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**INFORMATION SOURCES SELECTED BY ADULT STUDENTS AT TWO
STAGES IN THE DECISION TO ATTEND AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER
EDUCATION**

The University of Oklahoma

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INFORMATION SOURCES SELECTED BY ADULT STUDENTS
AT TWO STAGES IN THE DECISION TO ATTEND
AN INSTITUTION OF HIGHER EDUCATION

by
RICHARD LAWRENCE COBERG

A DISSERTATION


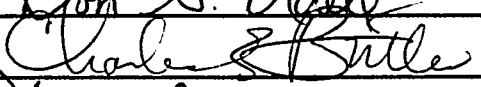
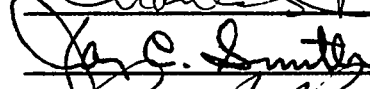
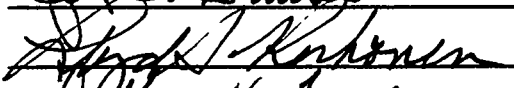

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APPROVED BY

DISSERTATION COMMITTEE

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Context: Adult Students in Higher Education

The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, which was established in 1967 by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, explored the developing trends in higher education and made recommendations about higher education ahead to the year 2,000. The Commission met with hundreds of leaders in higher education. It convened in twenty-one cities across the nation. In a final report, the Commission characterized higher education as being in grave trouble.¹

Higher education has been a growth segment of American society since 1636. It no longer is. Enrollments of traditional students on established campuses will most likely decline in the 1980's. . . This new stage of development comes as a great shock, a great change of life, and creates many new problems. It marks the first decent into a strange world where future prospects are no longer thought to be limitless.

¹Priorities for Action: Final Report of the Carnegie Commission on Higher Education, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1973), p. 4.

A separate Carnegie Commission study developed by Earl F. Cheit¹ reviewed the financial situation of forty-one public and private institutions of higher education. The majority of these institutions (71%) were in financial crises. Cheit characterized the situation as a "New Depression" for higher education.

The vast numbers of post-war babies which filled our institutions of higher education in the late sixties and early seventies are now moving beyond traditional college age. School populations have shifted and will continue to shift toward smaller and smaller numbers of traditional-aged students.

"From 1980 to 1985, the pool of potential college students (18 and 19 year olds) will shrink from 16.7 million to 15.2 million."²

The conclusions of the Commission suggest that colleges and universities must begin to look for students in the ranks of the older members of the population.

The primary focus of the literature discussing the adult student and higher education since the Commission has been directed toward the creation of programs which are adapted to the needs of adults unable to attend institutions within the framework of a traditional program.³ However, during the years of

¹Earl F. Cheit, The New Depression for Higher Education, The Carnegie Commission for Higher Education. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971).

²Luther Hoopes, "Your Recruiting is Showing," College and University Journal 35 (November 1973):30.

³See Leland Medsker & others, Extending Opportunities for a College Degree; Practices, Problems and Potentials, (Berkeley Center for Research and Development in Higher Education: University of California, 1975) p. 14; K. Patricia Cross, The Needs of Non-Traditional Learners and the Response of Non-Traditional Programs. (Berkeley Center for Research and Development in Higher Education: University of California, 1977); K. Patricia Cross, Life-long Learners, A New Clientel for Higher Education (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, 1974), p. 8.

discussion about the development of non-traditional programs, rapid growth has taken place in the number of adults who were, in fact, attending traditional programs.

Between the years of 1970 and 1977, 33% of the increase in undergraduate enrollments in four-year colleges and universities were older students. From 1971 to 1978, the proportion of students above twenty-five years of age grew by 24.3%.¹ The undergraduate student population above age twenty-five at the University of Oklahoma rose 14% between the fall semesters of 1975 and 1979.²

At the present time there exists no empirical data upon which higher education administrators can base a communications model for information designed to reach the adult learner and serve the needs of this population. Our system of higher education serves society by fulfilling the needs of its members. Without an understanding of the needs of this older population, educators must assume that the older student is a carbon copy of the younger student.³

¹U.S. Bureau of the Census, School Enrollment - Social and Economic Characteristics of Students, October 1977, Current Population Reports, Series P2-, No. 333. Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 3; U.S. Bureau of Census, School Enrollment - Social and Economic Characteristics of Students: October 1978 (Advance Report) (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1979), p. 114.

²Myrna Carney, Analysis of the Older or Non-Traditional Undergraduate Student Population at The University of Oklahoma (Norman Office of Student Affairs Research: University of Oklahoma, No. 11, 1979-80), p. 1.

³Rosiland K. Loring, Adapting Institutions to Adults, American Association for Higher Education (Bethesda, Maryland: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, Ed. 159478).

While we are coming to a clearer understanding of the motivation of adults who participate in our system of higher education, we are without empirical evidence concerning the specific communications activities which occur during the motivation process.¹

At the heart of this study lie the questions: What types of information sources facilitate adults in making a decision to attend an undergraduate program in higher education? Do adults rely on the different types of information sources at different stages in their decision to enter a four-year institution of higher education?

Diffusion: A Theoretical Framework

In 1962, Everett M. Rogers published a theory of diffusion which included generalizations about the specific channels of information which people will consult at different stages in the process of making a decision to adopt a new pattern of behavior.

Rogers set forth two general hypotheses concerning decision-making stages and the channels of information selected.²

(1) Impersonal information sources are most important at the awareness stage, and personal sources are most important at the evaluation stage of the decision process.

¹Jane T. Malin, Adults Attending College Goals and Change. American Psychological Association (Bethesda, Maryland: ERIC Document Reproduction Service, Ed. 177325).

²Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations (New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1961), pp. 310-312.

(2) Cosmopolite¹ information sources are most important at the awareness stage, and localite information sources are most important at the evaluation stage of the decision process.

In 1971, Rogers and Shoemaker restated the hypotheses and challenged their readers in the social sciences to apply the findings and methods in order that the theoretical potentials of the model might be fulfilled.²

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this work was to test the accuracy and the applicability of the conclusions developed by Rogers within the context of the decision process of adult students choosing to enter a four-year institution of higher education.

In a general sense, this study was a cross-validation or more specifically a validity extension of the Roger's model.³

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study is: What sources of information do adults report to have consulted at the knowledge and persuasion stages of their decision to attend an institution of higher education?

¹As used here Cosmpolite refers to individuals or media which can be considered as outsiders in an examination of an individual's personal social system, as in Everett M. Rogers and F. Floyd Shoemaker, Communication of Innovations, 2nd Ed. (New York: The Free Press, 1972), p. 258.

²Ibid, p. 255-256.

³The model for a validity extension, cross-validation, is taken from G.C. Helmstadter, Research Concepts in Human Behavior, (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1970), pp. 309-312.

Need for the Study

This work gathered new information concerning the usefulness of Roger's model. It retested his hypotheses and allows for the expansion and establishment of boundaries within which the constructs apply. It will allow researchers and practitioners to hypothesize inferences to other populations making decisions similar to those within this context.

The research also has implications in the field of adult and higher education. The study presents data upon which higher education administrators may begin to develop a model for communicating with the adult population.

Hypotheses

To fulfill the purposes of this study, the following research hypotheses were tested:

1. Mass media sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than personal sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.
2. Cosmopolite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.
3. Personal sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than mass media sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.
4. Localite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Definitions

To facilitate reading the remainder of the proposal, terms are defined below that are unique either to the system of language used in diffusion literature or are operationalized for the purpose of this study:

Innovation refers to an idea, practice or object new to an individual.

Diffusion refers to the process by which these ideas (innovations) are communicated to members of a social system.

Adoption is a decision to make full use of a new idea as the best course of action.

The innovation-decision process refers to the mental process through which an individual passes from first knowledge of an innovation to a decision to adopt or reject.

The knowledge function of the decision process occurs when the individual is first exposed to an innovation's existence and gains some understanding of how it functions.

The persuasion function of the decision process occurs when the individual forms a favorable or unfavorable attitude towards the innovation just prior to the decision.

Communications channel refers to any source of information to which an individual refers in the innovation-decision process.

Mass media channels include any information source which is impersonal, and targeted toward a large audience.

Personal channels allow face-to-face communications between two or more individuals.

Cosmopolite channels are sources from outside an individual's personal social system.

Localite channels are sources from inside an individual's personal social system.

A personal social system refers to the group of persons with whom an individual has regular personal interaction, and with whom he engages in collective problem-solving behavior.

Adult student refers to an individual above age twenty-five who chooses to enter the University of Oklahoma as a freshman in the fall semester of 1981.

Limitations of the Study

The study is limited by an essential characteristic of the sample, i.e.: that is made up of adult students closest in time to the decision to attend the institution, i.e., they are in their first semester of coursework at the institution. To meet that requirement the sample chosen represents the best possible sample of adult students attending the institution for this study, but is not thoroughly representative.

A second limitation is that the measurement relies on the students recall of events which took place in the past. Measurement of this type will be subjective whether it is illicited by interview, questionnaire or any other method. The body of research upon which this study is based is also limited in this manner.

