

**SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR WOMEN RETURNING
TO THE UNIVERSITY**

BY

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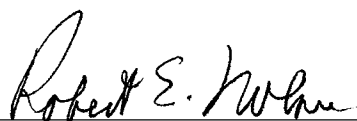
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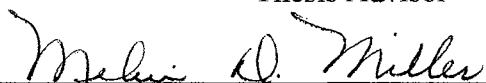
Submitted to the faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
In partial fulfillment of
The requirements for
The degree of
DOCTOR OF EDUCATION
May, 1995

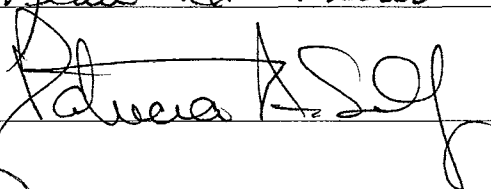
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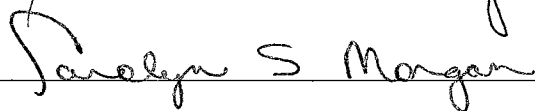
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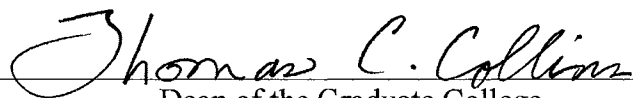


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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Without the emotional support from my husband, Dr. Daniel Snell and my children James and Abigail this project would not have been a reality. Thank you all. I would also like to thank and acknowledge my chairman, Dr. Melvin Miller and my dissertation advisor Dr. Robert Nolan for his intelligent supervision, constructive guidance and friendship. My sincere appreciation also extends to my mentors, Dr. Carolyn Morgan, and Dr. Patricia Self whose guidance, assistance, encouragement and friendship are invaluable. Dr. Joanna Harris deserves more than my enduring friendship for her statistical expertise, time and guidance. I would also like to give my special appreciation to my friends and my parents for their strong encouragement at times of difficulty, and understanding throughout the whole process. I wish to express my sincere thanks to the women of Delta Kappa Gamma for providing me with funds to continue.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Background of the Problem

For the last twenty years growing numbers of adult women have been returning to college to achieve professional and personal growth. Many women need the college education to advance in their jobs or careers or to make enough money to escape poverty. The Center for Law and Social Policy documents that women who have completed four years of college have a better chance of getting off Aid for Dependent Children than do high school graduates or women with two-year post-secondary training (Rice, 1993).

There are numerous studies concerning white middle class women returning to school, many of whom do not have financial difficulties or who are not economically disadvantaged (Beautell & O'Hare, 1987; Bodensteiner, 1985; Eagle, 1981; Evans, 1985; Hetherington, & Hudson, 1981; Holliday, 1985; Sands & Richardson, 1984; Suitor, 1987; Swift, Colvin & Mills, 1987).

And yet poverty in America falls heavily on women,

particularly re-entry women that are single heads of households. "Complex ties to public assistance may exacerbate more than alleviate the situation" (Rice, 1990). Women in Oklahoma with Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC) grants receive educational benefits, but benefits can be cut when they receive financial aid (Leticia Ness, DHS Caseworker, March 15, 1994). Research using the Social Support Inventory (SSI) on women returning to the university has not previously been performed. However, research on social support from a spouse and others with women returning to school has been done with primarily white, married, middle-class individuals because that was the population of universities in the 1970's and 1980's. Less is know about support with the culturally diverse groups of women that are the changing population of the university in the 1990's.

Theoretical Approach for the Study

Family systems theory helps provide a context for understanding, experiencing and incorporating the dynamics of the family system when women return to school. Theorists such as Hoffman (1980), McCubbin, Patterson & Glynn, (1982) and Walsh (1982) describe processes that show that a change in any one member, like the re-entry student, results in

reciprocal changes for each family member and for the family unit as a whole. Any change within the unit requires adaptational shifts on everyone's part to preserve the family's sense of continuity and to ease the adjustment of its members (McGoldrick & Carter, 1982). The need for studies of women returning to school and their families is supported by research which suggests that there is an impact on the family (Hooper, 1977).

Problem Statement

The problem that Rice identified in 1982 is still a problem today. While it is clear that higher education is one way impoverished mothers can rationally take to escape poverty, retention of these adult students is a persistent and perplexing dilemma for higher education because of the complexities returning adult women face in managing school, family and finances (Rice, 1982). Institutional research from two southwestern universities shows that women over 25 years of age take longer to graduate and many do not finish (Appendix G). If public policy encourages women to return to school, then social support mechanisms need to be in place so women can finish a university degree.

Purpose of the Study

What is the role of social support in this

retention question? A decision to return to school and stay in school are not isolated ones since it affects a system of people who may or may not be supportive of the student (Rice, 1979a). The support of family, and other social circles can be a determining factor in a student's ability to stay in school, maintain academic progress and graduate. This study addresses the problem of learning more about women returning to the university that are receiving financial aid and federal financial help. This study reaches beyond the middle-class focus of earlier studies concerning social support for women returning to school, to determine who gives such support to minority women or economically disadvantaged women by using the Social Support Inventory (SSI) developed by McCubbin, Patterson, & Glynn (1982). This study assesses the social support for women returning to two research universities by systematically measuring how much, what kind, and from whom the student receives social support when returning to undergraduate school, using the SSI.

Need for the Study

Less is known about support with the culturally diverse groups of women that are the changing population of the university in the 1990's and how social support of family

members and other social groups affects the student. In recent decades more women have returned to postsecondary education because higher education can open doorways to better financial success and federal financial aid and other aid programs have attracted students who otherwise would not have been able to afford college (U.S. Dept. Of Education, 1993). In recent decades more women have returned to postsecondary education because of reasons such as a need for two incomes and to prepare for employment or to fulfill a desire for education and achievement (Weilbert & Van Dusseldorp, 1983). More lower income women are returning to universities because education can open doorways to better financial success, but much of the research is class specific to middle or upper class women (Lewis, 1988). More research is needed to add to the body of literature on women returning to school, including women who live in poverty or who are receiving federal financial help, so that the barriers to post-secondary education can be removed (Rice, 1993).

Objectives

The objectives of this study include:

1. To identify the people, groups of people or sources of support who provide social support for women returning to school as determined by the total Social Support Inventory means.

2. To compare total Social Support Inventory means of women returning to the university women who receive financial aid to those who do not.

3. To compare total Social Support Inventory means between those who receive federal financial help and those who do not.

Assumptions

1. The students surveyed from the major research universities in Oklahoma have met academic admission requirements set forth by the State Regents of Oklahoma Higher Education.

2. The self-reporting survey methodology was an appropriate method to study this problem.

3. Non-traditional returning women students in Oklahoma are representative of women who live in other states of similar size and comparable economies who attend research universities.

4. The SSI was an appropriate research tool to use with women returning to the university.

Scope And Limitations

1. This study surveys Oklahoma women currently 25 years old and older. These women were classified as sophomores, juniors or seniors.

2. This study is limited to survey research methodology and calls for a self-report measure by the women returning to school, seeking their perceptions of their family systems and support. It is difficult to gauge adequately and honestly how the family system works because society assumes the family is to be supportive. Also the self-reporting of their current gradepoint average could be inflated depending on how they want others to see them.

3. The population of the study is representative of state research universities.

Definition of Terms

1. Adult learner for the purpose of this study is any female student 25 years or older. The age 25 assumes a hiatus in education for either work or family. College Board (Aslanian, 1988) chose age 25 and above as a working definition of an adult student. An adult student is "...an

adult person who takes personal responsibility for learning" (Knowles 1980, p. 20). Adults "...engage in learning largely in response to pressures they feel from their current life situation" (p. 53). "To adults, education is a process of improving their ability to cope with life problems they face now " (Houle, 1961, p. 53).

2. Altruistic support is defined as information which leads the student to believe that she is worthwhile because of what she has done with and for others (McCubbin, 1982).

3. Appraisal Support refers to feedback from another which allows the individual to assess how well she is doing with life's tasks (McCubbin 1982).

4. Attitudinal Support is the choice of male and female roles, responsibilities and attitudes (Berkove, 1978; Huston-Hoberg, 1984).

5. Emotional Support is defined by the degree of emotional encouragement, praise and problem-solving given by a significant other or person that is important. The perception of approval and encouragement of the student role from significant others (Berkove, 1978; Huston-Hoberg, 1984) would also include the willingness to make time and economic accommodations or changes and acceptance of changed role status (Rice, 1979).

6. Esteem Support is feeling valued or respected for

who she is and what she can do (Cooke, et al, 1988).

7. Family is "two or more persons who are related by marriage, blood or adoption who may or may not reside together" (H. McCubbin et al, 1987). All such persons are considered as members of one family (U. S. Dept. of Commerce, 1992).

8. Federal Financial Assistance for this study is any student receiving Aid for Dependent Children (AFDC), Women, Infant and Children supplement (WIC), Medicaid, foodstamps, housing or transportation assistance, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) or other General Assistance programs funded by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services. Terms such as "welfare mom", "welfare recipient" or financially disadvantaged have characterized the student receiving financial assistance or help.

9. Financial Aid for this study can be personal loans or gifts, scholarships, loans, grants or work-study programs. Aid is determined by the local higher education institution based on the cost of education minus the expected family contribution to equal financial need. The educational financial cost (EFC) is determined by a formula established by Congress that indicates how much of a student's family's financial resources should be available to help pay for school. Factors such as taxable and

nontaxable income, assets (such as savings and checking accounts), and benefits (for example, unemployment or Social Security) are all considered in this calculation (1993-4 Financial Aid for the U. S. Department of Education publication).

10. Functional Support is the reported performance and adjustment to the division of household tasks and use of childcare by the student (Berkove, 1978; Huston-Hoberg, 1984). This type of support is not evaluated by the SSI, but it is discussed in the literature.

11. Instrumental Support is assessed on hours of childcare, household tasks and social responsibilities (Rice, 1979). House (1981) calls instrumental support time, labor, and money. This type of support is not elicited in the SSI, but it is discussed in the literature.

12. Low income women, economically disadvantaged women, or women receiving federal financial assistance include anyone living below the poverty line, which is 40% of the median household income level. A person making less than \$3,492.00 a year and a family of four making less than \$8,076 a year qualify for financial assistance. These guidelines were clarified by the Oklahoma Department of Human Services Caseworker Leticia Ness, Norman, OK office, March 15, 1994 (Ness, March, 1994, personal response). In

April 1990 the U. S. Census Bureau stated that Oklahoma had 16.7 percent of persons living below the poverty line. The median household income level for the state at that time was \$23,577.00 (U. S. Dept. of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1993).

13. Network Support is based on information which leads the student to believe that she obtains a sense of trust and security from belonging to a group (Cooke et al, 1988).

14. Social Support is defined by Cobb (1976) as information exchanged at the interpersonal level which provides emotional support, esteem support, and network support. H. McCubbin and his associates (1982) expanded on this idea to add appraisal support, and altruistic support. The role of reciprocity of social support was earlier identified by Broadhead, Kaplan and James (1983).

15. Women returning to school, re-entry women, and non-traditional women students all describe the same population for this study. For this study they are women 25 or older returning to the university after a break in their studies.

Organization of the Study

Chapter I is the introductory chapter and contains sections which relate to the purpose of the research. This chapter includes the background of the problem, theoretical concept, the problem statement, the purpose of the study,

the need for the study, the objectives, the limitations of the study and the definitions of specific terms used in the study and related literature.

Chapter II presents related literature about women returning to school, social support systems, the theoretical framework, and issues related to the return to school.

Chapter III includes the procedures used in the study, the population, the instrumentation, the assumptions of the study, the objectives and the explanation of how the data were analyzed.

Chapter IV presents the findings of the research. The demographic profile of the population, the findings on the objectives and further discussion of the findings are reported.

Chapter V consists of the summary and discussion of the results of the research, the conclusions based upon the study, the recommendations for further research and implications of the study results.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Family Systems--Theoretical Framework

Family systems theory helps provide a context for understanding how changes may be experienced and incorporated. Theorists such as Hoffman (1980), McCubbin and Patterson (1983) and Walsh (1982) describe processes that show a change in any one member, like the re-entry student, results in reciprocal changes for each family member and for the family unit as a whole. Any change within the unit requires adaptational shifts on everyone's part to preserve the family's sense of continuity and to ease the adjustment of its members (McGoldrick & Carter, 1982).

The most common definition of a system is any entity the parts of which interact independently of one another, and which maintain equilibrium. These parts behave in a predictable relationship with one another and create a pattern that maintains a stable equilibrium by making

changes in itself (Hooper, 1977). Each family member works to maintain balance in the family system and is influenced by the other family members. The family is thus conceived as a system with each member of the family playing an interdependent part. Family systems theory identifies each member of a family to the other family members; these members might be supporters or they might provide counter-support (Lewis, 1988). Family systems theory continues to describe the application of general system concepts to the family as a behavioral system and views the individual as a part of the larger family system (Steinglass, 1984; Braden & Sharrard, 1987).

Systems theory examines a set of interacting units with relationships among them or a system of relationships among relationships (Hage, 1972). Systems are considered living and non-living, are organized and maintain some sort of balance. They have clear boundaries and within their boundaries they are organized and hierarchical. Living systems (such as the family) make changes based on feedback. The system alters its activities based on its structure and its direction in order to further its goals. The family system orientation is based on the concept of the consciousness of the interdependence of life and the conditions that support it (Napier & Whitaker, 1978).

A family system is much like the mobile hanging above an infant's crib. When one clown or bear moves, the rest of the bears also move and change positions so that the mobile hangs evenly above the crib again. The mobile's movement would be dependent on other factors in the system. It could return to its original state or could be changed depending on the ability of the child to move the mobile or pull it. Family systems are like mobiles as family members make changes in their lives (big ones such as a return to school or small ones such as who does what household chores); the rest of the family moves with the changes and tries to keep the family balanced in life. The decision to resume education may be precipitated by new growth in the family system or an unbalancing of the family mobile. Thus, family systems theory helps provide a context for potential keys to well being and especially for those who are undergoing a major life transition such as a return to school (Caplan, 1974; McCubbin & Boss, 1980)

Women's development of self-awareness, the changing gender roles of women, and the need to be self-supporting are factors that affect women's life patterns and their families. Many women have joined the working world and left full-time homemaking behind. One-parent families, dual-

career families, ease of divorce and numerous other family changes have encouraged women as older students to return to college to update their skills for their chosen careers, to start a new career, or to pursue lifelong learning.

This study is based on the family systems approach. Systems theory allows the researcher to investigate the system as it is without having to define the family. This allows the researcher to avoid defining the family in a social-culturally subjective way (Hooper, 1979). Hill further explains the use of the systems theory. Within systems theory, the family can be seen as a higher-order, complex, adaptive system which is open, internally and externally. Hill writes,

"The family is now viewed as neither independent of other social systems nor is it wholly dependent; thus it is termed 'a semiclosed system' opening up selectively to transact business with other associations" (Hill, 1971, p. 306).

Changes that happen in the components may cause changes in the other components and vice-versa. The inclusion of feedback loops in the theory makes possible regulation and self-direction or change in the structure of the system as a mechanism of survival or viability (Becvar & Becvar, 1982; Hill, 1971).

