An Investigation Of A Rural Community College Meeting The Needs Of Nontraditional Students

Kishki Hall

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td

Recommended Citation
https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td/573

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com.
AN INVESTIGATION OF A RURAL COMMUNITY COLLEGE MEETING THE
NEEDS OF NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS

By
Kishki Kamaranell Hall

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Faculty of
Mississippi State University
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in Community College Leadership
in the Department of Leadership and Foundations

Mississippi State, Mississippi
December 2009
Copyright by
Kishki Kamaranell Hall
2009
This study’s general purpose was to examine nontraditional students’ satisfaction with services provided by community colleges. A survey was administered to 81 Coahoma Community College students who identified themselves as nontraditional students. The Nontraditional Students’ Satisfaction survey was designed to examine the needs and satisfaction of nontraditional students.

The nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College deemed getting information on financial aid opportunities, studying and test taking, computers and Internet use, job opportunities in their majors and academic tutoring as most important. The nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College deemed getting information on campus events and/or campus job opportunities as least important.

In addition, the nontraditional students deemed getting advice on careers, getting advice on choosing courses, taking an active part in what goes on in their classes, having one place to go for general questions and problems, and having access to campus services and offices and/or on weekends as most important. The nontraditional students indicated
participating in social activities on campus and being involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, and student government as least important.

Overall, the research data indicated that nontraditional students were satisfied with the services provided by Coahoma Community College. The nontraditional students were more satisfied with the opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes and instructors’ availability outside of classes. The findings suggested that there was no significant relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction.
DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my praying, supportive, and loving mother, Doris Stine Hall. Without your prayers, support, and encouragement, I could not have completed such a milestone in my life. Thank you for instilling in me to always be the best at everything I attempt. Thank you for never giving up on my dreams in life. Thank you for your 100% support, sticking in my corner, and always pushing me to greatness.

I also dedicate this dissertation to my late and loving maternal grandmother, Mamie Lee Brown. I am saddened that you could not live to see this milestone in my life, but I am grateful to God for the many lessons you’ve taught me and they will live in me forever. You were not given the opportunity to obtain a formal education, but have always been the wisest person I know. This is for you two!
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I would like to thank God for blessing me with the favor, wisdom, strength, and determination to complete this study. Without God, I am nothing and this could not have been possible. Isaiah 54:17 states, “No Weapon formed against me shall prosper, and every tongue that rises against me shall be condemned.” Philippians 4:13 states, “I can do all things through Christ which strengthens me. Therefore, I thank my Lord and Savior Jesus Christ for favoring me with this accomplishment.

Special gratitude is extended to Elder Walter S. Dixon and Missionary Irene Dixon and the New Morning Star Church of God in Christ for your spiritual guidance and prayers though the years. A special thanks to Elder Henry Walker and Missionary Sarah Walker for their prayers and support during this process and my life. I would like to give thanks to my sister, Reuna Monique Hall, for your support and encouragement during this process. Special and sincere thanks to Dr. Ed Davis for all his encouragement, support, and guidance during this endeavor. Dr. Davis, you’re the best! I extend a sincere thank you and appreciation to Dr. Amienyi for his support, time, and patience through this process. I offer a sincere thank you to Dr. Marty Wiseman and Dr. Joe Adams for their guidance of this dissertation. I extend a thank you to Damen Peterson for his time and support during this process. I offer thanks to Dr. Frankie K. Williams for the
flexibility of your schedule and the spirit of excellence you contributed upon the completion of this process.

I offer a special thanks to Dr. Vivian Presley, President of Coahoma Community College, for granting me permission to conduct this study at Coahoma Community College. I offer a special thanks to Suzanne Stafford at the University of Colorado at Boulder for granting me permission to utilize the survey for this study. Your support and contributions to this study do not go unnoticed. I offer special thanks to the many students that always saw this dream as a reality. I would like to give special thanks to my co-workers at East Side High School for their prayers and support during this process. A special thanks goes to Mrs. Mary Campbell for your time, support, and encouragement through this process. I offer special gratitude to the many educators in my life that always pushed me to greatness and never ceased to raise the bar for my life. I offer a thank you to my family and closest friends for your support and prayers throughout this journey.