Further, although there is a great deal of mass media information available concerning the institution of higher education being studied, relatively little of this information is directly targeted towards encouraging adult students to participate in educational offerings. A lack of reporting the importance of mass media sources of information cannot be clearly labeled as an indication that mass media sources are unimportant or would not be

important at different stages of the decision were informational offerings of a different nature available. The study will give higher education administrators an indication of the relative importance and effectiveness of information about the institution available in the mass media during the time that these students passed through the decision process.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The literature on which this study is based is presented in three main sections. An overview of recent motivation research dealing with adults decision to attend an institution of higher education; a look at communications as a process concomitant and antecedant to motivation, and a review of the research upon which Rogers bases his hypotheses regarding the selection of communication sources at different stages in the decision-making process.

Adult Motivation Research

Recent examinations of the nature of maturation reveal that as persons age, their needs, aspirations and motivations change. Indications are that life is a developmental process.¹ Adults themselves will differ widely in their motives for attending a University. Yet the research indicates that while wide differences in motivation exist, large groups of similarly motivated students are present in the adult population.²

¹Alan B. Knox, Adult Development and Learning (San Francisco: Jossey Bass, Inc., 1977), p. 28.

Vivian Rogers McCoy, Adult Life Task Cycle/Adult Continuing Education Program Response. (Adult Life Resource Center, University of Kansas, 1977).

²Barry Morstain and John Smart, "A Motivational Typology of Adult Learners," Journal of Higher Education 48 (1977): 655-679.

In 1961, Cyril Houle¹ developed a typology of adult-learner motivation. Houle interviewed twenty-two adult learners and found the following three types of motivation: the first group of adults are goal-oriented; they use education as a means of accomplishing fairly clear-cut objectives; the second group are activity-oriented; participating because they find satisfaction in the circumstances of learning situations; and, third, are learning-oriented adults who seek knowledge for its own sake. Houle said that these are not pure types, but the central emphasis of each sub-group is discernable.

Using the Houle typology, Roger Boshier² developed the Educational Participation Scale (EPS), a forty-eight item instrument detailing reasons for participation in educational activities. On the EPS, respondents were asked to check a nine-point scale "To what extent did the following reasons influence you to enroll in your adult education program?"

Boshier administered his EPS to 233 participants in University Extension High School Program for Adults. The fourteen factors or 'motivational orientations' emerging were labeled as follows:

Social welfare

Social contact

Other-directed professional advancement

Intellectual recreation ('stimulus seeking')

¹C.O. Houle, The Inquiring Mind (Madison, Wisconsin: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1961.)

²R.W. Boshier, "Motivational Orientations of Adult Education Participants: A Factor Analytic Exploration of Houles Typology," Adult Education 21 (1971): 3-26.

Inner-directed professional advancement

Social conformity

Educational preparedness

Cognitive interest ('learning')

Educational compensation

Social sharing

Television abhorrence

"Social" improvement and escape

Education supplementation

Barry Morstain and John Smart¹ applied the EPS to 648 adult college students. They identified six types of motivation.

Those seeking Social Relationships

Those seeking to meet External Expectations

Those preparing to be of benefit to the Social Welfare

Those seeking Professional Advancement

Those seeking fulfillment of Cognitive Interest

The final analysis left five categories of learners:

Non-directed

Social

Stimulation seeking

Career oriented

Life change oriented.

¹Morstain and Smart, "A Motivational Typology of Adult Learners," p. 674.

In a 1976 review of motivation research published in the 25th Anniversary edition of Adult Education, Roger Boshier said that adult educators could now begin to rely on the data base that has been developed around the Houle typology.

Boshier said that the orientations of learners as modeled by Houle has proven stable across time. "Now could be the time to focus on concomitants and antecedents of motivation."¹

Communications: A Related Process

One process which is both antecedent and concomitant to the motivation of adults to continue their learning is the communications process. Through communications, adults become aware of educational opportunities and additional information is also necessary to facilitate their decision to participate.

Communication is the process by which messages are transferred from a source to a receiver. David Berlo² proposed a simple model for communications which outlined the elements as being a Source which sends a Message through Channels to a Receiver.

Harold Lasswell has described Communications Research in terms of:

Who

Says What

In which Channel

To Whom.

¹Roger Boshier, "Factor Analysis at Large: A Critical Review of Motivational Orientation Literature," Adult Education Vol. XXVII, No. 1, (1976): 44.

²David Berlo, The Process of Communications (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960), p. 32.

"The scientific study of the process of communications tends to concentrate upon one or another of these questions."¹ The present discussion is concerned with the specific channels of information which are selected by adults to facilitate the decision-making process involved with entering an institution of higher education. The special type of communications research which is concerned with how the communication and decision-making processes interact is diffusion research.²

Roger's Hypothesis: Specific Sources at Different Stages
in a Decision-Making Process

In 1962, Everett M. Rogers published a theory of diffusion which included generalizations about the specific sources of information which people will consult at the different stages of a decision to adopt a new pattern of behavior. Rogers refers to these new patterns of behavior as innovations. To Rogers, an innovation is any idea, practice, or object, new to an individual.³

It matters little so far as human behavior is concerned whether or not an idea is 'objectively' new as measured by the lapse of time since its first discovery. It is the perceived or subjective newness of the idea for the individual that determines reactions to it.⁴

¹Harold Lasswell, The Structure: Function of Communication in Society, Mass Communications, ed. Wilbur Schramm (University of Illinois Press, 1960), p. 117.

²Communications Channels usage is one of eight main types of diffusion research outlined by Rogers and Shoemaker, Communications, (1971) p. 95., the others include: rate of adoption within a system; rate of adoption in a different system; perceived attributes of an innovation; innovativeness; earliness of knowing about an innovation; opinion leadership; and, consequences of an innovation.

³Everett M. Rogers, Diffusion of Innovations, (New York: The Free Press, 1962), p. 103.

⁴Ibid, p. 13.

The act of enrolling in a program of higher education represents an overt change in behavior for an adult. It is a new approach to solving problems. In Roger's model, the act of taking on the role of student represents the completion of an innovation-decision-making process. This process has been conceptualized in a number of ways.

John Dewey wrote in 1910, "The function of reflective thought. . . is to transform a situation in which there is some experienced obscurity, doubt, conflict disturbance of some sort, into a situation that is clear, coherent, settled, harmonious."¹ Dewey went on to outline five phases or aspects of a reflective thought process: suggestion; intellectualization; hypothesis; reasoning; and, testing.

There is a great similarity between Dewey's constructs and the stages in the decision-making process set forth in diffusion literature. Several approaches have been taken in describing the process.

Ryan and Gross² were the first researchers to suggest that an individual passes through different mental stages in adopting a new idea. They found that the typical Iowa farmer first heard of hybrid seed corn from an extension agent or commercial salesman, but that neighbors were most influential in persuading farmers to adopt the new behavior.

¹John Dewey, How We Think, 2nd ed. (New York: Heath, 1933), p. 110.

²Ryan Bryce and Neal Gross, "The Diffusion of Hybrid Seed Corn in Two Iowa Communities," Rural Sociology 8 1943: 19.

Eugene A. Wilkening¹ proposed three stages in the process of adopting a new idea: awareness; decision making; and, action stages. James Copp, Maurice Sill and Emory Brown put forth a five-stage adoption process which included: awareness; interest; acceptance; trial; and, adoption.²

George Beal, Everett Rogers and Joe Bohlen³ sought to validate the five-stage process by asking farmers questions concerning when they passed through each stage, and what information sources were selected at each stage. In the first edition of the volume in which he presents the generalizations being examined in this work, Everett Rogers⁴ referred to the adoption process as having these same five stages. In the second edition, he prefers to conceptualize the process as having four stages: knowledge; persuasion; decision; and, confirmation.⁵

Copp, Sill and Brown⁶ point out that it should be recognized that stages in the process are merely a conceptual framework for organizing data. A conceptual framework is neither true nor false; it is a scaffolding erected for

¹Eugene A. Wilkening, "Roles of Communications Agents in Technological Change in Agriculture," Social Forces 34 (May 1956): 362.

²James H. Copp, Maurice L. Sill, and Emory J. Brown, "The Function of Information Sources in the Farm Practice Adoption Process," Rural Sociology 23 (1958): 149.

³George M. Beal, Everett M. Rogers, and Joe M. Bohlen, "Validity of the Concept of Stages in the Adoption Process," Rural Sociology 22 (June 1956): 166-163.

⁴Rogers, Diffusion, p. 81.

⁵Rogers and Shoemaker, Communications, p. 25.

⁶Copp, Sill, and Brown, "Function of Information," pp. 163-166.

construction of generalizations. A conceptual framework can be tested only on the basis of its ability to help us better understand and organize behavior, and its meaningfulness to respondents in the research situations.

There is no evidence which empirically proves that the adoption process is like the four stages Rogers postulates. Rogers hypothesis deal with only two stages of the adoption/decision process. This research examines the same two stages. These two stages are the knowledge stage, which takes place when the individual is first exposed to the concept and gains some understanding of its functions, and its applicability to his or her situation, and the persuasion stage which occurs when the individual forms a favorable or unfavorable opinion toward the concept just prior to the decision.

The relationship between the stage of the process and the type of communication channel selected is the focus of this work. How much is each type of channel used at each stage in the process?

In "The Peoples Choice," Lazarsfeld¹ and others reviewed the election campaign of 1940 and determined that interpersonal channels of communication were of significant importance in the decision-making process of voters. They disclosed the fact that those who changed their candidate affiliation were likely to do so on the basis of information from friends and relatives. They also brought to light the fact that on a given day, more people reported participating in dialogue about the election than reported being exposed to mass-media messages about the candidates. They concluded that personal channels of communication were more frequent and more effective than mass media at the persuasion stage of the decision-making process.