The family has the inherent capacity to change and develop in such a way as to promote the greatest possible growth and individuation of family members. A change of the behavior of any member will result in a change in the system's functioning as indicated by redistribution of roles, dysfunctional conflict, acting out by one or more members, etc. Additionally, families have certain needs which must be met in order for the family to survive. Such needs can be met by any member of the family with the capacity to meet them (Buckley, 1967; Hage, 1974; Hill, 1971). The need for studies with women returning to school and their families is supported by research that shows interactions between the student and her family system, thus impacting the whole family (Ackerman, 1984; Hooper, 1979; Manis & Mochizycki, 1972; Mayfield, 1989; Yogev, 1983).

Prior Research Findings on Family Social Support

The definition of social support varies among the researchers who study social support. Family social support is referred to in a general way as support which is "provided by other people and arises within the context of interpersonal relationships" (Hirsh, 1981, p.151) and as "support accessible to an individual through social ties to

other individuals, groups, and the larger community" (Lin, Simeone, Ensel, & Kuo, 1979, p. 109). Social support during a stressful life event such as a return to school is the focus of this study. Social support as a potential resource for the family system evolved out of a family stress theoretical framework. Support is one of the coping resources affecting an individual's or family's way of handling stress. Research on the mediating influence of social support for certain stressful events has focused on both the direct role of social support in promoting recovery from stressful experiences and on the protective role of social support in buffering the effects of stress (Cooke et al., 1988; House, 1981; McCubbin & Boss, 1980; Roehl & Okum, 1984).

In the past few years a number of researchers from the social sciences, and family and health related fields have turned their attention to social support and how it affects people and their families (Clayton & Smith, 1987; Huston-Hoberg & Strange, 1986; Tripp, 1988). Social support has been described as "the manner in which human attachments are structured as systems of support and the resources that are exchanged among the members of these systems" (Gottlieb, 1981, p.7). Social support as a potential resource for the family system evolved out of a family stress theoretical

framework. Support is one of the coping resources affecting an individual's or family's way of handling stress. The research shows that social support networks and systems of support are extremely important for health and psychological well-being especially " when our culture seems increasingly preoccupied with social fragmentation and separateness" (Gottlieb, 1981, p.7).

The nature, meaning and measurement of social support is being debated in the literature (Caplan, 1974; Cobb, 1982; Gottlieb, 1981). There is a lack of agreement on an operational and conceptual definition of social support. For this study, social support is defined as information exchanged at the interpersonal level which provides emotional support, esteem support, and network support. This idea is supplemented by the categories of appraisal support and altruistic support. The role of reciprocity of social support was earlier identified by Broadhead, Kaplan and James (1983).

For women returning to school, engaging in formal education often means a disruption in established routines, family life, and friendships. It is not uncommon to find significant others, coworkers, employers, relatives and spouses opposed to a woman's educational undertaking (Lewis, 1988). The degree to which a woman experiences a successful

return to school is related to the support she receives from significant others, from her spouse and family (Galliano & Gildea, 1982; Karelius-Schumacher, 1977; Rice, 1979b, 1982).

Numerous researchers have observed that a partner's attitude toward a woman's return to school is a crucial factor in her educational success and satisfaction (Hooper, 1979; DeGroot, 1980; Gilbert, 1982; Lewis, 1983; Zuckerman, 1981). Women who put their families first in terms of role priorities may feel less role strain. There also seems to be a positive correlation between the need for family support and self-confidence; in Van Meter's sample 77% of the women students studied stressed need for family support, and they also marked "problems with self-confidence" as one of their largest problems as returning students (Van Meter, 1976). Problems with self-confidence could be considered the same as self-esteem. In a study of poor single-mother students, Nelson, Van Stone, & Neimann (1993) found that support of other students, university services, support of the family and support of faculty were important for two-thirds of the women interviewed. One-half of the students cited the influence of personal ambition and one-fourth or fewer cited prior knowledge and experience, effort and discipline and self-confidence as important to success

(Nelson, et. al., 1993).

Attitudinal, emotional and functional supports, or lack of the same, are frequently reported in the literature as affecting educational participation. Attitudinal support reflects others' traditional or nontraditional perspectives on appropriate roles for women (Weilbert & Dusseldorp, 1983). Attitudinal support describes the extent to which one agrees or disagrees with the roles a woman chooses to assume or to abandon (Lewis, 1988). Emotional support involves approval or disapproval of a woman's educational goals and is the degree of support she gets from others including her children, friends, significant others or spouse, employers, classmates and the like (Fisher, 1987; Sewall, 1984; Troll, 1981; Zehner, 1981). Functional support describes the division of labor and household responsibilities. These are sometimes assumed and shared by others in the family. Each category speaks to a different dimension of the term support and is a separate aspect of measuring the extent to which support does or does not exist (Lewis, 1988; Smallwood, 1980).

Rice's (1979a) study defined perceived spousal support as instrumental and emotional. Instrumental support was measured by assessing the degree of behavioral role sharing in household tasks, childcare and social responsibilities.

Emotional spousal support was defined by the degree of emotional encouragement, praise and problem solving by the spouse, the willingness to make time and economic accommodations or changes, the threat to changed role status and the relative weight of the husband's support as compared to other sources (e.g., children, friends, teachers, etc.)(Johnson , Wallace & Sedlacek, 1979; Rice, 1979b; Roach, 1976). Support from one's family seems to act as a buffer for the depression and conflict a woman may experience on the return to school (Roehl & Okun, 1984).

In Markus's study (1973) the more support a returning woman received from her husband, children, instructors, friends and advisors, the more likely she was to stay in school. Married women with supportive spouses indicate better goal direction and more feelings of excitement and satisfaction than married women with unsupportive husbands. Older women who drop out or stop attending school seem less likely to ask for help from their spouses. They describe themselves as significantly more tired and in poorer health than successful students. Their husbands report significantly greater threat when they return to school and offer significantly less functional support than do husbands of successful students (Adelstein, Sedlacek & Martinez, 1983; Berkove, 1976). When asked to make an overall

judgment, a majority of returning women reported positive support from their families for a return to school (Astin, 1976; Rice, 1979b; Hendel, 1983; Spreadbury, 1983). Even though emotional support may exist for many women, actual functional or instrumental support from husbands and children and changes in their role behavior are less likely to happen. This fact means that re-entry women continue to fulfill household duties on top of studying and school work (Ryan, 1976). This problem might be why returning women generally report their families are not negatively affected by their return to school (Spreadbury, 1983).

Related Literature Concerning Women Returning to School

Since the 1960s the number of women returning to school has increased (Hemmingway, 1981; Solomon, 1991). The rest of this chapter will look at the literature on what factors influence the social support of adult students, 25 years and older, in undergraduate school. This chapter will focus on individual and social elements of support for women returning to school. As Fisher writes, "Enter the current influx of returning students: older, more racially diverse women who season our classes with rich responses from their adult lives" (Fisher, 1987, p. 90).

More women than men enroll in higher education as

adults (Aslanian, 1988). In the United States in the fall of 1991, 14,358,953 adults were enrolled in all institutions of higher education. There were 3,929,375 men enrolled and 4,185,954 women enrolled full-time. Part-time 2,572,469 men and 3,671,155 women were enrolled (U.S. Department of Education, 1993,). Today the woman re-entering school is younger than previously, in the work force, and juggling the demands of family, young children and full-time or part-time employment. It is not surprising that 95 percent of all women participating in some form of adult or continuing education are part-time (U.S. Department of Education, 1984).

The U. S. Department of Education, National Center of Educational Statistics, stated that Oklahoma had 59,017 men and 69,340 women enrolled full-time, and 24,322 men and 30,857 women enrolled part-time in their education institutions in fall of 1991 (U. S. Department of Education, 1993). At the University of Oklahoma the Office of Institutional Research reports that women 25 and older totaled 1,158 and men 25 and older totaled 1,432 for the fall of 1994, and Oklahoma State University had 651 women over 25 and 1,248 men over 25 enrolled for the fall 1994 semester.

The key to survival in this fast-paced world of

technology has often been attributed to the family (Zehner, 1981). Women's roles have been changing in the past two decades. Women constitute the fastest growing segment of adult learners because of the changes from traditional gender roles and exploration of new roles (Berry, 1972; Carbone, 1988). Children are entering school or day-care , and this frees up time for mothers to pursue new activities or resume their education. Also, technology has changed the ways families manage their households (Cross, 1981).

There is no one profile of the returning woman student, for she exemplifies many personae, many identities, and she wears many hats. As Mayfield writes, "She is many people to others, and she is many people even to herself; she out of necessity fulfills multiple roles in her attempt to fulfill yet another--that of becoming a student "(Mayfield, 1989, p. 10). Returning women students are diverse in their socioeconomic backgrounds, and they range in age from twenty-five to over sixty-five with the majority between twenty-five and fifty. They may be single, divorced, married, or widowed, with or without children (Lewis, 1988).

The trend for non-traditional students in education can be seen by the numbers of women continuing their education. Many women return to school because of self-motivation or for intellectual stimulation (Whatley, 1975; Tittle &

Denker, 1980). In post-secondary education, the number of women over 25 returning to school has increased almost tenfold in the past twenty years as re-entry women have become the largest group of new students to fill the gap created by the declining number of traditional-aged students (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1984; U.S. Department of Education, 1992).

Between 1972 and 1979 total college enrollments increased by 2.3 million; this growth is due to the enrollment or re-enrollment of adult women, who outnumber men in the 35 and over age group by roughly two to one. This attendance record at post-secondary institutions has led women to outnumber men students for the first time since World War II (Higher Education Daily, 1980). In the most recent educational projections from the U.S. Department of Education, women over 25 years old and over increased from 5.1 million in 1983 to an estimated 6.2 million in 1991, an increase of 23 percent. This number is projected to increase in the range of 6.1 million and 7.0 million by the year 2003 (U.S. Department of Education (1993 p.12). It is also estimated that by the year 2000, 52% of all undergraduate students will be women, with 50% of these 22 and older (Carnegie Council on Policy Studies in Higher Education, 1980).

Barriers to Participation in Higher Education

Researchers have investigated what causes adults to enter college, what they seek, and what they perceive as barriers to further education (Aslanin & Brickell, 1988; Brooker, 1988; Carbone, 1988; Cross, 1981; Ekstrom, 1972; Galliano & Gildea, 1982; Hemmingway, 1981; Johnson, Wallace & Sedlaced, 1979; Kelly, 1984; Keogh, 1980; Ross, 1985). A woman who returns to school confronts personal and situational barriers. These factors can be due to personal circumstances, the situation, self-image and personal demands (Cross, 1981; Tarule, 1988).

Social barriers for the return of re-entry women to college include inconvenient course scheduling, restrictive course locations, complex administrative procedures, lack of childcare and lack of support groups (Pitts, 1992). Because of the abundance of research that has been gathered and explained in other studies, this study will not delve into that topic in depth but merely recognize it as worthy of more research.

Individual Elements Related to Social Support--a Balancing Act

The woman of the 1990s is a woman who balances many

roles in her family. She often is a student, a wage earner, a mother, a wife, a daughter and a community volunteer. This makes her different from traditional college students. The prevailing finding in the literature is that despite the sense of self-worth that often accompanies a return to school, strain, anxiety, and stress are the inevitable consequences of multiple role incumbency (Greenhouse & Beutell, 1985). Goode(1960) and Sieber(1974) support that role accumulation, or the assumption that multiplicity of roles has benefits that outweigh any stress thus yielding net gratification.

Role Accumulation, Role Strain, Role Enhancement
And Self-worth

Other research indicates women are under considerable stress trying to juggle their lives and manage the needs of husbands and families. Often there is role strain between husband and wife, whether real or perceived. Scott and King (1985) found in their survey that participants had greater support for their going back to school when the woman student met part of her family's need for attention and did not neglect family members for her studies. Husbands in the study perceived greater stress when the women students

neglected their household responsibilities and when they could not spend time with the family (Scott & King, 1985).

Many women are pulled in various and often conflicting ways. They try to meet the demands of being a mother, a partner in marriage and a role model to her children, community, family, and friends. The data indicate that the mother's educational level apparently influences her daughters' education (Zuckerman, 1981). Homemakers who returned to school and graduated reported impressive personal growth, especially in self-confidence and satisfaction at having completed a degree (Mishler, 1983). While women returning to school report more role strain than comparable groups of housewives, they also experience significantly greater role gratification like feelings of self-respect, respect from others, and a more diversified and meaningful life (Gerson, 1985).

"Role accumulation may enrich the personality and enhance one's self conception" (Seiber, 1974 p.572) Tolerance of other's viewpoints, exposure to many sources of information, flexibility in adjusting to the demands of diverse people, reduction of boredom- all of these benefits may come to the person with wide and varied relationships and roles (Marks, 1977; Seiber, 1974). Women adding one more role, as a student, may enhance self-respect, ego

gratification or even provide a buffer against failure. Despite the likelihood of role conflict for the working student, women are seeking a wider role repertoire to increase their resources, knowledge, privileges and a sense of personal worth.

Various coping strategies for dealing with role conflicts have been investigated among re-entry women students. Ackerman found professional and nonprofessional women used different coping strategies for different conflicts (Ackerman, 1984). Time management, role conflicts, study skills, self-confidence and various other issues have been cited by returning women as problems or concerns (Adelstein, Sedlaced & Martinez, 1983; Karlius & Schumaker, 1977; Lance, Lourie & Mayo, 1979; Smallwood, 1980; Yogev, 1983). Problems of re-entry women typically are related to female gender role socialization. Because our society expects women to be in charge of family responsibilities and child rearing, a return to school can cause guilt, feelings of inadequacy and self-blame over difficulties in handling multiple roles (Patterson & Blank, 1985). Despite the sense of self-worth that often accompanies a woman returning to school, there is also strain, anxiety and stress (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985; Scott & King, 1985). Research indicates women are under

considerable stress trying to balance their lives and manage the needs of husbands and families. Often there is role strain between husband and wife, whether real or perceived when a woman returns to university life (Van Meter, 1976). Often families are not adequately prepared for role adjustments that family members have to make when women return to school (Gerson, 1985). Role enhancement, ego gratification, social prestige and personality enrichment are often accompanied by greater feelings of self-worth and many women returning to college obtain this upon their return (Sieber, 1974).

Academic Success

Academic success is an individual factor that affects women returning to school and their grades. Esteem support may be eroded by low achievement with academic skills that might be many years old. Returning women often are concerned with their rusty study skills such as note taking and testing skills and the ability to memorize, remember facts or perform in class (Maccoby & Jacklin, 1974), but research shows that returning students often do better than their younger counterparts (Leppell, 1984). A survey of adult learners by Pierson and Springer (1988) found that the

adults at Southwest Texas State University felt less comfortable with their academic skills such as writing and mathematics than traditional students. Without adequate learning skills such as writing and mathematics, adult students may drop out or stop out. Adult learners have a desire to learn about things they think are worthwhile or important, and usually these things can be applied to relatively immediate real-life situations (Pierson, 1988). Without an adequate or a stimulating program many adults may become frustrated at the routine or dull assignments and projects that are not pertinent to their education thus affecting their grade point averages, scholarships and esteem support.

