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Special Service Needs of Adult Students Attending Weekend College at Western Michigan University

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Western Michigan University

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SPECIAL SERVICE NEEDS OF ADULT STUDENTS
ATTENDING WEEKEND COLLEGE AT
WESTERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY

by
Patricia A. Dolly

A Dissertation
Submitted to the
Faculty of The Graduate College
in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the
Degree of Doctor of Education
Department of Educational Leadership

Western Michigan University
Kalamazoo, Michigan
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This dissertation examines the needs of the adult learner and how or if these needs are being met in the Campus III/Weekend College program at Western Michigan University. Specifically, factors that explain the rise of adult learners on college campuses and demographic information on this rising student population are presented. In addition, the reasons for returning to school and differences between traditional and nontraditional students are examined. Institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers confronting adult students are discussed; a model is put forth along with strategies to overcome barriers offered.

Current services for adult learners attending Weekend College at Western Michigan University are described in relationships to adult student needs. Results of a survey to adult students attending Weekend College during the Spring and Summer Sessions at Western Michigan University are summarized in terms of services offered and their link to institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers of the adult learners.
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The dissertation is dedicated to Carol J. Dulaney, the author's sister, whose understanding and patience made this educational undertaking possible.

Patricia A. Dolly
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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

Importance of the Study

Colleges and universities continue to be locked in a paradigm of tradition in an era when nontraditional students are growing at a more rapid rate than traditional students. Since the early 1970s, enrollment trends in higher education have reflected a changing student population. While there are many factors which characterize these changes, three are central to this study: students are likely to be older, they are likely to be women and/or minorities, and they are likely to be better educated. These factors begin to suggest that in order to remain competitive and to meet the challenges that this changing student population demands, colleges and universities must seek ways to develop new programs and services as well as to adapt existing programs and services that will meet the needs of this growing and diverse population. As a practitioner interested in program development and adult student services, the researcher expected this study to link the needs of adult learners to institutional services, thus, enabling the researcher to effectively influence programs and retention policies.

Enrollment of Older Students

In the late 1980s, more than 40% of all students enrolled in higher education were 25 and older. And by the mid-1990s, it was
expected that the percentage of students over the age of 25 would be more than equal to that of students under the age of 25 (Grennan & Schneider, 1989). In fact, the rapid growth in enrollment of students age 25 and above is expected to continue into the next century. According to the National Center for Education Statistics (1991), between 1980 and 1990, the enrollment of students 25 years old and over increased by 34%, while the enrollment of students under the age of 25 rose by only 7% during those years. Moreover, it is projected that between 1990 and 1997, the older student population will increase by 16%, while the younger student population will increase by only 5% for the same period (National Center for Education Statistics [NCES], 1991).

There are various reasons for the increase in the older student population: The population in general is aging--baby boomers have grown up. In fact, it is predicted that by the year 2000 the majority of society in the United States will be middle-aged (Golladay, 1977). Employment trends from the recession of the 1980s reflect that white collar employment has risen significantly which tends to force this group back into the education arena to acquire the skills needed to remain employed. In addition, displaced workers including executives have the need to update or obtain new skills in order to remain competitive in the labor force; and finally, organizations and career-oriented adults place greater importance on education, recognizing that education is a lifelong process (Aslanian, 1989; Grennan & Schneider, 1989; Bowden & Heritage, 1992).
Enrollments of Women and Minorities

According to a 1988 College Entrance Examination Board study, within a decade, 60% of the adult student population will be women. In fact, several researchers agree that this trend will continue into the 21st century (Bodensteiner, 1988; Glass & Rose, 1987; Hoyt, 1988; Ross, 1988; Sorensen & Robinson, 1992). A recent publication of the National University Continuing Education Association (1993) mirrors earlier projections revealing that adult women enrolled at the undergraduate level account for 58% of all adult student enrollments and 59% at the graduate level. Women are making the decision to start or reenter colleges and universities for a number of reasons: Many are divorced, which may bring on the reevaluation of self; often, their families have matured; some are bored once their children have grown up; and many are seeking a career change. Indeed, these are not the only reasons women are starting or reentering higher education, but they are among the most common. Whatever their reasons for entering college, women are the fastest growing student population (Glass & Rose, 1987; Silling, 1984).

The number of Black women attending colleges and universities increased slightly between 1977 and 1988, while the number of Black male students declined to a greater extent during this same period. Consequently, the proportion of Black college students fell from 9.6% in 1978 to 8.9% in 1988 (NCES, 1991). However, the overall number of minority college students rose between 1978 and 1988 from 16.3% to 18.9%, respectively. This rise is attributed to the rising number of
Hispanic and Asian students (NCES, 1991).

A primary reason for this increase, particularly in the Asian population, is the rise of the Pacific Rim (a shift from the Atlantic to the Pacific) where the economic growth is much more rapid than in mature Western economies. This has created an extraordinary need for well-educated people (Naisbitt & Aburdene, 1990).

**Enrollments of Better Educated Students**

Aslanian (1989) stated that adult students are more affluent and better educated than the general population. In fact, the number of educated people has increased dramatically in the past 20 years (NCES, 1991). Forty-five percent (nearly half) of today's work force is college educated and another 40% have graduated from high school. This leaves only 15% of the adult-aged working population with less than a high school diploma as compared to 20 years ago when those with less than a high school diploma was 41%. The implication is that this better educated work force directly or indirectly influences the number of adult student enrollments.

In addition to today's adult students having a stronger formal educational background, most educators and scholars agree that the adult learner's life experiences play an integral part in their learning process (Grennan & Schneider, 1989). According to Knowles (1980), a noted author and adult educator, life experiences significantly impact the learning process of the adult student. Knowles's (1980, 1984) contribution to the field of adult education was his formulation of a set of assumptions which he named andragogy. Andragogy is defined as
the art and science of helping adults learn. Knowles's set of assumptions rests on the following characteristics of adults:

1. Their self-concepts move from one of being a dependent personality to one of being a self-directed human being.

2. They accumulate a growing reservoir of experience that becomes an increasingly rich resource for learning.

3. Their readiness to learn becomes oriented increasingly to the developmental tasks of their social roles.

4. Their time perspective changes from one of postponed application of knowledge to immediacy of application. Accordingly, learning shifts from subject-centeredness to one of performance-centeredness.

Contrary to Knowles's (1980) conceptualization of andragogy, many educators still believe that to establish a separate set of characteristics for adult learners divides rather than unifies the field of education (Brookfield, 1986; Houle, 1972). Put simply, they believe that good teaching is good teaching regardless of the age of students. However, all agree that adults come into the classroom with significant experiences and their experiences are an important and integral part of the way they learn (Grennan & Schneider, 1989).

Also, life experiences with regard to the rapid rate of change in society forces many adult students to return to institutions of higher learning. They have the need for additional education in order to supplement their knowledge in regard to their current jobs or to retrain themselves to deal more effectively with changing technologies (Aslanian, 1989; Grennan & Schneider, 1989; Hall & Langenbach, 1990).
These three factors, formal education, life experiences, and technological changes, help to explain why adult educators/institutions need to reassess the way in which they design and implement programs. However, if they are to attract this changed student population, then colleges and universities must change too, because as was stated earlier, most of the current programs and policies are geared toward traditional-aged students.

Impact of Enrollment Trends on Colleges and Universities

The shift in the numbers of these enrollment trends supports the fact that colleges and universities are pressured to accommodate the needs of adult students. However, as Cross (1971) pointed out, recruitment and retention of adult students could suffer unless there is a major overhaul of the curricula, institutional, and educational policies to meet adult students' needs. This view was further supported by Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching (1986) which indicated that the survival of many colleges and universities may rest on their ability to reorganize and take a first step in developing new ideas and concepts for nontraditional students. In fact, this is increasingly important, since as financial constraints seize institutions, administrators will continue to turn to the growing population of adult students as a source of revenue (Lawler, 1991).

The problem, however, is the fact that most institutions of higher learning continue to develop and implement programs and services designed to meet the needs of students between the ages of 18 and 24. Many authors (Bowden & Heritage, 1992; Cross, 1992; Lawler, 1991;
Loring, LeGates, Josephs, & O’Neill, 1978; Schlossberg, Lynch, &
Chickering, 1989; Thon, 1985) have pointed out that, generally, the
tendency in higher education has been to fit adults into programs and
services geared to students who have recently completed high school
and who have other kinds of concerns. Thon (1985) stated that when
institutions have implemented programs and services aimed at meeting
the unique needs of the adult student, the focus has primarily been in
the academic area with programs and services such as extended office
hours, continuing education courses, evening and weekend classes,
classes created for prior learning and/or work experience, and elderhostel
(a program designed for senior citizens). These and similar programs
tend to ignore support services for adults which may include, but not be
limited to child care, financial aid, and academic and career counseling,
many of which fall under the heading of student services for the typical
or traditional college students. Administrators often overlook that adult
students need or desire these same services.

Schlossberg et al. (1989) wrote that several underlying assump-
tions are at work within colleges and universities:

The main mission of the institution will continue to be to
provide student services for traditional-aged students who
come directly from high school, study full time, live on
campus, and are totally involved in the institution, and have
not other areas of significant responsibility. There is little
payoff in making significant investments to serve adult
learners as well. (p. 209)

Schlossberg et al. (1989) contended that these assumptions are flawed
and outdated. In fact, this contention represents a growing trend among
adult educators (Lawler, 1991; Sewall, 1986; Silling, 1984; Thon,
1985). These educators wrote that adult students do need student
services and that universities and colleges are responsible for providing support services that will meet the needs of the adult student population.

Colleges and universities must change the paradigm that keeps them locked into the traditional way of serving students; they must seek to understand the adult population and its diversity in terms of needs (Hall & Langenbach, 1990). To gain an understanding, institutions of higher learning must determine how adult students differ and determine what services can be developed or adapted to reduce, eliminate, or take advantage of these differences, thereby, meeting the needs of adults.

Silling (1984) identified a need for what she called a "change strategy" (p. 5) in her study, Student Services for Adult Learners. In her study, she examined the needs of the adult student and how these needs are met at Kent State University, Ohio, and by 20 other universities and colleges. She surveyed both public and private institutions to identify the services that were being provided to adult students in an effort to determine whether or not the needs of adult students were being met. However, Silling's study neglected to directly assess the needs of the adult student populations that particular universities were attempting to serve. Her study focused primarily on institutional services versus student needs. A special needs assessment of the particular adult student population to determine the services that students perceive needed would offer a rational approach to determining priorities and allocating resources (Stufflebeam, 1985). Schlossberg et al. (1989) supported this view as it relates to the adult student when they stated that program assessment shows how well the policies and practices of
institutions serve adult students.

Indeed, a needs analysis provides a systematic approach to the linking of adult student needs to institutional services, which is critical to planning new programs and services and to adapting existing programs and services if institutions of higher learning are to accommodate this population. In fact, to meet the needs of adult students is not only the responsibility of colleges and universities, but it is essential to the development of programs and services designed to recruit and retain them.

**Impact of Enrollment Trends on Western Michigan University**

The national enrollment trends are reflected in Western Michigan University's adult student enrollment, which increased by 14% between 1989 and 1994. During this same period, the university experienced marginal growth in its traditional aged student population. A review of university documents, such as minutes to administrative meetings and enrollment project reports, revealed that Western Michigan University expected a decline in enrollment of students between the ages of 18 and 24. These same documents provided the researcher with the university's response to a rise in the adult student population and the potential of a decline in the traditional aged student population.

Western Michigan University sought to develop a comprehensive weekend program designed to meet both academic and nonacademic needs of the adult student. The concept of creating an environment that is conducive to meeting needs of adult students on weekends is both innovative and creative. However, as was formerly discussed, programming for such a diverse population requires that the institution
understand the needs of the population it is serving (Schlossberg et al., 1989). To gain insights, institutions should conduct a needs analysis to determine whether or not the needs of the adult student population are linked to the programs and services provided. This is the responsibility of the university and will assist in the recruitment and retention of adult students.

Statement of the Problem

Institutions of higher learning concerned with a changing student population and its current, as well as expected, financial constraints are seeking to develop programs and services that are designed to meet the needs of the adult student population. But it is not enough to make the decision to develop and implement programs and services based upon assumptions many educators make about adult students and their needs. Colleges and universities must assess the needs of their particular adult student populations in order to ensure that the services provided are meeting the perceived needs of the students they are attempting to serve.

A case in point is weekend college programs which are designed to meet the needs of the adult student. Many universities and colleges have responded to the growing population of adult students in the face of declining traditional student enrollments by implementing weekend college programs, but often without careful analysis and assessment of needs in relationship to services to be provided. When this happens, it is possible that needs and services are not aligned. A specific example is the weekend college program at Western Michigan University (WMU),
which was established in 1992 without conducting a proper needs assessment. Specifically, at the time of this study, the program continued to operate without considering this important step that would certainly assist in program viability; consequently, it is possible that critical needs of adult students are not being adequately met by the services being provided.

Purpose of the Study

This study addressed the following question: Do the services offered in WMU weekend college program meet the needs of the adult student population that it is attempting to serve? To address this question, this study sought to identify needs expressed by this population and to determine what services can be created or adapted to reduce or eliminate barriers; thereby meeting the needs of adult students on weekends at Western Michigan University in particular. It is further hoped that this study will provide a useful approach for colleges and universities, in a similar setting, that are seeking to design new or adapt existing weekend college programs. The study examined the issue of aligning needs with services in the context of the following questions.

Research Questions

1. What special services do adult learners attending weekend college perceive as needs or needed?
2. How do the general characteristics of adult students relate to their needs regarding institutional, situational, and dispositional dimensions?
3. To what extent do the special services offered by WMU meet the needs of adult students attending weekend college?

**Definition of Terms**

**Adult students** as used in this study describes students over the age of 25 and who essentially have the responsibility for their lives.

**Traditional students** as used in this study describes students under the age of 25 and who have had no break in their education.

**Andragogy**, as defined by Knowles (1980), is the art and science of teaching adults.

**Weekend** is defined as the period from 4:00 p.m. on Friday through 4:00 p.m. on Sunday.

**Weekend college program** is the concept of offering self-contained courses, degree, and certificate programs as well as a comprehensive support services on weekends, with specific reference to Western Michigan University.

**Actual population**: students enrolled in Western Michigan University's weekend college program during the Winter Semester of 1993.

**Target population**: the population of students who are likely to be or are enrolled in the weekend college program at Western Michigan University.

**Needs**, for this study, one determined by barriers that typically confront this population.

**Barriers** as discussed in this study were first proposed by Cross and Zusman (1977) and refer to three types: situational, dispositional, and institutional.
Situational barriers are related to the circumstances and situations of the adult student; they are further grouped by dimension personal support system.

Personal support system was operationally defined as child care and health center services.

Dispositional barriers are those that are self-imposed psychologically.

Institutional barriers are those factors that are outside of the control of the adult student, but are inside the control of the institution; they are further grouped by three dimensions: core academics, academic logistical support, and administrative and logistical support.