Last but certainly not least, I offer special gratitude, appreciation, thanks, and acknowledgment to my sister and best friend Kimberly Reed-Nolan for her 100% support, patience, and love during years and this process. I will never forget your support and loyalty as my sister. Thank you for encouraging me to enter this program and better myself. You are truly God’s gift to my life. Kim, thank you for always giving me that extra push in life. Your encouragement, strength, and wisdom was never ignored, but held in my heart.
# TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION.................................................................................................................... ii  
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS............................................................................................... iii  
LIST OF TABLES............................................................................................................ vii  

CHAPTER  

I. INTRODUCTION .................................................................................................1  
   Statement of the Problem...................................................................................2  
   Purpose of the Study .........................................................................................2  
   Research Questions...........................................................................................3  
   Justification of the Study ................................................................................3  
   Limitations of the Study....................................................................................4  
   Delimitations of the Study................................................................................4  
   Definitions of Terms ........................................................................................4  

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE ................................................................................6  
   The Community College Mission......................................................................6  
   Adult Education Movement and Pioneering Scholars.........................................7  
   Nontraditional Students ..................................................................................9  
   Adult’s Success in College...............................................................................16  
   Nontraditional Students Who Return To School.............................................16  
   Issues and Concerns of Nontraditional Students............................................20  
   Recruiting and Retaining Nontraditional Students......................................24  
   Summary of the Literature Review..................................................................28  

III. METHODOLOGY .............................................................................................30  
   Research Design of Study..............................................................................30  
   Location of Coahoma Community College....................................................30  
   History of Coahoma Community College......................................................31  
   Mission of Coahoma Community College.....................................................31  
   Instrumentation...............................................................................................32  
   Data Collection Procedures..........................................................................33  

v
Data Analysis ................................................................................................... 34

IV. DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS .............................................................. 35

Research Questions .......................................................................................... 35
Profile of Respondents ..................................................................................... 36
Results of Data Analysis for Research Question One ..................................... 38
Results of Data Analysis for Research Question Two ..................................... 46
Results of Data Analysis for Research Question Three ................................... 55
General Comments .......................................................................................... 64
Summary of Findings ....................................................................................... 64

V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS .................. 68

Introduction ...................................................................................................... 68
Summary ............................................................................................................ 68
Discussion of the Findings ............................................................................... 70
Conclusions ...................................................................................................... 74
Recommendations ............................................................................................ 75

REFERENCES .................................................................................................................. 76

APPENDIX

A. CONSENT FORM & SURVEY ...................................................................... 82
B. REQUEST & APPROVAL LETTERS ........................................................... 87
C. MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY IRB LETTER ..................................... 92
LIST OF TABLES

4.1 Frequency Distribution ofRespondents’ Demographics (N=81) .................37
4.2 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Importance Related to InformationProvided by the Community College .........................40
4.3 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Importance Related to ServicesProvided by the Community College ..................................43
4.4 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Satisfaction Related to InformationProvided by the Community College .........................48
4.5 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Satisfaction Related to ServicesProvided by the Community College .........................52
4.6 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Respondents’ Encountering ProblemsRelated to Services Provided by the Community College ..........................57
4.7 Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Respondents’ Encountering ProblemsRelated to Quality Child Care Services Provided by the Community College ...............................................................................59
4.8 Chi-Square Test (advising on choosing courses and finding a place to go for general questions and problems) .................................................................................................60
4.9 Chi-Square Test (advising on careers and finding a place to relax on campus between classes) .................................................................................................61
4.10 Chi-Square Test (advising on careers and finding a place to go for general questions and problems) .................................................................................................62
4.11 Chi-Square Test (instructors’ availability outside of class and finding where to go for general questions and problems) .................................................................................................63
CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The community college has many missions, goals, values, visions, and responsibilities. The community college is not just a school for some but a way of survival. One of the factors that makes the community college popular is its dedication to meeting the needs of nontraditional (adult learners) students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Some of the major characteristics of a community college are developmental education (remedial) programs, vocational education, General Educational Development preparation courses and training, workforce development, career development programs, and many other basic education and life skills programs.

