

A COMPARISON OF THE IDEAL AND REAL COLLEGE  
ENVIRONMENT AS PERCEIVED BY ENTERING  
FRESHMEN IN AN OKLAHOMA  
STATE UNIVERSITY

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## PREFACE

This study is concerned with determining the expected and perceived environment of a freshman class enrolled in a state university. Colleges and universities exert their influence on students in many ways, including environmental characteristics of the institution. The problem then becomes one of finding better ways of assessing the differences between institutions and those in particular that relate to what the college does to the students.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Colleges and universities prepare each year for the matriculation of youth who have completed prescribed requirements qualifying them to pursue further academic study at an institution of higher learning. Although several studies and reports tend to indicate a drop in college enrollments through the remainder of the 70's and 80's, large numbers of adolescents are making the transition from high school to colleges and universities. As institutions of higher education reevaluate their objectives and functions in response to societal demands of the 1970's, maximizing the individual educational experience is a central concern.

Today's eighteen-year-old college freshman has a much more comprehensive knowledge of the world in which he lives, a more intensive feeling for the necessity of mankind to learn to live together in harmony, and a general knowledge far surpassing that of any preceding generation embarking on its collegiate studies. The matriculation of an individual into a college or university signals the assumption of a social role and master status of freshman in the university social system. As youths assume this role in the college or university setting, they break from the restrictions of the parental family and pass into the aspect of society where peers exert a major influence on their lives. It is in this respect that institutions of higher

education share a tremendous responsibility to society, and more specifically, to their students.

#### Importance of the Problem

Typically, the criteria for evaluating colleges and universities has relied heavily upon morphological characteristics of these institutions. Those agencies concerned with evaluation and comparison of institutions have relied almost exclusively upon statistical studies of easily computed characteristics of school plant and personnel. The value of such measurements cannot be denied. However, educational philosophers are not concerned now with what physical or financial assets an institution has, but what it is trying to accomplish and how well it accomplishes its objectives. Their attention is directed to process and purposes, rather than physical appearances.

A college or university exerts its influence over students in many ways. Academic influence, although perhaps the most convenient to measure, does not necessarily provide the most significant longitudinal effect. In fact, Jacob (1957) found that there were no significant changes in student values that could be attributed to the curriculum that the students pursued.

The techniques of assessing the real environment of an institution are just now beginning to emerge. Researchers are making increased efforts to identify and study the many forces which operate on and influence the college student. The problem then is essentially one of finding better ways to assess the differences between institutions--those differences in particular that relate to what the college does to the students.

The environment to which a student is subjected is of utmost importance in determining that student's opinions and attitudes. Pace (1964) in discussing the influence of the environment on student attitudes states that environmental factors effect one's behavior patterns in many ways. He stresses the importance of the influence of the environment as a factor of a student's perception of the environment.

Regardless of individual behavior, or assorted physical facts such as money or size, the environment, in a psychological sense, is what it is perceived to be by the people who live in it. Even if one grants the possibility of self-deception on a large scale, the perceived reality, whatever it is, influences one's behavior and response. Thus, realistically, what people think is true is true for them (Pace, 1964, p. 7).

George Stern (1970) has identified a generalized pattern of unlimited freshman expectations of the college environment which he has labeled "the freshman myth." This pattern as reflected by the College Characteristics Index is shared by entering students at institutions with widely varying cultural climates and evidences no significant discriminating factors between entering students as they enter differential institutional environments. Stern (1970, p. 177) summarizes his data in the following statement:

Convinced that his travails have now been rewarded by his entrance into the Community of Scholars, he looks forward to the best he had known in high school--the rare moments of real-intellectual excitement, a teacher who gave him the sense of being a person rather than a pupil, the discovery of ideals to which people had dedicated themselves--to all this and even headier, undreamed of new miracles of participation and fulfillment that are now to become commonplace. No mere college could fulfill such expectations. The student comes to realize this after he has been on campus for a short while, and the disillusion can nowhere be more acute than at the large universities where the discrepancy between student needs and institutional environment is the most extreme.

College campuses and their influential environments allow access to resources of all kinds which frequently act to catalyze student opinions and actions. It becomes necessary then that each college examine the campus environment as perceived by the students and prospective students.

#### Statement of the Problem

The presence of the "freshman myth" has been established at several colleges and universities (Stern, 1970). Studies of upperclassmen have established a pattern of reality perceptions distinctly different from the freshman expectations. The problem then, in this study, was: Do entering freshmen at Northeastern Oklahoma State University expect an environment different from the one which actually exists, and how can university staff provide experiences to the students that will result in positive attitudes concerning the actual environment?

The purpose of this study was to assess how Northeastern Oklahoma State University influences freshman student change in attitudes concerning the expected and perceived environment of the university after a one-semester experience in the environment.

The presence of the "freshman myth"--unlimited expectations of the college environment--has been established at Syracuse University in College Characteristics Index data submitted by entering freshmen prior to their matriculation. Pace (1969) cites a report that showed what incoming freshmen think is characteristic of the college they have just entered is substantially different from what upperclassmen at the college perceive to be characteristic.

Typically, both high school students and entering freshmen tend to have unrealistic expectations about the college environment resulting in extremely high scores on the Community, Awareness, and Scholarship dimensions and moderately high scores on the Practicality and Propriety dimensions of the College and University Environment Scales (p. 10).

All entering freshmen were administered Pace's College and University Environment Scales, Second Edition during the second week of the 1973 fall semester. The same students were administered the same test during the last week of the 1973 fall semester. Comparisons of the two test results were made and changes in attitudes were assessed in regard to overall university influence on these freshmen students.

Newly admitted students enter the university with preconceived ideas of what their experiences will be like. Their ideas are normally incorporated into their thinking from information gathered from friends, relatives, and their high school counselors (McLaughlin, 1966). It was the intent of this study to measure freshmen expectations of an ideal university environment before their formal exposure to the university environment commenced. After they had experienced one semester of the university environment, they were asked to respond to the test instrument (CUES) on the basis of what they then perceived the true university environment to be.

If the discrepancy between the students' preconceived expectations and their experienced perceptions differed significantly, then this could be a factor causing students disappointment and/or disillusionment. The transition to a new school and a new environment is, hopefully, an exciting experience. The results of this study may identify and isolate factors which will assist in reducing the possibility that this experience becomes traumatic.

## Definition of Terms

Various terms may require defining in regards to their particular adaptation to this study.

1. Environment. The term "environment" is used in this study to indicate the specific surroundings and conditions at the university which have an influence on the students attending this particular institution.

2. Resident students. All students who reported residing in a university dormitory, fraternity, or an apartment near the campus community.

3. Non-resident students or commuters. All students who reported residing at a place other than on campus or near the university community. This included students living "at home" or with "relatives or guardian."

4. Metropolitan area. The U. S. Census Bureau has identified certain areas of the United States as Standard Metropolitan Statistical Areas (SMSA). An SMSA involves two considerations: First, a city or cities of a specified population (50,000) to constitute the central city and to identify the county in which it is located as the central county; and second, economic and social relationships with contiguous counties which are metropolitan in character, so that the periphery of the specific metropolitan area may be determined.

5. Non-metropolitan area. A city or cities which do not fulfill the above definition of a metropolitan area.

6. Northeastern State College. The official name of Northeastern State College was changed to Northeastern Oklahoma State University



(N.E.O.S.U.) while this study was being conducted. The reader is advised that the two are one and the same.

### Research Hypotheses

This study attempted to substantiate the following research hypotheses:

1. There are significant differences between freshman pre-college expectations of the university environment and perceptions following a one-semester experience in the environment.
2. There are significant differences between the expectations of campus environment of male and female students at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.
3. There are significant differences between the expectations of the campus environment of resident and non-resident students at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.
4. There are significant differences between the expectations of the campus environment of students coming from a metropolitan area and those students from a non-metropolitan area at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.
5. There are significant differences between the expectations of the campus environment of students classed as Caucasians, American Indians, and African Negroes and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.

6. There are significant differences between the perceptions of the campus environment of freshmen and upperclassmen after the freshmen have been in attendance one semester and the upperclassmen a minimum of three semesters.

#### Limitations of the Study

The following limitations to this study were necessarily imposed:

1. The study was limited to freshmen students enrolling for the first time at Northeastern Oklahoma State University during the 1973 fall semester and to a sample population of upperclassmen drawn from the same campus.

2. Those students who completed the pre-test phase of this study and not the post-test were considered dropouts and were eliminated from this study.

3. Students who belonged to an ethnic group other than Caucasian, American Indian or African Negro were excluded from this study.

The assumptions were made that students' perceptions of a college environment can be measured and described and that data indicated by students on enrollment records and answer sheets were accurate.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The presence of the "freshman myth"--unlimited expectations of the university or college environment--has been established at Syracuse University by analysis of data submitted by entering freshmen prior to their matriculation (Stern, 1966a).

The "freshman myth" is still not clearly understood in alienation terms. Just what is the vital impact of generalized unlimited freshman expectations? Keniston (1968) concludes that it is not the absolute level either of educational quality or of student freedom that influences student alienation from the college, but the gap between student hopes and institutional facts. As such, alienation, expectations, and myth become entwined.

#### Student Culture

Student culture as distinct from faculty culture, is a set of understandings shared by students with youth culture influencing the formation as a latent culture factor (Becker and Geer, 1960). Hughes, Becker, and Geer (1962) state that student culture has two major functions: to provide methods of adaptation that make the pressures of the college tolerable for individual students and to provide support for patterns of behavior which are at variance with what is desired by the faculty and administration. Student peer group and student culture are

interdependent; social relations reinforce some values while de-emphasizing other values. The student peer groups assist the college student in sustaining a conception of the self in a transitional period with competition for academic and social status. Newcomb (1962) has isolated three independent variables related to peer group formation: pre-college acquaintance, propinquity, and similarity of attitudes and interests. Influence is facilitated by size of group, homogeneity, isolation, and group supported activities.

Bushnell (1962) informs us that whenever two societies are in contact, the process of acculturation is in effect, an interchange of cultural elements. Thus, in a college setting we have student culture interacting with faculty culture. Jencks and Reisman (1968) offer an interesting observation of student and faculty culture.

An institution that does not bring together people called teachers with other people called students is not called a college. . . . The central purpose of a college can thus be defined as socialization. In nine cases out of ten a college pits the old against the young and becomes both a battlefield and a negotiating table in the ceaseless war between the generations. . . . The customs and concerns of student sub-cultures vary enormously, but all are in one way or another at odds with the adult subcultures from which they spring (pp. 28, 50).

The fact that student culture and faculty culture differ and a central theme of authority relationships are vividly evident in this statement.

#### Student Sub-cultures

The discernable history of student sub-cultures is short but increasingly interesting. During the late 1950's several grew out of intensive study of a group of students at one particular institution. Two typologies of student sub-cultures were proposed by staff members

of the Mellon Program at Vassar. One was Brown's (1956) five patterns of college behavior: 1. Social Activity and Peer Group Orientation, 2. Over-achievers, 3. Under-achievers with Future Family Orientation, 4. High-achievers and 5. Seekers of Identity. The other was Freedman's (1956) Types A (well-prepared private secondary school graduates), B (less-well prepared public school graduates), and C (relatively naive students usually of minority group origin). Wedge (1958) at Yale, spoke of intellectuals, athletes, the professionally and vocationally oriented, the business oriented, and those who are "well-rounded" without "deep commitments." Steinzor (1960), in summarizing the results of a longitudinal study at Sarah Lawrence College, divided students into four sub-cultures consisting of pre-college maturers, college maturers, late maturers, and the unresolved.

Burton Clark and Martin Trow's paradigm of student sub-cultures was the first effort to discriminate student sub-cultures in the college society beyond the general student culture (1966). The focus of their study was drawn from interest in the impact of the college on students and the contention that the impact is realized or mediated largely through the action and influence of peer groups. This theoretical typology identified sub-culture orientations with generalized modes of response from a combination of two variables, identification with the college and involvement with ideas. Descriptions of the four sub-cultures are as follows:

Collegiate Culture - A world of football, fraternities and sororities, dates, cars, and drinking and campus fun. . . . In content, this system of values and activities is not hostile to the college, to which, in fact, it generates strong loyalties and attachments. It is however, indifferent and resistant to serious demands emanating from the faculty, or parts of it, for an involvement with ideas and issues over and above that required to gain the diploma.

Vocational Culture - To these students, many of them married, most of them working anywhere from 20-40 hours a week, college is largely "off the job training," an organization of courses and credits leading to a diploma and a better job than they could otherwise command. These students have very little attachment to the college where they buy their education somewhat as one buys groceries. But like the collegiate culture, these students, for whom college is an adjunct to the world of jobs, are also resistant to intellectual demands on them beyond what is required to pass the course.

Academic Culture - The essence of this system of values is its identification with the intellectual concerns of the serious faculty members. Where the collegiates pursue fun, and the job-oriented pursue skills and a diploma, these students pursue knowledge, their symbols are the library and laboratory and seminar. . . . The distinctive qualities of this group are (a) they are seriously involved in their course work beyond the minimum required for passing and graduation, and (b) they identify themselves with their college and its faculty.

Non-Conformist Culture - These students are often deeply involved with ideas, both the ideas they encounter in their classrooms, and those that are current in the wider society of adult art, literature and politics. To a much greater degree than their academically oriented classmates, these students use off-campus groups and currents of thought as points of reference over against the official college culture in their strategy of independence and criticism. The distinctive quality of this student style is a rather aggressive non-conformism, a critical detachment from the college they attend and its faculty, and a generalized hostility to the college administration (Trow, 1962, pp. 205-208).

Stern (1969) provides empirical support for the existence of identifiable student sub-cultures. Through factor analysis of need-press relationships between the student and the college he identified five college culture factors: collegiate, expressive, vocational, intellectual, and protective. Stern (1969) describes needs as a taxonomic classification of the characteristic spontaneous behaviors manifested by individuals in their life transactions. Press is the taxonomic classification of characteristic behaviors manifested by aggregates of individuals in their mutual interpersonal transactions

according to Stern (1969). The needs component of any given interaction relate to the situational press in an adaptive manner, but the character of the adaptation is a function of the total person and the total environment at a given moment in time. Congruence is defined in terms of actual combinations of needs and press characterizing relationships producing a sense of satisfaction or fulfillment. Dissonance is an unstable needs-press combination which must lead to a modification of the press in a more congruent direction or to withdrawal of participants unless artificial equilibrium is maintained through coercion.

The five college and university culture factors described by Stern are as follows:

Expressive - This culture suggests a non-work oriented, non-conforming climate peopled by students with non-applied interests and disinclined toward orderliness. The college culture implied by this factor is aesthetic, gregarious, and non-practical in its preoccupations with decided feminist overtones. It suggests a community of self-actualizing, but not necessarily creative people.

Intellectual - These climates are distinguished by their extensive support for intellectual activity, self-expression and achievement. The students are correspondingly high in intellectual interests and academic motivation.

Protective - These colleges, essentially small denominational institutions, are characterized by a highly organized supportive environment and a relatively independent submissive student body.

Vocational - These schools provide practical instruction for instrumental purposes within a conventionally authoritative structure for students who are egocentric and self-assertive.

Collegiate - These cultural climates are characterized by extensive facilities for student recreation and amusement, close administrative supervision, and low standards of academic achievement. The students are gregarious and self-assertive (Stern, 1970, pp. 206-210).

Pace (1969) has been extremely active in the gathering of information pertaining to college environments or student sub-cultures. In a 1964 research project, he expressed the idea that the type of environment greatly influences the behavior of those living in the environment (Pace, 1969). Pace (1969) continued by stating that students will be more likely to succeed if they are under the influence of a positive environment. He identified five educational environmental variables as: Practicality - environment characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits, and social activities; Community - friendly, cohesive, group-oriented campus; Awareness - concern and emphasis on personal, poetic and political meaning; Propriety - polite and considerate environment with absence of demonstrative, risk-taking activities; Scholarship - environment characterized by intellectuality and scholastic discipline. The five sub-cultures are classed as scales in Pace's College and University Environment Scales which was the test instrument used in this study. These scales will be described more fully later in this study.

#### Student Attitude Studies

Probably the most controversial study on the effect of the impact of the college environment on students was completed in 1957 by Jacob (1957). Jacob studied literature and research projects accumulated since the early 1940's from numerous institutions of higher learning. The effect of Jacob's study was profound. The vast majority of the comments on his research were critical and numerous researchers embarked upon studies of their own in attempts to temper, if not refute, Jacob's findings.



Perhaps the most contested and controversial finding of the Jacob study was the assertion students altered their values very little, if any, between their freshman and senior years in college (Jacob, 1957). Where changes did occur, the students appeared to be more conforming in their senior year than in their freshman year. They were a more homogeneous group when they left college than when they entered. Their college education tended to act as a catalyst to produce a more stereotyped person better prepared to conform to the norms of society (Jacob, 1957).

Another remarkable finding of the Jacob study was that no significant changes in student values could be attributed to coursework pursued by the students or the quality of teaching conducted in the classroom. An even more startling discovery was that there was no discernible difference in the impact of a good teacher from a poor one (Jacob, 1957).

Jacob's findings can be summarized by saying that higher education exerted an insignificant amount of influence on the attitudes and values of American college students. Because of these findings, it is not surprising that much research has been conducted in attempts to reassess the kinds and amounts of influence that a college exerts on its students. Although most of this research has produced findings that are critical of Jacob's results, there is little doubt that Jacob inspired much, if not most, of the literature on college students and their attitudes and values published since 1957.

