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GRADUATE COLLEGE

A COMPARISON OF THE PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL FACTORS RELATED TO THE ATTENDANCE AND RETENTION RATES OF ADULTS AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

A DISSERTATION

SUBMITTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY

in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION

BY

BOBBY LEE TRAMMELL

Norman, Oklahoma

1977

A COMPARISON OF THE PERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL

FACTORS RELATED TO THE ATTENDANCE AND

RETENTION RATES OF ADULTS AT A

COMMUNITY COLLEGE

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Dedicated to

My Parents

Ted and Rose Trammell

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In the 1970's more than fifteen million men and women are entering nearly three thousand colleges and universities. However, since completion-dropout rates, which have not changed appreciably for decades, are holding steady, it can be predicted that about half are likely to graduate on schedule and between five and six million will never earn degrees.

Degree completion rates over a "normal" four-year college career have shown a surprisingly constant picture since the first national study (in the 1930's) indicated that approximately sixty percent of the entering freshmen did not achieve a baccalaureate degree in four years.[1] A similar nationwide study conducted in the 1950's concluded that forty percent of the entering freshmen never graduate.[2] More recent reviews of the

---

[1] J. S. McNelly, College Student Mortality (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Office of Education, 1938), Bulletin 1937, No. 11, p. 14.

[2] R. E. Iffert, Retention and Withdrawal of College Students (U. S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare, 1957), Bulletin No. 1. Washington, D. C.: U. S. Government Printing Office, p. 20.

literature by Summerskill[3] and Skaling[4] as well as reports based on national surveys by Panos and Astin[5] by Astin[6] and by Bayer and others[7] reconfirm the earlier findings: about forty percent of the entering freshmen nationwide never achieve a baccalaureate degree.

The rate of dropping out among community college students is apparently considerably higher than rates at four-year colleges. Although reliable data on community colleges is difficult to find, nationally it appears that approximately one half of the community college students do not return for

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[3] J. Summerskill, "Dropouts from College," quoted in N. Sanford, (Ed.), The American College (New York: Wiley, 1962), pp. 627-657.

[4] M. M. Skaling, "Review of the Research Literature," quoted in R. Cope, et al., (Eds.), An Investigation of Entrance Characteristics Related to Types of College Dropouts, (U. S. Office of Education, 1971) Final Research Report, pp. 17-60.

[5] R. J. Panos and A. W. Astin, "Attrition Among College Students," American Educational Research Journal, V (1968), pp. 57-72.

[6] A. Astin, "Research-based decision making in Higher Education: Possibility or pipe dream?" Paper presented at the meeting of the Higher Education Colloquiuim, Chicago, 1973.

[7] A. Bayer, et al, Four Years After College, Report to American Council on Education, 1973 (Washington D. C.: ACE Research Report 8).

a second year and only about half of the remaining students go on to complete the requirements for an associate degree. After comparing the persistence rates between four-year and two-year colleges, Astin[8] concludes that students of comparable ability had somewhat better chances of returning for a second undergraduate year if attendance was at a two-year college. Cope and Hannah[9] estimated that about two students in ten that enter community colleges stay on to complete the requirements for an associate degree and one in ten goes on to complete the requirements for a baccalaureate degree.

Traditionally, college dropouts were viewed largely from the standpoint of lack of job opportunities and personal loss to the dropout. In more recent times, however, the college dropout problem has been viewed as a waste of the college faculties' and administrators' time, financial loss to the university and individual, loss of trained manpower to society, and in terms of the feelings of personal failure with which the dropout must cope.[10,11]

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[8]A. Astin, Preventing Students from Dropping Out (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, Inc. 1975), XV, pp. 1-204.

[9]R. G. Cope and W. Hannah, Revolving College Doors (New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1975), p. 2.

[10]John Vazey, "The Costs of Wastage," Universities Quarterlys, XXV (Spring, 1971), pp. 139-145.

[11]Eleanor Langlois, Graduate Attrition at Berkeley, Eric, No. 699 220, Office of Institutional Research (Berkley: California University, August, 1972), pp. 59.

How are dropouts different from those who do not drop-out (persisters)? The first studies of dropouts made no attempt to compare their data with persisters. However, more recent studies have made such comparisons (Irvine, 1966;[12] Mehra, 1973;[13] Van Alstyne, 1973;[14] and Astin, 1975).[15]

Most studies have dealt only with major four-year colleges and universities and only with students who were less than twenty-five years old and unemployed. A different set of factors may cause student absenteeism or dropouts at two-year community colleges where most students are more than twenty-five years of age, commute to the college campus from the surrounding area, work at full-time or part-time jobs, and are enrolled in less than twelve credit hours of courses per week.

What factors are related to absenteeism and dropout rates? Are they personal and family problems, or are they more related to vocational choices and institutional limitations? Are the factors that cause students to drop out of a community college

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[12] D. W. Irvine, "Multiple Prediction of College Graduation From - Admission Data," The Journal of Experimental Education, 35 (Fall, 1966), pp. 84-80.

[13] N. Mehra, Retention and Withdrawal of University Students, Office of Institutional Research, (University of Aberta, December, 1973).

[14] C. Van Alstyne, "Attrition Rates of College Students" (unpublished paper, Washington, D. C.: American Council on Education, 1973).

[15] A. Astin, op. cit., pp. 1-204.

different from the factors that cause them to be absent? If so, what areas cause the most absenteeism and dropouts? Are the problems cited by chronic absentees and dropouts different from the problems cited by persisters? These were the major problems that were investigated in the present study.

Definition of Terms

Several terms were defined for the purpose of this study. These definitions pertain only to their use in this study.

Adults/Student Adults: Those persons enrolled as full-time or part-time students at Seminole Junior College in Seminole, Oklahoma, during the fall and spring semesters of the 1976-77 school year.

Chronically-Absent Students/Adults: Those students who were absent more than ten percent of the classtime allocated for a particular course during a semester.

Student Dropouts: Those students who withdrew from classes at Seminole Junior College during the spring and fall semesters of the 1976-77 school year after completion of three weeks' classwork, but prior to the end of the semester.

Student Persister/Persisters: Students who completed a program of study or earned an associate degree at Seminole Junior College while enrolled as full-time or part-time students during consecutive semesters.

Personal Problems: The situations shown on the "personal problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of nineteen personal problems. . .

Family Problems: The situations shown on the "Family Problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of five personal problems.

Commuting/Transportation Problems: The situations shown on the "Commuting/Transportation Problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of seven personal problems.

Scheduling Conflicts: The situations shown on the "Scheduling Conflicts" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of six personal problems.

Class-Related Problems: The situations shown on the "Class-Related Problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of fourteen personal problems.

Vocational Problems: The situations shown on the "Vocational Problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of eight personal problems.

Institution-Related Problems: The situations shown on the "Institution-Related Problems" section of the data-collection instrument presented in the Appendix. Participants made ratings of nine personal problems.

Two-Year Community College: A public two-year educational institution that attempts to meet the postsecondary educational needs of its local community. It may also be referred to as a public junior college or a public community junior college. Its functions usually include: 1) the transfer or college parallel program, and 2) the nontransfer program of technical education, vocational education, general education, continuing education, and community services (a non-credit educational program). Private colleges are not included in this definition.

Seminole Junior College: A two-year community college located at Seminole, Oklahoma (population 13,000). The college's service area includes five counties that are in a seventy-mile radius of the institution. The college offers both a day and evening school.

Seminole Junior College Evening School: The evening school begins at 5:45 P.M. and lasts until 9:50 P.M., four nights a week. Most participants commute, work during the daytime, and are largely self-supporting.

Biographical Information: The educational information is contained on the first part of the data-collection instrument shown in the Appendices. This data included the participants' (1) age, (2) race, (3) marital status, (4) sex, (5) address, (6) number of children, (7) birth order, (8) father's educational level, (9) academic performance at Seminole Junior College,

(10) intentions upon entering Seminole Junior College, and (11), in the case of the dropouts, their intentions upon leaving Seminole Junior College.

Hypotheses Tested In The Study

The following null hypotheses will be tested for significance at the .05 level.

Ho_1 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of nineteen personal problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_2 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of five family problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_3 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of seven commuting/transportation problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_4 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of six scheduling conflicts as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_5 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of fourteen class-related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_6 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of eight vocation related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Ho_7 There are no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of nine institution-related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

Statement of the Problem

This study was conducted to identify, analyze, and compare selected factors that influenced absenteeism and dropouts among adults at a community college. More specifically, data was collected, tabulated, analyzed and used to identify and compare selected personal and interpersonal factors that affected attendance among adults who were chronically absent, occasionally absent, or dropouts from educational programs at Seminole Junior College. More specifically, the researcher compared importance ratings of seven types of personal and interpersonal problems encountered by dropouts, chronically-absent, and persisting adults who attended the Seminole Junior College during the 1976-77 school year.

