

AN INVESTIGATION INTO WHETHER OR NOT  
POSITIVE SELF CONCEPT RELATES TO  
SUCCESS ON THE JOB

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By  
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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether or not the positive self concept of a group of para professional Rehabilitation aides was related to their success on the job.

A twenty-five item questionnaire was administered to the entire population of Rehabilitation aides in Northern California. Hypotheses were drawn from the demographic data contained in the questionnaire, and then analyzed in light of the six criteria for success in the Rehabilitation aide position. Percentages were computed for each criterion.

The results revealed high percentages of positive and/or similar responses on all six of the criteria. It was concluded that positive self concept did related to success on the job. Further studies were suggested to enable administrators to establish criteria by which future para professional programs could be measured.

DEDICATION

To my Professors:

Dr. Donald Brown and Dr. Phyllis Kaplan

And to my Family:

Arthur, Alison and Penny



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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

This study proposes to demonstrate how the positive self concept of a group of para professional Rehabilitation Aides relates to their success on the job. In addition, it is concerned with those variables that serve to either maintain a positive self concept, or lower it over a period of time.

#### Background of the Problem

Many studies have attempted to show the relationship between one's self concept and occupational preference, job performance, job satisfaction, and success. People such as Super (1963), Tageson (1960), and Brophy (1959), all studied the role of self concept and how it related to vocational behavior. Brophy, for an example, used a questionnaire to show a correlation between self concept, occupational role requirements, and job satisfaction.

This study will concern itself with self concept and how it relates to only one of the four variables mentioned above, namely success. It is felt that more relevant information regarding this aspect of vocational behavior is necessary if objective evaluations of the over-all success

of para professionals working in human service agencies are to be conducted.

Prior to the implementation of the para professional concept, there were very few, if any, professionally linked jobs in the human services that allowed a person into the profession with no formal training. It was usually considered too much of a risk to give a person responsibilities based solely on a personal self confidence, an experience in living, so to speak, and a knowledge of his community. Persons functioning in such a capacity would certainly need a great deal of structure from supervisors, and also much support and positive feed back from professionals in the agency as to their performance. It would not only be very time consuming, but success would be unpredictable.

However, this level of cooperation, when supplemented by some formal training at a later point in the program, could serve to enhance the positive self concept of indigenous workers and thereby positively effect their job performance.

The underlying basis for the implementation of the Rehabilitation Aide Program in California Departments of Vocational Rehabilitation was a response to the pressures coming from the local minority community for more better services from the Rehabilitation agency. The general purpose of the program was to provide a coordination of agency services that would attack the basic problems of low

income families (Lucas, 1968). More specifically, the aides were to "bridge the gap" between the poor and the bureaucratic structure of the department. The department was therefore faced with having to take risk and utilize a new resource in the community which later became a working force of para professionals.

It is hoped that an identification of those variables that serve to help maintain a positive self concept, will alert administrators and supervisors who deal with para professionals, to the kinds of attitudes, policies, and job structures, that would have a positive influence on their performance.

#### Significance of the Problem

The Social Service needs of most communities cannot be met with the limited number of professional workers assigned to most offices (Ginsberg, 1969). Counselors, Social Workers, and Public Health Nurses, to name just a few, are constantly complaining of heavy caseloads that make it virtually impossible to give the kind of service that a given community needs and wants. Along the same line, the professional worker has found that his university training, which incorporates counseling and social work methods, does not necessarily prepare him with the kinds of communication skills and demeanor that enable him to relate to poor and/or minority communities (Finch, 1970). Without these skills,

his ability to provide even minimum services is further hampered.

Out of this dilemma grew the need for a professional helper of some sort who could serve both the agency and the community. Theodore Blau (1969), in his article entitled The Professional in the Community Views the Non-Professional Helper, emphasizes the increasing need for services to communities, and suggests that a new concept of training must be developed to educate specialists, with the responsibility falling on the psychologists to implement this concept. A new position was finally created in human service agencies, in 1966 and this new worker was called the para professional. This division of labor required a certain level of training that was quite different from that offered at a University School of Social Work for an example. It required a certain attitude from supervisors and administrators, and some definite job guidelines; all of which could help to create an atmosphere of positive learning that could benefit both the professional and the para professional workers (Walcott, 1969). As a positive result, the needs of the community can be met.

#### Definition of Terms

1. Para professional: a person working a professional service agency or institution such as a Department of Rehabilitation, a school, a hospital or clinic, or a Social

Service agency. This person's professional training (above high school level), for the traditional positions within the agency is not complete. His minimum training or skills within the field, together with a sensitivity to the needs of the community being served, enable him to perform various designated tasks on the job.

2. Rehabilitation Aide: a person residing, or indigenous to the community in which the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation is located, who is knowledgeable of that community with respect to its school systems, its local business, its social strata, its political make-up. He is also aware of, and/or can readily secure information about the needs of the community in the areas of employment, social services, and educational programs. He is a person who can accurately verbalize the needs of the community to the appropriate service agencies (Hunn, 1969). He can also verbalize, simply and accurately, the scope of the community service he represents to the people of the community and he can enable them to feel comfortable about seeking out and using the service. He has a minimum of ten years of schooling.

