

2006

Effects of the Workbook God's Way to an A om Students Grade Point Averages

Donna Koson
Old Dominion University

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects



Part of the [Education Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Koson, Donna, "Effects of the Workbook God's Way to an A om Students Grade Point Averages" (2006).
OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers. 114.
https://digitalcommons.odu.edu/ots_masters_projects/114

This Master's Project is brought to you for free and open access by the STEM Education & Professional Studies at ODU Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in OTS Master's Level Projects & Papers by an authorized administrator of ODU Digital Commons. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@odu.edu.

Effects of the Workbook God's Way to an A on Students Grade Point

Averages

**A Research Project Presented to the Graduate Faculty of the Department of
Occupational and Technical Studies
Old Dominion University**

**In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Masters of Science in
Occupational and Technical Studies**

By

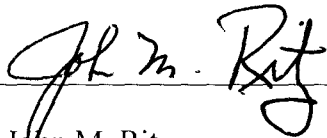
Donna Koson

December 2006

SIGNATURE PAGE

Donna Koson prepared this research project under the direction of Dr. John M. Ritz in OTED 636, Problems in Occupational and Technical Studies, at Old Dominion University. It was submitted to the Graduate Program Director as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in Occupational and Technical Studies.

Approved by



Date

12-12-06

John M. Ritz
Research Advisor and
Graduate Program Director,
Occupational and Technical Studies
Old Dominion University

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
SIGNATURE PAGE	ii
TABLE OF TABLES	iv
CHAPTER I - INTRODUCTION	1
Introduction	1
Statement of the Problem	2
Hypothesis	3
Background and Significance	3
Limitations.....	4
Assumptions	5
Procedures	5
Definition of Terms	6
Overview of Chapters.....	7
CHAPTER II - REVIEW OF LITERATURE	8
Freshman Orientation at Palm Beach Atlantic University	8
God’s Way to an A.....	10
Influence of Religion on Academics	15
Summary.....	18
CHAPTER III - METHODS AND PROCEDURES	20
Population.....	20
Research Variables	20
Methods of Data Collection.....	21
Statistical Analysis	21
Summary.....	22
CHAPTER IV - FINDINGS	23
Data.....	23
Results	24
Summary.....	25
CHAPTER V - SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS	26
Summary.....	26
Conclusions	27
Recommendations	28
REFERENCES	31
APPENDICES	32
APPENDIX A- Grade Point Averages for GWTA	32
APPENDIX B- Grade Point Averages for Non GWTA.....	33
APPENDIX C-Table of Critical Values for t.....	34

TABLE OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1: Mean GPA	24
Table 2: Comparison of Populations at the .05 Level of Significance	24

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many students desire to further their education beyond high school to become proficient in the areas they choose to study. One way to determine the level of proficiency in a subject is to view the grade-point-average (GPA). The GPA shows a snapshot of the level of achievement that the student has obtained throughout his high school as well as college years. If a student wants to attend a university and pursue a bachelor and/or master's degree, the GPA is an important number viewed for university admittance.

The GPA is one of the factors that colleges and universities analyze to determine if a student is eligible for admittance. University and college admittance committees review hundreds of applications of students interested in being admitted to a specific program of study. With limited knowledge of the applicant, the admittance committees use the GPA and grade rank to help them in making these decisions (Tufariello, 1997). Once the student has been admitted to college, the GPA continues to be important as it is a measurement linked with academic achievement. At many colleges and universities if the GPA falls below a certain number, the student is considered on 'academic probation'. For those pursuing master's degrees, many universities do not allow graduate student's GPAs to fall below a 3.0. These students may be placed on probation and suspended if grades do not improve.

There are many factors that work together in a student achieving proficiency or academic success in college as measured by the GPA. One of the factors that needs further research is a person's religious beliefs and faith in God. How does God play into

the person's academic success? This paper discusses a workbook that was written to help Christian students focus on their academics within the perspective of God guiding all aspects of a Christian's life including academics. The writer of the workbook assumes that the person reading it does have faith in God or considers him- or her-self a Christian. The workbook points out that God wants to be part of the student's learning process to help him achieve his educational goals. This perspective on faith in God and Christianity ultimately leads to academic success and achievement or improvement in ones grades and grade point averages. The workbook used in this study is called "God's Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics" (GWTA).

Palm Beach Atlantic University incorporated the workbook GWTA in one section of their freshman orientation course during the fall semester of 2004. The students had a choice between studying the workbook GWTA, Career Development, or Leadership Development during the latter portion of the freshman orientation course. This study compares the group of students that chose the GWTA track of the freshman orientation course to the group of students that chose either the Career Development or the Leadership Development track.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The problem of this study was to determine the effect of the workbook, "God's Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics," on academic achievement as measured by the grade point averages of students in a freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University.

HYPOTHESIS

The following hypothesis was developed to guide this study:

H₁: Students at Palm Beach Atlantic University, after taking the freshman orientation course that included the study of the workbook, "Gods Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics," during the Fall 2004 semester, will have higher cumulative grade point averages at the end of the Spring 2005 semester than those students that took the freshman orientation course but studied Career Development or Leadership Development.