Freedman (1960) conducted a study at Vassar College and found that there were significant changes in personality between the freshman and senior years. He found the seniors to be more tolerant or

unconventional thinkers and more willing and better prepared to accept different points of view. Freedman discovered the girls to be much less stable and displaying a greater amount of internal conflict than they did four years before (Freedman, 1960).

Webster, Freedman, and Heist (1964) reported that recent studies in addition to those conducted prior to World War II, indicate a "change in the direction of greater liberalism and sophistication in political, social and religious outlook," in general, between the freshmen and seniors studied (1964, p. 806).

Dressel and Lehman (1965) in summarizing the research, stated that between the freshman and senior years, significant changes did occur in regards to the "attitudes, values, interests, and beliefs" of the students. Based on their review of past research, Dressel and Lehman then embarked upon a study of their own at Michigan State University. They were interested in discovering how much student attitudes changed and the direction of such change. Their findings indicated that definite changes were found in the students studied. They further concluded that the amount of time enrolled at the college was a significant factor in the amount and nature of the change in the student (Dressel and Lehman, 1965, p. 256).

In a study completed the same year as Jacob's study, 1957, Palmer (1957) investigated the possible existence of differences in attitudes of affiliated and non-affiliated students at the University of Southern California. The affiliated students consisted of freshmen, sophomores, juniors and seniors who were pledges or members of six national social fraternities. The non-affiliated group was similar in size and represented by males who were not pledges or members of any national social

fraternities. Palmer concluded that there were very few significant changes in attitudes between freshmen and sophomores; that any changes began slowly and took three years to evolve. He further noted that fewer attitudinal differences appeared to take place among the affiliated groups than among the non-affiliated groups. In contrast to Jacob (1957), Palmer found that there were much greater differences between the affiliated and non-affiliated seniors than between the affiliated and non-affiliated freshmen. Grafton (1968) repeated Palmer's study in 1968 and found that significant differences in attitudes existed between the subjects in the 1957 and 1968 studies. He noted a greater homogeneity among both the affiliated and non-affiliated groups than was indicated in the earlier study. Grafton (1968) concluded that "students will tend not to be changed by just being in college or a university," which concurs to the conclusions of the Jacob study.

Trent and Medsker (1968) conducted a longitudinal study of 10,000 high school graduates through the next four years of their lives in order to ascertain if students who continued their education by enrolling at an institution of higher learning altered their attitudes and values more than their contemporaries who chose to enter the job market instead. The results of their study indicated that although all of the subjects when averaged together changed, the college students developed more critical thinking abilities, became more tolerant, yet more flexible, and displayed less prejudice than did those who did not enter an institution of higher learning. Trent and Medsker (1968) concluded that college does make a difference.

In a study conducted at Michigan State University, Lehman, Sinha, and Hartnett (1966) searched for factors influencing changes between freshmen and senior students. They concluded that there were many elements responsible for bringing about changes in students, the academic institution being only partially responsible. They felt that maturation and social environment were also contributing factors. However, the most important finding was their confirmation that changes, in fact, did occur between the freshman and senior years.

Lehman and Payne (1963) designed a study specifically to uncover some possible reasons for student changes in attitude. They concluded that only formal educational influences such as curricula and teachers had an impact on students' attitudes and values. Conversely they were unable to find one factor that could be attributed to the changes in attitudes and values that they admitted do occur.

Zimmerman (1969) conceded that there are many factors which influence student attitudes toward college. Regardless of the external influences exerted on the students, colleges and universities should be able to develop techniques that would stimulate the student and make it an exciting adventure for him to learn, according to Zimmerman. He pointed out that most freshmen's perceptions of college are a vast disappointment from their expectations and placed the blame for this change of attitude primarily on the collegiate institutions (Zimmerman, 1969).

In a study designed to assess the differences, if any, between attitudinal changes of black and white college students, Ratliffe and Steil (1970) found that student attitudes were altered over the undergraduate years in college and that race, rather than sex, class rank,

age, or geographical location, was more of a determinant of this change.

Tillquist (1968) theorized that student perceptions of their college would change over the course of the freshman year. He surveyed all freshman students enrolling in the fall of 1966 and 1967 at Gustavus Adolphus College and then administered the same survey seven months later. Significant differences were found for both classes between the initial testing and the one administered seven months later.

#### The Study of College Environments

Pace (1969) states that "a college is many things - courses, professors, books, tests, lectures, rules and regulations, extracurricular activities, facilities, attitudes and expectations, and other features" (p. 7). All these constitute its environment and help to define the atmosphere of the institution. In an effort to differentiate different types of college environments, Pace (1960) conducted a survey of students in sixty collegiate institutions during the spring of 1959. The test instrument used was the College Characteristics Index developed by Pace and Stern. The results identified essentially five different types of environments. Pace's first type of environment was classed as being humanistic while at the same time stimulating the students' curiosities concerning concepts and ideas. He described the second environment as being demanding and competitive and particularly concerned with scientific interests. The third environment, Pace discovered, was pragmatic in nature and overly concerned with the gaining of status, authoritative positions, and other visible rewards. The fourth

environment described was characterized by social responsibility and other directedness. Friendships as well as group welfare are very important to the participants in his fourth type of environment. The fifth type, although rebellious, impulsive, and aggressive, is particularly oriented toward the idea of a highly structured socialized community. Pace and McFee (1960), in a study of college environments, believe that if one takes a broader view of the college environment as a complex social system, a network of interaction, or, indeed in the case of colleges, as a miniature culture, this may lead to more productive research on environments.

Ivery and Wilson (1971) conducted a four-year longitudinal study using the College Characteristics Index. They found a significant difference on the aspiration, self-expression, social form, and vocational scales when the study was completed again at the end of four years. They concluded that this suggests an institution in transition, poised on the brink of a major change.

Various studies have been conducted to determine if differences exist between student perceptions of the environment and that of various school personnel. Lynch and Sedlacek (1971) conducted a study in 1971 using the campus climate of new students to transfer students, administrators to faculty, new faculty to old faculty, and rural students to urban students. The College and University Environment Scales served as the test instrument. Dorcas (1967) found a significant difference between the "real" and "ideal" perceptions in general and between faculty and students' "real" perceptions of their own campus. Faculty and students were alike in their perceptions of the "ideal" campus. They see the ideal campus as having an atmosphere characterized

by more scholarship, awareness, more emphasis on community, and slightly more interest on propriety than exists at present.

Spangler (1972) studied the real and ideal university as perceived by students, faculty, and administrators. Her findings indicated that none of the press as described by the College and University Environment Scales were considered characteristic of the real university by any of the subgroups. Significant differences were found between the real and ideal university as perceived by the students, faculty, and administrators. According to the study, community, awareness, and scholarship should be characteristic of an ideal university environment. Resnick (1971) studied the environment of the main campus of the University of Oklahoma and found that faculty, administrators, and students agree in their perceptions of the educational environment which offers support to Spangler's (1972) findings.

Trott (1972) investigated the real and ideal campus environment of the University of Mississippi as perceived by outstanding women leaders and compared the differences between the real and ideal environment of the college as reported by these students. The results indicated considerable variance except for the practicality and community scale of the College and University Environment Scales. The largest difference between the two environments was reported for the quality of teaching, faculty-student relationships, and scholarship scales. The students of the study described the real environment of the university as highly practical with emphasis upon good fun and school spirit. They described the ideal environment as important in all areas with awareness of the world and academic pursuits being most important.

Murray (1972) compared the perceptions of Mexican-Americans with Anglo students at the University of Texas - El Paso. He found that Anglos perceived the UTEP environment as more scholarly than did Mexican-Americans and males scored higher on the awareness scale of the College and University Environment Scales than did females. These differences were attributed to sex and ethnicity. McIntosh (1970) conducted a study of black and white freshmen at Michigan State University which indicated that sex had no significant influence on any part of the study. This is a contradiction to the study by Murray described above.

#### Freshmen Expectations

Berger (1971) investigated how the University of Southern California influenced freshmen students' changes in attitudes concerning the expected and perceived environment of the university. The results indicated that student perceptions based upon their one semester experiences failed to live up to their expectations. Also, their perceptions of the university differed significantly from their earlier expectations. The College and University Environment Scales most closely resembling its expectations counterpart was Quality of Teaching and Faculty-Student Relationships.

Miser (1971) conducted a study to determine the impact of the first semester of college on student perceptions of the college environment. The findings indicated that the college experiences did not live up to the pre-conceived perceptions of entering freshmen, especially with regards to perceiving the campus as a community. He concluded that the initial semester had an impact on personal growth and



development of freshmen and was reflected in changes of attitudes, values, and beliefs during the first semester.

A study of freshman expectations and socialization in the college environment was conducted by Stafford (1971). She used the College Characteristics Index to investigate the nature of the "freshman myth." The results clearly indicated a difference in the preconceptions of all freshmen in the fall as compared to their perceptions at the end of one semester. Seven of eleven CCI factors exceeded one standard deviation from the mean. Significant differences were found in eight of ten factors of the CCI at the end of the one semester. Standing and Parker (1964) used the CCI and found similar results. They conducted their studies at Brigham Young University and found that entering freshmen did anticipate the general patterning of the environmental factors but they tended to be exaggerated.

In a study of freshman socialization at a midwest liberal arts college, Wallace (1964) discovered that most academic attitude change among entering freshmen occurred within the first seven weeks of the college experience. This study emphasized the rapidity of convergence toward upperclass attitudes. Changes came about as a result of precipitous decline in grades orientation among students strongly desirous of social integration.

#### Summary

Changes in student attitudes toward their college environment have been shown to occur quite frequently. The majority of the studies which were concerned with student expectations and later perceptions of the institutional environment noted that a disparity does exist

between entering freshmen's expectations and perceptions. The frequency, time, and intensity of these changes have been highly dependent on the institution under study. Because of their somewhat ideal expectations, students have tended to become frequently disappointed, sometimes disenchanted, and occasionally totally dissatisfied.

It is recognized that the students themselves contribute to the forming of the environment of a school, but most studies have indicated that the school environments exert pressures on the students resulting in changes in attitudes by students. Pace (1969) identified five types of these collegiate environments.

## CHAPTER III

### DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### The Sample

The sample utilized in this study was selected from the freshmen entering Northeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall of 1973. A group of upperclass students were selected from those enrolled at the University for one aspect of the study.

Freshmen were administered the College and University Environment Scale during the first week of the fall, 1973 semester. They were asked to respond to the CUES instrument during the second class meeting of their freshmen orientation class which meets one time per week during the semester. Oral instructions were given to the participants in the initial administration of the CUES, Second Edition. The oral instructions were:

The purpose of the College and University Environment Scales is to assist in discovering the general atmosphere and climate of Northeastern State College. You are being asked to give your opinion concerning questions about the school in which you have just enrolled. You are to answer the questions as honestly as possible, based upon whatever knowledge you have of N.S.C.

There are 160 questions in the test booklet which are to be answered either TRUE or FALSE, whichever most closely represents your feelings of what you think should be characteristic of an "ideal" or your expected college environment. There are no right or wrong answers. You are merely stating your opinions on the questions.

You will be asked to respond to the CUES again near the end of this semester and at that time you will answer the items on the test on the basis of what you have actually observed the environment to be at N.S.C.

Students were asked to identify themselves by placing their names and social security numbers on the answer sheets. This was necessary because of the need to compare pre-test and post-test scores on an individual basis after all of the data were gathered. Students were assured that no participant would be individually identified with his answers on the test instrument.

A total of 612 students were given the pre-test during their second class meeting. No attempts were made to insure one hundred per cent participation in the test since the method of scoring the test is based on a consensus of opinion of those responding. The official records of the college registrar indicate that 693 were officially enrolled as freshmen during the 1973 fall term.

The freshmen were administered the CUES, Second Edition as a post-test during the next to last week of the 1973 fall semester. It was not possible to test the group during the last week as other exams were scheduled on that particular week. They were asked to respond to the items on the test on the basis of what they now observed the environment to be at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. As might be expected, several students were not in attendance during the post-test phase of the testing. Various and sundry reasons for this situation were possible, among them, illness, dropouts, and general absenteeism.

All students who responded to the test instrument completed demographic information including sex, residency, hometown and high school of graduation, classification, major field, and ethnic group.

Students taking the post-test were given verbal instructions similar to those of the pre-test. They were again reassured that their identity would not be acknowledged together with the information they gave on their answer sheets.

After administration of the pre- and post-test was completed, the answer sheets were matched on the basis of name and social security number. Since not all people took the pre-test and not all students took the post-test, a total of 523 matched pre- and post-tests were obtained. These 523 students were used in analysis of the data.

A sample of upperclassmen was selected by use of a table of random numbers and the official student directory. A sample of 100 such upperclassmen was selected and mailed a letter describing their participation in the study and announcing the dates of the testing phase of their group. A copy of the letter sent this group is found in Appendix D. They were administered the CUES, Second Edition and were asked to respond on the basis of what they perceive the environment to be at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Upperclassmen were defined as those students who had been in attendance at N.E.O.S.U. for at least three semesters. Some of the original sample of 100 were eliminated due to the three semester minimum attendance to classify as upperclassmen. Those who did not attend the scheduled testing date were personally contacted and given the test. Test scores were obtained from a total of 81 of the original sample of upperclassmen.

#### The Test Instrument

The instrument selected for the measurement of the expected environment and the later perceived environment was the College and

University Environment Scales, Second Edition (CUES). This particular instrument was selected because of its recent acceptance throughout the United States as a simple, yet insightful, measuring device for the purpose of assessing college environments.

Educational Testing Service published the original edition of the CUES in 1963. The items in the first edition of the CUES were extracted from an earlier test developed by Pace and George Stern in 1958 titled the College Characteristics Index. The original CUES consisted of 150 of the 300 items in the CCI, because they were successful in distinguishing between environments and were felt to represent five different environmental scales. Those scales were: Practicality, Community, Awareness, Propriety, and Scholarship.

Pace introduced the second edition of the CUES in 1969 after factor analysis and item discrimination data of the original 150 items indicated that the instrument could be improved by eliminating some items. The CUES, Second Edition was very similar to the first edition. Of the original 150 items, 100 were retained in the second edition. In addition, sixty experimental items were included which represented two additional scales. The 100 remaining items from the first edition of the CUES were divided into five scales of twenty statements each.

Students responding to the CUES are asked if they think a statement is generally true or false with reference to their college. They mark "true" if the statement identified a characteristic of the college and "false" if the statement does not describe a general characteristic of the college. The CUES instrument is, therefore, an opinionnaire for obtaining a description of the college from the students themselves, who presumably know what the environment is like because they live in

it and are a part of it.

In the second edition of the CUES Technical Manual, Pace described the five scales in the following manner:

Scale 1. Practicality. The twenty items that contribute to the score for this scale describe an environment characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits, and social activities. There are both vocational and collegiate emphases. A kind of orderly supervision is evident in the administration and the classwork. As in many organized societies there is also some personal benefit and prestige to be obtained by operating in the system--knowing the right people, being in the right clubs, becoming a leader, respecting one's superiors, and so forth. The environment, though structured, is not repressive because it responds to entrepreneurial activities and is generally characterized by good fun and school spirit.

Scale 2. Community. The items in this scale describe a friendly, cohesive, group-oriented campus. There is a feeling of group welfare and group loyalty that encompasses the college as a whole. The atmosphere is congenial; the campus is a community. Faculty members know the students, are interested in their problems, and go out of their way to be helpful. Student life is characterized by togetherness and sharing rather than by privacy and cool detachment.

Scale 3. Awareness. The items in this scale seem to reflect a concern about and emphasis upon three sorts of meaning--personal, poetic, and political. An emphasis upon self-understanding, reflectiveness, and identity suggests the search for personal meaning. A wide range of opportunities for creative and appreciative relationships to painting, music, drama, poetry, sculpture, architecture, and the like suggests the search for poetic meaning. A concern about events around the world, the welfare of mankind, and the present and future condition of man suggests the search for political meaning and idealistic commitment. What seems to be evident in this sort of environment is a stress on awareness, an awareness of self, of society, and of aesthetic stimuli. Along with this push toward expansion, and perhaps as a necessary condition for it, there is encouragement of questioning and dissent and a tolerance of nonconformity and personal expressiveness.

Scale 4. Propriety. These items describe an environment that is polite and considerate. Caution and thoughtfulness are evident. Group standards of decorum are important. There is an absence of demonstrative, assertive, argumentative, risk-taking activities. In general, the campus atmosphere is mannerly, considerate, proper, and conventional.

Scale 5. Scholarship. The items in this scale describe an environment characterized by intellectuality and scholastic discipline. The emphasis is on competitively high academic achievement and a serious interest in scholarship. The pursuit of knowledge and theories, scientific or philosophical, is carried on rigorously and vigorously. Intellectual speculation, an interest in ideas, knowledge for its own sake, and intellectual discipline--all these are characteristic of the environment (Pace, 1963, p. 11).

Pace also identified two subscales that were added to CUES, Second Edition. These subscales are Campus Morale and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-Student Relationships and were derived by selecting items from each of the original five scales. Campus Morale consisted of twenty-two items from the other scales and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-Student Relationships was composed of eleven items from the other five scales. Pace described the two subscales in this manner:

Campus Morale. The items in this scale describe an environment characterized by acceptance of social norms, group cohesiveness, friendly assimilation into campus life, and, at the same time, a commitment to intellectual pursuits and freedom of expression. Intellectual goals are exemplified and widely shared in an atmosphere of personal and social relationships that are both supportive and spirited.

