

A STUDY OF BARRIERS AS PERCEIVED BY GRADUATE
STUDENTS IN OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT
EDUCATION AT OKLAHOMA STATE
UNIVERSITY

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PEARL ELLA ROLLAND

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Thesis Adviser:

Ernie W. Ruggen

Thesis Adviser

John L. Baird

John C. Chisholm

Norman N. Durham

Dean of the Graduate College

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Traditionally at Oklahoma State University and other universities throughout the United States, the percentage of adult students is on the increase. But in recent years with the rapid advancements in technology and the baby boom era moving beyond the college years, more adults are returning to college. Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983) point out that in a 1979 survey released by the Ohio Inter University Council, 1.7 million adults in Ohio planned to enroll in a college or university within the next four years. Colleges have responded to the undergraduate educational needs of adult college students. According to Bauer (1983), these programs have been ancillary to the college or university's main educational commitments, instructing traditional students and research. Also, the traditional college student body is changing. National data suggest that its adult component will increase, according to Bauer (1983). Although this is a national perspective, locally the same changes in the adult population in colleges or universities is taking place.

According to Cross (1981), the more education people have, the more education they want, and the more they participate in further learning activities. Olski (1980) found that many adults return to college to attain a degree, to complete an education that was interrupted years ago by social circumstances, or to finally get an

education which was not previously available to them. Kuh and Sturgis (1980) reported in a study conducted by the National Center for Education Statistics in 1977, the proportion of undergraduates who were 25 years of age and older have increased from 28 percent in 1972 to 36 percent in 1977. Reehling (1980) reported that in 1972, students, 25 years of age and older, represented 30 percent of all students attending colleges. By 1977, their proportion had increased to 40 percent of total colleges and their proportion had increased to 40 percent of total college enrollments. According to Dewey III (1980):

The retirement aged adult is entering college in growing numbers. The Academy for Educational Development reported that based on the experience of some 212 institutions that kept data on their older adult student enrollment, the enrollment of older students increased by nearly 2.600% from 1970 to 1976 . . . that roughly a fifth of the 3,300 colleges and universities in the nation are involved in one form or another with programs for older adults (p. 498).

He further stated:

There are two principal reasons for this expectation (expected participation by college and university in adult programs will continue to increase). First, the over 60 age group is by number and proportion the fastest growing segment of the American population. In 1900, the population 60 years and over numbered 4.9 million people. In 1930, it had more than doubled to 10.5 million. By 1975, this population had tripled to 31.6 million and has continued to grow at a rate that suggests it will reach 42 million by the year 2000, approximately 16% of the total population according to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1977, p. 498).

According to Fredericksen (1983), there have been numerous studies and much research compiled about adult students, but these were national in scope and offered limited help to administrators who were concerned about the problem on a local level. Therefore, this study was an attempt to identify and analyze barriers (institutional,

dispositional, and situational) of graduate students at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma, in an effort to relate the identification of such barriers to the registration and advisement process.

Statement of the Problem

Many studies and much research has been conducted on adults returning to college, but most was based on a national or state level instead of at the institutional level. Information regarding the barriers at the institutional level was not known. This type of information was needed for use in decision making in the further improvement of the services provided by the School of Occupational and Adult Education (OAED).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the barriers perceived by graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma.

Specific objectives related to this purpose were:

1. To identify perceived institutional barriers which exist for graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education (OAED).
2. To identify perceived situational barriers which exist for graduate students in OAED.
3. To identify perceived dispositional barriers which exist for graduate students in OAED.

Limitations of the Study

Limitations of the study are:

1. Select information regarding the 98 graduate students was restricted to the informational files of Oklahoma State University's School of Occupational and Adult Education.
2. This study was limited to graduate students currently enrolled during the school year 1986 in Oklahoma State University's School of Occupational and Adult Education.

Assumptions

The design of this study was based upon several assumptions:

1. It was assumed that students which participated in this study responded accurately to the instrument used to collect the data.
2. It was assumed that the raw data used in this study did not vary in overall accuracy for the period of time in which the data was collected.
3. It was assumed that graduate students currently enrolled in programs in the School of Occupational and Adult Education would be similar to other graduate students in the foreseeable future. Austin (1976) cited several studies which showed that the general characteristics of students in an institution at a given point in time remained relatively stable over a period of several years.

Definition of Terms

Dispositional Barriers: Barriers related to attitudes and self-perceptions about oneself as a learner which includes such things as adults feeling too old to learn and lack of interest.

Institutional Barriers: Barriers which consist of all those practices and procedures that exclude or discourage working adults from participating in educational activities. These barriers include inconvenient schedules or locations and inappropriate courses of study.

Lifelong Learning: Refers to the purposeful activities people undertake with the intention of increasing their knowledge, developing and updating their skills, and modifying their attitudes throughout their lifetime.

Situational Barriers: Barriers arising from one's situation in life at a given time such as lack of study time due to job and home responsibilities.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I introduces the study, states the problem, purpose, limitations, assumptions, and definition of terms. Chapter II includes a review of related literature focusing on the areas of (1) institutional barriers, (2) dispositional barriers, and (3) situational barriers. Chapter III includes the (1) development of the instrument, (2) validating the instrument, (3) selection of the population, and (4) treatment of the data.

Chapter IV includes the presentation of findings and an analysis of the collected data. Chapter V includes a summary of the study, findings, conclusions, and recommendations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Our society today is an ever changing entity. Technological advancements are increasing so rapidly that the average American is having a difficult time keeping abreast. According to Zeik (1980), future shock adds to the complexity of life-quickenning technological change which may guarantee the demise of some jobs and the startling genesis of others. These technological changes have affected Americans at home, work, and school. In a study by Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983) found that the press of multiple commitments to family, occupation, and community limits time available for school work and the more limited remaining years to work add a sense of urgency to the need for immediately applicable skills. In a 1973 survey of 9,283 continuing education students enrolled in credit courses, Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983) found that a prevalent reason for enrollment was updating skills and knowledge related to career advancement. Adults are finding themselves quickly outdated in their areas of expertise. According to Zeik (1980):

The retraining of personnel for skilled occupations is a national necessity, and the problem of professional competency is closely related. For better or worse, a skilled professional, for example, a surgeon or an electrical engineer who has been out of school for ten years, is probably out of date (p. 45).

In order to keep abreast with new technological advances, many adults are returning back to colleges for updating or retraining. In a similar study by Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983), they reported that in a survey of 9,283 continuing education students enrolled in credit courses, the prevalent reason for enrollment was updating skills and knowledge related to career advancement. In another study, Reehling (1980) found that 10.2 percent of 166 respondents cited additional preparation needed to advance in present work as a main reason for continuing with their education and 5.4 percent cited the desire to change careers, and preparation needed for a new area of work.

According to Christoffel (1981), congressional action was needed in order to improve secondary educational opportunities for adults. In the Education Amendments of 1980 (P. L. 96-374), Christoffel (1981) found that:

- (1) The rapid pace of social, economic, and technological change has created pressing needs for postsecondary educational opportunities for adults;
- (2) Postsecondary educational opportunities in the United States are traditionally provided for individuals between the ages of eighteen and twenty-two;
- (3) Many adults are barred from advancement or self sufficiency by lack of access to, and lack of retention in, postsecondary educational opportunities appropriate to their needs, or by lack of information or support services about the availability of postsecondary educational opportunities;
- (4) Access to postsecondary educational opportunities is severely limited for adults whose educational needs have been inadequately served during youth, or whose age, sex, race, handicap, national origin, rural isolation, or economic circumstance may be a barrier to such opportunities;
- (5) With declining population growth rates, the future of postsecondary education in the United States is largely dependent upon its ability to respond to the challenges of new student populations;

(6) Service in continuing education will be better achieved through increased emphasis on planning and coordination which more effectively utilizes existing resources of both public and private sectors; and

(7) To meet the unique problems and needs of adults who are disadvantaged in seeking access to postsecondary educational opportunities, resources must be marshalled from a wide range of institutions and groups, including community colleges, community-based educational institutions, business, industry, labor, and other public and private organizations and institutions (p. 8).

Christoffel (1981) also reported that the Educational Amendment focused attention on barriers to access for adults, particularly those "who because of circumstances of age, sex, low income, handicap, minority status, rural isolation, status of unemployment or underemployment, lack of education or other significant barriers have been discouraged from obtaining equal education opportunities" (p. 9). Secondly, it simplifies the federal-state partnership by drawing together the three state-based federal higher education programs of planning, information services, and continuing education. Also the new law permitted up to ten percent of the student aid funds which colleges and universities receive under the Supplemental Educational Opportunity Grants (SEOG) and College Work Study (CWS) programs to be used for less-than half-time students. The limitation on the number of years a student was eligible for SEOG was eliminated, thus helping many adults who needed more than four or five years to earn a degree.

Christoffel (1981) stressed that there would be battles over appropriation levels for all the new programs established from the Educational Amendment and close examination should be taken at the dollar needs concerning adults. The funding of these programs was by no means assured and would depend on a number of factors to convince

Congress of the importance of their goals and needs.

According to Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983), one of the three reasons an adult enters college is to seek education as an aid in making a vertical move within their chosen field. In a similar study, Zeik (1980) stated:

According to the College Board, a full 60 percent of intrasition adults already plan to resume their quest for professional skills and credentials. That figure--about 60 percent of 40 million people--means that as many as 25 million working adults in America will seriously consider college enrollment in the next ten years. And to these figures must be added the ever-increasing number of those adults who, upon reaching retirement, find themselves sufficiently healthy and interested to pursue some academic subject (p. 41).