¹Paul F. Lazarsfeld and others, The Peoples Choice (New York: Duel Sloan and Pearce, 1944), p. 150.

In 1943, the Ryan and Gross¹ analysis of the diffusion of hybrid seed corn led to the investigation of the roles of various communications channels in the innovation-decision process. Hybrid seed corn was an agricultural innovation which increased crop yield by 20%. Its drawback was that it required farmers to purchase new seed yearly instead of using seeds from their own crop. Over a period of thirteen years following its introduction, it gained almost universal acceptance. The communication of the idea was aided by county extension agents and seed industry representatives.

Ryan and Gross interviewed 259 farmers regarding the innovation-decision process which led to their acceptance of the concept and change behavior. They found that the typical farmer had first heard about the hybrid corn seed from an extension agent or an industry representative, but that fellow farmers were most often the ones who led them to the decision to plant hybrid corn.

The Ryan and Gross study suggested that different information sources facilitate different stages of the decision-making process. "It may be suggested that diffusion agencies are divisible into two types, namely, those important as introductory mechanisms and those important as activating agents. Salesmen were credited with informing the majority of the operators but neighbors were credited with convincing them. The spread of knowledge and the spread of 'conviction' are, analytically at least, distinct processes and appear to operate in part through different though complimentary channels."²

¹Ryan and Gross, "Diffusion of Hybrid Seed," p. 21.

²Ibid.

Eugene A. Wilkening,¹ working with the University of Wisconsin in May 1956, further developed the idea that different sources of information are utilized for different stages of the decision-making process.

Wilkening proposed that different types of information are used for three stages of change. The three types of information are:

Hearing about the change possibility

Information and help in deciding whether to try the change

Information on how to put the change into effect.²

"These different types of information are needed at different stages with respect to the adoption of change. The stages corresponding to the types of information are the awareness, the decision-making, and the action stages of the change."

Wilkening interviewed a sample of 636 young farm operators in Wisconsin. Open-ended questions were asked to determine the primary sources of three kinds of information. The questions were:

Where or from whom do you usually first hear about a new idea in farming?

After you first hear about some new idea, where or from whom do you get information that helps you decide whether to try it out?

If you decide to try out a new idea, where or from whom do you get most help on how much material to use, when to use it, how to go about it, etc?³

¹Wilkening, "Roles of Communications Agents," p. 361.

²Ibid, p. 362.

³Ibid, p. 363.

Wilkening found that 70% of his sample gave the mass media as the usual contact for first hearing about new ideas. Only 4% gave mass media as a source of information in deciding whether to try out new ideas, and only 2% used mass-media channels in deciding how to implement the change.¹

The major role of personal channels in communicating information was found to be in the decision-making state, while 47% of the sample mentioned other farmers, relatives or neighbors as the main source of information in helping to decide whether to try out a new idea. Educational or action agencies (county agents and other agencies) were given as the significantly most frequent source of information in helping to implement innovation, once decisions were made.

The second most important function of the educational agents was in helping in the decision process. One-fourth of the farmers went to the agents for information in helping to decide to try out the new practice. In his study, Wilkening also found that the agents were second only to mass media in the awareness process.

Wilkening concluded that the selection of information channels varies as an individual moves through a definite series of stages in the adoption process.² Table 1 shows the percentage distribution of information sources at each stage as found by Wilkening.

Taking Wilkening's findings as a point of departure, Copp, Sill and Brown set out to develop a model which would account for the function of information sources in the adoption process.

¹Ibid, p. 365.

²Ibid, p. 365.

TABLE 1

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONSES OF INFORMATION SOURCES CHOSEN
AT THE KNOWLEDGE, DECISION AND IMPLEMENTATION STAGES
OF THE ADOPTION PROCESS

Information Source	Knowledge from which you first learned about a new idea	Persuasion that helped you decide to try out a new idea	Significance of differences of percentage
Farm papers, magazines, newspapers	62.2	3.8	p .01
Radio	8.0	.02	p .01
Voc Ag Instruction	7.4	21.1	p .01
Commercial Source	2.2	8.2	p .01
Other farmers	11.0	47.0	p .01
Self	.5	8.6	p .01

SOURCE: Eugene A. Wilkening, "Roles of Communicating Agents in Technological Change in Agriculture," Social Forces 34 (May 1956):364.

They hypothesized that one can make some prediction as to the selection of information sources that will be used at various stages of the adoption process. They proposed an ideal model of information seeking for the various stages. The model which they set forth was based upon four stages:¹

Awareness Stage:

Mass media, magazines, printed information

Interest Stage:

Printed information and expert personal sources

Acceptance Stage:

Informal personal sources, expert personal sources

Trial Stage:

Printed information, informal personal sources, expert personal sources.

To test the model, they applied data concerning sources of information in the adoption process of three farm practices through the awareness, interest, acceptance, and trial stages. They found that the direction of difference was consistent with their model's prediction.²

Herbert Lionberger, reviewing diffusion literature in 1960, said that mass media and commercial sources are most important in the awareness and interest stages, and that peers, family and friends become most important in the evaluation and trial stages of the decision process.³

¹Copp, Sill and Brown, "The Function of Information," p. 155.

²Ibid, p. 156.

³Herbert F. Lionberger, Adoption of New Ideas and Practices, (Ames: The Iowa State University Press, 1960), p. 42.

To further test the hypothesis that personal influence is more important at some stages than at others, Rogers and Beal¹ interviewed 148 Iowa farmers concerning the information source used at five stages in the adoption of weed spray. They found that farmers used impersonal sources at the awareness stage of the adoption process and personal sources most often at all other stages.

Rogers and Beal categorized personal sources into agency personal (county agents, vocational agricultural teachers and soil conservation technicians), informal personal (relatives, neighbors and friends), and commercial personal (dealers and salesmen).

Localite sources were most important at all stages but chiefly at the application stage. Agency personal played their most important role at the awareness stage, commercial sources were most important at the trial stage, after the decision was made.²

In order to isolate the effects of different types of personal communications channels in the decision-making process, Rogers reanalyzed data he gathered with George Beal on the channels of communication selected by 148 Iowa housewives at different stages in the process of deciding to adopt the use of "miracle" fabrics.³ He developed a model of personal information sources

¹Everett M. Rogers and George M. Beal, "The Importance of Personal Influence in the Adoption of Technological Change," Social Forces 36 (May 1958):329.

²Ibid, p. 335

³Rogers, Diffusion, p. 102.

which included two dimensions—Personal Cosmopolite and Personal Localite. He found in this analysis, as in research done on the adoption of weed spray, that cosmopolite sources were relatively more important at the awareness and interest stage of the decision-making process, and localite sources were relatively more important at the other stages.

Rogers categorized Sources of Information in two ways:

Mass Media Interpersonal

Cosmopolite/Localite

Mass Media Sources include any form of communication which allows an individual to communicate with large audiences. Interpersonal Sources are those which allow face-to-face communications between two or more individuals. Cosmopolite Sources carry communications from outside the social system of an individual. Localite Sources present information from within the individual's current social system.

While there is overlap in the two classification schemes, Rogers stated that they are conceptually distinct. Interpersonal Sources may be either localite or cosmopolite. Still, there is a vast difference between having a conversation with a member of one's own social system and conversing with someone from outside of that system.

In the same work in which he presented this re-analysis, Rogers first put forth his generalizations concerning the types of information sources which are selected at different stages in the decision to adopt new behavior:

Impersonal sources are most important at the Awareness Stage and Personal sources are most important at the Evaluation Stage of the decision-

making process.¹ Cosmopolite information sources are most important at the Awareness Stage and Localite information sources are most important at the Evaluation Stage of the decision-making process.²

In order to validate the hypothesized effects of different types of personal communications channels in the decision-making process, Rogers conducted research outside of the United States, where mass communications channels are less plentiful.

In 1963, Rogers and Whicky L. Meynen interviewed a sample of 158 farmers in the foothills of the Andes Mountains. They note that although mass communications in the area are "widely available" in terms of published newspapers and magazines, radios, and television stations, their use by respondent families is limited by cost, illiteracy and lack of interest in program content which is seldom of an agricultural nature. The two investigators asked the villagers the following questions to determine communication sources at each stage of the process involved with the adoption of 2, 4-D Weed Spray³.

"Where or from whom did you receive your first information about 2, 4-D Weed Spray?"

"Where or from whom did you receive further information about 2, 4-D Weed Spray when you were interested?"

¹Everett M. Rogers and Whicky L. Meynen, "Communication Sources for 2, 4-D Weed Spray among Columbian Peasants," Rural Sociology 30 (1965):214.

²Rogers, Diffusion, p. 99.

³Ibid, p. 102.

"Who or what convinced you to use 2, 4-D Weed Spray on your own?"

"Where or from whom did you receive information about how to use 2, 4-D Weed Spray on your farm?"

The communication sources obtained in response to these questions were classified into four categories:

Mass Media: Radio, newspapers, magazines, television

Personal-Cosmopolite: Communications with extension agents

Personal-Localite: such as neighbors, friends, and family

Self: one's personal experience with innovations on one's own farm.

Roger's hypotheses about the role of mass media were not supported because no mass media sources were mentioned by any respondents. The hypotheses about the role of personal cosmopolite versus personal localite channels was partially supported by data which indicated that cosmopolite sources play their least important role at the evaluation stage of the process.

