COMPARISON OF REASONS FOR UNIVERSITY ATTENDANCE
BETWEEN TRADITIONAL AND NON-TRADITIONAL
FEMALE STUDENTS

DISSERTATION

Presented to the Graduate Council of the
University of North Texas in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

By
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Denton, Texas
May, 1997

The aim of this study was to identify the characteristics of non-traditional female students and their perceived reasons for university studies. The population was all women students enrolled in Texas A&M University - Commerce for 1996 - one semester. The population was divided into scientifically selected samples, traditional students 19 to 25 for a total of 149 and non-traditional students 25 and up for a total of 144. Data was collected by mail questionnaires to identify reasons for university attendance, needed special services, and demographic data. The questions, combined into six clusters of reasons for university attendance, showed that The Desire to Know was the highest rated reason for the non-traditional students. No other clusters of reasons were important. The highest rated clusters for the traditional students were The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, The Desire to Comply with Formal Requirements, The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity, and The Desire to Escape which was almost as important as The Desire to take Part in Social Activity. Both groups
rated high on the need for financial aid, better class scheduling, and more class offerings. Both groups were mostly middle class. The non-traditional students' grade point average was much higher, more were married with twice the personal salary. Their mean age was 37. The other group mean age was 22.

This study could benefit the universities in their efforts to design programs, special facilities and services to meet the special needs of women students. Focus should be to change the traditional students' reasons for attendance from escapism to fired up intellectual curiosity. The non-traditional students should be nurtured in their main orientation, The Desire to Know. Related research should focus on attracting, recruiting, and retaining the non-traditional students to graduation. This is important to the non-traditional women, the universities, the business community and the country.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION OF THE STUDY

During the 1980's, there was a 12 percent enrollment increase of college students (Kaufman, 1986). By 1988, about 45 percent of the total student body was over 25 years of age and 60 percent of this number were older females (Mercer, 1993). This phenomena points to the urgency of research directed toward understanding the reasons that influenced the older woman to return to school (Ross, 1988). For institutions of higher learning to seize the opportunity to transmit knowledge to an ever increasing audience, the student's reasons for attendance, her motivation for education, and special needs must be determined and addressed. This study focused on the older female student, (the non-traditional female student), to help answer these questions.

Statement of the Problem

The major question addressed is why the older female student takes university courses and how motivation differs from the traditional female student. Areas studied were: 1) stated reasons for the non-traditional female student to enroll in college, 2) stated reasons for college attendance by the traditional female student, 3)
comparison of the traditional and non-traditional female student to ascertain if and how their reasons for attendance differed, 4) comparison of the effect of socioeconomic status on motivations for enrollment of traditional with that of non-traditional female students, 5) comparison of selected demographic variables such as father's occupation, education, and income for the traditional and non-traditional female student, and 6) comparison as to the extent of need for special university services for traditional and non-traditional female students.

Importance of the Problem

The place of women in American society has been under rapid change in the last half of the twentieth century. These include technological changes, greater emphasis on self actualization and perceived needs of society as well as the notion of the female role.

Institutions of higher learning are at a crossroads. They face the prospect of failing to meet the challenges of the female students (traditional and non-traditional) if they continue to treat the young female as only marking time until marriage or that the female is less able academically. The dramatic increase in numbers of older students sparked an interest in researching that development. The increase in research is an encouraging sign that empirical research can provide a guide to measure the response and progress of
education institutions to meet the needs of the non-
traditional student.

The body of knowledge through such research may be
enhanced in the following fields: 1) gerontology - to
gather important data on the cognitive abilities of the
older female student and to identify if and how continued
academic learning may enhance the quality of life including
the continued learning power of the older female student,
2) higher education - to meet the academic needs and
interests of the non-traditional student and how to best
market higher education to this population, 3) feminist
sociology - to study the effect of education on self esteem
and the economic future of the non-traditional female
student, 4) gender relations - to study how higher
education for the non-traditional female student effects the
relationship between sexes.

Limitations of the Study

The population for the present study were traditional
and non-traditional students. They were attending a small
state supported university in the southwest.

It is recognized that other populations in other
colleges and universities might have different reasons for
university attendance. Texas A&M University - Commerce is a
rural, commuter college. As such, this population may not
have been representative of other institutions. Women attending urban universities, attending large universities, attending private institutions, or attending Ivy League universities might have had quite different responses. This present study may not be generalized to other populations for these reasons.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Some private colleges and universities in the recent past were forced to close their doors in the face of tight budgets and lower attendance rates. Institutions, both private and public, that remained open, faced the prospect of denying tenure, dismissing faculty, dropping classes, and closing academic departments because of the drops in attendance (Grove, 1980). Astin reported that college admissions of 18-21 year olds had shrunk in size but that slack has been taken up by the increase in older female students (1990, p. 480). Those mature faces and gray heads that are increasingly seen on the student side of the lectern in higher education are posing a challenge to our university system. They are relatively more sophisticated patrons of the educational system and therefore, "expect a fair exchange for their hard earned tuition and for the time and energy which is often made available at the expense of remunerative work, family interaction, social life, volunteerism and other previously accustomed activities" (Mercer, 1993, p. 153).

To illustrate this phenomenal increase in the older college student body, Hirschorn, noted in 1988 that a
college board found that the student body contained 45 percent of persons over 25. Moreover, 60 percent of those were women (p.33).

The Colorado Commission on Higher Education found through their study (1992) that "Nationally in 1990-91, 33 percent of the undergraduate student population were traditional students, and 66 percent were non-traditional. Two-fifths of all students are part timers and more than a third are over 25. The typical traditional student is 20 years old, dependent, a high school graduate, female (53 percent), white (only 18 percent are minority), and single (p. 5). The commission also reported that nationally the typical non-traditional undergraduate student is white, female (57 percent), with an average age 29. She is taking courses toward a degree on a part-time basis, independent of parents, and lives off campus (p. 5).

Given the premise that a vast new clientele existed, there has been a dearth of research concerning that phenomenon. However, a few studies have been conducted concerning reasons why non-traditional students attended institutions of higher learning, although none were done on older women as a group with the exception of a study done by this researcher in 1980. The present study was an attempt to replicate the previous study and enlarge the findings to include variables that identified needed university
services. The focus of the study was to find reasons why older women (the non-traditional students) enroll in courses leading to a degree.

Although this most important research area has been largely unexplored, a few studies which were relevant to this study were done. They include C.O. Houle's, *The Inquiring Mind* (1961), Roger Boshier's (1971), "Motivational Orientations of Adult Education Participants: A Factor Analytic Exploration of Houle's Typology," Barry Marstain's and J. C. Smart (1974), "Reasons for Participation in Adult Education Courses: A Multivariate Analysis of Group Differences," and Paul Burgess' (1971), "Reasons for Adult Participation in Group Educational Activities."

Others have done work in the area, Astin (1990), did a study from a sample of University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA) students. Part of that study focused on reasons for college attendance for all age female students, not the non-traditional age student as a group. She found that to get a better job and to make more money was important, but to gain general education and appreciation of ideas were just as important (p. 490). Blankoph (1981) noted that for many non-traditional age women students the changing societal expectations for women and lessened familial responsibilities had finally released them to fulfill an often repressed desire to go to college. Pressures from
society imprinted them with the message that home, hearth, children, and husband were their highest goal and achievement. Why did they need an education? Their appointed role was to marry, raise children, and stay in that appointed role all their lives. But this rigid role started shattering along with the advancing technical advances. Life spans continued to increase and a woman could now look to 25 to 35 years of life without a maternal role (p. 10). Her horizons could expand. She could now aspire to resurrect what for many was that long buried dream - a college education.

Several of the works noted above had implications for the present study and were examined: C.O. Houle's *The Inquiring Mind* (1961), Roger Boshier's "Motivational Orientations of Adult Education Participants: A Factor Analytic Exploration of Houle's Typology", and Paul Burgess', "Reasons for Adult Participation in Group Educational Activities" (1971). Also included was a review of literature and theoretical postulates concerning the self-actualization theory and its application to the educational attainment. Special emphasis was placed on Abraham Maslow's levels of need attainment and its perceived influence on the desire for education.
The Inquiring Mind

In his book, *The Inquiring Mind*, Houle presented his findings based on a study of adult education. It was a landmark in that he was the first to investigate the participant instead of the program or the act of participation in education. His only criterion in that study was participation in various forms of continuing education. The research was conducted by the use of a pre-tested interview schedule. To gather added information and tap personalized responses, the participant was encouraged to talk freely to the interviewer. Those interviews were tape recorded and transcribed. In all, there were twenty-two case studies.

Even though the group making up those twenty-two case studies came from diversified backgrounds there was a great basic similarity in their views and purposes of desiring continued education. Houle postulated that his subjects could be classified into three basic groups, although not as pure types. He went on to add that they could best be understood as three circles with overlapping edges. The three classifications were the goal-oriented, the activity-oriented, and the learning oriented.

The best description of the goal-oriented was the person who had no use for knowledge unless it could be used for economics. No study had been done that linked reasons
given for educational participation as related to extent of participation.

He hypothesized that reasons men and women participate in educational activities would factor into one or more of eight groups. The "Reasons for Educational Participation" instrument was constructed by Burgess (1971) to measure reasons for participation. The instrument contained seventy possible reasons for participation measured on a never-to-always scale. The seventy reasons were obtained from 5,773 possible reasons with the assistance of two groups of judges and two different groups of adult learners who responded to statements on two different dates at least two weeks apart.

A total of 1,098 respondents randomly selected from the St. Louis area were included in the survey by Burgess. The respondents were adults who at that time were participating in a group educational activity on a part-time basis. The group activities selected were based on the subject-skill matter. Analysis was performed by the maximum likelihood factor analysis solution and an oblique rotation technique for identification of reason clusters.

The statistical techniques isolated seven distinct clusters which were: 1) The Desire to Know, 2) The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, 3) The Desire to Reach a Social Goal, 4) The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity, 5) The Desire to Escape Some Other Activity or
Situation, 6) The Desire to Comply with Formal Recommendations, and 7) The Desire to Reach a Religious Goal. Even though cluster seven emerged, it was not as important as the other six.

Burgess concluded that educational orientations of adults as originated by Houle were valid. Furthermore, his study pointed to the theory that every adult possessed a certain educational orientation. One of the things Burgess cited was the need to conduct a study that used a shorter form of the "Reasons for Educational Participation." The present study will utilize a shorter version by elimination of the cluster, The Desire to Reach a Religious Goal, and not including certain reasons in the clusters of reasons.

Self-Actualization

The present study utilizes four clusters of hypothesized reasons why women sought higher education that led to a degree that were based on Maslow's need hierarchy. They were: 1) The Desire to Know, 2) The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, 3) The Desire to Reach a Social Goal, 4) The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity.