Returning to college, many adults are faced with many barriers. In a study conducted by Olski (1980) stated that adults returning for higher education find nontraditional methods more convenient to their schedules. And the problems/needs which occur when an adult adds education to a busy schedule should be given close consideration. In a similar study, Bauer (1983) finds the following barriers to adults: being older than other students and therefore feeling rejected by classmates and professors, class location and schedules, entrance examinations, tuition, prior academic record, balancing job, school, and family responsibilities, and the red tape surrounding enrollment procedures. For older students, going to college is often a severe disruption of many aspects of their lives; by such things as time, attention, and financial resources once devoted to spouse, children, friends, community activities, and occupation are partly diverted to class attendance and study, according to Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983). These barriers are known as: institutional, situational, and

dispositional, according to Cross (1981). Fears, many of which are valid, prevent some adults from attending classes and advancing in their jobs. Many adult learners must balance the responsibilities of a full-time job and family with classroom demands. Furthermore, older students tend to spend relatively little time on campus and rarely attend or participate in extracurricular activities, are some of the barriers identified by Kuh and Sturgis (1980). Two barriers identified in a study by Olski (1980) were that adults have been conditioned to expect that age will bring a lowering of the ability to learn. The problems which were incurred with nontraditional methods of learning included: (1) adults using the nontraditional method may need to learn about areas such as self-motivation and independent learning, (2) nontraditional methods do not usually include daily contact with classmates or instructors, and (3) the attitudes of family and friends are very often negative towards adults who want a degree. In a study by Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983), it was found that the older student enters college having accomplished those tasks and having formed a network of intimate relationships (family and friends) may severely disrupt those relationships.

But, other adults are highly motivated to enroll and with approval from others do quite well. According to Olski (1980), although reasons for returning are diverse, ranging from career advancement to personal growth, it is a voluntary return. The challenge presented to educators and administrators is to meet the needs of adult students by removing barriers which prevent them from enrolling in college. According to Olski (1980), colleges and universities have become aware of administrative and academic areas which must be changed or altered to fit the

needs of the over-25 population continuing their education. In order to meet their needs, educators and administrators have been attempting to aid these students without an assessment of their needs. According to Olski (1980), adults want to deal with one person who can answer all of their questions about the institution, the academic programs and requirements, and the processes involved. Also, adults want to deal with a person who has knowledge of the whole system, not with many people each having a narrow, specialized responsibility, thereby requiring the adult to go from person to person reiterating educational goals and needs. Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983) stressed the need for specific counselor training in adult development so that they would be able to respond properly to the needs of the older student. Dewey III (1980) reported the need, the potential, and the right of retirement-aged adults for active participation in life-long education. Adults have been enrolling without proper counseling and educators have been teaching with old traditional formats. Universities are still being structured in the traditional fashion which does not meet or respond to the current needs of adult students. According to Bauer (1983), as the number of adult or nontraditional students in institutions of higher education increase, academic policies and institutional services should expand to meet their unique needs.

According to Dewey III (1980), the pervasion of prejudice and the dimensions of student difference must be accurately gauged and understood if educators/administrators are to create a campus environment that is conducive to the development and success of these retirement-aged students. If adults feel uncomfortable and burdened, then educators are not fulfilling their job.

This chapter, therefore, is a review of the research that has been conducted concerning institutional barriers, dispositional barriers, and situational barriers which affect the reasons why adults are (or not) returning to colleges and universities.

Institutional Barriers

Several studies have been conducted concerning the barriers which adults face when returning to college. One such barrier is termed "institutional barrier" according to Hammer and Shale (1981). This barrier includes such things as: course scheduling, work schedule, lack of transportation, lack of relevant courses, financial support restrictions, too long to complete program, do not want to go full-time, too much red tape, lack of information on courses, lack of information on support assistance, and inadequate counseling. When adults are interested in taking credit courses to change or improve their work situation, they will need to have available an advisor who can assess their needs in an unbiased fashion and assist in selecting courses which may be too complex for the beginning student. Moyle (1980) stressed that while cost and lack of time are the two greatest barriers to adult study, other important barriers include lack of confidence and lack of information on study opportunities, and the institutions' lack of understanding individual needs. Moyle (1980) also found that approximately 26 million adults did not participate in formal study for reasons which could have been remedied by adequate counseling. Linke (1979) pointed out that 33.5 percent found the times for counseling inconvenient and 15 percent found the times for student inquiries inconvenient.

Course planning is a very important aspect to the adult learner.

If courses meet on days which are inconvenient for the adult to take them, then this too has become a barrier. Moyle (1980) found that most adults preferred Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday as the best days (or evenings) and Friday, Saturday and Sunday as the worst days for taking classes. Therefore, the weekend college concept does not appeal to most adult students according to this study. It was also mentioned that the weekend college concept has been found to work with students who are interested in a particular course of study.

Linke (1979) found in a time study that work periods conflicting with assignment demands affected 55 percent more than a little, while 16 percent saw it as the major factor and 40 percent saw it as a contributing factor for withdrawal from a subject. Similar studies showed that at Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT), 61 percent felt that peak work periods conflicting with course demands affected their study more than a little while at South Australian Institute of Technology (SAIT), workload was seen as the major factor and 40 percent as a contributing factor for withdrawal from a subject, according to Linke (1979). Linke (1979) found that at the University of Western Australia (UWA), 62 percent saw insufficient time to study as a problem, and at QIT, 57 percent claimed that a subject's heavy workload was a contributing factor for withdrawal.

Research has shown that there are several factors which affect adults who are continuing their educational goals. These factors, which have been mentioned, are just a few of the many reasons why adults do not continue their education. Identifying these barriers can aid in the prevention of adults not returning to colleges and universities.

In a study conducted by Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983), 801

adult students out of 9,283 found that students were unaware of the existing services. Also, sixty percent of the older students stated that evening hours were very important, 24 percent stated that they were of average importance, and 16 percent stated that they were not important.

Another type of barrier which adults were confronted with were dispositional barriers.

Dispositional Barriers

This type of barrier, termed by Miller (according to Hammer and Shale, 1981) could be classified as a dispositional barrier or termed by Charner (1980) as a social psychological barrier. This barrier included lack of confidence in ability, feeling too old, low self-concept, tired of school, lack of interest, family or friends do not like the idea, and hesitate to seem too ambitious.

Attitudinal or dispositional barriers which are internal to the individual are much less socially acceptable as reasons for not participating in college programs, according to Cross (1981). Most adults lack confidence in their ability and fear that without a brushing up on the fundamentals like math and English they would fail. Another problem barrier is fatigue. Many adults work as much as a 35 to 40 hours per week plus attending classes. Linke (1979) reported that in a QIT survey, 72 percent of the students felt that fatigue adversely affected the quality of their study more than a little. Other surveys, such as the SAIT, reported that 58 percent were adversely affected by fatigue in their study more than a little while a New South Wales

Institute of Technology (NSWIT) reported 37.2 percent saw it as their most important personal problem and 25 percent saw it as their second most difficult personal problem. Therefore, the feeling "too old", concept really has to do with the long working hours that adults often have to deal with, in addition to their school workload. It is also important to consider that most students are in the 25 and older age group which indicates that the older the student is, the more his/her physical health may be a deterrent.

In dealing with all the institutional barriers when trying to enter college plus rationalizing their own attitudes toward returning to college, an adult also has to confront outside influences such as friends, employers and family members. But in most studies, data has shown little disapproval from these outside sources. Moyle (1980) reported that two percent of employers disapproved of their employees seeking additional education. About the same number or three percent would anticipate disapproval from their families. Friends showed only a two percent expected disapproval in a 1975 survey conducted by Moyle (1980). Interestingly enough, 52 percent of adults stated that they have friends who have become involved in adult education and 68 percent of those, who are themselves most likely to become involved, have friends who have been doing so. In a 1977 survey by Bauer (1983), he reported that adult students felt isolated. The reports of disapproval being relatively low concerning friend and family might be a reason why some adults are motivated to return to college. In another survey by McMann (1981), it was found that most students felt support and/or approval from those close to them (family, friends, people whom they

worked with, and their employers) to be a factor in their decision to return to college.

According to Reehling (1980), study problems were the difficulty most often found to affect college attendance; 35.7 percent of the participants stated this fact. However, 34.1 percent indicated they had no problem with college attendance. These participants also revealed that they had few difficulties at home to deter their attendance.

Reehling (1980) also found that the older student ranked self-improvement as the main reason for continuing their education and that external forces did not weigh heavily on participants' decisions to continue their education. Dewey III (1980) found that the older adult student sought to increase the positive effects of their structured college-learning experience, such as mental stimulation and mental activity, acquisition of new knowledge, a sense of achievement, and confrontation of challenge. He also found that social involvement and the companionship of peers with similar interests played a secondary role in the lives of older students. Reehling (1980) also found that self-improvement and employment were cited almost equally as reasons for continuing an education.

Situational Barriers

According to Hammer and Shale (1981), a study was conducted by Miller who recognized another barrier which affected adults' decisions to return to colleges or universities which he termed "situational." Examples of this type of barrier were: costs, lack of time, age, prior educational attainment, home responsibilities, job responsibilities,

number of dependents, occupational status, and level of income.

Moyle (1980) suggested that 56 percent of adult students stated that cost would be a major factor in deciding whether to take a course. Also, Moyle (1980) found that in a 1975 study, 40 percent stated that cost would be a major decision factor. Lewis (1980) and Stephenson (1982) in similar studies, reported that most adults considered cost to be an important factor as to whether or not they would obtain additional education. Things involved in cost would be: travel expenses, tuition and fees, books, daycare expenses, work time-off, and extra materials for courses.

Moyle (1980) reported that in a 1975 survey, 11 percent stated that free time would be a problem and 34 percent stated that free time would be a problem, inhibiting their involvement in adult education. In a comparison between practical barriers in 1980 and 1975, cost was listed as second in 1980 and fourth in 1975, according to frequency of mention. Fifty-six percent of all adults considered cost as a major factor in deciding whether to take a course. According to Moyle (1980) concerning practical barriers in 1975 and 1980, he stated:

In the period between the two surveys, concern with age and family obligations has tended to wane while time and cost constraints have become more prominent as perceived barriers to adult education. To deal with the free time constraint, higher education institutions perhaps need to exhibit greater flexibility in locating and scheduling courses to minimize disruption for potential adult learners (p. 22).

