RUNNING HEAD: Spiritual Values Inventory

The Spiritual Values Inventory: An Instrument for Pastoral Assessment

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Author Note:

This project began as a Ph.D. dissertation at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in 1989. The dissertation, completed in 1991, was title, "Pastoral Variables in Psychotherapy: An Instrument for Assessment." Additional research was conducted from 1992-1994 through a grant from the Midwest Region of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors.

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Abstract

Presents development of the <u>Spiritual Values Inventory</u> (<u>SVI</u>), a 15-item

instrument inspired by the writings of Paul Pruyser and Andrew Lester.

The instrument can be used in comparative outcome studies for pastoral

counseling, in the pretest/posttest assessment of psychotherapy, or for

measurement of intermediate progress. Resources include scoring sheets,

interpretive handouts, score reports, counselor feedback forms, progress

charts, and a manual that offers theoretical background for factor domains.

Factors include <u>Vocation</u>, <u>Dysphoria</u>, <u>Community</u>, and <u>Hope</u>. Validity and

reliability statistics are provided from four major surveys and subsequent

factor analyses, and assistance with clinical trials is requested. The <u>SVI</u> is also

available as the <u>Core Values Inventory</u> (<u>CVI</u>), which uses twelve-step "Higher-

Power" language instead of overtly theological language.

The Spiritual Values Inventory: An Instrument for Pastoral Assessment

As a discipline barely a generation old, pastoral counseling continues to struggle to claim its place among the clinical disciplines which have developed in the 20th century. The questions concerning whether pastoral counseling is really different from other counseling, and, if different, whether it is more effective than (or even as effective as) other approaches, continue to be troublesome for its practitioners. Everett Worthington surveyed the relevant literature for a ten-year period, hoping to discover empirical outcome studies for "religious" counseling, concluding that

> no support has been found that religious counseling has any more
>
> beneficial effects than does secular counseling in working with religious
>
> clients. In fact, little is known about what really makes religious
>
> counseling distinct from secular counseling, although theory abounds
>
> (Worthington, 1986, p. 429).

Speaking to this issue, Larry VandeCreek challenged his colleagues in ministry to do something about it, writing that

> We possess a moral obligation not only to discover whether we are
>
> helping our clientele and patients, but also to determine whether some of
>
> our efforts are more helpful than others, whether religious interventions
>
> of one style or another are helpful or hurtful (VandeCreek, 1988, p. 2).

More than twenty years ago, Pruyser asked what, if anything, distinguishes a pastoral from a psychological assessment (Pruyser, 1976,

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p. 21)? Pruyser went on to suggest that, in turning to a minister, persons give a signal—they want a <u>theological</u> perspective on their lives and situations, or they would not have bothered to come (Pruyser, 1976, p. 46).

Pruyser challenged ministers to recognize that they have not only the right, but the responsibility, to put anything and everything in a theological perspective. Theological ideas do not become inoperative in the face of serious mental turmoil. Pruyser argued that what a phenomenon "is" depends on how it is regarded (Pruyser, 1976, p. 49), and he suggested some theological lenses through which to view persons and their experience (Table 1).

Pruyser's constructs are not innovative so much in their content as in their constellation. Scholars have discussed the concepts of <u>providence</u>, <u>repentance</u>, and <u>vocation</u>, for example, for centuries. Pruyser's contribution was to propose that these seven variables together constitute a place to begin in talking with persons about their lives in the context of Christian faith.

Others agree that pastoral assessment deserves serious discussion.   For example, Lester's six-fold paradigm for conceptualizing hope and hopelessness suggests clinically useful and empirically measurable responses to persons in the concrete contingencies of their lives (Table 1). As with Pruyser's variables, Lester's schema also constitutes a constellation of six phenomenological lenses as places to begin in talking with persons about their lives in a pastoral context (Lester, 1988, 1995).

As the context of Table 1 reveals, Pruyser's seven-fold theological model and Lester's six-fold phenomenological model contain similarities which invite

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empirical assessment. This report describes the integration of these thirteen variables and the development of an instrument that may both illuminate the distinctiveness of pastoral counseling and enhance its effectiveness in practice.