BACKGROUND AND SIGNIFICANCE

The workbook was designed and written by Veronica Karaman while studying for her master's degree at Regent University. She wanted to know how or if devotion to God made a difference in the academic process. She wrote and developed a workbook as her master's thesis. It was created out of her own struggles with her academics during her graduate studies. After developing the workbook GWTA, she started working with students of all ages to help them focus on devotion to God as a way of gaining academic achievement. The testimonials received by Ms. Karaman from her students share how the information in the workbook has impacted their spiritual walk, perspective on their academics, and improved their grades (Karaman, 1999; Karaman, 2005; Karaman, 2006). The testimonials indicate that there is a positive influence in studying the workbook and academic achievement.

In the fall of 2004, Karaman had an opportunity to have her workbook integrated into a freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University (PBAU) in Palm

Beach, Florida. This was the first time the GWTA workbook was implemented at a university as part of a freshman orientation course. Having this opportunity through PBAU gave the researcher an opportunity to complete a preliminary study of the impact of the workbook on academic achievement as measured by the GPA. Although testimonials received suggest that there is a positive influence and impact on academic achievement after completing the workbook, there has been no formal research to statistically prove that there is an impact. In addition, there has been limited research completed on the impact of faith and religion on academic achievement as measured by GPA. Determining statistically if there is an impact in students GPAs after completing a workbook specifically developed to raise students' awareness of their faith and how it interrelates with their studies is significant to the current body of knowledge that exists about this topic. This research is to determine if the factor of faith in God, measured through the completion of the workbook GWTA, effects academic achievement as measured by GPA.

LIMITATIONS

The following were limitations of the research.

1. The study was limited to students taking the freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University in Palm Beach, Florida.
2. The author of GWTA and the researcher did not teach and were not present for the classes at PBAU and therefore did not know how the information was specifically taught to the students.
3. The study population was limited to traditional freshman students at Palm Beach

Atlantic University admitted for the fall semester of 2004.

4. The study was limited to the Spring 2005 cumulative GPA for the control group and the experimental groups.

ASSUMPTIONS

The following were assumptions to this research:

1. Students were required to complete the Freshman Orientation Course but voluntarily signed up for one of the three tracks that were offered at Palm Beach Atlantic University.
2. The effort and abilities of the students varied among the participants.
3. The classroom was equipped with appropriate training aids and equipment.
4. All classes in the GWTA track were taught similarly in format and followed the information in the workbook.
5. The students in the GWTA track were considered to be practicing Christians.
6. An increase in the students GPA may not be due to the study of the workbook.

PROCEDURES

A group of freshman enrolled at Palm Beach Atlantic University that completed the required freshman orientation course was used for the study. The orientation course offered three different tracks during the fall semester of 2004. The three choices were Career Development, Leadership Development, and "God's Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics." The students chose which track they wanted to take. The students taking the GWTA track of the freshman orientation course were the

experimental group, while the students that took the other tracks were the control group.

The researcher collected the cumulative GPAs for each student in the freshman orientation course for the Spring 2005 semester. The cumulative GPAs included grades from the courses students completed during the Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 semester. The cumulative GPAs collected for the group of students that went through the GWTA track was then compared to those who chose the Career Development or Leadership Development tracks. The goal was to determine if the GWTA track made any impact on the students' academic achievement as measured by GPA.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

Below is a list of terms specific to this research.

1. **GPA-** a term used to describe the accumulation of grades of students from one year to the next on a 4 point scale which results in a final average at the end of the school tenure. The grade-point-average used was actual school data and a cumulative number (included both Fall 2004 and Spring 2005 courses completed by the students).
2. **GWTA-** The workbook, "God's Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics". This workbook helps students to integrate their faith into their academics and helps students realize that God is in control of their entire life.
3. **Christian-** the term used to define a person that has a personal relationship with Jesus Christ; Christ is their Lord and Savior.
4. **Faith-** believing God's Word and obeying His commandments.
5. **PBAU-** Palm Beach Atlantic University.

OVERVIEW OF CHAPTERS

This study sought to determine if students taking the freshman orientation course that included the study of the workbook GWTA positively impacted academic achievement as measured by grade point average. Chapter I of this study introduced the reader to the problem area, presented background information, and provided information in support of its significance to the current existing body of research. The procedures for conducting the study and the limitations and assumptions that must be acknowledged when analyzing this study were also presented.

Chapter II is the Review of Literature pertaining to the study. The review included information about freshman orientations, the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” and the influence of religion on academics. Chapter III documents the methods and procedures used to conduct the study, including a description of the population, the procedures for collecting the data, the research variables, and the analysis process. Finally, Chapter IV and V present the findings and results of the research, provides a summary and conclusions, and offers some recommendations for further research in the problem area.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The goal of this study was to determine if a group of freshman college students completing the Fall 2004 freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University that included the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” had a positive impact on their academics as measured by their grade point averages. The researcher collected the cumulative GPAs for the Spring 2005 semester of the experimental group and the control group. The workbook provided information on one’s faith in God and how it relates to academics. This chapter describes the freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University for Fall of 2004, the workbook, “God’s Way to an A,” and the influence of religion on academics.