Social Elements Related to the Study

Significant others such as partners, spouses, or friends and their supporting or opposing attitudes will impact both the female's initial decision to return to school and her persistence in school.

Supporters and Counter Supporters

Numerous researchers have observed that a partner's attitude toward a woman's return to school is a crucial factor in her educational success and satisfaction

(DeGroot, 1980; Gilbert, 1982; Hooper, 1979; Lewis, 1988; Rice, 1979a). The demands of balancing both traditional work at home and work outside the home with schoolwork are difficult. These demands often make the over-25-year-old student different from traditional college students (Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980). Numerous research studies center on women, spousal support and how support affects the family (Berkove, 1979; Hendel, 1983; Hooper, 1979; Lewis, 1985; Rice, 1979b & 1982; Scott & King, 1985; Spreadbury, 1983).

A career or an educational decision usually affects someone close to the returning student. The people who will have the most influence on the first decision will be immediate family members and intimate associates because they are most affected (Rice, 1982). Rice states, "The attitude and support of the spouse and, to a lesser extent, one's children emerge as formidable variables in a person's decision to return to school and in the ultimate success of that choice" (1982, p. 4). The area of family support and family matters for returning women students has not been researched as thoroughly as possible and is a relevant area (DeGroot, 1980; Hooper, 1979; Lewis, 1985 and Rice, 1979a & 1979b). In past studies returning students have been shown to have relatively accurate perceptions of their

spouse's attitudes toward their education (Agronow, 1982; Berkove, 1979; Van Meter, 1976).

Many women students feel stress and worry that their children are being short-changed because of their lack of availability (Kelly, 1984; Rands & Shiavo, 1984). In addition, research has found that women often accept more responsibility in order to prevent disruption to other family members (Katz 1976; Barnett, Beiner & Baruch, 1988).

It is not unusual that significant others (friends, spouses, family members, employers) are threatened by or opposed to a woman's educational or career pursuits (Lewis, 1983). For returning women students the lack of time spent on family, home, and domestic responsibilities can result in the need to develop a wide range of coping behaviors in order to maintain existing relationships and to avoid conflict (Gilligan, 1982).

Returning women adult students reported that their husbands and families generally supported and encouraged their endeavors (Carbone, 1988). When the wife/mother/student cooks, and cleans less and needs more time to herself in order to study, the family adjusts by doing more work around the house (Spreadbury, 1983). While a number of women elicit a high degree of support and enthusiasm from significant others, some encounter

passivity, nonsupport, resistance, and even open hostility in response to their educational aspirations. In addition, the degree of initial support might change as the realities of how much time the student has to give to library work and long-distance commuting becomes clear (Lewis, 1988).

Research spanning the past 25 years indicates that a woman's decision to return to school continues to be questioned and challenged by significant others and that minimal changes in traditional allocations of domestic responsibility have occurred (House, 1961; Astin, 1976; Lewis, 1981).

Students in the Lewis (1985) survey readily identified supporters and countersupporters who contributed to or took away from their educational progress. For those students who experienced countersupport, the negative reactions came from family members and friends. Spouses or partners made up the largest group of individuals who encouraged students to remain as they were and not to return to school (Lewis, 1985).

Black and Hispanic students report the greatest number of countersupporters, while single, widowed, separated, and divorced students had significantly fewer positive supporters than married students did. To exacerbate an already negative situation, those who experienced countersupport identified significantly more

countersupporters than did those with positive support. So negativity was found to breed negativity. In fact women without supporters continually expressed concern about their ability to persevere in the face of negative feedback and opposition (Lewis, 1985).

Program or Institutional Design and Implementation

The design and implementation of programs for women re-entering school after an interruption in their formal education have been explored in the literature. Many women students may be in jeopardy of dropping out or stopping because re-entry women have problems different from those of younger students and male re-entry students. Many schools and businesses have actively recruited, developed, and expanded services for returning women, but the need to design responsive programming and insure access for re-entry women still exists (Lewis, 1988).

Ways the university can promote retention with adult students include: readily available academic and personal counseling; flexible scheduling and registration by mail, even mailing textbooks; faculty who are trained to work with non-traditional students; an orientation for returning students; career planning and placement services; newsletters for adult services; library services at all

program locations and the provision of financial aid for non-traditional part-time students (Brooker 1988; Lewis 1988; Pitts, 1992).

The above-mentioned ways higher education can improve the quality of the adult program are only the beginning for meeting the needs of returning women students. To ensure the retention of re-entry students, periodic re-evaluation of programs should be done. The ultimate success of higher education for returning women rests on the institutional credibility and how much the institution is willing to follow through with programs and services for the older students (Lewis, 1988). To succeed, evaluations of successful programs must be done, and women returning to school programs should receive encouragement and support from top-level administrators (Whatley, 1975).

Economic Self-sufficiency

For many women further education seems the only hope to increase their ability to attain self-sufficiency. The most frequent reason given by women to return to school is economic need (U. S. Department of Education, 1993 ; Clayton & Smith, 1987). When they return to college, their problems are often compounded because they lack financial resources, have limited time, may not have good study skills, and need

support services including child care. They enroll hoping ultimately to solve their financial problems, but often they discover that the financial and emotional cost of being a student is difficult for them (Adelstein, et al., 1983; Hetherington & Hudson, 1981). Financial aid through grants, scholarships and loans also presents a problem for married returning women because of their limited eligibility which may be based on total family income and repayment arrangements. Spouses can create problems in this situation by encouraging a spouse to return to school but not providing a way to pay for it. His salary may also prevent her from receiving financial aid because it is considered before eligibility is determined (Ekstrom, 1972). In 1976, M. E. Ryan suggested the establishment of a "Mothers' Bill for Educational Opportunity" for financial assistance for women that would be similar to the G. I. Bill as a reward for her contribution to society. As it is, women struggle to do the paperwork needed for financial aid or assistance to continue school (Ryan, 1976).

Hooper (1979) noted that lower income single mothers and divorced women face social disapproval and isolation, enjoying few institutional sources of personal and familial support. Many cannot get loans because they are poor and are considered a bad risk; equally problematic, they cannot

get scholarships because they are balancing family, work and school and must go to school part-time (Hooper, 1979). Financial aid is significantly lower for a part-time student. Smallwood (1980) found that one-third of the potential problems of adult women students were significantly related to low income.

Child-care assistance, financial aid for educational vocational skills and job readiness programs are frequently recommended for low income women, but often after using these programs, women struggling to support a family cannot insure long-term employment, because the programs are for two year educational programs (Knox, 1983). Forest (1981) found in a follow-up study of disadvantaged women in a community college that 83% were employed in clerical occupations, traditionally a low-paying ghetto for women. Many re-entry women end up working in lower-paying traditionally female fields such as clerical work or teaching (Hildreth, 1983).

Many women need a college education to advance in their jobs or careers or to make enough money to get out of poverty. The U.S. Census data from 1989 state that the hardest hit by poverty in Oklahoma is the single mother household. The number of U.S. families with single adult females as their heads of household is growing ten times as

fast as families with males as heads (Rice, 1993). Fifty-seven percent of families headed by females with children under five years old have incomes below poverty level (U. S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of Census, 1993). The poverty level set by the U.S. Department of Agriculture statistics is \$8, 076 a year for a two-person household in 1989 in Oklahoma.

The Center for Law and Social Policy documents that women who have completed four years of college have a better chance of getting off Aid for Dependent Children than do high school graduates or women with two-year post-secondary training (Rice, 1993). Educational attainment is strongly linked to family income. The median income for families headed by a high school dropout was \$22,000 in 1992, while the median income was \$34,000 for families headed by a high school graduate and \$57,000 for families headed by the holder of a bachelor's degree. The median income for families headed by an individual with more than a baccalaureate degree increased by 17 percent in the year. Research demonstrates that family poverty and unemployment rates also decreased as educational level increased (Postsecondary Education Opportunity, 1994). The lessons from these statistics are clear; women need to be encouraged and supported so they can finish baccalaureate

degrees to provide for their families or help to provide for their families with their spouses. With the decreasing access to welfare programs, that need becomes more urgent. The U. S. Census Bureau shows that women in jobs with a baccalaureate degree from college make \$6,000 a year more than women with a two-year degree (U. S. Department of Commerce, 1993). At this time minimum wage will not pay for housing costs, health care, child care, transportation and work clothes. Women with higher education will be better able financially to support their families.

Higher education institutions are undergoing a slight change in demographics with the accessibility of federal financial aid. Women who may have interrupted their education because of crisis (such as an unplanned pregnancy). One-half of all teen-age mothers remain single parents and are very likely to live in poverty with their infants. Families begun by teen-agers account for more than one-half of all families receiving Aid For Dependent Children, food stamps, and Medicaid benefits (Children's Defense Fund, 1986). About half of the state of Oklahoma's black children younger than five live in poverty along with forty-one percent of the Native American children and thirty-eight percent of the Hispanic children (U.S. Department of Commerce, 1993).

While it is clear that higher education is one way impoverished mothers can rationally take to escape poverty, retention of these adult students is a persistent and perplexing dilemma for higher education providers because of the complexities of the women's needs in managing school, family and finances. Counselors and policy makers in education can become more aware and sensitive to the multiple roles adults play and to the interaction of their personal and familial needs with their educational needs (Rice, 1982).

History of Instrument Design Used in the Study

The inventory instrument used in this study is the Social Support Inventory (SSI) which has been copyrighted and is distributed by the Family Stress Coping and Health Project at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The SSI was developed to expand the current definitions of social support. Rossmann (November 13, 1994), stated that the inventory was very well-developed and solidly researched.

Determination that the SSI was accurately measuring social support was done in a two stage process upon the recommendations of Lynn (1986). During development the SSI content validity was determined using three methods. The first method was a systematic review of the literature on

social support which found that the items used in the SSI represent the content universe. The second method was the transcription and content analysis of the ethnographic interviews with the 22 parents. These confirmed the conclusions of the literature review. The third method involved formation of the identified sources and kinds of support that allowed for the measurement of the interaction of these two variables. In the judgement stage of content validation a team of four researchers evaluated the categories of sources and kinds of social support identified in the interviews and confirmed by the literature which became the items in the SSI. With 80% accuracy the original 22 parents were asked to complete the SSI again. Two family life professionals were asked to match the transcriptions with the 22 Inventory responses (Cooke, et al, 1983). The degree of consistency (reliability) was measured with two groups in a test -retest manner. Stability was obtained by administering the SSI to a group of 13 parents that had similar characteristics of the original couples. The same instrument was then administered a week later. Scores were correlated and the coefficient of stability was determined to be .81. The same SSI procedures were administered to a group of 18 educators with a coefficient of stability of .79 (Cooke,et al. 1983). In previous literature Bruhn and

Phillips (1984) emphasized the dynamic and complex nature of social support and suggest that a high test- retest correlation could be meaningless.

The Inventory's originators write, "The SSI has the potential but has not yet been fully tested for use in assessing the social support for individuals and groups of parents at any stage of the parenting cycle, and for people in general in many other roles or contexts...." (Cooke et al., 1988, p. 216). There are a number of other instruments for practitioners to use in determining the quantity and quality of an individual's social support system (Bruhn & Philips, 1984; Norbeck, Lindsey & Carrieri, 1981; Turner, 1983).

A method for measuring the interaction of the kinds of social support, such as suggestions from teachers, with sources of support, such as family, was developed by Cooke, et al., (1988). This Social Support Inventory including demographic questions created by the researcher was used for this research.

The Social Support Inventory lists eleven sources of social support, i.e., spouse or partner, children, other relatives, close friends, co-workers, community or neighborhood groups, church or synagogue, professional or service providers, special groups, television, radio,

newspapers, etc., and spiritual beliefs.

There are five types of support assessed in this study with the Social Support Inventory: a) emotional, b) esteem, c) network, d) appraisal, and e) altruistic. These sources of support and kinds of support were found by Cooke et al (1988) after extensive interview research, content analysis procedures were used by a trained researcher and a research team reassessed the classification of social support sources and kinds. Further research has been done with this instrument by Hamilton McCubbin. Questions were adapted for youth and factor analyzed (McCubbin ,Thompson & Thompson, 1987). A clearer definition of these types of support can be found in chapter one in the definition of terms.

Social support can be obtained from various sources, and the amount of support varies. The Social Support Inventory captures the type, source, and intensity of the support received by women returning to college. An inventory is a tool that attempts to measure one or more of the aspects of an individual's behaviors or perceptions. Inventories have been used in educational research to obtain trait descriptions of certain defined groups such as dropouts, members of minority groups, etc. They have also been used to measure attitudes. The advantages of an inventory are economy, simplicity, and objectivity (Dillman,

1978; Van Dalen, 1979).

Summary

The barriers and challenges that women have had to face have not stopped women from succeeding in getting college degrees. The rigorous admission requirements and inflexible scheduling that women who enter a four-year institution often encounter can be big hurdles for women who faced educational anxieties in school previously. The emotional challenges, the barriers, and the individual and social support issues all affect women who re-enter academia.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY AND DESIGN

Introduction

This chapter describes the methodology and design of the study. The problem and purpose, need for the study, and the hypotheses are restated. This chapter contains a design of the study including the selection of the population and sample, the selection of the instrument, reliability and validity results, the assumptions, the scope and limitations of the study, the collection of data, and the statistical procedures that were used for data analysis.

Problem Statement

The problem that Rice identified in 1982 is still a problem today. While it is clear that higher education is one way impoverished mothers can rationally take to escape poverty, retention of these adult students is a persistent and perplexing dilemma for higher education because of the

complexities returning adult women face in managing school, family and finances (Rice, 1982). Institutional research from two southwestern universities shows that women over 25 years of age take longer to graduate and many do not finish (Appendix G). If public policy encourages women to return to school then, social support mechanisms need to be in place so women can finish a university degree.

Purpose of the Study

What is the role of social support in this retention question? A decision to return to school and stay in school are not isolated ones since it affects a system of people who may or may not be supportive of the student (Rice, 1979a). The support of family, and other social circles can be a determining factor in a student's ability to stay in school, maintain academic progress and graduate. This study addresses the problem of learning more about women returning to the university that are receiving financial aid and federal financial help. This study reaches beyond the middle-class focus of earlier studies concerning social support for women returning to school, to determine who gives such support to minority women or economically disadvantaged women by using the Social Support Inventory (SSI) developed by McCubbin, Patterson, & Glynn (1982). This study assesses the social support for women returning to two

research universities by systematically measuring how much, what kind, and from whom the student receives social support when returning to undergraduate school, using the SSI.

Need For The Study

Less is known about support with the culturally diverse groups of women that are the changing population of the university in the 1990's and how social support of family members and other social groups affects the student. In recent decades more women have returned to postsecondary education because higher education can open doorways to better financial success and federal financial aid and other aid programs have attracted students who otherwise would not have been able to afford college (U.S. Dept. Of Education, 1993). In recent decades more women have returned to postsecondary education because of multiple reasons such as a need for two incomes and to prepare for employment or to fulfill a desire for education and achievement (Weilbert & Van Dusseldorp, 1983). More lower income women are returning to universities because education can open doorways to better financial success, but much of the research is class specific to middle or upper class women (Lewis, 1988). More research is needed to add to the body of literature on women returning to school, including women who live in poverty or who are receiving federal financial help, so that the

barriers to post-secondary education can be removed (Rice, 1993).