Core academic support was operationally defined to include course offerings, flexible scheduling, completeness of program, and knowledgeable faculty.

Academic logistical support was operationally defined to include academic advising, weekend facilitator, library services, early morning library hours, and weekend bulletin.

Administrative logistical support was operationally defined to include promotional activities, on-site coordinator, walk-in registration, phone registration, central location, nearby food services, financial aid, complementary refreshments, and accessible parking.

Needs analysis as used in this study determines whether or not there is a link between the needs of adult students and the services provided by Western Michigan University.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Overview

A review of the current literature revealed that the vast body of theory and research about adult students is both complex and diverse in nature. Yet, it provides a rich reservoir of information for institutions of higher learning seeking to recruit and retain this growing student population whose needs are inherently different from those of traditional age students. Furthermore, this review provided the basis for three research questions presented in Chapter I. The review is divided into four sections: (1) profile of the adult student, (2) population barriers or needs, (3) institutional programs/services to overcome barriers (Western Michigan University Weekend College), and (4) alignment of needs to services. Each section represents an element in the Adult Student Program Assessment Model, which is designed to assist colleges and universities in developing programs for adult students.

Profile of Adult Students

In this section, the traditional student is set apart from the adult student as the profile of the adult learner begins to emerge. Knowles (1980), in his book Modern Practice of Adult Education: From Pedagogy to Andragogy, contributed greatly to this process when he put forth his assumptions about the teaching and learning of adults. Although he has
been severely criticized, his conceptualization of the adult learner helps to give form and shape to this vast field of knowledge. Moreover, his characterization of the adult learner recognizes that there is a relationship between the adult learner and the adult development process. This relationship is critical to adult educators, scholars, and administrators because an understanding of how adults learn is critical to design programs that assume their retention and understanding what attracts adults to higher education will facilitate them with recruitment. Therefore, what Knowles (1980) called andragogy, the art and science of helping adults learn, provides the framework for building a profile of the adult learner.

**Andragogy**

Malcolm Knowles, an adult educator, often credited with being the father of andragogy, did not originate the term nor the notion that adult learning is distinctively different from children's learning. The term andragogik was used by a German educator, Alexander Knapp, as early as 1833 (Davenport, 1987). Knapp felt that education for adults could and should be as normal as education for children. Then it appears that this concept all but vanished for nearly a century when a German social scientist elaborated on the differences between pedagogy (children's learning) and andragogy (adult learning) (Pratt, 1984). In 1927, the term was used by Martha Anderson and Edward Lindeman in a publication titled *Education Through Experience*, who along with John Dewey, their contemporary, believed in experience based and self-directed learning (Feuer & Geber, 1988). But it was Knowles who by 1968 had
formulated a basic perspective about adults as learners. His intent was to provide adult educators and practitioners with a unified theory on adults as learners. His theory ignited a debate among scholars in the field that continues today (Brookfield, 1986; Cross, 1981; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Feuer & Geber, 1988; Houle, 1972; Knowles, 1984, 1989). Specifically, what fuels this discussion about andragogy is its contrast to pedagogy which is characterized by Knowles (1970) as the art and science of teaching children.

His beliefs about these two strikingly different perspectives were formed by what he saw as a dichotomous classification of various educational philosophies. Knowles’s suggested that children learn from a pedagogical perspective while adults learn from a andragogical perspective. Subsequently, they, children and adults, warrant different theories about learning.

**Pedagogy Versus Andragogy**

Knowles’s (1984) basic assumptions about learning and learners inherent in the pedagogical model are as follows:

1. The learner is dependent upon the teacher who has responsibility for making decisions about what should be learned and whether it has been learned. Therefore, the only role of the learner is to submissively carry out the teacher’s direction.

2. Learners have little experiences that are of value as a resource for learning; it is the experiences of the teacher, the textbook writer, and other producers of classroom aids that serve as the learning resource.

3. Student readiness depends upon what they are told that they have to learn in order to advance to the next grade level; readiness is largely a function of age.
4. Students have a subject-centered orientation to learning; they see learning as a prescriptive process of obtaining subject matter content; consequently, the basis of the curriculum organization is according to content units and is sequenced according to the logic of the subject matter.

5. Students are motivated largely by external pressures from parents and teachers, competition for grades, and the likes. (p. 8)

Knowles (1984) contrasted these with the assumptions made about adult learners and learning inherent in the andragogical model:

1. The learner is self-directed; they feel, they are, responsible for their own lives which often causes an internal conflict in an educational setting.

2. The learner has both a greater volume and different quality of experiences from youth. The longer we live, the more experience we accumulate at least in our normal lives. The difference in quality of experiences occurs because adults perform different roles from young people. Consequently, for many kinds of learning experiences, adults are themselves the riches-resources for one another.

3. Adults become ready to learn when they experience the need to know or do something in order to perform more effectively in some aspect of their lives; readiness is largely associated with the developmental tasks of moving from one stage of development to another, but any change is likely to trigger a readiness to learn.

4. Adults are motivated to learn after they experience a need in their life situation; their orientation to learning is life centered, task centered, or problem centered.

5. Adults will respond to some external motivators such as a better job, or an increase in salary, but this model suggests that the more potent motivators are internal. (p. 9)

The idea that Knowles (1984) posted the theoretical perspective that children learn differently than adults caused many leaders of adult education to quickly question the merits of andragogy (Cross, 1981; Davenport & Davenport, 1985; Elias, 1979; Houle, 1972; London, 1973). Many of these educators took issue with andragogy as a theory.
because of its similarity to progressive education applied to adults; they preferred to stress unity of education versus the dichotomous viewpoint (Davenport, 1987; C. Day & Baskett, 1972; Houle, 1972). Houle (1972), a former student of Knowles, stated that Knowles's characterization of andragogy could never serve as a foundation for a unifying theory of adult learning because basically children and adults learn in the same way.

Some supporters of Knowles believed that the differences between children and adults requires a different approach to educational practices (Davenport, 1987; McKenzie, 1977, 1979). Other supporters agreed with these beliefs about andragogy, but went a step beyond, suggesting that adults differ from children and likewise younger adults differ from older adults calling for still another classification, "gerogogy" or "eldergogy" (Lebel, 1978; Yeo, 1982). Of course, the opposers feared too much segmentation of the educational taxonomy (Courtney & Stevenson, 1983; Rachal, 1983) was not likely to lead to a better understanding of how adults learn and how their needs can best be met.

Knowles (1980) ultimately relinquished and abandoned his hope that andragogy could serve as a unifying theory of adult education, conceding that it is more of a method or approach to adult learning. He further stated that pedagogy and andragogy are parallel rather than dichotomous concepts. But, he continued to emphasize that generally andragogy as an approach is better for adults, while pedagogy is better for children. In other words, he seemed to suggest that his assumptions are more prescriptive than descriptive. Consequently, Knowles received stinging criticism for making such a big leap of faith not supported by
theory or perhaps more importantly research to support his thinking (Davenport, 1987; Griffin, 1983; Guglielmino, 1977; Pratt, 1984).

Hartree (1984) expressed some concern over this, questioning the soundness of the basic assumptions underlying the theory or practice of andragogy; specifically, she criticized the validity of Knowles's assumption that adult learners are self-directed. According to Hartree, the notion that the adult learner is self-directing is often more of a pious hope than a description of how they learn; she concluded this assumption is prescriptive. This view was supported by Clardy (1986) and Cross (1981). The following observation about andragogy by Cross (1981) provides useful insights:

Whether andragogy can serve as the foundation for a unifying theory of adult education remains to be seen. At the very least, it identifies some characteristics of adult learners that deserve attention. It has been far more successful than most theories in getting the attention of practitioners, and it has been moderately successful in sparking debate; it has not been especially successful, however, in stimulating research to test the assumptions. (pp. 227-228)

Most important, perhaps, the visibility of andragogy has heightened awareness of the need for answers to three major questions:

1. Is it useful to distinguish the learning needs of adults from those of children? If so, are we talking about dichotomous differences or continuous differences? Or both? 2. What are we really seeking? Theories of learning? Theories of teaching? 3. Do we have, or can we develop, an initial framework on which successive generations of scholars can build? Does andragogy lead to researchable questions that will advance knowledge in adult education? (Cross, 1981, pp. 227-228)

Cross's (1981) summation with regards to andragogy pointed to a way out of the andragogy versus pedagogy controversy by moving adult educators, scholars, and researchers to a level where assumptions
become the subject of research to validate theory and sound practice of teaching adult learners.

Research Findings on Assumptions

During the mid-1980s, the research on andragogy sought to find empirical evidence to determine whether or not Knowles's assumptions were descriptive or prescriptive in nature. Specifically, the research often focused on the concept of the learner and the learner's orientation to learning. For the other three assumptions, role of learners' experience, readiness to learn, and motivation to learn, scholars and educators generally agreed that they do in fact set adults apart from children as learners. Consequently, these provide the foundation for the profile of the adult learner.

Much of the research of Knowles's assumptions on andragogy centered around his assumption that adults are self-directed, which is what some refer to as the cornerstone of his model (Feuer & Gerber, 1988). This review of empirical research findings regarding Knowles's assumptions is considered under five major concepts: concept of learner, orientation of learner, life experiences, readiness to learn, and motivation to learn.

Concept of the Learner

Guglielmino (1977) developed an instrument that attempted to measure the learner's internal state of psychological readiness to engage in learning by considering eight factors: love of learning; self-concepts as effective independent learner; tolerance of risk, ambiguity, and
complexity in learning; creatively; view of learning as a lifelong, beneficial process; initiative in learning; self-understanding; and acceptance of responsibility for one's own learning. Guglielmino (1977) and Pratt (1984) later concluded that approximately half of the adult population is well below Knowles's definition of psychological adulthood and the balance, in varying degrees, is achieving adulthood according to the Self-Directed Learner Readiness Scale. In fact, several major studies have failed to provide strong evidence in support of Knowles's andragogical assumption about adults being self-directing.

Rosenblum and Darkenwald's (1983) study showed that to include adults in the process of course planning, objectives diagnosis, and design did not necessarily yield meaningful differences in learning or satisfaction. The control group in their study actually scored higher than did the experimental group. McLoughlin (1971) conducted a similar study. He measured students' attitudes and learning. His experimental group scored higher in satisfaction, but there were no significant differences in learning. Conti (1985) found that teaching style can influence student achievement, but self-directed or collaborative methods are no utopia for adults. Specifically, the results of his study were that a teacher-center approach was more effective with adult students in a GED program than a learner-centered approach, but the reverse was true for an adult Basic Education/English as a Second Language Program. Conti concluded by stating that his findings tend to switch the general argument from a combative stance of which style is best to a more practical position of when each style is most appropriate.
Conti's (1985) research findings which are supported by similar studies have largely influenced the thinking of scholars in the field during the late 1980s and even today. Brookfield (1986) voiced his opinion about this assumption by saying that

the idea that adult learners are self-directing is consistently overestimated . . . people think that if you walk into a classroom and say, "Look this course is yours; you'll choose the topics, find the resources, and generate the evaluation criteria," there will be a wonderful sense of relief and exhilaration among the learners. They assume that the students will jump into this self-directed learning mode like ducks take to water. The more common reaction is one of confusion, anxiety, and often anger. Students will say, "We paid a high price to come here and we want your expertise. We don't feel equipped to design our own curricula." (p. 33)

Most scholars, along with Brookfield, agree that Knowles's assumption about adults being self-directed is faulty and that future studies will continue to bear that out (Davenport, 1987; Goodman, 1983/1984; Hartree, 1984). Moreover, they believe that Conti's (1985) findings may provide a good example for establishing the empirical and theoretical underpinning necessary to build the andragogy model on facts rather than fiction (Davenport, 1987). And while these discussions and findings suggest a direction for future studies about self-directed learning, it is not the primary concern of this study. It does, however, provide this researcher with a firm basis for which to support the conclusion that adult students are not necessarily self-directed when entering an educational environment or activity. In fact, it is this researcher's belief that self-directedness should be the goal for teaching adults; this supports the notion that Knowles's assumption is prescriptive rather than descriptive. Likewise, their readiness to act in a self-directed manner is
dependent upon the individual's psychological needs, as well as the type of classroom activity--in other words, the situation.

**Orientation to Learning**

There have been few studies that have created experimental situations for which to test the andragogical assumptions, but noted scholars and educators in the field of adult education still disagreed with Knowles's claim that children are more subject-centered and adults are more life-centered or problem oriented in their learning (Backus, 1984; Brookfield, 1986). Houle (cited in Brookfield, 1986) elaborated on this view, indicating that certain adults are learning oriented in that they were continually inquiring into knowledge whether or not it was related to some immediate life application. Moreover, Brookfield (1986) pointed out that adults will and often do undertake learning for the sake of joy and fulfillment that it provides; he continued that some of an adult's most meaningful learning occurs with no specific goal in mind. And, instead of learning being related to a life task, it represents a means by which adults can define themselves (Broadwell & Walden, 1988). Yet, a nationwide study titled *Americans in Transition: Life Changes as Reasons for Adult Learning* (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980) regarding Americans in traditions stated that life changes as reasons for adult learning revealed that of the 2,000 adults, 25 and older, that were surveyed, most did not learn for the sheer pleasure of learning. In fact, results showed that learning is not its own reward. They concluded that the major purpose for adult learning is to acquire occupational skills.
Life Experiences

Knowles was criticized for making undeclared leaps from scientific theory about adult characteristics to a philosophy of what should be in adult learning. But, all scholars, educators, and researchers in the field of adult education agree that an adult student, those over the age of 25 and responsible for their own life, have accumulated a greater volume of life experiences when compared to children or their traditional aged student counterparts (Griffin, 1983; Knowles, 1980; Lawler, 1991; Pratt, 1984).

Cross (1981) and Lindeman (1926) described the adult's life experience as a living textbook. Scholars and educators also agree that life experience plays an important role in the adult learning process. They concluded that frequently their experiences provide a rich resource for learning and a foundation upon which new knowledge can build. This, in turn, enables them to apply what they are learning in class to their own life experiences (Polson, 1993).

In addition, adult students are different from children and traditional students because of their experiences in various social roles such as employee, mother, wife, and so forth (Apps, 1981; Griffin, 1983; Polson, 1993). And, it is those social roles, or the changing of those roles, that generally serve as a catalyst for their decision to enter higher education (Aslanian, 1989; Brickell, 1992). In contrast, the traditional students' social roles such as student, son, boyfriend, and so forth have little to do with their decision to enter college. A College Board (cited in Brickell, 1992; Silling, 1984) study in 1980 revealed that 83% of the
2,000 students enrolled returned for a college education due to a major life transition.

**Readiness to Learn**

Knowles's assumption with regard to an adult's readiness to learn is supported by research in the field of adult development, which in itself is a vast field and is not the primary focus of this study. However, it is important to note that research findings in this area suggest that growth which results in developmental tasks readiness to learn and teachable moments. But, unlike children whose developmental tasks tend to be products primarily of physiology and mental maturation, adults are primarily products of the changing of social roles (Griffin, 1983; Knowles, 1980).