FRESHMAN ORIENTATION AT PALM BEACH ATLANTIC

Research has indicated that the first few weeks are the most important for the freshman student in the transition to college life (Pascarella, 1992). Pascarella and Terenzini (1992) went on further to state that “the initial encounters with the institution and its people can have profound effects on subsequent levels of involvement and aspirations for intellectual achievement” (p. 4). According to Feldman (2005), a college or university that readily welcomes the student, is supportive of excellence in teaching, depth in learning, as well as providing opportunities to gain strong and supportive relationships with peers and instructors, is an ideal environment for the college student’s first year of study. In order to accomplish this type of environment many universities have freshman orientation courses, workshops, or seminars for their incoming freshman

students. Along with helping to provide a welcoming environment, freshman orientation programs should be designed to help students make a successful transition from high school to the college environment (Cohen & Jody, 1978). According to Cohen and Jody (1978), students “need someone knowledgeable and trustworthy who can help them decipher and process the information they require to make intelligent choices” (p. 5). In addition, students’ college years are a time of growth and development, particularly in the areas of learning and cognition (Feldman, 2005). There is also indication that the freshman year is “a time of potentially important changes in the ways students learn to think and what they come to know” (Feldman, 2005, p. 111). With this in mind, it is important for colleges and universities to put in place courses, seminars, and activities during the freshman year that will ultimately help the student succeed in college.

According to Cohen and Jody (1978), the ultimate goal of the freshman seminar is an attitude change for the student. The student needs to see themselves as an active participant in their learning and education, not just a passive recipient (Cohen & Jodi, 1978). This attitude of active learning is brought about by the instructor helping students realize their skills and accomplishments and guiding the students to use their skills and accomplishments adaptively to succeed in college (Cohen & Jody, 1978). Other areas of content to consider for a freshman seminar includes information pertaining to policies, procedures and scholastic skills such as listening, note taking, studying, preparation, and participation (Cohen & Jody, 1978). Decision making and time management are still other skills that should be considered as part of a freshman orientation course (Cohen & Jody, 1978). All are relevant concepts to consider.

PBAU has established a freshman orientation course to help students transition to

college life. It is a required course for all incoming freshman students. Items included in the seminar include the history of the university, policies and procedures, time management, and Christian living and learning. These topics are covered during the first half of the semester. During the course the students explore and learn about issues that are relevant to new students in a college environment. The freshman orientation course is offered as a one credit course and is scheduled during the fall semester. The students are expected to participate in the reading and discussions and complete the assignments. During the latter portion of the course, a specific study is completed. For the Fall 2004 semester, the students had a choice of three tracks: Career Development, Leadership Development, and “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics”.

GODS WAY TO AN A

“God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” is a workbook, or study guide, for students to deepen their relationship to God and learn how He helps them in their academic pursuits. Its purpose is to explain things such as: 1) How a relationship with God relates to academics, 2) How specifically to integrate faith and learning, and 3) How to experience God’s love in learning (Karaman, 1999). The workbook is designed to be completed in a seven week timeframe with five lessons per week. Throughout the seven weeks, various topics are developed and scripture is assigned to read and memorize. The seven chapters are:

1. Learning is a Partnership with God,
2. God is Your Source of Wisdom,
3. God Desires to Give You Wisdom,

4. The Fear of the Lord is the Beginning of Wisdom,
5. God's Heart is to Fellowship with You,
6. The Holy Spirit Will Empower You in Your Studies, and
7. God Offers You the Gift of His Grace (Karaman, 1999).

The workbook is written under the assumption that the person studying it is a Christian.

The first chapter of GWTA points out that a Christian's view on learning should be one of a partnership between God and the student and that there should be no distinction between secular and sacred work as God is over all of the students' activities (Karaman, 1999). Since Christ or God is over all aspects of a Christian's life, there should not be a distinction between secular and sacred activities. Sherman and Hendricks (1987) disclose that many Christians believe there are two worlds that they live: one of work and one of religion. Although Sherman and Hendricks (1987) write about work and careers in their book, the concept can be compared to students attending college as the student's 'work' in his pursuit of obtaining an education and succeeding during college. Sherman and Hendricks (1987) state that,

Christ is Lord of all of life. If He is not, if He only presides over what we do on Sunday or at home, if He is only an ideal, if Jesus is merely a name in a book we read to our children - then He really isn't our Lord at all. He doesn't really matter in what matters most to most of us: our work (p. 22).

They go on to say, "We must bring the entirety of our lives back together under Him" (Sherman & Hendricks, 1987, p. 22). This same philosophy of bringing Christ into the entirety of a Christian's life is the same philosophy that is presented in the workbook GWTA. Warren (2002) expresses the same philosophy this way, "He wants to be part of

every activity, every conversation, every problem and even every thought” (p. 87). We are to give God “all of our soul, heart and strength” (Warren, 2002, p. 100). When a Christian brings all of their actions, thoughts, and desires under the Lordship of God, and realizes that God is over them all, including academics, a different mind set and attitude is achieved and God can work in and through and within the Christian.

The second chapter of GWTA explains the dynamic concept of God being the Christian students’ source of wisdom (Karaman, 1999). The chapter also goes into academics as being a way to worship God (Karaman, 1999). Karaman (1999) states that our learning begins with realizing that God is “our source of wisdom, knowledge, understanding and insight” (p. 38), that “The process of integrating our faith and learning is to realize that it is a God-centered process” (p. 38), and that “Our learning becomes a partnership when the focus is on God’s ability working in and through the student’s ability” (p. 38).

On the topic of worship, Karaman (1999) points out that learning and the realm of academics is a way to worship God. She then goes on to say that when we worship God we are to “come in honesty and humility, acknowledging our weaknesses, pride and inadequacies” (p. 47). Warren (2002) says that bringing all of our life under God’s authority and surrendering our life to him is the heart of worship. When Christians give their lives completely over to God and worship, it brings God pleasure (Warren, 2002). Karaman (1999) explains that, “We worship God by making offerings to Him from our heart” (p. 43). In order to worship wholeheartedly, it requires faith. God is pleased by his people’s faith and rewards the faithful and trustworthy (Karaman, 1999). She goes on to state that,

Every test you take, every assignment you do, every book you read is to be done as unto the Lord, not just because your teacher assigned it, or your parents will discipline you if you don't do it, or you'll lose your eligibility to play sports if you don't keep up your GPA (p. 44).