Assumptions

Several assumptions were made in the study. These assumptions, related to the participants and data-collection instruments, are as follows:

The researcher assumed that the adult participants constituted a normal population of adults enrolled at a community college in rural Oklahoma where the students commute to and from school and are largely self-supporting.

It was further assumed that the data-collection instruments shown in the Appendix contained all, or a true representation of, the problems as reported by adult students who commuted to and from Seminole Junior College.

Limitations

The present study was restricted by the following limitations:

The sample of chronically-absent participants was limited to those adults/students who were enrolled full-time or part-time at Seminole Junior College for the fall and/or spring semesters of the 1976-77 school year and who missed at least ten percent of the class periods allocated for a particular class or activity.

Dropouts were limited to those students who were enrolled at Seminole Junior College during the summer (1976) session but dropped out after more than three weeks had passed but prior to the end of the summer session. Dropouts were further limited to students who enrolled at Seminole Junior College during the fall and spring semesters of the 1976-77 school year, but dropped out after more than three weeks of school but prior to the end of the semester.

Persisters were limited to those students who completed an associate degree or training program at Seminole Junior College during the spring semester of the 1975-76 academic year or by the end of the summer (1976) session. Persisters also included those who completed work on an associate degree or post-secondary training program during the fall and spring semesters of the 1976-77 academic year.

The data was collected only from students at the Seminole Junior College. Thus, the conclusions were necessarily only supported by this data. At best this data could only be applied to other rural community colleges and to other two-year colleges after refinement to fit individual cases.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

There are between fifty and eighty million adults in the United States enrolled in some form of adult education.[1] They have enrolled to meet internal needs and to achieve personal objectives that may or may not be clearly perceived.

The basic structure of adult education is shaped through voluntary enrollment and attendance of the participants, but the initial enrollment is rarely maintained throughout a course. This means that the pattern of attendance in most adult classes is characterized by a sporadic but persistent decline.

The school dropout problem is a national concern at all levels of education. Since the founding of Harvard in 1636 institutions of higher education have been confronted with the dilemma of students' withdrawing from college.[2]

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[1]Robert M. Smith, George F. Aker, and J. R. Kidd (eds.), Handbook of Adult Education, (London: The Macmillian Company, 1964, p. 11.

[2]Casimir John Kowalski, "Comparison of Persisting and Nonpersisting Students at Indiana University," (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, Indiana University, 1975), p. 1.

The school dropout problem is not a new phenomenon; it is probably just one day, or hours, younger than the schools themselves. A paper entitled "The Early Withdrawal of Pupils from School: Its Causes and Its Remedies" was presented to the annual convention of the National Education Association as early as 1872.[3]

Even though the problem has long been recognized, it was not until the twentieth century that systematic investigations into the problem were initiated. This need for research was made evident in 1955 by the Adult Education Association Research Committee. They recognized the dropout as one of the foremost problems facing adult educators and assumed that much study had already been done. They found, however, only a scanty amount of fragmented material available for review.[4]

Review of Studies Conducted Prior to 1964

In 1964, Verner and Davis reviewed existing major research efforts prior to their own study by reviewing several seemingly related studies that were the result of an unsystematic approach

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[3] Daniel Schreiber, "700,000 Dropouts," American Education, VI, (June, 1968), p. 6.

[4] Ralph B. Spence and Louise H. Evans, "Dropouts In Adult Education," Report to AEA's Research Committee, Adult Ed. (Spring, 1955), p. 221.

leading to questionable and sometimes contradictory results. These studies did, however, have some general value. Verner and Davis provided a summary about dropouts and what is known or not known about them. They found thirty studies that dealt with some aspect of attendance in adult education before 1964. Of these, nineteen were conducted in the context of a public school setting with two dealing with evening elementary programs, two with technical evening schools, and fourteen with either evening high schools or otherwise unspecified evening adult schools.

Five of the thirty studies were conducted within the concept of college or university adult education, of which two were in evening colleges and one each in a junior college, technical college, and university extension department.

Three of the thirty studies were combined school and college programs for adults; two were concerned with discussion groups; and one was conducted as part of a YMCA Program.

Verner and Davis noted that the thirty studies approached the question of attendance by studying either persistence or discontinuance of attendance, which are, in effect, two approaches of the same problem. In either case, the research results were descriptive and could be categorized as either comparative or reactional.

Comparative studies are accomplished by comparing those who discontinue with those who persist on an individual basis or by comparing certain personal or social factors among those who discontinue and those who persist. Situational factors are also studied by relating certain factors to participants' discontinuance or persistence.

Reactional studies on the other hand usually involve the obtaining of responses from adult dropouts, such as: reasons for discontinuing adult education; criticisms of the program; and suggestions for its improvement. The responses of different groups are then compared on the basis of such factors as age, race, IQ level, etc.

The review conducted by Verner and Davis included studies completed over a thirty-five year period. During that time, there were marked changes in the form and quality of the research. Verner and Davis noted that the earlier studies were marked by a simplicity bordering on over simplification in design and analysis, which very often led to conclusions that could not be substantiated by the data provided. They further noted that later studies were more sophisticated concerning design, the kind of data collected, the analytical interrelationships attempted, and the appropriateness of statistical processes. Verner and Davis also pointed out that only more recent studies utilized any tests for statistical

significance.[5]

While the dropout problem is of a major concern to all areas of adult higher education, the focus in the present study was on the adult student in the community colleges which generally has the same dropout problems, with additional problems that relate specifically to two-year institutions.

Dropout and Attendance Studies Related to Adult Attendance at Two-Year Colleges

Of the thirty studies previously mentioned only one was related to adult dropouts at a two-year college. This study was conducted by Ulmer in 1960.

Ulmer's study sought to determine if in terms of specific measurable factors there were any significant differences between those students who persisted in attendance and those who discontinued. The factors, expressed as null hypotheses, included age, sex, marital status, course load, veteran or non-veteran status, number of class sessions per week, admission prerequisites, completion of courses in the prior semester, and distance traveled to the institution. The hypotheses were tested by appropriate statistical processes at the .01 level of confidence.

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[5]Coolie Verner and George S. Davis, Jr., "A Review of Research," Adult Ed. (Spring, 1963), p. 157.

Ulmer's study involved 315 students who were dropouts of the Meridian Mississippi Junior College's evening adult credit program between the years of 1952 and 1956. He used data from student record cards in comparing characteristics of dropouts and regular students (persisters).

In terms of the factors tested, the following results were reported:

1. Veterans were more apt to maintain continuity of attendance than non-veterans.

2. Female students were more apt to drop out than male students.

3. Marital status appeared to have no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

4. Whether a student was admitted with a regular high school diploma or with a GED equivalency certificate appeared to have no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

5. The successful completion of a prior semester or semesters appeared to have no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

6. The distance students traveled to class had no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

7. The age of the student appeared to have no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

8. The number of courses that a student took in any single semester appeared to have no significant influence on continuity of attendance.

9. The number of times classes met appeared to have a significant influence on the continuity of attendance.

Ulmer in summary had this to say about his study:

> While this study identifies some of the objective characteristics that distinguish the dropout from those who persist in attendance, it also indicates some of the characteristics of adult programs that affect attendance. Since this study was confined to students in a heavily structured evening adult credit program, the factors identified as significant may not apply to the less formalized non-credit programs. If adult education is to understand and resolve the problem of attendance and enrollment, it must approach the problem through systematic research and analyze not only the personal characteristics of individual students but also the administrative structure and the instructional process of adult education itself.[6]

In 1967 Dickinson and Verner conducted a study based on data that was collected on specially designed key-sort registration cards from 2,075 persons who enrolled in ninety-eight courses offered by a public adult night school in a suburban district near Vancouver, British Columbia.

They divided the courses offered into three subject matter categories:

1. Academic — Subjects such as history, mathematics, and science that were offered for high school credit. This group contained 14.3 percent of the courses and 14.5

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[6]Curtis R. Ulmer and Coolie Verner, "Factors Affecting Attendance in a Junior College Adult Program," Adult Education (Spring, 1963).

percent of the participants.

2. Vocational Subjects such as bookkeeping, welding, and automotive tune-up that were offered as preparation for upgrading in various occupational fields. This category included 30.6 percent of the courses and 25.6 percent of the participants.

3. General Interest The courses in this group covered a wide range of subject matter and included such things as Chinese cookery, public speaking, and gift wrapping. This category accounted for 55.1 percent of the courses and 59.9 percent of the participants.

The courses ranged from three to forty-five sessions in length with a median of twenty sessions. They were grouped by length into the following three categories:

1. Ten or fewer class sessions--30.6 percent of courses
   33.2 percent of participants

2. Eleven to twenty class sessions--30.8 percent of courses
   3.69 percent of enrollment

3. More than twenty class sessions--29.6 percent of enrollment
   29.8 percent of participants

Attendance registers maintained by course instructors were used to identify dropouts and derive average daily attendance figures. The 577 dropouts were defined as

those who had enrolled in a course but did not attend the last two class sessions. Null hypotheses of no significant difference between persisters and dropouts in all courses on all eleven factors were tested using a chi square statistic. Comparisons were also made between the socioeconomic characteristics of dropouts by subject matter and course length categories.