Havinghurst (1970) and Chickering and Havinghurst's (1981) theories in adult development contributed significantly to Knowles's assumption with regard to adult readiness. They divided the adult years into five phases: early adulthood (23-35), middle transition (35-45), middle adulthood (45-57), late adult transition (57-65), and late adulthood (65). Havinghurst (1970) further identified 10 social roles of adulthood: workers, mate, parent, homemaker, son, daughter of aging parents, citizen, friend, organization member, religious affiliate, and user of leisure time. He found that the requirement for performing each of these social roles changes as adults move through phases of adult life, thereby, setting up changing developmental tasks; therefore, changing readiness to learn (Cross, 1981; Erickson, 1959; Havinghurst, 1970; Knowles, 1980; Terrell, 1990).
Knox (1977) found that learning is one of the six responses linked in role change and that sometimes learning is directly linked to an event such as divorce, illness, loss of job, and so forth. In fact, Knox has gone the furthest in linking adult learning to adult life changes. Aslanian and Brickell (1980) built on this premise and put forth two propositions when they surveyed 2,000 adult Americans from all over the country: Proposition 1: moving from one status in life to another requires learning of new information, skills, attitudes or values. Proposition 2: a significant event triggers an adult's decision to learn at a particular time. In other words, transitions are the reasons for learning and triggers set time for our learning.

The results from testing the two propositions reveal that not all adults were learning in order to cope with change in their life, but 83% of them were talking about learning for various reasons such as technological changes, for example, new machinery, relocation, and so forth. They also found that close to 60% identified career transitions as the reason for learning; family and leisure competed for second place. Therefore, Aslanian & Brickell (1980) concluded that most of the people that return to college campuses do so to meet new roles imposed by their jobs. According to a study conducted by Tough (1968), only one third of the population in his study identified life transitions as the factor that initiated learning. Cross (1981) did not suggest that the rapid changes in society may help to explain the gap between the two studies. Other studies such as Bowden and Heritage (1992) and Grennan and Schneider (1989) seem to point to this direction.
Cross (1981) stated that the difference between the two figures are substantial and they do not appear to be explained by the difference in their definition of learning.

Motivation to Learn

Knowles recognized that the adults' motivation to learn is often triggered by external factors such as a loss of job or a pay raise, but his andragogical assumption predicts that internal motivations such as self-esteem, recognition, or a better quality of life are greater motivators. Knowles, like Maslow (1970) perceived the goal of learning to be self-actualization, and in support of Knowles's assumption regarding motivation is Miller's (1967) social class theory which he applied to adult education. Miller incorporated Maslow's (1954) Hierarchy of Needs and Lewin's (1947) concept of Force Field Analysis.

According to Miller (1967), Maslow's low fundamental needs—survival, safety, and belonging—must be acquired before people can begin to concern themselves with higher human needs—for recognition (status), achievement, and self-realization. In addition, when applied to education, the needs hierarchy suggests that members of the lower classes will generally utilize the basics of education to fulfill fundamental needs such as job training and adult basic education. Whereas, the upper classes, already having fulfilled those needs, then utilize education for achievement and self-realization. Research shows that higher education is comprised primarily of the middle class (Aslanian & Brickell, 1988; Cross, 1981). Also, several scholars and educators support Miller's usage of Maslow's hierarchy needs (Cross, 1981;
Knowles, 1980). He further demonstrated a relationship between educational interests, age, and position in relation to life cycles. Generally, during the early stages of adulthood, people are concerned with satisfaction of needs, low in hierarchy such as obtaining a job, family, and a home. Unlike people in their early adulthood, those people in later stages of adulthood are generally achieving status, enhancing achievement, and working toward self-realization (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1975; Cross, 1979; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965).

Upon careful analysis, it seems clear that andragogy and pedagogy do not describe two distinct arts and sciences of teaching. They rather present two different approaches to education of children and adults. Dewey (cited in Elias, 1979) called the two approaches the traditional and the progressive. In their extreme form, he rejected both of these approaches in favor of an approach that uses both experience and subject centered, both past and future oriented.

But, the andragogical assumptions, in terms of the volume and quality of the adults' life experiences, the adults' readiness to learn, and their motivation to learn, do provide a basis for which to distinguish the traditional student from the nontraditional student, or adult learners. Further, it provides educators, policy makers, and scholars responsible for adult education with a profile of the general characteristics of the adult learner, which will help them to understand this growing population.

However, future research should more precisely measure the characteristics of individual learners and educators what Griffin (1983) called a theory about andragogy—what is teaching and learning. Again,
this points to the Conti findings in 1985 which suggest that the best teaching and learning depends upon the situation. In other words, "one size fits all" approach can be problematic in dealing with adult learners.

Barriers Confronting Adult Learners

While the characteristics of adult learners clearly set them apart from the traditional learner, they do not provide an adequate basis for determining the needs that adult learners have in higher education. Therefore, it is imperative to consider additional components that aid the development of a conceptual framework for this population. Cross and Zusman (1977) provided these components with their broad description of the barriers that typically confront this population. These same barriers interact with the characteristics of the population, thereby influencing needs.

Institutional Barriers

Generally, institutional barriers are related to the type of program or the training of the staff. According to Garbarino (1992), institutional barriers create the most anxiety for adult learners because they have no control over the barriers. According to Cross (1981), institutional barriers affect between 10% and 25% of the potential learners in most surveys.

Cross (1981) grouped institutional barriers into five areas: problems with scheduling; location or transportation problems; lack of courses that are interesting, practical, or relevant; procedures and time requirement problems; and lack of information.
However, for the purpose of this study, institutional barriers are divided into three dimensions which not only provided basis for which to review the vast amount of literature on institutional barriers, but it further defines the variables under consideration when the needs of adult learners are being determined by educators, practitioners, and scholars: core academic support, academic logistical support, and administrative logistical support. Core academic support consists of obstacles related to the scheduling of courses, program offerings, and faculty knowledge about adult learners. Academic logistical support is inclusive of information or lack of information with regards to institutional resources, libraries, and schedules or bulletins, advisors, and facilitators. Administrative logistical support are those obstacles related to registration, location, parking, financial aid, and food services.

**Core Academic Support**

Core academic support are the inconvenient schedules and the lack of relevant courses, complete programs, and knowledgeable faculty; and these are the types of barriers that adult learners complain most about; they are discussed in the literature review in the manner that is similar to the analyzation of each barrier. Bodensteiner (1988), in his study of 1,719 adult students enrolled in a Midwestern university, found that if more courses were scheduled during the late afternoon, evening hours, and on Saturdays, the institution would better serve its population. He further concluded that if these courses were scheduled sequentially, one could earn most or all of the credits needed for a degree. He suggested that a 3- to 5-year schedule developed in advance would
facilitate the planning process for adult students. These findings support most of the relevant research which shows that adults did not participate when the time or location was inconvenient to their lifestyle (Boshier, 1973; Cross & McCurtan, 1984; Darkenwald, 1982; Knox, 1987; Silling, 1984; Sullins & Vogler, 1986).

The literature reveals that typically 70% of the adult population works full time; thereby, generally being available to attend higher education only on a part-time basis during evenings and weekends (Sorensen & Robinson, 1992). In fact, the majority of the adult student population, according to the demographic information in the literature on the adult learner, are part time (Aslanian & Brickell, 1988; NUCEA, 1994; Silling, 1984; Sorensen & Robinson, 1992).

College Entrance Examination Board (1986) found that more than one-third of the adult students preferred classes being between 7:00 a.m. and 10:00 a.m. and nearly one half preferred that classes start between 5:00 p.m. and 7:00 p.m.; they indicated that these findings suggest since adults preferred early mornings or late evening classes that they are taking classes that fit around work and family schedules.

**Course Offerings/Complete Programs.** Most studies state that inconvenient scheduling of courses as well as a poor selection of courses toward majors on the part of the institution generally results in empty classrooms (Silling, 1984). Moreover, 90% of the part-time students enrolled in credit programs are seeking a degree, either at the prebaccalaureate or postbaccalaureate level. The nondegree seeking part-time students, 10%, comprise those that are taking classes as a job
requirement or to satisfy professional certification requirements (NUCEA, 1994).

**Faculty Training.** A study at Lakeland Community College on nonreturning students revealed that in addition to factors as scheduling and course offerings influencing student retention that faculty instruction or faculty training affected their decision to return, too (Thompson, 1985). Additional findings with regard to faculty training and its impact on the adult learner revealed that faculty knowledge about the adult learner may impede program participation as it may have an impact on student achievement; thereby, having the potential of being construed as a "need" for adult learners.

Galerstein and Chandler (1982) examined the attitudes of faculty at the University of Texas-Dallas concerning the adult learners in their classrooms; they concluded that, on the whole, the faculty did not change their teaching methods to accommodate the needs of the learner. Additionally, a large percentage of the faculty felt that there was no distinction between the quality of the adult learners and the traditional students. Faculty plans did not consider the goals of students.

Beder and Darkenwald (1982) sought to determine whether or not faculty tend to teach adults differently than preadults. A survey of teachers from elementary through college level revealed that the teachers' perceived that their instructional behavior was related to the characteristics of students as outlined by theory and their belief that different age groups should be taught differently. Furthermore, the result showed that the differences were greater for extreme age ranges implying a
continuum of differences rather than a dichotomy for the age groups which were elementary, high school, traditional college, and adult college students. They found that there were eight differences between the teachers of adult students and teachers of preadult students. The study reported that these forging behaviors were common to the teachers of adult students: (1) greater use of group discussion, (2) less time spent on classroom, (3) more varying of classroom teaching techniques, (4) less time spent on giving directions, (5) more relating of class material to life experiences, (6) less tight structuring of instructional activities, (7) more adjustments made in instructional content in response to student feedback, and (8) less emotional support provided in individual students.

Darkenwald (1982) extended this study; he performed additional analyses on the data and found two factors emerging which he labeled responsiveness and control. These factors seem similar to teacher-centered (pedagogical) and learner-centered (andragogical) concepts as described in the literature, as well as to factors in differentiating teacher behavior in terms of traditional and/or task oriented and progressive or person-oriented (Gorham, 1985; Kerlinger & Pedhazur, 1968).

These and similar findings appear to suggest that one's philosophy of education has an impact on faculty predisposition and how it impacts achievement or meets a perceived need of adult students. Future studies in the area of faculty training would prove helpful when developing programs for adult learners. But, studies conducted with this intent must pay particular attention to the other core academic support areas
as each of them are important variables in programs established to overcome obstacles experienced by adult learners.

**Academic Logistical Support**

Academic logistical support includes those barriers that are critical due to inadequate or lack of information. Like core academic support, they are discussed in a manner that is similar to the analysis of barriers.

**Institutional Information Sources.** Cross (1981) indicated that in recent years colleges and universities have lowered institutional barriers by making programs more accessible through scheduling, granting credit by examination, in other words, relaxing policy somewhat in an effort to reduce barriers. In spite of this, Cross concluded that the average adult still seem unaware of this change when surveyed. Cross continued that surveys are intended to tell what people perceive to be barriers, which may have as much to do with the lack of participation as the actual barriers. Hence, institutions must seek to inform students of learning opportunities as well as remove obstacles that deter participation. Specifically, Cross considered information as the critical link in bringing potential learners and providers together (Cross, 1981; Hale, 1989/1990).

**Bulletin or Schedule.** Thon (1985) supported the Cross (1981) findings in his study of 500 chief student personnel administrators of four-year institutions and with total enrollments over 300. In fact, the need to provide printed materials that will inform students of frequently
asked questions, course offerings, and institutional resources was among his top 10 recommendations to those colleges and universities that he included in his study. He also concluded that there is a need to identify a person or an office in order to answer questions relative to the adult learners' education.

**Resource People/Services.** Hilts (1991), in his study of deterrents of adult learners in an isolated northern community, found that students perceived that the most difficult barrier to their learning was knowing what was out there and then how to get there. The implication is that an institutional resource person or office can provide them with information about the institution or program. This would include advisors, program facilitator, and centralized resource offices. Greenland (1989) provided additional support for this conclusion. Her survey of 24 campus personnel and 181 undergraduate adult students at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst found that the mean satisfaction scores showed that library facilities/services and academic advising services were among the highest rated services by adults. Moreover, in this same study, a survey of 20 environmental aspects indicated that the student's flexibility to design their program of study and availability of advisors received the highest ratings on satisfaction.

According to Silling (1984), academic and career counseling may be important to adult learners because it allows them an avenue for which to set realistic academic goals, learn career decision-making skills, and develop reasonable expectations for postgraduate employment.
Administrative Logistical Support

Administrative logistical support are obstacles that are created by policies and procedures, in general, red tape, which may be defined as things that unnecessarily inconvenience adults.

In fact, Silling (1984) indicated that in addition to providing counseling services during evenings and weekends, Kent State along with several other two-year institutions in her study provided a resource center for adult students. She described this as a centralized location for a number of student services. The resource center staff at Kent State University in particular provides academic advising; informs students of institutional policies, procedures, programs, and services; collects tuition payments; and assists students to register. The need to provide these types of services are found throughout the literature (Bodensteiner, 1988; Cross, 1981).

Admissions, Registration, and Financial Aid. King (1985) provided a direction for administrator and educator seeking to overcome institutional barriers by suggesting that in the future there will be three kinds of assistance that are critical in helping adult learners gain access to institutions: information about which institutions are accessible to their admissions, counseling, and information about financial aid available. Again, they are discussed in a manner that is similar to the analyzation of these types of barriers.

Bodensteiner (1988), Griffin (1983), and Silling (1984) all showed that registration and scheduling procedures should be simplified and that these offices should provide services during lunch hours, in the early
evening hours, and perhaps on Saturday morning. Bodensteiner further found that what would be most helpful for adult learners is to register through the mail or by phone, since adult learners, because of time constraints, are unable to stand in long lines.

Parking and Location. The Bodensteiner (1988) study also found that adequate parking should be made available and readily accessible to adult learners because many have the need to get on and off campus in a hurry due to employment and other responsibilities. Another reason adult students require accessible parking is that most commute to campus, some from a long distance, thereby, being unable to use the public transportation system (Silling, 1984).

Promotional Activities/Materials. One of the final findings of Bodensteiner's (1988) study was that the staff for adult learners needs to be tuned into the specific needs, circumstances, and situations of the adult learner and how these differ from those of traditional students enabling them to better inform students on issues such as financial aid. This will assist institutions in designing promotional activities and literature that are sensitive to this audience's needs.

Glass and Rose (1987), in their study of reentry adult women, established that it was unfair for institutions to attend only to institutional policies and procedures. He found that reentry women required flexible scheduling and admission policies and information related to the institution and programs. These findings, of course, may be generalized to include all adult learners because they represent the types of
in institutional barriers that must be overcome if the needs of this population are to be addressed.

**Situational Barriers**

Situational barriers are those barriers that prohibit adult learners from entering in continuing higher education. They include several limiting factors: lack of time due to job and home responsibilities, lack of money, lack of child care, lack of transportation, and personal event that prevents the adult learner from attending school.