In the United States, postsecondary education has long driven individual social mobility and economic prosperity (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2007). According to the Lumina Foundation for Education, increased global economic competition and the rapid pace of technological change are revolutionizing the skills and educational qualifications essential to individual job success and national economic well-being. A dedicated and informed approach to recognizing adult learners’ needs will help realize the vast educational potential of America’s adult learners and greatly benefit individuals, families, communities and the national economy (Lumina Foundation for Education, 2007).
Statement of Problem

Due to the fact that nontraditional students typically have multiple responsibilities, such as employment, family, and as well as school, (Cross, 1980), in the past many ended their educational careers soon after they started. The drop-out rate is higher for part time students than for full-time students; the drop-out rate for nontraditional students is 85% compared to 30% for traditional age students (Brawer, 1995). Similarly, a six-year study of students found that nontraditional students completed college at a rate of less than 15%, compared to 57% of traditional students (Choy, 2002). Often times the community college is unaware of what nontraditional students perceive important to their educational pursuits. Therefore, this study investigated whether the rural community college meets the needs of nontraditional students or if these needs go unmet. The findings from this study may assist in determining what improvements need to be made for the retention of nontraditional students rural community colleges.

Purpose of the Study

This study’s general purpose was to examine and determine nontraditional students’ satisfaction with services provided by the community college. The Nontraditional Students’ Satisfaction Survey was designed to examine and determine the needs and current satisfaction of nontraditional-aged students in a rural setting. Specifically, this study was conducted at one community college (Coahoma Community College).
Research Questions

The overall research questions investigated by this study included the following.

1. What do nontraditional students perceive as important information and services at a community college?

2. Are nontraditional students satisfied with the services provided by community colleges?

3. Is there a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services?

Justification of the Study

The recruitment and retention of nontraditional students should be a primary concern for any institution of higher learning. Nontraditional students are more likely to drop out early in their educational careers due to the demands of adult life responsibilities (Vaughan, 2006). Therefore, determining the needs and expectations of nontraditional students is essential in order to retain them. A large volume of research on nontraditional students’ satisfaction, perceptions, needs, and academic success exist. However, there is little research on meeting nontraditional students’ needs in a rural community college setting. This study explores a community college (Coahoma Community College) located in the rural Mississippi Delta in Clarksdale, Mississippi.

A major characteristic of the Mississippi Delta is that the area is poverty stricken. The likelihood of entering college within a year after high school graduation for many is slim. Due to the fact that the teenage pregnancy rate is high in the area, often students must delay their entrance in college. Therefore, many students in the Mississippi Delta
attend college as nontraditional students. This study is designed to determine what nontraditional students expect and need from the rural community college.

Limitations of the Study

1. This study was confined by the items contained on the survey instrument.
2. This study was confined by the researcher’s ability to distribute surveys to Coahoma Community College in Mississippi.
3. This study was confined by the time frame of the distributions of the surveys (only one semester).

Delimitations of the Study

1. This study was restricted by the particular students being studied at the given time.
2. This study was restricted by the robustness and scope of the instrument being used.
3. This study was restricted by the definitions of the terms below.
4. This study was restricted to only nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College.

Definitions of Terms

In exploring this topic, the following are some common terms relevant to community college education.
1. Adult education is “instruction designed for people who are beyond the age of compulsory school attendance and have either completed or interrupted their formal education” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 287).

2. Continuing education is the learning effort undertaken by people whose principal occupation is no longer student but those who regard learning as a means of developing their potential or resolving their social problems (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).


4. Community service “in the broadest term is whatever services an institution provides that are acceptable to the people in its service area” (Cohen & Brawer, 2003, p. 287).

5. Community-based education refers to programs designed for the improvement of the community (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

6. Contract training is collaboration between the community colleges, businesses, and industries in the particular area to train workers in specific fields (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).