The overall pattern of attendance in the night school courses revealed a rather bleak picture. Dickinson and Verner concluded that the ADA for all courses was only 63.5 percent. It was also noted that the subject matter and length of course appeared to account for many of the differences in observed attendance patterns. General interest courses and/or the shorter courses were mutually supportive. Since content and length were controlled by the institution, it was probable that the attendance patterns could be altered by modifying the structure and content of night classes.

Dropouts, constituting 27.8 percent of the original enrollment, were found to have certain differentiating characteristics. Age, marital status, number of dependents, occupation, and previous participation in adult education were found to be characteristics that differentiated those who persisted and those who discontinued attendance. On the other hand, education, sex, years of residence in the area, and travel time to class were not significant characteristics.

When the characteristics were tested by subject matter and length of course, further conclusions were drawn. Sex, age, marital status, and previous participation in adult education showed no significant differences when tested by subject matter or course length. On the other hand, the number of children, education, and occupation showed variations by length, also occupation showed variations by subject matter. In general, then, the persistent attenders were older, married housewives who had children, while the dropouts were younger adults who were usually single.

The influence of the length of the course on persistence of attendance is obvious, but the specific attributes of subject matter need more detailed analysis. Such an analysis, however, involves such factors as motivation, objectives, and the instructional situation. These are sometimes nebulous and esoteric aspects of student participation that are difficult to study.[7]

> There was no significant difference between the dropout group and the persisting group when the age category, eighteen to twenty years, was compared with the grouping of twenty-one years of age and older. Age did not contribute significantly to withdrawal from college for this population group.

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[7] Gary Dickinson and Collie Verner, "Attendance Patterns and Dropouts In Adult Night School Classes," Journal of Adult Education, Vol. XIX, (No. 1, 1967), pp. 24-33.

> They found that if an individual were married, the probability was greater that he or she would drop out during the semester than if he or she were single.
>
> It was also found that students from the lower socioeconomic status were more prone to withdraw than those students with other socioeconomic classifications.

Differences were very evident between the two groups' dropout rates when teacher performance was compared. Ninety-six percent of the persisting students reported that generally their teachers' performances in the classroom were excellent or very good, only fifty-two percent of the dropouts chose positive superatives in describing their teachers' performance.

The amount of help supplied by counselors also seemed to be a factor in the student dropout rates. Dropout students, in general, felt their counselor had been of "some help" or "no help" to them. A higher percentage of persisters felt that the counselors had been "very helpful."

It was found that students whose parents attended college were likely to persist in the community college. Also students who had selected a program-transfer, technical-occupational, or enrichment were more likely to persist.

Bossen also found that the student who was taking six units or less of course work was more prone to withdraw during the semester. Surprisingly, the demands of paid employment did not encourage withdrawal. It is significant that more

persisters worked whether part time or full time than students who withdrew.[8]

In conclusion the researchers recommended a replication of the study in different public junior college environments. Results of these studies would make it possible further to generalize the conclusions. Knowing more about the characteristics of withdrawal-prone students would enable counselors and teachers to be more effective with this group.

Stafford[9] conducted a statewide follow-up study of dropouts in the Florida community colleges. The purpose of the study was to develop dropout figures for the community colleges of Florida that took into account students' needs and goals, and to develop a profile of characteristics for both the typical dropout and for the persisting student.

Data were collected from 850 community college students in the state by means of a personnel questionnaire. Information was analyzed statistically in some cases and by frequency display in others. Specific questions of the study were answered as follows:

1. Dropout rates were significantly reduced when those students who returned to college, after two years, and pursued course work were deleted from the original dropout data.

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[8]Doris A Bossen, "A Follow-Up Study of the Junior College Withdrawal Student," (unpublished Ph.D Dissertation, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1968), pp. 1-71.

[9]Harry Arthur Stafford, "Dropouts in the Florida Community Colleges: A Statewide Follow-Up Study," (unpublished Ed.D. dissertation, University of Florida, 1974), pp. 1-71.

2. Dropout rates improved when dropout figures were modified to eliminate those students who accomplished goals without completing two years of work. However, this did not appear to make a significant difference.

3. Demonstrated output for accountability was significantly affected by the change indicated in questions one and two above.

4. The large number of students-in the class entering in 1970-meeting or in pursuit of educational goals indicated that individual needs were being met by Florida's community colleges.

5. The profile of persisters and dropouts according to intellectual and non-intellectual characteristics provided significant information for analysis of dropouts and predictions of persistence.

Future studies should be carried out in different geographical locations for possible modification of these findings if appropriate.

This study showed some evidence that a redefinition of persisters and dropouts, for Florida community colleges, was appropriate. It also indicated that the Florida community college student was different in certain respects from other college students. Information concerning these differences would be useful in analysis and prediction of dropouts for planning and accountability purposes.

Some specific conclusions that can be drawn from the analysis of the accountability standards imposed by the state of Florida are:

1. When dropout figures are modified as indicated in this study, it was found that eighty-four percent of the students

who entered Florida's community colleges in 1970 had met their educational goals or were still pursuing them.

2. When dropouts are studied in Florida's community colleges with traditional methods, traditional results are obtained.
3. When dropout figures are modified to take into consideration the needs of the individual and the community, highly significant results are obtained, indicating that the community colleges are meeting these needs.
4. Initial and follow-up responses that included mail and telephoning were similar in nature and were considered alike for the study's purpose.
5. The following specific relationships were found according to statistical analyses:
   a. There was significant relationship between aspirations and the following:

      age
      marital status
      educational level upon entering

   b. There was significant relationship between accomplishment (attrition) and the following:

      marital status
      grade-point average
      student aspirations
      feelings about experience

   c. There was no significant relationship between aspirations and the following:

sex
race
grade-point average

d. There was no significant relationship between accomplishment (attrition) and the following:

age
sex
race
educational level upon entering

6. The following were deemed to be related to accomplishment by frequency comparison:

home value
career success values
social and economic security
secondary school preparation
parental influence

7. The following were deemed to be not related to accomplishment by frequency comparison:

adjustment
lack of interest
military service
marriage
illness

As is often the case, more questions were raised than were answered by Stafford's study. The traditional variables such as age, sex, race and others which did not appear to be related to attrition probably should generate questions which might answer, why? The fact that these variables did not appear important might only lead to a finding that these variables are interrelated with others which did not appear significant. Other groups are a larger sample might provide some answers. Florida's community college students do not always fit the traditional pattern. Studies of this kind are needed in other institutions and locations.

Kowalski,[10] in 1975 has performed the most recent study available that is related to the student dropout problem. His study examined the difference between the home environments, college environments, and the personal and academic characteristics of persisting and nonpersisting students at Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. The population of this study was comprised of students enrolled during the fall semester of 1973.

Within the design of this study three separate clusters of factors were examined. These factors were as follows:

1. The home environment as expressed by family size, parents' marital status, education of parents, and problems and pressures at home has an influence on persisting in college.
2. The college environment as expressed by the student's relationship with other students or with an advisor, faculty members, and the student personnel services has an influence on persisting in college.
3. The individual's personal, emotional and academic characteristics as expressed by feelings of happiness-unhappiness, encouraged-discourage, healthy-unhealthy, good study habits-poor study habits, self-confident-lacking self-confidence, adequate ability-inadequate

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[10]Casimir John Kowalski, op. cit., pp. 1-93.

ability, certain goals-uncertain goals, etc., have an influence on persisting in college.

The general procedure in this study involved selecting two random samples of Indiana University students. One sample was composed of persisting students and the other sample consisted of nonpersisting students. Further, the design called for the development of a questionnaire that allowed the students to respond to selected items that related to the problems of college attendance. Questionnaires were mailed to a sample of persisting students and to a sample of nonpersisting students. This information was then compiled into statistical data that, when analyzed, allowed for comparisons between persisting and nonpersisting students of selected factors.

In order to obtain a more accurate description of the persisting and nonpersisting students in this study some information was obtained from the Admission and Records Office.

Kowalski reported the following conclusions:

1. Students with academic disabilities and personal pressures are unlikely to continue their education.
2. Students with academic and personal problems can be identified as potential dropouts.
3. The father's educational level is highly indicative as to whether or not a student will persist or withdraw from college.