3. Success: in the Rehabilitation Aide position, and for the purpose of this study, is defined as the ability to progressively demonstrate that he can perform certain designated tasks on a caseload. It is also the ability to understand and internalize the Rehabilitation concept to the



extent that he can accurately verbalize it and interpret it to his community. A successful Rehabilitation Aide has received regular supervision from a Rehabilitation Counselor or supervisor. This supervision also includes positive reinforcement for job performance. A successful aide has also taken advantage of the educational (out-service) opportunities that were built into the program. He has a clear understanding of his responsibilities and limitations, and feels that he has a specific valuable role within the agency. He feels secure in his position, and hence, is free enough to be innovative.

4. Lack of success: or unsuccessful performance is demonstrated when the Rehabilitation Aide is not clear about his role within the agency and feels insecure and threatened around professional counselors and administrators of the agency. He has not consistently demonstrated his ability to handle designated tasks on the caseload, and does not feel free enough to be innovative. He has not taken advantage of the out-service educational opportunities, that are built into the program.

5. Self-concept: for the purpose of this study is a person's picture of himself that he develops over a period of time. In this study we will discuss self concept as it relates to the Rehabilitation Aide's ability to perform successfully on the job.

Positive self concept is defined here as a person's positive feelings about his ability to perform on the job.

Negative self concept is a negative, uncertain feeling about one's ability to perform on a job.

6. Negative "feed-back": refers to the ambivalent attitude on the part of supervisors and administrators about the need for aides in the agency. It also refers to a verbalized apprehension about the level of responsibility than an aide can handle.

7. Human Service agency: an agency or department, either private or public, that concerns itself with and provides services for people. These services are usually in the areas of social, psychological, or health care services. Specific examples would be Welfare services, Family Counseling services, Vocational Rehabilitation services, and School Counseling services.

## Chapter 2

### A REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

Specific studies that relate to the self concept of para professionals are very limited as positions in human service agencies are relatively new in most states and are still in the experimental stages.

Many psychologists have studied self concept as it relates to different aspects of behavior (Thorne, 1950; Morrison, 1962). There also seems to be much discussion in the literature about occupational psychology and how it incorporates self concept theories (Tiedeman, 1963; Sampler, 1953; Holland, 1959).

Zemon (1969), for example, studied cases of chronic failures. His study was based on the premise that individuals are considered to operate at a level designated by their own self image. In other words, a person with a negative self image will persist in seeking a confirmation of this. The reverse can also be true; that is, one with a positive self image will engage in behavior that will, no doubt, reinforce that self image.

There are many studies that deal with self concept as it relates to some particular aspect of vocational behavior. Super's (1957) premise, for an example, is that it is directly related to occupational choice, and that one's

picture of one's self incorporates vocational aspirations and ultimate choices. Neff (1968), who has followed Super's work, describes this monumental study as one that has been conducted over two decades now, in an effort to find a means of assessing the components of the career patterns that ultimately make their appearance. Although Super has not yet been able to verify his hypotheses, many in the field of vocational psychology have benefited from his approach to the problem because it clearly points to the need to study the vocational behavior of an individual over a prolonged period of time.

Ginzberg (1951), developed a theory of occupational choice which in some ways paralleled Super's study in that both agree that vocational choice or career patterns develop over a long period of time. Whether it is more a function of the self concept (Super) or the environment (Ginzberg), has not been totally resolved, and warrants further investigation. Neither of these theories speaks to the way in which self concept relates to success on the job.

In her revised study entitled, The Origin of Interests, Ann Roe (1964), along with Siegelman (1964), carried the environmental theory even further by proposing that early childhood experiences, general cultural background, and the socio-economic position of the family, all affect one's self concept and vocational choice. She further proposes that the development of vocational

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interests commands involuntary attention on the part of the individual over a period of time.

Occupational success has been studied for the past thirty years and valuable summaries exist, especially those done regularly by Hoppock (1950), Davies, Stott, and Reeves all discussed the concept in 1950, and Heron in 1954. None of these theories are universally accepted, although they all have contributed in some way to the question of what occupational success really is.

The terms "satisfaction and satisfactoriness," are used by Kristy and Carlson (1952), in their analysis of job satisfaction. The latter referring to the adjustment of the individual on the job from the employer's standpoint, and the former being defined as the individual's adjustment as he feels it to be. Heron (1954) used these two sets of variables and drew from them fifteen items which he used in the construction of his job satisfaction theory.

Neither of these studies has dealt with or proven that success is related to a positive self concept. The most that can be gathered from these analyses is that there is still a dearth of information about the question that has been posed. Heron (1952) puts it another way by saying that the discussion in his paper focused on "the continuing inadequacy of our knowledge about the structure of occupational success [p. 84]."

Simpson and Simpson (1959), both discuss "occupational self-image," but relate it to the prestige which is part of the profession. People in low-status occupations will single out that aspect of their work which is most highly valued and built their own self-image around it. In the case of Rehabilitation Aides, this would be the "gut-level" client contact that is a significant part of their job. Aides would then gain a positive self-image among their peers, but would not necessarily experience the same feed back from the professionals in the agency.