Maslow's heuristic principles of self-actualization were similar to other thinkers. Threads of the self-actualization principle have been seen in thinkers for centuries. Of great importance was a German movement in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century called
Geistenwissenschaft or Kulturwissenschaft. Allport became the chief spokesman in America for this movement. Others influential toward the theory of self-actualization, were Alfred Adler, C. G. Jung, Otto Rank, and Abraham Maslow (Cofer and Appley, 1964). A discussion of the contributions of each of those thinkers to the self-actualization theory was examined with particular emphasis on Maslow's theory and his hierarchy of self-actualization. Also included was a discussion on the hypothesized relationship of the fully functioning person and age.

Jung stressed the future in his account of conduct that was the goals or aims of the individuals. He called it self-actualization and Hall and Lindzey said that it meant the fullest, most complete differentiation and harmonious blending of all aspects of man's total personality (Hall and Lindzey, 1970).

Rank was another early thinker who stressed self-actualization. His concept of that phenomena was summed up as follows: 1) to be creative one must express individuality, 2) to be an artist was to be able to express individuality, 3) to reach that achievement, one must have mastered anxiety caused by separation from the mass or herd, 4) to reach individuality, that anxiety must be experienced but one must only experience a temporary setback because of it, 5) to experience separation followed
by more anxiety and separation in the process of further growth and individualism, 6) to the average man (the multitude) life was a continual conformity to external demands, first the mother, next society, and 7) to resolve those two conflicts was the goal of the artist which was self-actualization (Cofer and Appley, p.664). Adler stressed the uniqueness of self-actualization, the striving for perfection. He postulated that the natural inferior position of a child, both physically and intellectually, led to a feeling of inferiority caused by the organ deficiency if not met by a loving and trustworthy environment such as the love of a mother. If that condition was met drives would then be channeled toward perfection and interest in the welfare of others. Thus, if the feeling of self-worth and uniqueness was established in youth, even higher plateaus of growth or "creative being" could be achieved. That term was roughly the same as Maslow's "self-actualization" (p.663).

The present study explored a possible link between the placement of an individual on the need hierarchy. It also attempted to test that placement according to age, using four of the clusters of reasons in the present study. Maslow clearly saw age as a very positive link in the upward movement of self-actualization.
Maslow postulated a hierarchy of needs which were believed to be universal. Maslow called those needs instinctoid. He used that term to indicate that many higher level needs would not appear until lower level needs or physical needs were satisfied.

Maslow's need hierarchy was heuristic. At the base was physiological needs such as thirst and hunger. Those needs dominated until they were satisfied (Rogers and Coulson, 1975, p. 67). The next level could not be attained until the first need was met. Next came the need for safety. In the past that need was more prominent, but in the present society, its manifestations were mainly seen in children in such ways as fear of the dark, animals, and being alone.

The third level was the need for love which became dominant after the safety needs were satisfied. According to Maslow that factor was dominant in today's society. Failure to meet that need was a common cause for maladjustment and psychopathology.

The fourth need level was the need for esteem. That need included a need for favorable self-evaluation of others.

The fifth and highest level was self-actualization. This meant to reach one's highest potential.
Equally important to the question of why non-traditional students go to college was what colleges and universities could do to keep them there. The present study explored the need for special services that may enhance the educational experience of the non-traditional student or in some cases make it possible to continue in school. Studies that point to the need for special services were presented below.

Robertson (1991) found in his study that non-traditional women students often have to act as jugglers between home, work, and school duties. These disparate duties must be integrated into a whole that the non-traditional student can manage. Clearly this can be done in many ways. He stated "Some may involve frequent stops and light loads. If the adult learner is female, chances are almost even that she will go very quickly with no interruptions or go very slowly with many interruptions" (p. 494). He saw that his findings have important implications for the colleges and universities. "A model of full-time, fall to spring enrollment with summers off tend to discriminate against some large categories of adult learners - either those who progress rapidly or those who progress slowly. Regarding those who go slowly, policies that disfavor interruptions and relatively low rates of progress discriminate against what may be a large category of female
students" (p. 494). Once the mature woman has reached the often difficult decision to enter a college or university, the hard part is to implement it because of the unique set of problems imposed not only on her but on the institution she chooses.

Barriers can be institutional as well as personal (Glass and Rose, 1987, p. 110). Not only does she have to do a juggling act between her various roles of adulthood but she often faces insecurity about study skills and competing with college kids. Such insecurity can be a major stumbling block. Other concerns are physical appearance in a predominantly youthful culture. She does not want to be the "old woman on campus whether in dress or looks". Other concerns may be guilt over leaving her husband or family resistance and negative reaction from friends and family members. Such negative reactions among one's existing support group are just another factor which makes the mature woman's adjustment to college more difficult" (p. 112).

Institutional barriers need to be dismantled to meet individual expectations. These demands may create tensions in the institutions that have to meet the demand to become more service oriented "to move to a situation where students bear the burden of adaptation to meet the expectations of the colleges they attend to one in which institutions of higher education increasingly refine their role as one of
fulfilling student expectations" (Colorado Commission on Higher Education, 1992, p. 12).

Hildreth found in her 1983 study of college women over fifty that two of the main problems of college attendance were schedule of courses and location of course offerings (p. 340). Important barriers, seen by Moore and Young (1985) included "social barriers, constraints brought about through economics, age, family or community attitudes or sex role stereotyping, institutional barriers, practices that discriminate to keep non-traditional age women out, or means that are not used to encourage and support their entrance, and psychological barriers, pervasive and complex beliefs concerning personal identity and self image" (p. 1).

The highest rated barrier according to Young's and Moore's study was institutional barriers at 43 percent followed by general social barriers 28 percent (p.1). In order for colleges and universities to meet these special needs of non-traditional female students a combination of academic, personal, and career counseling should be offered (Papier, 1980, p.9). Patterson and Blank (1985) found in their study of the major profile of the returning non-traditional female student that the main problems facing these women were exam anxiety, time allotment, and role conflict (p.1). These are important findings that colleges
and universities can use in their effort to serve this important and growing population.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY USED IN THE STUDY

The major objective of this chapter was to describe the methodological techniques and problems used in collecting the data. Also, selected procedures for discussed data were included.

Population and the Sample Selection

The population selected for this study was all women students enrolled at A&M University - Commerce for the 1996 one semester. All subjects were taking courses that totaled six or more hours credit.

A computer printout of all such students was obtained from the computer center after receiving consent to secure such a list from the vice-president of the university and the Committee for Protection of Human Subjects. This method gave complete assurance that each member of the designated population was included in the population for sampling.

The next step in the process was to employ a method that would insure each name on each sampling frame had an equal chance to be included in the final sample. To insure that, each homogeneous subset was sampled by using a $1/k$
sampling technique with the first element selected by using a table of random numbers entered randomly.

According to Winton (1974), it is vital for the research sample to be large enough to allow the examination of all the variables need for analysis and yet small enough to be manageable. Bailey (1978) stated that at least thirty cases are needed for statistical analyses, but one hundred cases are considered by a great many researchers as the bare minimum. Using that as a guide, it is felt that one hundred and fifty elements in each sub-sample were more than adequate for a total of 300 elements. One hundred forty-nine traditional students and 144 non-traditional students were selected by this method.

Data Collection

The computer printout of women students provided addresses. The address information was utilized in the three mailings which consisted of: 1) first mailing - a cover letter, questionnaire, and a stamped self-addressed return envelope, 2) second mailing - reminder letter, and 3) third mailing - cover letter urging return of the questionnaire, replacement questionnaire, and another stamped self-addressed envelope. The cover letter introduced the investigator, the sponsor, the nature of the study, the importance and relevance of the study, and how the respondent was chosen and her representative importance.
Also, the sampling unit was assured of complete confidentiality. It was explained in the letter that the fine penciled number on the upper right corner of the back page was strictly for identification purposes to verify who had returned the questionnaire and who had not. This method assured that only one questionnaire was returned by each respondent which resulted in a reduction in time, expense, and effort.

Dillman (1976) stresses the importance of the cover letter stating that it must convey a personalized appeal to the respondent that her individual help is needed to solve a problem important to a group with which she identifies. This will serve as a reward for her cooperation. Each of these recommendations was incorporated in the cover letter introducing this study to each sampling unit.

The first paragraph of the cover letter explained what the study was about and its usefulness. The next two paragraphs explained how the respondent was selected and why her response was so vital. The fourth paragraph was designed to alleviate the fear that many respondents have that their answers would be used by other than research purposes which might damage them in some way, a factor cited as reasons for low questionnaire returns. Also the respondent was urged to reply promptly. Sponsorship of the study was named in the fifth paragraph.
Authenticity was gained by sponsorship of a prestigious academic department of the university, the Department of Sociology and Criminal Justice. To further emphasize the authenticity and prestige of the study, official university letterheads and envelopes were used (Dillman, p. 180).

Also of great importance was how the cover letter was reproduced. A factor in the success rate of returns has been traced to personalization of letters. In order to meet this test and insure the quality of the print in reproduction, a master letter was multilithed. This investigator later added the personalized salutation to each letter and signed it.

The data gathering technique utilized was mail questionnaires. There was a total of three mailings sent to the two scientifically selected sub-samples (traditional and non-traditional women students).

A total of 293 questionnaires were sent in the first mailing. Six letters were returned as undeliverable and were not used to measure the response rate. The two successive mailings were sent to those who had not previously responded.

The first mailing was sent September 10 and consisted of the cover letter (Appendix B), questionnaire (Appendix A), and a self-addressed envelope. A total of 74 questionnaires resulted from the first mailing.
The second mailing was sent on September 23 and consisted of a courteous reminder memo (Appendix C) inserted into an envelope and mailed to those who had not responded to the first mailing. A total of 41 questionnaires resulted from the second mailing.

The third and final mailing was sent October 4. It consisted of a cover letter urging the return of the questionnaire (Appendix D). A replacement copy of the questionnaire and another stamped self-addressed envelope was also included. The third mailing resulted in 54 returned questionnaires. There was a total of 169 questionnaires returned from the three mailings.

Data Collection Device

Mail questionnaires were used to collect data. Among the reasons for choosing that method over other methods were the wide coverage for minimal expenses and time, uniformity of answers, and provisions for a sense of privacy. There were also some disadvantages associated with mail questionnaires, one being the risk of low questionnaire returns. Typically, the expected return is only fifty percent. However, studies to evaluate mail questionnaires concluded that proper attention to the cover letter, questionnaire length, unambiguous questions, and adequate follow up letters can produce much returns (Miller, 1977).

Burgess (1971) studied reasons for adult participation
in education. He identified and put together various clusters of reasons which were validated by other studies.

The attitude scale, "Reasons for Enrollment in University Studies" utilized in the present study and an earlier study done in 1980, was devised in part from Burgess' study and in part by the investigator of this study. Questions concerning socioeconomic status were asked. Questions to ascertain the need for special services for female students, especially non-traditional female students, were asked at the end of the questionnaire. Space was provided for qualitative data in the form of comments and added information from the respondent.