4. A positive personal relationship with a student's advisor and faculty members influences the student's chances to remain in school.
5. Students' needs have not been adequately satisfied by student personnel services.
6. It appears likely that having a definite educational goal in mind enhances persistence in college.
7. There are sufficient numbers of programs and courses available to students at Indiana University.
8. The dropout problem suggests that something is wrong with our educational institutions. Apparently current educational practices are treating a symptom and are not meeting the real cause of the problem.
9. The college needs to continue to explore means that will not only keep students in college until they complete their degrees, but that will give them a useful and meaningful education.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

In the present study, a random sample of 220 adults, former students at Seminole Junior College, were administered a "Student Attendance or Student Attrition Questionnaire" in order to determine the differences and similarities among the three groups' responses. Dropouts' (N=55), chronic-absentees' (N-65), persisters' (N=100) responses to seven types of personal and interpersonal problems were compared to determine any differences that may have existed among the three groups. Additional comparisons were made with the three groups' biographical data.

This chapter contains a detailed explanation of the methods and procedures that were used in conducting the study. These methods and procedures were divided into three phases or time orientations--pre-survey procedures, survey procedures, and data-analysis procedures.

Pre-Survey Procedures

Selection of Participants

It was necessary to select three groups of participants for the study. Persisters were selected from among those students who completed an associate degree or vocational training program during the summer of 1976 or who completed an associate degree or vocational training program during the 1976-77 academic year. The number of students who qualified for the persisters population is shown in Table 1.

Chronic absentees were selected from among those students who were absent more than ten percent of the class time allocated for a particular course or activity in which they were enrolled during the summer of 1976 at Seminole Junior College. The population of chronic absentees further included students who were absent more than ten percent of the time allocated for a particular course or activity, but did not drop out of the course or activity during the semester. The number of students who were chronic absentees during the summer (1976) session and the numbers for the 1976-77 school year are presented in Table 2.

Dropouts were selected from a population of students who dropped out of regular classes or a technical-vocational

T A B L E 1

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE POPULATION OF PERSISTERS

School Sessions	Students Completing Technical Vocational Programs	Students Completing Associate Degrees
Summer, 1976	87	64
Fall, 1976	112	234
Spring, 1977	132	614
T O T A L S	331	912

T A B L E 2

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE POPULATION OF CHRONIC ABSENTEES

School Session	Absentees From Technical-Vocational Programs	Absentees From Regular Programs
Summer, 1976	24	38
Fall, 1976	63	144
Spring, 1977	65	129
T O T A L S	152	463

programs at Seminole Junior College during the 1976-77 school year, but who dropped out after completion of more than three weeks of classwork had been completed but prior to the end of the semester. The number of dropouts from the 1976 summer session and the number during the 1976-77 academic year are presented in Table 3.

Development of a Data-Collection Instrument

Perhaps the most time-consuming and difficult task was the development of a data-collection instrument used in the study. The developmental procedures involved surveying existing literature for previous questionnaires as well as developing new categories for problems cited by students. Questionnaires used by Kowalski in a dropout study conducted in 1973 at Indiana University were very helpful.

Biographical Information Related to Dropouts and Persisters

Several studies have been conducted in which the researchers compared the biographical and personal data of dropouts and persisters. Many variables once thought to be related to success in college have since been found to be unrelated. Such variables as overall grade-point average (Mehra[1]) and aptitute test

[1] N. Mehra, Dec. 1973.

T A B L E 3

NUMBER OF STUDENTS AVAILABLE FOR THE DROPOUT POPULATION

School Session	Dropouts From Technical-Vocational Programs	Dropouts From Regular Courses
Summer, 1976	31	102
Fall, 1976	51	163
Spring, 1977	47	295
T O T A L S	129	560

scores (Astin,[2] Panos and Astin,[3] Bayer,[4]) have failed to yield conclusive results. In a broader sense, some studies have found variables that are related to persistence in college. Some researchers (Thistlethwaite,[5] Van Alystne,[6] and Astin[7]) have reported that higher family income is related to persistence in college.

In summary, it may be stated that family birth order, sex, the educational level of the father, and personal commitment are the variables that have been consistently related to persistence in college. These were the variables included on the questionnaire used in the present study.

Establishing Problem Categories

The next phase of questionnaire development was determining the areas or types of problems that tend to disrupt the educational process. This was approached in two ways. First the researcher examined the questionnaires used in several previous studies. Next, reasons given by students

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[2]A. Astin, op. cit., p. 107.

[3]R. J. Panos and A.W. Astin, op. cit., p. 57-72.

[4]A Bayer, op. cit., 1973.

[5]D. L. Thistlethwaite, "Recruitment and Retention of Talented College Students," U. S. Office of Education, 1963.

[6]Van Alystne, op. cit., p. 27.

[7]A. Astin, op. cit., p. 109.

who had dropped out of Seminole Junior College or who were chronically absent from classes were factor analyzed.

Factor Analysis

The method used to determine categories was a statistical analysis of problems reported to the researcher through a series of exit interviews with dropouts, absentees, and persisters. During these sessions, eighty-two participants listed problems they had encountered that tended to disrupt their educational program, and gave seriousness ratings to these problems on a five point Likert scale. The participants' responses were analyzed by using a varimax rotation method of factor analysis.[8] This method of factor analysis tends to group responses according to predetermined criteria.

Results of the factor analysis showed eight distinct groupings of problems. The general categories and the number of problems in each are shown in Figure 1.

The data presented in Figure 1 shows that problems were grouped into one of eight categories. Names of the categories were derived from the types of problems contained in each. The final category, "General Problems," only contained two

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[8]F. N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, 1964), p. 650.

Problem Categories Resulting From the Factor Analysis	Number of Problem Statements Contained in the Category
1. Personal Problems	18
2. Family Problems	5
3. Commuting/Transportation Problems	7
4. Curriculum/Scheduling Problems	6
5. Class-Related Problems	13
6. Vocational Problems	8
7. Institution-Related Problems	9
8. General Problems	2

Figure 1. Results of the factor analysis creating eight categories of problems that tend to interrupt college attendance.

statements and one of these was placed in the "Personal Problems" category while the other was placed in the "Class-Related Problems" category.

Uniqueness of Categories

A look at the problems and categories of problems will demonstrate that their scope and nature are not reflective of many problems encountered at other colleges and universities. For instance, there were no problems related to campus life or dormitory living such as social clubs, library services, health services, food services, college publications, student activities, and intercollegiate athletics programs. Problems related to campus living are absent because Seminole Junior College has no dormitories and provides living facilities for only a few athletes. Problems related to on-campus services are minimized for two reasons: (1) most students live off campus and are responsible for their own health, food, and recreational activities; and (2) most students are adults who have very little interest in collegiate social organizations and student activities or in intercollegiate athletic programs.

The seven categories of problems were established and data-collection instruments were developed for each of the

three groups already identified. The finalized instruments are shown in Appendices A, B, and C.

Pilot Study

A pilot study was conducted in order to establish the validity and reliability of the data-collection instruments and to determine any problems that may later occur in the administration, scoring, and interpretation of the questionnaires.

Twenty-five dropouts, absentees, and persisters were selected at random and asked to complete the questionnaires during the pilot study. These participants also made any comments or suggestions they desired concerning the data-collection instruments.

Results of the pilot study were used to determine the validity and reliability of the data-collection instruments. The test-retest reliability of the questionnaires was computed as follows: (1) Dropouts, $r = 0.913$; (2) Absentees, $r = 0.926$; and (3) Persisters, $r = 0.944$. These reliability coefficients were more than sufficient.

The content validity of the instruments was established by categorizing all three groups' responses, utilizing a discriminate function analysis as the testing statistic.[9]

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[9]R. E. Kirk, Experimental Design: Procedures for the Behavioral Sciences (California: Brooks/Cole, 1968), p. 488.

This statistic categorizes individuals into a predetermined number of groups according to their responses. The seven questionnaire categories were used to determine the accuracy of the questionnaire in identifying the real problems encountered by students at Seminole Junior College.

Results of the discriminate function analysis showed that the content validity for the three groups' questionnaires was as follows: (1) Dropouts, $r = 0.773$; (2) Absentees, $r = 0.749$; and (3) Persisters, $r = 0.817$. These validity coefficients were more than sufficient.

Survey Procedures

The questionnaires were administered to the three groups of participants during the spring semester of the 1976-77 academic year. The researcher administered all questionnaires on an individual or small-group basis in an attempt to control the participants' responses. Questionnaires were administered to 200 randomly-selected members of each population and a random sample of 75 was drawn from the usable responses received.

Data-Analysis Procedures

The final phase of the procedures was to analyze the results. The primary comparisons were among the three

groups' mean ratings of the seven problem categories. Each group's average rating of a particular problem was determined by multiplying the rating points by the number of frequencies at each point, and averaging the resulting products. This index was then multiplied by the percentage of the group who rated the problem. Average ratings for each question were treated as raw scores, and a mean (X) and standard deviation (S) was calculated for the ratings of all questions within each category. Comparisons were made among mean category ratings to test the seven null hypotheses.

In addition to comparing the categories of problems, comparisons were made on each questionnaire item within each category. These results allowed the researcher to compare the three groups' responses to individual types of problems.