Quality of Teaching and Faculty-Student Relationships. This scale defines an atmosphere in which professors are perceived to be scholarly, to set high standards, to be clear, adaptive, and flexible. At the same time, this academic quality of teaching is infused with warmth, interest, and helpfulness toward students (Pace, 1963, p. 11).

The scoring of the CUES is based upon the consensus of opinion rationale. The specific method of scoring the CUES, Second Edition was concerned with a consensus of two-to-one or better, regardless of direction. If students agree two-to-one or better that a statement is not true, that fact identifies a characteristic of the environment just as clearly as when students agree by an equally high level of consensus



that a particular statement is true of the environment. This was termed by Pace as the "sixty-six plus/thirty-three minus" scoring technique. The score for a scale is obtained in the following manner:

1. Add the number of items answered by 66 percent or more of the students in the keyed direction.
2. Subtract the number of items answered by 33 percent or fewer of the students in the keyed direction.
3. Add 20 points to the difference, so as to eliminate any possibility of obtaining a negative score (Pace, 1969, p. 13).

National norms for the one hundred scaled items in the CUES, Second Edition were obtained from administration of the instrument to a broad cross-section of American four-year, fully accredited colleges and universities.

The reliability estimates of the CUES are based on Cronbach's coefficient alpha and are reported in the Technical Manual (Pace, 1969). The validity data for the instrument consist of correlations between CUES scores and various characteristics of students and institutions and is also available in the Technical Manual (Pace, 1969). Pace (1969, p. 54) states that, "In general, scores on CUES correlate with other relevant variables about the same degree as scores on the Scholastic Aptitude Test correlate with college grades--namely, from the low .30s to the high .60s."

#### Analysis of Data

Scores were obtained for all seven of the CUES scales--Practicality, Scholarship, Community, Awareness, Propriety, Campus Morale, Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships--by utilizing the method described above. These scores were compared to a national

normative sample by percentile equivalents.

Individual scores were obtained for all seven of the GUES scales and analysis of variance was used to test for significance between the pre- and post-test scores of the various subgroups in the study.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

The results of this investigation were reported in four areas as follows: the expected environment, the perceived environment, a comparison of the expected and the perceived environment, and freshmen-upperclass comparisons.

#### The Expected Environment

The expected environment of the college consisted of student responses to the College and University Environment Scales. They responded to each item on the basis of what they expected an ideal college environment to be. The "freshman myth" - unlimited expectations of the college environment - is clearly reflected in the preconceptions of freshmen comprising the sample under study who were to enter Northeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall of 1973 (Table I).

Scale scores for each CUES scale as well as percentiles based upon a national normative sample are presented in Table I (Pace, 1969). Scores and percentiles were included for all freshmen, males, females, residents, commuters, metropolitan, non-metropolitan, white, black, and Indian.

Based on comparisons of percentile equivalents from the national sample, freshmen as a group expressed their expectations to be highest

TABLE I

THE EXPECTED ENVIRONMENT AT NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY AS  
ANTICIPATED BY FRESHMEN UPON ENTERING IN THE FALL, 1973 SEMESTER

CUES Scale	All Fresh.	Male	Female	Resi- dent	Com- muter	Metro	Non- Metro	White	Black	Indian
	N=523	N=247	N=276	N=328	N=195	N=191	N=332	N=392	N= 65	N= 64
Practicality	25* (.81)	25 (.81)	25 (.81)	24 (.78)	25 (.81)	25 (.81)	25 (.81)	25 (.81)	28 (.91)	27 (.86)
Scholarship	29 (.73)	28 (.69)	29 (.73)	28 (.69)	28 (.69)	28 (.69)	31 (.77)	27 (.66)	30 (.77)	28 (.69)
Community	27 (.64)	26 (.57)	26 (.57)	26 (.57)	25 (.55)	25 (.55)	27 (.64)	27 (.64)	27 (.64)	27 (.64)
Awareness	25 (.73)	24 (.70)	27 (.76)	25 (.73)	28 (.80)	23 (.65)	29 (.81)	26 (.76)	25 (.73)	26 (.76)
Propriety	19 (.69)	18 (.65)	19 (.69)	18 (.65)	19 (.69)	17 (.57)	19 (.69)	19 (.69)	18 (.65)	20 (.73)
Campus Morale	26 (.65)	27 (.72)	28 (.74)	28 (.74)	28 (.74)	27 (.72)	30 (.78)	27 (.72)	27 (.72)	30 (.78)
Quality of Teaching	16 (.72)	17 (.80)	15 (.68)	16 (.72)	15 (.68)	16 (.72)	16 (.72)	16 (.72)	15 (.68)	15 (.68)

\*Raw Scores from the College and University Scales are shown for each scale. Percentiles are given in parentheses.

in Practicality with Scholarship and Awareness the next highest. The Scholarship and Community scales were highest in terms of raw score. Freshmen indicated their lowest expectations in the Community scale based on percentile equivalents. The lowest scale according to raw score was Quality of Teaching. However, in comparison to national norms, this score fell in the 72nd percentile. Figure 1 graphically illustrates the fluctuations of the group as compared to the national norms.

The male freshmen indicated their highest expectations on the Practicality and Quality of Teaching scales, while the females' highest expectation was Practicality only. The lowest expectations of the male freshmen was the Community scale. The female sample indicated their lowest expectations on the Community scale also. Figure 2 shows graphically how both male and female freshmen expectations compare with the national norm group.

The freshmen who graduated from a school located in a Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area were classed as metropolitan and those not coming from an SMSA were classed as non-metropolitan. Metropolitan freshmen indicated their perceived environment to be highest in Practicality while the non-metropolitan group's highest percentile was Practicality also, but had the same percentile score on the Awareness scale as well. The non-metropolitan group would seem to stress an awareness of self, of society, and of aesthetic stimuli. The metropolitan and non-metropolitan groups both indicated they perceived the Community scale or one with a friendly, cohesive group-oriented campus, as exerting less stress in their "ideal" college environment. Figure 3 shows the percentile scores for both of the above groups.

N=523

Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\*Percen-  
tile

100

90

80

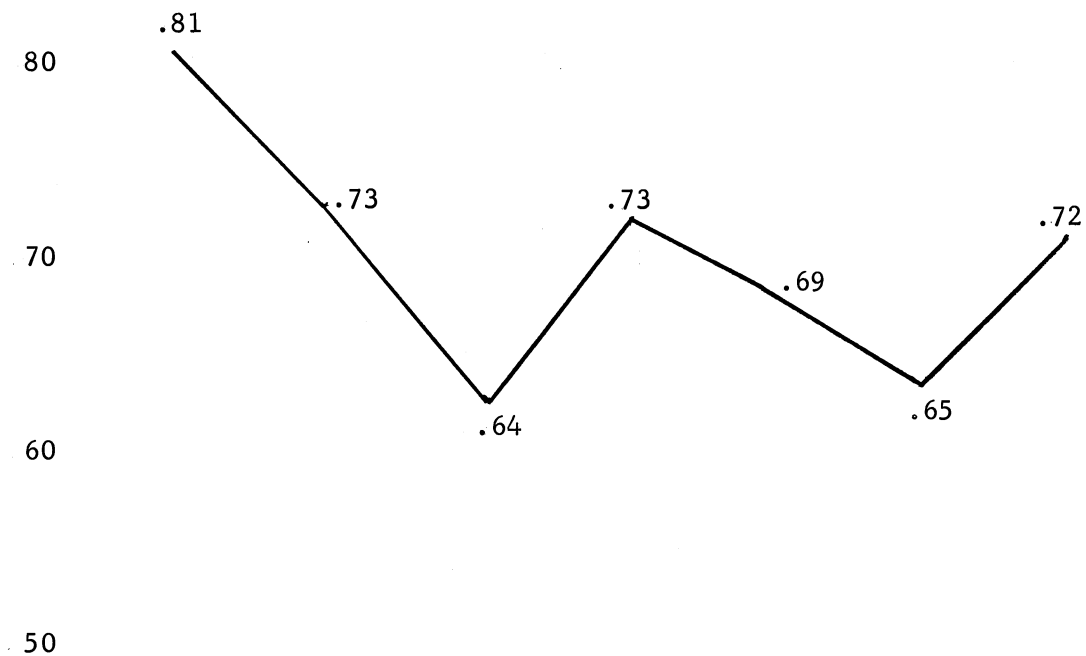
70

60

50

\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 1. The Expected Environment of Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Entering Freshmen, Fall, 1973



Male N=247

Female N=276

Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Communi- ty	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Percen-  
tile

100

90

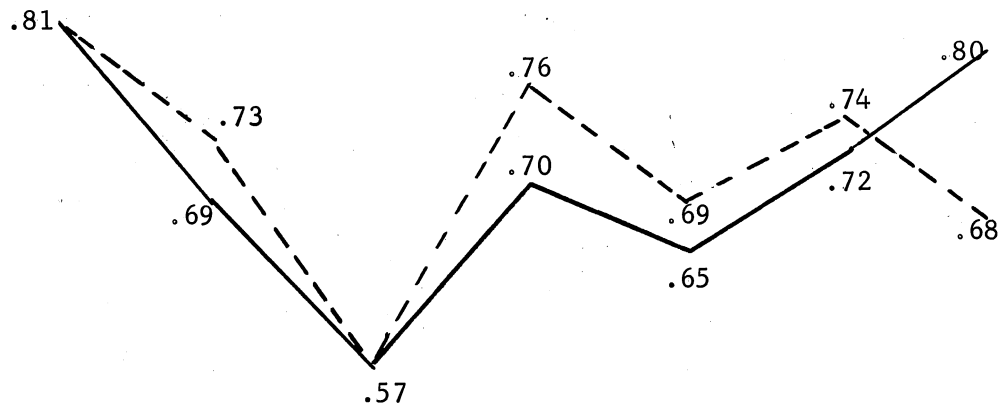
80

70

60

50

40



Male —————

Female - - - - -

\* Percentiles are based upon national normative samples (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 2. The Expected Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Indicated by Entering Male and Female Freshmen During the Fall, 1973

Metropolitan N=191

Non-metropolitan N=332

Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
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\* Per-  
centile

100

90

80

70

60

50

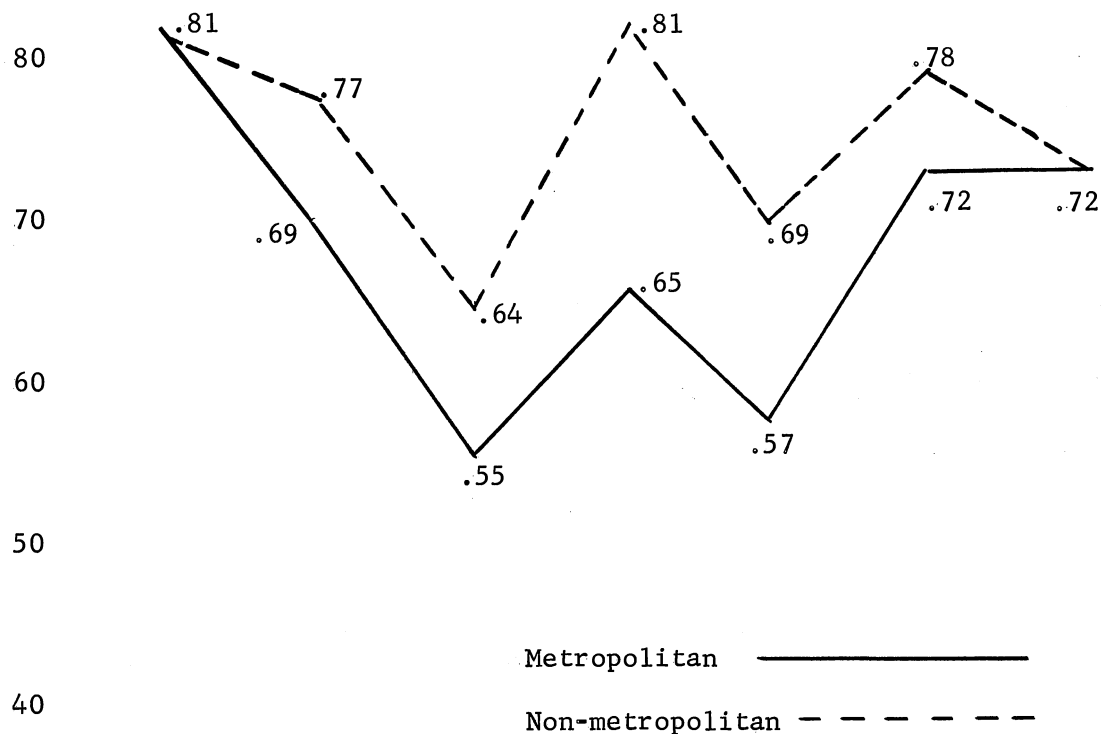
40

Metropolitan —————

Non-metropolitan - - - - -

\* Percentiles are based on a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 3. The Expected Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Indicated by Entering Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Freshmen During the Fall, 1973





All three ethnic groups--white, black, and Indian--perceived the environment highest in Practicality and lowest in Community. Thus, all freshmen subgroups' perceived college environment was one that was high in Community or one characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits, and social activities. The fact that all subgroups scored low on the Community scale would tend to indicate that they place less emphasis upon an atmosphere of congeniality. They do not appear to place much emphasis upon professors being helpful, knowing them, and going out of their way to help students. Student life characterized by privacy and cool detachment rather than by togetherness and sharing seems to be indicative of their perceived environment. Figure 4 illustrates the three ethnic groups' percentile equivalents.

#### The Perceived Environment

Freshmen students responded to the post-test phase of this investigation by reporting what they now perceived the climate of the school to be like after having spent one semester in the environment. They contributed their now more experienced knowledge of the university by responding to each CUES item on the basis of what they now perceive the real environment to be. Table II contains the raw scores for each subgroup on the seven scales as well as their percentile equivalents taken from a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

The all freshmen group perceived the environment to be highest in Practicality and lowest in the Scholarship and Community scales, when comparing raw scores and percentile equivalents. Figure 5 shows the perceived environment for this all freshmen group.

White N=392

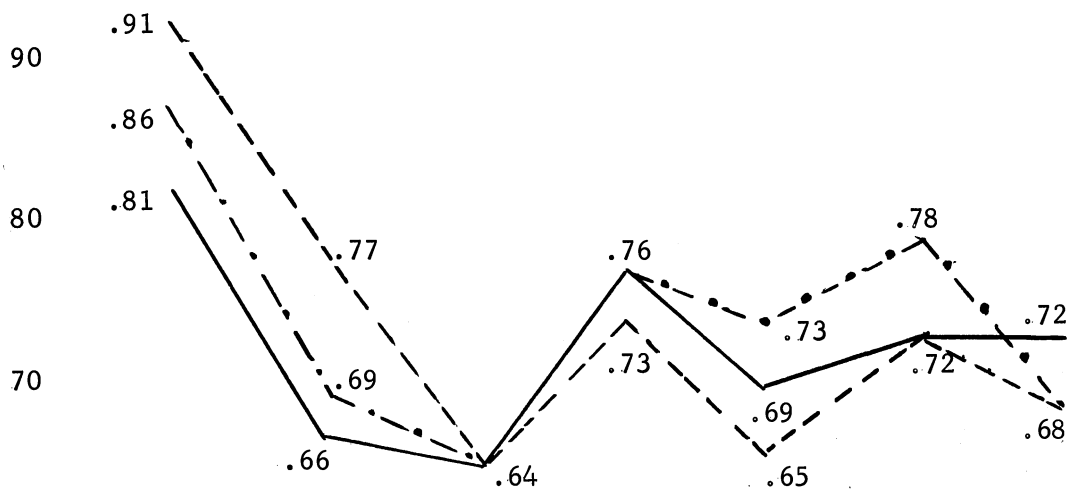
Black N=65

Indian N=64

	Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
--	-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Per-  
centile

100



70

50

40

White —————  
 Black - - - - -  
 Indian - · - · - · - · - · - · - · - ·

\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 4. The Expected Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Indicated by Three Ethnic Groups: White, Black, and Indian During the Fall of 1973

TABLE II

THE PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENT AT NORTHEASTERN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY AS REPORTED  
BY FRESHMEN AFTER A ONE SEMESTER EXPERIENCE IN THE ENVIRONMENT

CUES Scale	All Fresh.	Male	Female	Resi- dent	Com- muter	Metro	Non- Metro	White	Black	Indian
	N=523	N=247	N=276	N=336	N=187	N=163	N=360	N=399	N= 55	N= 69
Practicality	25* (.81)	24 (.78)	25 (.81)	26 (.84)	24 (.78)	23 (.74)	24 (.78)	25 (.81)	22 (.69)	26 (.84)
Scholarship	24 (.50)	20 (.33)	25 (.52)	24 (.50)	25 (.52)	20 (.33)	25 (.52)	24 (.50)	30 (.77)	31 (.77)
Community	24 (.50)	24 (.50)	28 (.68)	25 (.55)	24 (.50)	25 (.55)	25 (.55)	24 (.50)	25 (.55)	28 (.68)
Awareness	23 (.65)	20 (.55)	29 (.81)	22 (.64)	24 (.70)	18 (.47)	27 (.76)	23 (.65)	20 (.55)	29 (.81)
Propriety	17 (.57)	16 (.54)	18 (.65)	15 (.49)	20 (.73)	16 (.54)	17 (.57)	16 (.54)	17 (.57)	18 (.65)
Campus Morale	25 (.57)	22 (.40)	25 (.57)	24 (.49)	28 (.74)	24 (.49)	26 (.65)	26 (.65)	24 (.49)	29 (.78)
Quality of Teaching	16 (.72)	14 (.62)	15 (.68)	16 (.72)	16 (.72)	14 (.62)	16 (.72)	15 (.68)	15 (.68)	17 (.80)

\*Raw scores from the College and University Environment Scales are shown for each scale.  
Percentiles are given in parentheses.