Cross (1981) found that situational factors ranked at the top of the list, ranging from roughly 10% of the adult student population citing factors such as lack of child care or transportation to about 50% identifying cost or lack of time as factors that prohibit adult learning. In fact, Cross determined that cost of education and lack of time led all other barriers by a substantial margin. For the purposes of this study, situational barriers are described as personal support systems; they consist of issues such as child care, health services, and tuition cost.

Silling (1984) identified that a lack of money is a major barrier for adult learners. Most are part-time students; therefore, they are frequently ineligible for financial aid. Furthermore, she found that if an adult does attend full time, that typically their family income exceeds eligibility requirements for grants and loans (Cross, 1981; Griffin, 1983; Hu, 1985).
Personal Support Systems

Time, Money, and Child Care. Personal support systems are the types of barriers that are caused by the individual learner's personal situation.

The Cross (1981) findings revealed that people who have the time for education frequently lack the money. On the other hand, the people who have the money often lack the time. Then it stands to reason that lower-income groups typically mention cost as a barrier more frequently when compared to middle-upper income groups. Due to the nature of barriers, the analyzation of them is treated somewhat differently than institutional barriers for instrumentation purposes because their range is not varied. In addition, Cross found that among actual learners public funding supported the education for about one-third of the Black adult learners, while employers supported the cost for about a third of the White male adult learners. White females, the majority in today's adult student market is the only subgroup which shows that the majority are supporting their educational costs from family funds. Cross determined that this undoubtedly is the reason why cost is cited the most often as a barrier to education among White females.

Current findings with regard to financing study revealed similar results. According to National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA, 1994), the majority of part-time undergraduate students use their own financial resources to pay for college because many are ineligible to receive aid at the state and institutional level. The study further indicated that in many instances, part-time students are eligible
for federal aid, but few students actually receive any help from federal grants or loans. Yet, adult learners frequently cite lack of money as a reason for why they do not attend or remain in higher education. In fact, it is not unusual for institutions of higher education to charge a higher credit hour fee for part-time students.

Sewall (1984) surveyed 1,343 adult students seeking undergraduate degrees from six campuses of a large Midwestern university system. This study showed that when forced to choose, the single most important barrier was typically family responsibilities. When barriers were examined by sex, age, and employment status, family responsibilities were cited as the major problem for women, whereas job responsibilities and lack of interest were the problems cited most often by men. In the case of respondents between the age of 25 and 34, no factor emerged as a major barrier; but among the 34 and older group, job responsibilities and lack of interest were cited the most often as the major barrier to education activities. Additional analysis also revealed that present employment status was not significantly related to the barriers that respondents selected. The implications of the Sewall study are that student attributes may have some impact on their needs. Specific to child care, Sewall found that adults preferred day and evening child care with reasonable financial charges on a drop-in or flexible scheduling basis. Silling (1984) found similar results indicating that women in particular between the ages of 25 and 39 have children under the age of 18; they make up the majority of the adult student population, and most of them must make child care arrangements. She concluded by indicating that convenient, low-cost, and quality child care needs to be
provided in the university and the community in order to attract and retain this population.

Generally, situational barriers are the most difficult for adults to surmount, and colleges and universities are only beginning to address them. On the other hand, many universities have begun to assist adult learners in overcoming dispositional barriers.

**Dispositional Barriers**

Dispositional barriers are self-imposed psychological barriers such as lack of self-confidence or feelings of guilt for neglecting family responsibilities.

Cross (1981) found that these types of barriers are probably underestimated in survey research. In most instances, dispositional barriers are mentioned by only 5% to 15% of the survey respondents. However, Cross stated that there are several methodological problems related to the role of dispositional barriers, one of which is the problem of social desirability. She found that it is far more acceptable for adult learners to claim that they are too busy to participate in learning activities, or that the cost of learning is too much versus to say that they are not interested because they feel that they are too old or lack the ability.

Glass and Rose (1987), in their study of reentry women, found that women returning to school may feel insecure about study skills since they are often rusty and they fear competing with the college "kids." This can be a major stumbling block. The number of years away from an academic environment appears to be a significant factor in the level of strain that these women feel. (Cramer, 1981; C. J. White, 1983).
Silling (1984) found that there were long-term benefits with a semester-long orientation program for adult students at Kent State University. The orientation program was successful in terms of helping adult learners to overcome their fear about reentry by addressing issues such as study skills, career awareness and decision making, overcoming anxiety in the classroom, time management, and coping with family responsibilities.

Sorensen and Robinson's (1992) research findings showed that adult learners may require special classes with an orientation, particularly women, which would help them to adapt to the academic setting. Once adult learners have adjusted to the academic setting, the Bodensteiner (1988) study revealed that college attendance significantly raised the adult learners' self-esteem, finding that 75% of the subjects indicated that they were more self-confident as a result of college attendance.

Badenhoop and Johansen (1980) found that many insecurities with regard to the student role may also cause the reentry student to avoid student services that they feel are designed for traditional college students, hence, creating an obstacle that can only be addressed through further research and information aimed at dispelling myths of this nature.

Summary

Findings on Institutional, Situational, and Dispositional Barriers

Hu (1985) provided a detailed investigation of the reasons/needs and attitudes of the adult learners toward higher education in the
northeastern Ohio area. He shed some light on the general finding with respect to institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers. His study was categorized into three segments, current, prospective, and nonprospective students. The survey findings revealed that students ranked the following items by importance (determined by a mean score greater than 3): high quality professors, excellent academic reputation, flexibility of program offerings and requirements, availability of evening and weekend classes, easy to commute from work or home, safe campus, top quality program of study, numerous course offerings, availability of campus parking space, low tuition cost, and courses oriented to meet current job market demand. He also used the analysis of variance (ANOVA) to detect differences among the three groups. He found statistically significant difference ($\alpha < .10$) along 8 of the 29 dimensions: excellent academic reputation, required homework after class, easy commute from work or home, recent favorable newspaper publicity, numerous course offerings, informative university catalog, and programs exactly suiting students’ needs. Though there are implications with regards to some major differences in terms of the perceptions of these groups, all three current, prospective, and nonprospective have some institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers in common, for example, availability of evening and weekend classes, low tuition, flexibility of course offerings, and several others. In addition, they are similar to those found throughout the literature. Hu (1985) concluded his study by stating that the prospective student group represents roughly 33% of those who are not currently in school but already have a high level of interest in going to college. In the case of nonprospective students (he suggests that institutions need to divide) and only the current student group which in
general has identified items such as financial aid, part-time jobs, child care facility, public transportation, weekend classes, and academic counseling to be important. Students who are currently enrolled put a great deal of value on the quality of a program and at the same time this group is particularly subject to family and social influences. The implication of this analysis is that if university and colleges are to retain and recruit this population, they must consider programming that will eliminate institutional situational and dispositional barriers.

A review of the literature on institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers provides a basis for extrapolating obstacles that encourage or discourage participation in higher education. The limitations are that the barriers encountered by adult learners are situational. Therefore, they must be examined on the context of the adult learner's environment.

Programs Designed to Overcome Barriers

Many colleges and universities have responded to special needs of this changing student population by developing a weekend college program which is a viable method for those who find it inconvenient or impossible to avail themselves during the traditional day or evening classes (J. B. Morton, 1979; Roundtree, 1987/1988). The concept of weekend learning is not a novelty. In fact, it has been around since the late 1980s in the United States when the Chautauqua and the Danish folk school movement offered weekend classes. Several of the earlier adaptations of the folk school movement included residential programs such as the Pochcho People's College and the Opportunity School of
South Carolina. In the 1930s and 1940s weekend learning was popular among labor unions who would sponsor residential sessions to develop union leadership as well as to better understand organizational problems. During the 1950s weekend learning became an important institutional function as executives were in residence spending weekends studying management and human relation skills (Schact, 1960). But, it was not until 1965 when the first actual weekend college was developed at Miami Dade Junior College in Florida. According to Pflanzer and East (1984), the college offered seven courses and enrolled 323 students in its first semester. The program continued until the mid 1970s and has since revived itself in the 1990s.

The idea of weekend college had a slow beginning, but the concept caught on and moved rapidly among colleges and universities during the early 1970s. East (1991) and Wahlman (1988/1989) found that of the 321 institutions that make up the American Association of State Colleges and Universities, 49 had implemented the weekend college delivery system. This number is up from a similar study conducted by W. N. Morton (1977) in which only 27 member institutions indicated that they participated in this delivery format. East (1991) found that throughout the United States and Canada there are 528 weekend college programs.

Scheduling Patterns

Cross (1976) established that many institutions offer Saturday courses but do not define them as weekend college. Yet, by her definition they are, since typically they are offered for two or more days of
leisure time and in sequence.

As Cross (1976) suggested, the definition of weekend college varies among institutions with scheduling patterns being a primary difference. Most weekend programs offer classes on Friday evening, Saturday morning and afternoon, and Sunday afternoon and evening. A few offer classes on Sunday mornings, while many offer courses on Saturdays only. The number of student contact hours generally does not change for weekend students.

Curriculum

East (1991) found that success of weekend college programs was determined by the curriculum. He stated that programs should appeal to the interests of adult learners in the following areas: general education, skills, special interest courses with a professional focus, one-credit courses, and courses which satisfied degree requirements. Moreover, he concluded that courses filled to capacity most often were in the following academic areas: English composition, sign language, speech, accounting, computers, journalism, mathematics, and foreign languages.

Among those curriculums with a professional focus, which include both undergraduate and graduate course offerings, business, engineering/technology, criminal justice, nursing, social work, and education were the most popular areas of interest. Also, adult learners found special interest in courses related to ethnicity and gender attractive, for example, Afro-American folklore, history of black Americans, Afro-American studies, philosophy of women, and psychology of women in literature. One-credit courses were found to be appealing to adult
learners for several reasons: Cost is considerably less than three-credit hour courses, commitment towards degree status is minimal, and time management is easier.

Student Services

W. N. Morton (1977) found that flexible course scheduling was not sufficient; he stated that if adult learners are to fully participate in higher education, then they must have access to student services. W. N. Morton identified 11: (1) extended faculty and staff office hours, (2) availability of facilities and learning resources, (3) extended library hours, (4) access to the bookstore, (5) readily available housing and food services, (6) medical insurance and health care services, (7) job placement services, (8) readily available study skills center and simplified application and admissions policies, (10) optional child care services, and (11) available information centers and advisors.

Several researchers (Bodensteiner, 1988; Cross, 1981; Devore, 1978; Hall, 1980; Meyer, 1980) have found similar results claiming that many of the aforementioned student services play a critical role in the recruitment and retention of adult learners.

Roundtree (1987/1988), in her study of the characteristics common to the operation of the best weekend colleges in the nation, surveyed 321 weekend college administrators of which 96 responded and 15 emerged as the "best" or most successful programs in the nation. But, what is most relevant to this study is that among the 15 best a limited amount of student service were offered. She also concluded that there was no consistent pattern among the best weekend
college programs in the areas of administration, goals and mission, policies and procedures, budgeting, weekend course scheduling, or guidelines for the operation of weekend college. This seems to suggest that successful programming may be determined by the needs of the adult student population of a particular institution.

Among those that the Roundtree (1987/1988) study identified as the best in the nation was Western Michigan University's (WMU) weekend program which during the 1970s and 1980s consisted primarily of education courses and almost no student services, with the exception being library services. However, in the late 1980s, like most colleges and universities, WMU was faced with the reality of a declining or flat traditional student market and with the knowledge that the growth in the student market would come from the adult student population, expanded and severely enhanced its weekend college program.

Western Michigan University Campus III/Weekend College

The focus of this study is the Campus III/Weekend College of Western Michigan University. This program was named Campus III to distinguish from the university's traditional academic programs on campus, Campus I, and its nontraditional or evening programs of campus at one of its six regional centers (Lansing, Battle Creek, Grand Rapids, St. Joseph/Benton Harbor, Muskegon, and Kalamazoo-Off Campus), Campus II. In addition, Campus III represented a cooperative program effort between the Division of Continuing Education and the Provost and Vice President for Academic Affairs. The program was administered by the Office of Weekend College. From the program's inception, Winter
Semester 1991 until December 1994, the office was staffed by a
director who also had the responsibility for the Office of Adult Learning
Services, two graduate assistants, and a secretary.

In January 1995, the office was changed to the Office of
Weekend College and Special Programs with an office staff of a director
and a coordinator. The program’s mission rests on three objectives:
(1) providing a flexible weekend schedule; (2) offering a selection of
courses which lead to a degree, a certificate, or personal enrichment;
and (3) meeting the needs of adult students.

Campus III/Weekend College provides a flexible weekend schedule
by offering courses in a variety of accelerated scheduling formats such
as 3, 4, or 6 weeks as well as the traditional semester format. The
hours of instruction range between 3 to 9 hours per weekend with the
total number of student contact hours remaining the same as Campus I
and II, between 12 and 15 contact hours per credit hour. The time
periods for Campus III/Weekend College was generally between 4:00
p.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Fridays and 8:00 a.m. until 9:00 p.m. on Satur­
days, and 1:00 p.m. until 5:00 p.m. on Sundays. The scheduling format
lends itself to a wide selection of courses which lead to a degree or
certificate program; at this time, those areas are general university stud­
ies, public administration, educational leadership and education, and
profession development specialty programs on alcohol and drug abuse
(SPADA).

Campus III is an array of special services which are designed to
meet the needs of adult students: child care, health and library services,
academic advising, weekend facilitator and librarian, convenient
registrant, and convenient food services. This comprehensive program is designed to create a culture within a culture—one that is unique to the adult learner. Furthermore a program of this type appears consistent with most of the research and literature on the adult learner in terms of their needs and desires.

Yet, the program continues to experience marginal enrollment when compared to projected enrollment trends for this unique program. This, in part, is what makes this study compelling, not only for the researcher but also for Western Michigan University. Specifically, if administrators, educators, and scholars expect to recruit and retain this heterogeneous population, then they must examine the needs of the individual or particular adult student population that they are to serve. Once the characteristics have been identified and the needs of the adult learner have been determined, they must be compared to institutional resources or services to determine if there is a discrepancy. Then adult learning services will emerge as learner needs and institutional services are aligned, thereby achieving satisfaction for both (College Entrance Examination Board, 1988; Drucker, 1969; Pride & Ferrell, 1985; M. White, 1990).

The Adult Student Assessment model considers the five components that are interactive in the process of successful program development:

1. The adult student population which is the group of potential or existing students that the institution is attempting to recruit and/or retain.
2. The adult student profile which corresponds to the characteristics or experience; readiness and motivation; and the attributes or sex, race, gender, level of education, marital status, tuition source, age, and employment status.

3. The barriers, institutional, situational, and dispositional, are described as the types of obstacles encountered by the learner.

4. The barriers encountered translate into perceived student needs.

5. Finally, the institutional services represent the institutional resources allocated to serve the adult student population.

Figure 1 illustrates the interaction of each component. The model is applied in the study by addressing three basic research questions.