Additional comparisons were made among the three groups' biographical data. Comparisons were made on the variables of race, marital status, sex, birth order in the family, educational level of the father, academic performance at Seminole Junior College, and vocational plans upon entering Seminole Junior College. These variables were not only compared, but their relationship to college attendance was also determined.

Statistical Analysis

The null hypotheses were tested by using a one-way analysis of variance-testing statistic. This statistic is appropriate

for comparing two or more groups' mean values at a single calculation.[10] Comparisons among the groups' responses to individual questions were also made with the ANOVA testing statistic.

Biographical information was compared by using a Chi Square (X^2) test of frequencies. Additional correlation methods were employed to determine the relationship of the biographical data to persistence in college.

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[10]Gene V. Glass and Julian C. Stanley, Statistical Methods in Education and Psychology (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1970), pp. 338-380.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF DATA ANALYSIS

Questionnaire ratings were made by two-hundred twenty (N=220) students who had attended Seminole Junior College during the summer of 1976 and/or during the fall and spring semesters of the 1976-77 school year. Persisters, chronic absentees, and dropouts made importance ratings of sixty-eight situations which commonly tend to interrupt or terminate college attendance. A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the three groups' importance ratings and to test the seven null hypotheses stated in the study.

Additional comparisons were made among the three groups' biographical data such as marital status, birth order, number of children, father's educational level, academic performance at Seminole Junior College (SJC), and educational plans when entering and leaving SJC. The results of these secondary comparisons are presented in the second part of the Chapter.

Chapter IV contains the results of all data analysis. The presentation of each null hypothesis was as follows: (1) The null hypothesis is restated, (2) A Table containing the three groups' ratings of the statements is presented,

(3) The results of comparing the three groups' ratings are presented in a second table, and (4) The decision made from the statistical results is presented with each null hypothesis.

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number One

The first null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_1 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of nineteen personal problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The first null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 4. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 5.

The results presented in Table 5 show that there were no significant differences among the three groups' rating of personal problems ($F = 1.228$; $df = 2/54$; $p > .05$). These results would not allow the researcher to reject the first null hypothesis.

TABLE 4

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

		Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1.	Personal illness	1.45	2.9538	1.3818
2.	Illness of immediate family member	1.57	2.9538	1.0909
3.	Personal/emotional problems	.43	1.3076	.7273
4.	Marital problems	.73	.7077	.8364
5.	Pregnancy or birth of a child	.35	.9231	.6182
6.	Conflict with college authorities	.35	.3846	.1818
7.	Inadequate financial aid	.65	.3077	.8000
8.	Too expensive	.61	.4462	.8364
9.	Personal goals and values different from college's	.70	.5846	.9091
10.	I got tired of school	.69	.6615	1.4182
11.	Lost interest in education	.57	.4308	.4545
12.	Inability to compete with other students	.27	.3846	.5091
13.	An unforseen catastrophe such as car accident, tornado, etc. caused me to consider dropping out	.29	1.1077	.8000
14.	I felt out of place at SJC	.24	.4308	.5818
15.	I could not afford the clothing, books, fees, meals, and etc.	.24	.2308	.9091
16.	Lack of personal concern among college personnel	.31	.5385	.6545
17.	Personal conflicts with peers	.57	.4923	.4000
18.	Poor social relationships	.18	.4154	.2909
19.	Poor grades	.39	.6154	.6182
	Mean	0.5574	0.8049	0.7378
	Standard Deviation	0.3794	0.7148	0.3252

TABLE 5

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.6225	2	0.3113	1.228	$p > .05$
Within Subjects	13.6915	54	0.2535		
TOTAL	14.3140	56			

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Two

The second null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_2 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of five family problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The second null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 6. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 7.

The results presented in Table 7 show that there were no significant differences among the three groups' ratings of family problems ($F = 3.159$; $df = 2/12$; $p > .05$). These results would not allow the researcher to reject the second null hypothesis.

TABLE 6

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF PERSONAL PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

		Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1.	No one to stay with children while I attended classes	.27	.4769	.4000
2.	Divorced and/or separated and I needed to be at home with my children	.22	.3077	.2909
3.	Parents or family wanted me to drop out	.10	.2000	.2909
4.	Gave birth to a child	.14	.1692	.2909
5.	Children required too much time	.21	.4308	.2909
	Mean	0.188	0.3169	0.3127
	Standard Deviation . . .	0.0676	0.1361	0.0488

TABLE 7

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF FAMILY PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.0537	2	0.02685	3.159	
Within Subjects	0.1019	12	0.0085		$p > .05$
TOTAL	0.1556	14			

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Three

The third null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_3 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of seven commuting/transportation problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The third null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 8. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 9.

The results presented in Table 9 show that there were no significant differences among the three groups' rating of commuting/transportation problems ($F = 0.473$; $df = 2/18$; $p > .05$). These results would not allow the researcher to reject the third null hypothesis.

TABLE 8

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF COMMUTING/TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

		Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1.	Too far to travel	.57	.7846	.7818
2.	Too tired to attend classes after working all day	1.09	1.2308	1.5455
3.	Lack of transportation	.43	.7539	.4000
4.	Costs too much to commute	.42	.6308	.9455
5.	Lack of security for vehicles at college	.47	.5692	.1990
6.	Lack of parking facilities	.47	.3539	.2545
7.	Poor road and/or weather conditions	1.00	1.6254	1.0182
	Mean	0.6357	0.8484	0.7349
	Standard Deviation	0.2849	0.4315	0.4855

TABLE 9

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF COMMUTING/TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.1585	2	0.0793	0.4729	$p > .05$
Within Subjects	3.0187	18	0.1677		
TOTAL	3.1772	20			

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Four

The fourth null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_4 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of six scheduling conflicts as related to attendance at a community college.

The fourth null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 10. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 11.

The results presented in Table 11 show that there were significant differences among the three groups' rating of scheduling problems ($F = 5.583$; $df = 2/15$; $p < .05$). These results allowed the researcher to reject the fourth null hypothesis.

Additional comparisons were made among the three groups mean ratings. A Newman-Keuls Test was used to make the pair-wise comparisons. The results are presented in Table 12.

The results presented in Table 12 indicate that the persisters made significantly lower ratings of the scheduling conflicts than the absentees and dropouts.

TABLE 10

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

		Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1.	Course was not offered at a time when I needed it	.69	1.1077	.7273
2.	Class was closed before I could enroll	.38	.7077	.5455
3.	Courses needed were not offered	.45	1.1231	.9091
4.	Courses needed were not offered at a time when I could attend	.73	.9846	.9818
5.	Courses needed were not offered on the days I could attend	.51	.6462	.8000
6.	Lack of assistance in planning a program of studies	.63	.8308	.5818
	Mean	0.565	0.9000	0.7576
	Standard Deviation	0.1397	0.2031	0.1743

TABLE 11

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.3391	2	0.1696	5.583	
					$p < .05$
Within Subjects	0.4557	15	0.0304		
TOTAL	0.7948	17			

TABLE 12

SUMMARY OF PAIR-WISE COMPARISONS MADE AMONG THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF SCHEDULING CONFLICTS

Rank Ordered Means		$\bar{X}_1$ Persisters	$\bar{X}_3$ Dropouts	$\bar{X}_2$ Absentees
Persisters	$\bar{X}_1 = 0.5650$	—	0.1926	0.335*
Dropouts	$\bar{X}_3 = 0.7576$		—	0.1424
Absentees	$\bar{X}_2 = 0.9000$			—
$MS_{within} = 0.0304$				

*Significant beyong the .05 level

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Five

The fifth null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_5 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of fourteen class-related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The fifth null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 13. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 14.

The results presented in Table 14 show that there were significant differences among the three groups' rating of class-related problems ($F = 9.547$; $df = 2/39$; $p < .01$). These results allowed the researcher to reject the fifth null hypothesis.

Additional pair-wise comparisons were made among the three groups' mean ratings in an attempt to locate the specific differences. The results of these comparisons are presented in Table 15.

The results of the Newman-Keuls Test, shown in Table 15, indicate that the persisters had significantly lower ratings of the class-related conflicts than the absentees and dropouts.