She continues on saying that, "God's standard is wholeheartedness, not excellence. Wholeheartedness will produce excellence, but God wants to be placed first in this process" (p. 44).

The main point of Chapter 3 is that God desires to give the student wisdom if they seek after it humbly. In order to receive God's wisdom, one has to be desirous of it, have a pure heart, and ask for it through prayer with a believing heart free from doubt (Karaman, 1999). Karaman (1999) states that receiving God's wisdom is "not based on how smart or ignorant you are but based on the desire of your heart to serve God and to follow His will in your life. God gives His wisdom to people to accomplish His work" (p. 71). God's wisdom comes to a Christian who is free from self-sufficiency, independence and pride (Karaman, 1999). God wants the Christian to have total dependence upon Him (Karaman, 1999). Karaman (1999) reveals that this dependence and humility create a capacity to receive from God.

Chapter 4 points out the dynamic of the fear of the Lord as the beginning of wisdom and that a student who fears God honors Him, relies on Him, and walks in confidence (Karaman, 1999). Fearing God includes a person's love, loyalty, and worship and is "the guiding principal for every aspect of life." (Karaman, 1999, p. 93) Fearing the Lord helps the Christian to honor and rely on God as the source of everything the Christian needs in order to walk in fellowship with Him. Fearing the Lord is knowing

that he is in control of everything and from that comes the desire to honor Him. Honoring Him can be done through being obedient to him, doing the right thing, and making the right decisions no matter the cost (Karaman, 1999).

Chapter 5 is the pivotal chapter in the workbook according to Karaman (1999), and relates the dynamic concept that God loves the believer and wants fellowship with him. In other words, he wants to be your best friend (Warren, 2002). When we have conversations with God in the form of prayer and we meditate on his word, we become God's friend (Warren, 2002). Once a Christian knows that God loves him the motivation of doing things is no longer self centered but love centered and love is the way to excellence (Karaman, 1999). According to the Bible in Matthew 22:37-40, Jesus speaks,

You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all our soul, and with all your mind. This is the great and foremost commandment. The second is like it. You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend the whole Law and the Prophets (Matthew 22:33-37, New American Standard, p. 1299).

When a student loves God in his studies, the focus is to do the work for His pleasure (Karaman, 1999). Karaman (1999) states that "When you love God in your studies, regardless of the grade, the work will be eternal" (p. 126).

Ann Graham Lotz (2006) writes that when you love others you want to do things for them. When a student's motivation is love, he will also want to love others and do things for others. The question for students to ask themselves is, "How do I complete the assignments in such a way as to love God and my fellow students and professors, thereby fulfilling the higher law of love?" (Karaman, 1999, p. 131). Ways of showing love and

blessing to the professor includes being respectful, showing up on time, and doing assignments accurately (Karaman, 1999).

Chapter 6 covers the dynamic that the Holy Spirit will empower you in your studies (Karaman, 1999). The Holy Spirit is a Christian's personal guidance counselor and is available to help the Christian in his weaknesses, teach truths and realities about Jesus Christ, and reveal God's will (Karaman, 1999). A Christian student integrating his faith and academics will rely on God and the power of the Holy Spirit to help him through his needs even when he does not know his needs.

The final chapter of the workbook proclaims the dynamics of God offering the gift of His grace (Karaman, 1999). Everything we receive in the form of divine help is a matter of divine grace (Karaman, 1999). Karaman (1999) writes, "We do not deserve the direction, assistance or revelation knowledge that God gives us. It is a gift" (p. 177). Coming to the end of our rope, it is then that the Christian realizes his need to rely on the grace of God for help. God gives us undeserved favor through his son Jesus Christ and realizing this, a Christian students' thoughts and actions should be to glorify God above all else and to give God the glory of what He is doing in the Christians life (Karaman, 1999). God is glorified when He is revealed for who He truly is through the daily living of the Christian's life (Karaman, 1999). When the student opens up his heart for God to come in and take charge, despite his GPA, God will be glorified in his life (Karaman, 1999).

INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON ACADEMICS

Of the research that has been conducted on religion and its impact on academics,

there has generally been found a positive influence with the connection between religious practices to educational achievement (Regnerus, 2001). It has also been found that youth who were involved in religious activities tended to do well in their academics (Regnerus, 2001). It was found that as a youth's involvement in academic activities increased, so did their academic progress (Regnerus, 2001). The reason for this positive link may be that "religion helps to reinforce the importance of staying in school, working hard to attain good grades and achieving a diploma" (Regnerus, 2001, p. 2). Regnerus completed a study in 2000 using data from the 1990 restricted-use edition of the High School Effectiveness Study, which is a subset of the National Educational Longitudinal Study of 1988. He attempted to determine a link between religious socialization and educational outcomes. The study sought to answer three questions, one of them being, "Does a student's participation in religious activities have any bearing on their educational expectations and academic performance?" (Regnerus, 2000, p. 363). Regnerus (2000) found that "youth church participation positively affects both educational aspiration and achievement" (p. 370).