Objectives

The objectives of this study include:

1. To identify the people, groups of people or sources of support who provide social support for women returning to school as determined by the total Social Support Inventory means.
2. To compare total Social Support Inventory means of women returning to the university women who receive financial aid to those who do not.
3. To compare Total Social Support Inventory means between those who receive federal financial help and those who do not.

Design of The Study

Self-reporting family surveys have been used in research and education because families interact in predictable and discernable ways (McCubbin, 1985). Family systems research is based on the premise that family processes interact with individual family member's and the Social Support Inventory was chosen to use in this study because of the theoretical relationship with family systems

literature.

Valid Social Support Inventories were collected from returning women undergraduates at two major research universities in the southwest during the fall of 1994. Inventories were mailed to all women over 25 years old sophomore-senior and non-respondents were contacted by telephone. The SSI was used without any changes except the addition of demographic questions and an introductory section required by the Institutional Review Board.

The study is concerned with the perceptions and opinions of the respondents; therefore, it is considered descriptive research (Huck, Cormier, & Bounds, 1974; Toothaker, 1986). Descriptive research is used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena of women returning to school. Descriptive research describes "what exists" with respect to variables or conditions in a situation (Kerlinger, 1973; Van Dalen, 1979). Frequency data and descriptive research will provide a more in- depth picture of the women studied (Merriam and Simpson, 1984). The depth and breadth of description adds to the meaning of research (Merriam, 1988).

Reliability/ Validity

The Social Support Inventory used by Cooke, et al. 1988

assessed the social support for new parents. The test-retest reliability was reported at .81. The construct validity of the instrument was assessed and supported by a systematic literature review, 22 ethnographic interviews and completion of the SSI by the same 22 subjects (Cooke, et al., 1983). During development the SSI content validity was determined using three methods. The first method was a systematic review of the literature on social support which found that the items used in the SSI represent the content universe. The second method was the transcription and content analysis of the ethnographic interviews with the 22 parents. These confirmed the conclusions of the literature review. The third method involved formation of the identified sources and kinds of support that allowed for the measurement of the interaction of these two variables. In the judgement stage of content validation a team of four researchers evaluated the categories of sources and kinds of social support identified in the interviews and confirmed by the literature which became the items in the SSI. The original 22 parents were asked to complete the SSI again one week later. Two family life professionals were asked to match the transcriptions with the 22 Inventory responses (Cooke, et al, 1983). The degree of consistency (reliability) was measured with two groups by test-retest.

Stability was obtained by administering the SSI to a group of 13 parents that had similar characteristics of the original couples. The same instrument was then administered a week later. Scores were correlated and the coefficient of stability was determined to be .81. The same SSI procedures were administered to a group of 18 educators with a coefficient of stability of .79 (Cooke, et al. 1983).

Field Testing The Instrument

The inventory was field-tested for clarity and to measure the time it took to complete the inventory. No statistical tests were used in the analysis because the researcher based the reliability (.81) on previous studies with another population (Cooke, et al., 1983). Twenty students in a graduate level Human Relations class were asked to fill in the instrument in April, 1994. The students were timed to make certain that it would take no longer than 15 minutes to complete the form. The time the inventory took varied between six and ten minutes. The feedback received from the class resulted in adding more demographic descriptors for ethnic groups. The pilot test was analyzed manually.

Population

The population of this study is defined as women over

25 years of age who were enrolled at two major research Universities for the fall 1994 semester as sophomores, juniors, or seniors. The two state-supported universities have a diverse population. The urban university has the enrollment of approximately 19,000 students; the rural university has about 18,000 students. Originally the parameters were set to include women with more than six credit hours to show that they were at least committed to earning a degree and not just taking an occasional course. The freshman classes of both universities were omitted from the study because the records at one of the participating universities could not discriminate a list for second-semester freshmen only, which was a parameter set by the researcher to guarantee commitment to a degree program. The population included in the study totaled 1661. Of those 1060 were attending the urban school, and 601 were attending the rural school. The undergraduate enrollment for women at the rural institution is 6,502, and 651 are over the age of 25, as of December, 1994 according to the Office of Institutional Research. The urban University has a larger number of returning students because it is a metropolitan campus, and a large number of students commute from a nearby city of 800,000. (Carney, September, 1994, personal communication). As of December 1, 1994 the Office of

Institutional Research at the urban university gave the undergraduate headcount of women as 6,847; 1,158 were over 25 years old.

Two names from the urban university were omitted from the list, one because it did not have an address and the other because its bearer was incorrect. The lists from the universities were acquired from the Director of Institutional Research at the rural university and the Assistant Dean\ Director of University College at the urban university.

Sampling Procedures

The researcher applied to both institutions for permission to conduct a survey from the Institutional Review Boards (See Appendices B & C). After the completion of fall enrollment, both institutions supplied lists of women who fit the characteristics of the study in the fall semester, 1994.

Due to the low population of women returning to school inventories were mailed to the total female non-traditional undergraduate population, sophomore through senior, at both schools. A telephone sample of 30 split equally with the urban and rural universities was planned to test the non-respondent population.

A survey of the entire population of women returning to school was conducted because of expected low survey return rate and the expense was not prohibitive to mail to all women. The average expectation of a mail survey without monetary compensation for the subjects is 30% (Dillman, 1991).

Data Gathering Procedures

Students voluntarily completed the surveys and returned it at their convenience (no deadline date was given, students were urged to respond as soon as possible) in stamped self-addressed envelopes supplied for the purpose.

Surveys were coded by color to identify institutions and numerically to identify respondents. Survey forms indicating respondents from the rural university were yellow, and the urban university survey inventories were beige. Surveys printed on colored paper were also used. Because Dillman (1991) found that colored surveys increase response rates. A copy of the survey inventory can be found in appendix A.

No monetary rewards were offered to respondents to complete the survey inventories. To encourage subjects to complete a mailed inventory, press releases describing the

study were published in the community newspapers including the student campus newspapers at both locations. The press release (appendix E) stated that students who did not return their inventories could pick up replacement surveys from a designated site at each participating university campus. Press releases describing the study appeared October 23, 1994 and November 15, 1994. Moreover, extra inventories were given to the coordinator of Adult Student Services to distribute to the Adult Student Organization meeting held November 8 for the students who needed replacement surveys. Both coordinators of the adult student groups for the research universities were contacted, and were willing to include a special note in the Adult Student Organization newsletter about this research project.

Since the survey offered to inform students who participated of the results, a file of student names has been maintained for informing those students who requested copies of the results.

Non-respondent Sample

The researcher attempted to put an inventory in every potential respondent's hands because of the concern for the best possible representation. However, a non-respondent sample was planned to increase the statistical quality of

the study. This sample was to find out if the non-respondents are part of a different population from the respondents. The researcher performed a stratified random sample by taking the thirty non-respondent sample and split them according to ethnicity (white and other races) and university (urban and rural). Thirty respondents samples were randomly chosen to match the non-respondent sample so that they would be matched for ethnicity and university setting.

Non-respondents were interviewed by telephone during the week of November 28, 1994. In an eight hour period the researcher was able to complete thirty non-respondent surveys by telephone. Fifty-five students were called from a random selection of non-respondents divided into equal urban and rural lists. Of these 55 phone calls the researcher was able to complete 30 surveys. The students were asked to complete a questionnaire orally from questions read to them by the researcher over the telephone. The researcher simply asked for participation and read the cover letter at the beginning of the phone call and filled in the inventory according to the preferences of the subject.

Data Analysis Techniques

Descriptive frequency data were gathered for objective one and descriptive data students wrote in the "other"

section and comments written on their instruments are reported in the narrative of Chapter Four.

An multivariate analysis of variance was chosen for obtaining information about objective two and three and to compare the non-respondent sample and the respondent sample.

An multivariate analysis of variance is a statistical procedure for testing a hypothesis of equality or two or more means from independent groups. The analysis of variance is a general extension of the t test (Toothaker, 1986).

Objective one Information about scoring the Social Support Inventory for Total Support Scores is explained in the following because the mean scores are used in the multivariate analysis of variance tests. It is possible to indicate separate scores for each kinds of support and all sources, but the separation may not give the correct information about the complexity of social support for the individual (Cooke, et al., 1988). The scoring for the normative values of the SSI, done in 1988 separated the inventory into two parts. Part I calls for scoring of the twelve subscales on identifying sources of support, Part II scores the kinds of support and Part III calls for creating a total social support score. The twelve sources of support or sub-scales are as follows:

Source 1: Spouse or Partners

Source 2: Children

Source 3: Other Relatives

Source 4: Close Friendships

Source 5: Co-workers

Source 6: Community or Neighborhood Groups

Source 7: Church/Synagogue Groups

Source 8: Professional or Service Providers

Source 9: Special Groups Belonged to

Source 10: Reading certain books, or watching
television

Source 11: Spiritual Faith

Source 12: Other

To obtain data for the frequency tables the subscales of sources of support were added by the respondent marking yes as one and no as zero.

In scoring for Part II the sums for each kind of support perceived by the respondents are as follows:

Question 1: Emotional

Question 2: Esteem

Question 3: Network

Question 4: Appraisal

Question 5: Altruistic

The scores ran from 0-2; with no support being zero, yes

some support as one and yes a lot of support as two.

To fully explain the scores in relation to other women returning to school the mean, median and mode and the range for the scores, were set for each source table. The numbers under the median were considered low and all of the numbers above the median are considered high.

To create a total score, the totals for each of the subscales are added together. The highest possible support score is 120, and the lowest is zero. The SSI total for the entire inventory range is 0-120; a 60 would be the median score for the test. Tables I, II, XIV, XV, XVI, XVII also contain the mean, median, modal, and the range for the scores to fully explain the scores in relation to other women returning to school. The perceived support scores under the median were considered low and all of the numbers above the median are considered high. The researcher realizes that this does not fully explain the complexities of social support but the categories merely explain the scores in terms of the median score numbers.

Objective Two To examine objective two, a multivariate analysis of variance was performed on the total SSI scores (see further information on scoring the instrument) and the category of re-entry women receiving financial aid. To meet objective two, (See page 48) the independent

variable was financial aid and the dependent variables were source of support subscales, kinds of support, age and GPA.

Objective Three To examine objective three, (see page 48) a multivariate analysis of variance was performed on the total SSI scores (see further information on scoring the instrument) and the category of women returning to school receiving federal financial help. Federal financial help was the independent variable and sources of support subscales, kinds of support, age and GPA were dependent variables.

Non-respondent/ Respondent To find out if the non-respondents are part of a different population from the respondents multivariate analyses of variance sorted by respondent type (Non-Respondent or Respondent) was performed for total support scores to see if there were any statistically significant differences in the non-respondents and the respondents.

CHAPTER FOUR

FINDINGS OF THE RESEARCH

Introduction

The following are the findings from the Social Support Inventory that was distributed in the Fall of 1994. The findings for objectives one, two and three are presented first. Following are demographics of the study, a comparison of non-respondent/ respondent samples and a discussion of the findings. A total of 538 surveys excluding the 30 non-respondent surveys were processed in December 1995. The response rate was 32%. Since there was no difference in mean scores between the non-respondent sample and the respondent sample, the inventories were pooled as a single sample improving the response rate to 35%.

Findings Related to the Objective One

1. To identify the people, groups of people or sources of support who provide social support for women returning to school as determined by the Social Support Inventory means.

Previous research has shown that women returning to school need family support to progress in school. This study attempted to identify people such as family members, close friends or groups of people such as professionals, teachers, special support groups or churches that provide support for a re-entry woman. The Social Support Inventory was chosen for this study because of its theoretical relationship with family systems literature. The Social Support Inventory systematically measures how much, what kind, and from whom the student perceives social support.

The total Social Support Inventory mean, which is the measure of how much support was perceived to be given to the student, was 41.91 (sd 17.07), the median of the surveyed respondents was 41, and the mode was 43. For this study the women perceived social support from the total score (see Chapter 3 for inventory scoring) of 41.91. This is .91 above the median of 41. The range for the surveyed respondents was 0-112.

The SSI instrument has the possible range of scores from 0-120 and 60 is the theoretical median for the Inventory. For this study the total SSI Score means are used in relation to the median and mode for the actual number of women respondents. Below the median can be considered low support; above the median can be considered high support.

Categories of low and high support are used here simply to summarize data.

Table I describes the people from whom women returning to school perceive support. This table is for all the women surveyed and includes yes and no answers for questions 1-11 (see inventory in appendix A).

In Table I a number of sources are perceived to be positively supporting women returning to school; the means are higher than the medians. The spouse or partner, other relatives, community and neighbors, professional or service providers, the media and spiritual beliefs are all perceived to be supportive.

TABLE I
FREQUENCIES, MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, MEDIAN, MODES,
AND RANGE, OF THE SOURCES OF SUPPORT

SOURCES OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS * (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	RANGE
Spouse or partner	372	65%	7.80 (2.82)	6	10	0-10
children	365	64%	6.99 (2.31)	7	10 & 9	0-10
other relatives	550	96%	6.46 (2.66)	6	5	0-10
close friends	504	88%	6.94 (2.23)	7	5	0-10
co-workers	280	49%	4.53 (2.26)	5	5	0-10
community neighborhood	213	37%	3.74 (3.18)	4	6	0-10
church or synagogue	272	47%	6.70 (2.47)	7	7	0-10
professional or service providers	497	87%	2.10 (2.28)	1	1	0-10
special groups	73	13%	4.12 (2.45)	5	5	0-10
television, newspaper, books	562	99%	1.75 (2.70)	0	0	0-10
spiritual beliefs	531	93%	2.10 (2.22)	1	1	0-10

*Below the median are low; above the median are high.

In Table II the perceived kinds of support are displayed for all women answering the survey with a yes or no to questions 1-11 (see inventory in the appendix A). In reviewing the table, one can see that the women responding perceived that they felt loved (question 1), valued (question 2), helpful (question 5) and had a sense of trust (question 3) from the people they consider a source of support. The only kind of support subscale re-entry women perceived to be lower than the median (Question 4) was the "I feel understood and get help from..." (See Appendix A for narrative from the kinds of support questions). One respondent added a comment to the survey and described her feelings in the following way:

"Although my husband supports me in going back to school and he helps me with the house--It seems he wasn't feeling good about himself--which added an immense amount of stress and heartache--so I for one will be glad when this semester is over--I have been an emotional wreck for the past few weeks--and I question if my going back to school could have contributed to the problems my husband and I are trying to work through or brought them to the surface. Although I enjoy the being in class and I seem to be more creative in other areas so it has helped me in that regard."

For more information on the kind of support the returning student perceives they are getting see Table II.

Table II

FREQUENCIES, TOTAL SCORE MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATIONS),
MEDIAN, MODES, AND RANGE FOR KINDS OF SUPPORT

KINDS OF SUPPORT	FRQ N=568	MEAN* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	RANGE
Question 1 emotional	568 100%	8.69 (3.55)	8	10	0-20
Question 2 esteem	567 99%	8.37 (3.76)	8	8	0-24
Question 3 network	567 99%	7.70 (3.77)	7	7	0-24
Question 4 appraisal	568 100%	6.88 (3.56)	7	5,7,8	0-24
Question 5 altruistic	564 99%	10.35 (4.23)	10	8	0-24

*Below the median are low; above the median are high.