Berger (1970), in his study hypothesized that satisfaction with those job variables which are congruent with one's self concept will influence overall job satisfaction. Built into the concept of developing a para professional program was the emphasis on allowing him to "do his own thing," and perform those duties within the agency he felt most comfortable with. (Robinson, 1969; Kelso, 1966). If Berger's principle were applied here, it would suggest that para professionals who performed under the above guidelines probably experienced some job satisfaction.

Rogers (1942), in his first book, formulated a theory of client centered counseling which was based on the premise that basically intelligent, well-functioning people who happened not to be successful in school or on the job could enjoy success if they understood themselves better,

i.e., had a more realistic self concept with respect to what they could and could not do in life.

This relates in some ways to the problem under investigation. The concern here, however, is for the para professional who has already developed his self concept, basically understands his limitations and is now engaged in vocational behavior. What are those variables that serve to maintain this positive feeling, so that he can experience reasonable success on the job?

In general, most of the writing that has been done on the para professional deals with the value and worth of the position (Blau, 1969), the structuring of their role within the agency (Gottesfeld; Rhee and Parker, 1970), and the pros and cons of having a career ladder built into the position (Felton, 1967). A few writers, Cauffman (1970), Weber and Palmer (1969), and Heath (1967), have described new careerist type programs as being successful when the professionals in the agency learn to accept the aides as a valuable asset to the agency with respect to the unique services they can provide. When the aide ceases to be a threat then the professionals can provide the necessary supervision and leadership that is needed.

Mitchell (1969), feels that psychologists have a mandate in the development and the implementation of the new careerist concept. He further states that:



The success of new careers depends on the quality of training for nonprofessionals, the adequacy with which professional personnel are prepared to welcome the workers as contributing staff members, and the possibilities for upward mobility [p. 67].

Reiff (1969), in his book dealing with non professionals in the human services, realistically suggests that conflict between professional and non-professional is inevitable, but can be minimized through clarification of roles and a clear delineation of tasks. He adds that new careerists and aides alike can be successful if they can get the cooperation of the professionals in the agency in the early stages of the relationship. Lucas (1968), however, in his Report on the Use of Indigenous Aides, states that "all counselors cannot work well with aides. Sometimes there are personality combinations of counselors and aides that can create less effective team work [p. 1]."

When the Rehabilitation Aide position was developed within the Vocational Rehabilitation agencies in California in 1966, the major objectives were:

1. To provide outreach to the community and serve as advocates for disadvantaged citizens utilizing center services; and
2. To assist counselors in the provision of services by making personal contacts with clients, developing on-the-job training or placement opportunities and keep counselors in closer contact with clients' problems as they develop during on-going services [Lucas, 1968, p. 1].

Since California was a pioneer in the use of aides in a Rehabilitation agency (Lucas, 1968), there was little in the way of past experience to draw on. No real structure

was built into the position, and no training was provided for counselors within the agency in working with indigenous personnel. It was truly believed that this group of "helpers" could be oriented in a few weeks to the general principles of Vocational Rehabilitation and then be allowed to perform certain tasks which were either clerical in nature, or had to do directly with clients.

It soon became evident that a great deal of structure and training had to be incorporated into the program because this new work force was not performing consistently at its optimum level (Lucas, 1968). The fact that this discovery was made two years after the program went into effect made it increasingly difficult to catch up.

It was first suggested that aides take advantage of any in-service training that was provided for Rehabilitation counselors in the agency (Robinson, 1969). Although this helped, it still did not meet the specific needs of most of the aide population which was for consistent, structured training programs on Rehabilitation fundamentals supplemented by college level courses in the social and psychological sciences.

Finally, early in 1971, specific training programs for aides were incorporated into the in-service structure of the department (Merrill, 1971). Coupled with this was the beginning of a career-ladder structure. By this time, however, some aides had left the agency, and because they

already had "civil service status," and some exposure to human services, they were hired by other agencies such as Human Resources Development, Social Welfare and departments of correction, all of which had a more structured kind of para professional program going.

If the existing data were summarized, it would appear that there are at least two variables that have been suggested throughout the readings as being necessary for the success of the para professional working in a traditional human service agency such as Vocational Rehabilitation. They are the need for role and task delineation, and the minimizing of the threatening feelings on the part of the professionals in the agency.

## Chapter 3

### DESIGN AND PROCEDURES

#### Specific Statement of the Problem

Does the positive self concept of a group of para professional Rehabilitation Aides relate to their success on the job?

#### Hypotheses

The following hypotheses will be tested:

Hypothesis 1: There will be similarities of responses among the respondents on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 2: There will be similarities of response between males and females on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 3: There will be similarities of response due to educational level on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 4: There will be similarities on response due to age on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 5: There will be similarities of response due to marital status on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 6: There will be similarities of response due to time on the job on the criteria for success.

Hypothesis 7: There will be similarities of response due to "Special Talents" on the criteria for success.