The survey comparisons in 1980 and 1975 listed five barriers in descending order of frequency of mention. In 1975 they were: age, family obligations, free time, cost, and health. In 1980 they were: free time, cost, age, family obligations, and health. Another similar study conducted by Linke (1979) found that part-time students reported

that course timetabling (three hour blocks) as the chief administrative problem. Timetabling was reported as the most important academic problem by 2.9 percent of the students and 2.5 percent of the students saw it as the second most important problem. Another aspect of lack of time is that most adults are part-time students. According to Lewis (1980), part-time adult students have doubled since 1968 and now constitute 40.8 percent of all postsecondary education enrollments. Hammer and Shale (1981) reported that a large portion of adult students (61.3 percent) attended two-year colleges and 23.9 percent attended four-year colleges. Also, Hammer and Shale (1981) reported that 30 percent of all undergraduates and 60 percent of all graduate students are part-time learners.

The fact that so many adults learn on a part-time basis, serves as a reminder that these are people with family responsibilities and career and community responsibilities who are juggling many variables in order to pursue their learning goals (Lewis, 1980). In a study by Sewall (1982), 65 percent of the adult students were taking 11 or fewer semester credit hours. Also reported was that nearly two thirds or 66 percent of the entire students surveyed had attended college prior to their current period of enrollment. Forty-nine percent of the adults waited three years after high school before attending college and 26 percent waited ten years or more before enrolling in college.

Job responsibilities are an important factor when adults consider enrolling in a college. But with the fast growing technical advances in business and industry today, most employees are faced with some kind of retraining. One alternative for some adults is to return to college and obtain a degree. Moyle (1980) found that a desire for

self-satisfaction or self-improvement (48 percent) outranked work related motivation (30 percent) as a reason for becoming involved in adult education. Moyle (1980, p. 18) reported:

Nearly two-thirds (63%) indicated their potential interest in adult education would be best characterized by a desire to broaden knowledge and interests in social, cultural or intellectual matters; (27%) indicated their interest would be for work related reasons. When asked to assess the most frequently motivating factor regarding adult education, most Kansans mentioned job or income related factors, followed by mentions of desire for self-satisfaction or self-improvement. For 44% of those who have been enrolled in continuing education, work related motivation is cited as the reason for past involvement.

Many adults return to college not only to obtain additional education, but also to demonstrate to their employers that they have demonstrated competency and have potential for advancement. Another reason arises out of fear of losing their job and economic security. In a survey by Mardoyan, Alleman and Cochran (1983), it was reported that 75 percent of the older students felt that job skills were important.

Concerning what motivates people to become involved in adult education, Moyle (1980, p. 21) found:

When asked what they think motivates most people who decide to become involved in adult education, most Kansans (57%) cite economic influence (better job, more income). A smaller number (39%) cite influences like self-satisfaction or self-improvement. By contrast, when asked about their own motivations those who mentioned self-improvement (64%) outnumber those who mentioned work related influences (46%). Even though most adults say their own motivations would not be work related, other survey data suggests that the largest number who do in fact become involved in adult education tend to be driven by work related considerations.

In a similar study conducted by Galliano (1982), boredom (12 percent) and intellectual stimulation (36 percent) were reported by most students as an area of concern. Also listed were: economic

self-sufficiency, desire to enrich family relationships, self-satisfaction, a desire to achieve or accomplish, career advancement, and to add to family income.

Sewall (1982) found nearly three-fourths or 72 percent of adult students are between 25 and 34 years of age. Also, that two-thirds or 61 percent are married and 62 percent have children, including 46 percent who have school-age children. Another aspect of some adult students was that in addition to family responsibilities, two-thirds of the students were employed outside of the home, 43 percent were employed full-time and 23 percent were employed part-time according to Sewall (1982).

According to Zeik (1980), the majority of older students (white, 82 percent; female, 60 percent) were between 20 and 40 years of age. Sixty-three percent were married; a smaller but growing number (14 percent) were widowed, separated, or divorced. The majority or 63 percent of those students who were married had one or more children.

Summary of Literature Review

Statistics show that the population of adult learners is increasing in greater numbers every year. The recognition of adult student needs and barriers that prevent them from returning to college, is becoming more and more important to administrators and the college community. Also, new methods are being developed to aid this new group of students entering college and getting away from using only traditional methods of teaching.

Now that adult enrollments are increasing and the needs and interests of all students are being recognized, institutions need to provide

a foundation for student services, retention, and change. With the current situation of higher education, there has never been a more desperate need for those services.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the barriers perceived by graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education while attending classes during the spring semester of 1986 at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The specific barriers identified in this study were: (1) institutional, (2) situational, and (3) dispositional.

This study was conducted in four phases: (1) development of the instrument, (2) validation of the instrument, (3) selection of population, and (4) treatment of the data.

Development of the Instrument

The constructed questionnaire was based on a survey instrument developed by the American College Testing program (Kaufman, 1982). The questionnaire was designed to obtain data needed to achieve the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information from graduate students such as their age, why they decided to continue their education, and when classes should be scheduled. Also, the questionnaire was developed with the specific objective of identifying institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers of graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education. A copy of the questionnaire is presented in Appendix A.

Validating the Instrument

The questionnaire was designed by the researcher and the first draft was submitted to the researcher's graduate study committee for their evaluation and recommendations. After the recommendations were received and revisions made, the questionnaire was pretested. By random selection, a group of 23 graduate students were chosen to pretest the questionnaire. Revisions were made and the questionnaire was implemented.

Selecting the Population

The subjects selected for the study were graduate students attending Oklahoma State University in the School of Occupational and Adult Education during the 1986 spring semester. All the 98 graduate students were chosen from official class schedules. The questionnaire was then distributed to each of the participants by mail or in classes by their instructors.

A cover letter and questionnaire with a self-addressed, stamped envelope was mailed to some participants because the students' course had ended, while the majority of the questionnaires were distributed in class. The cover letter explained the purpose of the study and requested that the questionnaire be returned by the allotted time to the instructor. A copy of the questionnaire and cover letter are presented in Appendixes A and B, respectively.

Treatment of the Data

The treatment of the data in this study consisted of frequency

distribution, mean scores, and rank order scales to determine the differences in perception of graduate students regarding the amount of service provided and the amount of importance of each item to the graduate student.

A three point rating scale was used to assess the perceived amount of importance and the amount of service provided. Graduate students ranked the items on a rank order scale. The amount of importance of each item included a choice of "very important", "little importance", and "not important" where the graduate students were asked to select the appropriate response. Also, the graduate students selected the amount of service provided which included a choice of "a lot of service provided", "little service provided", and "no service provided".

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this study was to identify and analyze the barriers perceived by graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education. This chapter is organized into the following sections:

(1) distribution and collection of the questionnaire, (2) response rate, (3) demographic data, (4) results of the responses, and (5) researcher's comments.

Distribution and Collection of Questionnaire

The questionnaire developed was utilized for all graduate students currently enrolled in Occupational and Adult Education (OAED) courses during the 1986 spring semester at Oklahoma State University. The questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter of instructions and a self-addressed, stamped envelope to one class of students whose session had ended. All of the other questionnaires were distributed in class by the instructor and completed by the graduate students, then returned to their instructor. This latter group was also given a cover letter with instructions on completion of the questionnaire.

Response Rate

From the original population of 98, 52 graduate students responded as the information shows in Table I. The 52 qualifying respondents

TABLE I
POPULATION AND RESPONSE RATE

Number Queried	Number of Respondents	Percentage
98	52	53

represented 53 percent of the universe used in this study.

Demographic Data

Demographic data were gathered from the respondents. This data are presented in Table II and in Figures 1 through 4. Information presented in Table II reveals that 22 females (42.3 percent) and 28 males (53.8 percent) responded to this questionnaire. Information in Figure 1 reveals that the age range of all respondents was 22 through 52, which shows a span of 30 years. The median age of the respondents was 38 years of age. Twenty-one of the respondents (40.3 percent) were under the age of 38 and 25 of the respondents (48.0 percent) were 39 or older.

A question on marital status yielded data presented in Table II and in Figure 2. Thirty-three percent of the respondents, both male and female, were married. There were more single females (ten percent) than single males (six percent) of the total respondents as the information shows in Figure 2. One respondent "prefer(ed) not to respond" to the question on sex and marital status, while two other respondents did not respond to either question.

In response to a question concerning the number of dependent children, as the information in Figure 3 shows, over three-fifths (69.2 percent) of the respondents had dependents. Less than one-fourth (23.1 percent) of the respondents did not have dependents. Two-thirds (66.6 percent) of the female respondents had dependents and 21 (75 percent) of the male respondents had dependents. Only two percent of the respondents had four dependents and six dependents. Ninety-four percent of the respondents were employed as shown by the information

TABLE II
 DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF OAED MAJORS IN NUMBERS AND PERCENT
 FOR SPRING SEMESTER - 1986

Demographic Category	<u>Frequency</u> N	Percentage of Responses
Sex		
Male	28	53.8
Female	22	42.3
No Response	<u>2</u>	<u>3.9</u>
Total	52	100.00
Marital Status		
Single	8	15.4
Married	35	67.3
Separated	1	1.9
Divorced	5	9.7
Widowed		
Prefer Not to Respond	1	1.9
No Response	<u>2</u>	<u>3.8</u>
Total	52	100.00