Specifically, the purpose of this research was to compare the Pruyser and Lester categories, to discover underlying common themes, and to identify those that are unique to each schema. A central goal was to develop an instrument that facilitates pastoral counseling conversations and that might be useful for comparative outcome studies.

Methods and Results

Literary research was undertaken on the Lester and Pruyser concepts (such as hope and providence) in order to develop an understanding sufficient to permit writing multiple items about them. This research led to a pilot instrument of 413 statements, each related to one of the seven Pruyser categories or one of the six Lester categories. Ten pastoral counselors completed the pilot instrument, and items with low discriminatory power were eliminated.   Remaining items were then examined for potential vocabulary problems.   All were stated positively and in the present tense.   Items were limited to 20 words, modifiers (i.e., usually, often) were eliminated where possible, and statements were examined for relevance over time (Payne, 1951, pp. 124, 158-176, 212-213).

Aquiescence, or the tendency to agree with items regardless of their content, was reduced by wording statements such that approximately half were expected to be answered in a positive direction, and a similar proportion

negatively (Rust & Golombok, 1989, p. 153). Additionally, items were scrambled to avoid trends of content (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987, p. 268).

This second version contained 182 items.   This allowed up to 50% attrition during subsequent testing, while still permitting a final scale of 100-125 items. Again, responses were made on a 7-point Likert scale, and respondents were assured that both their participation and their responses were confidential.

First Survey

This instrument was mailed to a systematic sample of the Members, Fellows, and Diplomates of the Midwest Region of the American Association of Pastoral Counselors (AAPC). Additionally, instruments were mailed to a systematic sample of 513 resident adult members of seven churches in the area.   Two of these churches were suburban, upper-middle class Presbyterian congregations, and five of the churches were Baptist. The Baptist congregations included a rural county-seat church, a regional county-seat church, an urban working-class church, a suburban working-class church, and a suburban middle-class church.

These mailings garnered 220 usable returns (43%). Factor analysis revealed 12 factors, which together accounted for 46.4% of the variance.

Second Survey

A second replicative survey using the same 182-item instrument included 500 community persons who live in the upper Midwest. This sample was selected by first writing to a systematic sample of AAPC members in the region

and asking that they submit five pages from their local telephone directories, beginning with the page on which the first entry appeared which began with the first letter of their last name. This yielded a second sample pool of about 10,000 persons, from which the final 500 were systematically selected (approximately every 50th name). Care was taken that the major cities in the region were not over-represented in the sample.

This generated 137 usable returns (27%), a return rate apparently related to postal delivery problems to persons with "general delivery" zip codes. Factor analysis revealed 15 factors, which together accounted for 31.8% of the variance. These factors were quite similar to the 12 that had emerged from the first survey.

The results of these two surveys were combined, creating a master data file of 357 responses. These data were subjected to a series of factor analyses, with items being deleted when they loaded on more than one factor (x $\square$ .30) or possessed factor loadings of less than .50. These analyses resulted in a 7-factor, 25-item solution, which accounted for 56.4% of the variance.

Third Survey

Criterion studies were now conducted, by means of a third survey in which the 25-item scale, now named the Spiritual Values Inventory (SVI), was correlated with the Generalized Contentment Scale (GCS) and the Index of Self-Esteem (ISE; Hudson, 1982).   The intent of this new scale was to provide pastoral counselors with an instrument organized around the concept of hope. Persons with high levels of hope would be expected to have low levels of

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depression and high self-esteem, so the GCS and the ISE comparison tested the SVI in both directions. Since high scores on the GCS indicate depression, and high scores on the ISE indicate low self-esteem, it was hypothesized that the SVI would be negatively correlated with each of these instruments.

This three-instrument set was mailed to 300 persons who live in the Midwest, selected in the same fashion as in the second survey (the sample was non-duplicating). Two phases of follow-up garnered a total response of 102 usable returns (34%). The correlations were as predicted (SVI/GCS = -.73; SVI/ISE = -.70).

Factor analysis again revealed that a 7-factor solution was most satisfactory, accounting for 64.7% of the variance. For the SVI-25 as a whole, alpha was .785, with an inter-item correlation of .132.