Research Questions

1. What special services do adult learners attending weekend college perceive as needs or needed?

2. How do the general characteristics of adult students relate to their needs regarding institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers?

3. To what extent do the special services offered by WMU meet the needs of adult students attending weekend college?
Figure 1. Adult Student Program Assessment Model.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was twofold: first, to seek a better understanding of the needs of adult students attending weekend college at Western Michigan University (WMU); and second, to determine how well those needs align with the services provided by weekend college. This chapter contains descriptions of the methodology and procedures used in the study under the following subsections of research design, sources of information, population, instrumentation, data collection, data analysis, and summary.

Research Design

This is a descriptive case study of the needs of students attending weekend college at WMU. Consistent with the case study approach defined as research that involves examining "intensively the background, current status, and environmental interactions of a given social unit, an individual, group, institution, or community" (Isaac & Michael, 1981; p. 48); the researcher has focused on the weekend college at WMU. This choice has been made in large part because this program represents critical variables or dimensions, processes, and interactions that would provide insights into needs of and services for adult students in a given context (Brinkerhoff, 1987; Isaac & Michael, 1981).
In addition, although the case study approach may not be defensible in terms of making generalizations about weekend programs, its major strength lies in its recognition of the importance of context and thus anecdotal evidence in dealing with a process like assessing and analyzing needs of adult learners. Further, the researcher understands that when several case studies of weekend colleges in a variety of settings have been conducted, it is possible to make compelling generalizations about needs and services required for adult students attending weekend colleges. In fact, it is hoped that this study will become part of the process of accumulating the necessary case studies to support generalizations. Equally important, this case study will better inform policy makers and program designers of the WMU Weekend College about critical factors that will enable them to better meet the needs of their clients and assure effective recruitment and retention of this important and fast growing element of higher education student population.

The conceptual framework detailed in Adult Student Program Assessment Model (Figure 1) was used to organize the characteristics of interest in this study. The process depicted by the model is interactive, the dotted arrows pointing in either direction for barriers, needs, and institutional services illustrate the interactive nature of the relationships between these characteristics.

The three main types of barriers or needs of students attending weekend college that were considered in this study are: institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers. These barriers were further broken down into five dimensions. This was largely done to make the data
analysis process more manageable. Furthermore, the variables actually used in the data collection instrument represent the composite variables for each dimension (see Table 1).

### Table 1

**Variables Considered in the Study**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Barriers</th>
<th>Dimensions</th>
<th>Variables</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Core academics</td>
<td>Course offerings, flexible scheduling of courses, completeness of program, knowledgeable faculty</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Academic logistical support</td>
<td>Academic advising, weekend facilitating, library services, early morning library hours, weekend schedule bulletin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institutional</td>
<td>Administrative logistical support</td>
<td>Promotional activities materials, on-site coordination, walk-in registration, phone registration, central location, nearby food services, financial aid, complementary refreshments, accessible parking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Situational</td>
<td>Personal support systems</td>
<td>Child care, health center services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dispositional</td>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>Academic skills services</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Sources of Data**

The two main sources of data for this study were a survey of all participants in the two sessions of the weekend college in 1993 and a focus group. The survey enabled the researcher to address Research
Questions 1 and 2, while the third research question was addressed by employing the focus group methodology.

Population

This study had as its subjects 120 graduate and undergraduate students enrolled in Campus III/Weekend College at WMU during the spring and summer sessions of 1993. Students took course offerings from the Colleges of Arts and Sciences, Education, Engineering and Applied Sciences, Health and Human Services, and Business at appropriate levels (i.e., undergraduate or graduate). All except three came from Michigan, with a significant number (56) from Kalamazoo, while the rest came from surrounding towns and cities. A significant number of the subjects were female (82), married (76), and White (89). Most of them already had a bachelor's (54) or a master's degree. The age of most of the subjects ranged from 35 to 54 years (70.5%) and were either fully employed or had a part-time job (92.5%). These characteristics and attributes of the adult student population generally mirror the national trends and statistics (Aslanian, 1989; Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Cross, 1981).

Instrumentation

There were two instruments designed for this study: A survey instrument or questionnaire as well as a general guideline and topics for the focus group. The questionnaire (Appendix A) consisted of 33 substantive items divided into two sections: The first section seeks information and the second seeks to solicit information about the barriers
faced and services needed by adult learners. Specifically, this second
section is essentially a Likert-type differential semantic 5-point scale that
elicits the respondent's perception of the services needed by them in
relation to the services provided by the weekend college at WMU. The
questionnaire was based on the review of literature and was a modifica-
tion of a questionnaire developed by Cross (1978) and an Adult Services
Questionnaire by Silling (1984). The Cross instrument examined the
needs of students across the country with consideration being given to
barriers, whereas the Silling instrument focused on the services offered
at more than 20 institutions.

The first draft was reviewed by the Weekend College Advisory
Board which included three faculty members from different departments,
a department chair from the College of Education, an assistant dean of
the College of Arts and Sciences, the then acting dean of the College of
Business, the dean of the Graduate College, the dean of the Division of
Continuing Education, and the associate vice president for academic
affairs. In addition, advice on the design of the instrument was sought
from an expert in survey research instrument design at the Western
Michigan University Evaluation Center. As a result of these reviews, the
following additional questions were included: (a) employed (9), (b) what
is the primary source for your tuition (10), and (c) financial aid (31).

Following the changes arising from the expert review, a second
draft instrument was prepared for pilot testing with a small sample of
students (20). In addition to filling out the questionnaire, the students
were asked to critically review the questions and make comments and
suggestions in regard to the clarity and content of the questions. Only a
few minor suggestions were made and these were not substantive and, thus, did not result in major changes in the questionnaire.

Content of the Questionnaire

The first 10 items (Items 1-10) as well as the last two (Items 32 and 33) sought information on the characteristics and attributes of the respondents. The remaining 21 items measured the respondents' perceptions of their needs/barriers. These needs were divided into three categories: (1) institutional barriers that include the core academic support dimension (Items 11, 16, 24, and 27), academic logistical support dimension (Items 15, 17, 18, 21, and 22), administrative logistical support dimension (Items 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, and 31); (2) situational barriers include personal support system dimension (Items 12 and 13); (3) dispositional barriers include academic skill services dimension (Item 14) (also see Table 1). In addition, subjects were given an opportunity to respond to the following two open-ended items: (1) "What other services would you like to see offered on weekends?" and (2) "additional comments." These open-ended items were intended to capture any emerging needs/services not previously identified in Items 11 through 33.

Focus Group Guidelines

The case study methodology requires the researchers to employ various data collection techniques, such as a survey and a focus group. In the present study the focus group seemed to be a logical data collection choice for weekend college because by definition it recognizes the
human tendencies by allowing for people with similar interests and backgrounds to build on each others' attitudes and perceptions as they relate to programs and services. Guidelines to be used by the facilitator for the focus group were drafted by the researcher. These guidelines were organized under the following two headings: (1) How did you come to know about weekend college and (2) what services as a weekend college student do you perceive as needs? (See Appendix B.) The main objective of using this data collection approach was to obtain rich qualitative information to supplement the data from the questionnaire, but perhaps more importantly to involve the clients or subjects in the research process and thus enhance its validity and utility. In addition, this technique was selected to determine whether or not needs were in fact linked to services.

The focus group draft protocol was reviewed by research experts and those familiar with this approach in the Evaluation Center at Western Michigan University. The researcher made minor modification to the draft before it was used with a carefully selected group of subjects.

Data Collection

Administration of the Questionnaire

Coded questionnaires were mailed to 120 students enrolled in the weekend college during the spring and summer session of 1993. A cover letter (see Appendix C) explained the purpose of the study, guaranteed confidentiality, and encouraged the timely responses. Ninety-one respondents filled out the questionnaire from the initial mailing.
Successful follow-up letters (see Appendix D) and telephone calls were made to nonrespondents resulting in a 100% response rate. Such a high response rate was possible in large part because subjects were persuaded that the study would result in a direct benefit to them because of its practical orientation.

**Focus Group**

Unlike questionnaires that are administered by mail or via telephone or even face-to-face interviews, the focus group assumes that individuals may not really know how they feel. Moreover, opinions formed in isolation lack the synergy that results from a brainstorming experience. The focus group approach to data collection allowed the researcher to observe shifts in opinions and other factors that seemed to influence the thinking of the participants during the process of group interaction (Bers & Smith, 1989; Kruger, 1988).

A systematic sampling procedure was employed to form the focus group. A list of 120 students was obtained, from which every 10th student was selected equaling a total number of 12 students. Of the 12 students contacted via phone, 9 actually participated. The focus group was held on Saturday, July 23, 1994. The nine-member focus group included one undergraduate and eight graduate students from the Departments of Educational Leadership, Management, History, and Sociology. This group was representative of the population attending weekend college. The process was facilitated by a graduate student whose orientation included instructions not to be an active participant but to provide information for the clarification of an issue, to probe, and
to keep time. The researcher was in attendance to provide additional information that might be required. The session was recorded and transcribed by the facilitator and the information has been integrated with information from the survey findings.

Data Analysis

As a first step in the process of data analysis all items on the questionnaire were tallied and descriptive statistics were computed including frequency distributions, medians, modes, means, and standard deviations. These procedures in part enabled the researcher to detect any outliers in the data coding procedures. This analysis made it possible to describe the population of the adult learners involved in this study and to assess the extent to which the characteristics of the group are consistent with the literature (Aslanian, 1989; Cross, 1981; Silling, 1984). The researcher also explored various tests to respond to the research questions. The first research question was: What special services do adult learners perceive as needs or needed? The response to this question required frequency tabulations of Items 11-31 of the questionnaire and rank ordering of these variables to show the order of the perceived importance of the needs by respondents. For rank ordering the needs, mean scores were used.

The second research question was: How do the demographic characteristics of adult learners relate to their needs regarding the institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers? This research question involves relationships between and among sets of variables. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run to compute the $F$ statistic to establish
whether or not there was a significant difference in the means of the items measuring the perceived needs that could be explained by different demographic characteristics. The rationale for using the ANOVA is that other alternative tests such as the chi square were not feasible in most cases as the resulting cross-tabulations produce too many empty cells (more than one third of the cells for most of the tables) and thus rendering uninterpretable results. Furthermore, the ANOVA was used by Hale (1989/1990) in a similar study in which he examined the relationships between factors affecting weekend college student participation.

In this study differences between demographic characteristics and the need for services was examined using ANOVA (means, standard deviations, F ratio at the .05 level of significance, and Tukey post hoc comparisons for pairs of means). Chapter IV contains all of the ANOVA results; but in responding to Question 2 of this study, the researcher considered the following subquestions:

2A. Is there any relationship between the respondents' reason for returning to school and their perceptions of the need for core academic support?

2B. Is there any relationship between the level of educational attainment among respondents and their perception of needs with regard to core academic support?

2C. Is there any relationship between respondents' tuition source and their perceptions of the need for core academic support?

2D. Is there any relationship between respondents' employment status and their perceptions of needs with regard to academic logistical support?
2E. Is there any relationship between respondents' employment status and their perceptions of needs with regard to administrative logistical support?

2F. Is there any relationship between respondents' ages and their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

2G. Is there any relationship between respondents' race and their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

2H. Is there any relationship between respondents of different employment status and their perceptions of need for personal support?

2I. Is there any relationship between respondents' education level and their perceptions of needs with regard to academic skills services?

2J. Is there any difference between male and female respondents regarding their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

These questions were selected based upon the literature review and they specifically relate to Research Question 2 of this study; they may prove useful to policy makers at WMU.

Consistent with the variables listed in Table 1, composite variables (needs) were formed from items of the questionnaire to represent the dimensions of core academic support (Items 11, 16, 24, and 27), academic logistical support (Items 15, 17, 18, 21, and 22), administrative logistical support (Items 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, and 30), personal support system (Items 12 and 13), and academic skills service (Item 14). The maximum score point for each of these dimensions was a function of the number of items included in the dimension and the highest score on the score scale used in the questionnaire (i.e., 5), while
the minimum score was 5.

In addition to using the ANOVA analysis, the chi square was used in cases where the nature of the survey data was nominal. These cases include Items 32 and 33 from the survey where responses are yes and no versus the responses garnered by the 5-point Likert scale. As in the case of the ANOVA the level of significance for the chi square was set at .05.

The three subquestions for this analysis follows:

2K. Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status and their availability to attend only weekend classes?

2L. Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status and their availability to attend evening classes?

2M. Is there any relationship between the respondents' distance traveled to campus and their availability to attend only weekend classes?

These relationships will show the extent to which an adult learner attending weekend college at WMU requires flexible scheduling.

The third research question was: To what extent do special services provided by weekend college at WMU meet the needs of students? This research question was answered by using qualitative data obtained through the focus group. Transcriptions of tape recorded information from the focus group was content-analyzed and categories were formed about how and to what extent respondents perceived their needs to be met by WMU.
Summary

In this chapter, the purpose of the study was restated. The research design adopted in this study, case study, was described and the rationale was explained and the sources of information identified. Then detailed demographic information of the population and where the data were collected were provided. Next there was a lengthy discussion on the development of the instrument which was mailed to all of the subjects; the discussion included the content of the questionnaire, the distribution of the questionnaire, the guidelines of the focus group, and its distribution. Following the sections on the survey research method and the focus group, a rationale for the sampling method and how it was utilized to draw focus group participants. The last part of the chapter was data analysis used to organize data obtained and to produce results for this study. Mainly descriptive statistics (frequency and mean) and inferential statistics (independent samples t test and ANOVA) were employed to analyze the data. The qualitative data obtained from the focus group was described in narrative form.
In this chapter, both the quantitative and qualitative results of the analysis for the three research questions are presented. These questions are consistent with the purpose of this study which is to seek a better understanding of the needs of adult students attending Weekend College at Western Michigan University (WMU) in Kalamazoo and to align those needs to the services provided by Weekend College. Specifically, the analysis focuses on five dimensions of institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers confronted by this population. The five dimensions and the variables nested in them are as follows: (1) core academic support: course offerings, flexible scheduling of courses, completeness of program, and knowledgeable faculty; (2) academic logistical support: academic advising, weekend facilitator, library services, early morning library hours, and weekend schedule bulletin; (3) administrative logistical support: promotional activities on site coordinator, walk-in registration, central location, nearby food services, financial aid, complementary refreshments, and accessible parking; (4) personal support system: child care services and health center services; and (5) academic skills: academic skills services.