All Freshmen N=523

	Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
--	-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Per-  
centile

100

90

80

70

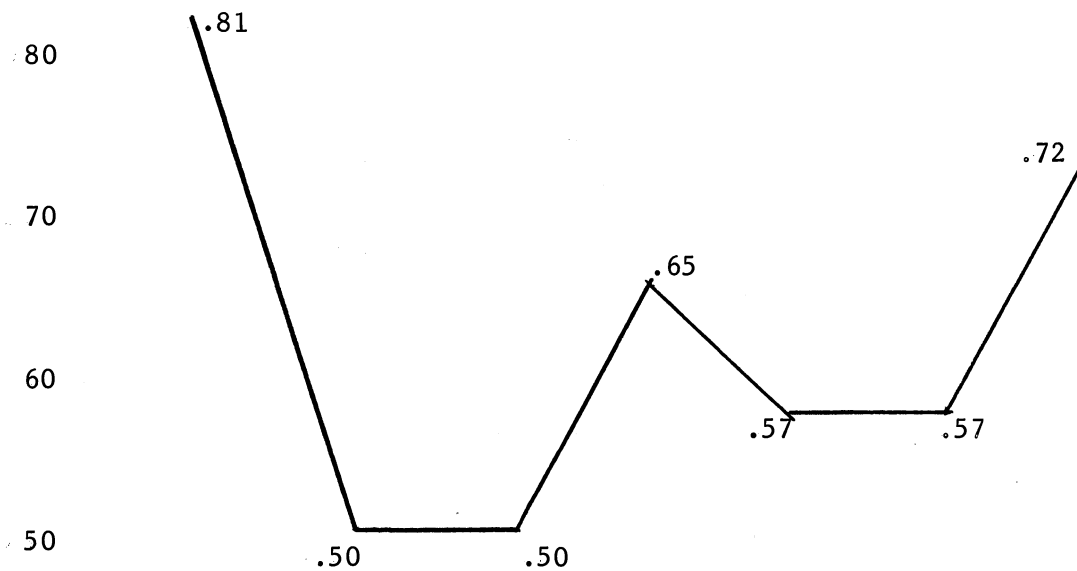
60

50

40

\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 5. The Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Freshmen After One Semester of Attendance in the Environment During the Fall of 1973



Male students perceived the environment highest in the Practicality scale. Females also perceived the environment high in Practicality but they also perceived the university environment to be high in the Awareness scale. The males and females both perceived the environment lowest in Scholarship. Figure 6 depicts this graphically for the male and female subgroup.

Resident and commuter freshmen perceived the environment to be high in Practicality. They differed, however, in what they perceived the environmental press to be lowest in at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. The resident freshmen perceived the environment lowest in the Propriety and Campus Morale scales with the Scholarship scale only one percentage point above the other two. The low score of this group on the Campus Morale scale would seem to indicate some dissatisfaction on the part of the resident students with overall university morale. These dissatisfactions might possibly be with lack of student freedom of expression, failure to become assimilated into campus life, lack of group cohesiveness, lack of a commitment to intellectual tasks or failure to identify with social norms on the campus, according to Pace (1969). He identified the above aspects as those which contribute most to morale on a college campus. Figure 7 gives graphic representation of the resident and commuter freshmen's perceived environment.

The metropolitan and non-metropolitan freshmen perceived the environment highest in Practicality and lowest in Scholarship. Both groups obviously feel an environment characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits, and social activities, according to the Pace model, is characteristic of Northeastern Oklahoma State University. It would also appear that they feel the environment does not

Male N=247

Female N=276

	Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
--	-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Per-  
centile

100

90

80

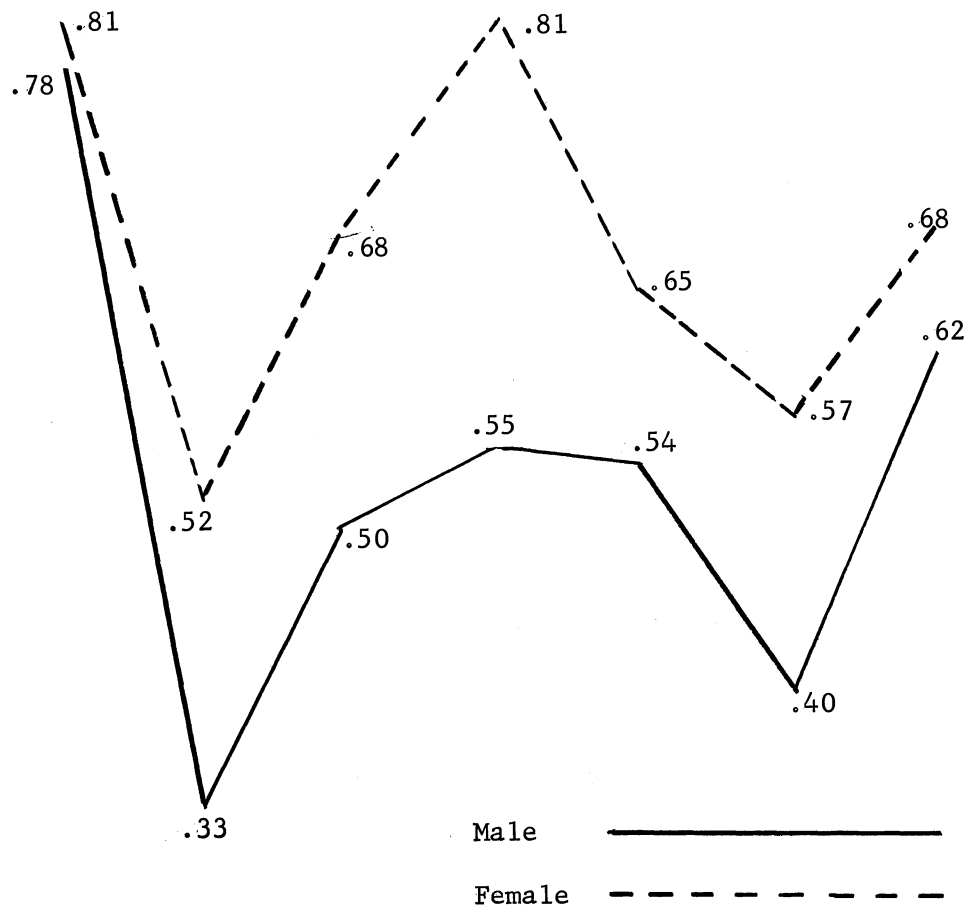
70

60

50

40

30



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 6. The Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Male and Female Freshmen After One Semester and In the Fall of 1973

Resident N=336

Commuter N=187

	Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Communi- ty	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
--	-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Percen-  
tile

100

90

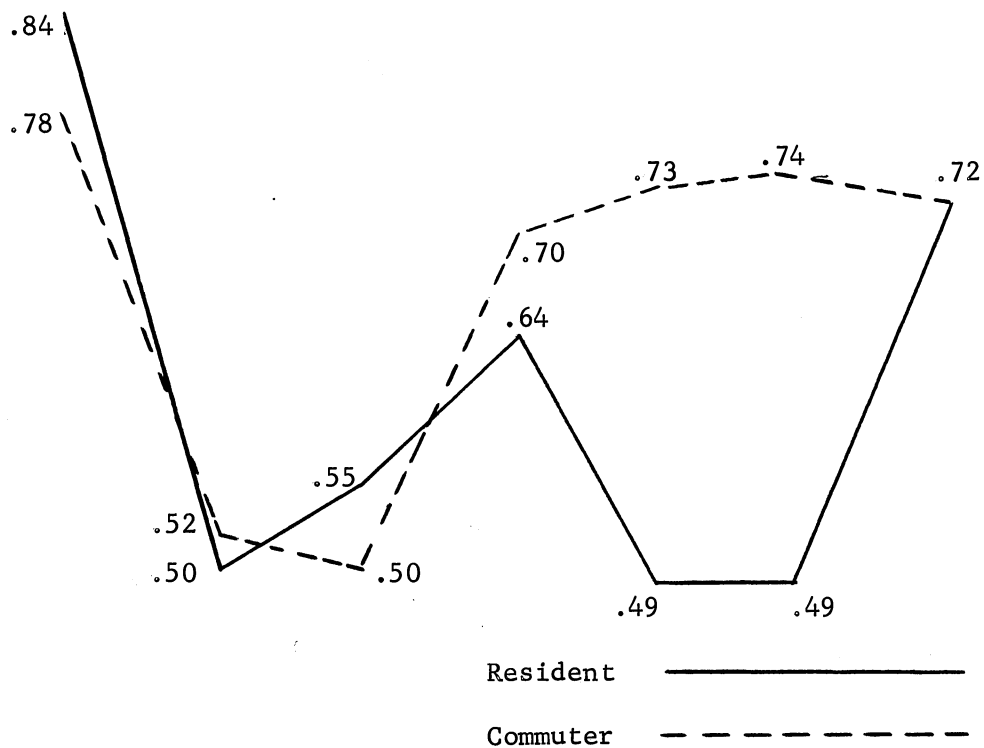
80

70

60

50

40



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 7. The Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Resident and Commuter Freshmen After One Semester in the Environment During the Fall of 1973

emphasize competitively high academic achievement or serious interest in scholarship. Figure 8 illustrates the percentile equivalents for the metropolitan and non-metropolitan sample.

The three ethnic groups showed more diversity in their perceived environment than any of the other subgroups. White and Indian freshmen perceived the environment highest in Practicality while the black freshmen perceived Scholarship as the highest. The white subgroup perceived the environment lowest in Scholarship and Community. The black subgroup perceived the Campus Morale scale lowest, while the Indian freshmen perceived the Propriety scale lowest. Figure 9 depicts these data graphically.

#### A Comparison of the Expected and Perceived Environment

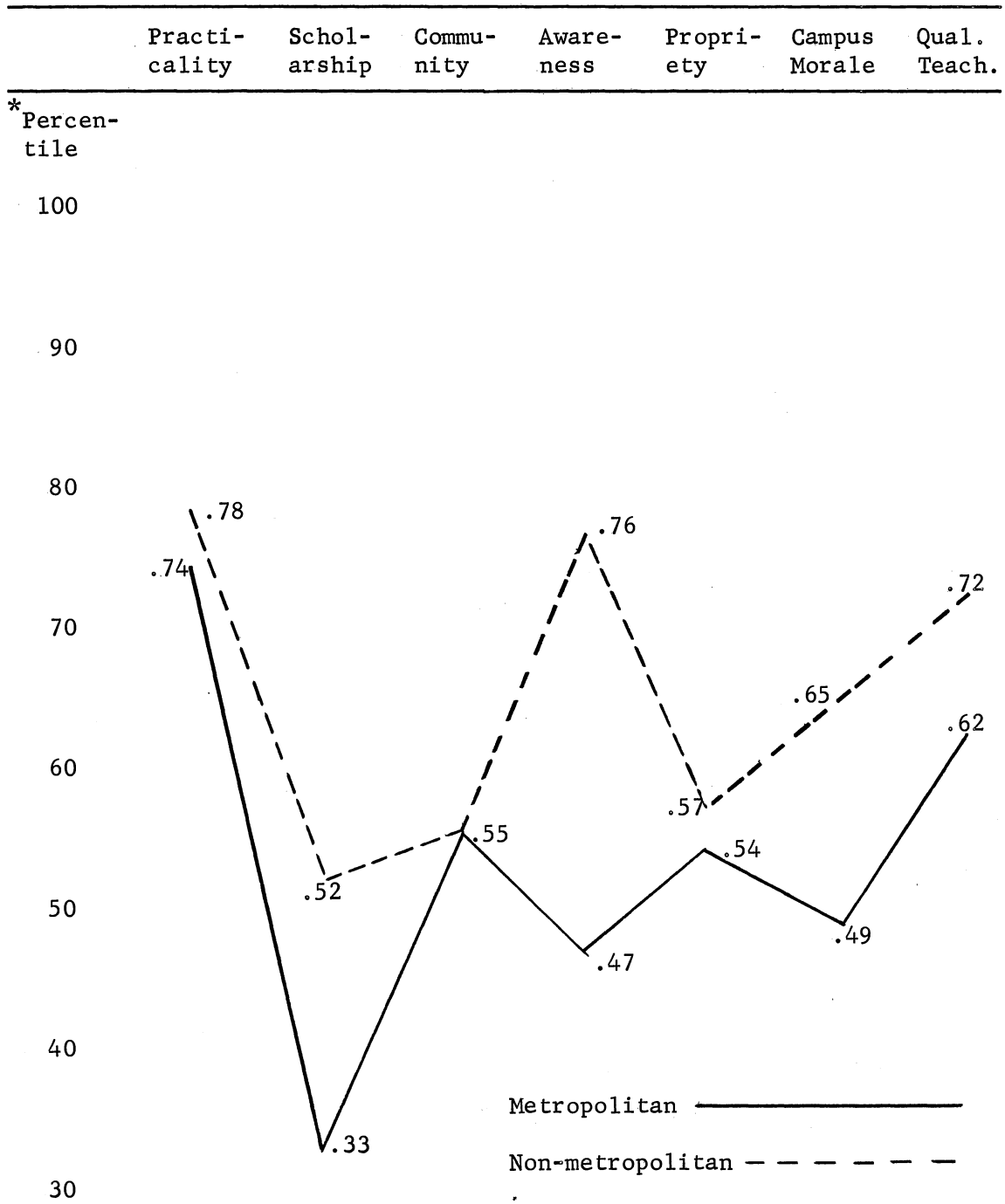
##### Comparisons of Percentiles

Comparisons of percentile equivalents on the pre-test and post-test do indicate some changes in the freshmen expectations of the environment and their later perception of the environment. The freshmen as a group expect and perceive the environment to be high in Practicality, but their change in the negative direction is from the Community scale to the Scholarship scale. The percentile score in the Scholarship scale dropped from a pre-test 73 percent to a post-test or perceived environment value of 50 percent. The various subgroups as a whole made the same changes, which is not at all surprising when you look at the all freshmen group. Figure 10 illustrates the differences between the expected and perceived environment for the all freshmen group.



Metropolitan N=163

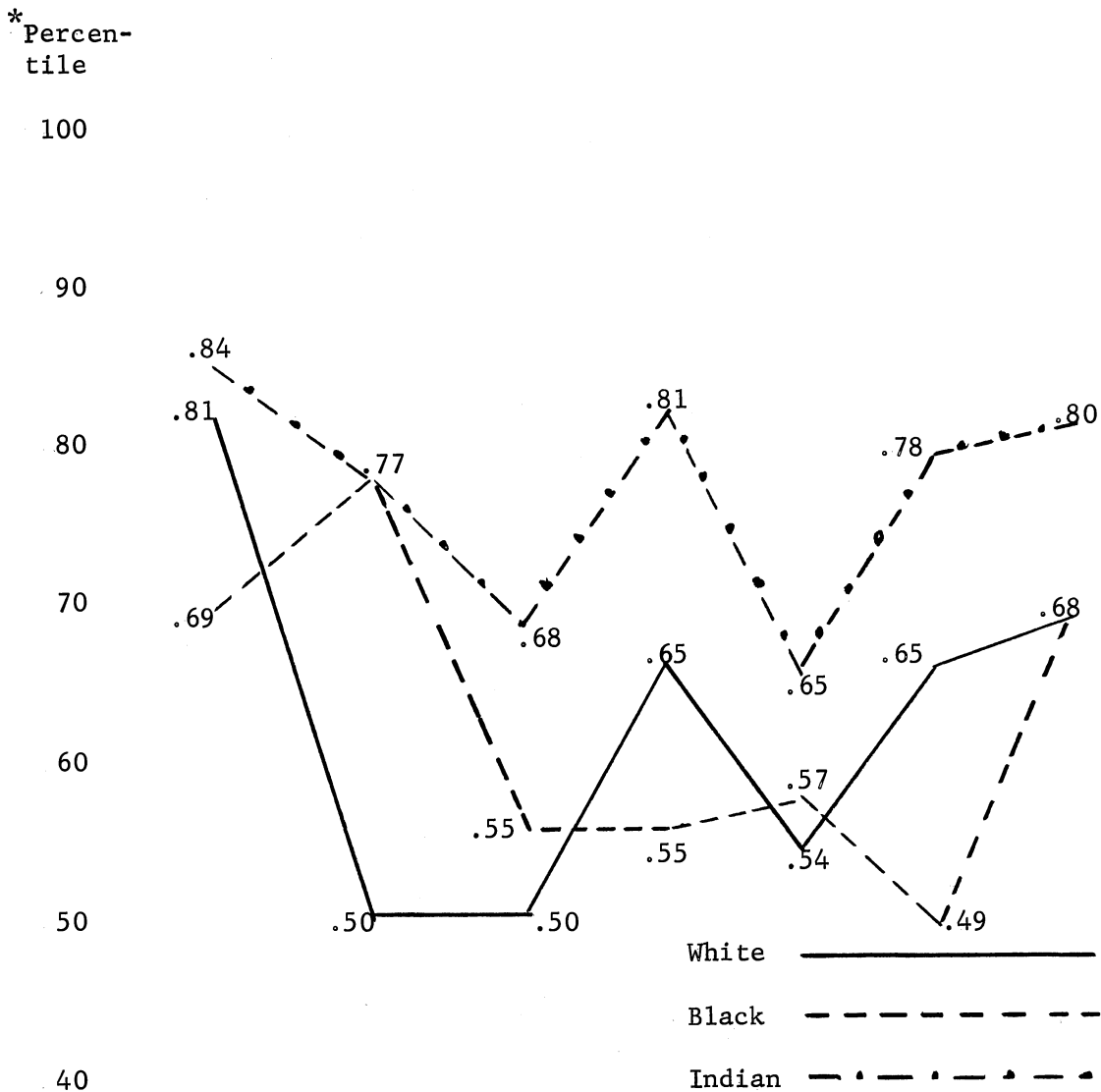
Non-metropolitan N=360



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 8. The Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Metropolitan and Non-metropolitan Freshmen After One Semester in the Environment

White N=399	Black N=55	Indian N=69							
			Practi-	Schol-	Commu-	Aware-	Propri-	Campus	Qual.
			cality	arship	nity	ness	ety	Morale	Teach.