7. Nontraditional Students is “an adult who returns to school full time or part time while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other responsibilities of adult life” (Cross, 1980). This study also considers nontraditional students as the students who did not enter college within a year after high school graduation or after receiving their General Educational Development (Cohen & Brawer, 2003).
Chapter I provided background information for the study, the statement of problem, purpose of the study, justification of the study, research questions, limitations, delimitations, and definitions of related terms. Chapter II presents a review of literature relevant to the study. This chapter includes (a) community college mission, (b) adult education movement and pioneering scholars, (c) previous research and studies conducted on nontraditional students and (d) the summary of the review of literature. All of these segments increase the understanding of the study.

The Community College Mission

According to Vaughan (2006), broadly stated, the community college mission is to provide access to postsecondary educational programs and services that lead to stronger, more vital communities. The way each individual community college achieves its mission may differ. One college may emphasize college transfer programs, while another may emphasize technical education (Vaughan). However, the commitment to offering courses, programs, training, and other services is fundamentally the same for every community college. According to Vaughan, the mission of most community colleges is shaped by the following commitments:
1. “Serving all segments of society through an open-access admissions policy that offers equal and fair treatment to all students
2. Providing a comprehensive educational program
3. Serving the community as a community-based institution of higher education.
4. Teaching and learning.
5. Fostering lifelong learning” (p. 3).

Adult Education Movement and Pioneering Scholars

Adult education became a social movement in the United States beginning in the Twentieth Century (Tweedell, 2000). Since its inception there have been many theories contributed from theorist in areas of philosophy, psychology, and sociology (Tweedell). Adult education, as seen today, is partially based on the theories of Houle and Knowles (Tweedell). One of Houles’ main goals was to increase the acceptance of adult education in the mainstream educational sectors (Tweedell).

Houle’s (1996) perspective of adult education was based on the following theories:

1. “Learning occurs in a specific situation.
2. Education planning should be based on realities of human experience and upon their constant change.
3. Education is a practical art.
4. Education is a cooperative rather than operative art.
5. The planning or analysis of an educational activity is usually undertaken in terms of some period that the mind abstracts for analytical purposes from complicated reality.
6. A generalized educational design should be used to strengthen (not replace) the
values that arise from profound belief, dedication, or creativeness.

7. A program design should be based on decision points, not prescriptions”

(Houle, 1996, pp. 41-53, as cited in Tweedell 2000).

Basically Houle attempted to develop a systematic approach to adult education, one which encompassed previous philosophical ideas on the issue of adult education. Knowles’ theory focused on a different aspect of adult education (Tweedell, 2000). In structuring the educational sector Knowles suggested that component of adult education should be kept separate from the other of components of the collegiate educational system. Knowles’ book *The Modern practice of adult education: Andragogy versus pedagogy* started much controversy in the educational arena (Tweedell). Supporters of Knowles theory argued that adults and children learn differently thus should be taught differently (as cited by Tweedell). While opponents of Knowles argue that his theory was not based on a credible system and therefore, adult education should not be considered a separate educational field (Tweedell).

Knowles’ ideal of adult education was based on the notion that adult learning experiences and their motivation to learn are greatly influenced by their personal life experiences (Tweedell, 2000). Knowles (1980) emphasized that the success of adult learners is highly influenced by their levels of involvement in their educational process (as cited in Tweedell). The structure of the learning process should include their life experiences (Tweedell). As maturity takes place in people, their experiences become a solid foundation for their learning (Tweedell). Nontraditional students’ motivation to learn is directly related to their social lives and they need proper application of the
understanding and learning they receive from institutions (Tweedell). All of this must be explained and understood before ultimately understanding adult education and the satisfaction of adult learners. The total environment for nontraditional students must be one of accommodating nontraditional students (Tweedell). Programs must have their way of dealing with adults’ problems and offer them a solid education that includes problem solving skills. Knowles discussed the ways of assisting nontraditional students in learning that include the following:

1. Developing an environment conducive for learning;
2. Developing an agreed upon system of planning;
3. Defining needs of the learners;
4. Outlining clear and precise objectives;
5. Developing an outline of possible learning patterns;
6. Establishing a control environment to manage experiences;
7. Reviewing outcomes” (as cited in Tweedell, 2000).