The questions making up this instrument attempted to measure six of the eight hypothesized cluster of reasons Burgess found to be valid in his study of adult educational participation. The clusters of reasons tested in the present study were: 1) The Desire to Know, 2) The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, 3) The Desire to Reach a Social Goal, 4) The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity, 5) The Desire to Escape Some Other Activity or Situation, and 6) The Desire to Comply with Formal Requirements. The Likert type scale was utilized for the measurement of each question or reason. The scale ranged from one, never influences me, to seven, always influences me.
The first cluster of reasons, The Desire to Know, was examined in the present study by using nine of thirteen original questions utilized by Burgess. Theorists, including Maslow, have recognized and expounded on the importance of this basic need in people, the desire or need to know. Maslow postulated this need at level five of his need hierarchy. He called this need for knowing and understanding the very essence of a fulfilled person.

A series of sixteen of the eighteen original questions used by Burgess in the cluster of reasons, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, was included in the present study. The importance of a personal or life goal cannot be overemphasized according to Humanistic psychologists. A leading postulate stated that if a person fails to have a realistic and identifiable life goal, guilt and a feeling of futility would ensue. A series of eight questions were used in the questionnaire in this study in an attempt to measure this cluster of reasons, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal. This too, was included in Maslow's hierarchy of motivational need. He placed this need at level four, needs of esteem, status and recognition.

Another level of Maslow's hierarchical needs was examined in the series of six questions to measure The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity. This was
motivational level three in the hierarchy, the need for belonging (Hall and Lindzey).

The last two series of questions concerned The Desire to Escape Some other Activity or Situation and The Desire to Comply with Formal Requirements. Those two clusters of reasons were based on the premise that the differing levels leading to self-actualization (the apex of the need hierarchy) may not be the motivating force for all students. The hard fact that rules and requirements must be met to hold certain positions might be the overriding factor in college or university attendance. Perhaps school was a form of escapism from other unpleasant aspects of life such as a bad home life or inability to get or hold a job.

Analytical Procedures

The analytical procedures employed in this study consisted of several steps. First the questionnaire were cleaned and coded. Each case was then be transferred to IBM computer sheets. Data from the IBM sheets were used as data input.

Data input instructed the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) which variables to be used in the analysis, and to activate each data processing technique. The mean and median score of each response score (variable) was run for the total sample (traditional and non-traditional students). Then selected demographic factors by
mean and median score were computed. Selected demographic factors of the whole population were run to find the percentage of the population according to class, father's occupation, father's education, and respondent grade point averages.

The next step in the analysis process was to reduce the data. In order to look at the reasons for college or university attendance itemized reasons were combined into six cluster of reasons. Cross tabs were then run on the cluster of reasons by age to see if there was a difference in reasons for college attendance between the traditional and non-traditional age groups. Kendall's tau_b was chosen as the measure of association because it measures the extent to which an increase in one variable is accompanied by an increase in another variable (or decrease, if the sign is negative) and it is a symmetric measure. Finally, a comparison of socioeconomic status and grade point average by age were run using tau_b as the measure of association.

Theoretical Perspective

The present study utilized data collected by use of a mail questionnaire that contained some of the variables identified in Burgess' study (1971). Those variables referred to above were used in this researcher's 1980 study and in the present study to test the following hypotheses
derived from the literature cited and the investigator's own empirical observations.

Hypotheses

The following hypothesis was tested through the use of $\tau_{ab}$. It was also used as a measure of association to see if there was a difference in reasons for college attendance between traditional and non-traditional female students or reasons for university attendance.

**Hypothesis number one.** The higher the age (non-traditional age female student) the higher one placed on the cluster of reasons for university attendance, The Desire to Know which is based on Maslow's level five hierarchy of needs.

**Nominal definitions.** Female university student was defined here as a female taking six or more hours of college course work in semester 1996 - one at A&M University - Commerce. Non-traditional age was defined here as a female student over 25 years of age. The Desire to Know is defined here as a cluster of nine variables to test the student's placement on one component of Maslow's level five hierarchy.

**Operational definitions.** Non-traditional female students were operationalized by using an university computer generated printout of all female students 25 years of age and older who were taking six or more credit hours in the
1996 fall semester. The Desire to Know was operationalized by recording the respondent's answers to the nine variables on the survey instrument using a Likert type scale with categories one through seven (never influences me to always influences me) with a 0 for a non response. The Desire to Know (destono) was a new variable composed of the following variables: Var. 27, var. 22, var. 15, var. 14, var. 6, var. 17, var. 10, var. 25, and var. 2. The Desire to Know is included in Maslow's highest level (five), self-actualization.

Independent and dependent variables. Age is the independent variable and desire to know is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number two. The higher the age (non-traditional age female student) the higher The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal which is based on Maslow's level four hierarchy of needs.

Nominal definitions. The non-traditional female student was defined as in hypothesis one. The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal was defined here as a cluster of sixteen variables.

Operational definitions. The non-traditional age female student was operationally defined as in hypothesis one. The Desire to Reach a Goal was operationally defined as hypothesis number one. However, Desire to Reach a Personal
Goal (desirepg) was a new variable composed of the following variables: var. 19, var. 3, var. 13, var. 44, var. 31, var. 12, var. 38, var. 35, var. 21, var. 4, var. 36, var. 26, var. 28, var. 5, var. 42, and var. 25.

Hypothesis number three. The higher the age (non-traditional female student) the higher the socioeconomic status.

Nominal definitions. The nominal definition of non-traditional female student was operationally defined as in hypothesis one and two. Socioeconomic-economic status was defined here as income, education, and occupation.

Operational definitions. The non-traditional female student was operationally defined as in hypotheses one and two. Socioeconomic status was operationally defined here by including questions in the mail questionnaire on father or guardian's occupation, approximate annual income of father, guardian, or self if self supporting, and highest level of educational attained by the father.

Independent variable. Age was the independent variable and socioeconomic status was the dependent variable.

Hypothesis Number Four. The higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the placement on the cluster The Desire to Know.
Nominal definitions. The nominal definition of non-traditional female student was operationally defined as in hypotheses one, two, and three. The Desire to Know was nominally defined as in hypothesis number one.

Operational definitions. Socioeconomic status was operationally defined as in hypothesis number four. The Desire to Know was operationally defined as in hypotheses number one.

Independent and dependent variables. Socioeconomic status was the independent variable and The Desire to Know was the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number five. The higher the age (non-traditional female student) the more special University services needed

Nominal definitions. Age was nominally defined here as in hypotheses number one, two, and three. Special University services was defined here as in hypotheses number one, two, and three. Special University services are defined here as those services (counseling, admission, procedures, advisors, financial need, etc.) that promote success in attracting and retention of the non-traditional female student.

Operational definitions. Age was operationalized here as in hypotheses number one, two, and three. Special
university services was operationalized by recording the respondent's answers to ten variables on the survey instrument using a Likert type scale with categories one through seven (never influence me to always influence me) with a zero for non-response.

**Independent and dependent variables.** Age was the independent variable. Special University services was the dependent variable.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

The major question addressed in the present study was why the older female student takes university courses and if the motivation differs from the traditional female student. Areas studied were: 1) stated reasons for the non-traditional female student to enroll in college, 2) stated reasons for college attendance by the traditional female student, 3) comparison of the traditional and non-traditional female student to ascertain if and how their reasons for attendance differ, 4) comparison of the effect of socioeconomic status on motivations for enrollment of traditional with that of the non-traditional female student, 5) comparison of selected demographic variables such as father's occupation, education, and income for the traditional and non-traditional female student, and 6) comparison as to the extent of need for special university service for traditional and non-traditional female students.

To test if and how the older student (non-traditional student) had reasons and needs that were significantly different from a younger woman (traditional student) two sub-samples were tested. One sub-sample consisted of women
students under the age of 25, and the other sub-sample consisted of women 25 and above.

Data for the tests were collected by means of a mail questionnaire which listed a total of forty-six reasons for college attendance. Each reason was measured on a one through seven (never influences me to always influences me) scale. The respondent was asked to check the number on the scale which best described her position. Each of 46 reasons were first tested individually to measure its importance. Next, the reasons were combined into six clusters of reasons and the clusters of reasons were tested for their importance for college or university attendance. Also, each of the 47 through 56 questions concerning special university services was tested individually to measure for its importance.

Analyses of data were accomplished by use of SPSS (1986) in increasingly sophisticated techniques. The results were presented one by one along with the appropriate data in this chapter. A discussion of reasons for choosing each analytical technique, the data, and a discussion of their implications was included. Also included was a comparison of the data found in this researcher's 1980 study with the exception of questions 47 through 56 concerning special university services.

As a primary step in a series of progressively more refined analysis, a simple frequency distributor was
introduced. Tables were constructed to present the reasons women take university courses and the mean and median scores on selected demographic factors were shown. Also, tables were constructed to present data conveying percentage scores for the same phenomena.

It was decided to show percentages for each variable because that method represented a graphic demonstration of sameness or difference. The median score was chosen because it was the preferred measure of central tendency for ordinal data. It has been used in social science research more than any other measure of central tendency. The median was the halfway point where half of the responses fell below that and half of the responses fell above it.

According to Klecka, Nie, and Hall (1975, p. 61) the first task you will undertake in any data analysis is to determine the pattern in which cases are distributed on each variable in your file. The characteristics you will usually check include measures of central tendency and variability - such as the mean, standard deviation, and range. The mean was also used to show a different dimension of central tendency. Using the above stated reasoning as a guide, frequencies were run.
Table 1.