## General Methodology

This will be a descriptive study done on a group of para professional Rehabilitation Aides currently functioning in Vocational Rehabilitation offices in Northern California.

All twenty of the subjects were given a questionnaire which was developed from six criteria for success taken from the State Personnel Board job description entitled, "Vocational Rehabilitation Aide," October 1966, and Susan Hunn's article, Rehabilitation Aides, Promise of Hope, 1969.

The face sheet of the questionnaire contains the following demographic data: sex, age, educational background, marital status, time on the job, and a list of specific talents acquired before beginning to work in the Rehabilitation position.

Before the questionnaire was mailed out to the Rehabilitation Aide population, it was given to a small group of three Rehabilitation Aides in an effort to test the clarity of the questions. Items that were unclear were extracted and reworded.

Each hypothesis was looked at in the light of the six criteria for success designated earlier.

The questionnaires were hand tabulated and percentages drawn up for each criterion.

## Subjects

The subjects were a group of twenty Rehabilitation Aides, twelve female and eight male, currently working in

the Rehabilitation Aide position in Vocational Rehabilitation offices in California. All of the subjects have worked in the position for at least a three year period, and no longer than six and one-half years.

The entire group of Aides that are working in Northern California was polled, with the major concentration being in the Greater Bay Area. Although there are other areas of the state where Rehabilitation Aides are employed, such as Los Angeles and San Diego, it was felt that the Northern California group had representative functions and responsibilities.

Six males and eleven females returned questionnaires. The average age for the female Aide was 34.5 and for the male Aide was 32.8. The median age for the entire group was 35. Of the seventeen questionnaires returned, there were six married females, three divorced, and two single females. Among the males, three were married, two divorced, and one was single. The average level of educational achievement was 13.02 for both groups combined, and 12.7 and 13.5 for female and male, respectively.

All of the Aides work in offices where the basic structure consists of a Rehabilitation Supervisor, who is responsible for a "unit" of five Rehabilitation Counselors, three to five Aides, and two Clerks.

The responsibilities and work loads of the Rehabilitation Aides vary somewhat from office to office.

In all cases, they are assigned to a particular Rehabilitation Counselor's caseload. The extent of their involvement, however, has largely to do with their individual skills and past experience. What they do on a particular caseload also has to do with how comfortable the counselor is in allowing the Aide to take over some of his responsibilities. Generally, there are two levels of functioning; the first involves the carrying of a case from start to finish. This is generally a case on which the Aide has done the Intake Interview. The second function is strictly in the assistive role, where the Aide carries out specific tasks assigned by the counselor, such as closing a case out, or taking a client to look for a job (Robinson, 1969).

### Instrument

A questionnaire was mailed out to the entire Rehabilitation Aide population in Northern California. Prior to the mailing, however, the questionnaire was tested for clarity. Three Rehabilitation Aides representing three different levels of educational achievement completed all of the items. Questions 16 and 21 were in need of revision to insure clarity and this was done at that time.

Seventeen questionnaires were returned, which represents 85 percent of the total number. It was felt that this was an adequate number of returns on which to proceed

with the examination of the data. The questionnaire was made up of twenty-five items, which contained the six criteria for success. These six criteria are: positive reinforcement for job performance, regular training (formal and in-service), job guidelines and structure, regular supervision, job security, and a clear understanding of the Vocational Rehabilitation concept.

At least four questions were drawn up from each of the six criteria to insure the reliability of the responses. Content for the questions was drawn from job descriptions, memos, and papers written within the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation during the developmental stages of the position, namely, Fall of 1966 to Summer of 1969. On two of the six criteria, namely positive reinforcement and supervision, four questions of the eight attempted to measure the Aides' proficiency on certain tasks and his overall increased responsibility. The assumption was made here that there had to be some degree of supervision and reinforcement within the basic structure of the Aide position so that he might perform and progress at a nominal rate of speed.

In addition to the twenty-five items, seven categories of demographic data were listed on the cover page of the questionnaire. The areas covered in this data were sex, educational level (when he began), marital status, time on the job, and special talents brought to the job.



All of the responses were looked at in terms of these demographic categories, and percentages were drawn up for all of the categories, except the area of "Special Talents." This particular area was included in the demographic data because the department recruited those Rehabilitation Aides whose personal experience in the community provided them with knowledge that proved to be a valuable asset to their success in the position.

## Chapter 4

### RESULTS

The general findings, and interpretation of the responses are presented in this chapter. The major focus of this study was on the self concept of the para professional working in a Human Service agency. The purpose of the study was to determine whether or not their self concept relates to their success on the job.

#### Findings

The first hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 1: There will be similarities of responses among the respondents on the criteria for success.

On the six criteria for success, there were high percentages of similar responses among the general population questioned (Table 1). The six criteria were: (1) positive reinforcement for job performance; (2) regular supervision; (3) regular training (formal and in-service); (4) job guidelines and structure; (5) job security; (6) a clear understanding of the Rehabilitation concept.

The second hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 2: There will be similarities of response between males and females on the criteria for success.