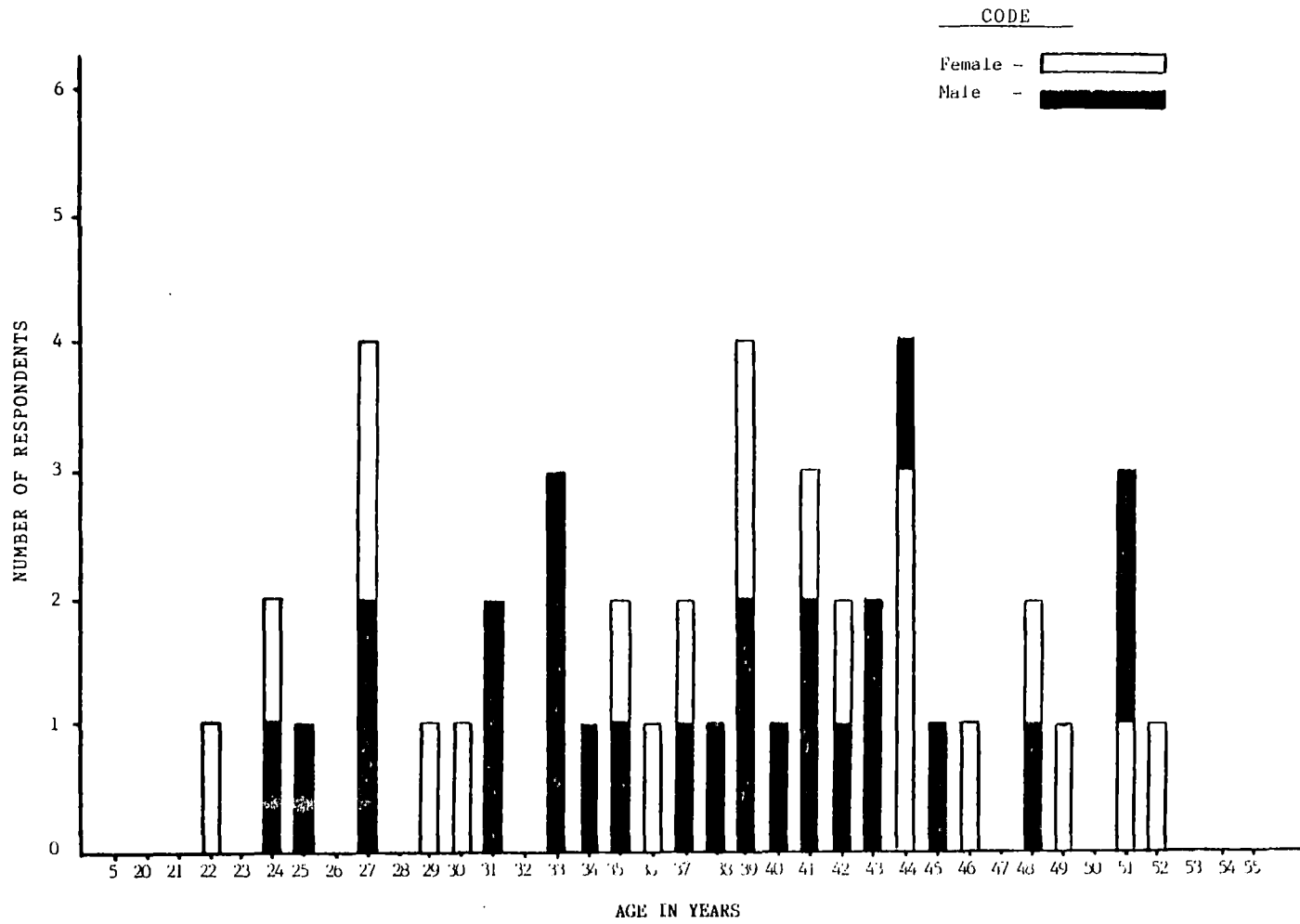


Figure 1. Number of Male and Female Respondents by Age

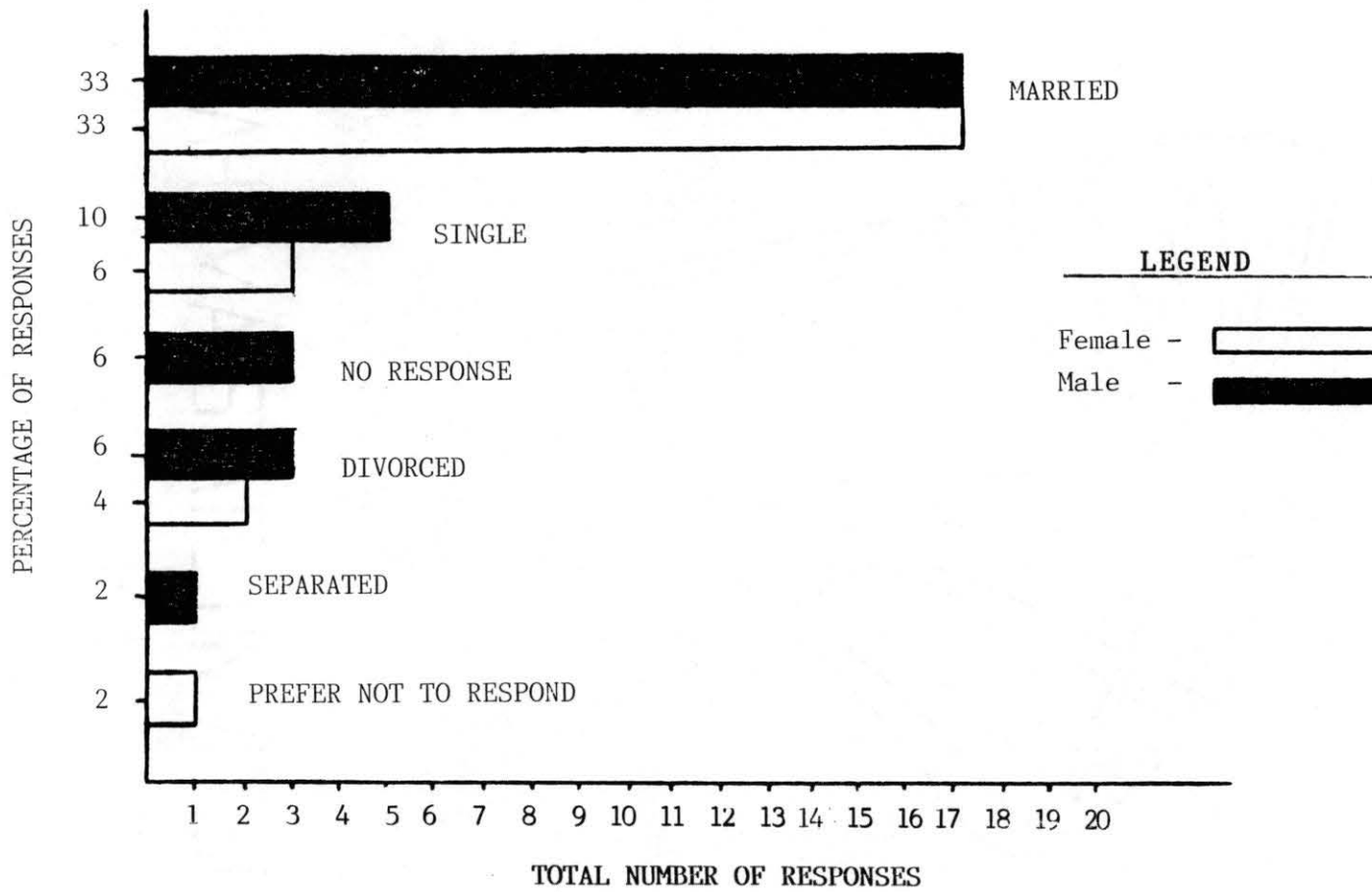


Figure 2. Marital Status of Respondents by Number and Percent

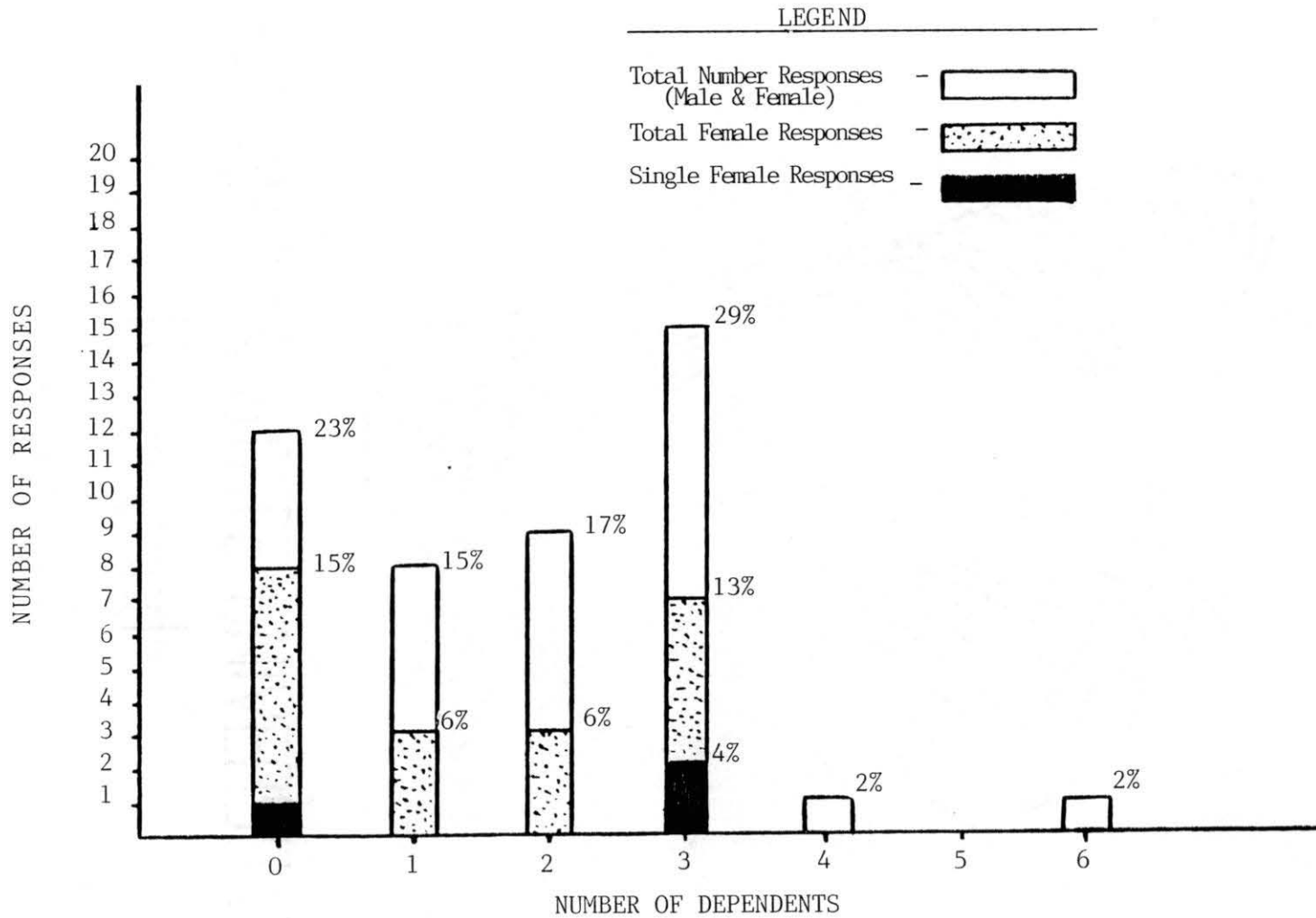


Figure 3. Number and Percentage of Dependents Per Respondent

presented in Figure 4. Of the 94 percent employed, 28 or 57.1 percent were male and 21 or 42.9 percent were female. Ten or 20.4 percent were employed part-time of which seven or 70 percent were male and three or 30 were female. Seven respondents reported working 20 hours per week; one reported working 30 hours per week, and one reported working 12 hours per week. There was also one respondent who indicated working 50 hours per week. Three respondents indicated they were not "currently employed."

