

Distinguishing between Exogenous and Endogenous Intent-to-Transfer Students

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Abstract

In this article, we distinguish between two types of students who intend to transfer and graduate from another institution. During the fall of 2006, 507 first-semester students attending a state university completed a survey. Seventy-six percent of the students indicated that they planned on graduating from the University (intent-to-persist), 16% indicated that they intended to transfer and that this intention emerged following enrollment at the University (endogenous intent-to-transfer), and 8% indicated that they entered the University with the intent to transfer (exogenous intent-to-transfer). Exogenous intent-to-transfer students were significantly ($p < .05$) higher than endogenous intent-to-transfer students on academic integration, social integration, and institutional commitment. The two types of intent to transfer students differed in their economic, social, and quality of academic program reasons for enrolling at and transferring from the University. Implications for retention of making the distinction between the two types of intended transfer students were noted.

Distinguishing between Exogenous and Endogenous Intent-to-Transfer Students

Researchers studying student attrition have noted the importance of distinguishing among the different types of institutional departure, including stopping out, dropping out, and transferring to another college or university (Mallette & Cabrera, 1991; Okun, Ruehlman, & Karoly, 1991; Wintre, Bowers, Gordner, & Lange, 2006). In contrast to drop outs who leave a college and do not return, stop outs, after a temporary hiatus, re-enter and complete their degree (Woosley, 2003-2004). The present study is based on the premise that students who transfer from four-year colleges and universities are not a homogenous group. Almost all of the research on transferring by students entering four-year colleges and universities has focused on why students change their intention from staying to leaving. For example, Hermanowicz (2006-2007, p. 21) stated, "Leaving any college runs counter to both individual and institutional expectation. Students do not enroll in schools, and schools do not admit students, with the expectation of departure without a degree." In contrast, scant attention has been paid to the notion that some students enter four-year colleges and universities with the explicit intention of transferring to another institution (Whitely, 2002-2003).

Planned Attrition

In an interesting study conducted in Queensland Australia, Whiteley (2002-2003) challenged the notion that all students start a tertiary educational program with the goal of completing that program. In contrast to the United States system of higher education, the Australian system is highly selective and students are expected to declare their major at the time of enrollment. Thus, many students in Queensland Australia settle for a program of study that is not their most preferred option. Some of these students may aspire to transfer within the university to their most preferred program of study or to migrate to

another university where they can pursue their most preferred program of study or a different program of study.

In a study of over 4,000 first-year students attending one of eight public universities, Whiteley (2002-2003) found that 82 percent of the students intended to complete the degree program in which they were currently enrolled, 1 percent were uncertain as to whether they would complete their current program of study, and 17 percent did not plan to finish their current degree. Students who did not plan to finish their current program were asked to provide their reasons for the intended program termination. A total of 1,104 reasons were generated by 775 students. Of greatest interest to the present study, 313 reasons were related to enrolling in a different program at a different university and another 108 reasons pertained to enrolling in the same program at a different university. Thus, 38 percent of the reasons given by first-year students for not intending to complete the current program of study involved plans to transfer to another university. Whiteley (2002-2003) referred to the phenomenon of entering a holding pattern at a university with the intention of enrolling at another institution in the future after obtaining good grades as *parking*.

Purpose of the Present Study

In the present study, we refer to first-year students who enter a university with the intent to transfer as *exogenous* intent-to-transfer students and we refer to first-year students who shift their intention from persisting to transferring after an initial set of experiences in the university environment as *endogenous* intent-to-transfer students. In this context, the term “exogenous” is used to denote students who formed an intent to transfer independent of their experiences within the university environment and the term “endogenous” is used to denote students who formed an intent to transfer intent as part of

their reactions to experiences within the university environment. The purpose of this study was to compare exogenous intent-to-transfer intenders, endogenous intent-to-transfer intenders, and intended persisters (students who intend to stay and graduate from a university) on variables derived from Tinto's (1975; 1987) conceptual framework. In addition, we explored via open-ended questions, differences between exogenous and endogenous intended transfer students on the reasons they give for enrolling at and departing from a university.