The chapter itself is divided into four sections: (1) perceived needs, (2) characteristics and needs, (3) satisfaction and needs, and (4) summary.
Perceived Needs

**Question 1:** What special services do adult learners attending weekend college perceive as needs?

To respond to this question descriptive statistics were used to establish the order of importance of the perceived need for special services. More specifically, the mean scores for responses to Questionnaire Items 11 through 31 were computed to determine the perceived order of importance of special services needed by adult learners attending weekend college at WMU. The means were subsequently rank-ordered in a descending manner. Table 2 shows that the mean response relating to the perceived importance of accessible parking is 4.76, thereby rendering accessible parking as the most needed special service. Included in the top five mean responses pertaining to the perceived importance of special services is courses with a mean of 4.63, phone registration with a mean of 4.52, flexible schedules with a mean of 4.51, and library services with a mean of 4.49. The implication here is that the top five most needed special services relate to flexibility or the ease with which a student can participate in a program. On the other hand, the mean scores at the bottom of Table 2 reveal that the mean responses relating to the least perceived important special service is health center services with a mean of 2.12 and child care services with a mean of 2.34. This implies that these situational barriers which are related to the need for these services are the least encountered by adult students attending weekend college at WMU.
Table 2
Special Services Perceived as Needed in Rank Order

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Rank order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accessible parking</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>0.50</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.63</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phone registration</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.52</td>
<td>0.93</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible schedule</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.51</td>
<td>0.80</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library services</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.49</td>
<td>0.81</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty/staff</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.34</td>
<td>0.99</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complete program</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.28</td>
<td>1.04</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend schedule booklet</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>4.09</td>
<td>1.92</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Central location</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>4.02</td>
<td>1.93</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nearby food services</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.90</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Early morning library hours</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.79</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial aid</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>3.59</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic advising services</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>3.44</td>
<td>1.31</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills services</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site coordinator</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>3.35</td>
<td>1.14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complimentary refreshments</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.33</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Weekend facilitator on site</td>
<td>118</td>
<td>3.28</td>
<td>1.23</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-in registration</td>
<td>119</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>1.38</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Promotional activities</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>1.09</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child care services</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health center services</td>
<td>116</td>
<td>2.12</td>
<td>1.17</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Characteristics and Needs

Question 2: How do the general characteristics of adult students relate to their needs regarding institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers?

To respond to this question, the analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to detect differences between and among the characteristics--Items 1, 2, and 4-10 of the questionnaire (i.e., reason for returning, age, race, marital status, highest degree, program affiliation, miles traveled, employment, and tuition source) and the special services needed--Items 11-31 of the survey (i.e., core academics, academic logistical support, administrative logistical support, personal support systems, and academic skills [Appendix A]). The $t$ test was used to detect differences between the characteristic of sex, Item 3 of the questionnaire.

Table 3 shows the results of the one-way analysis of variance. However, as was discussed in Chapter III, subquestions are categorized by dimension; they are reported and analyzed.

Subquestion 2A: Is there any relationship between the respondents' reasons for returning to school and their perceptions of the need core academic support?

Table 4 demonstrates that when using the ANOVA to compare the mean responses for 120 respondents and their reasons for returning to school to the perceived need to have core academic support. The $F$ ratio was 2.73 with a $p$ value of .032. Therefore, at a level of $p < .05$, there is a significant difference in the respondents' perceived need for core academic support. The post hoc Tukey test shows that there is a difference between the mean responses of those returning to school for
Table 3
Summary of Relationship Between Characteristics of Participants and Their Perceived Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Core academics</th>
<th>Academic logistical</th>
<th>Administrative logistical support</th>
<th>Personal support system</th>
<th>Academic skills</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>p</td>
<td>F</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reason for returning</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.032*</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.032*</td>
<td>2.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>2.73</td>
<td>.032*</td>
<td>0.62</td>
<td>.646</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race</td>
<td>0.33</td>
<td>.854</td>
<td>0.64</td>
<td>.632</td>
<td>1.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital status</td>
<td>0.09</td>
<td>.963</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>.517</td>
<td>1.16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree earned</td>
<td>1.27</td>
<td>.287</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.500</td>
<td>1.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Program affiliation</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.531</td>
<td>0.69</td>
<td>.598</td>
<td>0.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance traveled</td>
<td>1.08</td>
<td>.368</td>
<td>1.54</td>
<td>.196</td>
<td>0.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employment status</td>
<td>0.65</td>
<td>.526</td>
<td>2.53</td>
<td>.084</td>
<td>2.79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Source of Tuition</td>
<td>0.47</td>
<td>.754</td>
<td>0.68</td>
<td>.608</td>
<td>0.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Core academics Items 11, 16, 24, and 27 of questionnaire; academic logistical support Items 15, 17, 18, 21, and 22 of questionnaire; personal support Items 12, 13, 19, 20, 23, 25, 26, 28, 29, 30, and 31 of questionnaire; and academic skills services Item 14 of questionnaire. F = F ratio. p = probability.

*Significant at .05 level.
professional enrichment and those returning to school for professional transition and their perceptions of the need to have core academic support. This same test did not show any other differences among the groups. The Tukey test indicates that the former respondents who have returned to school due to professional transition (mean score = 18.45) have a greater need for core academic support services (i.e., course offerings, flexible scheduling of courses, completeness of program, and knowledgeable faculty) as compared to respondents who return to school for personal enrichment. This suggests that there is a relationship between the respondents' reasons for returning to school and their need for core academic support.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Career preparation</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>17.29</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.032*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional transition</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>18.45</td>
<td>2.82</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal crisis</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal enrichment</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>16.75</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16.33</td>
<td>2.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 5 as lowest and 25 as highest.

*p < .05.

Subquestion 2B: Is there any relationship between the level of educational attainment among respondents and their perceptions of
needs with regard to core academic support?

Table 5 shows that when using the ANOVA to compare the mean responses for 118 respondents grouped by varying degree levels of educational attainment and their perceived need to have core academic's support, the $F$ ratio found is 1.27 with a $p$ value of .287. Therefore, there is no significant difference using a level of .05 among the groups with regard to their perceptions of the need to have core academic support. This implies that there is no relationship between the level of educational attainment and the respondents' need for core academic support. Although it might be expected that associate degree holders would have a greater need for core academic support, this would suggest that the level of degree (e.g., an associate degree holder when compared to someone with a master's and bachelor's degree or other) is no different in terms of their perceived need for core academic support. This may be explained by the fact that respondents are taking courses in fields other than the ones for which they were previously prepared. For example, some respondents indicated that they held diplomas in nursing, an area that is not the focus of weekend college.

Subquestion 2C: Is there any relationship between respondents' tuition source and their perceptions of the need for core academic support?

Table 6 reveals that using the ANOVA to compare mean responses for 120 respondents grouped by sources of tuition and their perceived need for core academic support, the $F$ ratio found is 0.47 with a $p$ value of .754. Thus, the perceived relationship between the need for core
Table 5  
Relationship Between Level of Education and Perceived Need for Core Academics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>18.1</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>.287</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>17.8</td>
<td>3.15</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16.1</td>
<td>3.45</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 4 as lowest score and 20 as the highest.

*p > .05.

Table 6  
Relationship Between Tuition Source and Perceived Need for Core Academic Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>17.61</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>.754</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>17.67</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full reimbursement</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18.42</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partial reimbursement</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>17.28</td>
<td>3.01</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18.60</td>
<td>0.55</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 5 as lowest and 25 as highest.

*p > .05.
Subquestion 2D: Is there any relationship between respondents’ employment status and their perceptions of the need for academic logistical support?

Table 7 shows that using the ANOVA to compare the mean responses for 120 respondents grouped by employment status and their perceived need for academic logistical support, the $F$ ratio found is 2.53 with a $p$ value of .084. Therefore, at $p < .05$, there is no significant difference in the respondents’ perceptions with regard to the need for academic logistical support. This suggests that there is no relationship between employment status and the need for academic logistical support. The specific implication here is that there is no difference between full time and part time or other employees and their need for academic logistical support which relates to information and includes questionnaire items academic advising, weekend facilitating library services, early morning library hours, and weekend schedule bulletin. Also, this finding is supported by earlier research which indicates that information is an important need for all learners because it links students to institutions (Cross, 1981; Hale, 1989/1990).

Subquestion 2E: Is there any relationship between respondents’ employment status and their perceptions of needs with regard to administrative logistical support?

Table 8 reveals that using the ANOVA to compare the mean responses of 120 respondents grouped by employment status and their perceived need for administrative logistical support, the $F$ ratio found is 2.79 with a $p$ value of .065. Therefore, at $p < .05$, there is no significant difference among the groups with regard to their perceptions of the
Table 7
Relationship Between Employment Status and Perceived Need for Academic Logistical Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>32.41</td>
<td>5.95</td>
<td>.084</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>34.35</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>36.33</td>
<td>4.50</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 9 as lowest and 45 as highest.

*p > .05.

need for administrative logistical support. Again, this suggests that there is no relationship between employment status and the need for administrative logistical support. Moreover, this implies that those who are employed full time do not have administrative logistical support needs (which includes services such as phone registration, financial, and so forth) that are different from those who are employed part time or other, as one might expect. Those who chose to respond to the category of other described themselves as full-time students.

Subquestion 2F: Is there any relationship between respondents' ages and their perception of need for personal support systems?

Table 9 indicates that using the ANOVA to compare mean responses for 117 respondents grouped by age and their perceived need for personal support systems, the F ratio found is 0.319 with a p value of .016. Therefore, at p < .05, there is a difference among the groups and their perceptions with regard to the need for personal support...
Table 8
Relationship Between Employment Status and Perceived Administrative Logistical Support

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>18.52</td>
<td>4.20</td>
<td>.065</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>19.82</td>
<td>2.98</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>21.44</td>
<td>1.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 9 as lowest and 45 as highest.
*p > .05.

systems. The post hoc Tukey test results showed that weekend college students who are between 45 and 54 years old (mean score = 3.2) perceive a lesser degree of need for personal support systems (i.e., child care and health services) than those who are between the ages of 25 and 34 years of age (mean score = 4.8). In other words, there is a relationship between the respondents' age and their need for personal support systems. This relationship may be due to the fact that the respondents are likely to have grownup children or older children; consequently, they are unlikely to be in need of child care.

Subquestion 2G: Is there any relationship between respondents' race and their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

Table 10 indicates that when using the ANOVA to compare mean responses for 120 respondents grouped by race and their perceived need for personal support systems, the $F$ ratio found is 4.03 with a $p$ value of .005. Therefore, at $p < .05$, there are differences among the races...
Table 9
Relationship Between Age and Perceived Need for Personal Support Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 25</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>1.58</td>
<td>.016*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>2.21</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>2.23</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>3.2</td>
<td>1.32</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 55</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 2 as lowest and 10 as highest.

and their perceptions with regard to personal support systems. The post hoc Tukey test results show that Black (mean score = 5.4) and Asian (mean score = 7.7) weekend college students perceive personal support systems as a greater need than do White (mean score = 4.0) weekend college students. This suggests that there is a relationship between the respondents' race and their need for personal support systems. The implication here is that participants from different cultures and backgrounds differ in their need for personal support services.

Subquestion 2H: Is there any relationship between respondents of different employment status and their perceptions of need for personal support?
Table 10
Relationship Between Race and the Perceived Need for Personal Support Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>2.06</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6.0</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian/Pacific</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7.7</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native American</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>3.54</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 2 as lowest and 10 as highest. Caution should be taken when generalizing the results of this particular test due to the small group of Asian students.

*p < .05.

Table 11 reveals that when using the ANOVA to compare mean responses for 117 respondents grouped by employment status and their perceived need for personal support systems, the F ratio found is 4.74 with a p value of .010. At p < .05, there is a significant difference among the groups and their perceptions of the need for personal support systems. The post hoc Tukey test results showed that the group of respondents classified as other (mean score = 6.22) have a greater need for personal support systems when compared to those who have full-(mean score = 4.13) or part-time (mean score = 4.94) employment. Therefore, this suggests that there is a relationship between those who belong to the other category identified as full-time students and their need for personal support systems.
Table 11
Relationship Between Employment Status and Perceived Need for Personal Support Systems

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full time</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>4.13</td>
<td>2.14</td>
<td>.010*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part time</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>6.22</td>
<td>1.86</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 2 as lowest and 10 as highest.

*p < .05.

Subquestion 21: Is there any relationship between respondents' education level and their perception of needs with regards to academic skills services?

Table 12 shows that when using the ANOVA to compare the mean responses for 114 respondents grouped by level of education and their perceived need to have academic skills services, the F ratio found is 2.41 with a p value of .071. Therefore, at p < .05, there is no difference among the groups with regard to their perceptions of the need to have academic skills services. This would suggest that there is no relationship between the respondents' educational level and their need for academic support services. The implication is that associate degree students' need for academic skills services, which includes items such as English, mathematics, study skills, orientation, and campus facilities, are not different from university students with a bachelor's or a master's degree or other qualifications.
Table 12
Relationship Between Education Level and Perceived Need for Academic Skills Services

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Associate</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>0.79</td>
<td>.071</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>3.50</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>2.22</td>
<td>0.97</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Scoring = 1 as lowest and 5 as highest.
*p > .05.

Table 13 shows the results of the t test for the characteristic sex and its relationship to the perceived need for all five dimensions.

Table 13
Summary of the Difference Between the Participants' Perceived Needs by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension need</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Core academics</td>
<td>0.49</td>
<td>.625</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic logistical</td>
<td>1.90</td>
<td>.060</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative logistical support</td>
<td>-0.06</td>
<td>.952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal support system</td>
<td>-0.14</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic skills</td>
<td>0.53</td>
<td>.596</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Subquestion 2J:** Is there any difference between male and female respondents regarding their perception of need for personal support systems?

Table 14 shows that using the t test to compare mean responses for 117 respondents grouped by sex and their perceived need for personal support systems, the t statistic found is -0.14 with a p value of .892. Therefore, at p < .05, there is no significant difference. Again, this suggests that there is no relationship between gender and the need for personal support. This may imply that males and females have similar needs for personal support systems, which includes child care and health care services.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>p</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>.892</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>2.24</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Scoring = +/- test used (missing = 3). *p > .05.*

To determine whether or not there is a relationship between the categorical variables of Items 31 (i.e., "I am available to attend class on weekends only") and 33 (i.e., "I am available to attend class any evening Monday through Thursday") of the survey and the characteristics of employment status and distance traveled, the chi-square test was applied.
Three subquestions are analyzed and discussed.

**Subquestion 2K:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status and their availability to attend only weekend classes?

Table 15 reveals that using the chi-square analysis the relationship between 114 respondents grouped by employment status and availability to attend weekend classes only was found not to be statistically significant, $\chi^2(2, N = 114) = 0.2168, p > .05$. The observed frequencies for the six cells are found in Table 15. The analysis indicates that weekend college students who work full time are not different from those who work part time or those classified as other which upon close examination are comprised largely as full-time students.

**Table 15**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Full time</th>
<th>Part time</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available to attend class on weekends</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>54</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Note.** Nonrespondents = 6.

*p > .05.*
Subquestion 2L: Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status and their availability to attend evening classes?

Table 16 demonstrates that using the chi-square analysis the relationship between 109 respondents grouped by employment status and their availability to attend evenings, Monday through Thursday, found to be statistically significant, \( \chi^2(2, N = 109) = 0.0398, p < .05 \). The observed frequencies for the six cells are found in Table 16. This seems to suggest that there is a relationship among those who work full time, part time, and those that were classified as other in terms of their availability to attend classes evenings, Monday through Thursday. Chi-square value revealed statistical significance between employment status and availability to attend any evening.