Reasons Why Women Take University Courses by Mean and Median Response Score

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1) To take my mind off other difficulties</td>
<td>1.912</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2) To gain insight into myself as a person</td>
<td>4.476**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3) To gain additional credit for my record</td>
<td>5.365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4) To increase my competence to achieve my goals</td>
<td>6.441*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5) To seek relief from economic pressures of life</td>
<td>4.276**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6) To satisfy a desire to learn something new</td>
<td>5.588*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7) To comply with regulations</td>
<td>3.741</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8) To prepare for service to the community</td>
<td>4.712**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9) To become acquainted with congenial people</td>
<td>3.294</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10) To study for its own sake</td>
<td>3.753</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11) To feel a sense of belonging</td>
<td>3.041</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>12) To keep up with competition</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.231**</td>
<td>4.000**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13) To fulfill a personal motivation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to get ahead</td>
<td></td>
<td>6.036*</td>
<td>6.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14) To satisfy an intellectual curiosity</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.224*</td>
<td>6.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15) To enrich my life by learning</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.800*</td>
<td>6.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16) To enjoy a change from my present social life</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.359</td>
<td>3.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17) To become a better informed person</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.671*</td>
<td>6.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18) To experience the pleasure of meeting new people</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.659</td>
<td>4.000**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19) To learn in order to secure personal advancement</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.682*</td>
<td>6.000*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20) To comply with others or someone with authority</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.965</td>
<td>2.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21) To maintain or improve my social position</td>
<td></td>
<td>4.024**</td>
<td>4.00**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22) To satisfy a desire to know</td>
<td></td>
<td>5.290*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23) To comply with recommendations of those who have influence over my life</td>
<td></td>
<td>3.781</td>
<td>4.000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*(table continues)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Response Score</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Response Score</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24) To enjoy the fellowship</td>
<td>3.137</td>
<td>3.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25) To upgrade my personal competency</td>
<td>5.651*</td>
<td>6.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26) To meet educational requirements</td>
<td>5.757*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.00*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27) To feed my appetite for knowledge</td>
<td>5.183*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28) To keep up with others</td>
<td>3.750</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>29) To make social contacts</td>
<td>3.143</td>
<td>3.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30) To find relief from some satisfactory condition of life</td>
<td>3.130</td>
<td>2.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.266*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31) To learn to make my position in life more secure</td>
<td>5.266*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.00*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>32) To have a few hours away from responsibility</td>
<td>1.893</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33) To compensate from lack of association with people</td>
<td>1.757</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>34) To improve my ability to help others</td>
<td>5.183*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6.00*</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35) To meet some formal requirements</td>
<td>4.503</td>
<td>5.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>36) To compete with others</td>
<td>3.254</td>
<td>3.080</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>37) To forget personal problems</td>
<td>1.840</td>
<td>1.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason</td>
<td>Response Score Mean</td>
<td>Median</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>38) To become eligible for certain privileges such as joining a group or securing a job</td>
<td>5.320*</td>
<td>6.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>39) To understand community problems</td>
<td>3.911</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40) To become a more effective citizen</td>
<td>4.473**</td>
<td>5.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>41) To fulfill a felt obligation to society</td>
<td>3.231</td>
<td>3.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>42) To comply with wishes of employers</td>
<td>3.101</td>
<td>2.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>43) To broaden my outlook on problems of society</td>
<td>3.923</td>
<td>4.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>44) To earn a degree, diploma, or certificate</td>
<td>6.718*</td>
<td>7.00*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45) To get away from the routine of daily living</td>
<td>2.182</td>
<td>1.500</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46) To improve my ability to serve society</td>
<td>4.482*</td>
<td>5.00*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* 5.00 or above = very important

** 4.00 to 5.00 = fairly important
The frequencies showed the mean and median score for each reason given for college or university attendance by the respondents (Table 1). The itemized reasons given for attendance in a college or university that had the highest mean and median scores (over 6.00) were (Table 1): 1) to increase my competence to achieve my goals, 2) to fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead, and 3) to earn a degree or certificate.

Reason number one had a mean score of 6.441 and a median of 7.00, reason number two had a mean score of 6.036 and a median score of 6.00 and reason number three had a mean of 6.718 and a median of 7.00. A mean or median of 5.00 or over was considered very important. According to the high scores received (more than 6.00) the three itemized reasons for college or university attendance, to increase my competence to achieve my goals, to fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead, and to earn a degree or certificate were the most important ones for both the traditional and non-traditional students. Moreover, the last two above stated reasons for college and university attendance fell into level three of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; the need for favorable self-esteem including goal seeking and personal advancement.

The itemized reasons that had at least a mean and median value of 5.00 were as follows: 1) to gain credits
for my record, 2) to satisfy a desire to learn something new, 3) to satisfy an intellectual curiosity, 4) to enrich my life by learning, 5) to become a better informed person, 6) to learn in order to secure personal advancement, 7) to satisfy a desire to know, 8) to upgrade my personal competency, 9) to meet educational requirements of the era, 10) to learn to make my position in life more secure, 11) to improve my ability to help others, and 12) to become eligible for certain privileges such as joining a group or securing a job.

Each of the above stated reasons received a value of at least 5.00 (very important). Number two, three, four, five, and seven were reasons included in the cluster of reasons for college attendance, The Desire to Know. Itemized reasons one, six, eight, nine, ten, and twelve were included in the cluster of reasons for college or university attendance, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal.

The presentation of the data showed the patterned responses given by the sample as a whole. Thus, a graphic picture of the reasons for college attendance emerged as presented above.

Questions 47 through 56 in the questionnaire pertained to the need for special university services to meet the needs of women students. The mean and median answer for each question is presented in Table 2.
Comparison of Present Study

to the 1980 Study

A comparison of the itemized reasons for university studies by women in researcher's 1980 study and the present study was examined. A mean score of 5.00 or above was considered very important and a mean score of 4.0 to 5.00 was considered fairly important in both studies. This guide was used in both studies.

The highest rated reasons in the present study were: 1) to increase my competence to achieve my goals, 2) to fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead, and 3) to earn a degree or certificate. The first reason had a mean of 6.44, the second reason had a mean of 6.03, and the third reason had a mean of 6.71.

The 1980 study showed the highest means for reason 1) to increase my competence to achieve my goals and to earn a degree, diploma, or certificate. The first reason had a mean of 6.43 while reason number two had a mean score of 6.27. The 1980 study respondents and the present study respondents were very close in the most important reasons for university attendance. Moreover, the above reasons rated the highest in both studies fell into level three of Maslow's hierarchy of needs; the need for favorable self-esteem included goal seeking and personal advancement.
In the present study twelve of the reasons for university attendance received a mean value of at least 5.00 (very important). Five of those reasons were included in the cluster of reasons, The Desire to Know, while six of those reasons fell into the cluster, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal.

Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Special University Services by a Mean Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>---------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little contact with faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty discriminates against me because of age</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for financial aid</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of college admission policies which consider adult students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Classes scheduled when I must work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little access to student advising</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help in understanding the mechanics of returning to school and overcoming institutional barriers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Counseling (group and individual to address exam anxiety, time allotment, role conflict, self doubt</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
Traditional fall to spring enrollment.

Summers off discriminate against adult learners 3.55

Husband, partner, boyfriend supports me emotionally in my school efforts 5.98**

*5.0 or above = very important

** 4.0 to 5.0 = fairly important

Table 2 presented the data for the total population collected through questionnaire items 47 through 56. Only two of the questions received a 5.0 or above mean score which considered here to be very important. This was measured on a one through seven scale with seven equal to strongly agree. They were: 1) financial aid (5.05 mean), 2) husband, partner, boyfriend supports me emotionally in my school efforts (5.98 mean). The other items that received at least a 4.0 mean or above were: 1) classes scheduled when I must work, and 2) counseling (group and individual) to address exam anxiety, time allotment, role conflict, and self doubt. A discussion of the findings on the population as a whole followed the presentation of the data on the two groups. Table 3 presented the mean for
questions 47 through 56 for the traditional and non-traditional students as individual groups.

Table 3  
Special University Services by Mean Scores

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Services</th>
<th>Traditional</th>
<th>Non-Traditional</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Too little contact with faculty</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty discriminates against me</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because of age</td>
<td>5.23*</td>
<td>4.90**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Need for financial aid</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of college admission policies which consider adult</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>students</td>
<td>3.13</td>
<td>3.42</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class scheduled when I must work</td>
<td>3.87</td>
<td>4.20**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Too little access to student advising</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>3.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help in understanding the mechanics of returning to school and overcoming institutional barriers</td>
<td>3.70</td>
<td>3.90</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(table continues)
The special university services rated highest in Table 3 were the support received by the non-traditional respondents' husband, partner, or boyfriend which received a 6.04 rated on a scale from one through seven. This was taken to mean that the non-traditional respondents' partner, mate, or boyfriend was very supportive of her school efforts. The traditional respondents received a 5.90 mean score which was only slightly less than the mean score of the non-traditional respondents. The non-traditional respondents had a mean score of 4.20 on the statement
"Classes scheduled when I must work". This was somewhat higher than the score the traditional students received which had a mean of 3.87.

On the item in the questionnaire "Help in understanding the mechanics of returning to school and overcoming institutional barriers" the non-traditional respondents had a mean of 3.90 while the traditional respondents had a mean score of 3.70 on a one through seven point score. On the response item, "Need for financial aid", the traditional students had a mean score of 5.23 on a one through seven point scale while the non-traditional respondents had a mean score of 4.90. The two response items that had the most relevance for the university in its effort to meet the needs of both traditional and non-traditional students were financial and counseling services directed to meet the needs of women students.

In the area of financial aid, the university might strive harder to educate the students about all governmental financial aid available, the criteria and how to access it. The financial aid office could provide knowledgeable, friendly, and courteous counselors that work as hard for the student seeking the aid as if it were the counselors seeking the aid. Scholarships could be researched and this resource could be made available and help could be offered in applying for the scholarships. Work-study could also be
expanded so that more students can be employed in on campus jobs ideally in their chosen field or a field of interest. If the colleges and universities make financial help and aid a priority, the problems faced by many students could be eased.

Another need that the respondents, both traditional and non-traditional, expressed through their high mean scores was the need for available counseling to address exam anxiety, time allotment, role conflict and self-doubt. Special seminars could be held and groups could be formed on each of these topics. The groups could be on-going and facilitated and organized by university personnel who had an interest and expertise in the particular area. They would need to be held on several different time periods and days to give married and/or commuter students a chance to attend. Each of the above needs that were identified by the respondents in this study; need for financial aid; class schedules to take account of working students; and need for counseling to address school and personal issues were cited prominently in the review of literature (Robertson, 1991, Glass and Rose, 1981, Hildreth, 1983, Moore and Young, 1985, Papier, 1980, and Peterson and Blank, 1985).

Qualitative data were gathered in the questionnaires. A sampling of the qualitative data was presented below.
Qualitative Data

The mail questionnaires sent to the population of traditional and non-traditional female students attending Texas A&M University - Commerce contained space at the end for students to make whatever comments they chose. This opportunity was taken by 19 of the traditional students and by 28 of the non-traditional students. Their comments and recommendations were varied but several items or concerns were quite prominent. A discussion of those themes and concerns and their possible implications for improved university services follow.

Robertson's 1991 study of non-traditional women students found that they often have to act as jugglers between home, work, and school duties and that the traditional fall to spring full-time enrollment often tend to discriminate against a large category of adult learners - either those who progress rapidly or those who progress slowly. His findings duplicate that of many Texas A&M University - Commerce students who used the comment section of the questionnaire to express their concerns. Hildreth (1983) found in her study of women and college attendance that the class schedules and course and location of course offerings were important barriers. Excerpts from those
comments regarding those concerns or similar concerns follow.

A 21-year old student commented:
I feel that internship and residency for one year is a waste of time. I think that it should be only for one semester. Having student teaching for a year has caused many people I know to go to the non-teaching route. I also have a problem with the times that classes are offered. I could not start my internship this summer because of the class schedule. All my classes that I needed were only offered on Tuesdays and Thursdays. Tuesdays and Thursdays were when I was scheduled to do my internship. I must now put off my internship to another term.

A 22-year old student remarked "I believe more classes at the junior and senior level needed to be offered at night so that people that support themselves can work full-time and still attend". A 40-year-old student remarked Offer class times for those who work full-time, especially for graduate classes and undergraduate required courses such as statistics, research, and theory. Change night courses from 4:30 to at
least 5:30 p.m. Drop 6-year requirement to complete graduate school.