Other areas that Knowles addressed were factors related to administration and organization of adult education programs. He recommended the adult education should be structured so that innovation can take place (Tweedell, 2000). Basically, there is value in taking a look at the institutions when focusing on the success of adult education programs.

Nontraditional Students

In evaluating the enrollment at institutions of higher learning, nontraditional students make up a large percentage of new students, creating several implications for
community colleges (Vaughan, 2006). On average, a nontraditional student is an adult, age 25 or older, who has enrolled in college on either full-time or part time basis all while juggling personal responsibilities (Vaughan). According to Cross (1980), a nontraditional student is defined as an adult who returns to school full or part time while maintaining responsibilities such as employment, family, and other responsibilities of adult life. Nontraditional students take longer to complete their degrees but usually make better grades than younger students (Ely, 1997). Many instructors in the community college arena will admit that active approaches to learning are most effective for nontraditional students (Cohen & Brawer, 2003). Related to nontraditional students, strategies that seek to improve these students academically, socially, and financially need to be developed and implemented (Ely). Nontraditional students have a variety of needs. With increased enrollment of nontraditional students expected due to welfare reform and technological advancement, community colleges must develop and implement a system geared toward meeting the current needs of nontraditional students (Ely).

Researchers have recently begun to assess the implications of an increasingly diverse student body. Researchers are using the term “nontraditional” to describe students who are older than typical college students, work because of financial needs, do not live on campus, attend part time, or are members of any minority group (Ogren, 2003). According to Ogren, other researchers who defined the term nontraditional included Levine and Associates (1989), Levine and Nidiffer (1996), and Pascarella and Terenzini (1998). Bean and Metzner (1985) stated that nontraditional students are distinguished by their little to no interaction with their faculty and peers at the institutions they attend.
Ogren (2003) argued that while the intention of research on nontraditional students is to better meet their needs, there is a possibility that the research also reinforces the ideal that these students are out of place and in some ways indirectly discourages them from interacting with others on campus. Sometimes these students even feel threatened to even communicate faithfully with their instructors or administrators because of the fear of being rejected. Ogren believed without nontraditional students, many colleges and universities would not be as successful or even needed in a sense. According to Ogren, one way to add to research would be to emphasize nontraditional students’ rich history in higher education. Historical research gives the impression that even without the encouragement of institutional and governmental policies, students from lower social class and unsophisticated backgrounds have a long history of attending American colleges and universities (Ogren).

According to Apling (1991), data from the National Post-secondary Studies and Survey in the past included the following.

1. “There is a considerable overlap between categories of “nontraditional” students. For example, 60% of all independent students are part time students, and 85% of students who are single parents are 24 years or older.

2. Eighty-one percent of single-parent students are women, 42 percent are members of minority groups, and 71% of independent single parent students have incomes below $15,000.

3. Independent students overall tend to have lower family incomes compared with dependent students; 48% of independent students have incomes below $15,000 while 18% of dependent students have income below that level.

4. “Nontraditional” students are most likely to attend public community colleges: for example, 63% of part time students are enrolled at community colleges.
5. Nontraditional” students participate at different rates in Federal student aid programs. For example, one-third of independent students receive some Title IV aid while 12% of part time students receive Title IV aid. Differences in participation rates are due in part to differences in cost attendance” (p. 4).

Adult students come to community colleges with a various characteristics and circumstances. They are more likely to attend part time, to take courses for self-improvement initially rather than for degree completion (Vaughan, 2006). Most of them often work full time and support dependents, usually as single parents. Nontraditional students usually take their education seriously; they generally earn better grades than younger students due to their maturity and demands of life (Horn & Carroll, 1996). Adults offer practical goals for their education and valuable life experiences to the community college classroom (Brookfield, 1986; Knowles, 1984; Lawler, 1991). This information alone indicates that nontraditional students have unique situations and unique expectations of the community college. There is relevance in examining basic principles of the adult (nontraditional) learner.