Table 16

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment status</th>
<th>Full time</th>
<th>Part time</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available to attend class any evening</td>
<td>n</td>
<td>%</td>
<td>n</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Nonrespondents = 11.

*p < .05.
**Subquestion 2M:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' distance traveled to campus and their availability to attend only weekend classes?

Table 17 shows that using the chi-square analysis the relationship between 114 respondents grouped by distance traveled and availability to attend weekends only was found to be statistically significant, \( \chi^2(4, N = 114) = 0.00077, p < .05 \). The observed frequencies for the 10 cells are found in Table 17. This appears to indicate that the number of miles a student has to travel may influence their availability to attend classes at times other than weekends.

**Table 17**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Availability to attend classes weekends only</th>
<th>Under 14 miles</th>
<th>15-29 miles</th>
<th>30-44 miles</th>
<th>45-59 miles</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>8 23</td>
<td>6 22</td>
<td>8 42</td>
<td>4 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>27 77</td>
<td>21 78</td>
<td>11 58</td>
<td>6 60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note.* Nonrespondents = 6.

**Special Services and Needs**

**Question 3:** To what extent do special services provided by weekend college at WMU meet the needs of students?
To respond to this question, a focus group comprised of nine students was conducted. The analysis and interpretation of the focus group are organized by Sections 1 and 2 (see Appendix B). The former (Section 1) reflects an inquiry with regard to information which Cross (1981) described as a critical link between the institution and the adult learner. Section 2 consists of four subquestions categorized by letters 3A through 3D; they seek to address questions related to program satisfaction. In other words, are the needs of the students aligned to the services provided by WMU on weekends? The actual transcripts were the primary basis for the analysis, but the program director and a graduate assistant other than the facilitator were asked to take notes and independently prepare a summary of the discussion to supplement the transcripts. These accounts of the focus group were then compared which helped to establish reliability in the interpretive process (Morgan and Krueger (1993). In addition to the focus group responses, the written responses to the open-ended question and the comment section of the questionnaire (i.e., "What other services would you like to see offered on weekends?") were analyzed and served as support to the responses obtained in the focus group.

Program Qualities and Services Perceived Satisfactory

**Question 2A:** "To what extent did the services offered in weekend college meet your needs while you attended weekend college? The needs to consider are items such as library hours, child care, convenient schedule and location, advising, and on-site facilitator."
Table 18 shows the program qualities and services perceived as satisfactory by the students in the focus group.

Table 18
Program Qualities and Services Perceived as Satisfactory

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program qualities and services</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Health center services</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Flexible scheduling (convenient hours)</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size of classes and informality of classes</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make-up of student population (nontraditional students)</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Instructors are more sensitive to student needs and are more willing to adjust to meeting those needs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site facilitator to get quick information</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. f = responses to question.

Table 18 shows that all of the focus group participants placed a high value on having a homogeneous population in terms of nontraditional student status. In addition, most perceived weekend course offerings as a viable educational delivery format because it affords them more flexibility when juggling their responsibilities (i.e., "All my needs were met, because it's great for my busy schedule"). Comments similar to this one were found among the responses of the questionnaire but on a much grander scale. In fact, 26 people commented on their satisfaction with the flexible weekend scheduling format. On the other hand, students placed little value on health care services and the need of the fact that the on-site facilitator was a resource for quick information.

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Satisfaction Ratings of Weekend College

**Question 2B:** "On a scale of 1-5 with 1 being the lowest score in terms of satisfaction with services and 5 being the highest score, what score would you give the weekend college?"

Generally, students stated that they were very satisfied with weekend college services. Table 19 reveals that most students gave weekend college a near perfect rating with no student rating it less than 4 on a scale of 1-5 with 5 being the highest score. This supports the students' general statements that they were very satisfied with weekend college.

Table 19

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Satisfaction rating</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction rating of 5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction rating of 4.5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Satisfaction rating of 4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Best and Least Liked Weekend College Services

**Question 2C:** "To improve the services offered in weekend college, what changes, if any, should be made? In other words, what are the things that you liked best about weekend college? Least about weekend college?"

Table 20 demonstrates that all of the participants felt that they needed greater access to university resources such as the computer lab...
(i.e., "What are the hours of the computer lab; where are the computer labs located?") Also, every participant felt that the tuition rate for weekend college should be reduced, perhaps by eliminating some of the special services. Most suggested child care and walk-in registration (i.e., "Definitely too expensive." "The cost is awful; maybe you should get rid of child care or some of the other services that you offer.") On the questionnaire, there were two prevalent comments. Thirty-three students commented on the high cost of weekend college. Many (12) stated that the cost was too high for the level and type of services provided; child care was cited the most often. Secondly, many participants in the focus group agreed that there needs to be a greater variety and number of graduate course offerings on weekends. In fact, this was the second most frequently stated comment (11) on the questionnaire. Another change suggested by the focus group was the marketing strategy. Participants perceived that there was not enough effort put in to getting the word out with regard to weekend college program at WMU.

Perceived Most Important Needs

Question 2D: "If you have to provide five most important needs/services that would make a difference in your participation, what would these be?"

Table 21 illustrates that all of the participants perceived that course offering and the centralized or convenient location were the most important services. Most valued flexible or extended library hours, too. Many felt that having an on-site facilitator was an important service.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Service</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services needing change--unmet needs</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extended hours for the library and bookstore</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textbooks could be made available at the first meeting of class and the fees could be included in the tuition</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Greater variety of course offerings in areas such as history, business, and sociology, more graduate courses</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More cohort groups</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advisors available for weekend college students</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing to a greater population--increase awareness</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better access to computer lab</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Partnership with business and community</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More comfortable furniture (tables and chairs) for small group discussion</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Easier access to weekend college office</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reduce the tuition cost</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Services perceived as not needed</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No need for child care services</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Walk-in registration</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 21

Perceived Most Important Needs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Need/service</th>
<th>f</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course offerings</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ability to complete programs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library hours</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenient location</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On-site facilitator</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Courtesy breakfast</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Summary

First, the findings of the present study revealed that using the mean rank order, adult students attending weekend college placed greater value on those services related to institutional barriers, for example, accessible parking, courses, phone registration, flexible scheduling, and library services. By contrast the services related to situational barriers, for example, child care and health services, are perceived as the least important to this population. Second, using the ANOVA the study found in some cases that there is a significant relationship between the characteristics of the adult student population and their perceived needs as defined by five dimensions, that is, core academic support, academic logistical support, administrative logistical support, personal support systems, and academic skills services. Significant relationships were found in eight areas: reason for returning and the perceived need for
core academics and academic logistical support; age and the perceived need for core academic support; age, race, distance traveled, employment status, and source of tuition and the perceived need for personal support systems; and employment status and the perceived need for academic skills. Also, using the chi-square analysis statistically significant relationships were found between employment status and availability to attend on weekends only and employment status and distance traveled and availability to attend in the evenings Monday through Thursday. And finally, by way of a focus group and the qualitative data obtained from the questionnaire, the analysis suggests that there is a gap between the perceived needs of adult students attending weekend college and the services offered by WMU, although the students' overall rating of the program was satisfactory.
CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION, CONCLUSIONS, AND
RECOMMENDATIONS

A synthesis of the study is presented in this last chapter. The following sections are included: discussion of the results and implications, recommendations, limits of the study, and conclusions. The discussion of results and implications as well as the recommendations will center around the three research questions and their findings in relation to institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers, that is, needs. The practical value of this study was two fold: (1) to provide Western Michigan University (WMU) policy makers and practitioners with information that would contribute to their understanding of how to best serve adult students attending weekend college and (2) to determine whether or not the services provided by WMU in fact meet the needs of its adult student population on weekends.

Discussion of Results and Implications

The institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers identified by Cross and Zusman (1977) provide the conceptual framework for determining the needs of adult students attending weekend college at WMU (see Table 1 in Chapter III with barriers and corresponding dimensions and questionnaire items). Institutional barriers or needs are related to those services and practices that encourage or discourage participation in weekend college. These services help to describe the quality of the
program, and they are the ones that the university has the most control over. On the other hand, students complain about them the most because they perceive that they have no control over them (Cross, 1981; Garbarino, 1992; Silling, 1984). Situational barriers or needs are related to those services that affect enrollment decisions in terms of entry or completion. The university has little control over the students' needs related to these services and they may change at any time (Cross, 1981; Garbarino, 1992; Silling, 1984). Finally, dispositional barriers or needs are related to those services that influence the weekend college students' self-perception (Cross, 1981; Garbarino, 1992; Silling, 1984). They are difficult to identify because they may make the weekend college student feel ashamed or uncomfortable (Cross, 1981).

These barriers undergird the discussion of the results and implications of the research questions which are discussed in detail in the sections that follow. The sections are divided by the three research questions.

Question 1: What special services do adult learners attending weekend college perceive as needs?

Weekend college students perceived that those services related to institutional barriers were the most important; those related to situational barriers were considered the least important (see mean rank in Table 2 in Chapter IV). Like all adult students in general, weekend college students at WMU placed a high value on items such as course offerings, parking, flexible scheduling, and other services that tend to demonstrate the university's willingness to accommodate the needs of this population, thereby encouraging participation (Hu, 1985; Silling, 1984). But, unlike
many returning or adult students, this population places a low value or appears to have no need at all for services such as child care or health care (Sewall, 1984; Silling, 1984; Thon, 1985). This difference is explained in part by the characteristics of the students attending weekend college at WMU. Moreover, the difference between this finding or earlier findings portends the influence that the unique characteristics of a particular population has on the type of or nature of services needed.

**Question 2:** How do the general characteristics of adult students relate to their needs regarding institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers?

The results with regard to this question are mixed, but they do show that in some cases there is a relationship between the participants' characteristics and their perceived needs. Specifically, this broad question was addressed by examining several subquestions; the discussion of the results and implications for each follow.

**Subquestion 2A:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' reasons for returning to school and their perceptions of the need for core academic support?

The findings suggest that there is a relationship between the reasons for returning to school and the weekend college students' need for core academic support. Since a difference between those who return to school for professional transition and those who return to school for personal enrichment and their need for core academic support, a dimension that is derived from institutional barriers exists. Core academic support encompasses courses, flexible schedule, completeness of program, and knowledgeable faculty. Weekend college students
seeking to make a change in their profession have a greater need for core academics support. This finding is not surprising in light of the literature with regard to why students are motivated to return to school (Aslanian, 1989; Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Grennan & Schneider, 1989). Most attend weekend college for the purpose of moving from one status in life to another (Aslanian, 1989). In fact, the very nature of their reasons for returning serve as the catalyst for participation in the weekend program (Aslanian, 1989; Cross, 1981; Silling, 1984). The same would be true for those preparing for a new or different career. These two groups reflect 79.9% of the WMU weekend college student population.

**Subquestion 2B:** Is there any relationship between the level of educational attainment among respondents and their perceptions of needs with regard to core academic support?

The findings suggest that relationships in prior educational attainment by students (i.e., associate, bachelor, or master degree holders, or others) do not necessarily justify that students attending weekend college have a need for core academic support. One might expect that associate degree holders would have a greater need for core academic support, for example, course offerings, when compared to those with a master's degree. Perhaps additional analysis would reveal that the field of study as well as the level of educational attainment at the time of program entry would help to explain this finding.

**Subquestion 2C:** Is there any relationship between respondents' tuition sources and their perceptions of the need for core academic support?
The findings suggest that one's source of funding (i.e., self, family, employer, or other) does not necessarily dictate one's level of need for core academic support. Consistent with part-time students in general, 80.9% of the students attending weekend college indicated that either self or family was the primary source of tuition (NUCEA, 1993). Yet, that is not a deterrent nor a determining factor in their perception of need for core academic support. Further, this finding may suggest the students in general place a high value on the need for core academic support. However, the data are inconclusive, in that other factors such as student course selection, availability of funding, or employer requirements may be other factors which influence their perceptions of need for courses, complete programs, or weekend college, itself.

**Subquestion 2D:** Is there any relationship between respondents' employment status and their perceptions of needs with regard to academic logistical support?

The findings suggest that employment status (i.e., full-time, part-time, or other) does not unduly influence the need for academic logistical support, a dimension that is a component of institutional barriers. Academic logistical support includes services that are related to information, such as academic advising, weekend facilitating, library services, or weekend schedule booklet. Again, this supports the Cross (1981) and Hale (1989/1990) findings that students in general share similar needs with regard to information which is a critical link between the adult student attending weekend college and WMU, the institution offering weekend programs.
Subquestion 2E: Is there any relationship between respondents' employment status and their perceptions of needs with regard to administrative logistical support?

The findings suggest that there is no relationship among full-time and part-time employees or students with regard to their need for administrative logistical support, a dimension that is a component of institutional barriers. Administrative logistical support includes factors such as phone registration, financial aid, walk-in registration, central location, nearby food services, complementary refreshments, and accessible parking. This lack of relationship may be explained by those items that are included in administrative logistical support that students deemed less important or unimportant in terms of perceived needs. For example, students considered services such as phone registration and accessible parking as important (see Table 2 in Chapter IV). By contrast, this same analysis revealed that students devalued services such as walk-in registration, nearby food services, and complementary refreshments. This disparity may influence the level of need among the groups.

Subquestion 2F: Is there any relationship between respondents' ages and their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

The findings seem to show that there is a relationship between weekend college students' ages and their need for personal support systems. This study found that students whose ages range between 45 and 54 and those between the ages of 25 and 34 were significantly different. As was suggested, this is explained in part by the fact that the older students have older children (Cross, 1981)–children that are well beyond an age that would require child care, therefore, lessening
their need for child care. It is also noteworthy that 60.5% of the students attending weekend college are between the ages of 35 and 54 and most are employed. This seems to suggest that the need for personal support on items such as health care is significantly reduced (NUCEA, 1993).

**Subquestion 2G:** Is there any relationship between respondents' race and their perceptions of need for personal support systems?

This finding supports that there is a relationship between Black and Asian weekend college students and their White counterparts with regard to their need for personal support systems. The minority groups which comprise 21.4% of the weekend college student population have a greater need for services like child care and health care. This relationship may be explained by the differences in culture as it relates to issues such as employment. Blacks in particular are less likely to be employed and when employed their wages or income is typically less than their White counterparts. In fact, Cross (1978) found that non-White women, especially those between the ages of 26 and 35, are strongly limited from educational participation by the lack of child care facilities.

**Subquestion 2H:** Is there any relationship between respondents of different employment statuses and their perceptions of need for personal support?

The findings revealed that there is a relationship between those classified as other, generally students, and those employed full or part time with regard to their need for personal support systems, a dimension that is derived from situational barriers. This supports the fact that the employed, 92.5% of the weekend college student population, do not
have a need for items such as health care which is a benefit that is typically provided by employers. In addition, this may have some bearing on their need for child care services in that they may prefer to use the same child care services that they use during the work week. Also as was stated earlier, 60.5% of the population is between 35 and 54 years old.

**Subquestion 21:** Is there any relationship between respondents' educational level and their perceptions of needs with regard to academic skills services?