A 30-year-old student stated

The classes are many times only before noon. Due to my long commute I would like to have more classes stretched throughout the day and maybe avoid driving to Commerce five days a week. For example - take classes all day Monday, Wednesday, and Friday. I drive 60-miles.

A 22-year-old student wrote:

I wish the teachers had more consideration for the working students. I commute from about 25 miles away. I go to school full-time and I also work 20-25 hours a week. Some teachers assign reading on file in the library and students who have to work don't have enough time to get to the library every night after work.

A 36-year-old student remarked:

The intern and resident program for teacher education still has many problems. For example, the university expects the students to be in the public school system from the day they start to school - say August 5th every day until university classes start on August 26th. Plus the university wants the students to have all paperwork and
tuition taken care of before the 26th. By being in the public school from 7:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m., five days a week, and the phone lines at the university continually busy from 4:00 till 5:00, it doesn't leave much time for a student to take care of business. There needs to be certain times set aside when interns and residents can come to the university to take care of business without fear of being dropped from classes.

A 30-year-old student remarked:

The classes are many times only before noon. Due to my long commute I would like to have more classes stretch throughout the day and maybe avoid driving to Commerce 5 days a week. For example - take classes all day Monday, Wednesday and Friday. I drive 60 miles.

A 37-year-old student declared

It's been very hard having stats (Soc. 332) at 2:00 in the afternoon. I go to my social work classes from 12:00 to 5:00 on Mondays. I have to get in 16 hours of field a week and I have to work. It has made for a very stressful semester. Stats should be offered in the morning.

A 43-year-old student expressed
and internship classes that are only offered at Commerce. Please help a working mother complete her degree.

A 50-year-old student commented:

My majors are psychology and counseling. No counseling courses were offered during the summer at the undergraduate level. Courses offered in psychology were few. None were offered that I could use. Because of summer scheduling, I was not able to pick up any hours. I should be able to take 12 hours. I am a senior but have no idea when I will graduate. The way courses are being scheduled, it will take 3 semesters to finish, assuming that the courses I still need are offered. Because of the extra time I will have to attend classes, I will have to commute an additional 7 months. This is going to cause an unnecessary financial hardship in the form of travel expense and increased cost of tuition. I had prepared myself to earn only a fraction of my previous income while going to school and working part-time for 4 years. I was not prepared to come this far and still have no end in sight. The university has taken 'we've always done it this way stance'
The Colorado Commission on Higher Education (1992) found in its study of non-traditional college students that the burden on the students to adapt to the expectation of the institution should shift to one in which "institutions of higher education increasingly refine their role as one of fulfilling students expectations" (p.12). Young and Moore's study indicated that institutional barriers rated the highest impediment to non-traditional students at 43 percent (p.1). Those findings are echoed by the concerns of students at Texas A&M - Commerce as seen by the excerpts from the questionnaires.

A 23-year-old remarked "Every time a service is needed in Administration / Records - there is always a 'run around' . . . . the efficiency is inadequate and records are not complete most of the time."

A 21-year-old-student stated " I believe that it was the fault of ETSU not to properly inform students of exactly all that would happen or not happen once Texas A&M took over. It would have made the transition easier on everyone".

A 35-year-old-student expressed

Weed out the professors who are no longer into the students' learning. Pay attention to students' evaluations and take appropriate action when the
evaluations indicate an overwhelming majority of students dislike or think the professor is unfair. A 30-year-old student declared
I am an older student, therefore it has been very complicated to attend school here at TAMU. My GPA is low not because of initiative, but lack of information. The admission office needs to offer (up front) the university's fresh start program. I didn't hear about it until it was too late so my GPA reflects several "F's" from over twelve years ago. Also, there are departments on campus that only offer classes every one or two years. That makes it harder for the older student to get in and out.
A 48-year-old student expressed:
There are policies that appear ludicrous. One semester, for instance, I literally forgot to pay my tuition, but was attending class, when the instructor said the registrar indicated I'd not paid. I was embarrassed and surprised. I called the registrar the next morning, made an appointment, took off from work and drove the 65-mile round trip to Commerce. When I arrived, I waited 30 minutes while the person I spoke to was visiting in her supervisor's office. I was supposed to attend a funeral in Sherman at 2:00
p.m. I asked the secretary to interrupt. The staff member was rude and demanded I have a signed note from my instructors before being reinstated. I reminded her that I was about to sign a check for over $500 and was she going to take my word that I had that money in the bank. The upshot was that I was late for the funeral - but like a naughty child, had to have notes from my teachers.

Moore and Young (1995) found in their study that one important barrier to higher education access and completion for the non-traditional student was finances (p.1). The excerpts from the qualitative portion of the questionnaires in the present study tended to support this contention. The excerpts follow:

A 55-year-old-student stated "I cannot afford to pay for credits on my own. I need financial aid. Therefore, one should be allowed to be accepted by another graduate program and be able to receive aid you can't get and unless you're in a degreed program."

A 40-year-old-student stated "I am a divorced mother of 3 school-age children, 12, 7 and 5. My ex-husband does not pay child support. I live on food stamps, Medicaid, and help from my boyfriend. More financial aid should be available for me (besides loans). I will graduate in May, Amen!"
A 21-one-year-old student responded
There is not enough financial aid for women available. It is hard to get what financial aid you deserve . . . It is ridiculous the time that has to be spent to get the smallest amount of money. I still have not been able to get my classes paid for yet. On top of all this, my classes were dropped at the beginning of the semester.

A 39-year-old student stated
I wish the State of Texas would grant all educators tuition-free education, in turn, that student would be required to teach in the State of Texas for a specified number of years to repay the state. If for some reason that student was unable to fulfill his/her obligation, the student must repay the state.

Another 40-year-old student commented :
I participated in Teacher's Field Based Program. The program is good in concept, however it lacked in several key elements. As a non-traditional student and a single parent of one, this program put an extreme financial hardship on me. Teaching is a full-time profession and they wanted you (required) to do this plus keep up with school work for 12-21 hours semester credits. Besides
paying high tuition there was no money coming in during the time of my intern-resident semesters. . . I'm still feeling the financial strain that the Field Base Program has left me. Furthermore, the college's liaison had the audacity to criticize my performance as a teacher. Funny how my performance improved when I began substitution and when I was assured there was money coming in, therefore, part of the stress was relieved.

Several participants gave fairly specific reasons for college attendance in the qualitative section of the questionnaire. A sampling of those reasons follow.

A 51-year-old student remarked
My undergraduate degree was obtained to satisfy my father and spouse. Since then I have taken classes to distract me from other life circumstances that could have been consuming. I have taken classes because I wanted to learn to be more effective in my work . . . My current degree pursuit is to satisfy a personal goal. It may or may not 'pay off financially' but that is not my motivation so it doesn't matter.

A 21-year-old student commented
The biggest problem at the university is the student's lack of desire to learn. I think the
faculty understands this and lowers its requirements. I feel too much emphasis is placed on grades and not on learning. It causes the university to turn out ignorant 'educated' people possessing a degree. I hope this survey will be taken seriously but, I believe I am in the minority because I want to learn. My motive may be unorthodox in our society."

A 22-year-old student stated "I am an intensely dedicated art student. Very often in my classes other than art or music, I feel as though my degree is looked at as insignificant. I also feel that the art classes available are rather limiting."

The qualitative data obtained in the questionnaires appeared to generate more important information on problems in services as seen by both traditional and non-traditional students than did the quantitative data. More and stronger comments were centered on the scheduling and offering of classes than any other concern. The next highest concern was in regards to finances. Several students thanked this researcher for caring enough to do this survey. Still others hoped that the university would pay attention to their needs as identified through the survey but doubted that would happen.
Demographic Factors of the Respondents

In order to get an understanding of who the respondents were, data for selected demographic factors were obtained. The questions asked were: 1) father's last occupation, 2) parents' annual income, 3) father's education, 4) overall grade point average, and 5) respondent's age.

Table 4

Selected Demographic Factors by Mean and for Percent Scores
(all Respondents)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Selected Demographic Factors</th>
<th>Scores</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Father's Occupation (^a)</td>
<td>35.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Annual Income (^b)</td>
<td>45.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Education (^c)</td>
<td>27.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Overall Grade Point Average (^d)</td>
<td>3.251</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Age (^e)</td>
<td>30.036</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^a\) Highest percentage - Some technical training or college

\(^b\) Highest percentage - $30,000 - 39,000

\(^c\) Highest percentage - Some technical training or college

\(^d\) Measured on a 1.00 - 4.00 grade point scale

\(^e\) Lowest age 19 - highest age 55

The father's occupation was measured on a one through four scale. One equaled blue collar, two equaled white collar, three equaled business owner or manager, and four equaled professional, and nine equaled no answer or
unemployed. There was a total of fourteen missing cases. The largest percentage fell into the professional bracket. The parents' annual income was based on a seven point scale from less than $10,000 to $40,000 or more. The largest percentage of parents' fell into the $40,000 bracket at 45.3 percent. Father's education was based on a one through eight point scale that ranged from one - some grade school through eight - graduate degree, M.D., M.A., Ph.D. etc. The largest percentage of fathers had some technical training or college at 27.6 percent. Only 2.9 percent had a graduate degree and only 4.7 percent had only some grade school education.

The grade point average (GPA) for the total population was 3.251 based on a 1.00 through 4.0 score. There were eight missing cases. The respondents' age mean was 30.036. The lowest age reported was nineteen and the highest reported was 55.

It appeared from the statistics just presented that somewhat less than half of the fathers had professional or managerial type occupations. The statistics gathered showed that more fathers had some technical or college training than any other category. Fathers' income was fairly high which was likely associated with their job status. The respondents grade point average was fairly high at 3.251 which can be considered a low B. The respondents' age at a
mean of 30.36 can be taken to indicate a fairly mature female student body although the highest reported age was 55.

The total population in the study was 169. There were 90 non-traditional female students and 79 traditional female students. The age range of those students was 19 years of age to 55 years of age. The mean for the respondents' reported income was $21,043, the median was $18,000, and the mode was $30,000. The minimum was 0 while the maximum was $90,000. Forty-six percent of the respondents' fathers had income at $40,000 or above. Twenty-seven percent of the fathers had some technical or college training. This was the largest percentage in a response and category. Nine and one-half percent had a graduate degree while almost five percent had only some grade school education. Almost 50 percent of the respondents were married. Only 12 percent reported that they were divorced or separated. All but ten of the respondents were seeking a university degree. The maximum for grade point average was 4.0 and the minimum was 2.0. The mean for the GPA for all respondents was 3.249, the median was 3.280, and the mode was 3.00.

Table 5 shows the demographic factors and the GPA for the traditional students. The mean age for the traditional students was 22 years of age. The respondents mean income was almost $13,000 per year. Nearly 55 percent of the
traditional students' fathers had an income over $40,000. More than 36 percent of the fathers had some technical training or college which was the largest percentage of any other possible categories. The traditional students' mean GPA was 3.07. Sixty-seven percent of them were single.