Results of Responses

In response to the question which asked why did the graduate student decide to further their education, approximately three-fourths (38 or 73.1 percent) indicated "to obtain a higher degree." This information is presented in Figure 5. Other handwritten reasons given for continuing their education were (1) to get a scholarship to study Human Resource Development (HRD), (2) student loans, and (3) an opportunity for a better job. The information presented in Figure 6 concerning how education was financed, the majority of the respondents (41 or 78.6 percent) indicated through personal earnings. The second most indicated response by respondents was reimbursement by their employer (11 or 21.1 percent). The remaining responses were approximately the same number (4, 3, 2, and 0).

In response to the question concerning full or part-time enrollment, 25 or 60.7 percent were enrolled part-time. Eleven of the respondents did not respond to the question, therefore, only 41 responses were considered in the percentage rate. This information is presented in Table III. The information presented in Table IV concerns

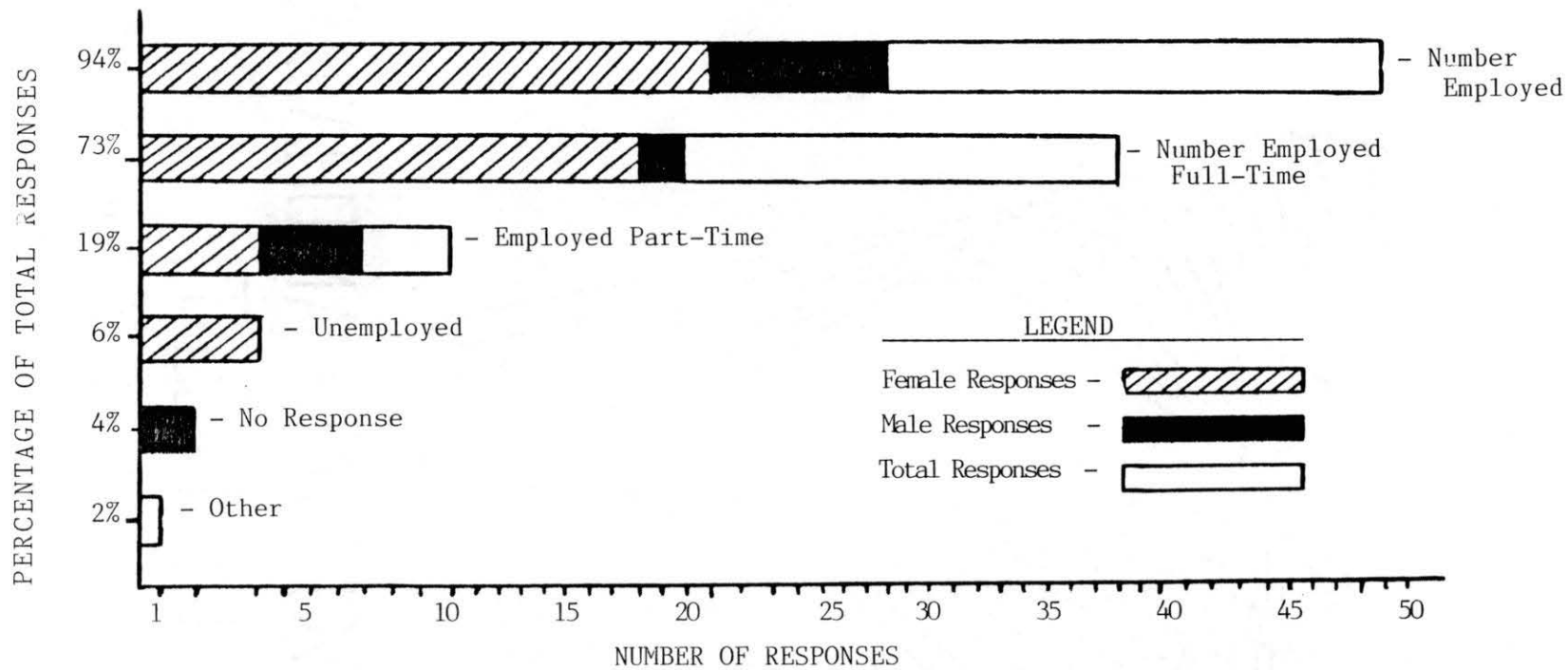


Figure 4. Employment Status of Respondents in Number and Percentage

Why Graduate Students Decided To Continue Education	Rank Order	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
To obtain a higher college degree	1	38	73
Personal satisfaction	2	34	65
Improve job skills	3	30	58
General self improvement	4	26	50
Improve income	5	21	40
To become better informed overall	6	17	33
Meet job requirements	7	10	19
Learn a new occupation	8	9	17
Obtaining or maintaining a certificate	9	8	15
Learn how to solve personal and communication problems	10	7	13
Other (please specify)	11	5	9

Figure 5. Reasons for Continuing Education in Numbers and Percent

How Was Education Financed?	Rank Order	Number of Responses	Percentage of Total Responses
Personal earnings	1	41	78
Reimbursement by employer	2	11	21
Other family income	3	4	8
Personal and family savings	3	4	8
Educational grants (please specify)	3	4	8
Student loans (please specify)	3	4	8
Veterans benefits	4	3	6
Scholarships (please specify)	4	3	6
Other (please specify)	4	3	6
Funds from relatives or friends	5	1	2
Social security benefits	6	0	0
Other loans (please specify)	6	0	0

Figure 6. How Education was Financed in Numbers and Percent

TABLE III
ENROLLMENT STATUS OF OAED GRADUATE STUDENTS

Enrollment Status	<u>Frequency</u> N	Percentage of Responses
Full-Time	16	39.3
Part-Time	<u>25</u>	<u>60.7</u>
Total	41	100.00

TABLE IV
CLASS WORK LOAD OF GRADUATE STUDENTS

Number of Hours	<u>Frequency</u> N	Percentage of Responses
Full-Time		
9 hours	6	37.5
10 hours	1	2.4
11 hours	2	4.9
<u>13 hours</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>2.4</u>
Total	10	47.2
Part-Time		
3 hours	4	9.8
6 hours	7	17.1
8 hours	<u>3</u>	<u>7.3</u>
Total	14	34.2

the number of hours graduate students were enrolled. Six (37.5 percent) of the respondents were enrolled full-time (9 hours) and seven (17.1 percent) of the respondents were enrolled part-time (6 hours). Twenty-eight respondents did not indicate the number of hours they were enrolled.

The information presented in Figure 7 concerns the time and day of the week classes should be scheduled as indicated by respondents. Thirty-one or 60 percent preferred evening classes held on Tuesday. The majority (85 percent) of the respondents indicated evening classes as the most preferred time of day over morning and afternoon classes. Evening classes were indicated as the most preferred time of day Monday through Friday. The respondents indicated that Saturday and Sunday evenings were not preferred times of day for class. Saturday morning was indicated as the most preferred time of day (27 percent) and Sunday afternoon as the most preferred time of day (17 percent) for weekend classes.

In response to the question concerning the rank order of the most preferred day of the week, the information is presented in Figure 8. Sunday was indicated as the least preferred day of the week to hold classes as indicated by 27 or 51.9 percent of the respondents. Monday and Tuesday were indicated as the most preferred days of the week to hold classes by 12 or 23.1 percent of the respondents. The number of no responses had a large response with an average percentage of 18 or 33.2 percent on this question.

Information concerning the question regarding the number of times classes should be held per week is presented in Table V. The respondents indicated that once a week (33 or 63.5 percent) as the most