TABLE 13

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

	Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1. Course work was too easy or too hard	.74	.9231	1.0182
2. Course work was irrelevant	.46	.5539	.4364
3. Instructor did a very poor job of teaching the class	.52	.8000	.7273
4. Instructor let some students dominate the class	.42	.4769	.5455
5. Personality clash or conflict with instructor	.29	.6462	.6545
6. Classes too large and impersonal	.28	.4615	.5455
7. Too much demanded for the course credit given	.59	.7231	.3636
8. Course credits would not transfer to another institution	.36	.6154	.2182
9. I was absent from class too much	.26	.7077	.2182
10. Unfair procedures for makeup work	.52	.6923	.4727
11. Classroom environment not conducive to learning	.35	.8154	.6182
12. Got behind in class and couldn't catch up	.46	.7077	.5091
13. I was about to flunk	.27	.7539	.4727
14. Course content was not what I had expected	.44	.8154	.6545
MEAN	0.4257	0.6923	0.5325
STANDARD DEVIATION	0.13799	0.1322	0.2065

TABLE 14

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.5041	2	0.2521	9.547	$p < .01$
Within Subjects	1.0291	39	0.0264		
TOTAL	1.5332	41			

TABLE 15

SUMMARY OF PAIR-WISE COMPARISONS MADE AMONG THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS

Rank Ordered Means		$\bar{X}_1$ Persisters	$\bar{X}_3$ Dropouts	$\bar{X}_2$ Absentees
Persisters	$\bar{X}_1 = 0.4257$	---	0.1068	0.2666**
Dropouts	$\bar{X}_3 = 0.5325$		---	0.1598*
Absentees	$\bar{X}_2 = 0.6923$			---
$MS_{error} = 0.0264$				

*Significant beyond the .05 level
**Significant beyond the .01 level

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Six

The sixth null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_6 There were no statistically significant difference among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of eight vocation-related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The sixth null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 16. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 17.

The results presented in Table 17 show that there were no significant differences among the three groups' rating of vocation-related problems ($F = 2.374$; $df = 2/21$; $p > .05$). These results would not allow the researcher to reject the sixth null hypothesis.

TABLE 16

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

	Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1. Transferred to a location too far to commute	.21	.6769	.1091
2. Obtained a job at a location too far to commute	.22	.5539	.1455
3. Work schedule came into conflict with class times	.75	1.4923	1.5455
4. SJC did not offer the vocational program desired	.26	.6154	.1818
5. Career opportunities changed during the course of the program	.30	.7231	.3636
6. Received job desired before completion of degree program	.12	.4462	.5455
7. Considered transferring to another college because of change in plans	.11	.3231	.5091
8. Lack of definite career plans	.41	.6769	.7636
Mean	0.2975	0.68846	0.5205
Standard Deviation . . .	0.2067	0.3512	0.4720

TABLE 17

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.6154	2	0.3077	2.374	
					$p > .05$
Within Subjects	2.7221	21	0.1296		
TOTAL	3.3375	23			

Results of Testing Null Hypothesis Number Seven

The seventh null hypothesis was stated as follows:

Ho_7 There were no statistically significant differences among the absentee, dropout, and persister importance ratings of nine institution-related problems as related to attendance at a community college.

The seventh null hypothesis was tested by comparing the importance ratings made by the three groups of participants as shown in Table 18. A one-way analysis of variance testing statistic was used to make the comparison. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in Table 19.

The results presented in Table 19 show that there were significant differences among the three groups' rating of institution-related problems ($F = 14.433$; $df = 2/24$; $p < .01$). These results allowed the researcher to reject the seventh null hypothesis.

Additional comparisons were made among the three groups' mean ratings in an attempt to locate specific differences. Results of the Newman-Keuls Tests are presented in Table 20.

The results presented in Table 20 show that the persisters made significantly lower ratings of the institution-related problems than the dropouts and absentees. In addition, the dropouts made significantly lower ratings of the institution-related problems than the absentees.

TABLE 18

PERSISTERS', ABSENTEES', AND DROPOUTS' IMPORTANCE RATINGS OF INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

	Persisters	Absentees	Dropouts
1. Conflict with SJC authorities	.17	.5231	.2000
2. College offices were not accessible at opportune times	.43	.8769	.6000
3. Curriculum was not adequate for some ethnic groups	.22	.5077	.5091
4. Counselors were not available when needed	.41	.7539	.1636
5. Disliked general atmosphere at SJC	.22	.5692	.2000
6. Too much emphasis on sports at SJC	.22	.5385	.3818
7. Too many rules and too much supervision	.20	.8923	.4000
8. Too much freedom and not enough supervision	.12	.3077	.2000
9. Enrollment procedures were too complicated	.28	.6615	.4000
Mean	0.2522	0.6256	0.3393
Standard Deviation . . .	0.1045	0.1898	0.1561

TABLE 19

RESULTS OF THE ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE COMPARING THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS THAT TEND TO INTERRUPT COLLEGE ATTENDANCE

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Degrees of Freedom	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Significance Level
Among Groups	0.6870	2	0.3435	14.433	
					$p < .01$
Within Subjects	0.5706	24	0.0238		
TOTAL	1.2576	26			

TABLE 20

SUMMARY OF PAIR-WISE COMPARISONS MADE AMONG THE THREE GROUPS' RATINGS OF INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS

Rank Ordered Means		$\bar{X}_1$ Persisters	$\bar{X}_3$ Dropouts	$\bar{X}_2$ Absentees
Persisters	$\bar{X}_1 = 0.2522$	---	0.0872	0.4606**
Dropouts	$\bar{X}_3 = 0.3394$		---	0.2862*
Absentees	$\bar{X}_2 = 0.6256$			---
$MS_{error} = 0.0238$				

*Significant beyond the .05 level
**Significant beyond the .01 level

Summary of Results

The results of testing the seven null hypotheses showed that differences existed among the three groups' ratings in three problem areas; (1) Scheduling Conflicts, (2) Class-Related Problems, and (3) Institution Related Problems. In each case, the persisters made significantly lower ratings of the problems in these areas than the absentees and dropouts.

Results of testing four other null hypotheses showed that there were no significant differences among the three groups' ratings in the following areas: (1) Personal Problems, (2) Family Problems, (3) Commuting/Transportation Problems, and (4) Vocational Problems.

As expected, the problem areas receiving the highest ratings varied from one group to the other. The three highest ratings made by each group were as follows:

Persisters

1.	Illness of immediate family member	1.570
2.	Personal Illness	1.450
3.	Too tired to attend class after working all day	1.090

Absentees

1.	Personal Illness	2.954
2.	Illness of immediate family member	2.369
3.	Poor roads and/or weather conditions	1.615

Dropouts

1.	Too tired to attend class after working all day	1.545
2.	Work schedule conflicted with class time	1.545

3. I got tired of school 1.418

It should be noted that the dropouts did not feel that personal illness or family illness contributed to their decision to dropout.

Several secondary comparisons were made among the three groups biographical information. Results of these comparisons showed no significant differences among the three groups (1) marital status, (2) number of children, (3) father's educational level, (4) college grades, and (5) educational intentions or plans. There was a difference among the numbers of males and females in the three groups. There were significantly more females among the dropouts than in the other two groups.

Secondary Findings

In addition to the seven hypotheses, several secondary comparisons were made with biographical information which had been found to be important in previous studies. In particular comparisons were made among the three groups' information on the following variables: (1) marital status, (2) sex, (3) number of children, (4) father's educational level, (5) college grade point average, and (6) educational intentions. A summary of the three groups' biographical data is presented in Table 21.

A comparison of the three groups' marital status showed no significant differences ($X^2 = 5.432$; df = 6: $p < .05$). About 85 percent of the persisters were married, while only 70-72 percent of the absentees and dropouts were married.

There was a significant difference in the numbers of males and females in the three groups ($X^2 = 8.978$; df = 2: $p < .05$). There were significantly more females in the dropouts than in the persisters and absentees.

A comparison of the number of children reported in the three groups showed no significant differences ($F = 1.332$; df = 2/169: $p < .05$). The dropouts had the fewest number of children, while the absentees had the most.

TABLE 21

SUMMARY OF BIOGRAPHICAL DATA FOR PERSISTERS, ABSENTEES AND DROPOUTS

	PERSISTERS			ABSENTEES			DROPOUTS		
		#	%		#	%		#	%
MARITAL STATUS	Married	79	85	Married	46	72	Married	19	70
	Single	13	13	Single	17	26	Single	7	26
	Divorced	2	2	Divorced	1	2	Divorced	1	4
SEX	Male	57	62	Male	51	78	Male	16	59
	Female	35	38	Female	14	22	Female	11	41
NUMBER OF CHILDREN	$\bar{X}$ = 1.752			$\bar{X}$ = 1.787			$\bar{X}$ = 1.385		
	S = 1.012			S = 0.863			S = 0.743		
FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL	< 8th grade	20	27	< 8th grade	14	30	< 8th grade	8	32
	< 12th grade	19	26	< 12th grade	10	22	< 12th grade	3	12
	High school	24	32	High School	14	30	High School	13	52
	Some College	8	11	Some College	5	11	Some College	1	4
	College Degree	3	4	College Degree	3	7	College Degree	0	0
COLLEGE GRADES	Inadequate	1	1	Inadequate	1	2	Inadequate	0	0
	Marginal	17	20	Marginal	12	20	Marginal	2	9
	Adequate	68	79	Adequate	47	78	Adequate	21	91
EDUCATIONAL INTENTIONS	Take one course	11	12		1	2		1	3
	Take several courses	13	14		8	12		4	13
	Complete a tech program	0	0		3	5		0	0
	Complege a 2-year degree	54	57		41	63		19	61
	Complete a 4-year degree	13	14		11	16		6	20
	Other	3	3		2	2		1	3
	TOTALS	94	100		66	100		31	100

There were no significant differences among the educational level of the fathers ($X^2 = 4.713$; df = 8: $p < .05$). The dropouts' fathers had the highest educational levels, while the absentees' fathers had the lowest educational levels.