In a second study by Regnerus in 2001, also using data from the National Longitudinal Study of Adolescent Health, he found a positive relationship between involvement in religious activities and academic performance (Regnerus, 2001). The second finding in the study was that church attendance helped youth stay on track in school (Regnerus, 2001). Staying on track includes maintaining a satisfactory GPA, completing homework assignments, graduating to the next grade level, getting along with classmates, refraining from skipping classes and refraining from disciplinary action (Regnerus, 2001). The study also indicated that church involvement helps youth in low

income neighborhoods progress in school more than youth in more affluent neighborhoods (Regnerus, 2001). This could be due to more competing activities in more affluent homes than in lower income neighborhoods (Regnerus, 2001).

Another study touching on religion and academics attempted to determine if there was a relationship between religious orientation and academic achievement among college bound high school seniors (Williams, 2002). The study used the 20 question Religion Orientation Scale (ROS) developed by Allport and Ross (Williams, 2002). The religious orientation scale measures Intrinsic Religiousness and Extrinsic Religiousness (Williams, 2002). One who scores high on the Extrinsic side “uses” religion while one who scores high on the Intrinsic is one who “lives” his religion (as cited in Williams, 2002, p. 31). The results of the study showed that there was a positive correlation between GPA and Intrinsic, or a genuine, religiousness (Williams, 2002). This positive relationship may suggest that the effort necessary to achieve academically is associated with an effort to live a genuine faith (Williams, 2002). The study also found that extrinsic religiousness, or a religiousness that is used to meet personal needs had a negative relationship with GPA (Williams, 2002). In addition, the study found that females’ religious orientation scores were higher than the males, indicating that females are more religious than males (Williams, 2002). Additionally, an ANOVA test completed on the data showed that religiousness did have a statistically significant effect on grade point average (Williams, 2002).

A fourth study completed on high school students examined the relative contributions of ego strength, faith involvement, and faith importance to the prediction of GPA (Freeman, 2001). Markstrom’s Psychosocial Inventory of Ego Strengths was used

in the study and included hope, will, purpose, competence, and fidelity (Freeman, 2001). Faith involvement is how often one participates in religious activities and faith importance is the level of importance placed on faith (Freeman, 2001). Freeman's findings indicated that those that participated in activities related to their faith and those who attributed more importance to their faith had higher ego strength scores and that the total ego strength variable is a significant predictor of students' GPAs (Freeman, 2001). This indicated that overall faith involvement and faith importance do play a role in predicting GPA. Freeman's study also showed that faith involvement contributed to the prediction of GPAs among both black and white females and among black males (Freeman, 2001). The difference in males and females and their religiousness compares to research by Donahue and Benson that found that females of all ages, from children, to young adults to older adults exhibit greater religiousness than males (as cited in Freeman, 2001).

SUMMARY

The review of literature focused on the importance of universities conducting freshman orientations, the concepts presented in the workbook GWTA, and the influence of religion on academics. Apparent from the review, freshman orientation seminars are used to help students transition from high school to college and are there to help provide information needed for the student to make decisions. Concepts in the workbook are dynamics about God and how he should be integrated into all of a Christian's life. It is also apparent from the review that religion does have a positive influence on academics. In Chapter III, the methods and procedures that the researcher used to determine if the

workbook GWTA had an impact on academic achievement as measured by GPA are presented.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This quasi-experimental type research problem sought to determine if the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” completed by students as part of the freshman orientation course would impact academic achievement as measured by the GPA, as compared to a control group that went through a different track of the freshman orientation course. This chapter includes information on the population, research variables, method of data collection, and the statistical analysis.

POPULATION

The population for this research consisted of freshman students that were enrolled in the freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University during the Fall 2004 semester. The freshman orientation course is a required course for all incoming students. At the time of registration, students were allowed to choose from three tracks that were offered: Career Development, Leadership Development, or “God’s Way to an A.” For the three tracks there were a total of 18 sections or classes. Six of the classes were dedicated to completing the workbook GWTA. The GWTA track had a total of 111 students, while the other two tracks had a total of 260 students. The students were both male and female between the ages of 18 to 20 and all were first year freshman students during the Fall 2004 semester.

RESEARCH VARIABLES

There were two variables considered for this research based on the hypothesis:

H₁: Students at Palm Beach Atlantic University after taking the freshman orientation course that included the study of the workbook, "Gods Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics," during the Fall 2004 semester, will have higher cumulative grade point averages at the end of the Spring 2005 semester than those students that took the freshman orientation course but studied Career Development or Leadership Development. The independent variable was the workbook GWTA or the other specific topics of the course sections: Career Development or Leadership Development. The dependent variable was the students cumulative GPA.

METHODS OF DATA COLLECTION

The researcher worked with Palm Beach Atlantic University Registrar's Office to obtain the cumulative GPAs of both the experimental group and the control group. At the end of the Spring 2005 semester, the cumulative GPA's were calculated by the University, compiled, and sent to the researcher. There was no student identification information, such as names or numbers, revealed.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

The cumulative GPAs were obtained for both the experimental and control group. The former group were those students who took the freshman orientation course that included the workbook GWTA. The latter group were those students who took the freshman orientation course but chose one of the other tracks, either Career Development or Leadership Development. The cumulative GPAs for each group were compared by the researcher to determine if there was a significant difference. A one tailed t-test was used

to analyze the data. The GPA of each student was the only data that was analyzed.