The findings suggest that there is no relationship among associate, bachelor's, and master's degree holders or other and their perceived need for academic skills services which is a derivative of dispositional barriers. Academic skills services include proficiencies in areas such as English, mathematics, study skills, orientation, campus facilities (i.e., library and computer lab). One would expect that associate degree students would have a greater need for support services by virtue of their low formal educational experience, for example, two-year or community college program versus a four-year program in a larger institution. But the need for the aforementioned services may better be explained by the years or length of time that a student has been out of higher education, which was not a consideration for this study.

**Subquestion 22:** Is there any relationship between male and female respondents and their perception of need for personal support systems?

The findings suggest that gender does not influence the level of need for personal support systems. A relationship was expected since...
68% of the weekend college student population are female. And the literature on adult students in general indicates that women in particular have a greater need for personal support systems, that is, high quality and low cost child care. The difference between the literature and the findings may be explained by the nature of the services included in personal support systems, the age of the population, and the fact the majority of the weekend college students at WMU are employed full or part time.

**Subquestion 2K:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status regarding their availability to attend only weekends classes?

The findings did not support a relationship among full-time and part-time employees or other (students) with regard to their availability to attend weekend classes only. The implication is that students participating in weekend college at WMU are choosing this delivery mode because of the scheduling, or in other words as an alternative to evening or day classes. This may also suggest that the courses offered on weekends are not available at other times for this student population many of which are employed full time.

**Subquestion 2L:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' employment status and their availability to attend evening classes?

The findings supported that there is a relationship among those who work full time or part time and those that were classified as other (students) and their availability to attend evening classes. This relationship is not surprising since those who are employed full time may find it necessary to attend class during the evening, contrary to a part-time
employee or full-time student who would have more flexibility in their schedule. In addition, the literature shows that adult students prefer evening or early morning courses because of their employment responsibilities (NUCEA, 1993; Thon, 1985).

**Subquestion 2M:** Is there any relationship between the respondents' distance traveled to campus and their availability to attend only weekend classes?

The findings support that there is a relationship among the number of miles traveled by weekend college participants and their availability to attend classes on only weekends. This relationship is to be expected since 70.6% of the students attending weekend classes travel 15 or more miles to attend class. It may also be attributed to the courses offered and the location of Western Michigan University in relation to other colleges and universities in the area.

Relationships were found among the students' motivation to enter school, age, and the institutional barriers related to courses, complete programs, faculty, and scheduling—put another way, the need to have a weekend college program. Also, the findings supported relationships among age, sex, employment status, distance traveled, source of tuition, and the situational barriers related to child care, health care, and availability to attend. They are the factors that affect and are critical to the students' decision to enter or complete the weekend college program (Cross, 1981; Silling, 1984). And finally, a relationship was found between employment status and dispositional barriers among students attending weekend college at WMU. All were reported, most were analyzed and discussed (see Tables 4-17).
The findings relative to these characteristics in general support the fact that the characteristics of a particular student population determine the types of barriers that they will encounter and, hence, influence their perceived needs.

**Question 3:** To what extent do special services provided by weekend college at WMU meet the needs of students?

Overall the findings support that adult students attending weekend college at WMU perceived in general that their needs were met. Perhaps this summation is true because to some extent their most important needs were met; they are course offerings, ability to complete programs, library, hours, convenient location, and program facilities. In addition, students liked or valued a lot of other program qualities, for example, flexible scheduling and the nontraditional culture.

However, when assessing the extent to which these needs were met, a gap is reflected between needs and services or program quality. Weekend college students suggested that several institutional barriers need to be overcome if WMU is to meet the needs of this population. They include issues such as cost, variety, and number of graduate course offerings, marketing, and access to resources. Moreover, they suggested that child care, a service related to situational barriers, be eliminated. The suggestions gathered from the focus group and the findings reported earlier in this study provide the basis for the recommendations to the policy makers and practitioners at Western Michigan University.
Recommendations

To better align the needs of adult students attending weekend college at WMU to the special services offered the following recommendations should be considered by policy makers and practitioners. In addition, this alignment will greatly improve recruitment and retention efforts of Western Michigan University's Weekend College program.

1. Increase the number and variety of graduate course offering. Focus group participants as well as students in general expressed a greater need for course offerings.

2. Reduce both child and health care services. Students perceive that these services are related to the high cost of the program. If WMU desires to increase enrollment among minorities such as Asians and Blacks, these services may need to be expanded.

3. Lower the cost of tuition. The level of participation in weekend college is directly related to the students' perceptions of the cost of the program. In many cases this negative perception of the high cost influenced students' perceptions with regard to services, for example, child care.

4. Expand marketing efforts in terms of awareness and geographic locations. The rationale for this recommendation is that the students, especially focus group participants, felt that more students would participate in the program if they were aware of it.

5. Create better access to resources and by extending hours, for example, computer lab and library. Focus group participants indicated that they had little information regarding the location of the university...
computer labs and the times in which they were open for students. The findings also supported the need to extend library hours.

6. Better informed or trained staff person as weekend facilitator. While many of the focus group participants indicated that there was a need for a weekend facilitator, only one person commented positively on the facilitator's ability to provide quick information.

7. Assess student characteristics in relation to needs regularly. As the findings suggest, the need of the weekend college students may change as the characteristics of the population change. These recommendations will ensure the success of the weekend college program. In particular, the ongoing assessment of the student population, the seventh recommendation, as it will certainly influence future recommendations and direction of the program. In fact, future studies should include more case studies on the relationships between the perceived needs of adult students and their characteristics.

Limits of the Study

This study examined the weekend college at WMU and not samples of weekend colleges generally. Therefore, findings may not be generalized to include weekend programs at other colleges and universities. However, this same fact is a strength, because the success of any weekend college program hinges largely upon the characteristics and needs of the adult student population that a particular institution is attempting to serve. As was mentioned earlier, future research should focus on the relationship between the characteristics of a population and their perceived needs. Specifically, beyond the scope of this study were
additiona analyses with regard to the characteristics of educational level attainment, employment status, and source of tuition and the perceived need for core academic support; employment status and the perceived need for academic logistical support; employment status and the perceived need for academic logistical support; gender and the perceived need for personal support systems; and the availability to attend on weekends and employment status.

Conclusion

Chapter II introduces policy makers and practitioners to the Adult Student Assessment model which provided the basis for which the three research questions were developed. The findings from these questions address each component of the model. In fact, the findings served to validate the need for program developers and administrators to consider the model because it identifies the components that are critical to programs designed to recruit and retain the adult learner. Further the findings illustrated the interaction between characteristic and barriers, or needs. Specifically, the model suggests that program practitioners and policy makers consider five areas: (1) the adult student population that the institution is attempting to recruit and/or retain; (2) the adult student profile which is in essence the characteristics of the population; (3) the institutional, situational, and dispositional barriers encountered by the student population that is being served; (4) the former translates or is interchangeable with the needs of the adult student; and (5) lastly, the institutional resources (see Figure 1 in Chapter II, the model). These components are central to the success of any institution of higher
learning that is seeking to attract and retain this fastest growing student population. It is also the hope of this researcher that other institutions of similar setting will adopt this approach if they are seeking to develop or assess weekend college programs.

Finally, in the case of WMU the close examination of each component of the model revealed that Western Michigan University should be recognized for having shown innovation and leadership in their development of Campus III Weekend College. This fact is supported by the students' overall rating of the program which was generally very satisfactory. However, in order to increase the attraction and retention of adult students attending the program policy and decision makers should consider the recommendations as outlined in this study as they point to the alignment of needs to services for students attending weekend college at WMU.
Appendix A

Confidential Student Services Assessment
Please circle your response.

1. What is your reason for returning to school?
   A) Career Preparation
   B) Professional Transition
   C) Personal Crisis
   D) Personal Enrichment
   E) Other _____________________________

2. Age?
   A) Under 25
   B) 25-34
   C) 35-44
   D) 45-54
   E) 55 and over

3. Sex?
   A) Male
   B) Female

4. Race?
   A) White (not of Hispanic origin)
   B) Black (not of Hispanic origin)
   C) Hispanic
   D) Asian/Pacific Islander
   E) Native American
   F) Other _____________________________

5. Marital Status?
   A) Single
   B) Married
   C) Divorced
   D) Widow/Widower
   E) Other _____________________________

6. Highest Degree?
   A) Associate
   B) Bachelor of Science or Art
   C) Master of Science or Art
   D) Other _____________________________

7. What is your program affiliation?
   A) Education & Professional Development
   B) Educational Leadership
   C) Specialty Program/Alcohol and Drug Abuse
   D) General University Studies
   E) Other (please specify) _____________________________

8. Miles traveled to class?
   A) Under 14
   B) 15-29
   C) 30-44
   D) 45-59
   E) Over 59

9. Employed?
   A) Full-time
   B) Part time
   C) Other _____________________________

10. What is the primary source for your tuition?
    A) Self
    B) Family
    C) Full reimbursement by employer
    D) Partial reimbursement by employer
    E) Other _____________________________
## Services Needed on Weekends...

*Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Definitely not needed</th>
<th>2 = Not needed</th>
<th>3 = Somewhat needed</th>
<th>4 = Needed</th>
<th>5 = Definitely needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 11. Courses 1 2 3 4 5
### 12. Childcare service 1 2 3 4 5
### 13. Health Center services 1 2 3 4 5
### 14. Academic skills service *(Areas include English, Math, Study Skills, Orientation, Campus facilities, i.e., library, computer lab)* 1 2 3 4 5
### 15. Library services 1 2 3 4 5
### 16. Flexible schedule *(Alternative to semester/term format)* 1 2 3 4 5
### 17. Academic advising services 1 2 3 4 5

## Services Needed on Weekends...

*Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>1 = Definitely not needed</th>
<th>2 = Not needed</th>
<th>3 = Somewhat needed</th>
<th>4 = Needed</th>
<th>5 = Definitely needed</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

### 18. Weekend Facilitator on site *(to accommodate students needs in areas such as admissions, registration, tuition and financial aid)* 1 2 3 4 5
### 19. Walk-in registration 1 2 3 4 5
### 20. Phone registration 1 2 3 4 5
### 21. Weekend schedule booklet *(more information on policies, courses, registration, services and programs)* 1 2 3 4 5

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Services needed on weekends...
Read each of the following statements, and circle your response according to this scale.

1 = Definitely not needed  
2 = Not needed  
3 = Somewhat needed  
4 = Needed  
5 = Definitely needed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
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<th>1</th>
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<th>3</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.</td>
<td>Early morning library hours</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>23.</td>
<td>Promotional activities (<a href="#">Activities include media, college fairs and mailings.</a>)</td>
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<td>24.</td>
<td>Complete program (<a href="#">leading to degree or certificate programs</a>)</td>
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<td>25.</td>
<td>Central location (<a href="#">such as Sangren Hall</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>On-site Coordinator (<a href="#">to answer questions about weekend college program</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>Faculty/staff (<a href="#">knowledgeable about adult learners</a>)</td>
<td></td>
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<td>28.</td>
<td>Complimentary refreshments</td>
<td></td>
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<td>29.</td>
<td>Nearby food services</td>
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<td>30.</td>
<td>Accessible Parking</td>
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<td>31.</td>
<td>Financial Aid</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>32.</td>
<td>I am available to attend class on weekends only. Yes [□] No [□]</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>33.</td>
<td>I am available to attend class any evening Monday–Thursday Yes [□] No [□]</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

What other services would you like to see offered on weekends? ______________________________________________________________

Additional Comments.______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________________________________

Please return this form to the Office of Adult Learning Services by June 15, 1993.  
Office of Adult Learning Services  
B-218 Ellsworth Hall  
Western Michigan University

Revised 5/24/93
Appendix B

Focus Group Guidelines
GENERAL GUIDELINE AND TOPICS
for the
FOCUS GROUP

A protocol for conducting the Focus Group follows this summary. This statement provides an evaluation and some general guidelines.

I. How did you come to know about the Weekend College? (10 min.)

II. A. To what extent did the services offered in Weekend College meet your needs as attending the college. The needs to consider are the library hours, child care, convenient location, advising, and on-site facilitator. (15 min.)

B. On a scale of 1-5, with one being the lowest score in terms of satisfaction with services and 5 being the highest score, what score would you give the Weekend College? Why? (15 min.)

C. To improve the services offered in Weekend College, what changes, if any should be made? In other words what are the things that you liked best about weekend college? Least about weekend college? (15 min.)

D. If you have to provide 5 most important needs/services that would make a difference in your participation, what would these be? (15 min.)
Appendix C

Cover Letter
August 4, 1993

Dear Colleague:

Western Michigan University launched the Campus III/Weekend College during Winter Semester, 1992, and since that time there have been many changes in its mode of operation. Many of these changes have occurred as a result of the feedback obtained from the Student Services Assessment Questionnaire which has been administered each semester since the program's inception.

This session, Summer 1993, the data collected from the Student Services Assessment Questionnaire will be included in a dissertation that may enable the University to further understand and facilitate student needs. Surveys are coded for the purpose of a follow-up only. All individual responses will be kept confidential. Participants may receive a report on the survey results by contacting the Office of Adult Learning Services (616) 387-4167.

Enclosed is a business reply envelope for your convenience. Thank you for your anticipated cooperation.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Dolly
Director

Enclosure
Appendix D

Follow-up Letter
September 10, 1993

Dear Colleague:

Recently, you were asked to complete a Student Services Assessment Questionnaire based on your experiences with Western Michigan University's Campus III/Weekend College. As of this date, your survey has not been received by our office.

Your opinions and ideas are important to us. Currently, we are preparing a report that may allow the Weekend College to offer more services to its students. With your input, we will better know our areas of weakness as well as our areas of strength. Please take a few minutes to fill out the enclosed survey and return it to our office in the envelope provided by September 20, 1993.

If your Student Assessment Questionnaire has been returned, please disregard this notice. Also, please call our office with any questions at (616) 387-4127. As always, our goal is to help you in your educational efforts. Your suggestions are greatly appreciated. Thank you for your response to this survey.

Sincerely,

Patricia A. Dolly, Director
Adult Learning Services
Campus III/Weekend College
Appendix E

Approval Letter From Human Subjects
Institutional Review Board
Date: February 3, 1993
To: Patricia Dolly
From: M. Michele Burnette, Chair
Re: HSIRB Project Number: 93-01-24

This letter will serve as confirmation that your research protocol, "An examination of the needs of adult students on weekends at Western Michigan University" has been approved under the exempt category of review by the HSIRB. The conditions and duration of this approval are specified in the Policies of Western Michigan University. You may now begin to implement the research as described in the approval application.

You must seek reapproval for any changes in this design. You must also seek reapproval if the project extends beyond the termination date.

The Board wishes you success in the pursuit of your research goals.

xc: Warfield, EL

Approval Termination: February 3, 1994
BIBLIOGRAPHY


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Polson, C. J. (1993). Teaching adult students (Idea Paper No. 29). Manhattan: Kansas State University, Center for Faculty Evaluation and Development, Division of Continuing Education.