Items with strong cross-loadings (x $\geq$ .30) were deleted though a succession of factor analyses, resulting in a 5-factor solution with 15 variables (the SVI-15a). The final solution accounted for 65.9% of the variance, as compared with 64.7% for the SVI-25.

The factors remained the same as in the larger version, with three items per factor. Only one cross-loading reached .3 (-.307). Alpha for the SVI-15 was .646, with inter-item correlation of .113. P values for F were .000000. Correlations with the GCS and ISE were -.631144 and -.632489, respectively.

One important aspect of an instrument such as this is the cutting score, that score above or below which a person's score falls outside of normal limits for healthy, non-depressed persons. The cutting scores vis-à-vis the GCS and

ISE proved to be 50 ± 1, and the range of possible scores for the SVI-15 is 15-75.

Validity Testing

The validity of an assessment instrument is a statement about what the instrument measures, and how well it does so.   Does it really measure what it claims to measure? Does its measurement match that of similar and proven instruments? Is it able to discriminate between groups that really are different?

Construct Validity

There are many types of psychometric validity. Of these, construct validity is particularly relevant to the SVI, since it involves relating a measuring instrument to a theoretical framework in order to determine whether the instrument does in fact measure constructs related to the theory (Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987, p. 170).

The essential validity of the SVI constructs has been established through cross-validation of four substantial systematic samples (the fourth is described below). Analysis has permitted examination of potentially normative responses from persons in various sub-populations, which has helped to differentiate social artifacts from true individual differences in experience or response (Fournier, 1979, p. 141).

Criterion validity

If an instrument has true construct validity, then it should correlate highly with criterion instruments which measure similar constructs, and

conversely, it should not correlate significantly with instruments which measure differing constructs (Anastasi, 1988, p. 156; Derogatis & Melisaratos, 1983, p. 600). As expected, persons who scored well on the <u>SVI</u> have also had low scores on depression (<u>GCS</u>) and high scores on self-esteem and assertiveness (<u>ISE</u>).

<u>Discriminant Validity</u>

Discriminant validity is a measure of the extent to which an instrument is able to distinguish differences between populations that do in fact significantly differ. Concurrently with the <u>SVI-25/GCS/ISE</u> study, the <u>SVI-25</u> was being employed as a pretest and posttest at the Roederer Correctional Complex in LaGrange, Kentucky. These tests were administered under the supervision of Dr. Leonard Miller, clinical psychologist for the prison.   The <u>SVI-25</u> was also being used in the Colorado correctional system, under the supervision of Dr. Margaret Arndt. In these settings, the <u>SVI</u> was called the <u>Core Values Inventory</u>, or <u>CVI</u>, since governmental agencies were more comfortable with that title than <u>spirituality</u>. In the <u>CVI</u>, <u>Higher Power</u> language is used instead of the word <u>God</u>.

Non-parametric testing was conducted to determine to what degree the <u>SVI-25</u> and the <u>SVI-15</u> could identify differences in correctional and non-correctional populations, and significant differences were indeed established (two-tailed <u>p</u> = .000000).

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Reliability Testing

Beyond establishment of validity, evidence of the SVI's reliability has been

assembled. As it is used in psychometrics, reliability refers to consistency of

results. A reliable instrument yields consistent scores when the same person

completes it (or an equivalent instrument) repeatedly under similar conditions

(Nachmias & Nachmias, 1987, p. 113).

Because it has a number of highly desirable characteristics, coefficient

alpha was chosen as the primary means of estimating reliability for each of the

SVI scales. An alpha coefficient of .90 or greater provides direct evidence to

support the claim that a particular scale is a unidimensional measurement tool

(Hudson, 1982, p. 85). Table 2 presents the alpha coefficient and inter-item

correlations for the final four factors.

Fourth Survey

During 1994 and 1995, Dr. Leonard Miller continued to use the SVI-25 at

Roederer Correctional Complex. Nearly 600 additional pretests and posttests

were entered into the database in October 1995, bringing the total number of

usable inventories (i.e., those without missing data) to 843.

When factor analysis of the complete SVI-25 was completed with the

larger sample, the factorial structure changed. Repeated analyses were

undertaken, removing items with strong cross-loadings ($\Box$ .30), resulting in a

4-factor solution with 15 items. These four factors were more readily

interpretable than the previous five, and were named <u>Vocation</u>, <u>Dysphoria</u>, <u>Community</u>, and <u>Hope</u>, respectively.