In 1972, Rogers with F. Floyd Shoemaker restated his 1962 generalizations concerning information sources selected at the different stages of the decision to adopt a new pattern of behavior within the framework of Diffusion theory. Rogers and Shoemaker made the following generalizations about the two classifications. Mass Media is relatively more important at knowledge stage and interpersonal sources are relatively more important at the persuasive stage in the innovation-decision process.

Cosmopolite sources are relatively more important at the knowledge stage and Localite sources are relatively more important at the persuasion stage in the innovation-decision process."¹

In that same work Rogers and Shoemaker challenged their readers in the social sciences to apply their findings to other innovation/decision situations in order that the theoretical potentials of the model might be fulfilled.²

In a July 7, 1981 interview with Dr. Rogers this author outlined the problem of this study. Dr. Rogers agreed that the decision process of adults entering an institution of higher education constitutes an innovation/decision.

He suggested that the findings of the study be reviewed in the light of more recent work done with D. Lawrence Kincaid.³ In this later work, Rogers and Kincaid examine the limitations of one way models of communications, and propose that in important decision processes a convergence model of communications is most appropriate. A convergence model implies that communication is an interactive process in which two individuals move toward a common understanding through information exchange.⁴ He was not aware of any studies being done since his 1971 publication that attempts to test the model. He felt that a study, such as the one done here, would add to the theory base which he developed.

Dr. Rogers was not aware of any studies being done since his 1971 publication that attempts to test the model. He felt that a study, such as the one done here, would add to the theory base which he developed.

¹Rogers and Shoemaker, Communications of Innovations, p. 255.

²Ibid, p. 255-256.

³Everett M. Rogers and D. Lawrence Kincaid, Communications Networks, (New York: The Free Press, 1980), p. 43.

⁴Ibid, p. 43.

CHAPTER III

METHODS

In this chapter, methods are presented by which the researcher described the relative use of information sources at the knowledge and persuasion stages of the decision process of adults entering an institution of higher education.

The chapter outlines methodology for selection of the sample, instrumentation, obtaining measures of reliability and validity for the instrument, collection of data, and treatment of the data.

The Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 110 students above age 25 entering The University of Oklahoma as freshmen in the fall of 1981 with no previous college work. The Office of Adult Student Information and Services supplied names, addresses, age and race for the 110 students. By limiting the study to these students who were closest to the innovation decision, a clearer test of the hypotheses was achieved. Rogers¹ suggests that many methodological defects might be overcome by gathering data at the time of an individual's decision to adopt.

¹Rogers and Shoemaker, Communication of Innovations, p. 169.

The study sought to obtain information regarding the innovation decision process within the first semester of course work.

The Study Measurements

In order to gain a clear description of the sample and to test the hypothesis a 66 item survey was developed. The survey was titled THE ADULT LEARNER INFORMATION SOURCE SURVEY (ALISS).

The ALISS consisted of three pages and three parts; demographics, knowledge stage questions and persuasion stage questions.

The demographic information included items which were designed to clarify the relationship of the sample surveyed to the respondent set and items which would further describe the respondent set.

Questions regarding the information sources selected at the two stages of the decision process consisted of twenty-four forced choice questions for each stage. The respondent was asked to select the most important source of information at each stage, and to rate the importance of each possible source of information on a five point scale ranging from no importance to very important.

Lists of possible sources of information were developed through interviews with ten adult students concerning their experience with the decision process involved in returning to school. Four discussion sessions were conducted. The discussion session groups consisted of two groups of two and two groups of three students. From these sessions twenty-two possible sources of information were generated.

Reliability and Validity

To establish reliability the instrument was administered to a group of 10 students who were enrolled in a special class conducted within the Weekend University format in the Fall of 1981. All of these students were above age 25 and taking their first college work. The group was retested after a four week interval.

A percentage of agreement of .86 was found between the two administrations. Agreement scores ranged between .91 and .71. Post test interviews led the researcher to add the item "spouse" to the list of choices.

To establish validity, the ALISS was presented to a panel of three experts. Dr. Paul Kleine, a Professor and a Research consultant to the College of Education of the University of Oklahoma, Dr. Vicki McNeal, a staff member of the University of Oklahoma and with expertise in the area of motivation and higher education, and Dr. Ivan Hanson, of the Oklahoma University College of Health Administration.

The panel agreed that the instrument was a valid measure of the concepts involved in the hypothesis. As a further measure of the validity of the two stages the panel suggested that questions be added to determine when the respondent first started thinking of returning to school, and when the decision was made. These questions were added prior to the administration of the instrument.

The information sources offered as options included the following:

Personal Sources	Mass Media Sources
Speaker at a meeting	College catalogue/publication
Brother or Sister	Television program
Work associate	Radio program
Spouse	Newspaper article
Friend	Magazine article
Employer or supervisor	Radio Ad/Announcement
Clergyman	Book
Relative other than parent, brother, sister or spouse	Government Publication
College employee	Newspaper Ad
Counseling professional	TV Ad/Announcement
Teacher	
Parent	

When described in terms of the cosmopolite and localite dimensions the sources were coded.

<u>Localite</u>	<u>Cosmopolite</u>
Brother or sister	Speaker at a meeting
Work associate	College employee
Friend	Counseling professional
Clergyman	College catalogue
Relative other than parent, brother, sister or spouse	Television program
Spouse	Radio program
Teacher	News article
Parent	Magazine article
Employer or supervisor	Radio announcement
	Book
	Government publications
	Newspaper advertisement
	Television advertisement or announcement

A separate selection item was established for other responses. This item left room for the respondent to fill in the response. All possible sources were randomly arranged within the framework of each question to minimize response set bias.

Data Acquisition

A survey and letter of explanation was sent to each member of the sample during the first week of December, 1981. (See Appendix A) An initial response of 44 surveys was obtained. A follow up mailing was done after a two week interval which yielded an additional 25 responses. A 60% response rate was deemed acceptable for the purposes of the study prior to the investigation. A response rate of 63% was achieved.

Treatment of Data

The data were subjected to analysis at three levels. Preliminary analysis was done on the basis of frequency counts of the reported information. A program to report frequencies and statistically define responses was developed using the SPSS Computer Package.

Secondary treatment was done to determine the strength of the relationship between part one (question one) and part two (questions two through twenty-three) of each stage. The data was subjected to correlational analysis at this stage using the Spearman Rank Order Correlation Statistic.²

Final treatment of the data was done by comparing the response set from part one of each stage to the mean of the binomial distribution³ to determine the significance of responses relative to the hypotheses.

¹Norman Nie, et. al., SPSS - Statistical Package for the Social Sciences, 2nd ed. (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1975), pp. 68-87

²Edward W. Minium, Statistical Reasoning in Psychology and Education, 2nd ed. (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1978), pp. 454-456 and pp. 540-541.

³N.M. Downe and R.W. Heath, Basic Statistical Methods, 4th ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1974), pp. 147-149.

The mean of the binomial distribution was calculated by using the following method.¹

$$M = np$$

where M the mean of the binomial
distribution

q = probability

p = the probability of the event
occurring

n = number of trials

$$Q = npq$$

The value for comparison with the binomial distribution calculated using the following formula:

$$\frac{Z = X - M}{Q}$$

Where X = the number of times the relevant information source type was selected.

Ibid., Downe & Heath, p. 147.

The Statistical Hypotheses

The statistical hypotheses for the study were restated as follows:

H_1 Mass media sources will be reported to be significantly more important than personal sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_1: Z \quad +1.96$$

$$.05$$

H_2 Cosmopolite sources of information will be reported to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an insitution of higher education.

$$H_2: Z \quad +1.96$$

$$.05$$

H_3 Personal sources of information will be reported to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_3: Z \quad +1.96$$

$$.05$$

H_4 Localite sources of information will be reported to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_4: Z \quad +1.96$$

$$.05$$

Summary of Methodolgy

The study sample consisted of 110 adult students above age 25 enrolled in their first college course work during the Fall semester of 1981.

A survey instrument was developed to obtain pertinent demographic data and to ask respondents questions concerning the importance of different sources of information at two stages of their decision to return to school, and the length of time since each stage of the process had occurred.

The survey was mailed during the first week of December, 1981. An initial response of 44 instruments was obtained. A follow-up mailing was done after a three week interval which yielded an additional 25 response. A total of 69 responses were obtained.

The data was preliminarily analyzed on the basis of response frequencies. Secondary treatment was done to determine the strength of the relationship between part one and part two responses for each decision stage. Final treatment consisted of comparing response set data for part one of each stage to the mean of the binomial distribution.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The analysis of the data was done in three stages: Computation of frequencies from raw data; correlational analysis of the data reported for part one and two at each stage; and comparison of aggregate frequencies to the mean of the binomial distribution to determine significance of differences relative to the hypothesis.

In the first stage of data analysis, individual responses were recorded and the frequency of each response was determined. Each response set was coded according to the information source types relevant to the hypothesis.