Table 5

Selected Demographic Factors\(^{(a)}\) and GPA by Mean or Percent Scores (Traditional Group)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Factors and GPA</th>
<th>Response Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>Mean 21.857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondent's Income</td>
<td>$12,938.71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent's Income</td>
<td>54.5*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father's Education</td>
<td>36.7**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>3.074</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Status</td>
<td>67.1***</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\(^{(a)}\) Traditional age group

* $40,000 or more income (largest percentage)
** Some technical training or college (largest percentage)
*** Single

The demographic factors and GPA for the non-traditional age group were presented in Table 6. The non-traditional students had a mean age of 37. Their mean income was
Almost 38 percent of their parents had incomes of $30,000 to $39,000 which was the largest percentage of possible categories. Twenty-three percent of the fathers had completed high school which was the largest percentage out of eight possible answer categories. The non-traditional students had a mean GPA of 3.40. Nearly 67 percent were married.

Table 6

Selected Demographic Factors and GPA by Mean or Percent Score (Non-Traditional Group) a

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Demographic Factors</th>
<th>Response Score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age b</td>
<td>37.114</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Respondents income c</td>
<td>25,450.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parents income d</td>
<td>37.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fathers' education</td>
<td>23.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GPA</td>
<td>3.40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status g</td>
<td>67.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a Non-traditional students
b Age - 25 years up - highest reported age 55

table continues
A comparison of the two groups on demographic factors and GPA showed some fairly important differences. The mean age difference was fifteen years. Their personal income showed a disparity with the non-traditional students mean personal income at almost twice as large as the traditional students. The non-traditional students mean income was $25,000 and the traditional students' mean income was $12,939.71. However, the traditional students' parents had higher incomes. Over 54 percent of the traditional students' parents had incomes of $40,000 or more while only 37.8 percent of the non-traditional parents had incomes of $40,000 and above. The traditional students' fathers education level was higher. Almost 37 percent of the fathers (the largest percentage of possible education categories) had some technical training or college while only 23 percent of the non-traditional group fell into that
category. The GPA for the traditional student was smaller. The mean GPA for the traditional students was 3.07 while the GPA for the non-traditional students was 3.40.

Most of the non-traditional students were married while most of the traditional students were single at 67.1 percent versus 67.8 percent of the non-traditional students that were married.

The demographic data showed a picture of the traditional students whose fathers were more educated, made more money and had a higher education than the non-traditional students. The non-traditional students were mostly single and had a much lower personal income. The non-traditional students' GPA were much higher. The traditional students' mean GPA was just over 3.0 while the non-traditional students' mean GPA were 3.40.

The grade point average was a self-reported score. Access to a student's grade point average was forbidden under the right to privacy law. A possible explanation for the non-traditional students' high grade point average scores might have been that graduate students who tend to have higher grade point averages were included in the sample.

A comparison of the demographic data from this investigator's 1980 study and the present study showed some differences for the population as a group. In the 1980
study the overall grade point average yielded a mean score of 3.49. The present study yielded a mean score of 3.25. The mean age of the respondents in the 1980 study was 30.3. Analysis of the demographic data seem to indicate that the women students (traditional and non-traditional) of Texas A&M University - Commerce were mostly middle class or on the border line between working class and middle class.

The next step in the analysis was to reduce the data. In order to look at the reasons for college or university attendance, itemized reasons were combined into six clusters of reasons (Appendix E). Cross-tabs were then run on the clusters of reasons by age to see if there was a difference in reasons for college attendance between the traditional and non-traditional age groups.

Kendall's $\tau_b$ was chosen as the measure of association because "it measures the extent to which an increase in one variable is accompanied by an increase in another variable (or decrease) if the sign is negative . . . . It is a symmetric measure" (Weisberg and Bowen, 1977, p. 153). Loether and McTavish (1980) stated that $\tau_b$ "is one of the more useful ordinal, symmetrical measures" (p. 236). Bahrnstedt and Knoke (1982) stated that $\tau_b$ uses information about two orderable discrete variables by considering every possible pair of observations in the cross tabulation table (p. 296). Weisberg and Bowen (p. 154)
contended that \( \tau_b \) above .7 were high, between .3 and .7 were moderate and between .0 and .3 small, and in some types of surveys values as high as .3 are rare so correlations of .1 are reported as high. This was used as a guide to figure measures of association between variables for the data presented in Table 8. The following Kendall's \( \tau_b \) measures of association were used: \( >.0 = \text{small correlation} \), \( >.3 = \text{moderate correlation} \), and \( >.7 = \text{high correlation} \).

For measurement purpose a one to seven Likert type scale was used to measure responses to questionnaire items which were then computed into low and high based on a median split. The cluster of reasons that was the most important for the non-traditional group was the Desire to Know. Forty-eight of the 90 non-traditional students were high on that cluster while 36 of the 69 traditional students were high on that cluster. The most important cluster for the traditional group was The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity followed by The Desire to Escape.

The two groups were almost indistinguishable on the clusters with the exception of the clusters, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal, The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity and The Desire to Escape. All of those were more important to the traditional group. Those clusters were seen as significant through the use of \( \tau_b \) in table 7 and
the point biserial correlation (Kachigan, 1982) as seen in Table 8.

Table 7

**Comparison of Clusters of Reasons for University Attendance by Age Group**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Clusters of reasons</th>
<th>Traditional (Number 79)</th>
<th>Non-Traditional (Number 90)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desire to Know</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desire to Reach A Personal Goal</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>46</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desire to Reach a Social Goal</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Desire to Escape with Formal Requirements</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

See Appendix E for reasons that make up clusters

Low and high based on medium split

*table continues*
Hypotheses Tested In Study

This study was exploratory in nature. However, through this investigator's 1980 study of the subject and an extensive literature review of the subject certain hypotheses were generated. They were: Hypothesis number one: The higher the age (non-traditional age female student), the higher one placed on the cluster of reasons for university attendance, The Desire to Know, which was based on Maslow's level five hierarchy of needs, Hypothesis number two. The higher the age (non-traditional age female student) the higher The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal which was based on Maslow's level four hierarchy of needs, Hypothesis number three. The higher the age (non-traditional female student) the higher the socioeconomic status, Hypothesis number four. The higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the placement on the cluster, The Desire to Know, and Hypothesis number five.
The non-traditional group will need more special university services than the traditional group.

Each of the five hypotheses was presented below. The research hypotheses, the nominal definitions, the operational definitions, the measure of association, and the findings were included. The presentation of the findings for each of the five hypothesis were shown at the end of the presentation. A discussion of hypothesis number five is in Table 9. This gave a condensed but graphic picture of the results of the measure of association, the point biserial correlation (Kachigan, 1982. P. 134).

**Hypothesis number one:** The higher the age (non-traditional age female student) the higher one placed on the cluster of reasons for university attendance, The Desire to Know which was based on Maslow's level five hierarchy of needs.

**Nominal definitions:** The female university student was defined here as a female taking six or more hours of college course work in the 1996 - one semester at Texas A&M University - Commerce. The non-traditional age group was defined here as a female student 25 years of age and up. The Desire to Know was defined here as a cluster of nine variables to test the student's placement one component of Maslow's level five hierarchy.
Operational definitions: Non-traditional female students were operationalized by using an university computer generated printout of all female students age 25 and over who were taking six or more credit hours in the 1996 spring semester. The Desire to Know was operationalized by recording the respondent's answers to the nine variables on the survey instrument using a Likert type scale with one through seven scores (never influences me to always influences me) with a 0 for non-response. The Desire to Know (destono) was a new variable composed of the following variables: Var. 27, Var. 22, Var. 15, Var. 14, Var. 6, Var. 17 Var. 16, Var. 25, and Var. 2. The Desire to Know is included in Maslow's highest level (five), self actualization.

Independent and dependent variables: Non-traditional and traditional groups was the independent. The Desire to Reach a Goal was the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number two: The higher the age (non-traditional age female student) the higher The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal. It was based on Maslow's level four hierarchy of needs.

Nominal definitions: The non-traditional group was defined as in hypothesis number one. The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal was defined here as a cluster of sixteen variables.
Operations definitions: The non-traditional age group was operationally defined as in hypothesis number one. However, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal (desirepg) was a new variable composed of the following variables: var. 19, var. 3, var. 13, var. 44, var. 31, var. 12, var. 38, var. 35, var. 21, var. 4, var. 36, var. 26, var. 28, var. 5, var. 42, and var. 25.

Independent and dependent variables: Non-traditional and traditional groups are the independent variables. The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal is the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number three: The higher the age (non-traditional female student) the higher the socioeconomic status.

Nominal definitions: The nominal definition of the non-traditional group was operationally defined as in hypothesis one and two. Socioeconomic status was defined as income, education, and occupation.

Operational definitions: The non-traditional female student was operationally defined as in hypotheses one and two. Socioeconomic was defined here by including questions in the mail questionnaire on father's or guardian's occupation, approximate annual income of father, guardian, or self, if self-supporting and highest level of education attained by father.
Independent and dependent variables: The non-traditional group was the independent variable. The socioeconomic status was the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number four: The higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the placement on the cluster, The Desire to Know.

Nominal definitions: The nominal definition of the non-traditional female group was nominally defined as in hypotheses one, two, and three. The Desire to Know was nominally defined as in hypothesis number one.

Operational definitions: Socioeconomic status was operationally defined as in hypothesis number four. The Desire to Know was operationally defined as in hypothesis number one.

Independent and dependent variables: Socioeconomic status was the independent variable and The Desire to Know was the dependent variable.

Hypothesis number five: The non-traditional age group will need more special university services than the traditional group.

Nominal definitions: Traditional and non-traditional age group was nominally defined here as in hypotheses number one, two, and three. Special university services were defined here as in hypotheses number one, two, and three.
Special university services were defined here as those services (counseling, admission procedure, advisors, financial need, etc.) that promote success in the attraction and retention of the non-traditional female students.

Operational definitions: The non-traditional age group was operationalized here as in hypotheses number one, two and three. Special university services were operationalized by recording the respondent's answers to ten variables on the survey instrument using a Likert type scale from one through seven with a 0 for non response.

Independent and dependent variables: The non-traditional age group was the independent variable. Special university services was the dependent variable.
Table 8

Point Biserial Correlation Between Group by (T, NT) and H - SES, L-SES and Reason A through F (No = 169)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reasons</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>E</th>
<th>F</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trad vs Trad vs Non-Trad</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>-.253*</td>
<td>-.138</td>
<td>-.311*</td>
<td>-.289</td>
<td>-.139</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi SES vs Low SES</td>
<td>.088</td>
<td>.086</td>
<td>.118</td>
<td>.103</td>
<td>.068</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* < .05

A through F corresponds to reasons 1-6 (See Appendix E)

Table 9

Point Biserial Correlation Between Group Type (T, NT) and (H - SES, L-SES) and Special University Services (N = 169)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Special University Services</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trad vs Non Trad</td>
<td>.021</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hi vs Low SES</td>
<td>.091</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* P < .05
Summary Of Findings And Results Of Analysis For The Hypotheses

Hypothesis number one: The non-traditional group will place higher on the cluster of reasons for university attendance, The Desire to Know. There was no significant difference between the two groups, the traditional and the non-traditional students as shown by Kendall's \( \tau_b \) of .077 and a significance level of .31237. The research hypothesis must be rejected in favor of the null hypothesis of no difference.