In this configuration, the highest cross loading was .27, and the average cross loading was .08. The variance explained was 58.42%. The <u>SVI-15b</u> had an alpha of .768, and an inter-item correlation of .190. The new instrument correlated with the <u>Generalized Contentment Scale</u> at -.684, with the <u>Index of Self-Esteem</u> at -.562, and was able to detect the highly significant difference between the mail sample and the correctional persons as they began the program. Table 3 presents the statements in each factor of the <u>SVI-15b</u>, and Table 4 presents the statements that comprise the <u>SVI-15b</u> as they appear on the instrument itself.[1]

<div align="center">Outcome Studies</div>

A primary use for which the <u>SVI</u> is intended is as a pre- and posttest to measure change in comparative outcome studies or in individual, couple, or family therapy. As a part of the third survey analysis, pretest and posttest results were examined for three drug-rehabilitation cohorts at Roederer, and for one boot-camp cohort in Colorado. Changes in scores at Roederer became more and more significant in subsequent cohorts, and when the three cohorts at Roederer were combined the improvement was highly significant.

Pretest and posttest data was gathered and analyzed following the fourth survey as it had been in the third. As before, there was a highly significant difference between the correctional persons' pretests and posttests and between the correctional pretests and the mail sample. Interestingly, there was

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not a significant difference between the mail sample and the correctional

posttests. Thus, not only did the second correctional sample assist with

clarification of the factorial structure, but there is significant evidence that the

correctional drug rehabilitation program does in fact resocialize participants.

Discussion

As has been noted, the purpose of this research was to compare the

Pruyser and Lester categories, to discover underlying common themes, and to

identify those that are unique to each schema. A central goal was to develop

an instrument that facilitates pastoral counseling conversations and that might

be useful for comparative outcome studies.

The dissertation research of 1990-1991 concluded that, while Pruyser

and Lester have some concepts in common, on the whole, their paradigms offer

different lenses for assessment. As the research continued into 1995, however,

four consistent factors have emerged, two of which (Vocation and Community)

seem closely related to two of Pruyser's categories, and two of which (Dysphoria

and Hope) seem closely related to two of Lester's categories.

Continuing evaluation of validity and reliability data does not exhaust

possible avenues of research using the SVI. Research also needs to be

conducted using cross-cultural and more religiously inclusive populations, and

outcome studies are needed which compare the therapeutic results of pastoral

counseling to those of other clinical disciplines. For example, if the SVI

succeeds in establishing initial parameters for the content of Christian pastoral

counseling, then research questions could include:

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- Do persons come to pastoral counselors because they wish to explore their lives in the context of faith (as defined by the SVI categories)?

- Do pastoral counselors actually address pastoral variables in their therapy?

- If so, do pastoral counselors address these issues more effectively than do other counselors?

- Is pastoral identity (as measured by employment of pastoral categories) enhanced by formal ordination, by experience as a church staff member, or by the context of a church building?

- Do pastoral counselors become more or less "pastoral" as they progress through clinical training?

- Are male counselors perceived as more or less pastoral than female counselors?

<div align="center">Clinical Use of the Spiritual Values Inventory</div>

The acid test of a clinical instrument is its utility in applied situations. A useful instrument should be easy to understand, to administer, and to interpret, and should be perceived as useful both by pastoral counselors and by their parishioners (Fournier, 1979, p. 105).[2]   The SVI has both advantages and disadvantages in clinical pastoral work. Advantages include efficiency, accessibility, disclosure, and comparability. The SVI is efficient because it is short and easy to administer. As a subjective inventory, it allows access to aspects of an individual's experience that may not be easily verbalized, and makes disclosure of sensitive information somewhat more comfortable. As

norms are developed, scores on the SVI will become comparable to the experience of other individuals, which may also facilitate pastoral conversation (Corcoran & Fischer, 1987, pp. 43-45).