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 9. The Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Three Ethnic Groups: White, Black, and Indian After One Semester Attendance in the Environment

	Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Commu- nity	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
--	-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Percen-  
tile

100

90

80

70

60

50

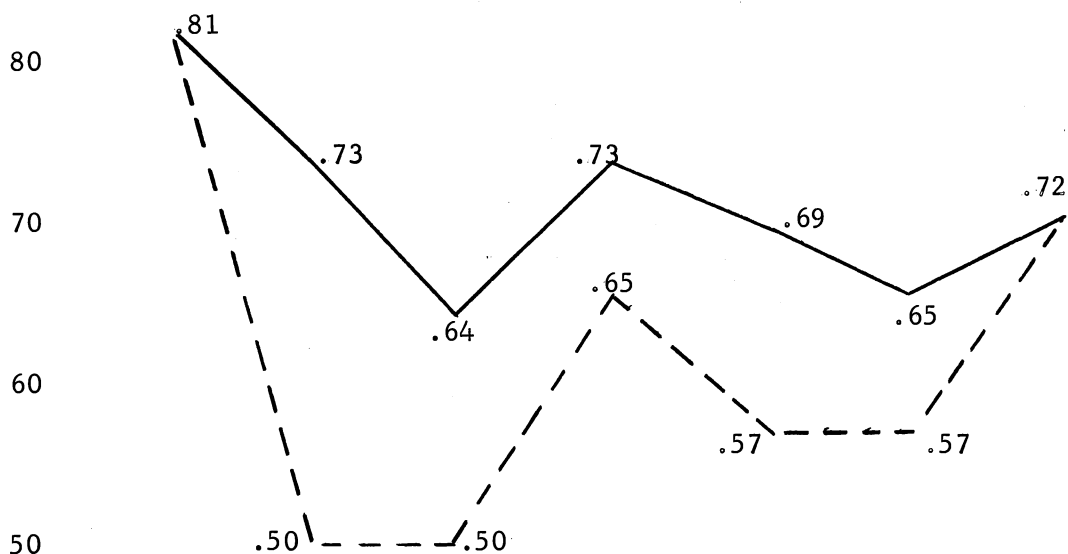
40

30

Expected Environment —————  
Perceived Environment - - - - -

\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

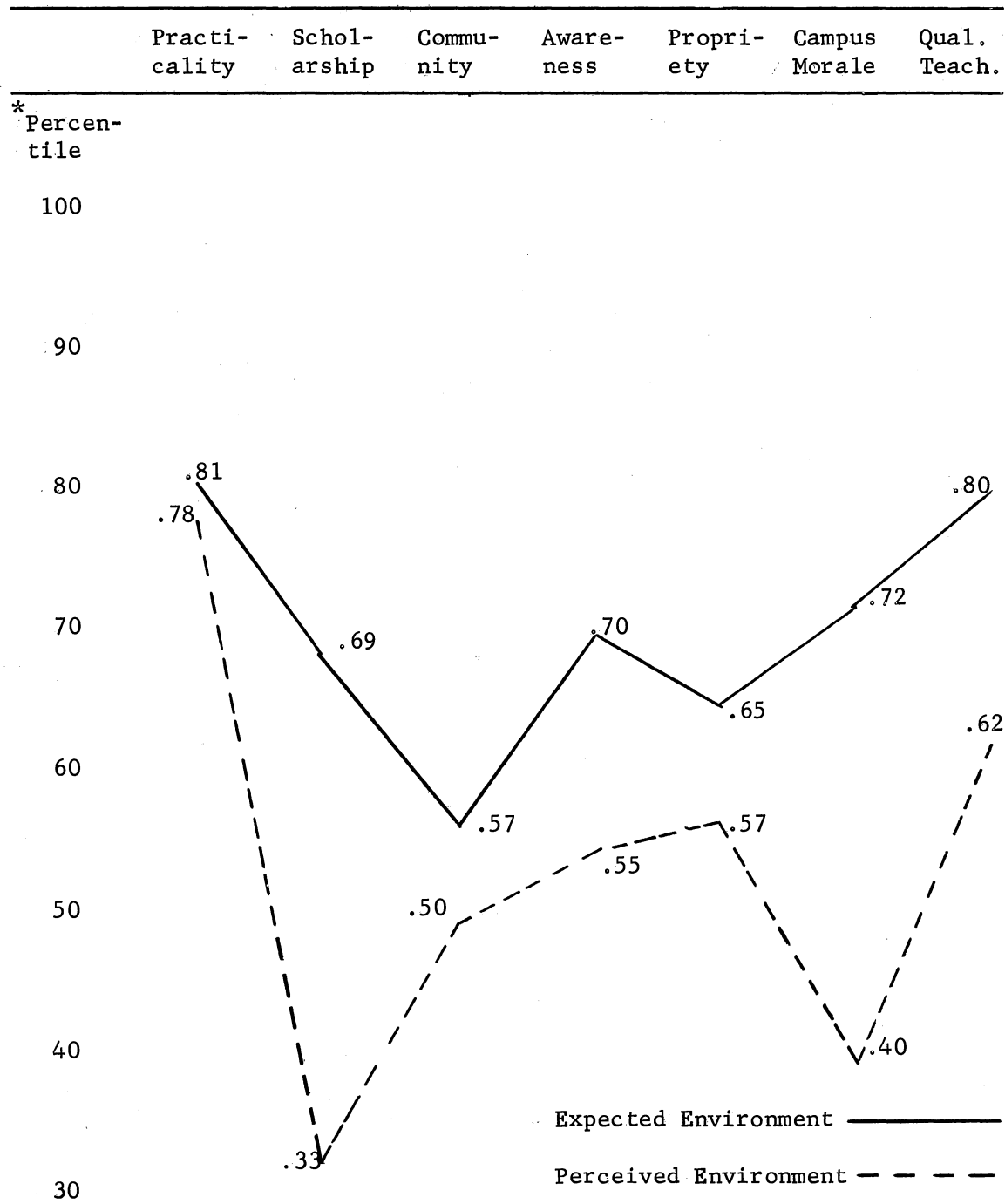
Figure 10. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Freshmen, Fall, 1973



The male and female subgroups' highest scale percentile was the Practicality scale for both their expected and perceived environments. Their biggest change in the negative direction was from Community to Scholarship. The male freshmen percentile on the Scholarship scale dropped thirty-six percentile points from the pre- to the post-test. The female group also had the greatest drop in the Scholarship scale. Figures 11 and 12 show graphically the comparisons of the male and female subgroups' expected and perceived environment.

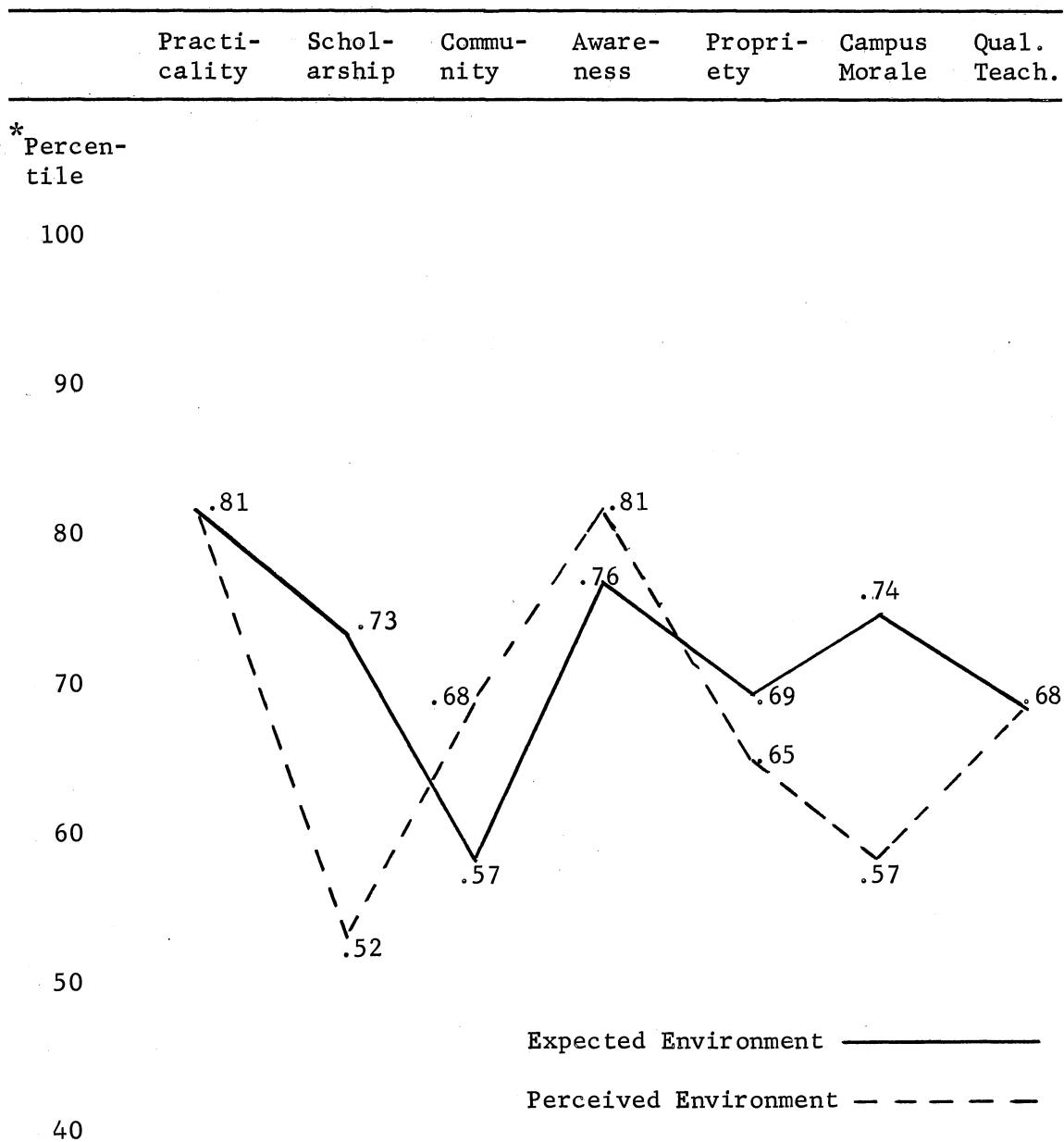
Figure 13 shows the comparisons of the expected and perceived environment of the metropolitan subgroup, and Figure 14 shows the comparisons of the non-metropolitan groups' expected and perceived environment. Both the metropolitan and non-metropolitan freshmen's highest expected and perceived environment showed no change from the Practicality scale. However, they both indicated a change from the Community scale to the Scholarship in the negative direction. The change in percentile points was 36 and 25 respectively for the metropolitan and non-metropolitan freshmen.

The three ethnic groups showed the greatest overall change from the pre- to the post-test. The white and Indian subgroups were highest in the expected and perceived environment on the Practicality scale. The white subgroup's lowest perception of the environment was the same as their expected, Community, but also was low in the Scholarship scale. The black freshmen showed the greatest change of all the subgroups. They scored the expected environment high in Practicality, but changed to Scholarship on the perceived environment. Their lowest scale percentile was Community on the expected and Campus Morale on the perceived environment. The Indian subgroup's low percentile was from



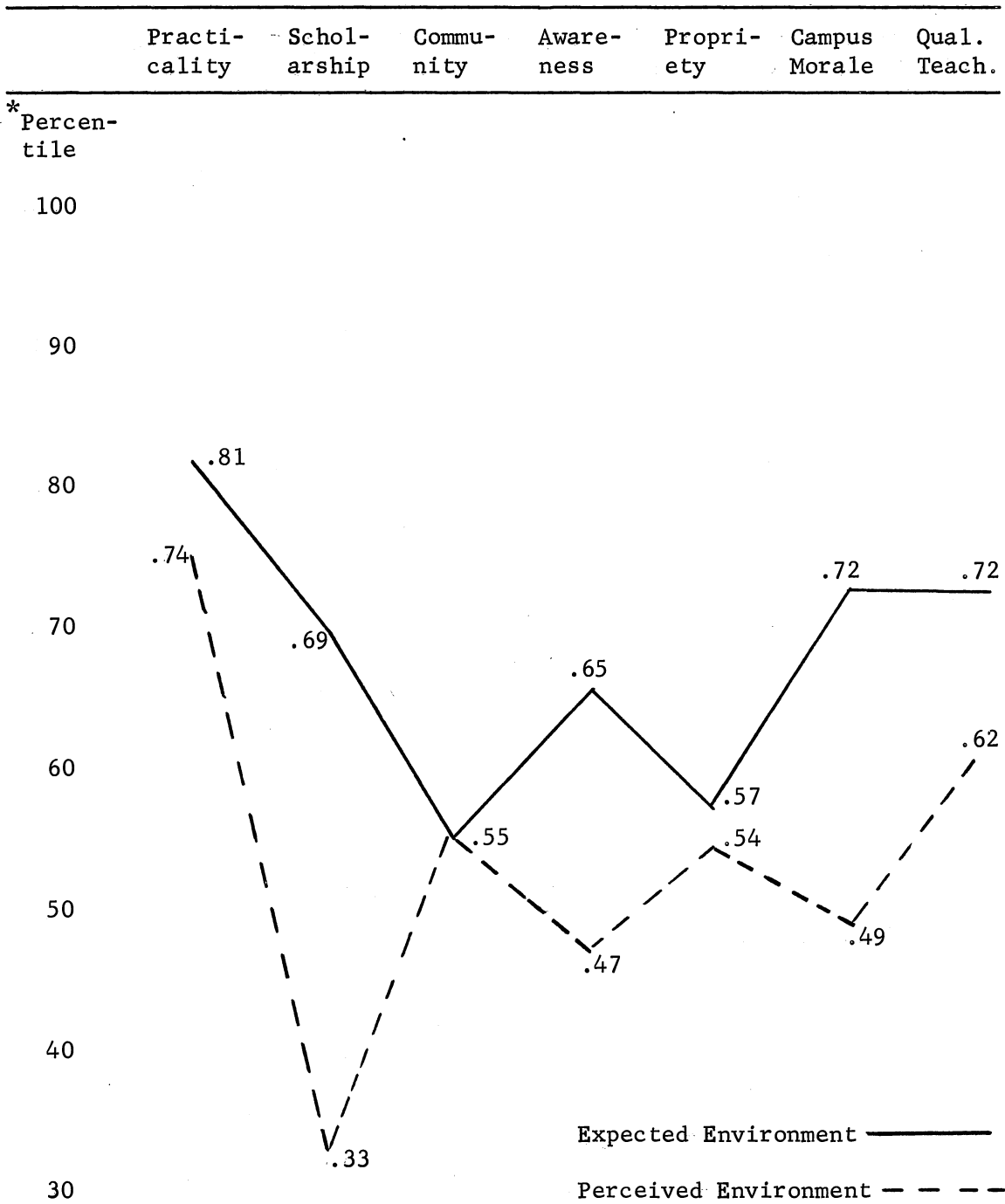
\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 11. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Male Freshmen, Fall, 1973