Of the total population responding, males represented 35 percent and females 65 percent, or six and eleven,

respectively. Eighty percent of both groups responded that they had received positive reinforcement. There was similarity of response on this criterion.

Education and training were divided into two categories. Those who had taken advantage of the programs and those who had acquired degrees in the process. Females and males responded similarly to the question dealing with taking advantage of the program, i.e. 100 percent for each. Only a small percentage acquired degrees, however, namely 35 percent of the total population. Eighty-three percent of the females in that population acquired degrees, and 17 percent of the males.

In the area of specific guidelines and structure, 65 percent of the total population felt that they had some guidelines and structure. Of that group, 39.3 percent were females, and 25.3 percent were males. Comparing the responses, a higher percentage of males, i.e., 71 percent versus 60 percent for females, felt that they had structure.

Ninety-one percent of the male Aides responding felt that they had supervision compared to 86 percent of the female Aides.

Male Aides felt more secure on the job than female Aides. Ninety-four percent of the male population as compared to 77 percent of the female population.

Both groups responded similarly to the criteria that dealt with their knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept.

The percentage for males was slightly higher than females, 100 percent versus 97 percent.

The third hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 3: There will be similarities of response due to educational level in the criteria for success.

In the area of positive reinforcement, those Aides at the twelfth grade (when they started on the job), and those Aides above the twelfth grade responded somewhat similarly. Seventy-nine percent versus 81 percent for those with some college.

The total population (100 percent) of Aides took advantage of the education and training that were built into the program. For those who acquired degrees, 50 percent were at the twelfth grade level, 50 percent were above.

Seventy percent of the Aides entering the position with more than a twelfth grade education felt that they had specific guidelines and structure while 62 percent of those at the twelfth grade felt they had structure.

On the criteria for supervision, twelfth graders responded similarly to those with some college. Eighty-seven percent of both groups felt they had supervision.

For those aides who began the job with a twelfth grade education, 85 percent felt secure, compared to 91 percent of those with college who felt secure.

On the criteria of knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept, educational level did effect their knowledge

somewhat. Ninety-one percent of those at the twelfth knew the concept, as compared to 100 percent of those over the twelfth.

The fourth hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 4: There will be similarities of response due to age on the criteria for success.

The median age was thirty-five, and all of the criteria were looked at in terms of over thirty-five or under thirty-five years of age.

In the area of positive reinforcement, 76 percent of those over thirty-five felt they received it and 76 percent of those under thirty-five felt they received reinforcement.

On the criteria of education and training, 100 percent of the population took advantage of the programs. Of those who acquired degrees, however, 67 percent were under thirty-five and 33 percent were over thirty-five years of age.

On the criteria of specific guidelines and structure, 66 percent of those over thirty-five felt they got structure, while 62 percent of those under thirty-five felt they had structure.

Both age groups felt they got supervision, the percentage being 87 percent for each.

There were definite differences with respect to security. Eighty-nine percent of those over thirty-five years of age felt secure, as compared to 76 percent of those under thirty-five.

Knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept elicited very little difference in responses. One hundred percent of those under thirty-five felt they knew it and 98 percent of those over thirty-five felt they did.

The fifth hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 5: There will be similarities of response due to the marital status of the respondents.

Married and divorced were taken as one category versus single individuals as another.

Eighty percent of the married and divorced group felt they received positive reinforcement, as compared to 72 percent of the single group of Aides.

In the area of education and training, all of the respondents answered similarly, that is 100 percent of both populations. Of those who acquired degrees, however, 84 percent of those were married or divorced and 16 percent responding were single.

Sixty-seven percent of those married or divorced felt that they had structure and guidelines, and only 55 percent of those who were single felt some structure.

In the area of supervision, the two groups responded similarly, 81 percent of those married or divorced, and 83 percent of those who were single.

There were differences on the criteria of security. Eighty-five percent of those married and divorced felt secure, and 72 percent of those who were single felt secure.

Both groups responded similarly to the criteria of knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept. Ninety-seven percent of the married and divorced group, and 100 percent of the single group.

The sixth hypothesis was as follows:

Hypothesis 6: There will be similarities of response due to time on the job on the criteria for success.

Time on the job was expressed in two different ways; those Aides employed for a three year period of time versus those employed for a six year period. Eighty-five percent of the three year group felt they had positive reinforcement, while 77 percent of the six year group felt they had it.

Both groups responded similarly to the criteria of education and training, with 100 percent of both groups responding positively. However, of those who acquired degrees, the responses were quite different. Seventeen percent of the three year group acquired a degree as compared to 83 percent of the six year group of Aides.

In the area of specific guidelines and structure, 60 percent of the six year group felt they had structure as compared to 71 percent of the three year group.

The two groups differed in their responses on the criteria of supervision. Ninety-one percent of the three year Aides felt they had supervision while only 81 percent of the six year Aides felt they had it.

There were also differences in the responses on the criteria of security. Seventy-one percent of the three year Aides felt secure compared to 81 percent of the six year Aides.