Disadvantages include psychometric concerns, obtrusiveness, susceptibility to falsification, and opportunity for abuse. A psychometric instrument is no more valuable than it is valid and reliable, which again highlights the importance of further testing of the SVI. Use of paper-and-pencil instruments may be perceived as distancing and mechanical by counselees, and respondents may tailor their responses to present them selves in a certain way. Finally, because RAIs are easy to administer, counselors may overuse them, and may over-interpret the information that may be gained (Corcoran & Fischer, 1987, pp. 45-47).

The Spiritual Values Inventory is available with several resources. The SVI itself is a one-page document that includes demographic information together with the 15 items of the inventory. Other resources include a scoring sheet (about three minutes are required for scoring), an interpretive handout for the client, a score report sheet which may or may not be given to the client, a counselor feedback form, and a progress chart for recording administrations during the course of therapy.

All of these resources are also available as the Core Values Inventory, which uses Higher Power language instead of more traditional Christian language. In addition, a manual is available which explores the theological and

psychological underpinnings of the four constructs <u>vocation</u>, <u>dysphoria</u>, <u>community</u>, and <u>hope</u>.

<div align="center">A Concluding Word</div>

This research has attempted several tasks, the overt purposes of which have now been discussed. Perhaps the reader has discerned a subsurface movement as well. James Fowler remarked that persons involved in his faith-stage research frequently expressed deep appreciation for the opportunity to talk about the anchors of their faith, saying that they never got an opportunity to talk about these things, and numerous respondents to the present research questionnaires penned similar comments (Fowler, 1986, p. 38).

Pastoral assessment, as described here, "is a form of disciplined reflection upon experience designed to sensitize us to the activity of God so we can harmonize our decisions with God's actions and purposes" (Poling & Miller, 1985, p. 68). Modern persons are starved for ideas that can give coherence to their world. In an age often characterized by absurdity, ambiguity, anxiety, guilt, and death, what persons need most is aid in placing their stories within the context of <u>The Story</u>.

Aristotle argued that those who wish to succeed must ask the right preliminary questions (Aristotle, trans. 1857). The art of pastoral assessment involves asking questions which uncover the points at which persons have become broken and wounded in spirit, so that the good news of Christ may be conveyed appropriately to these points of pain. Charles Gerkin was on the mark when he observed that

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pastoral counselors are, more than anything else, listeners to and interpreters of stories. Persons seek out a pastoral counselor because they need someone to listen to their story. Most often the story is tangled; it involves themes, plot, and counterplots. . . . The search is for a listener who is an expert at interpretation, one who can make sense out of what has threatened to become senseless . . . . [T]he one seeking counseling comes asking for . . . a new "story" for his or her life (Gerkin, 1984, p. 26).

Because "much of the spiritual life consists of learning to call things by their right names" (Jensen, 1990, p. 29), this research has undertaken the development of an instrument which offers a bridge of language which may prepare the way for the Word of God. Such preparation is an awesome task, made effective through disciplined humility; for as Edward Thornton cautioned, pastoral counselors "do not bring the Word of God to another. God comes on his own initiative. We only witness to his coming. We prepare the way" (Thornton, 1964, p.71).

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Footnotes

[1] More detailed statistical information and theory related to questionnaire construction, validity and reliability may be found in Stancil, 1991 and 1994.

[2] While this appears to be the case, clinical feedback is greatly needed, and interested clinicians are invited to contact the author to secure inventory materials.

Table 1

Theological and Phenomenological Categories for Pastoral Assessment

Pruyser's Seven Categories Categories	Lester's Six
Communion	Communal/Relational vs.
	Isolationist/Separatist
Providence	Realistic (h[H]ope) vs.
	Unrealistic (H[h]ope)
Faith	Future Oriented vs.
	Past Oriented/Present Bound
Vocation	Endless Possibilities vs.
	Endless Impossibilities
Repentance	Personal Power vs.
	Helplessness/Impotence
Holy	Positive God-Images vs.
Grace/Gratefulness	Negative God-Images

Note. From Andrew Lester, "Theological Issues in Pastoral Care and Counseling," a graduate seminar (87560) at The Southern Baptist Theological Seminary, Louisville, Kentucky, Spring, 1988; and Paul Pruyser, The Minister as Diagnostician: Personal Problems in Pastoral Perspective (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1976), pp. 60-79.