Tinto's Model of Student Departure

Prior to Tinto's (1975) seminal review of the literature, numerous studies of college student departure had been conducted. However, Tinto provided a theoretical framework for integrating the many seemingly disconnected set of findings. According to Tinto (1987), attrition involves a process in which background variables influence students' initial intentions and commitments to goals and to the institution. Initial intentions and commitments, in turn, are viewed as the antecedents of the types of experiences that students have in both the informal and formal aspects of the academic and social systems of the institution. These interactions, in turn, are posited to be determinants of whether students become academically and socially integrated into the institution, which together with external commitments influence subsequent intentions and commitments. These subsequent intentions and commitments are proposed to be the most proximal determinants of the departure decision. In the Tinto model, intentions and goal- and institutional commitments are conceptualized to be the *individual* roots of departure, whereas academic and social integration are posited to be the *interactional* roots of departure

Intentions. In the Tinto model, intentions refer to the content of the occupational and educational goals that students possess. Students enter the institution with different types of intentions, and these intentions may vary in their specificity, stability, and clarity. These initial intentions are thought to be one factor that influences the types of experiences that students have in the institutional environment. For example, students who enter a university that is their top choice are more likely to intend to stay than students who enter a university that is not their top choice (Tinto, 1987). In turn, students with the intention of staying until graduation should be more likely to become socially embedded in the institution than students who enter a university with the intention of transferring (Okun & Finch, 1998). At the same time, the strength of students' intentions may degenerate (weaken) as they interact with the academic and social system of the institution. For example, lack of integration into the academic system of the institution increases the risk that students will shift their initial intention from staying to transferring (Pascarella, Duby, & Iverson, 1983).

Institutional and goal commitment. The constructs of institutional commitment and goal commitment comprise the other individual characteristics of the Tinto model. Goal commitment refers to students' commitment to their educational and occupational goals (Robbins, Allen, Casillas, Peterson, & Le, 2006). Institutional commitment refers to the student's commitment to the specific institution in which he or she is enrolled (Tinto, 1975). As institutional commitment increases, students are expected to become more socially integrated into the institution (Nora, Attinasi, & Matonak, 1990; Stage, 1989).

Academic and social integration. According to Pascarella and Terenzini (1991, p. 51): "The term *integration* can be understood to refer to the extent to which the

individual shares the normative attitudes and values of peers and faculty in the institution and abides by the formal and informal structural requirements for membership in that community or in the subgroups of which the individual is a part.” The social and academic systems that comprise the college environment have their own structures (Tinto, 1993). The academic system has both a formal component (grades) and an informal component (faculty/staff interactions). Similarly, the social system also has a formal component (extracurricular activities) and an informal component (peer group interactions).

As students become more academically and socially integrated into the institution, goal and institutional commitment should increase, and, in turn, the likelihood of premature departure should decrease (Cabrera, Castaneda, Nora, & Hengstler, 1992; Cabrera, Nora, & Castaneda, 1993). Tinto does not contend, however, that full integration in both systems of the college is necessary for persistence. Nor does he claim that failure to be integrated in either system necessarily leads to departure. Rather he proposes that some degree of social and intellectual integration must exist as a condition for persistence. Furthermore, a lack of integration in one system is a state that may be compensated for by a high level of integration in the other system (Pascarella, & Chapman, 1983; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1980).

Hypotheses

One purpose of the present study was to test hypotheses pertaining to differences among intended persisters, exogenous intended transfers, and endogenous intended transfers on the integration and commitment measures. With respect to the integration variables, we expected that students who intend to persist would be higher than both exogenous intent-to-transfer students and endogenous intent-to-transfer students.

Because they plan on leaving, exogenous intent-to-transfer students should invest less in becoming embedded in the institution than students who plan to persist. The shift in intention from stay to leave by endogenous intent-to-transfer students is posited to be a function of less integration into the academic and social system of the University, relative to students who plan to persist.

Using similar reasoning, we anticipated that students who intend to persist would be higher than both exogenous intent-to-transfer students and endogenous intent-to-transfer students on institutional commitment. Exogenous intent-to-transfer students are likely to have a low stake in the University and endogenous intent-to-transfer students are likely to be low in their commitment to the University as a function of their lack of embeddedness in the institution.