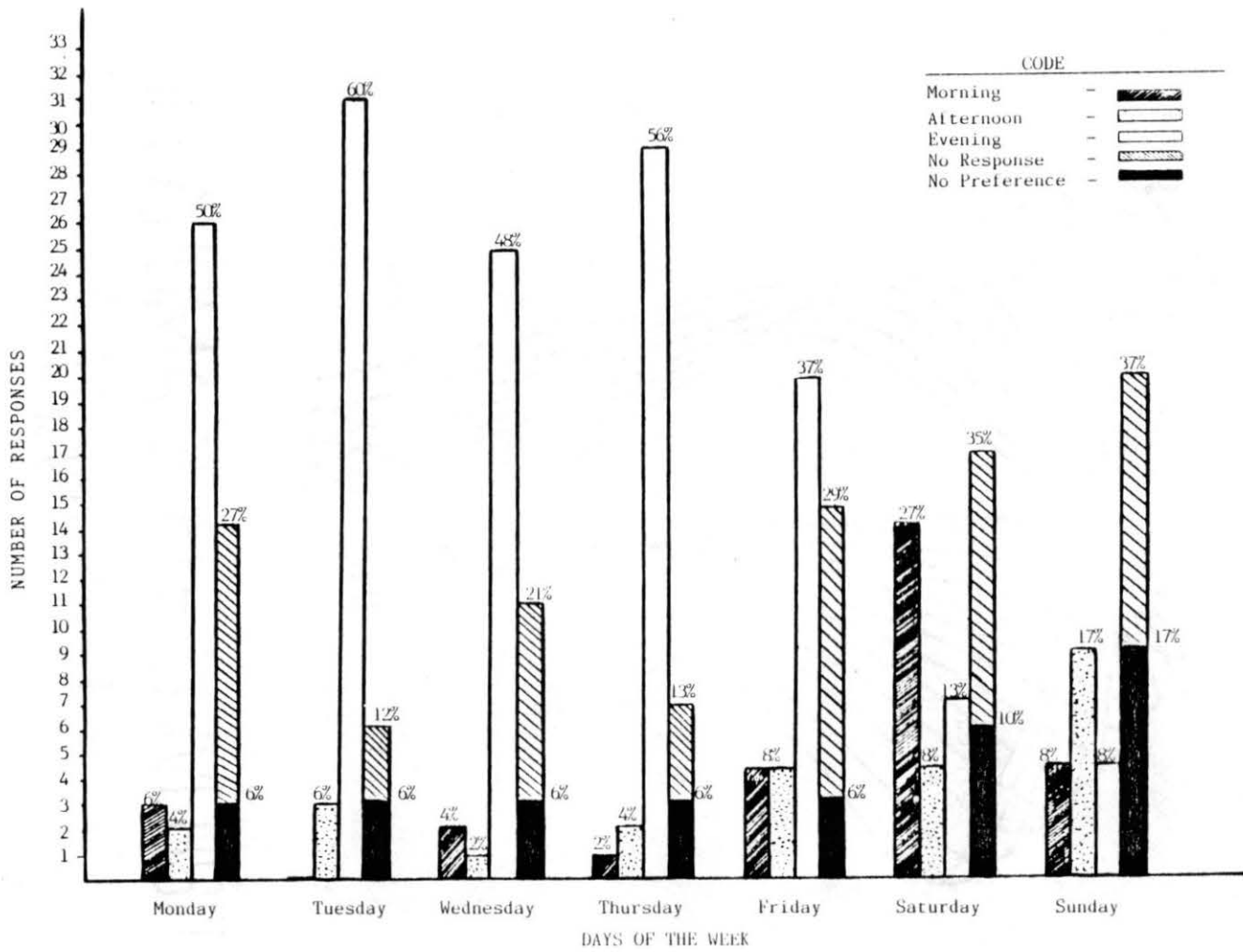


Figure 7. Preferred Time and Day of Week for Class Meetings

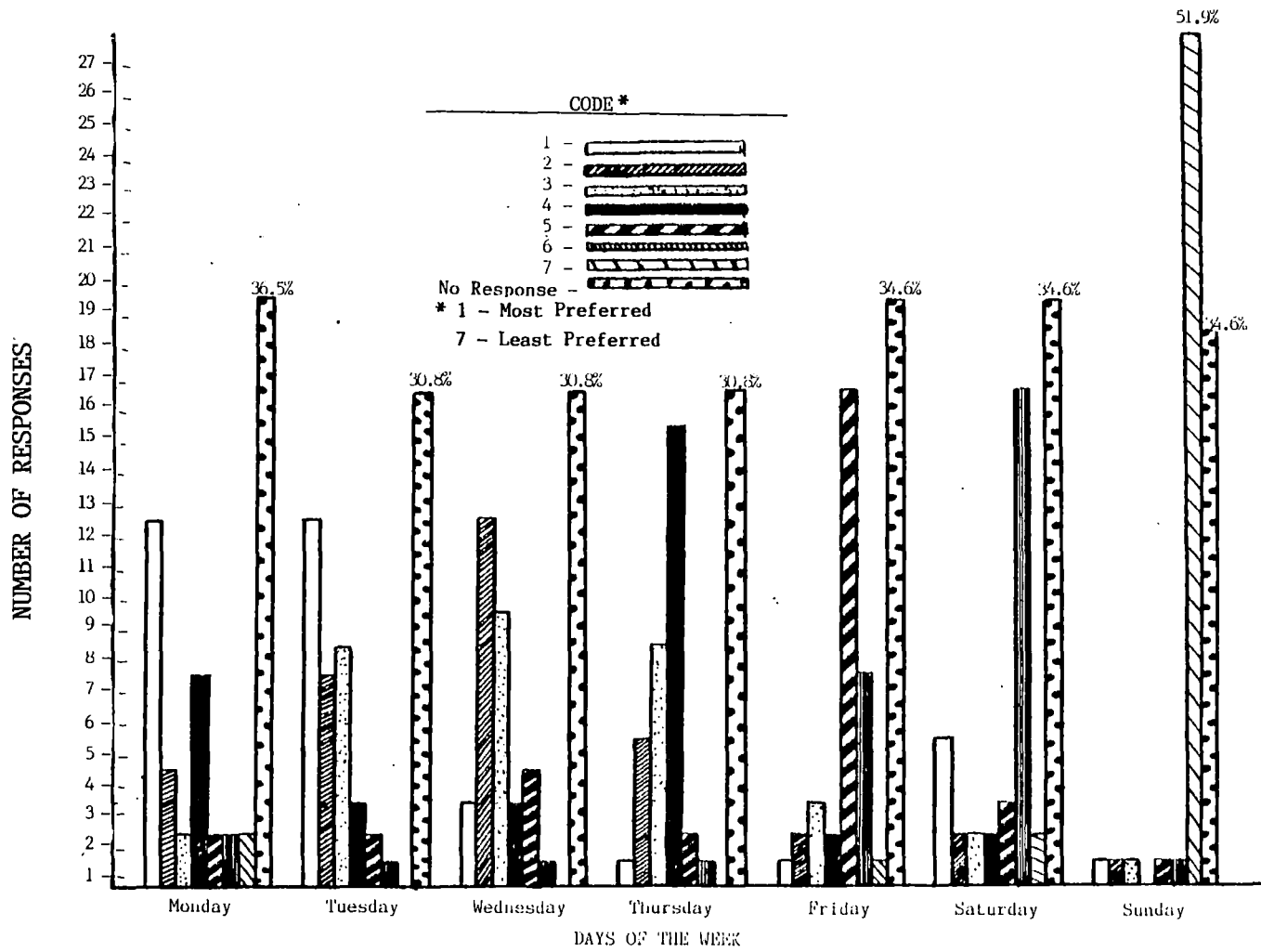


Figure 8. Class Day Preference by Number and Percent

TABLE V
PREFERRED MEETING TIMES PER WEEK

Number of Class Meetings Per Week	<u>Frequency</u> N	Percentage of Responses
Less than once	4	7.7
Once a week	33	63.5
Twice a week	8	15.4
Three times a week	5	9.6
No preference	1	1.9
No Response	<u>1</u>	<u>1.9</u>
Total	52	100.00

preferred number of times per week to hold classes. Eight or 15.4 percent indicated twice a week as being preferred.

The question concerning where classes should be held, most respondents (29 or 56 percent) indicated on-campus. This information is presented in Table VI. In regard to where off-campus, respondents commented on several locations: Oklahoma City, one; University Center at Tulsa (UCAT), seven; Oklahoma State University Technical Institute, Oklahoma City, six; Tinker Air Force Base, Midwest City, four; Federal Aviation Agency (FAA), Oklahoma City, two; and the workplace, one. One respondent did not respond to the question and one respondent indicated "no preference."

In response to the last part of the questionnaire concerning the amount of importance and the amount of service provided, the information is presented in Figures 9, 10 and in Table VII. The information presented in Figures 9 and 10 shows the varied responses by the respondents. The statements have been subdivided into barrier categories.

The information presented in Table VII gives a summary of barrier and service categories by frequency and percentage. In response to the statement concerning situational barriers, three responses were indicated as being very important, they were: (1) raising children today (24 or 46 percent), (2) discussing careers with people in the field (20 or 38 percent) and (3) getting family interested in education (19 or 37 percent). There were four responses which were indicated as not being important as situational barriers, they were: full-time job experience (19 or 37 percent), child care services (37 or 71 percent), coping with marital stress (23 or 44 percent), and finding part-time work in career (31 or 60 percent). The majority of the

TABLE VI
CLASS MEETING PLACES IN FREQUENCY AND PERCENT

Places Where Classes Should Be Held	<u>Frequency</u> N	Percentage of Responses
On Campus	29	56
Off Campus	21	40
No Preference	1	2
No Response	<u>1</u>	<u>2</u>
Total	52	100

	THE AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE				THE AMOUNT OF SERVICE				
	Vary Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response	A lot of Service Provided	Little Service Provided	No Service Provided	No Response	
SITUATIONAL BARRIERS									
Getting some full-time job experience in a new career area.	15	16	19	2	3	11	29	9	
Raising children in today's complex society.	24	5	20	3	1	10	37	11	
Obtaining child care services.	8	3	37	4	2	1	38	11	
Obtaining part-time work in my career area.	12	7	31	2	2	7	33	10	
Learning how to find job openings.	15	13	21	3	2	12	28	10	
Coping with marital stresses and problems.	16	17	23	4	0	5	33	14	
Arranging to discuss my career interests with people employed in my career area.	20	16	14	2	4	17	19	12	
Getting my family interested in my education and career.	19	15	14	4	3	10	25	14	
INSTITUTIONAL BARRIERS									
Learning more about how to transfer prior credits.	16	12	15	3	6	21	30	10	
Learning more about enrollment procedures (such as registration, and payment of fees).	20	14	16	2	9	20	11	12	
Obtaining help with college re-entry procedures.	12	15	22	3	6	14	20	12	
Securing information on transportation to and from campus (such as carpooling, mass transit, and parking permits).	4	10	34	4	2	11	25	14	
Learning how to get around on campus (such as parking lots, and buildings).	9	12	28	3	5	11	24	12	
Learning more about training requirements of jobs which I'm interested.	16	12	21	3	4	15	22	11	
Learning about the income potentials of jobs in my career interest area.	19	17	13	3	4	10	26	13	
Learning where to get training which is necessary in my career interest area.	21	19	9	3	5	18	17	12	
Learning about noncredit courses that will meet my needs.	7	16	26	3	3	16	17	14	
Getting advice about my educational plans prior to enrollment.	37	10	3	2	12	23	7	10	
Learning how to get course credit through nontraditional means (such as CLEP, and job experience).	18	17	14	3	7	9	25	13	
Learning about job opportunities in my career interest area.	25	11	13	3	2	15	22	15	
Arranging a class schedule that will not conflict with my current job.	38	9	1	2	13	15	12	11	
Learning more about financial aids.	14	11	25	2	3	17	22	14	
Learning about entrance requirements for educational programs that interest me.	18	22	10	2	8	18	16	10	
Selecting an educational program to meet my interests, skills, and potentials.	29	13	7	3	8	21	10	13	
Learning more about graduation requirements.	25	15	4	3	13	20	5	12	
Learning what jobs are available near where I wish to live.	19	11	19	3	2	14	23	13	
Obtaining special services for physically handicapped students.	5	8	35	4	3	3	23	16	
Obtaining access to college offices at times other than when I work.	23	18	9	2	8	10	22	12	
Learning how to make better use of library facilities.	23	18	7	5	10	13	16	13	