Knowles (1978) developed concepts that offered great assistance, in the United States, in areas of both art and science specifically geared toward adult learners. Knowles recognized five basic principles of adult learning: a) “adults are motivated to learn as they experience needs and interests that learning will satisfy, b) adults’ orientation to learning is life-centered, c) experience is the richest resource for adults’ learning, d) adults have a deep need to be self-directing, and e) individual differences among people increase with age” (Knowles, p. 8 as cited in Tweedell, 2000). A number of factors distinguish nontraditional students from younger college students. In comparing nontraditional
students to traditional students, nontraditional students tend to be more highly motivated and independent with unique needs than traditional students (Cross, 1980).

Adult learners generally prefer more active approaches to learning and value opportunities to integrate academic learning with their everyday lives and work experiences (Benshoff, 1991). Financial and family concerns are two of the biggest considerations that impact student experiences in college classrooms and environments (Benshoff). Often times there are benefits in institutions and an instructor fully understanding what distinguishes nontraditional students from traditional students. According to Richter-Antion (1986), some characteristics that distinguish nontraditional students from traditional students are stronger appreciation of education, various responsibilities in their daily lives and little social support.

Adult students attending community colleges for the first time are sometimes unprepared both academically and mentally as related to what will be expected for the college life (Valadez, 1993). Administration and instructors must understand the adult learners completely in order to understand their expectations and how to properly respond to them.

The term “nontraditional students” is not a precise one, although age and part time status (which often go together) are common characteristics (Bean & Metzner, 1985). Horn (1996) described a nontraditional student as one who has any of the following characteristics:

1. Delays enrollment into college (does not enter postsecondary education in the same calendar year that he or she finished high school).

2. Attends college part time during the academic year.

3. Works full time (35 hours or more per week) while enrolled.
4. Eligible for financial aid.

5. Has a dependent other than a spouse (usually children, but sometimes others).

6. Is a single parent (either not married or married but separated and with at least one dependent).

7. Does not have a high school diploma (completed high school with a GED or other high school completion certificate or did not finish high school).

Horn considered students to be “minimally nontraditional” if they only had one nontraditional characteristic, “moderately nontraditional” if they had two or three, and “highly nontraditional” if they had four or more. According to Horn (1996), in 1996, almost three-quarters of undergraduates in all community colleges in the United States were in some way “nontraditional.” In the undergraduate population, there were almost as many highly nontraditional students as there were traditional students (Horn).

Kasworm (2005) examined how nontraditional students’ perception of their age impacted their learning. Kasworm sought to find out if nontraditional students found difficulties in adjusting to the college life especially during their first experience with college life. Kasworm examined adult student identity in an intergenerational community college. Kasworm was interested in the nature of an adult student identity. When examining how nontraditional students are defined, there must also be consideration of how nontraditional students judge themselves. Some of these significant factors were included by Kasworm. Nontraditional students judge themselves through beliefs of age-appropriate social norms (Kasworm). According to Kasworm, approximately one-third of these adult students entered the community college with personal anxieties about their age and the notion that the college is for younger students. According to Kasworm, these adults or “nontraditional” students reported taking personal risks when returning to the
college classroom. Kasworm stated that nontraditional students that return to school have made statements and implied that they felt stupid and out of place for being present with younger students. Kasworm implied that this is the thought of a typical nontraditional student. Each of these adults negotiated personal acceptance and perceived college as a place for youth (Kasworm). Although many of nontraditional students identify or define themselves based on society views, nontraditional students yet feel they need to be there for the knowledge, the credential, and better future for them and their families (Kasworm).

Kasworm (2005) also expressed that all students believed that their aging influenced their learning performance. According to Kasworm, some nontraditional students believed that aging processes did change their academic abilities by reporting learning difficulties and understanding of collegiate work. Kasworm reported comments from a student, “However, at my age, sometimes it’s hard to memorize, my mind is full and overloaded; adults find it harder to learn” (p. 15).