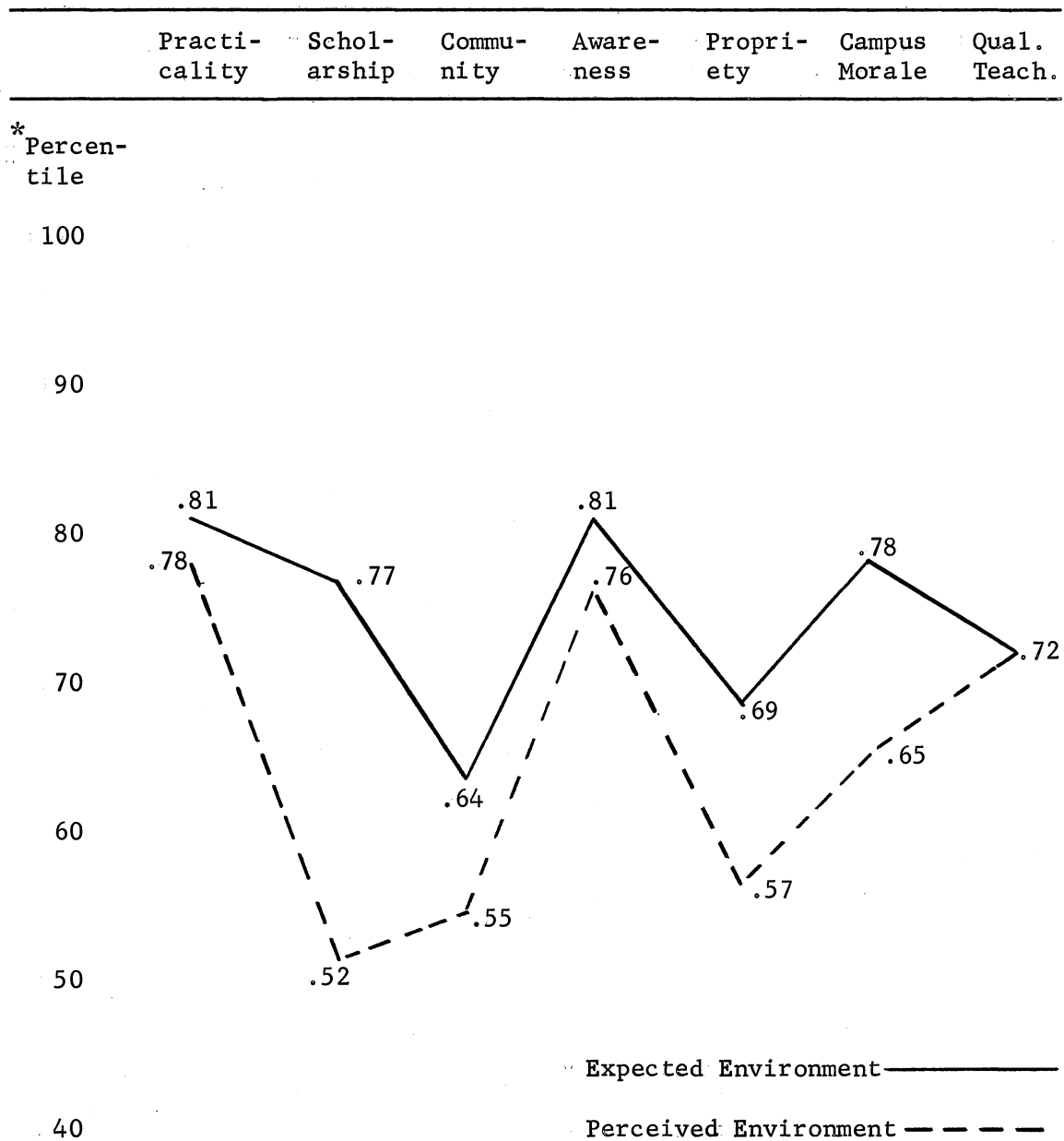
\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 12. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Female Freshmen, Fall, 1973



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 13. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Metropolitan Freshmen, Fall, 1973



\*Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 14. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Non-metropolitan Freshmen, Fall, 1973



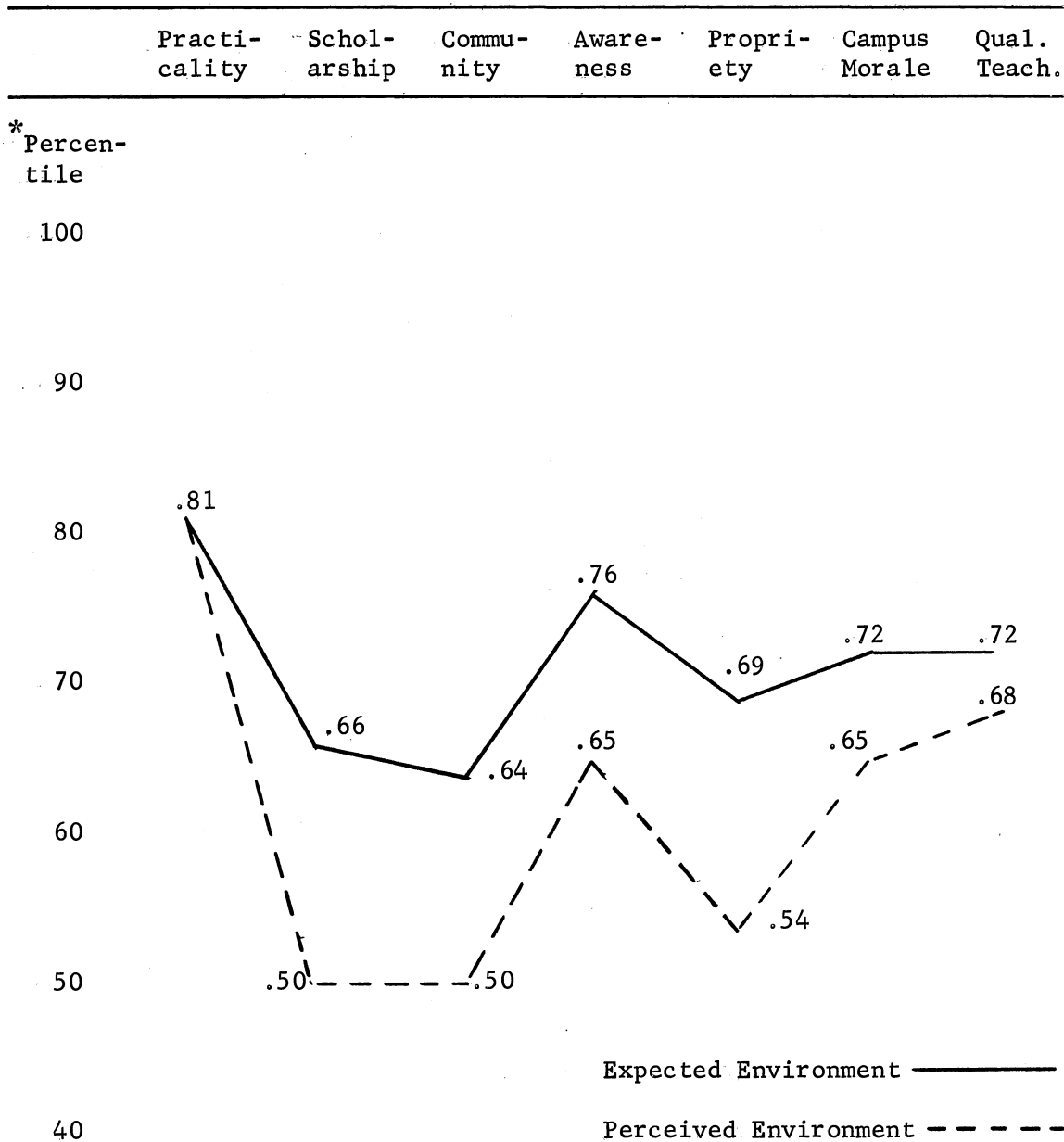
Community to Propriety on the expected to perceived environment. Figures 15, 16, and 17 give a graphic illustration of these three ethnic groups.

The resident students indicated Practicality exhibited more press on the environment than the other scales in their expected and perceived environment. The lowest scale percentile was for the Community scale in their expected environment and for Campus Morale and Propriety in their perceived environment. They expected an environment that was characterized by fun and school spirit with less press on group loyalty and group welfare. Figure 18 gives graphic illustration of their scale scores. The commuter group also indicated Practicality as the highest press in both the expected and perceived environment. The Community scale was lowest on both the expected and perceived environment for the commuters. Figure 19 shows their various percentile scale scores.

Figure 20 shows the comparison of percentile equivalents for the all freshmen group and the upperclass sample. Both perceived the environment to be high in Practicality. The two groups perceived the environment to be low in the Scholarship scale. It appears then that freshmen, after a one-semester experience in the environment, and upperclass students, after two or more semesters in the environment, perceive it very much alike.

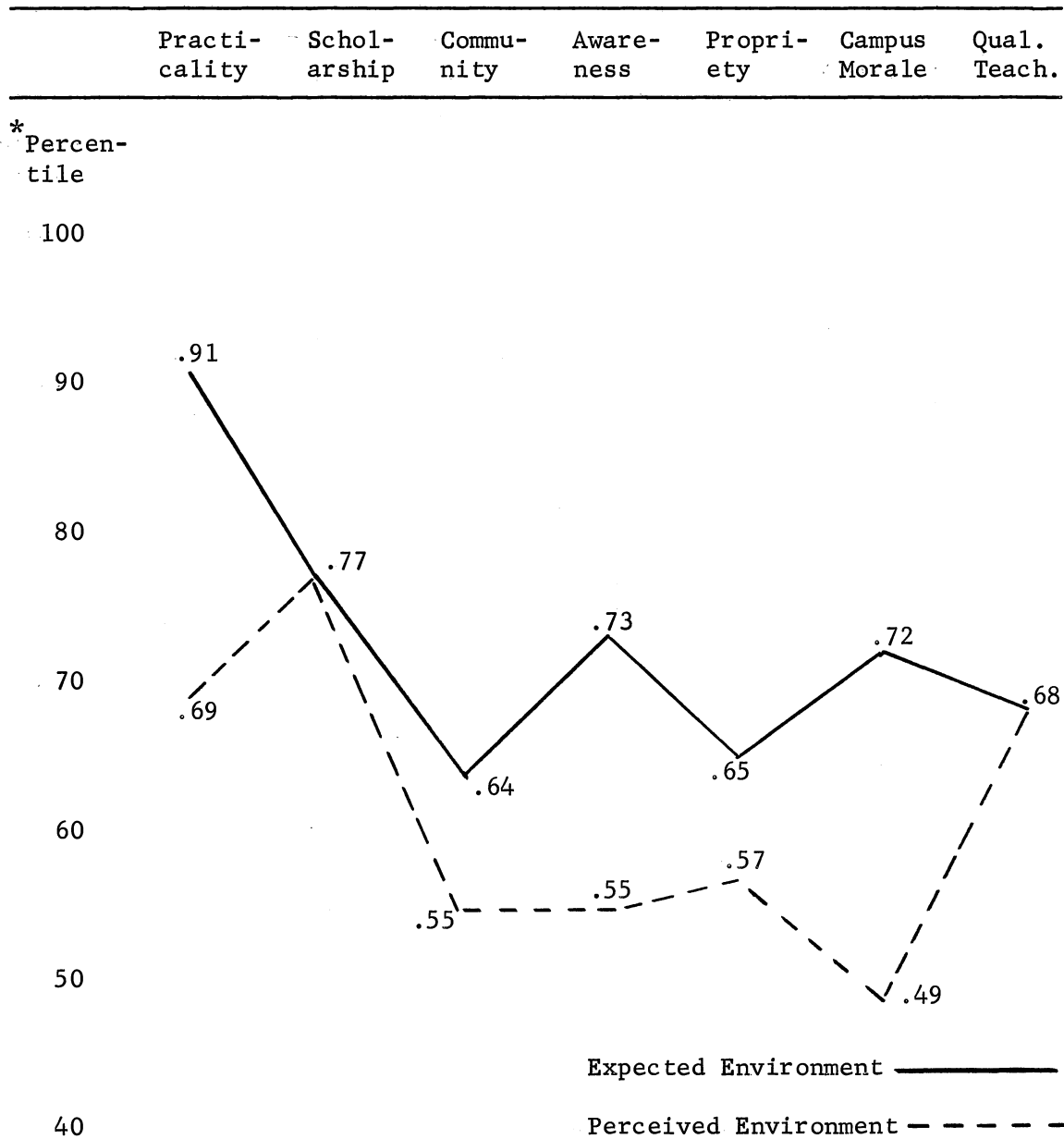
#### Comparisons of Test Scores

Analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences between pre- and post-test scores of the various subgroups. The .05 significant level was chosen for rejecting the null hypothesis. Tables



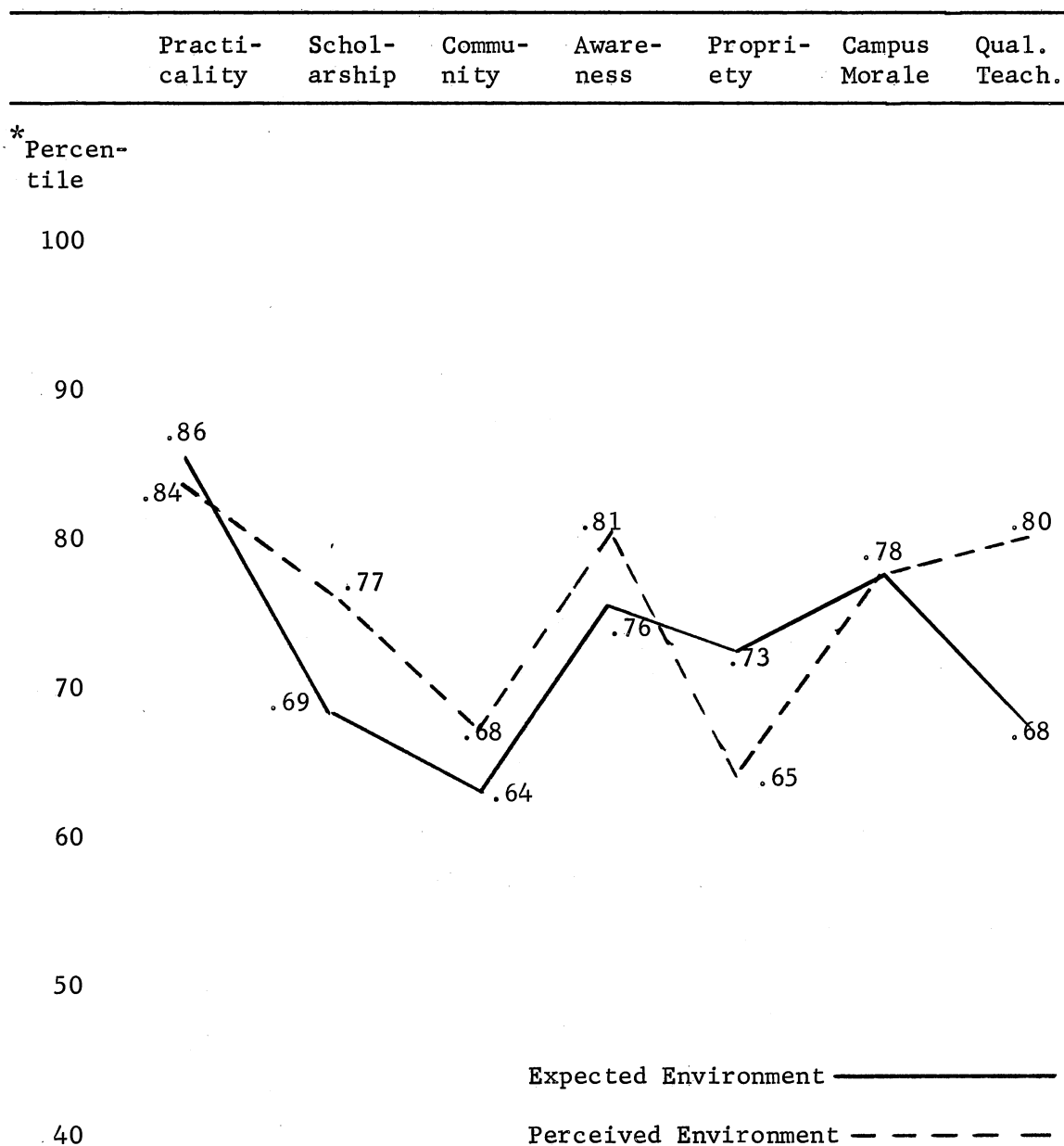
\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 15. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by White Freshmen, Fall, 1973



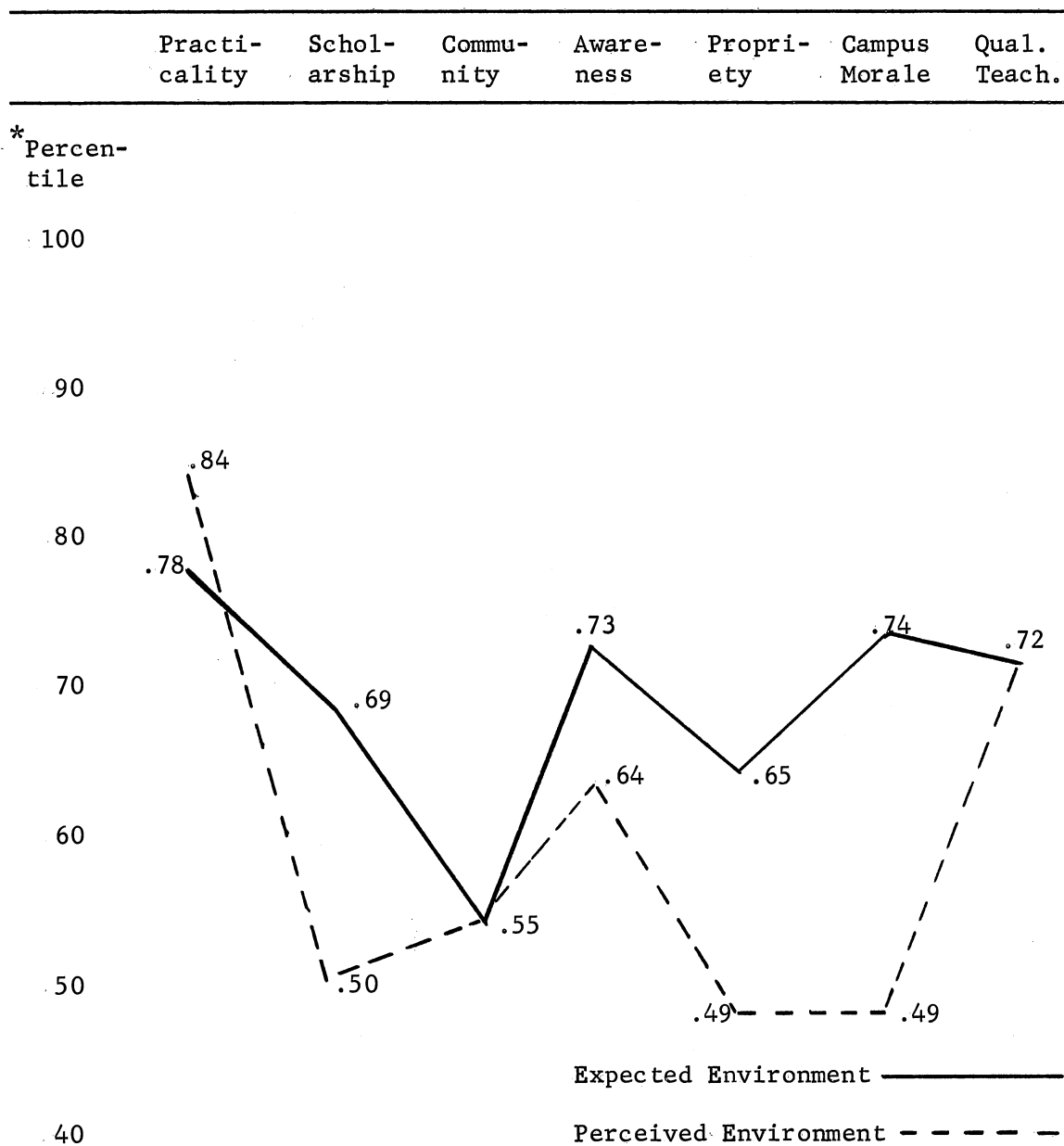
\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 16. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Black Freshmen, Fall, 1973