SUMMARY

This chapter, Methods and Procedures, defined the population that was used for this research. The chapter also included the research variables as well as the data collection and statistical analysis that were followed to complete the research. The results of this study will show whether completing the workbook GWTA impacts academic achievement as measured by GPAs of the students at Palm Beach Atlantic University. The findings of the research are discussed in the next chapter, Chapter IV.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to compare the Spring 2005 cumulative GPAs of a group of students that completed the freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University during the Fall 2004 semester. The comparison was between those students in the freshman orientation course that studied the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” to those students in the freshman orientation that studied Career Development or Leadership Development. This chapter presents the findings of the research conducted.

DATA

There was a total population of 371. Of that number, 108 were used for the experimental group and 250 were used for the control group. The numbers used for the study were lower than the total population because there were 10 from the control group and three from the experimental group that were discarded because there were no data. The population was divided into the experimental group and control group based on the orientation section chosen by the student. The lower number of students in the experimental group is due to there being three tracks or choices of the freshman orientation course. Approximately 30 percent of the population chose the “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” track, which was the experimental group. The other 70 percent of the population chose one of the other two tracks offered, which was the control group. Appendix A provides a listing of the cumulative GPAs for each student in the experimental group, while Appendix B provides a listing of the cumulative GPAs of the students in the control group.

RESULTS

The GPAs for each student in the control group and the experimental group were collected and the mean for each group was calculated. A single-tailed t-test was used to determine statistical significance between the results. The mean GPA for the experimental group was 3.05 and the mean GPA for the control group was 3.01. See Table 1 for the mean of each group.

Table 1. Mean GPA

Test Group	Population	Mean
Control Group	250	3.01
Experimental Group	108	3.05

The t-value for this study was .46 with a population size of 358. Using the degree of freedom of 356, at the .05 level of significance the critical t-value is 1.65. The results are indicated in Table 2. Refer to Appendix C for the table of critical values for t.

Table 2. Comparison of Populations at the .05 Level of Significance

Test Group	Population	Mean	Critical t-value	Study t-value
Experimental Group	108	3.05	p>1.65	t=.46
Control Group	250	3.01		

SUMMARY

This chapter presented the data collected during the study and the method of statistical analysis used to determine if there was a significant difference in the Spring 2005 semester GPA of the students who completed the workbook GWTA, versus those students who did not complete the GWTA workbook during the freshman orientation course at PBAU. The mean GPAs for both groups were compared and subjected to a single tailed t-test to determine statistical significance. In Chapter V, a summary of the method of data analysis, final conclusions based on statistical analysis of the findings, and recommendations for future studies will be presented.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this quasi-experimental study was to determine if there was a significant difference in the Spring 2005 semester cumulative GPAs of students that completed the freshman orientation class at Palm Beach Atlantic University (PBAU) during the fall of 2004 and studied the workbook, “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” (GWTA) compared to a group that studied Leadership Development or Career Development. This chapter summarizes the study, draws the conclusions based on the findings, and offers recommendations for further studies.

SUMMARY

The goal of the study was to determine if students who studied the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” that was included in the freshman orientation course at Palm Beach Atlantic University would have higher GPAs than those students that did not study the workbook during the freshman orientation during the fall of 2004. Earning high grades is important to many students who want to continue their education after high school, as grades impact a student's cumulative GPA and the GPA is used to determine college eligibility and entrance. The GPA continues to be important during the college years as it is a measurement used to determine how well someone has achieved his/her academic goals. While there are many factors impacting the GPA, this study focused on a person’s faith in God and how it impacts academic achievement. There have been few studies that have determined how Christianity and faith in God impacts academic achievement. The workbook GWTA is a study on

integrating a Christian's faith into their academics in order to achieve academic excellence. The students in the experimental group had the opportunity to study the workbook GWTA during a freshman orientation course held at PBAU.

This study was limited to freshman students who completed the freshman orientation course at PBAU during the Fall 2004 semester. During the orientation course, the students could choose from three tracks: "God's Way to An A: Encountering Christ in your Academics", Career Development, or Leadership Development. The Fall 2004 semester was the first year that the workbook GWTA was offered during the freshman orientation. Both the experimental group and control group classes were instructed by faculty at PBAU. The author of the workbook and the researcher were not able to attend the course. The students in both the control group and the experimental group were a random mix of male and female freshman students. The experimental group included those students that chose the orientation course that included the workbook GWTA. The control group included the students that chose one of the other tracks that were offered. Upon completion of the Spring 2005 semester the researcher obtained the cumulative GPA for each student that went through the freshman orientation course from PBAU. The mean for the control group and for the experimental group were determined. The researcher used a one-tailed t-test to determine if there was a significant difference between the GPA of the experimental group and the GPA of the control group. The conclusion on the resultant data follows.

CONCLUSIONS

The goal of the study was based upon the following hypothesis:

H₁: Students at Palm Beach Atlantic University after taking the freshman orientation course that included the study of the workbook, "Gods Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics," during the Fall 2004 semester, will have higher cumulative grade point averages at the end of the Spring 2005 semester than those students that took the freshman orientation course but studied Career Development or Leadership Development. The statistical analysis of the data collected for this study resulted in a t-value of .46. This value did not exceed the critical t-value of 1.65 at the .05 level of significance; therefore the hypothesis was rejected. The study showed that there was no significant difference in the cumulative GPA between experimental and control groups, indicating that there was no impact on academic achievement after completing the workbook. The two groups had only a very slight difference in the mean score. The control group had a mean score of 3.01 and the experimental group had a mean score of 3.05.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on these results the following recommendations are provided. Even though this study showed there was no difference in academic achievement as measured by GPA after studying the workbook GWTA, there is research that indicates that religion does have a positive impact on academics. As the information presented in the review of literature pointed out, religious attendance and involvement has a positive influence in academics and GPA. In addition, studies have not separated out Christianity as compared to other religions and determined Christianity's impact on academics, showing that more research needs to be completed in this area.