However, we proposed a different pattern of mean differences on goal commitment. On the one hand, at the time of entry into the University both endogenous intent-to-transfer students and students who intend to persist view the institution as providing a direct route for attaining their educational goal. On the other hand, at the time of entry into the University, exogenous intent-to-transfer students view the institution as providing an indirect route for attaining their educational goal. Their commitment to the goal pursuit process is likely to be comparatively strong for a number of reasons, including the possibility (1) that they have given more thought to the process owing to its multi-step nature, (2) that they have to be more forward looking and realistic in their expectations, (3) that, by attending a college from which that do not plan to graduate, they experience “cognitive dissonance” which is resolvable by enhancing their commitment to it, and (4) that having to attend a less preferred college prior to enrolling in one of higher preference makes the goal pursuit process more difficult, yielding

increased “energization” or arousal that, in turn, yields greater goal valuation (Wright & Brehm, 1989). Consequently we predicted that exogenous intended transfer students will score higher than endogenous intended transfer students and intended persisters on goal commitment.

Research Questions

Using open-ended data, we sought to determine whether exogenous and endogenous intent-to-transfer students differed in their reasons for attending the University and in their reasons for planning on leaving the University. Such comparisons could potentially provide insights into the dynamics that are associated with the two types of intended transfer students. In the study of students enrolled in tertiary education programs in Australia, Whiteley (2002-2003) found that relative to students who intended to complete their program of study, students intending to switch programs of study (and perhaps universities) were more likely to have enrolled in their initial program as a springboard for gaining entry to a preferred program. In the United States, it is possible that exogenous intent-to-transfer students enroll in some universities (such as state universities) for a similar reason-- that is, to build up their academic credentials. In addition, financial reasons may enter into the decision making of exogenous intent-to-transfer students because they can spend less money on their college education by starting out at a state university with relatively low tuition (Ishitani & DesJardins (2002-2003). With respect to reasons for planning to leave, endogenous intent-to-transfer students may be more likely than exogenous intent-to-transfer students to believe that they do not fit into the school in which they are currently enrolled, whereas exogenous intent-to-transfer students may be more likely to indicate that they simply desire to graduate from a more prestigious university.

Method

Preliminary Study

A preliminary study was conducted in the fall of 2005 by administering a survey to 245 first-year students attending the University. Students responded anonymously. The goal of this study was to develop University-specific scales for assessing the integration and commitment constructs among first-year students. Based upon a previous study conducted at the same University (Stage, 1989), 24 items from the Institutional Integration Scale (IIS) (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1983) were included as potential indicators of academic and social integration. These items came from four IIS subscales (Academic Development [7 items], Faculty Concerns [5 items], Informal Faculty Relations [5 items], and Peer-Group Relations [7 items]).

An exploratory factor analysis was conducted using Principal Axis factoring as the extraction method and Promax with Kaiser Normalization as the rotation method. The first two factors were labeled social and academic integration. The eigenvalues associated with these two factors were 6.35 and 2.62, respectively. Together, these two factors accounted for 33% of the variance. The loadings of the items on the social integration factor ranged from .70 to .85 and the loadings of the items on the academic integration factor ranged from .46 to .78. The cross-loadings ranged from -.04 to .27. The items that loaded on the academic integration and social integration factors are presented in Appendix A. The coefficient alphas for the academic integration and social integration scales were .82 and .85, respectively.

Six items from the Institutional and Goal Commitment subscale of the IIS and 10 items from the Attachment subscale of the College Adjustment Questionnaire (Baker & Syrik, 1986) were included as potential indicators of institutional and goal commitment.

Using the same methods of extraction and rotation, the first two factors were labeled institutional and goal commitment. The eigenvalues associated with these two factors were 4.93 and 2.14. Together, these two factors accounted for 44% of the variance. The loadings of the items on the institutional commitment factor ranged from .67 to .80 and the loadings of the items on the goal commitment factor ranged from .54 to .78. The cross-loadings ranged from .02 to .38. The items that loaded on the institutional commitment and goal commitment factors are presented in Appendix A. The coefficient alphas for the institutional commitment and goal commitment scales were .79 and .70, respectively.

Main Study

The University. The University in which the students in the present study were enrolled is one of the fastest growing multi-campus universities in the United States. The campus where the study was conducted has the nation's second largest single-campus combined enrollment of undergraduate (41,256) and graduate (10,356) students. According to the Carnegie classification system, the University is a Research I institution and according to the Shanghai Jiao Tong University's Institute of Higher Education, the University is among the 100 best universities in the world. In terms of number of National Merit scholars, the University is ranked in the top 10 nationally. The attrition rate for students from the first year to the second year in 2005 was 21.5 percent.