Similar responses occurred on the criteria of knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept. One hundred percent of the three year Aides knew the concept as compared to 97 percent of the six year group.

The seventh hypothesis stated:

Hypothesis 7: There will be similarities of response due to special talents on the criteria for success.

The special talents listed on the face sheet of the questionnaire were as follows: community involvement, knowledge of community resources, past work experience with service agencies, and formal training in the helping professions. The responses to the criteria of special talents were concentrated in the areas of community involvement and knowledge of community resources. Seventy-one percent of the total population was involved in the community prior to starting on the job. Of that 71 percent, four were males and eight were females. Eighty-two percent of the total population knew about community resources and of that 82 percent, four were males and ten were females. The other two talents were somewhat evenly distributed with 53 percent having past work experience, and 47 percent having formal training in the helping professions.



### Interpretation of the Results

The initial problem was an attempt to relate the Rehabilitation Aides' positive self concept to his success on the job. For the purpose of this study, positive self concept refers to the Rehabilitation Aides' positive feelings about his ability to perform successfully on the job. If it appears that a significantly high percentage of Aides met the criteria for success, previously defined, it may be concluded then that there is a relationship between positive self concept and success in the Rehabilitation Aide position.

There were high percentages of positive responses on all the criteria for success among the general population (Table 1). Knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept and supervision had the highest percentage of positive responses while specific guidelines and training had the lowest percentages. It would appear that the general population of Rehabilitation Aides met all six of the criteria for success, and this directly relates to the positive self concept which they manifested when they began the job.

There were high percentages of positive responses between males and females on the criteria of positive reinforcement, education and training, supervision, and knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept. Acquisition of a degree, guidelines and structure, and job security had lower percentages of positive responses. More females acquired degrees than males. Since the median age for Aides was thirty-five,

females of this age usually have school age children who would not necessarily interfere with them attending evening classes.

Males felt more secure on the job than females, and also felt that they had received more guidelines and structure, although both groups had negative responses in this area. Historically, the Department of Rehabilitation had hired more male counselors than female in addition, special efforts were made to recruit male Aides in some minority communities in an effort to counteract the matriarchal patterns already established (Lucas, 1968). Because of these factors, male Aides may have identified more with male counselors and supervisors, had a clearer understanding of their role within the agency, and therefore may have felt more secure.

When comparing educational level, there were high percentages of similar responses on all criteria. Again, guidelines and structure had the lowest percentage of positive responses. On this criteria, those Aides entering at the twelfth grade level felt they had received less structure than those with some college. This could mean that their need was greater. There is also a correlation here with job security. Those at the twelfth grade level felt less secure than those with college; although both grade levels on the whole had high positive responses to security.

Knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept had some differences in the responses between the two educational levels. Those with some college felt that they knew the concept more than those without college. This could mean that the exposure to college level courses enabled them to better grasp the concept.

There were differences in the responses due to age on two out of the six criteria, i.e. acquisition of degrees (education and training), and security. Those Aides starting the job at an earlier age tended to pursue degrees rather than just take courses related to the field; and older Aides felt more secure than the younger. The older Aides tended to have other skills to rely on in the event that the Rehabilitation Aide position folded. On the other criteria there were high percentages of similar responses.

There were differences in the percentages of positive responses due to marital status on the criteria of education and training (acquisition of degrees), guidelines and structure, and job security. Married or divorced Aides acquired degrees to a much greater degree than did single Aides. This correlates with the fact that this group also felt more secure on the job. It may be assumed that they felt more of a need to take full advantage of the educational program in an effort to protect themselves, to secure their jobs, and to prepare for upward mobility within the position. Married and divorced Aides felt they had received more guidelines

and structure than did single Aides. The differences in the responses may be due to the level of maturity implied for a married person versus a single person, who may need more structure.

When comparing the criteria on the basis of length of time on the job, there was generally high level of response. There were differences, however, in the percentages of positive responses. Those Aides working for the agency for six years acquired degrees to a much greater extent than those in the three year group. Since most Aides attended school part time, this would logically figure. Those on the job for six years felt they received less structure than the three year group. This also correlated with supervision and positive reinforcement, the implication being that supervisors and administrators felt less of a need to be supportive, to give supervision, and to clarify roles and guidelines to this group. On the criteria of security, those with the agency the longest felt more secure.

There were similar responses among the total population due to special talents. The Rehabilitation Aide position was geared to the knowledgeable person in the community who could verbalize the needs of the people. These were the special talents that elicited most of the positive responses.