Hypothesis number two: The non-traditional female student group will place higher on the cluster of reasons, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal. There was a small correlation between the non-traditional and the traditional student but the traditional student was higher on this cluster than the non-traditional student. The \( \tau_b \) was .323, significance was .00001. The point biserial correlation significance was -.2153 and the significance was .005. The research hypothesis as stated cannot be accepted. The difference in the groups go in the opposite direction than was predicted.

Hypothesis number three: The non-traditional group will have higher socioeconomic status (SES) than the traditional group. Kendall's \( \tau_b \) was -.051 with a significance level of .505. There was no significant
difference between the groups. The research hypothesis cannot be accepted. The null hypothesis of no difference must be accepted.

**Hypothesis number four:** The higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the placement on the cluster, The Desire to Know. There was no significant difference in the traditional and the non-traditional age group. The point biserial correlation was .088. The null hypothesis of no difference must be accepted.

**Hypothesis number five:** The non-traditional age group will need more special university services than the traditional group. Point biserial correlation at .021 showed no significant difference in the two groups. The null hypothesis of no difference must be accepted.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

The major objectives of the present study were exploratory in nature. Areas that were studied were: 1) stated reasons for the non-traditional female students to enroll in college, 2) stated reasons for college attendance by the traditional female student, 3) comparison of the traditional and non-traditional female student to ascertain if and how their reasons for attendance differed, 4) comparison of the effect of socioeconomic status on motivation for enrollment of traditional with that of non-traditional female students, 5) comparison of selected demographic variables such as fathers' occupation, education, and income for the traditional and non-traditional female student, and 6) comparison as to the extent of need for special university services for traditional and non-traditional female students.

In order to conduct an exploratory study in the above areas of interest, a mail questionnaire was devised which included an instrument to measure those variables under exploration. That instrument included "Reason for Enrollment in University Studies". A portion of the instrument was made up by use of variables used by Burgess...
(1971), with some modifications. The instrument also included scales devised to measure the extent of need for special university services. Questions to elicit demographic data were also included in the instrument. Also, of great importance was a section at the end of the questionnaire for qualitative data. The respondents were asked for whatever comments or added information they wished to give.

The questionnaire was mailed to 293 women university students who were enrolled at Texas A&M University - Commerce. All students receiving the questionnaire were taking six semester hours or more in the 1996 - one semester.

A total of 79 questionnaires were returned by the traditional students and a total of 90 questionnaires were returned by the non-traditional students. The final sample of 169 questionnaires were edited and coded on IBM coding forms. Next, each variable tested in the present study was subjected to several SPSS Analyses techniques. Frequencies were run on all variables to get an overall view of the data. The mean and median of each variable were calculated. The selected demographic data were analyzed by use of cross-tabulation. The comparison of clusters of reasons for college or university attendance by age groups were analyzed. The numbers were obtained for the traditional and
non-traditional students who fell into the low or high category of each cluster of reasons for attending the university. A comparison of the traditional with the non-traditional students on their need for special university services were done. Kendall's $\tau_b$ was used as a measure of association between responses of the traditional and non-traditional student. A comparison of socioeconomic status and clusters of reasons for university attendance and the traditional and non-traditional age groups and the need for special university services were analyzed by use of the point biserial correlation.

Other findings were seen by this investigator as equally important to the quantitative data generated by the variables contained in the questionnaires. Those were qualitative data findings generated through the solicitation of comments and suggestions and concerns at the end of the questionnaire. The qualitative data indicated concerns and needs that were very close to those identified by researchers cited in this study.

Although this was an exploratory study by nature, certain hypotheses were generated through the literature review. Also hypotheses were generated through this researcher's 1980 study, and empirical observation.
Summary of Findings

The exploratory areas that were tested were presented below. Also included were the findings of those tests.

Reasons For College Or University Attendance

The highest itemized reasons for college or university attendance by both groups were: 1) to increase my competence to achieve my goals, and 2) to earn a degree or certificate. When the itemized reasons were grouped into clusters and analyzed, the most important for the non-traditional age group was The Desire to Know. The most important clusters for the traditional age group were in order, The Desire to Take Part in Social Activities, The Desire to Escape, and The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal.

Comparison of the Traditional Student with the Non-Traditional Student by Reason for Attendance

The only cluster that was seen as important to the non-traditional student was The Desire to Know. All other reasons saw more persons in the low score than the high score. A clear picture of the non-traditional student did not emerge. The traditional student, however, was strongly represented in the high scores of The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity, The Desire to Escape, and The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal. None of these clusters was important to the non-traditional student.
Socioeconomic Status and Age

There was no correlation found between socioeconomic status and age. Kendall's \( \tau_b \) was -.051 with a significance of .505. They were almost evenly divided into high and low SES. The traditional group was slightly more represented in the low SES category.

Grade Point Average and Age

The non-traditional students had a mean average GPA of 3.40. The traditional students had a mean average GPA of 3.07. There appeared to be a relationship between age and GPA. This data was gathered through a self reporting question on the questionnaire. One explanation for the higher GPA of the non-traditional students might have been because graduate students were included in the sample and graduate students tend to have higher GPA's.

Comparison of Traditional and Non-traditional Student and Demographic Factors

The mean age for the traditional age group was twenty-two while the mean age of the non-traditional age group was thirty-seven -- a difference of fifteen years. The average income of the traditional student was less than half that of the non-traditional group. It was $12,938.71. (The average income of $12,938.71 of the traditional students was less than half of the non-traditional group) However, their
parents' income was more than the non-traditional students and 38 percent reported their parents earned $40,000 or more a year while only 38 percent of the parents of the non-traditional group earned as much. More traditional students' fathers' had some college or technical training. Sixty-seven percent of the traditional students were single whereas 68 percent of the non-traditional students were married.

Comparison of Need for Special University Services Between Traditional and Non-traditional Students

The highest rated need shown by both traditional and non-traditional students was for financial aid. This was followed by the need to have classes scheduled at times when they did not have to work. The third highest rated need by both groups was to have help with the mechanics of returning to school and overcoming institutional barriers. The need for financial aid was rated higher by the traditional students. This may be a reflection of their personal mean income of just over $12,000 per year. The traditional students also rated higher on the need for classes to be scheduled when they were not working. The non-traditional students reported higher support from their partners, husbands, or boyfriends in their school efforts than did the traditional students.
There was no significant difference between the groups when the questions were combined into a new variable. The groups were compared by \( \tau_{\text{b}} \).

**Qualitative Data**

Forty-seven respondents (traditional and non-traditional) furnished comments and concerns in the space allotted in the questionnaire. The comments and concerns mostly centered on class schedules, course offerings, location of courses, length of field placements, residency and internship. Other concerns voiced were institutional regulations that seemed more for the benefit of the organization than the student. One student stated that at one point she was made to feel like a naughty child by a worker in the Registrar's Office. Still other concerns were centered on the need for more important and up-to-date information on benefits and alternatives offered. Many of them voiced a need for more financial aid. Some expressed frustration at juggling their schedules to fit in everything.

**Hypothesis Tested**

There were five hypotheses tested in this study. They were: 1) The higher the age the higher one placed on the cluster of reasons for university attendance, The Desire to Know which was based on Maslow's level five hierarchy of
needs. There was no significant difference found between the traditional and the non-traditional students, 2) The higher the age (non-traditional age student) the higher The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal which was based on Maslow's level four hierarchy of needs. There was a small correlation here but it was not in the direction hypothesized, 3) The higher the age the higher the socioeconomic status. There was no significant difference. 4) The higher the socioeconomic status, the higher the placement on The Desire to Know. There was no significant difference. 5) The non-traditional age group will need more special university services that the traditional group. No significant difference was found.

Correlation of Abraham Maslow's Need Hierarchy and Age

The highest level in Maslow's need hierarchy was level five which included The Desire to Know, an integral ingredient of self-actualization. The non-traditional group rated higher on that cluster. The cluster, The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal was rated higher by the traditional students. This cluster is based on Maslow's level four hierarchy. The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal and The Desire to Take Part in Social Activities were important to the traditional students but not important to the non-traditional students. Both clusters corresponded to
Maslow's level three (social need). One explanation for the higher score by the traditional students may be that the non-traditional students had already found satisfaction at that hierarchical level and were seeking satisfaction at a higher levels of need. Apparently the traditional students had a greater social need than did the non-traditional students. Another reason may be that many more of the non-traditional students were married and settled.

Comparison With the Researcher's 1980 Study

A somewhat clearer picture of the reasons for college attendance by the non-traditional student emerged in the 1980 study. In that study, the non-traditional students rated higher on The Desire To Know cluster than they did in the present study. Also, they rated higher on The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal. In the 1980 study, the traditional students also rated higher. The Desire to Take Part in Social Activities and The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal were important reasons for college attendance in both the present study and the 1980 study. The Desire to Escape was rated as important to the traditional student in the present study, but not in the 1980 study. It was not important in either study to the non-traditional group.

Conclusions

The women students at Texas A&M University - Commerce were mostly from a middle class background. They had
attained a fairly high grade point average. The pursuit of knowledge was fairly important to the non-traditional student while The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal appeared to be more important to the traditional students. An example of that was the attainment of a college degree.

The social aspects of college were important to the traditional students, but not important to the non-traditional students. Traditional students may be using college attendance as a form of escape based on their high rating on this cluster of reasons for college attendance. It might have been that they were using college as an "escape" or first step into independence from the nest, but were not ready to take the full responsibility of a job and complete emotional and financial independence from their families of origin.

Limitations

An important area of research such as the present study needed a wider population, a higher budget, and a greater time span in order to make generalizations to traditional and non-traditional students. These recommendations were impossible to meet in the present research effort.

It was recognized and an attempt was made to eliminate all threads of bias in the findings. Recognition was made, however, of the fact that the mere choice of a research area was a form of bias.
Implication for Application

The findings of this study seem to indicate that women were in college to seek knowledge and attain a goal. Also for the younger women students it provided social opportunities and a form of escapism.

These finding pose a challenge to the colleges to not only provide course work to meet the knowledge seeking students but to catch the imagination and set on fire the desire to learn in students who may not have a direction or true sense of their purpose of attendance. The professors and instructors could make sure their lectures have relevance to the students life and experiences and they should show passion for the subject. A broad study area such as the social sciences could be made a part of the students' first year or two of college. This could give exposure to a knowledge base that more than likely is sorely lacking.

However, emphasis should be on beefing up the academic offerings. Special attention should be paid to the timing and frequency of course offerings. Budgeting, time management, stress relief, and tutoring classes should be readily available and assessable. Marketing to the potential women students should be ongoing. One important way would be to offer off-campus courses in each town in the area on evenings and weekends. The entry requirements
should be such that the first-time students would not be intimidated. Those classes should be taught by the top-rated professors in their field. More than likely, they have not had before. Other ways to feed the desire for knowledge and to turn the students reasons for college attendance from escapism to the pursuit of knowledge include: bringing in visiting professors and lecturers; arranging specialized seminars; providing opportunities for field trips and studies; and providing competitive salaries to exceptional faculty.