Participants. Five-hundred and forty-three students enrolled in a course designed to orient new students to the University environment participated in the study. Although not required, new students are urged to enroll in this course. Students were excluded from the study for the following reasons: (1) not classified as a first-year student and/or did not start the University in the fall of 2006 ($n = 25$), (2) intended to

drop out of college rather than to graduate from the University or to graduate from another university ($n = 1$), and (3) missing data ($n = 10$). Thus, our comparison of intended persisters, exogenous transfer intenders, and endogenous transfer intenders were based on 507 students.

The modal age of the students who participated in the study was 18-19 years old (95%). The percentage of male participants (53%) exceeded the percentage of female participants (47%). With respect to ethnicity, 73% of the participants reported that they were White-Non-Hispanic. Ten percent reported that they were Hispanic, 5% that they were African American, 4% that they were Asian American, and two percent that they were Native Americans. Finally, an additional 6% indicated that they belonged to two or more ethnic groups. The majority of the students (68%) were enrolled for 13 or more credit hours at the time of the study. Nineteen percent of the first-year students had attended another college prior to their enrollment at the University.

Procedures. The paper and pencil survey was administered to students between the ninth and twelfth week of the fall 2006 semester on a date convenient for the instructor. Students completed the survey anonymously as part of an in-class activity.

College intention. Students were asked whether 5 years from now, they would be (a) a college graduate from the University, (b) a college graduate from another university, or (c) a drop out of college.

Timing of intent to transfer. Students who intended to transfer were asked whether they entered the University with the intent to transfer or whether the intent to transfer emerged after they began taking classes at the University.

Why attend the University? Students who intended to transfer were asked an open-ended question regarding why they were currently attending the University, given

that they intended to transfer. The open-ended responses were coded after inter-coder reliability was established. Three members of the research team read 25 open-ended responses and then we developed a coding scheme. Next, each of the three coders independently coded 50 randomly selected protocols. The Kappas for the three pairs of coders ranged from .76 to .80.

Why transfer? Students who intended to transfer were asked why they thought it would be beneficial for them to graduate from another university given that they were currently enrolled at the University. The responses also were coded after inter-coder reliability was established. Again a coding scheme was developed after three members of the research team read 25 open-ended responses. Then, each of the three coders independently coded 50 randomly selected protocols. The Kappas for the three pairs of coders ranged from .77 to .88.

Social and academic integration. Social and academic integration were measured using the items listed in Appendix A. Students rated these 10 items on a 5-point scale with anchor points of “strongly disagree” (0) and “strongly agree” (4). Responses to the five items on each scale were averaged. Internal consistency reliability as estimated by coefficient alpha was .87 for social integration and .76 for academic integration.

Institutional and goal commitment. Institutional and goal commitment were measured using the items listed in Appendix A. Students rated these 7 items on a 5-point scale with anchor points of “doesn’t apply to me at all” (0) and “applies to me a great deal” (4). Responses to the four items on the institutional commitment scale were averaged as were the responses to the three items on the goal commitment scale. Internal consistency reliability as estimated by coefficient alpha was .88 for institutional commitment and .63 for goal commitment.

Results

Descriptive Analyses

College intention. Seventy-six percent of the students were intended persisters, 16% were endogenous intent-to-transfers, and 8% were exogenous intent-to-transfers. The mean for social integration ($M = 2.66$, $SD = 0.82$) was higher than the mean for academic integration ($M = 2.33$, $SD = 0.58$), $t(506) = 8.52$, $p < .001$. Students rated goal commitment ($M = 3.34$, $SD = 0.75$) higher than institutional commitment ($M = 2.83$, $SD = 1.07$), $t(506) = 10.42$, $p < .001$. The correlations between the integration and commitment scales were significant ($p < .01$) and positive, ranging from .14 (academic integration and goal commitment) to .35 (social integration and institutional commitment).

Why attend the University? Table 1 presents the percentage of intent-to-transfer students who indicated that each of the several reasons was a factor in their decision to attend the University. Three reasons were mentioned by more than 20% of the intended transfer students—close to home (28%), liked the University (26%), and preparation for transferring (24%).

Insert Table 1 about here

Why leave the University? Table 2 presents the percentage of intended transfer students who indicated that each of the several reasons was a factor in their plan to leave the University. Four reasons were mentioned by 20% or more of these students—(lack of) availability or quality of academic programs (31%), get closer to home (22%), (lack of) social integration (21%), and (lack of) prestige (20%).