Table 1

Percentages of Positive Responses of General  
versus Male and Female Population  
on Six Criteria for Success

Criteria	Rehabilitation Aides		
	General	Male	Female
Positive Reinforcement	79.5%	28%	51.5%
Education and Training	67.5%	20.5%	47%
Specific Guidelines	65%	25.3%	39.3%
Supervision	88%	32%	56%
Security	83%	33%	50%
Rehabilitation Concept	98%	35%	63%
	N=17	N=6	N=11

Table 2

Percentages of Positive Responses of General  
versus the Twelfth Grade and Over Twelfth  
Grade Population on the Six  
Criteria for Success

Criteria	Rehabilitation Aides		
	General	12th	Over 12th
Positive Reinforcement	79.5%	36.5%	38%
Education and Training	67.5%	75%	75%
Specific Guidelines	65%	29%	33%
Supervision	88%	41%	41%
Job Security	83%	40%	43%
Rehabilitation Concept	98.5%	47%	47%
	N=17	N=8	N=8

Table 3

Percentages of Positive Responses of General versus  
Rehabilitation Aides beginning the Job Under  
Thirty-Five Years of Age versus Those  
Over Thirty-Five Years of Age on the  
Criteria for Success

Criteria	Rehabilitation Aides		
	General	Under 35	Over 35
Positive Reinforcement	79.5%	36.5%	36.5%
Education and Training	67.5%	40%	57%
Specific Guidelines	65%	29%	31%
Supervision	88%	41%	41%
Specific Guidelines	83%	36.5%	42.5%
Rehabilitation Concept	98.5%	47%	45.5%
	N=17	N=8	N=8

Table 4

Percentages of Positive Responses of General versus  
Married/Divorced and Single Respondents  
on the Criteria for Success

Criteria	Rehabilitation Aides		
	General	Married/ Divorced	Single
Positive Reinforcement	79.5%	66%	13%
Education and Training	67.5%	82.5%	17.5%
Specific Guidelines	65%	55%	10%
Supervision	88%	73%	14.5%
Specific Guidelines	83%	70%	13%
Rehabilitation Concept	98.5%	82%	17%
	N=17	N=14	N=3

Table 5

Percentages of Positive Responses of General  
versus Three and Six Year Rehabilitation  
Aides on the Criteria for Success

Criteria	Rehabilitation Aides		
	General	3 Year	6 Year
Positive Reinforcement	79.5%	30.5%	48.5%
Education and Training	67.5%	26%	74%
Specific Guidelines	65%	25%	39.5%
Supervision	88%	32%	56%
Specific Guidelines	83%	24.5%	58%
Rehabilitation Concept	98.5%	35%	63%
	N=17	N=6	N=11

## Chapter 5

### CONCLUSION

The central problem was an investigation into whether or not the positive self concept of a group of para professional Rehabilitation Aides was related to their success on the job. Hypotheses were drawn up from demographic data contained in a questionnaire that was distributed to the population of Aides. Hypotheses were then analyzed in light of the criteria for success in the Rehabilitation Aide position. Percentages were computed for each criteria.

Hypotheses 1, 2, 3, and 4 had high percentages of positive responses to the various criteria. These four hypotheses compared similarities of responses among the general population of Rehabilitation Aides, between males and females, and similarities due to educational level and age.

Knowledge of the Rehabilitation concept, education and training (excluding acquisition of degrees), and supervision consistently elicited high percentages of similar responses, while guidelines and structure and acquisition of degrees both showed a consistently low percentage of positive responses and/or differences among the respondents.

Hypotheses 5 and 6 which compared similarities due to marital status and time on the job, both had somewhat high



percentages of positive responses, but some real differences among the respondents on the various criteria.

Hypothesis 7 elicited high percentages of positive, similar responses.

In summarizing, it appears that more female Aides secured degrees than male Aides, although both groups took some college courses related to their job. Male Aides seemed to feel more secure on the job, however.

Those entering the position at the twelfth grade level of education felt the need for more structure, and felt less secure, than those entering with some college work.

Rehabilitation Aides under thirty-five acquired degrees to a greater extent than those over thirty-five years of age, and those acquiring degrees were either married or divorced, and had generally been on the job longer.

Rehabilitation Aides working for six years or more, felt they had received less structure and positive reinforcement than those working for a shorter period of time.

It appears that positive self concept did relate to success on the job. The general population of Rehabilitation Aides responded positively to all the criteria for success, the lowest of the positive responses being in the area of specific guidelines and structure. The low percentage of positive responses on this criteria relates to the lack of guidelines and structure within the department during the first three years of the Rehabilitation Aide position.

Throughout the materials written to justify the Aide position, there is mention of this problem.

If the general population of Rehabilitation Aides met the previously defined criteria for successful performance on the job, then this researcher concludes that the positive self concept that they brought with them was maintained.

### Recommendations

This researcher recommends that this study be replicated on para professionals working in other types of human service agencies; especially within the health professions where there seem to be para professionals at many different levels. No allowances were made for the relatively new career ladder concepts being instituted into some para professional programs. This avenue of upward mobility may have some influence on responses.

Finally, this researcher feels that administrators in human service agencies need to have some criteria established within their agencies upon which they can objectively measure the success of their programs.

### Limitations

The population tested was small (twenty) and was limited to one group of para professionals within one particular profession, in one area of the State. This area was chosen, however, because it had been reasonably intact,

that is, there has been less turn-over in these offices than in other areas of the State such as Los Angeles. Rehabilitation Aides working in rural areas and/or with clientele with unique problems may have responded differently.

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# REHABILITATION AIDE QUESTIONNAIRE

Unless otherwise directed, please ( ) the one item of your choice.