Women's studies could be instituted or increased. A specialized center could be dedicated to helping women in transition from the home-maker role to student or professional role. Advisors acknowledgeable and interested in the problems of women should be available for conferences at all times. The social activities of the university

Implications for Further Research

All research into the area of higher education and non-traditional student pointed to its increased importance for the populace and the universities. Further research seems to be needed in several areas.

Areas in which further related research seem to be needed were: 1) curriculum planning geared to the needs of women students, 2) educational delivery services to meet the needs of local citizens who cannot commute to a university
campus or who cannot meet classes at traditional hours, 3) ways to meet unique requirements for counseling, tutoring, and services supporting academic effort, and 4) formal and informal planning to meet the needs of women students, 5) studies to explore escapism as a possible reason for traditional students to attend college.
APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE
This study is to help identify reasons why women enroll in University Studies so that their educational needs and requirements can be better met by Texas A&M University-Commerce. Please answer all of the questions. If you wish to comment on any aspect of the questionnaire or add additional information please use the space provided at the end of the questionnaire.

Thank you very sincerely for your help.

Please return this completed questionnaire to:
Lila Sparkman, Project Director
Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice
Texas A&M University-Commerce
Commerce, Texas 75429-3011

This project has been reviewed and approved by the Texas A&M University-Commerce Committee For the Protection of Human Subjects, (903) 886-5994 or 5940.
Reasons for Enrollment in University Studies

Please indicate how often reasons listed below influenced you to enroll in a university.

While there are no right or wrong answers please carefully consider each statement before circling only one of the numbers (1—Never influences me; 2—Very seldom influences me; 3—Once in a while influences me; 4—Occasionally influences me; 5—Fairly often influences me; 6—Very often influences me; and 7—Always influences me) opposite each statement.

Example:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Never Influences Me</th>
<th>Very Seldom Influences Me</th>
<th>Once in a While Influences Me</th>
<th>Occasionally Influences Me</th>
<th>Fairly Often Influences Me</th>
<th>Very Often Influences Me</th>
<th>Always Influences Me</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>14 To satisfy an intellectual curiosity</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
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If statement 14 in the example *Very seldom influences me* then circle 2 as indicated. If statement 14 in the example *Always influence me* then circle 7 as indicated.

Please begin and please answer every statement.

1 To take my mind off other difficulties
2 To gain insights into myself as a person
3 To gain additional credits for my record
4 To increase my competence to achieve my goals
5 To seek relief from economic pressures of life
6 To satisfy a desire to learn something new
7 To comply with regulations
8 To prepare for service to the community
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<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>To become acquainted with congenial people</th>
<th>To study for its own sake</th>
<th>To feel a sense of belonging</th>
<th>To keep up with competition</th>
<th>To fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead</th>
<th>To satisfy an intellectual curiosity</th>
<th>To enrich my life by learning</th>
<th>To enjoy a change from my present social life</th>
<th>To become a better informed person</th>
<th>To experience the pleasure of meeting new people</th>
<th>To learn in order to secure personal advancement</th>
<th>To comply with others or someone with authority</th>
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<td>To maintain or improve social position</td>
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<td>To comply with recommendations of those who have influence on my life</td>
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<td>To keep up with others</td>
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<td>To find relief from some unsatisfactory condition of life</td>
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<td>To forget personal problems</td>
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<td>To become eligible for certain privileges such as joining a group or securing a job</td>
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<td>40</td>
<td>To become a more effective citizen</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>41</td>
<td>To fulfill a felt obligation to society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>42</td>
<td>To comply with wishes of employers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>43</td>
<td>To broaden my outlook on problems of society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Never</td>
<td>Very seldom</td>
<td>Once in a while</td>
<td>Occasionally</td>
<td>Fairly often</td>
<td>Very often</td>
<td>Always</td>
<td></td>
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<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>44 To earn a degree, diploma or certificate</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>45 To get away from the routine of daily living</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 To improve my ability to serve society</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Your university is interested in learning how it can better serve you. The answers to the questions below can contribute to that end.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Strongly disagree</th>
<th>Somewhat disagree</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Somewhat agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>47 Too little contact from faculty</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>48 Faculty discriminates against me because of age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>49 Need for financial aid</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 Lack of college admission policies which consider adult students</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>51 Classes scheduled when I must work</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>52 Too little access to student advising</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>53 Help in understanding the mechanics of returning to school and overcoming institutional barriers</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>54 Counseling (group and individual) to address exam anxiety, time allocation, role conflict, self doubt</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55 Traditional fall to spring enrollment. Summers off discriminate against adult learners</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 Husband, partner, or boyfriend supports me emotionally in my school efforts</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Please circle the appropriate number or fill in the blank

1. What is (was) your father’s or your guardian’s occupation? Please specify

2. What was the approximate annual income of your parents in 1995?
   Less than $10,000 ......................................................... 1
   $10,000-14,999 .............................................................. 2
   $15,000-19,999 .............................................................. 3
   $20,000-24,999 .............................................................. 4
   $25,000-29,999 .............................................................. 5
   $30,000-39,999 .............................................................. 6
   $40,000-or more ........................................................... 7
   Deceased ......................................................................... 8

3. Please circle the highest level of education completed by your father.
   Some grade school ......................................................... 1
   Completed grade school .................................................. 2
   Some high school ........................................................... 3
   Completed high school .................................................... 4
   Some technical training or some college .......................... 5
   Completed four years of college ...................................... 6
   Some graduate work ...................................................... 7
   Graduate degree, M.D., M.A., Ph.D. etc ......................... 8

4. If you are self-supporting, what was your annual income in 1995?

5. What is your marital status?
   Single ........................................................................... 1
   Married ......................................................................... 2
   Divorced ....................................................................... 3
   Widowed ........................................................................ 4

6. Are you pursuing a university degree?
   Yes .......................................................... No
7 What is your overall grade point average?
   Please specify

8 How old are you?
   Please specify

The End

Thank You. Your contribution to this study is greatly appreciated.

Due Date

Please use this space for additional comments or information:
APPENDIX B

FIRST LETTER
Dear

It is a generally accepted fact that women are seeking college degrees at an increasing rate. College and university officials are very aware of this. It is urgent to identify the desires, needs, and goals of women seeking higher education in order to develop delivery systems to meet those needs.

For purposes of identifying some of these matters, you have been randomly selected within a relatively small sample to represent women students attending Texas A & M University - Commerce. Therefore, your responses will represent many people.

Because of the relatively small sample, it is important that you respond to each question on the questionnaire. Your completed questionnaire will give strong assurance for the success of the study and will afford a sound basis for decision.

Please be assured that your responses will be kept in the strictest confidence and will become a part of the total data without name attached in any way. The questionnaire is numbered only to check the mailing returns. A stamped self-
addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenient reply. Remember, it is your prompt response that will lend to the success of this study.

This study is sponsored by the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Texas A & M University - Commerce.

Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lila Sparkman
Project Director

LS: bm

Enclosure
APPENDIX C

SECOND LETTER
Dear

Last week a questionnaire seeking your reasons for college enrollment was mailed to you. If you have already completed and returned it, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it was sent to only a small representative sample of women students, it is extremely important to the success of the study.

If by chance you did not receive the questionnaire or it got misplaced, please call me collect right now at (214) 586-8048. I will get another questionnaire in the mail to you upon receipt of your call.

Sincerely,

Lila Sparkman

Project Director
APPENDIX D

THIRD LETTER
Dear

Several weeks ago I sent you a letter and a questionnaire with a stamped self-addressed envelope. The subject is reasons why women enroll in university studies.

You were selected among two hundred of your peers to represent more than 3,500 women students enrolled in the university. It is very important that you respond for the intent of the study to be complete. Perhaps you have lost the previous questionnaire. Therefore, another questionnaire with a stamped addressed envelope is enclosed for your convenient reply. Won't you please take a few minutes of your time to fill out the questionnaire and drop it in the mail?

Please be assured that your name will not be revealed in any way. The answers which you provide will be a part of all data received and your individual responses are in complete confidence.

If you have already mailed in your responses, please accept my sincere thanks. If not, won't you please do so now?
Thank you very much for your cooperation.

Yours sincerely,

Lila Sparkman, Project Director

LS: jr

Enclosure
APPENDIX E

CLUSTER OF REASONS
Clusters of Reasons

A. The Desire to Know
1. to feed my appetite for knowledge
2. to satisfy a desire to know
3. to enrich my life by learning
4. to satisfy an intellectual curiosity
5. to satisfy a desire to learn something new
6. to become a better informed person
7. to study for its own sake
8. to upgrade my personal competency
9. to gain insight into myself as a person

B. The Desire to Reach a Personal Goal
1. To learn
2. To gain additional credits for my record
3. To fulfill a personal motivation to get ahead
4. To earn a degree, a diploma or certificate
5. To learn to make my position in life more secure
6. To keep up with competition
7. To become eligible for certain privileges such as joining a group or securing a job.

8. To meet some formal requirements.

9. To maintain or improve my social position.

10. To increase my competence to achieve my goals.

11. To compete with others.

12. To meet the educational requirements of our era.

13. To keep up with others.

14. To seek relief from economic pressures of life.

15. To comply with wishes of employers.

16. To upgrade my personal competence.

C. The desire to Reach a Social Goal.

1. To become a more effective citizen.

2. To understand community problems.

3. To improve my ability to serve society.

4. To fulfill a felt obligation to society.

5. To broaden my outlook on problems of society.

6. To prepare for service to the community.

7. To improve my ability to help others.
8. To be better able to serve a church

D. The Desire to Take Part in Social Activity

1. To experience the pleasure of meeting new people
2. To make social contacts
3. To feel a sense of belonging
4. To become acquainted with congenial people
5. To enjoy the fellowship

E. The Desire to Escape

1. To forget personal problems
2. To have a few hours away from responsibilities
3. To get away from routine of daily living
4. To compensate for the lack of association with people
5. To take my mind off other difficulties
6. To find relief from unsatisfactory conditions of life
7. To enjoy a change from my present social life
8. To become acquainted with congenial people
9. To enjoy the fellowship
10. To make social contacts

11. To experience the pleasure of meeting new people

F. The Desire to Comply with Formal Requirements

1. To comply with orders of someone with authority

2. To carry out the recommendations of some authority

3. To comply with wishes of employers

4. To comply with regulations

5. To comply with recommendations of those who have influence on my life.

6. To meet some formal requirements
REFERENCES


Likert, R. "A technique for the measurement of attitudes." Archives of Psychology. 1,140, 1932.


Moore, W. & Young, C. "Barriers non-traditional age freshmen women encounter as they seek entrance to four year colleges and universities." 1985, 125 p. (ERIC Document).