This study was limited to obtaining the GPAs for only the Spring 2005 semester. Not enough time may have elapsed between studying the workbook and allowing it to impact academics. A longitudinal study following the population through their college years and capturing GPAs at specific intervals until graduation might prove to be better data. In addition, capturing GPAs before completing the workbook and capturing GPAs after completing the workbook might show a difference. Future research in this area should also consider other measures of academic success.

It was assumed that the person studying the workbook was indeed a Christian. Since specific data were not collected on the population, the researcher did not know if all of the students were Christians. The researcher also did not determine if the students had a true genuine faith. Future studies should capture additional information on the population, including their religion, faith involvement, and faith importance. Future studies should also include socio-economic, background and demographic information on the participants. All of the information could be captured in a survey and research completed to determine if there are any significant relationships among the demographic, socio-economic, and background data and academic achievement before and after completing the workbook.

Information in the workbook defined and described how to integrate Christ in the academic process and determined that God and Christ oversee all of a Christian's life. The information presented in the workbook may impact a person's attitude towards academic achievement and study habits. A future research study should include the collecting of information on the different attitudes of the participants towards academics

before and after completing the workbook to determine if there is an impact on the attitudes of the participants towards academic achievement and study habits.

Finally and most importantly, the researcher recommends that future studies be conducted by other researchers. This researcher believes that there may be some validity to faith and academic achievement. In addition, the researcher believes that studying the workbook “God’s Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics” could have an impact on a person’s academic success.

REFERENCES

- Cohen, R. D., & Jody, R. (1978). *Freshman Seminar: A New Orientation*. Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press.
- Donahue, M.J and Benson, P.L. (1995). Religion and the Well-Being of Adolescents. *Journal of Social Issues*, 51(2), 145-160.
- Feldman, R. S. (Ed.). (2005). *Improving the First Year of College: Research and Practice*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, Inc.
- Freeman, D. M. (2001). *The Contribution of Faith and Ego Strength to the Prediction of GPA among High School Students*. Unpublished Doctorate of Philosophy in Human Development, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University.
- Karaman, V. (2006). *Veronica Karaman Ministries*. Retrieved October 24, 2006, from <http://www.vkm.org/>
- Karaman, V. (2005). *AcademicChampion*. Retrieved October 24, 2006, from <http://home.regent.edu/verokar/home.htm>
- Karaman, V. (1999). *God's Way to an A: Encountering Christ in Your Academics* (revised edition ed.). Virginia Beach, Virginia: Veronica Karaman Ministries, Inc.
- Pascarella, E., & Terenzini, P. (1992). Designing Colleges for Greater Learning. *Planning for Higher Education*, 20 (3), 1-2-6.
- Regnerus, M. (2001). *Making the Grade: The Influence of Religion Upon the Academic Performance of Youth in Disadvantaged Communities*. Unpublished manuscript.
- Regnerus, M. D. (2000). Shaping Schooling Success: Religious Socialization and Educational Outcomes in Metropolitan Public Schools. *Journal for the Scientific Study of Religion*, 39(3), 363-370.
- Sherman, D., & Hendricks, W. (1987). *Your Work Matters to God*. Colorado Springs, CO: Navpress.
- Tufariello, A. H. (1997). *Up Your Grades: Proven Strategies for Academic Success*. Lincolnwood (Chicago), IL: VGM Career Horizons.
- Warren, R. (2002). *The Purpose Driven Life: What on Earth am I Here For?*. Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan.
- Williams, K. P. (2002). *The Soul of Scholarship: The Relationship Between Academic Achievement and Religious Orientation of College-Bound High School Seniors*. Unpublished Doctor of Education, University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

**APPENDIX A
GRADE POINT AVERAGES FOR GWTA**

#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA
1	4.00	41	3.39	81	2.67
2	4.00	42	3.36	82	2.64
3	4.00	43	3.36	83	2.63
4	4.00	44	3.33	84	2.60
5	4.00	45	3.33	85	2.56
6	4.00	46	3.33	86	2.50
7	3.98	47	3.31	87	2.45
8	3.94	48	3.31	88	2.40
9	3.94	49	3.31	89	2.38
10	3.93	50	3.29	90	2.36
11	3.93	51	3.28	91	2.35
12	3.92	52	3.28	92	2.33
13	3.80	53	3.28	93	2.31
14	3.80	54	3.27	94	2.31
15	3.79	55	3.23	95	2.23
16	3.76	56	3.19	96	2.17
17	3.76	57	3.18	97	2.13
18	3.76	58	3.17	98	2.07
19	3.75	59	3.15	99	2.00
20	3.75	60	3.13	100	1.93
21	3.73	61	3.10	101	1.67
22	3.72	62	3.07	102	1.50
23	3.69	63	3.06	103	1.43
24	3.67	64	3.06	104	1.37
25	3.65	65	3.06	105	1.20
26	3.64	66	3.03	106	0.96
27	3.63	67	3.00	107	0.56
28	3.62	68	3.00	108	0.50
29	3.60	69	3.00	109	0.00
30	3.60	70	3.00	110	0.00
31	3.58	71	2.96	111	0.00
32	3.50	72	2.92		
33	3.50	73	2.88		
34	3.48	74	2.86		
35	3.47	75	2.78		
36	3.46	76	2.69		
37	3.46	77	2.69		
38	3.44	78	2.67		
39	3.42	79	2.67		
40	3.39	80	2.67		