The responses to part one (question one) of the knowledge stage with respect to the mass media/personal dimensions are reported in Table 2. Responses to part two of the ALISS (questions 2-23) for both stages were scored according to reports of their level of importance. Each response received a rating of 0 for no importance, 1 for a rating not very important, 2 for a rating of somewhat important, 3 for a rating of important and 4 for a rating of very important. Scored responses for part two of the knowledge stage with respect to the mass media/personal dimensions are reported in Table 3. Responses to part one of the knowledge stage with respect to the cosmopolite/localite dimensions are reported in Table 4. Responses as for part two of the knowledge stage with respect to the cosmopolite/localite dimensions are reported in Table 5. Responses to part one of one of the persuasion stage

TABLE 2

Responses to Part One of the Knowledge Stage with Respect
to the Mass Media/Personal Dimensions

Sources	Frequency	Sources	Frequency
PERSONAL SOURCES		MASS MEDIA SOURCES	
Personal other	18	Newspaper Advertisement	4
Friend	11	College Catalogue/publication	2
Supervisor/Employer	8	Book	1
Spouse	7	Magazine Article	1
Work Associate	5	Newspaper Article	1
Sibling	3	Television Program	1
Other Relative	1	Government Publication	1
Counseling Professional	1	Radio Program	1
Clergyman	1		
	<u>55</u>		<u>12</u>

TABLE 3

Responses to Part Two of the Knowledge Stage with Respect
to the Mass Media/Personal Dimensions

Sources	Score	Sources	Score
PERSONAL SOURCES		MASS MEDIA SOURCES	
Personal other	119	Book	59
Work Associate	118	College Catalogue/publication	56
Spouse	117	Magazine Article	37
Friend	115	Newspaper Advertisement	36
Supervisor/Employer	87	Newspaper Article	34
Parent	77	Television Program	31
Teacher	63	Government Publication	28
Other Relative	59	Radio Program	16
Sibling	52	Radio Advertisement	16
Counseling Professional	44	Television Advertisement	16
Speaker at a Meeting	35		
College Employee	33		
Clergyman	13		

TABLE 4

Responses to Part One of the Knowledge Stage with Respect
to the Cosmopolite/Localite Dimensions

Sources	Frequency	Sources	Frequency
LOCALITE		COSMOPOLITE	
Other Localite	18	Newspaper Advertisement	4
Friend	11	College Catalogue/publication	2
Supervisor/Employer	8	Counseling Professional	1
Spouse	7	Magazine Article	1
Work Associate	5	Newspaper Article	1
Sibling	3	Television Program	1
Other Relative	1	Government Publication	1
Clergyman	1	Radio Program	1
	<u>54</u>		<u>12</u>

TABLE 5

Responses to Part Two of the Knowledge Stage with Respect
to the Cosmopolite/Localite Dimensions

Sources	Score	Sources	Score
LOCALITE		COSMOPOLITE	
Other Localite	119	Book	59
Work Associate	118	College Catalogue/publication	56
Spouse	117	Counseling Professional	44
Friend	115	Magazine Article	37
Supervisor/Employee	87	Newspaper Advertisement	36
Parent	77	Speaker at a Meeting	35
Teacher	63	Newspaper Article	34
Other Relative	59	College Employee	33
Sibling	52	Television Program	31
Clergyman	13	Government Publication	28
		Radio Program	16
		Radio Advertisement	16

with respect to the mass media and personal dimensions are reported in Table 6. Responses to part two of the persuasion stage with respect to the mass media/personal dimensions are reported in Table 7. Responses to part one of the persuasion stage with respect to the cosmopolite/localite dimensions are reported in Table 8. Responses to part two of the persuasion stage with respect to the cosmopolite/localite dimensions are reported in Table 9. A central issue in this study was the validity of the concept of stages in the decision process. In order to validate the concept and to learn about the length of time involved in the decision process the sample was asked to state the length of time since the knowledge stage and the length of time since the persuasion stage. Measures of central tendency and dispersion for aggregate responses to the question regarding length of time since the knowledge stage are recorded in Table 10.

Table 11 reports the percentage of respondents reporting differing lengths of time between the two stages.

The data validates the concept of stages in the decision process. It presents an average of over four and one half years between the knowledge and persuasion stages was seen.

Illustration 1 graphically depicts the dispersion of reported length of time since the knowledge stage. The sample reported a wide range of times since starting to think about school.

Illustration 2 graphically displays the length of time since the persuasion stage for all respondents.

TABLE 6

Responses to Part One of the Persuasion Stage with Respect
to the Mass Media/Personal Dimensions

Sources	Frequency	Sources	Frequency
PERSONAL SOURCES		MASS MEDIA SOURCES	
Spouse	11	College Catalogue	7
Friend	11	Book	2
Personal Other	9	Newspaper Article	2
Supervisor/Employee	7	Government Publication	1
Work Associate	4		
Counseling Professional	4		
College Employee	2		
Parent	1		
Other Relative	1		
Teacher	1		
Speaker at a Meeting	1		
	<u>52</u>		<u>12</u>

TABLE 7

Responses to Part Two of the Persuasion Stage with Respect
to the Mass Media/Personal Dimensions

Sources	Score	Sources	Score
PERSONAL SOURCES		MASS MEDIA SOURCES	
Spouse	147	College Catalogue	67
Friend	120	Book	66
Personal Other	102	Government Publication	38
Work Associate	96	Newspaper Article	27
Supervisor/Employee	73	Newspaper Advertisement	26
Parent	71	Television Program	22
Other Relative	67	Magazine Article	19
Sibling	61	Radio Program	12
Counseling Professional	50	Radio Advertisement	04
Teacher	50	Television Advertisement	04
College Employee	48		
Speaker at a Meeting	21		
Clergyman	10		

TABLE 8

Responses to Part One of the Persuasion Stage with Respect
to the Cosmopolite/Localite Dimensions

Sources	Frequency	Sources	Frequency
LOCALITE		COSMPOLITE	
Spouse	11	College Catalogue	7
Friend	11	Counseling Professional	4
Other Localite	9	College Employee	2
Supervisor/Employee	7	Government Publication	2
Work Associate	4	Newspaper Article	2
Parent	1	Book	1
Other Relative	1	Speaker at a Meeting	1
Teacher	1		
	<u>45</u>		<u>19</u>

TABLE 9

Responses to Part Two of the Persuasion Stage with Respect
to the Cosmopolite/Localite Dimensions

Sources	Score	Sources	Score
PERSONAL SOURCES		MASS MEDIA SOURCES	
Spouse	147	College Catalogue	67
Friend	126	Book	66
Other Localite	102	Counseling Professional	50
Work Associate	96	College Employee	48
Supervisor/Employee	73	Government Publication	38
Parent	71	Newspaper Article	27
Other Relative	67	Television Program	22
Sibling	61	Speaker at a Meeting	21
Teacher	50	Magazine Article	19
Clergyman	10	Radio Program	12
		Radio Advertisement	07
		Television Advertisement	04
		Other Cosmopolite	00

TABLE 10

Length of Time Reported Since Each Stage and Between Stages

Time Since Knowledge Stage (in Months)	Time Since Persuasion	Time Between Stages in Months
R = 414	R = 54.0	R = 188.0
X = 67.45	X = 11.18	X = 56.27
Q = 89.20	Q = 12.32	Q = 91.90

TABLE 11

Percentages of Respondants Reporting Different Lengths of
Time Between the Knowledge and Persuasion Stages

Length of Time in Months	Percentage of Respondants
Less than 12	27%
12-23	25
24-35	12.5
36-47	8.25
48-60	6.25
60 or more	21
	<hr/> 100%

In the second stage of analysis, the strength of the relationship between the single response frequencies in part one (question one) and the multiple response scores in part two (question two - twenty-three) was determined for each stage. The data were arranged in rank order and Spearmans Rank Order correlations were calculated. At both stages the responses to part one were found to be highly correlated with the more indepth responses given in part two. At the knowledge stage r_o value was significant at the .01 confidence level. ($r_o = .6402$, $r_{crit} = .526$). At the persuasion stage the strength of the relationship was also found to be significant at the .01 confidence level ($r_o = .8421$, $r_{crit} = .526$).

Table 13 and 14 detail the rank orders of each response type and display the calculations for r_o .

In the third stage of analysis the significance of differences relative to the hypothesis were tested. The recorded frequencies for part one of the knowledge and persuasion stages were compared to the mean of the binomial according to the statistical hypothesis to determine if a significant difference in the direction of the hypothesis occurred. Figure 1 outlines the test of significance for Ho_1 . Figure 2 describes the test of significance for Ho_2 . Figure 3 outlines the test of significance for Ho_3 . Figure 4 outlines the test of significance for Ho_4 .

TABLE 13

Rank Orders
Knowledge Stage

Source	Part One (Question one)	Part Two (Question two - twenty-three)	D ²
Personal Other	23.0	23	0.00
Work Associate	19.0	22	9.00
Spouse	20.0	21	1.00
Friend	22.0	20	4.00
Supervisor	21.0	19	4.00
Parent	3.5	18	210.25
Teacher	3.5	17	182.25
Other Relative	11.0	15.5	20.25
Book	11.0	15.5	20.25
College Employee	3.5	7.0	12.25
College Catalogue	16.0	14.0	4.00
Sibling	17.0	13.0	16.00
Counseling Professional	11.0	12.0	1.00
Magazine Article	11.0	11.0	0.00
Newspaper Advertisement	11.0	10.0	0.00
Speaker at a Meeting	18.0	9.0	81.00
Newspaper Article	11.0	8.0	9.00
Television Program	11.0	6.0	25.00
Government Publication	11.0	5.0	36.00
Radio Program	11.0	3.5	56.25
Radio Advertisement	3.5	3.5	0.00
Television Advertisement	3.5	1.5	2.25
Clergyman	11.0	1.5	90.25
			<u>785.00</u>

Spearman's¹ rank order correlation r_o for responses to questions concerning the knowledge stage were calculated as follows:

$$r_o = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} \quad r_o = .8421$$

$$r_{crit} = .526$$

Correlation is significant at .01 level.