The researcher explored the data further than objective one and found data of interest concerning the kinds and types of sources of support (see appendix H).

FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE NUMBER TWO.

Objective two was to compare total Support Score Inventory means of women returning to the university who

receive financial aid with those who do not. In order to study this a series of multivariate analyses of variance was performed with the independent variable of financial aid (yes or no) and the dependent variables of sources and kinds of support.

The SSI total score was significantly different when a multivariate analysis of variance was performed. The SSI total scores were higher for women not receiving financial aid (44.8). Women on financial aid perceived less (40.7) support (see Table III).

TABLE III

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES/ SSI TOTAL AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	1987.91	1987.91	6.89	0.0089
ERROR 566	163252.85	288.43		
CORRECTED	165240.77			
TOTAL 567				

The following Table IV shows what is significantly different for women who receive financial aid and those that do not receive aid.

TABLE IV

COMPARISONS OF MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATIONS), MEDIAN, MODES,
OF SOURCES OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID AND
THOSE NOT RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID

SSI	RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID			NOT RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID		
SOURCES OF SUPPORT	MEANS * (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	MEANS (SD) *	MEDIAN	MODE
Spouse or partner @	4.83 (4.31)	5	10	6.26 (4.09)	8	10
children	4.60 (3.74)	5	8, 10	4.32 (3.96)	5	9
other relatives	6.27 (2.77)	6	5	6.59 (2.63)	7	10
close friends	6.19 (2.97)	10	6	6.56 (2.57)	6	5
co-workers @	2.26 (2.66)	1	5	2.91 (2.90)	3	5
community neighbor@	2.45 (3.00)	1	5	3.13 (3.19)	2	6
church or synagogue	5.30 (2.90)	4	5	5.61 (2.96)	6	5
prof or service providers	1.88 (2.21)	1	1	2.17 (2.28)	1	1
special groups	2.60 (2.47)	0	5	2.66 (2.55)	2	1
television, books	1.77 (2.74)	0	1	1.68 (2.55)	0	5
spiritual beliefs	1.99 (2.21)	1	5	2.37 (2.24)	2	1

N=407

Range 0-10

N=161

*Below the median are low; above the median are high

@ p.<.05 (see Tables V-VI).

When the the sources of support categories were used as a dependent variable with a multivariate analysis of variance, and financial aid (yes or no) was the independent variable, the following were found significantly different :

- The spouse or partner of women not receiving financial aid is perceived to be more supportive (see Table V).

TABLE V

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES/ SPOUSE OR PARTNER AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL	1	238.09	13.17	0.0003
ERROR	566	10230.81		
CORRECTED TOTAL	567	10468.91		

- Co-workers of women not receiving financial aid are perceived to be more supportive (see Table VI).

TABLE VI

TABLE MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES/ CO-WORKERS AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT
VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	52.31	52.31	6.58	0.0106
ERROR 566	5313.25	9.387		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	5365.57			

- Community or neighborhood groups of women not receiving financial aid are perceived to be more supportive (see Table VII).

TABLE VII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES/ COMMUNITY OR
 NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID
 (YES OR NO) AS AN INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	52.31	52.31	5.57	0.0186
ERROR 566	5313.25	9.38		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	5365.57			

- Women not receiving financial aid were older than women receiving financial aid. The mean age for women receiving financial aid was 33.5, and for those not receiving financial aid the mean age was 35.8 (see Table VIII).

TABLE VIII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCES/ AGE AS DEPENDENT
 VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	600.00	600.00	11.31	0.0008
ERROR 566	29560.19	53.07		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	30160.19			

The kinds of support categories were not all statistically significant for women receiving financial aid.

TABLE IX

COMPARISON OF WOMEN RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID AND WITH THOSE WHO DO NOT, BY SSI SCORE MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATIONS), MEDIANS, AND MODES BY KINDS OF SUPPORT

SSI	RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID			NOT RECEIVING FINANCIAL AID		
KINDS OF SUPPORT	MEANS* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	MEANS* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE
emotional@	8.39 (3.50)	8	8,10	9.44	9	9
esteem@	8.12 (3.63)	8	8	9.01 (4.03)	9	9,10
network@	7.44 (3.71)	7	8	8.37 (3.86)	8	6
appraisal@	6.67 (3.58)	7	7	7.42 (3.47)	7	6
altruistic	10.14 (4.10)	10	10	10.89 (4.51)	10	8

N=407

N= 161

@ p<.05 (see Table)

Range between 0-22

In the following multivariate analysis of variances Tables(X-XIV) have the independent variable as financial aid (yes or no).

When the "kinds of support" were used as a dependent variable with a five-dependent multivariate analysis of variance and financial aid was the independent variable, the following were found significantly different:

- Emotional support or feeling loved and cared about was perceived as higher by returning women respondents not receiving financial aid (see Table X).

TABLE X

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ EMOTIONAL TOTAL AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	126.67	126.67	10.18	0.0015
ERROR 566	7042.79	12.44		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	7169.46			

- Esteem support or feeling valued and respected was perceived to be higher for re-entry women not receiving financial aid (see Table XI).

TABLE XI

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ ESTEEM TOTAL AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT
VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	92.44	92.44	6.57	0.0106
ERROR 566	7948.78	14.06		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	8041.23			

- Network support of women not receiving financial aid is perceived as higher (see Table XII).

TABLE XII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ NETWORK TOTAL AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT
VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	100.89	100.89	7.15	0.0077
ERROR 566	7978.08	14.12		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	8078.98			

- Appraisal support or being understood was perceived to be higher for reentry women not receiving financial aid (see Table XIII).

TABLE XIII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ APPRAISAL TOTAL AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FINANCIAL AID (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT
VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	65.82	65.82	5.22	0.0227
ERROR 566	7132.96	12.60		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	7198.78			

FINDINGS RELATED TO OBJECTIVE NUMBER THREE

Objective three was to compare Total Support Score Inventory means between those who receive federal financial help or assistance ("welfare") and those who do not.

The SSI total score was not significantly different when a multivariate analysis of variance was performed with women receiving federal financial help 41.8, (sd 18.52) and women not receiving federal financial help 41.9, (sd 16.74).

Here in Table XIV the truly needy women students are identified. Qualifying for financial aid is more likely for middle class women whose earnings do fall when they enter school but not usually to the level of needing "welfare", or financial help, as discussed in Chapter 2.

TABLE XIV

COMPARISON OF WOMEN RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP AND THOSE WHO DO NOT, WITH SSI SCORE MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATIONS), MEDIAN, AND MODES BY SOURCES OF SUPPORT

SSI	RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP			NOT RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP		
SOURCES OF SUPPORT	MEANS* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	MEAN* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE
SPOUSE OR PARTNER @	2.92 (3.86)	0	10	5.76 (4.22)	7	10
CHILDREN @	6.61 (2.69)	6	9	4.05 (3.86)	4	8,10
OTHER RELATIVES@	5.74 (2.93)	6	5	6.50 (2.66)	6	10
CLOSE FRIENDS	6.06 (3.26)	6	5,10	6.35 (2.77)	6	5
CO-WORKERS@	1.28 (2.13)	0	0	2.71 (2.80)	2	0
COMMUNITY NEIGHBOR	2.65 (3.29)	0	5	2.64 (3.02)	1	5
CHURCH OR SYNAGOGUE	5.64 (3.06)	6	10	5.33 (2.88)	5	5
PROF. OR SERVICE @ PROVIDERS	2.36 (2.62)	1	1	1.87 (2.13)	1	1
SPECIAL GROUPS @	3.10 (2.67)	3	5	2.21 (2.44)	2	5
TELEVISION BOOKS @	2.48 (3.31)	0	4	1.58 (2.50)	0	1
SPIRITUAL BELIEFS	2.40 (2.43)	1	1	2.13 (2.17)	1	1

N= 105

N=462

*Below the median are low; above the median are high. The range was between 0-10. For significant differences @ $p < .05$ see Tables XIII-XIX. A multivariate analysis of variance was used, and the following sources of support had significantly different means when the independent variables were federal financial help (yes or no) and the dependent variable was the source of support.

- Partners or spouses of women not receiving federal financial help were perceived as more supportive than partners or spouses of women receiving federal financial help (see Table XV).

TABLE XV

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ SPOUSE OR PARTNER AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	689.66	689.66	39.92	0.0001
ERROR 566	9779.26	17.28		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	10468.91			

- Children of women receiving federal financial help were perceived to be more supportive than children of women not receiving federal financial help, (see Table XVI).

TABLE XVI

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ CHILDREN AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP AS INDEPENDENT
VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	563.14	563.14	41.64	0.0001
ERROR 566	7654.41	13.52		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	8217.54			

- Other Relatives such as parents, brothers, sisters, and in-laws of women not receiving federal financial help were perceived to be more supportive than relatives of women receiving federal financial help (see Table XVII).

TABLE XVII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ OTHER RELATIVES AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP (YES OR NO) AS
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	49.49	49.49	6.69	0.0099
ERROR 566	4185.80	7.39		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	4235.29			

- For the women that worked outside the home and school for money, a multivariate analysis of variance found co-workers were more supportive to women not receiving federal financial help.(see Table XVIII).

TABLE XVIII

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ COWORKERS AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP (YES OR NO) AS
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	174.82	174. 82	24.04	0.0001
ERROR 566	4115.80	7.27		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	4290.61			

- Contact with professionals or service providers, including teachers was perceived to be higher for women receiving federal financial help (see Table XIX).

TABLE XIX

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ PROFESSIONALS,
SERVICE WORKERS, TEACHERS AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL
FINANCIAL HELP AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	20.13	20.13	4.04	0.0448
ERROR 566	2818.23	4.97		
CORRECTED TOTAL	2838.23			

- Special groups returning women belong to were also significantly different with a multivariate analysis of variance with women receiving federal financial help perceiving more support from them than women not receiving federal financial help (see Table XX).

TABLE XX

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ SPECIAL GROUPS AS
DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP (YES OR NO) AS
INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	30.08	30.08	4.87	0.0277
ERROR 566	3495.53	6.17		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	3525.61			

- Furthermore, the question television, newspapers, or books was considered a source of support by women receiving federal financial help more than by women not receiving federal financial help (see Table XXI).

TABLE XXI

MULTIVARIATE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE TABLES/ TELEVISION, BOOKS, MEDIA AS DEPENDENT VARIABLE; FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP (YES OR NO) AS INDEPENDENT VARIABLE

SOURCE	SUM OF SQ	MEAN SQ	F VALUE	P>F
MODEL 1	70.06	70.05	9.80	0.0018
ERROR 566	4044.94	7.14		
CORRECTED TOTAL 567	4114.99			

The following table (XXII) compares the "kinds of support" that women receiving federal financial help perceive they have.

TABLE XXII

COMPARISON OF WOMEN RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP AND THOSE WHO ARE NOT BY SSI SCORE MEANS (STANDARD DEVIATIONS), MEDIAN AND MODES FOR KINDS OF SUPPORT

SSI RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP				NOT RECEIVING FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP		
KINDS OF SUPPORT	MEANS* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE	MEANS* (SD)	MEDIAN	MODE
emotional	8.64 (3.88)	8	5	8.69 (3.48)	8	10
esteem	8.47 (4.06)	8	8	8.35 (3.70)	8	10
network	7.64 (4.07)	7	5	7.72 (3.71)	7	8
appraisal	6.47 (4.09)	6	3	6.98 (3.42)	7	5, 7, 8
altruistic	10.63 (4.27)	10	12	10.28 (4.22)	10	10

N=105 yes

N=463 no

*Below the median are low; above the median are high.

Ranges was between 0-22. None of the scores proved to be significantly different when an multivariate analysis of variance was performed. Thus the kinds of support are not

different , but the sources of support were with women receiving federal financial help.

DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE SURVEY

The ethnic information of the survey respondents is similar to the female ethnic population of sophmores, juniors, and seniors at the universities campuses surveyed(see Table XXIII).

Table XXIII

COMPARISON OF THE DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE UNIVERSITY POPULATION AND SURVEY RESPONDENTS IN THE FALL 1994

RACE/ETHNICITY	UNIVERSITIES		SURVEY	
	FREQUENCY	%	FREQUENCY	%
AFRICAN-AMERICAN	478	5.	14	3.
AMERICAN INDIAN	784	8.	47	8.5
ASIAN-AMERICAN	350	3.	11	2.
HISPANIC	202	2.	20	3.5
OTHER RACES	512	5.	16	3
WHITE	7691	77.	454	80
TOTAL NUMBER	9918	100	562	100

Frequency Missing=6

As a final comparison for objectives two and three consider the Grade Point Average (GPA). GPA of the surveyed

population was 3.24. The grade point average for women receiving any type of financial aid was 3.25. Women receiving any federal financial help had a GPA of 3.15. These scores are higher than the average women returning to school. The mean grade point average of women over 25 at the urban university is 2.99 and the mean GPA for women over 25 at the rural university is 2.70 for Fall 1994 according to institutional research from the universities.

In looking at the respondent/non-respondent sample the demographic frequency for the total survey was similar to the non-respondent sample except the SSI total score was higher for the non-respondent sample, but the difference was not statistically significant. To explore these differences between respondents and nonrespondents consider Table XXIV.

TABLE XXIV
COMPARISON OF DEMOGRAPHIC DATA OF THE TOTAL POPULATION AND
RESPONDENT/NON-RESPONDENT SAMPLE

DEMOGRAPHIC FREQUENCY	TOTAL SURVEY		RESPONDENT		NON-RESPONDENT	
	#	%	SAMPLE	%	SAMPLE	%
NUMBER	568		30		30	
AGE	34.1		35.7		32.5	
GPA	3.24		3.05		3.04	
SSI TOTAL	41.91		44.93		47.0	
CLASS	561	100%	30	100%	30	100
SOPHMORE	79	14%	5	17%	5	16%
JUNIOR	167	30%	8	26%	5	17%
SENIOR	315	56%	17	57%	20	67%
ETHNICITY	568	100%	30	100%	30	100%
WHITE	453	80%	18	60%	18	60%
OTHERS	115	20%	12	40%	12	40%
FINANCIAL AID	407	72%	18	60%	27	90%
FEDERAL HELP	105	19%	5	16.7%	7	23.3%

COMPARISON OF THE FINDINGS OF RESPONDENTS AND NON-
RESPONDENTS

The response rate was 32%. This response rate indicated a strong need to sample non-respondents. Since the response rate was above the expected response rate reported in the literature (Dillman, 1991), the researcher decided simply to compare completed matched respondents with

non-respondents rather than to attempt second and third mailings of replacement surveys.

Among non-respondents, those from the rural university completed the telephone survey at a higher rate (15\20), than those from the urban university (15\35) when contacted at random. To find out if the non-respondents are part of a population different from the respondents, multivariate analysis of variance tests were performed. Non-respondents and respondents were the independent variables and the dependent variables included age, and financial assistance (federal help and financial aid). The subscales of kinds of support, and the subscales of sources of support were also analyzed with a multivariate analysis of variance procedure. No significant differences were found between the two groups and the total SSI scores (see Table XXII page 83).