Figure 9. Responses to Situational and Institutional Barriers in Tabulation

	THE AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE				THE AMOUNT OF SERVICE			
	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important	No Response	A lot of Service Provided	Little Service Provided	No Service Provided	No Response
Learning how to better manage my time.	3	24	14	11	2	12	26	12
Learning how to work with my academic advisor.	3	34	8	7	10	15	16	11
Learning more about how to interview for a job.	4	20	14	14	4	12	23	13
Developing my speaking ability.	4	23	16	9	4	13	20	15
Improving my understanding of what I read.	3	28	14	7	2	13	24	13
Learning how to better make decisions and solve personal problems.	5	21	15	10	4	14	20	14
Learning how to budget money more wisely.	4	15	13	20	1	8	29	14
Learning how to maintain my physical and mental health.	4	22	13	13	0	15	24	13
Dealing with the problems of divorce or separation.	4	7	7	34	1	5	31	14
Developing and demonstrating confidence in myself.	4	28	8	12	2	12	25	13
Learning how to develop a personal vita or resume.	4	23	12	13	6	5	25	13
Identifying career areas which will fit my current interests, skills, abilities, and potentials.	4	21	10	16	4	12	22	14
Learning how to better handle pressure from friends, family, instructors, or myself.	4	17	17	14	0	11	25	13
Setting life goals.	5	20	16	11	2	12	25	13
Learning how to use my leisure time.	4	14	9	25	0	9	29	14
Increasing my reading and comprehensive speed.	3	26	11	12	1	7	31	13
Understanding my rights and responsibilities as a consumer.	6	11	14	21	2	5	29	16
Dealing objectively with discrimination (such as race, sex, and age).	5	7	20	22	2	7	25	15
Coping with the problems of being a single parent.	5	6	1	30	0	6	30	16
Learning how to communicate better with instructors.	4	18	16	14	1	16	21	14
Learning how to relate better with younger students.	4	7	21	20	1	10	27	14
Understanding, developing, and expressing my personal values.	4	16	21	11	1	10	24	13
Dealing with problems of personal security.	5	8	13	26	2	5	30	15
Dealing with the conflicts of job, family, and education.	4	22	9	17	1	11	27	13
Identifying my strengths and abilities.	5	28	13	7	5	10	24	13
Becoming more independent.	5	16	10	21	3	11	25	13
Improving my study skills and habits.	4	27	12	9	3	13	23	13
Learning how to learn more effectively.	4	27	12	9	4	13	22	13
Increasing my skills in mathematics.	4	15	14	19	1	11	27	13
Dealing with people who think and feel differently than I do.	4	19	14	15	4	17	18	13
Learning how to perform better on tests.	3	24	13	12	3	13	25	11
Getting along better with the people I work with.	6	20	16	10	2	15	21	14
Gaining a better understanding of people of different races and cultural backgrounds.	5	16	19	12	4	14	21	13
Improving my writing skills.	7	25	17	3	6	11	21	13

Figure 10. Responses to Dispositional Barriers in Tabulation

TABLE VII
SUMMARY OF BARRIER AND SERVICE CATEGORIES BY FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE

Barrier Category	Amount of Importance		A Lot - (1) Little - (2) No - (3) No Response - (4)	Amount of Service	
	Frequency N	Percentage of Response		Frequency N	Percentage of Response
<u>Situational - Very Important</u>					
Raising children today	24	46	3	32	62
Discuss career with people	20	38	3	19	37
Family interested in education	19	37	3	25	8
<u>Situational - Not Important</u>					
Child care services	37	71	3	38	73
Finding part-time work in career	31	60	3	33	63
Coping with marital stress	23	44	3	33	63
How to find job openings	21	41	3	28	54
Full-time job experience	19	37	3	29	56
<u>Institutional - Very Important</u>					
Class schedule will not conflict with job	38	73	2	16	31
Educational Advice prior to enrolling	37	71	2	23	44
Selecting program to meet needs	29	56	2	21	41
Information on graduation requirements	25	48	2	20	38
Learning about job opportunities	25	48	3	22	42

TABLE VII (Continued)

Barrier Category	Amount of Importance		A Lot Little No No Response - (4)	Amount of Service	
	Frequency N	Percentage of Response		Frequency N	Percentage of Response
Access to college offices than when at work	23	44	3	22	42
Making better use of library	23	44	3	16	31
Getting needed job training	21	41	2	18	35
Learning about enrollment procedures	20	38	2	20	38
Income potentials of job	19	37	3	25	48
Job available where live (Also Not Important)	19	37	3	3	44
Credit through nontraditional means	18	35	3	25	48
How to transfer credits	16	31	2	21	41
<u>Institutional - Not Important</u>					
Special services for handicapped	35	67	3	23	44
Getting transportation to and from campus	34	65	3	25	48
Getting around on campus	28	54	3	24	46
Learning about non-credit courses	26	50	2	18	35
Information about financial aid	25	48	3	22	42
Help with college re-entry	22	42	3	20	38
Training requirements for job	21	41	3	22	42
<u>Institutional - Fairly Important</u>					
Entrance requirement for programs	22	42	2	18	35

TABLE VII (Continued)

Barrier Category	Amount of Importance		A Lot Little No No Response	-	(1) (2) (3) (4)	Amount of Service	
	Frequency N	Percentage of Response				Frequency N	Percentage of Response
<u>Dispositional - Fairly Important</u>							
Working with academic advisor	34	65			3	16	31
Developing and demonstrating confidence	28	54			3	25	48
Better understanding of what read	28	54			3	24	46
Identifying strengths and abilities	28	54			3	24	46
Improving study skills and habits	27	52			3	23	44
How to learn effectively	27	52			3	22	42
Increasing reading and comprehensive speed	26	50			3	31	60
Improving writing skills	25	48			3	21	41
Performing better on tests	24	46			3	25	48
Better time management	24	46			3	26	50
Developing vita or resume	23	44			3	25	48
Developing speaking ability	23	44			3	20	38
Family, job, education conflicts	22	42			3	27	52
Maintaining physical and mental health	22	42			3	24	46
Make better decisions and solving problems	21	41			3	20	38
Identify career to fit my potentials	21	41			3	22	42
Interviewing for job	20	38			3	23	44
Setting life goals	20	38			3	25	48
Better working relationship with people	20	38			3	21	41

TABLE VII (Continued)

Barrier Category	Amount of Importance		A Lot Little No No Response - (4)	Amount of Service	
	Frequency N	Percentage of Response		Frequency N	Percentage of Response
Dealing with people who think different	19	37	3	18	35
Communication with instructor	18	35	3	21	41
Handling family, friends, instructor pressure	17	33	3	28	54
<u>Dispositional - Not Important</u>					
Relating with younger students	21	41	3	27	52
Developing & expressing personal values	21	41	3	28	54
Understanding people of different backgrounds	19	37	3	21	41
<u>Dispositional - No Response</u>					
Problems being single parent	36	69	3	30	58
Problems of personal security	26	50	3	30	58
Better use of leisure time	25	48	3	29	56
Dealing with discrimination	22	42	3	28	54
Rights and responsibilities as consumer	21	41	3	29	56
Becoming more independent	21	41	3	25	48
Increasing math skills	19	37	3	27	52

respondents indicated "no service provided" as the most selected response.

The following responses concerning institutional barriers which were indicated as being very important (above 50 percent) were: educational advice prior to enrolling (37 or 71 percent), class schedule which will not conflict with job (38 or 73 percent), and selecting program to meet needs (29 or 56 percent). The respondents indicated regarding these statements that little service was provided. "No importance" statements indicated by 50 percent or more of the respondents were: getting transportation to and from campus (34 or 65 percent), getting around on campus (28 or 54 percent), and special services for the handicapped (35 or 67 percent), which was also indicated by respondents as no service provided. In response to statements concerning dispositional barriers, most respondents indicated that the following statements were fairly important: working with academic advisor (34 or 65 percent), better understanding of what I read (28 or 54 percent), developing and demonstrating confidence (28 or 54 percent), improving study skills and habits (27 or 52 percent), and how to learn effectively (27 or 52 percent). In all of these statements, the majority of respondents indicated little service was provided.

In summary, in the three barrier categories: very, fairly, or not important and a lot, little, or no service provided was approximately the same.

Researcher's Comments

During the course of the study, the researcher made the following observations. Thirteen or 25 percent of the respondents did not

complete the last three pages of the questionnaire which asked for the amount of importance and the amount of services provided. The participants may have felt the four page questionnaire was too long and time consuming. Also, four or eight percent of the respondents felt the amount of service provided to them did not apply. For example, one respondent felt that being an international student, the services offered by the School of Occupational and Adult Education was for Americans. Also, one student stated that being a commuter he/she was not able to use the services.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, FINDINGS, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter contains a summary, the findings, conclusions, and recommendations of the study.