Table 2

Comparative Statistics of the Various Versions of the SVI

	SVI-25	SVI-15a	SVI-15b
correlation with GCS	-.731	-.639	-.684
correlation with ISE	-.701	-.571	-.562
correlation alpha	.785	.815	.768
inter-item correlation	.132	.237	.190
variance accounted for	64.7%	67.9%	58.4%

Table 3

Factors of the SVI-15b

Factor	Statement Number	Statement	factor loading
1	3.	I am truly connected to God.	.817858
1	5.	I think I know what my "spiritual gifts" are.	.639384
1	7.	I regularly read the Bible, or other material related to my spiritual values.	.708125
1	11.	I am doing what God intends for me to do with my life.	.786195
1	15.	I'm helping to accomplish God's purpose for the world.	.786128
2	2.	Sometimes I'm sad or angry without knowing why.	.660540
2	4.	Sometimes I am too emotionally dependent upon others.	.684928
2	8.	I spend a lot of time worrying about bad things that might happen.	.739886
2	12.	I often feel guilty.	.682659
3	1.	I have many friends.	.757938
3	10.	I have no really close friends.	.800458
3	14.	Most of my friendships are one-sided.	.686674
4	6.	It's too late for me to change.	
4	9.	I expect my life circumstances to improve.	-.817297
4	13.	I feel able to change my life.	-.792606

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Table 4

Content of the SVI-15b

No.	Statement
1.	I have many friends.
2.	Sometimes I'm sad or angry without knowing why.
3.	I am truly connected to God.
4.	Sometimes I am too emotionally dependent upon others.
5.	I think I know what my "spiritual gifts" are.
6.	It's too late for me to change.
7.	I regularly read the Bible, or other material related to my spiritual values.
8.	I spend a lot of time worrying about bad things that might happen.
9.	I expect my life circumstances to improve.
10.	I have no really close friends.
11.	I am doing what God intends for me to do with my life.
12.	I often feel guilty.
13.	I feel able to change my life.
14.	Most of my friendships are one-sided.
15.	I'm helping to accomplish God's purpose for the world.

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Factorial Structure of the SVI-15b the SVI-14/15c

Factor	SVI-15b			SVI-14/15c		
	Items in Factor	Alpha	Inter-Item Correlation	Items in Factor	Alpha	Inter-Item Correlation
One	10, 14, 15	.860	.681	3, 5, 7, 11, 15	.818	.477
Two	2, 7, 11	.729	.476	2, 4, 8, 12	.661	.328
Three	3. 5. 6	.650	.383	1, 10, 14	.657	.391
Four	4, 9, 13	.586	.323	(6), 9, 13		
Five	1, 8, 12	.602	.341			

Table 4

Comparative Statistics of the Various Versions of the SVI

	SVI-25	SVI-15a	SVI-15b	SVI-14/15c
correlation with GCS	-.731	-.639	-.631	-.684
correlation with ISE	-.701	-.571	-.633	-.562
correlation alpha	.785	.815	.646	.768
inter-item correlation	.132	.237	.113	.190
variance accounted for	64.7%	67.9%	65.9%	58.4%

Table 5

SVI-14/15c Pretest and Posttest t-tests for Correctional Populations

Group	2-tailed p	df	N 1	N 2	M 1	M 2	SD 1	SD 2
(1) Roederer Pretests (2) Roederer Posttests	.0000000	577	286	293	47.68	51.84	8.169	7.157
(1) Roederer Pretests (2) Roederer Dropouts	.1954370	304	284	206	47.68	50.10	8.169	6.147
(1) All Correctional Pretests (2) All Correctional Dropouts	.0962054	382	362	240	47.88	50.67	8.02	6.03
(1) All Correctional Pretests (2) All Correctional Posttests	.0000000	722	360	364	47.88	52.13	8.02	7.18
(1) Mail Sample (2) All Correctional Pretests	.0000000	460	100	360	53.26	47.88	6.09	8.02
(1) Mail Sample (2) All Correctional Posttests	.1491436	464	102	364	53.26	52.13	6.09	7.18
(1) Mail Sample (2) All Correctional Dropouts	.0628087	124	102	242	53.26	50.67	6.09	6.03