Insert Table 2 about here

Inferential Analyses

The relations between college intention and integration and commitment. We computed a one-way MANOVA to examine the relations between College Intention (intent to persist, exogenous intent-to-transfer, and endogenous intent-to-transfer) and the four integration and commitment scales. The multivariate test was significant ($p < .001$), $F(4,502) = 109.95$, Roy's Largest Root = .88. Three of the univariate F tests were significant. College Intention had significant effects on social integration, $F(2, 504) = 10.35$, $p < .001$, academic integration, $F(2, 504) = 11.67$, $p < .001$, and institutional commitment, $F(2, 504) = 194.38$, $p < .001$. College intention did not exert a significant effect on goal commitment, $F(2, 504) = 0.71$, $p = .49$.

Table 3 presents the means and standard deviations by College Intention for the two integration variables and the two commitment variables. Tukey HSD tests were

Insert Table 3 about here

carried out to make pair-wise comparisons among the three types of college intention on the two integration variables and on institutional commitment. Intent to persist students and exogenous intent-to-transfer students had significantly ($p < .05$) higher academic and social integration scores than endogenous intent-to-transfer students. Intent to persist students had significantly ($p < .05$) higher institutional commitment scores than both types of intended transfer students. Exogenous intent-to-transfer students, in turn, had

significantly ($p < .05$) higher institutional commitment scores than endogenous intent-to-transfer students.

Type of intended transfer student and reasons for enrolling in and planning to leave the University. Exogenous and endogenous intent-to-transfer students were compared using χ^2 tests on reasons given for enrolling in and planning to leave the University (see Tables 1 and 2). Endogenous intent-to-transfer students (23%) were significantly more likely than their exogenous peers (8%) to state that they enrolled at the University for the social life, $\chi^2 (1, 117) = 3.86, p < .05$. There was a trend for endogenous transfer intenders (30%) to be more likely than exogenous transfer intenders (16%) to give “liked the University” as a reason for enrolling at this institution, $\chi^2 (1, 117) = 2.86, p < .10$. Endogenous transfer intenders (28%) were significantly more likely than their exogenous peers (9%) to indicate that they were planning to leave the University to get closer to home, $\chi^2 (1, 109) = 5.43, p < .05$. Also, there were trends for endogenous intent-to-transfer students to be more likely than exogenous intent-to-transfer students to state that they were planning to leave the University because of a lack of social integration (26% versus 11%), $\chi^2 (1, 109) = 2.90, p < .10$, and because they didn’t like it here (14% versus 3%), $\chi^2 (1, 109) = 2.97, p < .10$.

Exogenous intent-to-transfer students (37%) were more likely than endogenous intent-to-transfer students (8%) to state that they were attending the University for financial reasons, $\chi^2 (1, 117) = 15.49, p < .001$, and there was a trend for exogenous transfer intenders (14%) to be more likely than endogenous transfer intenders (4%) to give finances as a reason for planning to leave the university, $\chi^2 (1, 109) = 3.66, p < .10$. In addition, exogenous intent-to-transfer students (46%) were more likely than endogenous intent-to-transfer students (24%) to state that they were planning to leave the

University due to lack of availability or quality of the academic programs, $\chi^2(1, 109) = 5.06, p < .05$.

Discussion

More students leave their college or university prior to graduation than persist at their college or university until degree completion (Tinto, 1993). Transferring is a very prevalent and important form of institutional departure. It has been estimated that over 40% of students who initially enroll at a 4-year institution transfer to another institution prior to earning their baccalaureate degree (McCormick & Carroll, 1997).

The goal of the present study was to compare exogenous transfer intenders, endogenous transfer intenders, and students who intend to persist on academic and social integration and on institutional and goal commitment. In addition, using open-ended data, we examined similarities and differences between exogenous and endogenous intent-to-transfer students on why they enrolled at the University and why they planned on leaving the University.

Academic and social integration. Contrary to our expectations, exogenous intent-to-transfer students scored higher than endogenous intent-to-transfer students on academic integration and social integration. Recall that our qualitative data indicated that exogenous transfer intenders were more likely than endogenous intent-to-transfer students to state that economics played a role in their decision to attend their present University and that the lack of availability or quality of academic programs was a factor in their plan to transfer. Because of their *a priori* goal of transferring to another university, exogenous transfer intenders may be motivated to engage in social and academic activities that would increase their embeddedness in the University and that, in turn, might increase their likelihood of doing well. Our qualitative data also indicate that

endogenous intent-to-transfer students, relative to exogenous intent-to-transfer students were more likely to enroll in the University and to plan on leaving the University as a result of social factors. Exogenous transfer intenders appear to be more likely than endogenous transfer intenders to have a home residence that is located within the same metropolitan area as the University because endogenous intent-to-transfer students were more likely to state that they were planning to leave the University to be closer to home. Thus, transitioning to the University may be more difficult for endogenous than for exogenous transfer intenders because the former must build a new social network rather than being able to rely on an existing social network.