Summary

The purpose of this study is to identify and analyze the barriers perceived by graduate students in the School of Occupational and Adult Education (OAED) at Oklahoma State University in Stillwater, Oklahoma. The purpose was achieved with the help of a questionnaire. The instrument used to collect information was distributed by the instructors to their class students or by mailouts with a stamped, self-addressed envelope enclosed.

Respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire and return it to the instructor or return it by mail. If the respondent had completed the questionnaire in another class, they were instructed to not fill it out a second time.

Data analysis was accomplished by using percentages and frequencies. Graduate students who did not respond to the questionnaire and those who had indicated that they preferred not to respond to the questions, were not included in the calculations.

Findings

The findings of the study revealed that:

1. There were 41 female and 57 male OAED graduate students enrolled during the spring semester, 1986.
2. Thirty-three percent of the respondents were married with one child.
3. A majority (94 percent) of the respondents were employed and 78 percent of the respondents were paying for their continued education from their personal earnings.
4. The respondents' ages ranged from 22 to 52 years of age.
5. The respondents' preferred to have classes held only once a week.
6. The respondents preferred evening classes, Monday through Friday. Most respondents preferred Tuesday evening classes with Thursday evenings as their second choice.
7. Most respondents preferred not to attend classes on Sunday.
8. The respondents indicated that it was very important that class schedules not conflict with their jobs.
9. The respondents indicated that it was very important to them that they receive educational advice prior to enrolling in a study program.
10. A majority of respondents (83 percent) felt little service was provided for them while continuing their education in OAED.

Conclusions

Conclusions that can be drawn from the findings of this study

are:

1. The services and scheduling of courses offered by the School of Occupational and Adult Education (OAED) were designed somewhat as the typical during the day courses. However, several OAED courses were offered on days, at times and at places preferred by the respondents.

2. Most respondents which indicated a statement as being very important concerned psychological problems.

3. The School of Occupational and Adult Education offers graduate students classes on and off campus more than other schools at Oklahoma State University, but the respondents would like to see other support courses not in OAED offered off campus and at night.

Recommendations

Several recommendations are presented as a result of this study. The recommendations are as follows:

1. The School of OAED should be made more aware of the lack of commitment toward the graduate students in terms of night courses, schedule conflicts, and lack of services provided such as child care service, discussing careers with people in the field, and lack of sufficient advisement.

2. Administrative personnel in the School of OAED and Oklahoma State University who are responsible for improving existing programs and implementing new curriculum and services should be made aware of the findings of this study.

3. Further studies should be conducted to determine more detailed information regarding the lack of expected services for graduate students in OAED.

4. Further studies should be conducted regarding a comparison of the amount of importance and the amount of service provided to graduate students in OAED. For example, a comparison between arranging a class schedule which does not conflict with current job which was indicated as being very important and the amount of service which was provided.

5. The School of OAED should implement an orientation course for graduate students during their first semester.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE INSTRUMENT

QUESTIONNAIRE

PART I.

Age _____

Sex _____

PART II.

Marital Status
(select one response)
 single
 married
 separated
 divorced
 widowed
 prefer not to respond

1. Number of dependents _____
2. Are you currently employed? (check one response)
 - No
 - Yes (if yes, check one response)
 - full-time (40 hours per week)
 - part-time (specify number of hours per week _____)
 - other (please specify _____)
3. Why did you decide to further your education? (check as many responses as apply)
 - to obtain a higher college degree
 - personal satisfaction
 - obtaining or maintaining a certificate
 - meet job requirements
 - improve job skills
 - general self improvement
 - improve income
 - to become better informed overall
 - learn a new occupation
 - learn how to solve personal and communication problems
 - other (please specify _____)
4. How are financial funds being provided for your educational needs? (check as many responses as apply)
 - reimbursement by employer
 - personal earnings
 - other family income
 - personal and family savings
 - funds from relatives or friends
 - social security benefits
 - Veterans benefits
 - educational grants (please specify _____)
 - scholarships (please specify _____)
 - student loans (please specify _____)
 - other loans (please specify _____)
 - other (please specify _____)
5. Your enrollment status.
 - full-time (nine or more credit hours, please specify _____)
 - part-time (less than nine credit hours, please specify _____)
6. Please rank the day(s) of week, in order of preference first and then indicate the time(s) of day, or no preference in which you would prefer to attend class. Rank items (1-7), 1-most preferred, 7-least preferred; and circle appropriate time of day response(s).
 - Monday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Tuesday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Wednesday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Thursday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Friday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Saturday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
 - Sunday morning, afternoon, evening, no preference
7. Indicate your most preferred number of class meetings per week. (check one response)
 - less than once a week
 - once a week
 - twice a week
 - three or more times a week
 - no preference
8. Where would you most prefer to attend classes? (check one response)
 - on campus
 - off campus (please specify place _____)
 - no preference

AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE YOU
PLACE ON EACH OF THE
FOLLOWING:

AMOUNT OF SERVICE
PROVIDED FOR YOU:

	Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important		AMOUNT OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR YOU:					
					A lot of Service Provided	Little Service Provided	No Service Provided			
				22.						
				23.						
				24.						
				25.						
				26.						
				27.						
				28.						
				29.						
				30.						
				31.						
				32.						
				33.						
				34.						
				35.						
				36.						
				37.						
				38.						
				39.						
				40.						

AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE YOU
PLACE ON EACH OF THE
FOLLOWING:

Please indicate the amount of importance
and the amount of service provided to you
as an individual and as a graduate student
by checking the appropriate columns for
each of the following statements. You
may wish to respond to the entire left
column and then respond to the right
column next.

AMOUNT OF SERVICE
PROVIDED FOR YOU

Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important			AMOUNT OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR YOU		
					A lot of Service Provided	Little Service Provided	No Service Provided
			1.	Getting some full-time job experience in a new career area.			
			2.	Raising children in today's complex society.			
			3.	Obtaining child care services.			
			4.	Obtaining part-time work in my career area.			
			5.	Learning how to find job openings.			
			6.	Coping with marital stresses and problems.			
			7.	Arranging to discuss my career interests with people employed in my career area.			
			8.	Getting my family interested in my education and career.			
			9.	Learning about noncredit courses that will meet my needs.			
			10.	Getting advice about my educational plans prior to enrollment.			
			11.	Learning how to get course credit through nontraditional means (such as CLEP, and job experience).			
			12.	Learning about job opportunities in my career interest area.			
			13.	Arranging a class schedule that will not conflict with my current job.			
			14.	Learning more about financial aids.			
			15.	Learning about entrance requirements for educational programs that interest me.			
			16.	Selecting an educational program to meet any interests, skills, and potentials.			
			17.	Learning more about graduation requirements.			
			18.	Learning what jobs are available near where I wish to live.			
			19.	Obtaining special services for physically handicapped students.			
			20.	Obtaining access to college offices at times other than when I work.			
			21.	Learning how to make better use of library facilities.			

AMOUNT OF IMPORTANCE YOU
PLACE ON EACH OF THE
FOLLOWING:

AMOUNT OF SERVICE
PROVIDED FOR YOU:

				AMOUNT OF SERVICE PROVIDED FOR YOU:			
				A lot of Service Provided	Little Service Provided	No Service Provided	
Very Important	Fairly Important	Not Important					
			41.	Learning how to better manage my time.			
			42.	Learning how to work with my academic advisor.			
			43.	Learning more about how to interview for a job.			
			44.	Developing my speaking ability.			
			45.	Improving my understanding of what I read.			
			46.	Learning how to better make decisions and solve personal problems.			
			47.	Learning how to budget money more wisely.			
			48.	Learning how to maintain my physical and mental health.			
			49.	Dealing with the problems of divorce or separation.			
			50.	Developing and demonstrating confidence in myself.			
			51.	Learning how to develop a personal vita or resume.			
			52.	Identifying career areas which will fit my current interests, skills, abilities, and potentials.			
			53.	Learning how to better handle pressure from friends, family, instructors, or myself.			
			54.	Setting life goals.			
			55.	Learning how to use my leisure time.			
			56.	Increasing my reading and comprehensive speed.			
			57.	Understanding my rights and responsibilities as a consumer.			
			58.	Dealing objectively with discrimination (such as race, sex, and age).			
			59.	Coping with the problems of being a single parent.			
			60.	Learning how to communicate better with instructors.			
			61.	Learning how to relate better with younger students.			
			62.	Understanding, developing, and expressing my personal values.			
			63.	Dealing with problems of personal security.			

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER ADMINISTERED IN CLASS



Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406
(405) 624-6275

March 20, 1986

Dear Occupational and Adult Education Graduate Student:

We in Occupational and Adult Education are conducting a study to determine the barriers that graduate students encounter during their Occupational and Adult Education academic program. Please give us fifteen to twenty minutes of your time and effort to provide us information on the attached questionnaire which is needed to further improve services for Occupational and Adult Education graduate students.

Please return the questionnaire to your instructor in your class and be assured that all reported information will be held in strict confidence.

Sincerely,

Pearl Rolland
Research Assistant



APPENDIX C

MAIL-OUT COVER LETTER



Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406
(405) 624-6275

March 20, 1986

Dear Occupational and Adult Education Graduate Student:

We in Occupational and Adult Education are conducting a study to determine the barriers that graduate students encounter during their Occupational and Adult Education academic program. Please give us fifteen to twenty minutes of your time and effort to provide us information on the attached questionnaire which is needed to further improve services for Occupational and Adult Education graduate students.

Enclosed is a self-addressed stamped envelop with the questionnaire, please complete the questionnaire and return it as soon as possible. You can be assured that all reported information will be held in strict confidence.

Sincerely,

Pearl Rolland
Research Assistant

2
VITA

Pearl Ella Rolland

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF BARRIERS AS PERCEIVED BY GRADUATE STUDENTS IN
OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Enid, Oklahoma, December 30, 1957, the
daughter of Mrs. Ida Pearl Glover.

Education: Graduated from Enid Public Schools, Enid, Oklahoma,
1976; received Bachelor of Science degree in Technical
Education from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater,
Oklahoma, 1983; completed requirements for Master of Science
degree in Occupational and Adult Education at Oklahoma State
University in December, 1986.