FURTHER DISCUSSION OF THE FINDINGS

For the last twenty years research and programs have been focused on women returning to the university; however, in this study SSI scores have been reported as high (above the median) in the sources of support but not in the kinds of support. Could this be because universities have not tried to introduce programs responding to women returning to school or have not put enough resources into programs for

re-entry women? Both universities surveyed had a number of institutional programs for re-entry students that the literature has suggested, such as a coordinator of returning students and special campus groups. But help for family and social support is obviously harder to institutionalize

Overall, women returning to undergraduate study at the two universities sampled in this study report as the kinds of support, that they are supported emotionally, they feel valued or respected, have a sense of trust from involvement with people and organizations and feel good about themselves because they are involved in the community and help others. Families of women returning to school help them progress through school by providing emotional support. Appraisal support, when the returning student feels understood and gets help, is lacking in almost all source areas (see Table II page 67).

How much support are they getting? Families, spouses, partners and other relatives are perceived to be supporting re-entry students. However, 196 women did not have spouses or partners, 203 did not have children and 18 did not have other relatives, about 35% without supportive families were also in this study. Women who receive federal help "welfare moms" perceived their children as more supportive than other women with children in the study (see Table XVI

page 79).

Are families helping women students? Women in this study believe their spouses or partners and other relatives are giving them high emotional support (see Table II page 67). This finding is similar to the research literature that reports positive emotional support from students' families when they return to school (Astin, 1976; Rice, 1979b; Spreadbury, 1983 and Rice, 1990). Numerous researchers have also observed that a partner's support when a student returns to school is crucial in her educational success and satisfaction (Hooper, 1979, DeGroot, 1980, Lewis, 1983 & 1988, Rice, 1979a). Women with children do not perceive their children as being supportive and helpful (appraisal support). For example, "When I need to talk or think about how I'm doing with my life, I feel understood and get help from my children " was not a typical response by women in this study (see Table XXIV in appendix H). While social support may be present in other areas, actual supportive behavior from children and changes in their role behavior are less likely to occur (Rice, 1990). Children might not be "helping" mom with household support or "understanding" mom's need for study time. However, another respondent commented on her survey :

"I am anxious to see the results of your survey. I never realized what a lonely trek this process of educating myself has been until filling out your form. Except for the love and support of my children I have been completely isolated; and that isolation is beginning to wear me down. It can be quite depressing."

In the "other" descriptive category written in on many surveys many women received emotional support from pets "holding my dog", "my dog", "cats" or "animals." self, my family, pets, family (mom/dad, other students), as sources of feeling loved or cared about. These statistics are similar to a study of poor single-mother students; Nelson, Van Stone, & Niemann (1993) found that support of other students, university services, support of the family and support of the faculty were important for two-thirds of the women interviewed. One-half of the students cited the influence of personal ambition and one-fourth or fewer cited prior knowledge and experience, effort and discipline and self-confidence as important to success (Nelson, et al. 1993).

✓ Research by Nelson et al. (1993) that indicated that support from faculty is crucial for the returning students' success. How well are the service providers, faculty and

special groups doing in support of returning women students? In this study, not as well as might be expected considering the programs that are in place for women returning to the university. Even though respondents felt they received support from faculty members, this study found teachers and service providers were perceived to be not as supportive with emotional, esteem, network, appraisal and altruistic support. These areas are important to retention of all students and have been explored in the literature (Deluccia, 1994). Even though respondents perceived professionals and service providers as a source of support, the kind of support they gave was low (see Table XXX appendix H). However, a number of respondents felt professionals and service providers gave some support because they scored above the median in the source of support category (mean 2.10, median 1) (see Table I page 65).

When women were asked the Appraisal question, "When I need to talk or think about how I'm doing with my life, I feel understood and get help from professionals or service providers," the reported mean perceived was .22 below the median of one (see Table XXX in appendix H). One way to account for this might be the universities sampled were large, where classes are big and there is little informal

interaction between faculty and undergraduate students. However, faculty support was mentioned in the descriptive data by a few of the women. In a conversation with one of the respondents, the student expressed concern that only three of her teachers in her undergraduate required classes had been faculty members while the rest had been graduate teaching assistants.

Re-entry women rarely use special groups for support. Only 73 respondents or 12% from the total sample population reported using special groups, and the level of network support ("sense of trust from being involved with special groups") for those who did was low (4.12, median 5; see Table XXXI in appendix H).

This was also the case with network support and community or neighborhood groups (mean .41, median 1; see Table XXVIII appendix H). Furthermore, 191 students responded "no, they are not involved with formal or informal community or neighborhood groups." All categories are in the low range; however 213 of the respondents "are involved formally or informally in these groups". In one phone interview with a non-respondent the woman laughed and said, "Who has time!" These findings are consistent with previous studies and discussions in the literature (Badenhoop & Johansen, 1980). Re-entry women are less likely than

traditional-aged students to make use of available services. Research shows that women do not know about support groups or campus and community activities, or they feel these groups are only for younger students, and so they do not participate, (Lewis, 1988). The universities sampled had numerous groups and support networks for the students (see appendix F). However, Adult Student coordinators from both campuses reported low numbers of participants or group numbers that change frequently often occur in the adult student organization meetings.

Altruistic support did have an impact on re-entry women. It was interesting to note that altruistic support occurred frequently and contributed to the returning student's sense of well-being. Likewise, Broadhead, Kaplan and James (1983) noted that reciprocity of social support was important. Maybe reciprocity is the way woman students managed to keep everyone happy. Women who put their families first in terms of role priorities may feel less role strain (Van Meter, 1976). Scott and King (1985) found in their survey that participants had greater support for their going back to school when they met part of their family's need for attention and did not neglect family members for their studies. Role accumulation might also be the reason for the high altruistic scores in many of the

areas of source support.

Financial frustration is a concern of women returning to school, as one woman wrote about university administration,

"They are also entirely too monetary oriented. They have the number one priority money rather than education. Example: I had credit on my copy card. They were not allowed to rebate the difference. My car was parked 1/4 inch on white line in parking lot. I received ticket. These are petty, but they indicate priorities- MONEY instead of trying to make education a pleasure to individuals."

A large number of women answered the question affirmatively that they had Spiritual beliefs (531), but a smaller number actually belonged to a church or synagogue (272). However, under the category of kinds support from churches & synagogues, students perceived support (all above the median 1) and had lower support for spiritual beliefs (below the median 1 ;see Table XXIX and Table XXXIII in appendix H). This would suggest that re-entry women do not necessarily benefit from belonging to a religious community. As one women reported, maybe there is just not enough time for religious or church responsibilities. As one

respondent wrote on her survey,

"I am interested in a report of the survey. I wonder if there are more women like me who thinks there isn't anyone who cares."

CHAPTER FIVE

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

About Objective One of this study we found that:

- The total Social Support Inventory mean, which is the measure of how much support was perceived to be given to the student, was above the median of the surveyed respondents; thus the women perceived some support.

In order of the frequency, women returning to school indicated the following sources of support: television, media; other relatives; spiritual beliefs; close friends; professional or service providers; spouse or partner and children. The other sources were below 50 percent in frequency.

When a multivariate analysis of variance was performed for objective two, the SSI total score was statistically significant.

- The SSI total scores were higher for women not receiving financial aid. Women receiving financial aid perceived less support.

To look further at the subscales of kind of support for women receiving financial aid, emotional support or feeling loved and cared about and esteem support or feeling valued and respected, were perceived to be higher for re-entry women not receiving financial aid. Furthermore, appraisal support or being understood, network support, or being involved and altruistic support or when students are able to do things for and help others, were perceived to be higher for re-entry women not receiving financial aid.

Further investigations of the source subscales indicate the spouse or partner, co-workers, community or neighborhood groups, and spiritual beliefs of women not receiving financial aid were perceived to be more supportive. Furthermore, the age of the women receiving financial aid was significantly different in that the women not receiving financial aid were older.

The following was found for Objective Three:

- The SSI total score was not significantly different when a multivariate analysis of variance was performed on women receiving federal financial help and

women not receiving federal financial help.

But significant differences were noted in the subscales. Partners or spouses, other relatives such as parents, brothers, sisters, and in-laws of women not receiving federal financial help were perceived as more supportive than partners or spouses of women receiving federal financial help. Women on federal help who worked at paying jobs perceived lower support from their co-workers than women who were not receiving federal financial help.

However, women receiving federal financial help perceived children and special groups re-entry women students belong to be more supportive than for women not receiving federal financial help; furthermore, contact with professionals or service providers, including teachers, was perceived to be higher for women receiving federal help. Television, radio, newspapers, or books were considered a source of support for women receiving federal financial help more than for women not receiving federal financial help.

CONCLUSIONS OF THE STUDY

- "Welfare moms" or women receiving federal financial assistance with children perceived support from their children, and women with no financial aid and a spouse

or partner perceived support from their spouses or partners. Financial aid of itself is not adequate in providing the "kinds" of social support that women need as based on the SSI.

- University teachers and service providers were perceived to be not supportive in emotional, esteem, network, appraisal and altruistic support based on the SSI analysis. These areas have been explored in the literature and are important to retention of all students.
- Women returning to school do not take advantage of special groups organized on campus, and in their home communities, churches and community/neighborhood activities.

It is important to distinguish social support from social network, the latter being all the people one has contact with and from whom one potentially gets support. Social Network support may not always provide support but may demand work. Social support implies more than superficial contact with people but involves a qualitative exchange of communications in an atmosphere of trust (McCubbin, 1986).

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR PRACTICE BASED ON THE STUDY

- This study shows that programs for men and women returning to school should continue on campuses, but more advertising, and public relations should be done to encourage students returning to school to participate and form social support networks.
- This study found that special groups were perceived to be supportive in the kind of support given, but very few women surveyed actually belonged to them. When resources are tight, these programs usually suffer and students do not get the support they need.
- This research raised the question of role accumulation or role stress. In the written remarks and the comments that students made verbally, the issue of balancing multiple roles and families did arise frequently. Counselors and policy makers in education should become more aware of and sensitive to the multiple roles adults play and to the interaction of their personal and familial needs with their educational needs (Rice, 1982).
- This population of this study had a about 75% of re-entry women receiving financial aid and 18% receiving "welfare," or federal financial help, and the remaining paid their own way. It is surprising to note

that the women on federal help perceived more support from special groups, service providers or professionals like teachers, and from television, books and newspapers. However, women receiving financial aid did not on the whole indicate support from these groups. Women receiving financial aid perceived fewer kinds of support and fewer sources of support than women receiving federal help.

These findings are related to the research that suggests that women must face multiple barriers including lack of familial, community and cultural support; they may feel isolated and alone in school (Rice, 1993).

As previously reported in research, information on "personal and cross-cultural variables that may be impeding participation should be shared through development sessions or small-group meetings" (Lewis, 1988, p. 103). The high score for service providers as a source of support reported in this study could be a result of universities trying to do the development services but failing to provide the kinds of support that the students perceive.

In this research, the finding that women receiving federal financial help perceive more professional support demanded further analysis. The researcher found that women receiving federal financial help get the help they need from

caseworkers with the Department of Human Services because of the regular meetings with a caseworker (Ness, DHS caseworker, conversation, April 1995). Women receiving financial aid but not federal help are not getting as much support and having their needs met because they do not have to maintain contact with any type of professional caseworkers. Could it be that the emotional, esteem, network, and appraisal support are often forgotten in academia? Possibly financial aid specialists could be trained to help women with financial aid and federal funding issues or other social service problems in ways that foster perceived support.

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

This study tried to address the problem of learning more about women returning to the university by reaching beyond the middle-class focus of earlier studies concerning social support for women returning to school to determine who gives such support to minority or economically disadvantaged women. The population of this study had 20% other race women and 80% white women. This research did not have a large number of minority women among the respondents. The percentage of women responding was similar to the number of minority women enrolled in the two institutions, so in

fact the researcher failed to reach beyond the middle class focus of other studies.

The researcher believes further work needs to be done with this instrument and women returning to school. Maybe using the survey with women at a predominately minority institution or in states with a larger minority population might help reach beyond the small minority population. A larger population with a larger proportion of women receiving federal funds would also be beneficial to broaden the data base for the SSI.

It is surprising to this researcher that the median scores are so low given the possible range. Further exploration comparing these data with SSI scores from the women in other academic settings could also be advantageous in allowing researchers to compare social support scores for other academic situations. Possible comparisons could be done of returning students with the data from the Young Adult Social Support Score (YASSI) developed by H. McCubbin from the SSI. For further research it would be interesting to compare major universities with smaller regional colleges or community colleges to see if smaller class size and more interaction with the faculty would raise the scores of social support. The researcher felt the kind of support levels for professionals and teachers might be higher on a

smaller campus unlike the large universities studied here.

Further research could address qualitative questions that explore resilience and role accumulation. To illuminate the resiliency of returning women who are making it without a lot of social support, another instrument such as the Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory (SEI) or Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale could also be administered to the survey population.

Further studies should include a longitudinal study that follows the women who responded to this SSI to see if and when they graduate and if their support changes over the next few years. Statistics obtained from a six-year retention study at the two research universities about re-entry women who are over 25 years old showed that many do not graduate or that take longer than six years to graduate (see Appendix G).

We are just beginning to understand the problems of women returning to school. There is a need to get governmental and academic administrative support to help re-entry women. It is a population that is growing and will be of increasing importance to colleges and universities and to society at large. With the current anti-intellectualism in the political arena coupled with budget cuts in financial

and federal financial help, women attempting to better themselves in higher education will be hard hit. Some are achieving the advancement they seek by entering higher education against great odds; some do not finish degrees. All are presumably qualified to succeed since they have met university entrance requirements. We must try to understand their plight and their promise.

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APPENDIX A
SOCIAL SUPPORT INVENTORY



HI !

I NEED YOUR HELP! You have been identified as a woman returning to college at OU or OSU. I am conducting research for my doctoral dissertation on Social Support for women returning to the University. This research has been approved by the OSU and OU /Norman campus administration, and if you have any questions please contact me at either department listed below. In filling out this confidential survey you are giving me your permission to use this information in my research. Your participation is voluntary, but I am hoping that the new knowledge found from this inventory will help the faculty and administration better support you as a woman returning to school. This survey has been coded for confidentiality and your name and address will NOT be used in research.

THANK YOU AGAIN FOR RETURNING THE COMPLETED FORM. If you are interested in a report on the results please include your name and address on a card, not on your survey form, and I will be happy to send you the results when I have completed it. Please take a few minutes now before the semester gets too hectic to answer these questions. I am hoping to get the results tabulated in the next few weeks, and I **NEED YOUR HELP NOW.** I am including a stamped self-addressed envelope for your speedy mail return.

HAVE A GREAT SEMESTER AND THANKS AGAIN!

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Katie'.