There were no significant differences among the three groups' grade point averages, although the results approached significance ($X^2 = 8.328$; df = 4: $p < .05$). The dropouts reported the highest grades, while the absentees reported the lowest grades.

A comparison was also made among the three groups' educational plans upon entering SJC. There were no significant differences among the three groups' educational plans at the time they began college ($X^2 = 9.513$; df = 10: $p < .05$). The greatest number of dropouts planned to obtain a 4-year degree, while the persisters had the fewest number planning to get a 4-year degree.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The purpose of the present study was to compare students' ratings of sixty-eight problems which tend to disrupt college attendance. More specifically, the study was intended to compare the importance ratings made by persisters, chronically absent students, and dropouts among adults attending Seminole Junior College.

A Student Attendance Questionnaire and a Student Attrition Questionnaire were developed and administered to one-hundred (N=100) persisters, sixty-five (N=65) chronic absentees, and fifty-five (N=55) dropouts. Respondents were asked to make continuum ratings of sixty-eight problems in seven categories.

A one-way analysis of variance was used to compare the three groups' importance ratings and to test the seven null hypotheses stated in the study.

Additional comparisons were made among the three groups' biographical data such as marital status, birth order, number of children, father's educational level, academic performance at Seminole Junior College (SJC), and educational plans when entering and leaving SJC.

The results of testing the seven null hypotheses showed

that differences existed among the groups' ratings in three problem areas: (1) Scheduling Conflicts, (2) Class-Related Problems, and (3) Institution-Related Problems. In each case, the persisters made significantly lower ratings of the problems in these areas than the absentees and dropouts.

Results of testing four other null hypotheses showed that there were no significant differences among the three groups' ratings in the following areas: (1) Personal Problems, (2) Family Problems, (3) Commuting/Transportation Problems, and (4) Vocational Problems.

The problems receiving the highest overall ratings were as follows:

1. Personal Illness
2. Illness of Immediate Family Member
3. Too tired to attend class after working all day.

Conclusions

The following conclusions are presented subject to the limitations of the study as to sample size and the population from which the sample groups were drawn.

1. The evidence suggests that there are not enough serious personal problems for this factor to be significant in causing dropouts.
2. Family problems among the evening students at Seminole Junior College are not a significant factor in causing students to terminate their educational goals.

3. Even though the Seminole Junior College has virtually no on-campus housing, the commuting and transportation problems seem to have little effect on a student's attendance.

4. Scheduling conflicts are a major reason why students drop out of the Seminole Junior College. The evidence indicated a need for concerted effort on the part of college personnel who plan the curriculum to offer the needed courses at the right time and day.

5. The evidence indicated that class-related problems; such as, coursework was too hard or the instructor did a poor job of teaching the class, represent a major factor in interrupting a student's college attendance.

6. Problems related to vocations were not a serious threat to student attendance at the Seminole Junior College.

7. The evidence suggested that the needs of the students in use of college offices such as financial aids and registration were not being met in the evening college.

8. The study showed evidence that the curriculum should be broadened to better serve the different ethnic groups represented.

9. A student's marital status had no serious relationship to his becoming a dropout.

10. The number of children a student might have was not significant in his attendance.

11. The evidence indicated that females were more inclined to dropout than males.

12. A father's educational level is not indicative of whether a student will persist or withdraw.

13. The student's grade point averages and educational plans on entering Seminole Junior College were not significant in the students attendance pattern.

Questions and Implications

It is interesting to note that very little has been done in the past to resolve the dropout dilemma in which Oklahoma's community colleges find themselves. All of the college leaders are aware of the problem but little research has been accomplished to study in general the dropout or persister. It is hoped that this study will provide a general research design which will allow other institutions to identify their own dropout characteristics and thus have a basis for corrective measures.

The present study did raise a number of questions which need to be answered by future research.

1. Since this sample was limited to evening college students, are the problems related to evening college students the same as those related to day students?

2. The results of this study were based on a single community college. Are the problems found in this study common to all the community colleges in Oklahoma or does each institution have its own specific set of attrition problems.

3. Are the dropout problems found in the two-year colleges different from those found in the four-year schools and universities?

4. Does the size of the institution and its particular educational environment influence attrition rates?

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO THE SAMPLE OF DROPOUTS

ATTRITION STUDY QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Race: _____ Marital Status: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____ Number of Children: _____

Birth Order: _____ Educational level of father: _____

I left Seminole Junior College (SJC) ___Voluntarily ___Involuntarily

My academic performance at SJC was . . . ___Inadequate ___Marginal ___Adequate

When I entered SJC I intended to . . .

___take only one course
___take several courses
___complete a technical program
___graduate from SJC with a 2-year degree
___graduate from a 4-year institution
___obtain a graduate degree
___Other; _____

I left SJC . . .

___Intending to transfer to another educational institution
___Intending to go to work
___Intending to travel
___Intending to enter military service
___With no definite plans
___Not sure or no opinion

DIRECTIONS: Please check those factors under each category which have contributed to your dropping out of Seminole Junior College. Next, use the number codes provided to indicate the importance of each factor to your decision. Be sure to circle one number after each statement.

5 = Extremely Important
4 = Important
3 = Not sure or no opinion
2 = Unimportant
1 = Very Unimportant
0 = Not Applicable

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

1.	Personal Illness	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Illness of immediate family member	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	Personal/emotional problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Marital Problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Pregnancy or birth of a child	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Conflict with college authorities	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Inadequate financial aid	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	Too expensive	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Personal goals and values different from college's	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	I got tired of school	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	Lost interest in education	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	Inability to compete with other students	5	4	3	2	1	0
13.	An unforseen catastrophe such as car accident, tornado, etc. caused me to withdraw	5	4	3	2	1	0
14.	I felt out of place at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
15.	I could not afford the clothing, books, fees, meals, and etc.	5	4	3	2	1	0
16.	Lack of personal concern	5	4	3	2	1	0
17.	Personal conflicts with peers	5	4	3	2	1	0
18.	Poor social relationships	5	4	3	2	1	0
19.	Poor grades	5	4	3	2	1	0

5 = Extremely Important
4 = Important
3 = Not sure or no opinion
2 = Unimportant
1 = Very Unimportant
0 = Not Applicable

FAMILY PROBLEMS

1. No one to stay with children while I attended classes	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Divorced and/or separated and I had to be at home with my children	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Parents or family wanted me to drop out	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Gave birth to a child	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Children required too much time.	5	4	3	2	1	0

COMMUTING/TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

1. Too far to travel	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Too tired to attend classes after working all day	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Lack of transportation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Cost too much to commute	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Lack of security for vehicles at college	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Lack of parking facilities	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Poor road and/or weather conditions	5	4	3	2	1	0

SCHEDULING/CONFLICTS

1. Course was not offered at time I needed it	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Class was closed before I could enroll	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Courses needed were not offered.	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Courses needed were not offered at a time when I could attend	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Courses needed were not offered on the days I could attend	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Lack of assistance in planning a program of studies	5	4	3	2	1	0

CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Course work was too easy or too hard	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Course work was irrelevant	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Instructor did a very poor job of teaching the class	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Instructor let some students dominate the class	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Personality clash or conflict with instructor	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Classes too large and impersonal	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Too much demanded for the course credit given	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Course credits would not transfer to another institution	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. I was absent from class too much	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Unfair procedures for makeup work	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. Classroom environment not conducive to learning	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Got behind in class and couldn't catch up	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Flunked out	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. Class content was different than what I anticipated	5	4	3	2	1	0

VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS

1. Transferred to a location too far to commute.	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Obtained a job at a location too far to commute	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Work schedule came into conflict with class times	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. SJC did not offer the vocational program desired	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Career opportunities changed during the course of the program	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Received job desired before completion of degree program	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Transferred to another college because of change in career plans.	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Lack of definite career plans	5	4	3	2	1	0

INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Conflict with SJC authorities	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. College offices are not accessible at opportune times	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Curriculum was not adequate for some ethnic groups	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Counselors are not available when needed	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Disliked general atmosphere at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Too much emphasis on sports at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Too many rules and too much supervision	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Too much freedom and not enough supervision	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Enrollment procedures too complicated	5	4	3	2	1	0

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO THE SAMPLE OF ABSENTEES

SEMINOLE JUNIOR COLLEGE
STUDENT ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Race: _____ Marital Status: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____ Number of Children: _____

Birth Order: _____ Educational level of father: _____

My academic performance at SJC is . . . _____ Inadequate _____ Marginal _____ Adequate

I entered SJC intending to . . .