Ibid., Minium, p. 454.

TABLE 14

Rank Orders
Persuasion Stage

Source	Part One (Question One)	Part Two (Question two - twenty-three)	D ²
Spouse	22.5	23.0	.25
Friend	22.5	22.0	.25
Personal Other	21.0	21.0	0.00
Work Associate	17.5	20.0	6.25
Supervisor	19.5	19.0	.25
Parent	11.0	18.0	49.00
College Catalogue	19.5	16.5	9.00
Other Relative	11.0	16.5	30.25
Book	15.0	15.0	0.00
Sibling	4.5	14.0	90.25
Counseling Professional	17.5	12.5	25.00
Teacher	11.0	12.5	2.25
College Employee	15.0	11.0	16.00
Government Publication	11.0	10.0	1.00
Newspaper Article	15.0	9.0	36.00
Newspaper Advertisement	4.5	8.0	12.25
Television Program	4.5	7.0	5.0625
Speaker at a Meeting	11.0	6.0	16.00
Magazine Article	4.5	5.0	.25
Radio Program	4.5	4.0	.25
Clergyman	4.5	3.0	2.25
Radio Advertisement	4.5	1.5	9.00
Television Advertisement	4.5	1.5	9.00
			319.5625

Spearman's¹ rank order correlation r_o for responses to questions concerning the knowledge stage were calculated as follows:

$$r_o = 1 - \frac{6 \sum D^2}{n(n^2 - 1)} \quad r_o = .6122$$

$$r_{crit} = .526$$

Correlation is significant at .01 level.

Ibid., Minium, p. 454.

Figure 1

H_1 Mass media sources will be determined to be significantly more important than personal sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_1: Z \quad +1.96 \\ .05$$

$$H_1: Z \quad + 1.96 \\ = .05$$

$$\text{Where} \quad Z = \frac{X - M}{Q}$$

Where X = No of times mass media was selected at the knowledge stage.

M = Mean of the binomial

$n.p.q.$

Where n = number of trials 66

p = probability of mass media
occurring
.41666

q = probability of mass media not
occurring
.58333

$$Q = n.p.q.$$

$$X = 12$$

$$M = 16.04$$

$$Q = 4.02$$

$$Z = - 1.05$$

$$Z \text{ crit} \quad +1.96$$

reject H_1

Figure 2

H_2 Cosmopolite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an insitution of higher education.

$$H_2: Z \quad +1.96 \\ .05$$

$$H_2: Z \quad + 1.96 \\ = .05$$

$$\text{Where} \quad Z = \frac{X - M}{Q}$$

Where X = No of times cosmopolite sources were selected at the knowledge stage.

M = Mean of the binomial

$n.p.q.$

Where n = number of trials 66

p = probability of cosmopolite
occurring
.41666

q = probability of cosmopolite not
occurring
.58333

$$Q = n.p.q.$$

$$X = 12$$

$$M = 16.04$$

$$Q = 4.02$$

$$Z = 1.05 \quad Z \text{ crit} \quad 1.96$$

reject H_2

Figure 3

H_3 Personal sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_3: Z \quad +1.96 \\ .05$$

$$H_3: Z \quad + 1.96 \\ = .05$$

$$\text{Where} \quad Z = \frac{X - M}{Q}$$

Where X = No of times personal sources were chosen at the persuasion stage.

M = Mean of the binomial

$n.p.q.$

Where n = number of trials 64

p = probability of personal
sources being chosen
.58333

q = probability of personal
sources not being chosen
.41666

$$Q = n.p.q.$$

$$X = 52$$

$$M = 15.555$$

$$Q = 3.98$$

$$Z = 9.15 \quad Z \text{ crit} \quad 1.96$$

accept H_3

Figure 4

H_4 Localite sources of information determined to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

$$H_4: Z = +1.96$$

.05

$$H_4: Z = +1.96$$

= .05

Where $Z = \frac{X - M}{Q}$

Where X = No of times which localite sources were chosen at the persuasion stage.

M = Mean of the binomial

$n.p.q.$

Where n = number of trials 64

p = probability of localite
being chosen
.41666

q = probability of localite
not being chosen
.58333

$$Q = n.p.q.$$

$$X = 45$$

$$M = 15.555$$

$$Q = 3.98$$

$$Z = +7.39 \quad Z \text{ crit} \quad +1.96$$

accept H_4

Testing of the Hypotheses

H_1 : Mass media sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than personal sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Hypothesis H_1 was tested by comparing the frequency responses reported in part one of the knowledge stage with respect to the relevant dimensions to the mean of the binomial distribution. The result of the analysis ($z = -1.25$) did not meet the criterion ($z = +1.96$). The hypothesis was rejected.

H_2 : Cosmopolite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Hypothesis H_2 was tested by comparing the frequency of responses reported in part one of the knowledge stage with respect to the relevant dimensions to the mean of the binomial distribution. The result of the analysis ($z = -1.05$) failed to meet the criterion ($z = +1.96$). The hypothesis was rejected.

H_3 : Personal sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Hypothesis H_3 was tested by comparing the frequency of responses in part one of the persuasion stage to the mean of the binomial distribution. The results of the analysis ($z = +9.15$) met the criteria ($z = +1.96$). The hypothesis was accepted.

H_4 : Localite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Hypothesis H_4 was tested by comparing the frequency of responses in part one of the persuasion stage to the mean of the binomial distribution. The results of the analysis ($z = +7.39$) met the criteria ($z = +1.96$). The hypothesis was accepted.

Summary

The Study Postulates Four Hypothesis

1. Media sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than personal services of information at the knowledge stage of an adult student's decision to attend an institution of higher education.
2. That cosmopolite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of an adult students decision to attend an institution of higher education.
3. That personal sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than mass media sources of information at persuasion stage of an adult students decision to attend an institution of higher education.
4. That localite sources of information will be determined to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of an adult students decision to attend an institution of higher education.

Two of the hypothesis were accepted and two of the hypothesis were rejected.

With respect to the first hypothesis, the sample did not report mass media sources of information to be significantly more important than personal sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

With respect to the second hypothesis the sample did not report cosmopolite sources to be significantly more important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of an adult students decision to attend an institution of higher education.

With respect to the third hypothesis, the sample did report personal sources to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

With respect to the fourth hypothesis, the sample did report localite sources to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources at the persuasion stage of the decision to attend an institution of higher education.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

Summary

The purpose of this study was to test the hypothesis of Everett M. Rogers concerning the information source types which will be used at different stages of a decision making process within the context of the decision making process of adult students choosing to enter a four year institution of higher education. The research was done in order that this decision process and information sources involved might be better understood.

The study sample consisted of 110 students in their first college course work in the Fall Semester of 1981. An instrument (ALISS) was developed to gather information regarding the demographic characteristics of the response set, and the information sources deemed important in causing the students to first start thinking of returning to school, and in deciding to return to school. The instrument was mailed to students in December of 1981. A follow up was done after a three week interval. A response of 69 questionnaires (63%) was obtained.

The data were analyzed in three stages. In the first stage, aggregate responses were computed from raw data and descriptive statistics were provided.

In the second stage the strength of the relationship between part one and part two of each stage was determined as an internal consistency, and to establish part one responses as a proper measure of the hypothesis. In the third stage, the significance of responses to the hypothesis was analyzed.

Mass media sources of information were found to be less important than Personal sources of Information at the knowledge stage of the decision process. Cosmopolite sources of information were found to be less important than localite sources of information at the knowledge stage of the decision process. Personal sources of information were found to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the persuasion stage of the decision process. Localite sources of information were found to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources of information at the persuasion stage of the decision process.

Discussion and Conclusions

Based on Rogers theory of information sources selected at different stages of the decision process it would be expected that adult students would rely upon mass media and cosmopolite sources of information at the knowledge stage of their decision to return to school. Results of the study did not support these expectations.

Based on Rogers work it was also expected that at the persuasion stage adult students would report to have relied upon personal and localite information sources.

The study results supported these expectations. Personal sources of information were found to be significantly more important than mass media sources at the 0.05 level ($z = 9.15$ $z_{\text{Crit}} = + 1.96$). Localite sources were

found to be significantly more important than cosmopolite sources at the 0.05 level ($z = 7.39$ $z_{crit} = + 1.96$).

The results of this study contradict Roger's model explanation of the knowledge stage of the innovation/decision process. Adult students are not significantly influenced by mass media or cosmopolite information sources at the knowledge stage of the decision to enter an institution of higher education. The reason the model does not work in this context might be the result of two factors: (1) a lack of mass media messages directly targeted towards encouraging adult students to participate in educational offerings, and (2) a more complex model of information and decision making being apparent in this situation.

The research upon which Rogers based his theory looks very little into situations in which mass media sources of information are not available. His examination of the decision process of farmers in the foothills of the Andes Mountains led him to conclude that in such a situation cosmopolite sources become more important at the knowledge stage.¹ This did not prove to be the case in this study. The data show cosmopolite and mass media sources to be equally unimportant (mass media $z = -1.05$, cosmopolite $z = -1.05$).