Institutional and goal commitment. Contrary to our predictions, exogenous intent-to-transfer students were higher than endogenous intent-to-transfer students on institutional commitment, but not on goal commitment. Perhaps, because their expectations of fitting into the University environment have not been met, endogenous intent-to-transfer students report lower institutional commitment than exogenous intent-to-transfer students. However, it should be noted that both groups of students who plan on transferring have much lower institutional commitment than students who intend to persist. Finally, all three groups of students have comparable goal commitment. Tinto (1987, p. 163) has suggested that "... many voluntary student withdrawals are brighter, more motivated, and more concerned with education than are some persisters." This statement would seem to be particularly applicable to students who plan to migrate to another university as opposed to stop out or drop out.

Limitations

Because only 39 first-semester students were in the exogenous intent-to-transfer group, a larger sample would increase our degree of confidence in the present findings.

In addition, the present study was conducted at one institution; and the results may not generalize to other colleges and universities. Finally, the present study used a cross-sectional design in which students who intended to transfer were asked to give a retrospective account between 9 and 12 weeks into their first semester at the University regarding whether they planned to stay at the time of entry into the institution.

Directions for Future Research

To obtain a better understanding of the determinants of the two forms of intent to transfer, longitudinal data are needed. It would be interesting, for example, to administer to cohorts of incoming students measures of college intention, goal commitment, and institutional commitment during the first two weeks of a fall semester and to measure these variables again as well as academic and social integration between the 9th and 10th week of the same semester. In future surveys, the inclusion of several additional variables might aid in the interpretation of the findings including viability of transfer options, hometown residence, and living on or off campus.

Implications

The findings of the present study raise two questions. First, should institutions target retention efforts at both types of intent-to-transfer students? Second, how would the focus of retention efforts differ for exogenous and endogenous intent-to-transfer students? On the one hand, students who enter a college with the intent of staying have an individual goal that is in sync with the institution's goal of retaining students. Because of the compatibility of the student's goal and the institution's goal, it makes good sense for the institution to use intervention strategies that are aimed at keeping students from shifting their intentions from staying to leaving.

On the other hand, students who enter a college with the intent of transferring to another college or university have an individual goal that is at odds with the institution's goal of retaining students. Because of the incompatibility of the student's goal and the institution's goal, the institution must decide whether to facilitate the student's goal or its own goal (Rummel, Acton, Costello, & Pielow, 1999). Whiteley (2002-2003) suggests that four-year colleges and universities have three options in responding to students who are "parking" at their institution. First, assuming that students who enter a 4-year institution with a plan of transferring could be identified prior to admission, the institution could choose to deny them admission. Second, the 4-year institution can admit them and then attempt to convince them to stay. Third, the 4-year institution can admit them and then focus on helping these students to achieve their academic goals. Tinto (2006-2007) advocates that institutions of higher education focus less on retention and more on the successful education of their students. Based upon this point of view, institutions of higher education may be better off allocating advising resources to facilitate the transfer process for exogenous intent-to-transfer students as opposed to earmarking advising resources to target exogenous intent-to-transfer students for interventions designed to get them to change their intention from transferring to staying.

If institutions decide to design retention programs for exogenous intent-to-transfer students, our findings indicate that they are similar to students who intend to persist with respect to goal commitment, academic integration, and social integration. The main reason given by exogenous intent to transfer students for their plan to leave is the lack of accessibility to, or the quality of, the educational programs. Caison (2004-2005) suggests that marketing analyses of students who plan to transfer from an institution can be helpful in terms of making improvements in existing educational programs and in terms of

identifying educational programs that should be added. Furthermore, marketing analyses might be used to pinpoint the sources of exogenous intent-to-transfer students' perceptions that an institution's educational programs are not high quality.

Our findings indicate that endogenous intent-to-transfer students are lower than both exogenous intent-to-transfer students and students who intend to persist on institutional commitment, academic integration and social integration. These findings, in conjunction with previous research (Trotter & Roberts, 2006), suggest that efforts by advisors, faculty, and administrators to retain endogenous intent-to-transfer students should focus on strategies that foster engagement in the academic and social realms of the university (Zhao & Kuh, 2004).