APPENDIX B
GRADE POINT AVERAGES FOR NON GWTA

#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA	#	GPA
1	4.00	42	3.75	83	3.44	124	3.17	165	2.83	206	2.43	247	0.71
2	4.00	43	3.75	84	3.44	125	3.14	166	2.83	207	2.39	248	0.34
3	4.00	44	3.74	85	3.44	126	3.14	167	2.80	208	2.35	249	0.17
4	4.00	45	3.73	86	3.42	127	3.13	168	2.80	209	2.35	250	0.13
5	4.00	46	3.70	87	3.41	128	3.13	169	2.79	210	2.33	251	0.00
6	3.95	47	3.70	88	3.41	129	3.13	170	2.77	211	2.33	252	0.00
7	3.95	48	3.69	89	3.41	130	3.13	171	2.76	212	2.31	253	0.00
8	3.95	49	3.69	90	3.40	131	3.12	172	2.76	213	2.31	254	0.00
9	3.94	50	3.69	91	3.40	132	3.12	173	2.75	214	2.30	255	0.00
10	3.94	51	3.67	92	3.39	133	3.10	174	2.73	215	2.28	256	0.00
11	3.94	52	3.65	93	3.38	134	3.08	175	2.72	216	2.27	257	0.00
12	3.94	53	3.65	94	3.38	135	3.07	176	2.71	217	2.27	258	0.00
13	3.94	54	3.64	95	3.34	136	3.07	177	2.71	218	2.21	259	0.00
14	3.93	55	3.64	96	3.34	137	3.06	178	2.70	219	2.15	260	0.00
15	3.93	56	3.63	97	3.33	138	3.05	179	2.67	220	2.15		
16	3.93	57	3.61	98	3.33	139	3.00	180	2.67	221	2.12		
17	3.92	58	3.61	99	3.33	140	3.00	181	2.67	222	2.12		
18	3.90	59	3.60	100	3.33	141	3.00	182	2.67	223	2.11		
19	3.89	60	3.60	101	3.33	142	3.00	183	2.67	224	2.11		
20	3.89	61	3.58	102	3.31	143	3.00	184	2.67	225	2.07		
21	3.89	62	3.58	103	3.31	144	3.00	185	2.67	226	2.06		
22	3.88	63	3.57	104	3.31	145	3.00	186	2.67	227	2.00		
23	3.88	64	3.57	105	3.31	146	2.94	187	2.63	228	2.00		
24	3.87	65	3.56	106	3.31	147	2.94	188	2.63	229	1.93		
25	3.87	66	3.56	107	3.29	148	2.94	189	2.60	230	1.93		
26	3.87	67	3.56	108	3.27	149	2.94	190	2.60	231	1.93		
27	3.87	68	3.56	109	3.25	150	2.94	191	2.59	232	1.88		
28	3.87	69	3.56	110	3.25	151	2.93	192	2.56	233	1.85		
29	3.86	70	3.56	111	3.24	152	2.92	193	2.55	234	1.85		
30	3.83	71	3.56	112	3.24	153	2.92	194	2.54	235	1.83		
31	3.83	72	3.53	113	3.24	154	2.92	195	2.53	236	1.57		
32	3.82	73	3.50	114	3.24	155	2.91	196	2.52	237	1.51		
33	3.82	74	3.50	115	3.23	156	2.91	197	2.50	238	1.50		
34	3.82	75	3.50	116	3.22	157	2.90	198	2.50	239	1.46		
35	3.81	76	3.49	117	3.20	158	2.89	199	2.47	240	1.36		
36	3.80	77	3.47	118	3.20	159	2.87	200	2.47	241	1.33		
37	3.80	78	3.47	119	3.19	160	2.85	201	2.47	242	1.23		
38	3.80	79	3.47	120	3.19	161	2.85	202	2.46	243	1.12		
39	3.80	80	3.45	121	3.19	162	2.85	203	2.45	244	1.09		
40	3.76	81	3.45	122	3.19	163	2.84	204	2.44	245	0.94		
41	3.75	82	3.44	123	3.18	164	2.83	205	2.43	246	0.85		

APPENDIX C
Table of Critical Values for t
One-tailed Significance

Degree of Freedom	.05	.025	.01	.005	.0005
90	1.662	1.987	2.368	2.632	3.402
100	1.66	1.984	2.364	2.626	3.39
120	1.658	1.98	2.358	2.617	3.373
140	1.656	1.977	2.353	2.611	3.361
150	1.655	1.976	2.351	2.609	3.357
200	1.653	1.972	2.345	2.601	3.34
250	1.651	1.969	2.341	2.596	3.33
300	1.65	1.968	2.339	2.592	3.323
350	1.649	1.967	2.337	2.59	3.319
356	1.649	1.967	2.337	2.59	3.318
400	1.649	1.966	2.336	2.588	3.315
450	1.648	1.965	2.335	2.587	3.315
500	1.648	1.965	2.334	2.586	3.31
1000	1.645	1.960	2.326	2.576	3.291
Infinity	1.645	1.960	2.326	2.576	3.291