Lazarsfeld's² review of election campaigns did not examine early stages of the decision making process, but did show that personal sources of information were reported to be preferred over mass media sources in a context when both were available.

¹Everett M. Rogers and Whickey L. Meynen, Communications Sources for 2, 4-D Weed Spray among Columbian Peasants. *Rural Sociology*, 30 (1965) p. 214.

²Paul F. Lazarsfeld and Others, The Peoples Choice (New York, Duell, Sloan and Pearce, 1944), p. 150.

There is an obvious void in the literature relative to situations in which mass media persuasive messages are limited. The second possible explanation for the contradictory nature of the findings of this study at the knowledge stage relates to the model of communications on which Rogers bases his generalizations.

Berlo's¹ model is essentially a one way model of communication. The process of communication in this situation seems often to originate with a source other than the institution of higher education and perhaps with the receiver him/herself. The context of this research may call for a different type of communications model. A review of the information sources selected at each stage (Tables pp 40-41) reflects the importance of information sources relatively close to the decision maker. The key element in this decision process may be the amount of interaction the decision maker has with others supportive of the concept of higher education. At both stages the relative importance of the spouse, friends and close associates are clearly indicated.

The importance of personal and local sources and length of time ($x = 4.5$ years) involved in the process indicate that the communications process is much more involved than a simple transmission of information from a source to a receiver. The decision is related to the social system in which the individual interacts, and the goals of that system.

The situation may reflect a convergence² model of communication in which the community and the institution are moving toward a common understanding through information exchange.

¹Berlo, David K. *The Process of Communication*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1960, p. 106.

²Kincaid, Lawrence D. "The Convergence Model of Communication", 1979, Honolulu, East West Communication Institute, paper 18

Recommendations

The implications for adult and higher education administrators are many. Communications directed towards encouraging adults to attend institutions of higher education should be developed with an understanding of adults as part of a social system. The messages should underline the benefits of the higher education experience for the entire system, family, friends, work associates, employers, children, etc.

In developing services for adult students institutions should keep in mind that the spouse is a co-decision maker, and that services which enable the spouse and family to enjoy the institution are essential. Child care, open recreation privileges will be helpful. The institution should view communications as a process in which it is one of many participants. It should seek to create an "information rich" environment, while at the same time remaining open to suggestions and expressed needs of adult students. The institution must develop means to move toward meeting the needs of adults, seeing itself as a participant in an ongoing dialogue with the community, rather than a sender of messages about services available. One suggestion might be a communications committee made up of high level administrators charged with speaking to targeted groups of adults in the community and discussing both available learning opportunities and the needs of the population.

The students in the sample were chosen because of their relative closeness to the innovation decision based on Rogers contention that this was essential to gaining a clear picture of their decision process. A relatively small sample was necessary. If a representative sample of all adult students at the institution were surveyed, that contention could be tested for this context. If

no difference appears between a representative sample and the sample of this study, a much larger study might be undertaken to determine if differences exist in students with differing sexes, racial origins, majors, occupations, ages, etc.

The sample of this study was composed of students in their first semester of course work at a four year institution of higher education. A similar sample, using students in a two year institution, also might be in order. Two year institutions have an older student population and are generally considered to be more responsive to adult needs. A replication of this type would give an indication as to whether mass media and cosmopolite sources of information play a larger role in the decision making process of students attending a two year institution.

Another approach for replication would be to identify two institutions with similar characteristics and student populations, but with different approaches to marketing their educational product. Would the students at an institution with a more aggressive marketing strategy respond differently to questions about the knowledge and persuasion stages of their decision? An institution such as Oklahoma City University might offer an appropriate setting for such a retest against this sample.

Finally, a replication of this study with students in a non-traditional program such as the Oklahoma University College of Liberal Studies would give a measure of the importance of each information source type in the decision process of students seeking a non-traditional approach to higher education.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Adult Learner Information Source Survey (ALISS) and Communications

ADULT LEARNER INFORMATION SOURCE SURVEY

This survey is designed to determine the different kinds of information sources adult learners are relying upon at different stages in their decision to return to school. By answering the following questions you will assist us in understanding the decision process that adults follow when returning to school.

The information you supply on this questionnaire will be kept confidential. The data will be used for research purposes and will not be individually listed on any report. Your name will not be associated with your reply.

Your reply is very important as you are part of a small sample. Each reply is vital to a successful project.

1. AGE <input type="checkbox"/> Under 24 <input type="checkbox"/> 24 to 28 <input type="checkbox"/> 28 to 32 <input type="checkbox"/> 32 to 36 <input type="checkbox"/> 36 to 40 <input type="checkbox"/> 40 to 44 <input type="checkbox"/> 44 to 48 <input type="checkbox"/> 48 to 52 <input type="checkbox"/> 52 to 55 <input type="checkbox"/> 55 to 59 <input type="checkbox"/> Above 59	2. SEX <input type="checkbox"/> Male <input type="checkbox"/> Female	3. RACE <input type="checkbox"/> Afro-American/Black <input type="checkbox"/> American Indian/Alaskan Native <input type="checkbox"/> Caucasian-American <input type="checkbox"/> Mexican American/Chicano <input type="checkbox"/> Asian American, Oriental, Pacific Islander <input type="checkbox"/> Puerto Rican, Cuban, Other Hispanic Origin <input type="checkbox"/> Other	4. MARITAL STATUS <input type="checkbox"/> Unmarried (Single, Divorced, Widowed) <input type="checkbox"/> Married <input type="checkbox"/> Separated
--	---	---	--

5. DO YOU CURRENTLY PLAN TO SEEK A DEGREE? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No	6. ARE YOU CURRENTLY ENROLLED? <input type="checkbox"/> Full Time (12 HRS +) <input type="checkbox"/> Part Time	7. NUMBER OF DEPENDENT CHILDREN <input type="checkbox"/> None <input type="checkbox"/> 1 <input type="checkbox"/> 2 <input type="checkbox"/> 3 or more
--	--	---

8. CURRENT FAMILY INCOME <input type="checkbox"/> Less than \$6001 <input type="checkbox"/> \$6,001 to \$9,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$9,001 to \$12,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$12,001 to \$15,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$15,001 to \$18,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$18,001 to \$21,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$21,001 to \$24,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$24,001 to \$27,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$27,001 to \$30,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,001 to \$33,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$33,001 to \$36,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$36,001 to \$39,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$39,001 to \$42,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$42,001 to \$45,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$45,001 to \$48,000 <input type="checkbox"/> \$48,001 to \$51,000 <input type="checkbox"/> Greater than \$51,000	9. WHAT METHOD DID YOU USE FOR COMPLETING HIGH SCHOOL? <input type="checkbox"/> GED <input type="checkbox"/> High School Attendance <input type="checkbox"/> Other	10. HOW LONG HAS IT BEEN SINCE YOU WERE LAST ENROLLED IN HIGH SCHOOL? <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 7 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 20 years
--	--	---

11. IF YOU FINISHED HIGH SCHOOL BY WAY OF THE GED, HOW LONG AGO DID YOU COMPLETE THE GED? (IF YOU DID NOT TAKE THE GED, LEAVE THIS QUESTION BLANK) <input type="checkbox"/> Less than one year <input type="checkbox"/> 1 to 2 years <input type="checkbox"/> 2 to 3 years <input type="checkbox"/> 3 to 5 years <input type="checkbox"/> 5 to 7 years <input type="checkbox"/> 10 to 15 years <input type="checkbox"/> 15 to 20 years <input type="checkbox"/> Over 20 years	12. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST REPRESENTS YOUR METHOD OF PAYING FOR YOUR EDUCATION? <input type="checkbox"/> Financial Aids/other assistance <input type="checkbox"/> Working my way through <input type="checkbox"/> Family income <input type="checkbox"/> Savings <input type="checkbox"/> Help from relatives <input type="checkbox"/> Other
--	--

13. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR CURRENT OCCUPATION? <input type="checkbox"/> Full-time student <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time student <input type="checkbox"/> Employed part-time <input type="checkbox"/> Employed full-time <input type="checkbox"/> Caring for a family <input type="checkbox"/> Self employed <input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed <input type="checkbox"/> Retired	14. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING DESCRIBES YOUR MAIN REASON FOR ATTENDING THIS INSTITUTION? <input type="checkbox"/> Economics <input type="checkbox"/> Love of Learning <input type="checkbox"/> Enjoyment of the Interaction with people.
--	---

15. WHAT IS YOUR PLANNED AREA OF STUDY? <input type="checkbox"/> Undecided <input type="checkbox"/> Health related <input type="checkbox"/> Arts and Sciences <input type="checkbox"/> Business <input type="checkbox"/> Fine Arts <input type="checkbox"/> Engineering <input type="checkbox"/> Law <input type="checkbox"/> Education <input type="checkbox"/> Architecture/Environmental Design <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____	16. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING BEST DESCRIBES YOUR TYPE OF OCCUPATION? <input type="checkbox"/> Service worker <input type="checkbox"/> Clerical <input type="checkbox"/> Crafts <input type="checkbox"/> Farm/Ranch <input type="checkbox"/> Labor <input type="checkbox"/> Vehicle/Machine operator <input type="checkbox"/> Professional <input type="checkbox"/> Sales <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="checkbox"/> Student
--	---

I. KNOWLEDGE STAGE

Where or from whom did you get the information which made you first start thinking of returning to school?