In conclusion, to maximize the effectiveness of intervention programs designed to improve retention rates, it is necessary to target the intervention to meet the needs of the at-risk population (Caison, 2004-2005). Our findings indicate that different dynamics are driving the departure intentions of exogenous and endogenous intent-to-transfer students. Consequently, it is important that higher education professionals become cognizant of the diversity that exists among students who plan to transfer to another institution.

Appendix A

Items Used to Measure Integration and Commitment Variables

Academic Integration:

- My nonclassroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my career goals and aspirations.^d
- I am satisfied with the opportunities to meet and interact informally with faculty members.^d
- Most of the faculty I have had contact with are interested in helping students grown in more than just academic areas.^d
- My nonclassroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in idea.^b
- My nonclassroom interactions with faculty have had a positive influence on my personal growth, values and attitudes.^d

Social Integration:

- It has been difficult for me to meet and make friends with other students.^{c,r}
- The student friendships I have developed at _____ have been personally satisfying.^c
- Since coming to _____ I have developed close personal relationships with other students.^c
- My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my personal growth, attitudes and values.^c
- My interpersonal relationships with other students have had a positive influence on my intellectual growth and interest in ideas.^a

Institutional Commitment:

- It is likely that I will register at _____ next fall.^e
- I prefer to graduate from some other university than from _____.^{e,r}
- I am pleased now about my decision to attend _____ in particular.^f
- I wish I were at another university.^{f,r}

Goal Commitment:

- I am pleased now about my decision to go to college.^f
- Lately I have been having doubts regarding the value of a college education.^{f,r}
- I find myself giving considerable thought to taking time off from college and finishing later.^{f,r}

^aAcademic Development Subscale of the Institutional Integration Scale.

^bFaculty Concerns Subscale of the Institutional Integration Scale.

^cPeer Group Relations Subscale of the Institutional Integration Scale.

^dInformal Faculty Relations Subscale of the Institutional Integration Scale.

^eInstitutional and Goal Commitment Subscale of the Institutional Integration Scale.

^fAttachment Sub-scale of the College Adjustment Questionnaire.

^rReverse coded.

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Table 1

Reasons for Attending the University by Type of Intent-to-Transfer Student (n = 117)¹

Reason	Type of Intent-to-Transfer Student		
	Endogenous	Exogenous	Total
Close to Home	27%	32%	28%
Prepare to Transfer	22%	29%	24%
Finances	8%	37%***	17%
Liked ____	30%	16% ^a	26%
Intercollegiate Athletics	1%	3%	2%
Social Life	23%	8%*	18%
Availability/ Quality of Academic Programs	8%	8%	8%

¹Participants could list more than one reason.^a $p < .10$ * $p < .05$ *** $p < .001$

Table 2

Reasons for Planning to Leave the University by Type of Intent-to-Transfer Student

(n = 109) ¹

Reason	Type of Intent-to-Transfer Student		Total
	Endogenous	Exogenous	
Get Closer to Home	28%	9%*	22%
Get Away from Home	1%	6%	3%
Finances	4%	14% ^a	7%
Job and Career Prospects	11%	17%	13%
Intercollegiate Athletics	1%	3%	2%
(Lack of) Social Interaction	26%	11% ^a	21%
(Lack of) Availability/ Quality of Academic Programs	24%	46%*	31%
(Lack of) Prestige	22%	17%	20%
Don't Like It Here	14%	3% ^a	10%

¹Participants could list more than one reason.^a $p < .10$ * $p < .05$

Table 3

Means for Academic Integration, Social Integration, Institutional Commitment, and Goal Commitment by College Intention (n = 507)

Variable	College Intention					
	Persist		Exogenous Transfer		Endogenous Transfer	
	M	SD	M	SD	M	SD
Social Integration	2.73 ^a	0.80	2.78 ^a	0.77	2.30	0.83
Academic Integration	2.39 ^a	0.55	2.32 ^a	0.53	2.06	0.65
Institutional Commitment	3.22	0.71	1.92	0.89	1.44	1.11
Goal Commitment	3.36 ^a	0.76	3.23 ^a	0.83	3.30 ^a	0.70

^aMeans sharing the superscript are not significantly different from each other ($p > .05$).