Katie Barwick-Snell
OU Human Relations Dept.
730 Physical Sciences Bldg.
Norman, OK. 73019

OSU Occupational and Adult Education Dept.
406 Classroom Bldg.
Stillwater, OK 74078

- A. YOUR AGE: _____
- B. ETHNIC ORIGIN: African American _____ Asian American _____ American Indian _____
Hispanic American _____ European American (white) _____ other _____
- C. FINANCIAL AID YOU ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING ? Student Loans _____
Scholarships _____ Personal Loans/Gifts _____ Grants _____ None _____
- D. FEDERAL FINANCIAL HELP YOU ARE CURRENTLY RECEIVING ?
Aid for Dependent Children _____ Medical Assistance _____ WIC _____ SSI _____
Housing Supplement _____ Childcare Assistance _____ No Assistance received _____
- E. WHAT IS YOUR CLASSIFICATION? Freshman _____ Sophomore _____
Junior _____ Senior _____
- F. WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT GRADEPOINT AVERAGE ? _____

SSI SOCIAL SUPPORT INVENTORY[®] <small>H. Milton I. McCubbin, Joan M. Patterson, Marilyn M. Rossman and Betty Cooke</small>			YES	NO
Please answer the following questions.				
1. Do you have a SPOUSE or PARTNER ?	YES	NO		
2. Do you have CHILDREN ?	YES	NO		
3. Do you have OTHER RELATIVES such as parents, brothers and sisters, in laws?	YES	NO		
4. Do you have CLOSE FRIENDS ?	YES	NO		
5. Do you have a job (for pay - \$) where you have CO-WORKERS ?	YES	NO		
6. Are you involved with formal or informal COMMUNITY or NEIGHBORHOOD GROUPS ?	YES	NO		
7. Do you belong to a CHURCH or SYNAGOGUE ?	YES	NO		
8. Do you have contact with PROFESSIONALS or SERVICE PROVIDERS such as doctors, nurses, social workers, teachers, child care workers?	YES	NO		
9. Do you belong to any SPECIAL GROUPS designed to help you with specific difficulties or responsibilities such as parent groups, groups for handicapped or divorced persons?	YES	NO		
10. Do you watch TELEVISION , listen to the RADIO , or read NEWSPAPERS , MAGAZINES , PHAMPHLETS , or BOOKS ?	YES	NO		
11. Do you have SPIRITUAL BELIEFS ?	YES	NO		
Please read each statement and then indicate how much <u>support</u> you receive from <u>each</u> of the sources listed by marking: NO (N), YES (Y), or YES A LOT (Y+).				
I. I have a feeling of being loved or cared about from:				
	NO	YES	YES A LOT	
My spouse or partner	N	Y	Y+	My spiritual faith
My children	N	Y	Y+	Community or neighborhood groups
Other relatives	N	Y	Y+	Professionals or Service Providers
Close friends	N	Y	Y+	Special groups I belong to
Co-workers	N	Y	Y+	Reading certain books or watching T.V.
Church/Synagogue groups	N	Y	Y+	Other: _____
II. I feel I am valued or respected for who I am and what I can do by:				
	NO	YES	YES A LOT	
My spouse or partner	N	Y	Y+	My spiritual faith
My children	N	Y	Y+	Community or neighborhood groups
Other relatives	N	Y	Y+	Professionals or Service Providers
Close friends	N	Y	Y+	Special groups I belong to
Co-workers	N	Y	Y+	Reading certain books or watching T.V.
Church/Synagogue groups	N	Y	Y+	Other: _____
III. I have a sense of trust or security from the "give-and-take" of being involved with:				
	NO	YES	YES A LOT	
My spouse or partner	N	Y	Y+	People who share my beliefs and values
My children	N	Y	Y+	Community or neighborhood groups
Other relatives	N	Y	Y+	Professionals or Service Providers
Close friends	N	Y	Y+	Special groups I belong to
Co-workers	N	Y	Y+	Ideas I get from books, T.V., etc.
Church/Synagogue groups	N	Y	Y+	Other: _____
IV. When I need to talk or think about how I'm doing with my life, I feel understood and get help from:				
	NO	YES	YES A LOT	
My spouse or partner	N	Y	Y+	My spiritual faith
My children	N	Y	Y+	Community or neighborhood groups
Other relatives	N	Y	Y+	Professionals or Service Providers
Close friends	N	Y	Y+	Special groups I belong to
Co-workers	N	Y	Y+	Reading certain books or watching T.V.
Church/Synagogue groups	N	Y	Y+	Other: _____
V. I feel good about myself when I am able to do things for and help:				
	NO	YES	YES A LOT	
My spouse or partner	N	Y	Y+	People who share my beliefs and values
My children	N	Y	Y+	Community or neighborhood groups
Other relatives	N	Y	Y+	Professionals or Service Providers
Close friends	N	Y	Y+	Special groups I belong to
Co-workers	N	Y	Y+	Causes that are promoted in books or on T.V.
Church/Synagogue groups	N	Y	Y+	Other: _____

APPENDIX B

PERMISSION FROM AUTHOR



August 31, 1994

Katie Barwick-Snell
504 Miller Street
Norman, OK 73069

Dear Ms. Barwick-Snell:

I am pleased to give you my permission to use the **SSI: Social Support Inventory** instrument. We have a policy to charge \$5.00 (one time charge only) *per instrument* to individuals who seek permission. We apologize for this necessity. We ask that you please fill out the enclosed abstract form and return it to this office.

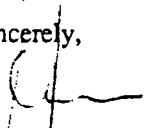
Also enclosed is a sample copy of the instrument. Additional copies can be obtained at this address for 10 cents each. When large quantities are requested, the cost of postage is also added to the order.

We would appreciate your sending group scores to add to our data base or any other information you feel may be useful, when they are available to Dr. Marty Rossmann. If you would like information about scoring and means developed thus far, please contact:

Dr. Marty Rossmann
Associate Professor and Director of Special Services
University of Minnesota
Dept. of Vocical and Technical Education
Office of Special Services
Vocational and Technical Education Bldg.
1954 Buford Ave., Room 210
St. Paul, MN 55108

If I could be of any further assistance to you, please let me know.

Sincerely,


Hamilton I. McCubbin
Dean

HEM/kme

Enclosures

APPENDIX C

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD STATEMENT

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University and the University of Oklahoma policies require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators can begin their research. The Oklahoma State University Research Services and the Institutional Review Board conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. In compliance with the aforementioned policy, at Oklahoma State University, this study received the proper surveillance, was granted permission to continue, and was assigned the following number: ED-94-066. The study was also approved by the University of Oklahoma review board chaired by Dean Eddie Carol Smith, and notification was given by Karen Petry, Administrative Officer at Institutional Review Board.

APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

OFFICE OF RESEARCH ADMINISTRATION

August 1, 1994

Dr. Katie Barwick-Snell
Human Relations

Dear Dr. Barwick-Snell:

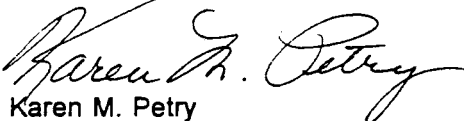
Your research proposal, "Social Support for Women Returning to the University," has been reviewed by Dr. Eddie Carol Smith, Chair of the Institutional Review Board, and found to be exempt from the University of Oklahoma-Norman Campus Policies and Procedures for the Protection of Human Subjects in Research Activities.

The Chair requested, however, that at the beginning of your survey you include all elements of the Informed Consent Form. I am enclosing a copy of the guidelines for the Informed Consent for your information.

The exempt status of your protocol is for a period of 12 months from this date, provided that the research procedures are not changed significantly from those described in your "Summary of Research Involving Human Subjects" and attachments. Should you wish to deviate from the described protocol, you must notify me and obtain prior approval from the Board for the changes. If the research is to extend beyond 12 months, you must contact this office, in writing, noting any changes or revisions in the protocol and/or informed consent form, and request an extension.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Sincerely yours,



Karen M. Petry
Administrative Officer
Institutional Review Board

KMP:sg
Encl.

cc: Dr. Eddie Carol Smith, Chair, IRB

APPENDIX D
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW

Date: 02-25-94

IRB#: ED-94-066

Proposal Title: EMOTIONAL SUPPORT AND PERSISTENCE OF LOW INCOME
WOMEN RETURNING TO SCHOOL

Principal Investigator(s): Robert Nolan, Katie Barwick-Snell

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

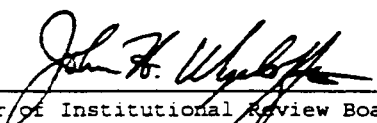
Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT
MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR
RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL. ANY MODIFICATIONS
TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for
Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: February 28, 1994

APPENDIX E

MEDIA PRESS RELEASE

STUDY REVEALS ON SOCIAL SUPPORT FOR BACK TO COLLEGE WOMEN

Women who have returned to college after a break or who are starting college after age 25 are the subject of a new study on social support conducted by University of Oklahoma Faculty member and Oklahoma State graduate student Katie Barwick-Snell.

Barwick-Snell has distributed over 1600 questionnaires to all women over 25 who are undergraduates at OSU and OU. She is asking them about the significant people that touch their lives and enable them to continue in school. The survey used is from the Family Stress Coping and Health Project in Wisconsin. Research has shown that women returning to school need social support from somewhere to continue. This social support can include family members, co-workers, community groups or professionals.

Barwick-Snell said "More research needs to be done on women over 25 returning to higher education." She hopes that her research will inform college and University administrators about the kinds of social support that a university can provide for a woman student's success.

"This study will enable women returning to school to identify important social support elements required for success." According to Barwick-Snell. A large sample is needed for this type of study. Consequently she urges every OSU student who received a survey to return the completed form to her as soon as possible. Barwick-Snell's survey form includes a prepaid envelope, so all she is asking of qualified students is five minutes of their time.

Students who did not get their survey or who have questions about it may contact her at 405-364-6740.

Barwick-Snell knows what it is like to balance a family work and go back to school. She is in her last year of doctoral work in Adult and Occupational Education at OSU, and this study is the basis of her dissertation. She is currently teaching in Human Relations at the University of Oklahoma. She has two small children, ages 3 & 5, that helped her with mailing out the surveys. Survey results will be available in the spring and will be given on request.

APPENDIX F

LISTINGS OF SPECIAL GROUPS FOR RE-ENTRY WOMEN

SELECTED OSU STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS FOR WOMEN & MINORITIES

COMPILED BY MARIE BASLER - RETURNING STUDENTS ORGANIZATION

ADULT STUDENT ORGANIZATION	WHEELCHAIR SPORTS CLUB
AFRO-AMERICAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION	WOMEN IN COMMUNICATIONS
CHALLENGERS	WOMEN'S RUGBY AT OSU
FAMILY RELATIONS AND CHILD	WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT
DEVELOPMENT CLUB	OSU WOMEN'S COUNCIL
GAY, LESBIAN & BISEXUAL COMMUNITY	DELTA SIGMA THETA
ASSOCIATION	ALPHA KAPPA ALPHA
HABITAT FOR HUMANITY	
HONG KONG STUDENT ASSOCIATION	
INTERNATIONAL FACILITIES	
MANAGEMENT JAPANESE STUDENT	
ASSOCIATION	
KOREAN STUDENT ASSOCIATION	
LATIN AMERICAN ASSOCIATION	
MINORITY EDUCATORS OF TOMORROW	
MINORITY GRADUATE STUDENT	
MINORITY WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION	
NAACP	
NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF BLACK	
ACCOUNTANTS	
NATIONAL ORGANIZATION FOR WOMEN	
NATIONAL PANHELLENIC COUNCIL	
NATIVE AMERICAN STUDENT	
ASSOCIATION	
OSU PANHELLENIC COUNCIL	
SOCIETY OF WOMEN ENGINEERS	

94 - 95 REGISTERED STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS

Academic Competition Foundation
Accounting Club
Advertising Club
Advocates for Sexual Assault Awareness
African Christian Fellowship
African Student Association
AFROTC Color Guard and Drill Team
Alliance of Indigenous Peoples
Alpha Phi Omega
Amateur Radio Club
American Civil Liberties Union of O.U.
American Indian Science & Engineering Society
American Indian Student Association
American Indian Student Social Workers Association
American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics
American Institute of Architecture Students
American Institute of Chemical Engineers Student Chapter
American Society of Interior Designers
American Society of Landscape Architecture
American Society of Mechanical Engineers
American Society of Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing
American Society of Training and Development
Amnesty International
Angel Flight
Angel Social Club
Animation Society
Anthropology Club
Anthropology Graduate Student Association
Arab Student Association
Arnold Air Society
Arsenal Soccer Club
Asian-American Student Association
Associated Library Students of Oklahoma
Association for Computing Machinery
Association for Disabled Students
Association of Graduate Sociologists
Badminton Club
Baha'i Club
Baptist Student Union
Bar Club
Big Red Council
Black Architect Student Association
Black Health Career Majors
Black Student Association
Bowling Club
Bridge Club
Bridging Project
Brothers and Sisters Making A Difference
Buddhist Association

Campus Crusade for Christ
Chess Club
Chi Alpha Christian Fellowship
Chinese Student Association
Christ on Campus
Christians on Campus
Classics Society
College of Architecture Newsletter
College of Architecture Student Board
College of Fine Arts Student Advisory Council
College Republicans
Construction Students Association
Counseling Psychology Student Association
Crimson Club
Data Processing Management Association
Delta Sigma Pi
Dove Social Club
Drama and Dance Association
Electrical Engineering Graduate Student Association
Engineers Club
Environmental Science Student Association
European Student Organization
Fencing Club
Finance Club
Flight Team
Games Club
Gamettes
Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual Alliance
Geography Club
Geography Graduate Student Organization
German Club
Golden Key National Honor Society
Graduate Association in Political Science
Graduate Business Association
Graduate Music Students Association
Habitat for Humanity
Heritage Ensemble
Hillel Jewish Student Organization
Hispanic American Student Association
History Club
History of Science Club
Hong Kong Student Association
Honor Students Association
Human Factors and Ergonomics Society
India Student Association
Indonesian Student Association
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers
Institute of Industrial Engineers
International Advisory Committee
International Soccer Club
Islamic Cultural Union
Japanese Student Association
Kappa Delta Pi
Kappa Gamma Epsilon

Know Thyself Society
Lutheran Student Fellowship
Malaysian Student Association
Management Club
Mathematical Association of America
Mathematics Graduate Student Organization
Mens' Soccer Club
Miss OU and Miss Norman Pageant
Model United Nations of the Southwest
Mortar Board
Mountain Bike Club
Movement of the Improvement of the Nation
Mu Kappa Tau
Mu Phi Epsilon (Mu Kappa Chapter)
Muslim Students Association
National Association of Black Journalists
National Association of College Broadcasters
National Association of the Advancement of Colored People
National Conference of Christians and Jews
National Organization for Women
National Residence Hall Honorary
National Society of Black Engineers
National Student Business League
Native American Collegiate Council of Oklahoma
Native Americans for Strength, Teamwork and Youth
Native American Graduate Students
Norman Oklahoma Science Fiction Association
Norman Youth Fellowship
NORML
Nursing Student Association
Oklahoma Intercollegiate Legislature
Oklahoma Undergraduate India Society
Omicron Delta Epsilon
Operations Research Society of America
Orthodox Christian Fellowship
Other Film Club
OUR Earth
Outreach Student Association
Pakistan Student Organization
PanAmerican Student Association
Pe-et
Pershing Rifles
Phi Alpha Theta
Phi Beta Lambda - Professional Business Leaders
Phi Lambda Upsilon
Phi Mu Alpha
Phi Theta Kappa Alumni Association
Philosophical Society
Pi Epsilon Tau
Pi Mu Epsilon
Pick and Hammer Club
Polo and Riding Club
Pre-Med Club
Pre Physical Therapy/Occupational Therapy Club