Please review the entire list and select the one choice which seems to best answer the question. Please choose only one.

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Speaker at a meeting | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Radio program |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper article | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Television advertisement/announcement | 18. <input type="checkbox"/> Television program |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Other _____ | 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling professional |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Book | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Employer or supervisor | 20. <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Work associate | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Clergyman | 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Parent |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Radio advertisement/announcement | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Relative other than parent, brother, sister, spouse | 22. <input type="checkbox"/> College catalogue/publication |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Government publication | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine article | 23. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper advertisement |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> College employee | |

How important was each of the following in causing you to first start thinking about returning to school. Please rate each item. Circle the appropriate response.

- | | NO
IMPORTANCE | VERY LITTLE
IMPORTANCE | SOMEWHAT
IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | VERY
IMPORTANT |
|--|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. Government publication_____ | | | | | |
| 2. Book_____ | | | | | |
| 3. Teacher_____ | | | | | |
| 4. Magazine article_____ | | | | | |
| 5. Other _____ | | | | | |
| 6. College catalogue - publication_____ | | | | | |
| 7. Employer or supervisor_____ | | | | | |
| 8. Radio advertisement/announcement_____ | | | | | |
| 9. Relative other than parent, brother, sister—
or spouse | | | | | |
| 10. Speaker at a meeting_____ | | | | | |
| 11. Television program_____ | | | | | |
| 12. Brother or sister_____ | | | | | |
| 13. Spouse_____ | | | | | |
| 14. Friend_____ | | | | | |
| 15. Counseling professional_____ | | | | | |
| 16. Newspaper advertisement_____ | | | | | |
| 17. College employee_____ | | | | | |
| 18. Television advertisement_____ | | | | | |
| 19. Clergyman_____ | | | | | |
| 20. Newspaper article_____ | | | | | |
| 21. Work associate_____ | | | | | |
| 22. Radio program_____ | | | | | |
| 23. Parent_____ | | | | | |

II. PERSUASION STAGE

Where or from whom did you get information which was most important in causing you to decide to return to school?

Please review the entire list and select the one choice which seems to best answer the question. Please choose only one.

- | | | |
|---|--|---|
| 1. <input type="checkbox"/> Book | 9. <input type="checkbox"/> Government publication | 17. <input type="checkbox"/> Counseling professional |
| 2. <input type="checkbox"/> Magazine article | 10. <input type="checkbox"/> Teacher | 18. <input type="checkbox"/> Brother or sister |
| 3. <input type="checkbox"/> College catalogue/publication | 11. <input type="checkbox"/> Speaker at a meeting | 19. <input type="checkbox"/> Radio advertisement/announcement |
| 4. <input type="checkbox"/> Work associate | 12. <input type="checkbox"/> Clergyman | 20. <input type="checkbox"/> College employee |
| 5. <input type="checkbox"/> Television program | 13. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper advertisement | 21. <input type="checkbox"/> Newspaper article |
| 6. <input type="checkbox"/> Employer or supervisor | 14. <input type="checkbox"/> Television advertisement/announcement | 22. <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| 7. <input type="checkbox"/> Spouse | 15. <input type="checkbox"/> Parent | 23. <input type="checkbox"/> Radio Program |
| 8. <input type="checkbox"/> Friend | 16. <input type="checkbox"/> Relative other than parent, brother
sister or spouse | |

How important was each of the following in helping you make the decision to return to school. Please rate each item. Circle the appropriate response.

- | | NO
IMPORTANCE | VERY LITTLE
IMPORTANCE | SOMEWHAT
IMPORTANT | IMPORTANT | VERY
IMPORTANT |
|---|------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------|-----------|-------------------|
| 1. Radio advertisement/announcement | | | | | |
| 2. Book | | | | | |
| 3. Relative other than parent, brother or sister—
sister or spouse | | | | | |
| 4. Speaker at a meeting | | | | | |
| 5. Clergyman | | | | | |
| 6. Television program | | | | | |
| 7. Brother or sister | | | | | |
| 8. Radio program | | | | | |
| 9. Counseling professional | | | | | |
| 10. Other | | | | | |
| 11. Employer or Supervisor | | | | | |
| 12. Government publication | | | | | |
| 13. College catalogue - publication | | | | | |
| 14. Newspaper article | | | | | |
| 15. Spouse | | | | | |
| 16. Television advertisement | | | | | |
| 17. Magazine article | | | | | |
| 18. Work associate | | | | | |
| 19. Teacher | | | | | |
| 20. Newspaper advertisement | | | | | |
| 21. College employee | | | | | |
| 22. Parent | | | | | |
| 23. Friend | | | | | |

How long ago did you first start thinking about returning to school?

_____ years months

How long has it been since you definitely decided to return to school?

_____ years months



The
University of Oklahoma

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
820 Van Vleet Oval
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

December 7, 1981

Dear Adult Student:

Did you know that you are part of an important change in higher education? As an adult returning to school, you are one of more than 5,000 O.U. students above age twenty-five and one of millions nationally.

We are doing this research project to begin to develop an understanding of the information sources adults use as they made the decision to return to school. The survey asks for information about two stages in your decision process. The knowledge stage when you first started thinking about returning to school, and the persuasion stage when you definitely decided to return.

The survey takes less than six minutes to complete. Your reply is very important, as you are part of a small sample. The information you supply on this questionnaire will be kept confidential. The data will be used for research purposes and will not be listed individually. Your name will not be associated with your reply.

Because our sample is small, we will send each person surveyed a copy of the results of this study when it is completed.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Richard Coberg, Assistant Director
Student Development Programs

RC:ms

Encl.



The
University of Oklahoma

COLLEGE OF EDUCATION
820 Van Vleet Oval
Norman, Oklahoma 73019

December 22, 1981

Dear Adult Student,

Help!

I recently sent out a survey which was designed to help me develop an understanding of what sources of information older students are relying upon in making their decision to return to school.

Because the replies were anonymous, I have no way of knowing who returned their survey and who did not. If you returned your survey already, thank you. You may scratch out my name on the envelope and use it to send a Christmas card.

If you did not return a survey, or if you have not received one, would you take just a few minutes to fill this one out and return it to me in the enclosed envelope?

The survey asks questions about two stages in your decision process: the stage at which you first started thinking about returning to school, and the stage at which you were deciding to come back.

Your help will be most appreciated. You are part of a small sample (110). Each reply is very important.

Thank you.

Rich Coberg
Rich Coberg
Assistant Director
Student Development Programs

RC:ms

APPENDIX B

Response Frequencies for Part One of the ALISS

Knowledge Stage Responses

Source	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Personal Other	18	26.1
Friend	11	16.4
Supervisor/Employer	8	11.9
Spouse	7	10.4
Work Associate	5	7.5
Newspaper Advertisement	4	6.0
Sibling	3	4.5
College Catalogue	2	3.0
Other Relative	1	1.5
Counseling Professional	1	1.5
Clergyman	1	1.5
Book	1	1.5
Magazine Article	1	1.5
Newspaper Article	1	1.5
Television Program	1	1.5
Government Publication	1	1.5
Radio Program	1	1.5

Persuasion Stage Responses

Source	Frequency	Relative Frequency
Spouse	11	17.2
Friend	11	17.2
Personal Other	9	14.1
Supervisor/Employee	7	10.9
Work Associate	4	6.3
Counseling Professional	4	6.3
College Employee	2	3.1
Book	2	3.1
Newspaper Article	2	3.1
Speaker at a Meeting	1	1.6
Parent	1	1.6
Other Relative	1	1.6
Teacher	1	1.6
Government Publication	1	1.6

APPENDIX C

**Annotated Responses to the
Selection item "other"**

"Other Responses"

The following represent responses to the category "other". The numbers in the left margin indicate the respondent number/the stage at which the "other" response was annotated/the part of the stage in which the annotation was made.

003/1,2/1,1	Did on my own related to #14 (friend)
010/1/2	Personal need for a new direction
010/2/2	Need for change
011/1/2	Wanted a better job
012/1/2	Future income
013/1/1,2	Mother-in-law
015/1/1	Now or never
015/2/2	Me
017/2/2	My own decision
018/2/2	Myself
018/1/1,2	Have always planned to
021/1,2/1,1	Always wanted to return and this was the best opportunity
024/1/2/1,1	A full-time OU student who was a friend and work associate
025/1,2/1,1	No response
030/1/1	Thinking of age and future
031/1/2	My wife's nursing books
033/1/1	My dream
033/2/1	Me
034/1/1	Need to keep up with modern business
035/1/2	Family and friends
036/1/2	Self desire

037/1,2/1,1	Myself
041/1/1	Myself
041/2/1	Attendance of a private college
045/1/2	Self motivated
049/1/1	No response
051/1/2	My employee
052/1/1	Feeling cultural inadequacy
052/2/1	Free time
056/1/2	Own desire
059/1/1	The need for a worth while endeavor while kids in school
060/1/2	Need for interior design education
061/1/	Concern for my own and families future, myself
062/1/1	Myself
063/2/1,2	Interview with future employers after I returned from Air Force.
064/1/1	No response

It can be seen from these reports that all respondents selecting "other" in part one of either stage were indicating a personal or cosmopolite information source, or were relying upon a personal motivation. These responses were coded personal and localite.