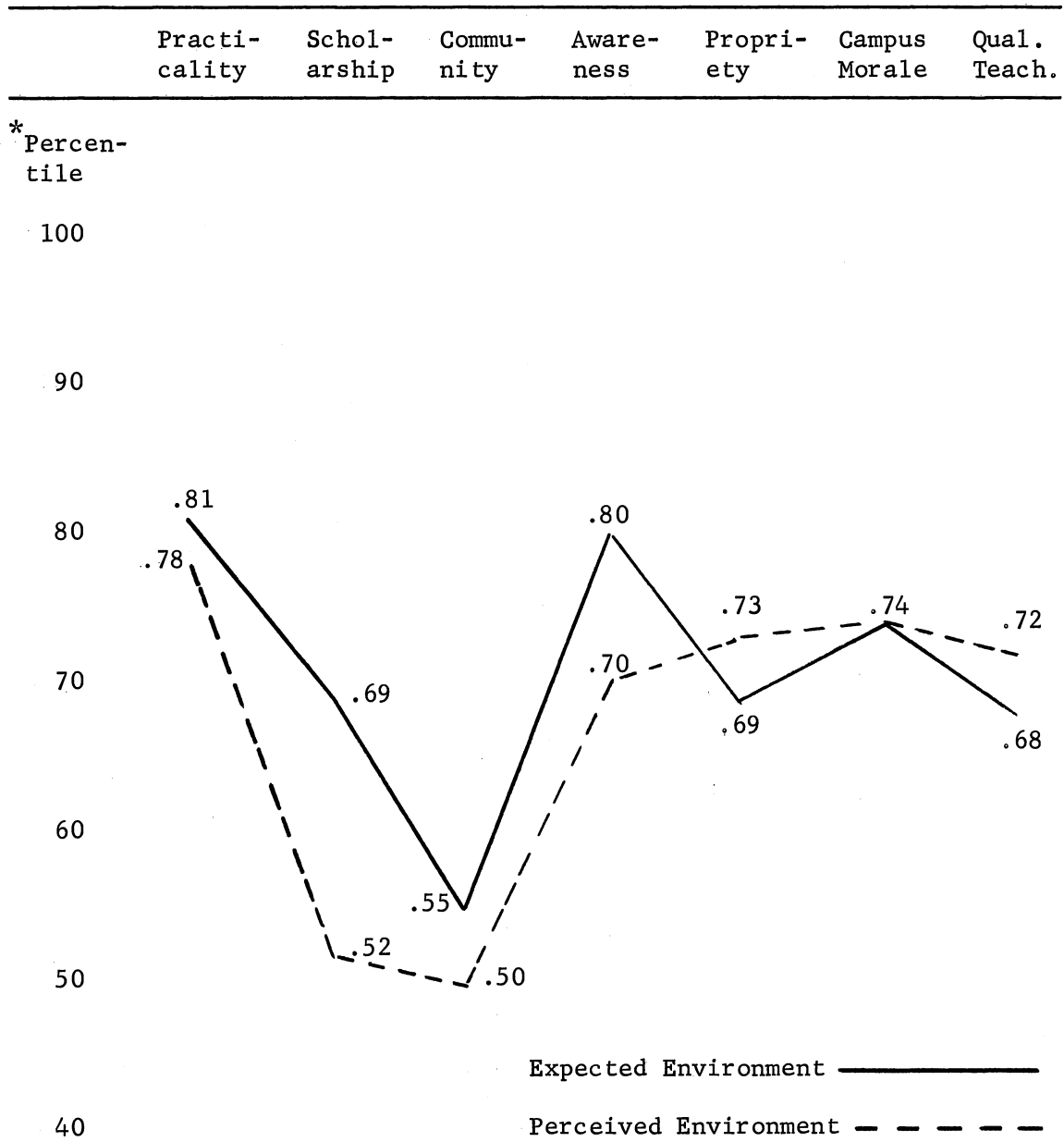
\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

\* Figure 17. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Indian Freshmen, Fall, 1973



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 18. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Resident Freshmen, Fall, 1973



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 19. Comparison of the Expected and the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Commuter Freshmen, Fall, 1973

Practi- cality	Schol- arship	Communi- ty	Aware- ness	Propri- ety	Campus Morale	Qual. Teach.
-------------------	------------------	----------------	----------------	----------------	------------------	-----------------

\* Percen-  
tile

100

90

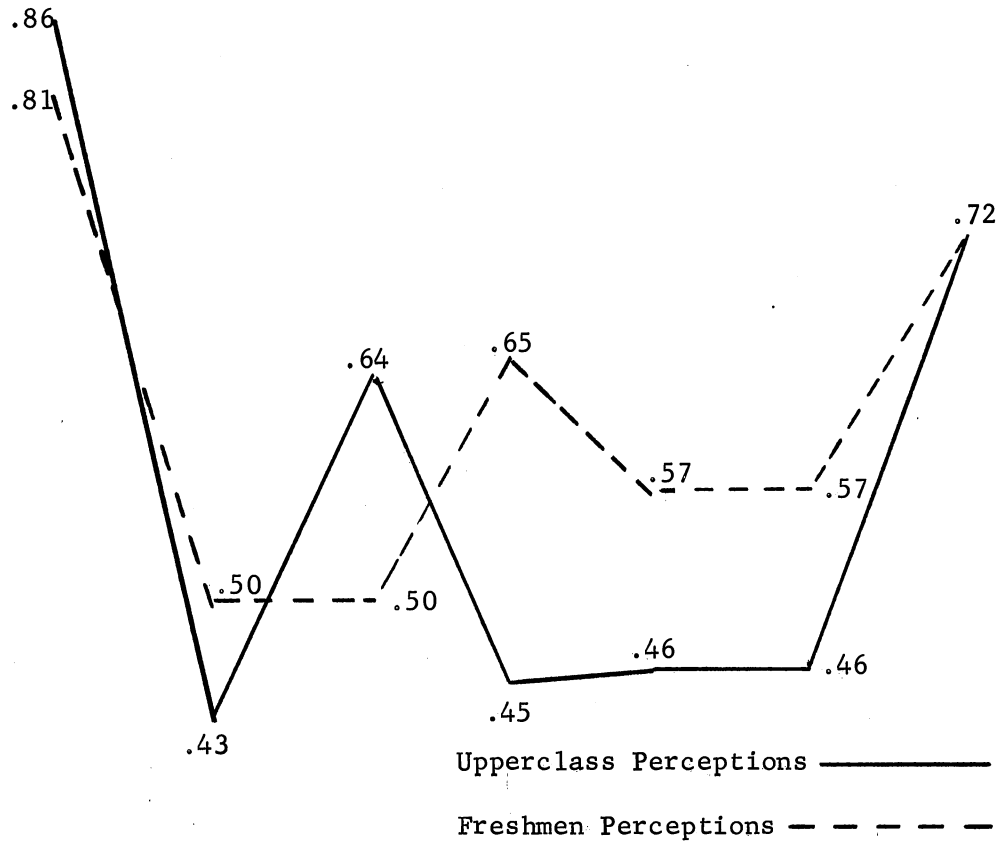
80

70

60

50

40



\* Percentiles are based upon a national normative sample (Pace, 1969, pp. 20, 34-35).

Figure 20. Comparison of the Perceived Environment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University as Reported by Freshmen and Upperclass Students, Fall, 1973

III through XII report the scales that show significance at either the .05 or .01 level.

For the all freshmen sample, six of the seven CUES scales showed a significant difference between pre- and post-test scores (Table III). These six scales were: Practicality, Scholarship, Community, Propriety, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships. The only scale which did not show a significant change was the Awareness scale.

TABLE III  
CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
OF RESPONSES OF THE ALL FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=520		N=520		
Practicality	25	11.65	25	11.07	.01
Scholarship	29	12.45	24	11.15	.01
Community	27	12.13	24	11.63	.05
Awareness	25	11.57	23	11.30	* NS
Propriety	19	9.38	17	8.96	.05
Campus Morale	26	13.48	25	11.89	.01
Quality of Teaching	16	6.82	16	6.54	.05

\* Not significant



The freshmen men showed significant differences on five of the seven scales (Table IV). They were the Practicality, Scholarship, Community, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships scales. The female freshmen sample showed significant differences on two scales, Scholarship and Campus Morale (Table V).

TABLE IV  
CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
OF RESPONSES OF THE MALE FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=247		N=247		
Practicality	25	11.66	24	10.87	.01
Scholarship	28	12.32	20	10.58	.01
Community	26	11.89	24	11.00	.01
Awareness	24	11.23	23	10.68	* NS
Propriety	19	9.11	16	8.80	* NS
Campus Morale	27	13.24	22	11.22	.01
Quality of Teaching	17	6.84	14	6.28	.01

\* Not significant

TABLE V  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
 OF RESPONSES OF THE FEMALE  
 FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=275		N=275		
Practicality	25	11.63	25	11.25	* NS
Scholarship	29	12.54	25	11.63	.01
Community	26	12.32	28	12.21	* NS
Awareness	27	11.88	29	11.91	* NS
Propriety	19	9.56	18	9.08	* NS
Campus Morale	28	13.67	25	12.51	.01
Quality of Teaching	15	6.80	15	6.75	* NS

\* Not significant

Resident students reported significant differences on six of the seven scales (Table VI). Practicality, Scholarship, Community, Propriety, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships all showed significant changes, while the Awareness scale did not change. The commuter group showed significant differences on only two scales, Scholarship and Campus Morale. All other scales showed no significant changes (Table VII).

TABLE VI  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
 OF RESPONSES OF THE RESIDENT  
 FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=329*		N=329*		
Practicality	24	11.75	26	11.16	.01
Scholarship	28	12.37	24	11.02	.01
Community	26	12.37	25	11.77	.05
Awareness	25	11.47	22	11.16	** NS
Propriety	18	9.29	15	8.69	.05
Campus Morale	28	13.50	24	11.67	.01
Quality of Teaching	16	6.84	16	6.46	.05

\*All students did not indicate their place of residence in both test administrations.

\*\*Not significant.

TABLE VII  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
 OF RESPONSES OF THE COMMUTER  
 FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=187*		N=187*		
Practicality	25	11.53	24	10.87	** NS
Scholarship	28	12.61	25	11.26	.01
Community	25	11.70	24	11.41	** NS
Awareness	28	11.79	24	11.64	** NS
Propriety	19	9.48	20	9.33	** NS
Campus Morale	28	13.44	28	12.32	.05
Quality of Teaching	15	6.81	16	6.66	** NS

\* All students did not indicate their place of residence in both test administrations.

\*\* Not significant.

The ethnic groups showed a somewhat surprising result. The white freshmen sample showed significant differences on four of the seven scales: Practicality, Scholarship, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships (Table VIII). There were no changes on their Community, Awareness, and Propriety scales pre- and post-test scores. The black freshmen sample indicated significant changes on only one scale, Campus Morale, and the Indian freshmen

subgroup showed no significant differences on any of the seven scales (Tables IX and X).

TABLE VIII  
CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
OF RESPONSES OF THE WHITE FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=392*		N=392*		
Practicality	25	11.44	25	10.89	.01
Scholarship	27	12.32	24	10.73	.01
Community	27	12.03	24	11.52	** NS
Awareness	26	11.47	23	11.13	** NS
Propriety	19	9.33	16	8.80	** NS
Campus Morale	27	13.39	26	11.68	.01
Quality of Teaching	16	6.92	15	6.56	.05

\*All students did not indicate their ethnic group in both test administrations.

\*\*Not significant.

TABLE IX  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF  
 RESPONSES OF THE BLACK FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=55*		N=55*		
Practicality	28	12.42	22	11.38	** NS
Scholarship	30	13.11	30	11.84	** NS
Community	27	12.25	25	11.73	** NS
Awareness	25	11.55	20	10.91	** NS
Propriety	18	9.45	17	8.71	** NS
Campus Morale	27	13.55	24	11.62	.05
Quality of Teaching	15	6.55	15	6.05	** NS

\* All students did not indicate their ethnic group in both test administrations.

\*\* Not significant.

TABLE X  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL OF  
 RESPONSES OF THE INDIAN FRESHMAN SAMPLE

GUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=64*		N=64*		
Practicality	27	12.23	26	11.72	** NS
Scholarship	28	12.39	31	12.53	** NS
Community	27	12.55	28	12.52	** NS
Awareness	26	11.94	29	12.73	** NS
Propriety	20	9.58	18	9.69	** NS
Campus Morale	30	13.75	29	13.19	** NS
Quality of Teaching	15	6.53	17	6.73	** NS

\* All students did not indicate their ethnic group in both test administrations.

\*\* Not significant.

Significant differences existed on three scales of the metropolitan sample (Table XI). Scholarship, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships were the three scales showing significance. The non-metropolitan sample showed significant differences on two of the seven scales (Table XII). Significant changes were found on the Scholarship scale and the Campus Morale scale between their expectations and later perceptions of the College Environment.

TABLE XI  
CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
OF RESPONSES OF THE METROPOLITAN  
FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=163*		N=163*		
Practicality	25	11.24	23	10.60	** NS
Scholarship	28	12.16	20	10.45	.01
Community	25	11.91	25	11.09	** NS
Awareness	23	11.05	18	9.99	** NS
Propriety	17	9.02	16	8.91	** NS
Campus Morale	27	12.90	24	10.88	.01
Quality of Teaching	16	6.70	14	6.13	.05

\* All students did not indicate their type of community in both test administrations.

\*\* Not significant.



TABLE XII  
 CUES SCORES, MEANS, AND SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL  
 OF RESPONSES OF THE NON-METROPOLITAN  
 FRESHMAN SAMPLE

CUES Scale	<u>Expectations</u>		<u>Perceptions</u>		Level of Significance
	Score	Mean	Score	Mean	
	N=333*		N=333*		
Practicality	25	11.81	24	11.27	** NS
Scholarship	31	12.59	25	11.34	.01
Community	25	12.18	25	11.94	** NS
Awareness	29	11.83	27	11.95	** NS
Propriety	19	9.47	17	8.98	** NS
Campus Morale	30	13.68	26	12.36	.01
Quality of Teaching	16	6.91	16	6.67	** NS

\* All students did not indicate their type of community in both test administrations.

\*\* Not significant.

#### Freshmen-Upperclass Comparisons

Freshmen and upperclass students perceived the campus environment high in Practicality and low in Scholarship. All other scales were very similar. F-scores and scale scores for both groups, plus individual score means, are shown in Table XIII. Only two scales showed significant differences in the way the two groups perceive the university

environment. Those two scales were the Scholarship and Awareness scales.

TABLE XIII  
FRESHMEN AND UPPERCLASS COMPARISONS OF SCALE  
SCORES, SIGNIFICANCE LEVEL, AND MEANS

CUES Scale	Scale Scores		Significance		Means	
	Fr.	Upper	F-score	Level	Fr.	Upper
Practicality	25	27	2.94	*NS	11.07	11.62
Scholarship	24	22	6.66	.05	11.15	9.98
Community	24	27	0.23	*NS	11.63	11.38
Awareness	23	17	10.89	.01	11.30	9.74
Propriety	17	14	2.44	*NS	8.96	9.34
Campus Morale	25	23	1.72	*NS	11.89	12.69
Quality of Teaching	16	16	3.94	*NS	6.54	6.56

\*NS - Not Significant

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if differences existed between freshmen students' expectations and their perceptions at the end of their initial semester of enrollment at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Could students who began their collegiate experience with specific expectations of the college environment alter their opinions after this limited exposure of one semester?