___ take only one course
___ take several courses
___ complete a technical program
___ graduate from SJC with a 2-year degree
___ obtain a graduate degree
___ Other; _____

DIRECTIONS: Please check those factors under each category which have contributed to your being absent from class. Next, use the number codes provided to indicate the importance of each factor to your absenteeism. Be sure to circle one number after each statement.

5 = Extremely Important
4 = Important
3 = Not sure or no opinion
2 = Unimportant
1 = Very Unimportant
0 = Not Applicable

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

1.	Personal Illness	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Illness of immediate family member	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	Personal/emotional problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Marital Problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Pregnancy or birth of a child	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Conflict with college authorities	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Inadequate financial aid	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	Too expensive	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Personal goals and values differ from college's	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	Getting tired of school	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	Lost interest in education	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	Inability to compete with other students	5	4	3	2	1	0
13.	An unforseen catastrophe such as car accident, tornado, etc. has caused me to be absent	5	4	3	2	1	0
14.	I feel out of place at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
15.	I cannot afford the clothing books, fees, meals, and etc.	5	4	3	2	1	0
16.	Lack of personal concern among college personnel	5	4	3	2	1	0
17.	Personal conflicts with peers	5	4	3	2	1	0
18.	Poor social relationships	5	4	3	2	1	0
19.	Poor grades	5	4	3	2	1	0

5 = Extremely Important
4 = Important
3 = Not sure or no opinion
2 = Unimportant
1 = Very Unimportant
0 = Not Applicable

FAMILY PROBLEMS

1. No one to stay with my children while I attend classes 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Divorced or separated and I had to be at home with my children . . 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Parents or family want me to drop out of school 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Gave birth to a child 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Children require too much of my time 5 4 3 2 1 0

COMMUTING/TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

1. Too far to travel 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Too tired to attend classes after working all day 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Lack of transportation 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Costs too much to commute 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Lack of security for vehicles at college 5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Lack of parking facilities 5 4 3 2 1 0
7. Poor road and/or weather conditions 5 4 3 2 1 0

SCHEDULING CONFLICTS

1. Course is not offered at a time when I need it 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Class was closed before I could enroll 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Courses I need are not offered 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Courses I need are not offered at a time when I can attend 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Courses I need are not offered on a day I can attend 5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Lack of assistance in planning a program of studies 5 4 3 2 1 0

CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Course work is too easy or too hard 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Course work is irrelevant 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Instructor does a very poor job of teaching the class 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Instructor lets some students dominate the class 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Personality clash or conflict with instructor 5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Classes are too large and impersonal 5 4 3 2 1 0
7. Too much demanded for the course credit given 5 4 3 2 1 0
8. Course credits will not transfer to another institution 5 4 3 2 1 0
9. I am absent from class too much 5 4 3 2 1 0
10. Unfair procedures for makeup work 5 4 3 2 1 0
11. Classroom environment is not conducive to learning 5 4 3 2 1 0
12. Got behind in class and can't catch up 5 4 3 2 1 0
13. I am about to flunk out 5 4 3 2 1 0
14. Course content is different than what I had anticipated 5 4 3 2 1 0

VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS

1. Transferred to a location too far to commute 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Obtained a job at a location too far to commute 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Work schedule conflicts with class times 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. SJC doesn't offer the vocational program desired 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Career opportunities have changed during the course of the program . 5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Received job desired before completion of degree program 5 4 3 2 1 0
7. I'm transferring to another college because of changes in career plans. 5 4 3 2 1 0
8. I lack definite career plans 5 4 3 2 1 0

INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Conflict with SJC authorities 5 4 3 2 1 0
2. Colleges offices are not always accessible at opportune times . . . 5 4 3 2 1 0
3. Curriculum is not adequate for some ethnic groups 5 4 3 2 1 0
4. Counselors are not available when needed 5 4 3 2 1 0
5. Dislike the general atmosphere at SJC 5 4 3 2 1 0
6. Too much emphasis on sports at SJC 5 4 3 2 1 0
7. Too many rules and too much supervision 5 4 3 2 1 0
8. Too much freedom and not enough supervision 5 4 3 2 1 0
9. Enrollment procedures are too complicated 5 4 3 2 1 0

APPENDIX C

QUESTIONNAIRE ADMINISTERED TO THE SAMPLE OF PERSISTERS

SEMINOLE JUNIOR COLLEGE
STUDENT ATTENDANCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Name: _____ Race: _____ Marital Status: _____ Sex: _____

Address: _____ Number of Children: _____

Birth Order: _____ Educational level of father: _____

My academic performance at SJC is . . . _____ Inadequate _____ Marginal _____ Adequate

I entered SJC intending to . . .
- ___ take only one course
- ___ take several courses
- ___ complete a technical program
- ___ graduate from SJC with a 2-year degree
- ___ obtain a graduate degree
- ___ Other; _____

DIRECTIONS: Please check those factors under each category which have tended to distrupt or hinder your college attendance. Next, use the number codes provided to indicate the importance of each factor in disrupting or hinderina your educational program. Be sure to circle one number after each statement.

5 = Extremely Important
4 = Important
3 = Not sure or no opinion
2 = Unimportant
1 = Very Unimportant
0 = Not Applicable

PERSONAL PROBLEMS

1.	Personal Illness	5	4	3	2	1	0
2.	Illness of immediate family member	5	4	3	2	1	0
3.	Personal/emotional problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
4.	Marital Problems	5	4	3	2	1	0
5.	Pregnancy or birth of a child	5	4	3	2	1	0
6.	Conflict with college authorities	5	4	3	2	1	0
7.	Inadequate financial aid	5	4	3	2	1	0
8.	Too expensive	5	4	3	2	1	0
9.	Personal goals and values different from college's	5	4	3	2	1	0
10.	I got tired of school	5	4	3	2	1	0
11.	Lost interest in education	5	4	3	2	1	0
12.	Inability to compete with other students	5	4	3	2	1	0
13.	An unforseen catastrophe such as car accident, tornado, etc. caused me to consider dropping out	5	4	3	2	1	0
14.	I felt out of place at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
15.	I could not afford the clothing, books, fees, meals, and etc.	5	4	3	2	1	0
16.	Lack of personal concern among college personnel	5	4	3	2	1	0
17.	Personal conflicts with peers	5	4	3	2	1	0
18.	Poor social relationships	5	4	3	2	1	0
19.	Poor grades	5	4	3	2	1	0

FAMILY PROBLEMS

1. No one to stay with children while I attended classes	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Divorced and/or separated and I needed to be at home with my children	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Parents or family wanted me to drop out	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Gave birth to a child	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Children required too much time	5	4	3	2	1	0

COMMUTING/TRANSPORTATION PROBLEMS

1. Too far to travel	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Too tired to attend classes after working all day	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Lack of transportation	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Costs too much to commute	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Lack of security for vehicles at college	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Lack of parking facilities	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Poor road and/or weather conditions	5	4	3	2	1	0

SCHEDULING/CONFLICTS

1. Course was not offered at time I needed it	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Class was closed before I could enroll	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Courses needed were not offered	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Courses needed were not offered at a time when I could attend	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Courses needed were not offered on the days I could attend	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Lack of assistance in planning a program of studies	5	4	3	2	1	0

CLASS-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Course work was too easy or too hard	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Course work was irrelevant	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Instructor did a very poor job of teaching the class	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Instructor let some students dominate the class	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Personality clash or conflict with instructor	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Classes too large and impersonal	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Too much demanded for the course credit given	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Course credits would not transfer to another institution	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. I was absent from class too much	5	4	3	2	1	0
10. Unfair procedures for makeup work	5	4	3	2	1	0
11. Classroom environment not conducive to learning	5	4	3	2	1	0
12. Got behind in class and couldn't catch up	5	4	3	2	1	0
13. Course content was not what I had expected	5	4	3	2	1	0
14. I was about to flunk	5	4	3	2	1	0

VOCATIONAL PROBLEMS

1. Transferred to a location too far to commute	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. Obtained a job at a location too far to commute	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Work schedule came into conflict with class times	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. SJC did not offer the vocational program desired	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Career opportunities changed during the course of the program	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Received job desired before completion of degree program	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Considered transferring to another college becuase of change in plans	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Lack of definite career plans	5	4	3	2	1	0

INSTITUTION-RELATED PROBLEMS

1. Conflict with SJC authorities	5	4	3	2	1	0
2. College offices were not accessible at opportune times	5	4	3	2	1	0
3. Curriculum was not adequate for some ethnic groups	5	4	3	2	1	0
4. Counselors were not available when needed	5	4	3	2	1	0
5. Disliked general atmosphere at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
6. Too much imphasis on sports at SJC	5	4	3	2	1	0
7. Too many rules and too much supervision	5	4	3	2	1	0
8. Too much freedom and not enough supervision	5	4	3	2	1	0
9. Enrollment procedures were too complicated	5	4	3	2	1	0