A. Sex:            M      F      (please circle one)

B. Education: 10 11 12 13 14  
(highest grade completed before joining DVR)

(other education--please specify)

C. Age (when you joined DVR):

D. Marital status: Married Single Divorced Widowed  
(circle)

E. Time on the job: How long working for DVR (yr., mo.)

F. What special talents did you bring to this position?

- ☐ a. Community involvement.
- ☐ b. Knowledge of community resources.
- ☐ c. Past work experience with service agencies (example: Welfare, HRD, Redevelopment, etc.)
- ☐ d. Formal training in the helping professions.
- ☐ e. All of the above.
- ☐ f. None of the above.
- ☐ g. Other (please specify.)

1. At present I feel that I can completely handle a case from intake to closure:
  - a. yes
  - b. no
2. At present I feel that I can clearly explain Rehabilitation services at a Community Meeting:
  - a. along
  - b. with another Rehabilitation Aide
  - c. with a Rehabilitation Counselor
  - d. with a Rehabilitation Supervisor
  - e. not at all
3. Since working here I have acquired:
  - a. a high school diploma
  - b. AA degree
  - c. Bachelor's degree
  - d. other (please specify)
  - e. none of the above
4. Since being employed, I have received regular feed-back from my supervisor as to my performance. Rate the kind of feed-back according to the following:
  - a. Continuous
  - b. Sporadic
  - c. Regular, but not enough (ex.: once a month)
  - d. Not at all
5. At present I feel confident to handle independently (of the following, use + for independent and - for dependent):
  - a. Intake
  - b. Case evaluation
  - c. Plan
  - d. Job development
  - e. Closure
6. At present, I feel competent to explain Rehabilitation services in an Intake interview to any potential client to the agency, i.e., a "drop in client":
  - a. alone
  - b. with another Rehabilitation Aide
  - c. with a Rehabilitation Counselor
  - d. with a Rehabilitation Supervisor
  - e. not at all



7. What areas of the following would you need more training:
- Outreach
  - Assigned tasks on counselor's cases
  - Intake interviewing
  - Transporting clients to seek work
  - All of the above
  - None of the above
8. At present, I feel secure enough to critically evaluate my position and make recommendations of alternative functions to administration:
- yes
  - no
9. At present, I feel that I am functioning in the Rehabilitation role to the best of my ability:
- yes
  - no
  - other (please specify)
10. At present I would prefer to handle one of the following (please rate in order of preference 1-5):
- Intake
  - Case evaluation
  - Plan
  - Job development
  - Closure
11. Since working here I have attended school:
- evenings after work
  - during the day on company time
  - both of the above
  - none of the above
12. At present I have a clear understanding of my specific role within the agency:
- yes
  - no
13. At present I feel secure enough to push for legislation that would benefit me in my position:
- yes
  - no

14. At present, I feel that my supervisor is aware of my unique talents and is allowing me to be as creative and innovative as possible:
- a. yes
  - b. no
15. From the job description I received when I applied, it seemed:
- a. similar to past employment
  - b. entirely different from past employment
  - c. similar in some ways
16. While attending school I have taken courses in:
- a. Psychology
  - b. Sociology
  - c. Writing Skills
  - d. Ethnic Studies
  - e. Other (please specify)
  - f. All of the above
17. At present, I can clearly interpret the needs of the community to the Rehabilitation agency:
- a. alone
  - b. with another Rehabilitation Aide
  - c. with a Rehabilitation Counselor
  - d. with a Rehabilitation Supervisor
  - e. not at all
18. At present, I feel secure enough to recommend a higher salary:
- a. yes
  - b. no
19. Since I have been attending school, I have learned:
- a. relevant information to help me on the job
  - b. irrelevant information that cannot be applied to the job
  - c. general liberal arts to enhance my own background
20. At present, I feel secure enough to suggest new ideas or innovations to the administration:
- a. yes
  - b. no

21. At present, I feel most proficient in handling:
- a. Intake
  - b. Case Evaluation
  - c. Plan
  - d. Job development
  - e. Closure
  - f. All of the above
22. When I applied for the Rehabilitation Aide position, I was told I would be doing:
- a. outreach
  - b. assigned tasks on the counselor's cases
  - c. intake interviewing
  - d. transporting clients to seek work
  - e. all of the above
  - f. none of the above
23. At present, I feel competent enough to approach a new community agency with information about DVR:
- a. alone
  - b. with another Rehabilitation Aide
  - c. with a Rehabilitation Counselor
  - d. with a Rehabilitation Supervisor
  - e. not at all
24. Since being employed, my job responsibilities have increased in the following areas (use a + or - to indicate which item you have had increased responsibilities in):
- a. Outreach
  - b. Assigned tasks on counselors' cases
  - c. Intake interviewing
  - d. Transporting clients to seek work
  - e. All of the above
  - f. None of the above
25. At present, I feel that there is an overlap within my role and that of a Rehabilitation Counselor:
- a. yes
  - b. no

Please feel free to write any comments you may have on the remainder of this sheet.

Thank you for your cooperation.