Students participating in the study were divided into the following subgroups: male and female; resident and commuter; metropolitan and non-metropolitan; white, black, and Indian; and upperclass students. No attempt was made to determine why, if any, differences existed among the various subgroups.

The test instrument selected and utilized in this investigation was Pace's College and University Environment Scale, Second Edition. The questionnaire was composed of five main scales of twenty items each: Practicality, Community, Scholarship, Awareness, and Propriety. In addition to these five scales, two subscales, Campus Morale and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships, were included in the Second Edition of the CUES.

All freshmen students entering Northeastern Oklahoma State University in the fall of 1973 responded to the CUES on the basis of what they expected the university environment to be like. At the end of

the fall semester, they then responded to the CUES on the basis of what they now perceived the environment to be after having spent one semester in the environment.

The responses of students were scored by the sixty-six plus/thirty-three minus method as suggested by Pace (1969, p. 13). The results were then compared by percentile equivalents to a national normative sample. Analysis of variance was used to ascertain if significant differences existed between the various subgroups' expected and perceived environment. These data are reported in Tables I through XIII and Figures 1 through 20. In addition to the above, those items characteristic and those not characteristic of Northeastern Oklahoma State University, and the percent of the all freshmen and the upper-class sample answering each item of the CUES in the keyed direction, are found in the appendices.

This chapter summarizes the findings of the research study, offers conclusions based upon the original hypotheses and the eventual findings, and proposes recommendations for further related research.

#### Summary of Findings

The hypotheses revolved around the central issue of whether any significant differences would be found to exist between the expectations and perceptions of freshmen at the university.

#### Hypotheses

1. There are significant differences between freshmen pre-college expectations of the college environment and perceptions following a one-semester experience in the environment.

The freshman myth--unlimited expectations of the college environment--is clearly reflected in the preconceptions of all freshmen studied who entered Northeastern Oklahoma State University. Freshmen expected a college with high intellectual and non-intellectual press, one which proved to be somewhat illusory when compared to their perceptions at the end of the semester.

Perceptions of the environment recorded at the end of the first semester showed significant differences on six of the seven CUES scales. Hypothesis 1 was therefore accepted. Freshman expectations decrease significantly by the end of the first semester.

2. There are significant differences between the expectations of campus environment of male and female students at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.

The male freshmen showed significant differences on all but two of the scales, Awareness and Propriety. The female sample indicated significant differences on only two of the scales, Scholarship and Campus Morale. Percentile equivalents indicated a great deal of change in the expected and later perceived environment of both males and females with less of a change in the female freshmen percentiles. On the basis of the findings, the hypothesis was accepted.

3. There are significant differences between the expectations of the campus environment of resident and non-resident students at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.

The resident freshmen indicated significant differences on six of the seven CUES scales. The Awareness scale did not show any

significant change. The non-resident or commuter sample showed significant differences on only two scales, Scholarship and Campus Morale. The results indicated that the resident freshmen's expectations did change significantly by the end of the semester but the non-resident or commuter freshmen did not change significantly in their expectations and later perceptions of the university environment.

4. There are significant differences between the expectations of the campus environment of students coming from a metropolitan area and those students from a non-metropolitan area at the time of enrollment and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment.

The metropolitan freshmen sample showed significant differences between pre- and post-test scores on three of the seven CUES scales: Scholarship, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships. The non-metropolitan sample showed significant differences on even fewer of the scales than the metropolitan sample. Scholarship and Campus Morale were the only two showing significant differences for this group. On this basis, the hypothesis was not accepted.

5. There are significant differences between the expectations and perceptions of the campus environment of students classed as Caucasians, American Indians, and African Negroes and the perceptions of those students after completing one semester in the environment. The black freshman sample had significant differences on only one scale, Campus Morale. The Indian freshmen showed no significant differences on any of the CUES scales, but the white freshman sample indicated significant differences on four of the seven CUES scales. Practicality,

Scholarship, Campus Morale, and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships were the CUES scales showing significance by the white freshmen. The hypothesis is, therefore, not accepted.

6. There are significant differences between the perceptions of the campus environment of freshmen and upperclassmen after the freshmen have been in attendance one semester and the upperclassmen a minimum of three semesters.

The upperclass sample's scale scores and percentile equivalents were very similar to the freshmen scores. Scale scores differed by no more than three points except on the Awareness scale. This CUES scale had the greatest deviations on scale scores, percentile equivalents, and means, and also, was the only scale which showed a significant difference between the freshmen sample and upperclass sample. It appears then, that freshmen and upperclass students perceive the campus environment to be very similar, so this hypothesis was not accepted.

#### Conclusions and Recommendations

The intermeshing of theoretical perspectives and empirical findings leads to conclusions vital to understanding the nature of the freshman experience. Both individuals and institutions are agents of change, the identification of the extraordinary expectations with which new students approach the college experience can be met with new forms of institutional challenge. The life sustaining impact of myth as related to expressed expectations and subsequent perceptions of the campus environment must be given attention in educational planning for freshmen. The "freshman myth" has important implications for academic

planning and student life programs, particularly the orientation and advisement processes.

### Conclusions

1. Freshman expectations of the university environment are infinite and unreal in character.

2. Freshman expectations decrease significantly by the end of the first semester in the environment.

3. The great disparity between expectations and perceptions on the Scholarship scale indicates that freshmen see a college environment as one which emphasizes high academic achievement and a serious interest in scholarship, but did not find this to be true at Northeastern Oklahoma State University.

4. Freshmen expectations and perceptions on the Campus Morale scale seem to indicate that they are generally dissatisfied with the university in regards to channels of communication open to students, orientation and subsequent adjustment into campus life, group identity and spirit, pressures to challenge students' scholastic initiative, and identifiable social norms.

5. Male freshmen show more of a change between their expectations and perceptions of the university environment than do female freshmen.

6. Resident students were more generally dissatisfied with the university than were the non-resident or commuter students. This was particularly apparent on the Scholarship scale.

7. Black and Indian freshmen found that the actual university environment more closely resembled their expectations than did white freshmen.



8. The Indian freshmen's expectations and perceptions of the university environment were higher overall than the other ethnic groups as indicated by CUES scale scores and means.

9. Freshmen and upperclass students perceive the campus environment very much the same after having spent some time in the environment.

#### Discussion of the Conclusions

In developing their expectations of what a college environment is going to be like, students are no doubt influenced by many people including parents, peers, teachers, relatives, and other school personnel. The news media and entertainment media of various kinds obviously are responsible for exposing the general population to information regarding the college setting. Whatever the source, the findings indicate that this information may not always be accurate and current. The image projected to prospective students differs greatly from the actual college environment.

Students' changes in attitudes toward a college or university environment could likewise be influenced by several factors. The student enters the college to pursue an academic program, his assimilation into the college society is a part of the freshman socialization process. In this society peers exert a vital and important impact on freshman expectation change and later life decisions. Unlimited expectations of the college environment if not limited rapidly are potent sources of alienation from the college and ultimate society. Students' expectations should be limited, not by decreasing the college environment perceptions, but by making them more aware of the real college environment through advisement and other means. This realistic college

environment should be neither static nor decreasing. Regardless of the methods utilized to make them aware of the real environment, actual on-campus experiences, both academic and social, are probably the greatest general influencing factors.

The two scales receiving the overall highest percentile scores on the post-test were Practicality and Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships. Students rated the university higher than eighty-one percent of the schools comprising the national normative sample on the Practicality scale and higher than seventy-two percent of the schools on the national sample on the Quality of Teaching and Faculty-student Relationships scale. This indicates that students perceive the environment as being somewhat structured and characterized by enterprise, organization, material benefits and social activities. It also characterizes an atmosphere in which professors are scholarly, have high standards, are clear, adaptive and flexible, but their teaching is infused with warmth, interest, and helpfulness toward students.

The great differences between the expectations and perceptions of white freshmen with that of their black and Indian counterparts indicates that peer influence within the ethnic group, parents, and relatives may have more of a bearing on their attitudes than any other factor or factors.

### Recommendations

Based upon the findings and conclusions of this study, several recommendations seem to be appropriate:

1. Further research on student attitudes, particularly as they pertain to the campus environment, is needed on a longitudinal basis.

2. Develop orientation programs that incorporate an understanding of the nature and change in freshman expectations.

3. Initiate studies to ascertain the perceptions of the college environment held by faculty, administrators, counselors, advisers, and governing boards.

4. Conduct studies at all institutions of higher education in order to assess their individual environmental characteristics, develop an appropriate classification system, and make this information available to all high schools and their personnel.

5. Conduct exhaustive studies concerning student attitude changes as influenced by college environments.

6. Develop new institutional communication channels, methods, and programs to lessen the shock when students are assimilated into the real college environment.

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APPENDIX A

PERCENTAGE OF ALL STUDENTS RESPONDING IN THE  
KEYED DIRECTION FOR CUES ITEMS IN EXPECTED  
AND PERCEIVED ENVIRONMENTS

CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.	CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.
1	.62	.50	18	.76	.64
2	.77	.54	19	.65	.55
3	.47	.44	20	.38	.37
4	.50	.64	21	.69	.64
5	.50	.49	22	.59	.45
6	.81	.75	23	.28	.31
7	.44	.38	24	.53	.63
8	.27	.36	25	.61	.56
9	.64	.48	26	.59	.66
10	.30	.33	27	.53	.45
11	.30	.28	28	.46	.39
12	.87	.81	29	.23	.26
13	.69	.62	30	.72	.65
14	.68	.54	31	.64	.65
15	.43	.36	32	.64	.61
16	.66	.58	33	.55	.67
17	.81	.72	34	.66	.63

CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.	CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.
35	.59	.56	60	.73	.73
36	.20	.26	61	.85	.78
37	.65	.52	62	.74	.61
38	.77	.66	63	.47	.37
39	.67	.64	64	.73	.69
40	.49	.47	65	.69	.68
41	.39	.46	66	.60	.56
42	.60	.48	67	.40	.37
43	.63	.52	68	.63	.55
44	.39	.35	69	.50	.47
45	.62	.62	70	.64	.57
46	.49	.46	71	.83	.76
47	.14	.16	72	.43	.48
48	.45	.40	73	.82	.74
49	.61	.55	74	.68	.57
50	.62	.62	75	.55	.51
51	.73	.75	76	.81	.82
52	.55	.46	77	.78	.80
53	.63	.53	78	.75	.77
54	.66	.64	79	.68	.68
55	.47	.51	80	.62	.53
56	.71	.69	81	.41	.45
57	.84	.73	82	.65	.59
58	.16	.23	83	.75	.69
59	.89	.87	84	.37	.39

CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.	CUES Item Number	Expected Environ.	Perceived Environ.
85	.48	.44	93	.68	.54
86	.73	.66	94	.35	.32
87	.42	.48	95	.77	.72
88	.69	.62	96	.38	.45
89	.52	.63	97	.74	.69
90	.76	.70	98	.23	.23
91	.53	.64	99	.39	.34
92	.14	.17	100	.29	.23

APPENDIX B

CUES ITEMS CHARACTERISTIC OF NORTHEASTERN  
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

The following statements describe the environment of the university as perceived by the freshmen in this study. In each case, sixty-six and two-thirds per cent or more of the respondents answered in the keyed direction in order to qualify the item as being characteristic of the university. Unless otherwise indicated, items are keyed true and answered true by at least a two-thirds margin of the respondents.

CUES Item  
Number

Scale

Practicality Scale

- |     |   |
|-----|---|
| 6.  | Education here tends to make students more practical and realistic.   |
| 51. | The important people at this school expect others to show proper respect for them.  |
| 56. | Many students try to pattern themselves after people they admire.   |
| 57. | New fads and phrases are continually springing up among the students.   |
| 59. | The college offers many really practical courses such as typing, report writing, etc.   |
| 60. | Student rooms are more likely to be decorated with pennants and pin-ups than with paintings, carvings, mobiles, fabrics, etc. |

CUES Item  
Number

## Scholarship Scale

- 12. Most of the professors are dedicated scholars in their fields.
- 17. Careful reasoning and clear logic are valued most highly in grading student papers, reports, or discussions.
- 61. Most of the professors are very thorough teachers and really probe into the fundamentals of their subjects.
- 64. Course offerings and faculty in the natural sciences are outstanding.
- 65. Courses, examinations, and readings are frequently revised.

## Community Scale

- 26. There is a great deal of borrowing and sharing among the students.
- 71. This school has a reputation for being very friendly.
- 73. Instructors clearly explain the goals and purposes of their courses.
- 76. Students quickly learn what is done and not done on this campus.
- 77. It's easy to get a group together for card games, singing, going to the movies, etc.
- 78. Students commonly share their problems.
- \*79. Faculty members rarely or never call students by their first names.

## Awareness Scale

- 33. Students are actively concerned about national and international affairs.
- 38. There are many facilities and opportunities for individual creative activity.
- 83. Many students here develop a strong sense of responsibility about their role in contemporary social and political life.
- 86. Course offerings and faculty in the social sciences are outstanding.

CUES Item  
Number

## Awareness Scale (Continued)

\*90. Modern art and music get little attention here.

## Propriety Scale

95. Most students show a good deal of caution and self-control in their behavior.

97. Students pay little attention to rules and regulations.

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\* These items were keyed false and were answered false by the respondents.

APPENDIX C

CUES ITEMS NOT CHARACTERISTIC OF NORTHEASTERN

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

The following statements describe what is not characteristic of the environment of the university as perceived by the freshmen in this study. In each case, thirty-three and one-third per cent or less of the respondents answered in the keyed direction in order to qualify the item as being not characteristic of the university. Unless otherwise indicated, items were keyed true and answered false by at least two-thirds of the respondents.

CUES Item  
Number

Scale

Practicality Scale

10. Anyone who knows the right people in the faculty or administration can get a better break here.
58. Students must have a written excuse for absence from class.

Scholarship Scale

No items from this scale were considered not characteristic.

Community Scale

23. Students often run errands or do other personal services for the faculty.
29. Students exert considerable pressure on one another to live up to the expected codes of conduct.

Awareness Scale

36. Public debates are held frequently.



CUES Item Number	Propriety Scale
*47.	Students frequently do things on the spur of the moment.
*92.	Student parties are colorful and lively.
94.	Students rarely get drunk and disorderly.
98.	Dormitory raids, water fights, and other student pranks would be unthinkable.
*99.	Many students seem to expect other people to adapt to them rather than trying to adapt themselves to others.
*100.	Rough games and contact sports are an important part of intramural athletics.

---

\* These items were keyed false but answered true by the respondents.

APPENDIX D

LETTER REQUESTING UPPERCLASS STUDENT

PARTICIPATION IN THE STUDY

The lettering appearing on the following page was mailed to a sample of 100 upperclass students at Northeastern Oklahoma State University. The letter was forwarded by U.S. Mail to those students selected for participation in this phase of the study. All letters were mailed approximately three weeks prior to the dates of administration of the questionnaire.

NORTHEASTERN STATE COLLEGE  
Tahlequah, Oklahoma

Dear Student:

You have been selected to participate in a research study that is very important to Northeastern State College. The College is very interested in learning what students think about it and what effect, if any, the College has upon your happiness and effectiveness as one of its students. In this way, constructive improvements may be implemented. I assure you that all student participants will remain anonymous.

Your cooperation is requested in selecting one of the days and times for completion of a questionnaire. It should take no more than 20 to 30 minutes of your time. You will be responding to the questionnaire with a group of upperclass students like yourself.

Please select one of the times listed below which is most convenient for you to attend and mark that time on the enclosed postcard. The postcard is pre-addressed and prepaid as a convenience to you. Mail the card promptly so as to assure your participation in this research study.

Times for Student Questionnaire

Wednesday, October 9 -- Men's Gym- Room 204  
12:00, 1:00, 2:00, 3:00, 4:00

Thursday, October 10 -- College Union Ballroom  
9:00, 11:00, 12:00, 1:00, 2:00

If none of the above times is convenient, please phone me at my office between 8:00 -- 5:00 (456-5511, Ext. 3307) or at my home (456-4009) anytime after 5:00 and an alternate time can be arranged. If I receive neither the card nor a phone call, I will contact you personally.

Only with the complete cooperation of yourself and the rest of those selected for this study, can we accomplish what we hope to accomplish. I look forward to seeing you at the time you have selected.

/s/ Gerald Benn

Gerald C. Benn  
Assistant Professor of Health,  
Physical Education and Safety

VITA

Gerald Chester Benn

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: A COMPARISON OF THE IDEAL AND REAL COLLEGE ENVIRONMENT AS PERCEIVED BY ENTERING FRESHMEN IN AN OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Major Field: Higher Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Sulphur, Oklahoma, December 7, 1934, the son of Roy C. and Esther Benn.

Education: Graduated from Sulphur High School, Sulphur, Oklahoma, in May, 1953; received Bachelor of Science degree in Education from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in May, 1961; received Master of Teaching degree from Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, in July, 1965; enrolled in doctoral program at the University of Arkansas, Fayetteville, Arkansas, in January, 1967; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, May, 1975.

Professional Experience: Taught science at Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma, 1961-62; instructor of Health, Physical Education and Safety at Northeastern Oklahoma State University, 1962-63; taught science at Ponca City High School, Ponca City, Oklahoma, summer and fall of 1963; instructor of Health, Physical Education and Safety, Northeastern Oklahoma State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma, from 1964 to present.

Professional Organizations: Oklahoma Education Association, Oklahoma Coaches Association, Phi Delta Kappa, Phi Kappa Phi.