Psi Chi
Psychology Club
Public Administration Political Science Collegiate Organization
Public Relations Student Society of America
Quarterdeck Society
Racial Awareness Program
Racquetball Club
Red Clay Faction Art Club
Romeos
Rotaract International Business Association
Rugby Football Club
Russian Club
Sailing Club
Society for Human Resource Management
Society of Automotive Engineers
Society of Chinese Students and Scholars
Society of Hispanic Professional Engineers
Society of Iranian Students and Scholars
Society of Manufacturing Engineers
Society of Petroleum Engineers
Society of Physics Students
Society of Women's Studies Students
Sooner Aviation Club
Speech and Debate Team
SPIC-MACAY
Starfleet Reserves
Students Affairs Committee - Meteorology
Student Alumni Board
Student Association for Wrestling
Student Association of Bangladesh
Student Association of Graduate English Studies
Student Association of Multi-cultural Affairs
Student Association of Scandinavia
Student Association of Singapore
Student Business Association
Student Council for Exceptional Children
Student Education Association
Student Planning Association
Students for Life
Tae Kwon Do Club
Tassels
Tau Beta Pi
Thai Student Association
Timberline Explorers
Toastmasters Club
Turkish Student Association
Undergraduate Social Work Student Association
United Ministry Center
Unitribe
UOSA Student Radio Committee
Vietnamese Student Association
Visual Arts Activities Council
War and Role Playing
Weightlifting Club

Women in Design
Women's Rugby Football Club
Women's Soccer
Women's Student Association
Young Democrats
Young Sales Executives
Zoology Association of Graduate Students

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Katie = as we also discussed, we have:

Women or Adults Returning to School

Evening only Student Services

Commuter Student Association

Specialized programming during
New Sooner Orientation geared for adults
or returning students

Academic Support programs to assist
with the transition of studying
again

I'm sure there are more services/program
that I've missed, but overall we (OU)
try to present a comfort level to meet
all needs. A challenge on any given day

Call again if I can help -

Marilyn Connor

APPENDIX G

SIX YEAR GRADUATION RATES

SIX-YEAR GRADUATION RATES OF STUDENTS 24 YEARS OR OLDER
 FALL SEMESTERS 1983 THROUGH 1988
 UNIVERSITY OF OKLAHOMA, NORMAN CAMPUS

Age ≥ 24**Males**

<u>Fall</u>	<u>- First-time Freshmen -</u>		<u>- Freshman Transfers -</u>		<u>- Sophomore Transfers -</u>	
	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>Grad</u>	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>Grad</u>	<u>Headcount</u>	<u>Grad</u>
1983	31	16.1%	23	4.3%	58	36.2%
1984	25	24.0%	29	13.8%	50	32.0%
1985	32	15.6%	31	32.3%	64	25.0%
1986	30	6.7%	26	11.5%	54	35.2%
1987	26	23.1%	21	28.6%	45	48.9%
1988	18	5.6%	21	28.6%	40	40.0%
Combined	162	15.4%	151	19.9%	311	35.4%

Females

1983	40	12.5%	41	19.5%	43	32.7%
1984	42	2.4%	30	10.0%	40	30.0%
1985	34	17.6%	29	20.7%	56	37.5%
1986	38	18.4%	26	19.2%	59	33.9%
1987	43	16.3%	22	36.4%	56	32.1%
1988	22	18.2%	21	23.8%	33	27.3%
Combined	219	13.7%	169	20.7%	287	32.8%

Total

1983	71	14.1%	64	14.1%	101	34.7%
1984	67	10.4%	59	11.9%	90	31.1%
1985	66	16.7%	60	26.7%	120	30.8%
1986	68	13.2%	52	15.4%	113	34.5%
1987	69	18.8%	43	32.6%	101	39.6%
1988	40	12.5%	42	26.2%	73	34.2%
Combined	381	14.4%	320	20.3%	598	34.1%

Notes: 1) The definition of adult students are all first-time freshmen, and freshman and sophomore transfers ages 24 and over.

2) The graduation rates reflect those students starting on the Norman campus and graduating from the Health Sciences Center.

RETENTION OF NEW TRANSFER STUDENTS
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
FEMALES OVER AGE 24 ONLY
FALL SEMESTER 1985 THROUGH 1993

NEW TRANS CLASS OF	AFTER 1 YEAR			AFTER 2 YEARS			AFTER 3 YEARS			AFTER 4 YEARS			AFTER 5 YEARS			AFTER 6 YEARS		
	DROP	CONT	GRAD	DROP	CONT	GRAD	DROP	CONT	GRAD	DROP	CONT	GRAD	DROP	CONT	GRAD	DROP	CONT	GRAD
1985	77 41.4%	107 57.5%	2 1.1%	93 50.0%	80 43.0%	13 7.0%	101 54.3%	49 26.3%	36 19.4%	102 54.8%	32 17.2%	52 28.0%	101 54.3%	23 12.4%	62 33.3%	96 51.6%	22 11.8%	68 36.6%
1986	48 28.4%	121 71.6%	. %	65 38.5%	87 51.5%	17 10.1%	73 43.2%	46 27.2%	50 29.6%	67 39.6%	31 18.3%	71 42.0%	68 40.2%	18 10.7%	83 49.1%	69 40.8%	8 4.7%	92 54.4%
1987	59 36.6%	101 62.7%	1 0.6%	71 44.1%	69 42.9%	21 13.0%	77 47.8%	40 24.8%	44 27.3%	77 47.8%	21 13.0%	63 39.1%	66 41.0%	20 12.4%	75 46.6%	65 40.4%	16 9.9%	80 49.7%
1988	49 26.9%	131 72.0%	2 1.1%	65 35.7%	92 50.5%	25 13.7%	67 36.8%	53 29.1%	62 34.1%	68 37.4%	24 13.2%	90 49.5%	69 37.9%	13 7.1%	100 54.9%	71 39.0%	4 2.2%	107 58.8%
1989	47 29.6%	107 67.3%	5 3.1%	70 44.0%	67 42.1%	22 13.8%	71 44.7%	39 24.5%	49 30.8%	65 40.9%	32 20.1%	62 39.0%	68 42.8%	13 8.2%	78 49.1%	. %	. %	. %
1990	33 26.0%	93 73.2%	1 0.8%	39 30.7%	72 56.7%	16 12.6%	47 37.0%	43 33.9%	37 29.1%	45 35.4%	21 16.5%	61 48.0%	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %
1991	33 27.5%	83 69.2%	4 3.3%	47 39.2%	58 48.3%	15 12.5%	59 49.2%	25 20.8%	36 30.0%	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %
1992	61 41.5%	85 57.8%	1 0.7%	79 53.7%	56 38.1%	12 8.2%	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %
1993	46 37.4%	75 61.0%	2 1.6%	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %	. %
TOTAL	453 33.0%	903 65.7%	18 1.3%	529 42.3%	581 46.4%	141 11.3%	495 44.8%	295 26.7%	314 28.4%	424 43.1%	161 16.4%	399 40.5%	372 43.4%	87 10.2%	398 46.4%	301 43.1%	50 7.2%	347 49.7%

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APPENDIX H

FURTHER RESEARCH ON KINDS AND TYPES OF SUPPORT

To explore further the data on sources and kinds of support take a closer look at the "kind" of support that students perceive they are getting, Tables XXIII through XXXIII show the Total SSI score means for each source of support. When the respondents answered the inventory they were given the "kinds" of support questions "I have a feeling of being loved or cared about from:" and then they filled in the sources. Table XXIII is based on data from women who answered affirmatively for having the source of support in questions 1-11 (For further clarification see the inventory in Appendix A).

The range for scores is between 0-2 with 0 indicating no support, one= support, and 2= yes a lot of support.

TABLE XXIII

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT BY SPOUSE

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N= 568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	372	65	1.68	0.56
ESTEEM	371	65	1.54	0.67
NETWORK	371	65	1.50	0.70
APPRAISAL	372	65	1.41	0.74
ALTRUISTIC	368	64	1.68	0.54

Range between 0-2

There were 195 women that did not have a partner or spouse or reported no support from a spouse or partner.

TABLE XXIV

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT BY CHILDREN

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	365	64	1.67	0.51
ESTEEM	365	64	1.46	0.60
NETWORK	364	64	1.33	0.67
APPRAISAL	363	63	0.79	0.74
ALTRUISTIC	363	63	1.74	0.48

Range between 0-2

Respondents with no children numbered 203. Women returning to school feel good about themselves when they are able to do things for and help their children(altruistic) and their next highest mean comes from having a feeling of being loved or cared about(emotional).

The Table XXV addresses perceived support from relatives other than spouse or partners. Only 18 women responded that they did not "have other relatives such as parents, brothers or sisters, in laws." (For further clarification see question 3 on the inventory in the Appendix A).

TABLE XXV

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT BY OTHER RELATIVES

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	550	96	1.46	0.59
ESTEEM	549	96	1.31	0.67
NETWORK	548	96	1.67	0.69
APPRAISAL	549	96	1.02	0.75
ALTRUISTIC	546	96	1.51	0.57

Range between 0-2

Eighty-eight percent of the repondents had relatives that provided support.

Table XXVI

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM CLOSE FRIENDS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	504	88	1.39	0.55
ESTEEM	503	88	1.40	0.67
NETWORK	503	88	1.27	0.59
APPRAISAL	503	88	1.31	0.61
ALTRUISTIC	500	88	1.58	0.52

Range between 0-2

Again women returning to school feel good about themselves when they are able to do things for and help their close friends which is altruistic support. The respondents that did not have close friends numbered 63.

Table XXVII

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM CO-WORKERS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	280	49	0.85	0.57
ESTEEM	278	48	1.05	0.60
NETWORK	279	49	0.79	0.59
APPRAISAL	279	49	0.61	0.62
ALTRUISTIC	277	48	1.23	0.57

Range between 0-2

Only 49% of the respondents worked outside the home and school for money. The highest score for co-workers support comes from altruistic support. The only descriptive data derived from the "other" category that had to do with working came from a woman who got support from "families and children I have been a nanny for."

Table XXVIII

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM COMMUNITY OR NEIGHBORHOOD
GROUPS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	213	37	0.80	0.71
ESTEEM	213	37	0.71	0.69
NETWORK	212	37	0.67	0.71
APPRAISAL	212	37	0.60	0.69
ALTRUISTIC	211	36	0.96	0.77

Range between 0-2

Women returning to school do not rank scores above the median for support of community or neighborhoods groups. Only 39% belonged to community or neighborhood groups. In the "other" category one woman mentioned being involved with a social and ecological group, and other women were involved with volunteer work. Other respondents mentioned "my children's friends," "people in general," "disadvantaged people" and "children" (not my children--implied) as people they were involved with.

Table XXIX

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM A CHURCH, SYNAGOGUE

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	272	47	1.32	0.65
ESTEEM	272	47	1.37	0.68
NETWORK	272	47	1.18	0.60
APPRAISAL	271	47	1.37	0.68
ALTRUISTIC	271	47	1.36	0.53

Range between 0-2

Two hundred ninety-four respondents marked no for the question "do you belong to a church or synagogue?", which is question number 7 in the inventory (see Appendix A). That is less than half of the participants that belong to a church or synagogue.

Bible, prayer, and Jesus Christ were all mentioned in the "other" category in the descriptive data as also important.

Table XXX

LEVELS AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM PROFESSIONALS, SERVICE PROVIDERS OR TEACHERS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	496	87	0.34	0.52
ESTEEM	496	87	0.41	0.56
NETWORK	493	86	0.37	0.54
APPRAISAL	493	86	0.22	0.47
ALTRUISTIC	491	85	0.76	0.67

Range between 0-2

Professionals and service providers such as teachers and administrators were perceived as offering low support scores as compared to the median of one for support and two for a lot of support. "When I need to talk or think about how I'm doing with my life, I feel understood and get help from professionals or service providers" had the lowest mean support score of 0.22.

Table XXXI

LEVELS AND TYPES OF SUPPORT FROM SPECIAL GROUPS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	73	13	0.75	0.59
ESTEEM	73	13	0.84	0.56
NETWORK	73	13	0.76	0.54
APPRAISAL	73	13	0.80	0.71
ALTRUISTIC	73	13	0.94	0.66

Range between 0-2

"Do you belong to any Special groups" had the smallest number of responses (73). In the descriptive data Alcoholics Anonymous, counseling (in esteem and appraisal), the chairwoman in the design women's group and exercise classes was mentioned in the "other" box for a few responses as the only special group women belonged to. A listing for the special groups or campus organizations for the major research universities are given in appendix F. An example of concerns that a support group could address for women returning to school is the following response from a student surveyed:

"As I fill out your questionnaire I feel the need to tell you going back to school was one of the hardest things to do--from the start. First I had to send for all my transcripts--it had been over 5 years since I last attended the urban university. Then you don't know where things are--parking is nuts--next I don't have a lot of chance to study--because of household responsibilities, kid activities, work--then the added expense and I'm working less--and I do plan to apply for financial aid."

Table XXXII

LEVEL AND TYPE OF SUPPORT FROM READING CERTAIN BOOKS OR
WATCHING TV

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	561	98	0.33	0.58
ESTEEM	560	98	0.35	0.59
NETWORK	558	98	0.31	0.57
APPRAISAL	558	98	0.26	0.55
ALTRUISTIC	555	97	0.50	0.69

Range between 0-2

A large number of women reported watching television, listening to the radio, reading Newspapers and books (562), but 325 women marked a 0 for no support. All scores for the kinds of support were below the median with Altruistic support being the highest score and appraisal support being the lowest score.

Table XXXIII

TYPES AND LEVELS OF SUPPPORT FROM SPIRITUAL BELIEFS

TYPE OF SUPPORT	FREQ N=568	%	MEANS	SD
EMOTIONAL	531	93	0.37	0.56
ESTEEM	531	93	0.31	0.51
NETWORK	531	93	0.42	0.56
APPRAISAL	531	93	0.45	0.58
ALTRUISTIC	531	93	0.53	0.63

Range between 0-2

Ninety- three percent of the respondents had spiritual beliefs. Note in the table above that the perceived support scores were below the median of one for support and two for a lot of support. No was answered to the question "do you have spiritual beliefs?" 183 times. In the "other" categories the descriptive data mentioned by respondents also included motivational tapes, being alone, other students, faculty and myself (in emotional and esteem).

VITA

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Doctoral student, Occupational and Adult Education, Oklahoma State University, 1984 to present. Completed comprehensive exams, Fall, 1993.

Dissertation: "Social Support For Women Returning To the University."

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Completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May 1995.

Master of Science, Home Economics Education, School of Human Development, University of Oklahoma, emphasis in family relations, 1982.

Bachelor of Science, Home Economics Education, Mississippi State University, emphasis in consumer education, foods, and nutrition, 1977.

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PERSONAL DATA

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, February 9, 1955, daughter of Doris and Jim Barwick. Married to Dr. Daniel C. Snell and mother of James and Abigail.

HONORS

Delta Kappa Gamma Society, 1987

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Omicron Delta Kappa Honor Society, 1975

Omicron Nu Home Economics Honor Society, 1981

Pi Gamma Mu Social Science Honors Society, 1976

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Association for Adult and Continuing Education

American Home Economics Association

Oklahoma Federation of Home Economics