The majority of adult students yet believed that they could be academically competitive. Their beliefs of academic success were based on their commitment to put more effort and resources into their learning in comparison to younger student (Kasworm). Many nontraditional students may perhaps believe that because they took five to ten years to actually come back to school after graduating from high school or receiving a General Educational Development negatively impacted their academic success. The bottom line of Kasworm’s study was that adult students defined themselves by their daily encounters in life. Nontraditional students had a developing student identity based on their prior experiences own perceptions of academia (Kasworm).
Adults’ Success in College

Focusing attention on adult learners’ success in college is imperative. Donaldson (1999) covered this in a simplistic but in-depth manner. Donaldson supported the notion that adults generally do as well or better than traditional-age students despite different patterns of involvement in higher education. Donaldson found adults reported slightly higher levels of growth than did the younger students academically despite responsibilities and demands of life (Donaldson). Kasworm (1990b) reviewed many studies and found that adult students did as well or better than traditional-aged students in higher education settings based on set standards (as stated by Donaldson, 1999).

Nontraditional Students Who Return To School

There are a variety of expectations among nontraditional students who are returning to an academic environment. If one desires to determine the needs of nontraditional students, one should examine why they return to school in the first place. According to Compton and Schock (2000), nontraditional students enroll in college for a plethora of reasons such as job training, continuing education credit, courses and degrees for the improvement of their lives. In addition, higher education is not the central feature of their lives, but just one of a multiple activities in which they are engaged everyday (Milheim, 2005). The relationships nontraditional students desire with their college is like the one they already have with their banks, supermarkets and other organizations they patronize on a daily basis (Levine, 1993).

Nontraditional students or adult learners tend to feel what Brookfield (1999) considers impostership which is a sense that they have neither the ability nor the right to
become college students. Nontraditional students are likely to hold stereotypical impressions of college teachers, envisioning them as superior and intimidating (Brookfield). Nontraditional students enroll in community colleges with already established lives. Nontraditional students offer more experience and practical information than younger students. Nontraditional students are interested in knowing how new knowledge relates to what they already know so that they apply it to their lives in a wholesome manner (Brookfield, 1986; Knox, 1977).

So what exactly do nontraditional students need? Most nontraditional students enroll in college to improve their lives. Nontraditional students are entering the college classroom to change their lives by locating new jobs and acquiring new knowledge to enhance their potential in society (Houser, 2002). Most nontraditional students enroll in evening classes because they have to work in the daytime to provide for their families. Many studies report nontraditional or adult students have a desire to boost self-esteem in their personal lives as well as in the workplace (Houser). Basically, they feel a college degree can help them feel better about themselves, move up the ladder, or simply gain more respect in their jobs. West (1995) conducted a study of 30 adult learners to discover their goals in entering college later in life. One of West’s primary findings was that adult students enroll after experiencing personal crises (Houser). Overall in the study gaining an education was the means to help them rebuild their lives (Houser).

Milheim (2005) made a positive and essential contribution to the study of identifying and addressing the needs of adult students. According to Milheim, adults have become a major part of the total enrollment composition within higher education institutions for a multitude of reasons. “In the past, many chose to return to school for the
sole purpose of advancing their degrees and the focus of climbing the “corporate ladder” in America” (Milheim, p.120). A degree with dedication to an organization for a long time frame within one’s career would eventually cause these students to elevate their way to management levels or even above (Milheim). The consequences of a poor job market have forced workers to look for new ways of remaining marketable and competitive in the workforce and life (Milheim).

According to Milheim (2005), as a result of changes in the economy, nontraditional students find the choice of returning to school as a vitally important step to advance or change their careers. Milheim emphasized that not only does a college degree allow one to remain competitive in the job market, a college degree also provides opportunities to become versatile and even transition to a different career path. Community colleges open the door for changes such as this. Educational opportunities within continuing education encompass professional development for nontraditional students (Borgen, 1995). Institutions of higher learning should become accountable and provide means in assisting nontraditional students in overcoming barriers that they commonly face (Milheim).

Many adults experience exhaustion on their jobs or in their careers and seek changes in careers. Hensel (1991) suggested the desire to change careers as the primary impetus for adult enrollment in college. Zemke and Zemke (1984) suggested that nontraditional students become motivated to re-enter the learning environment to seek out learning experiences in order to properly handle specific life experiences, receive knowledge on how to improve their families, and knowledge on how to increase and maintain their sense of self image.
Similar to Zemke and Zemke’s (1984) factors on why adult return to school, Clayton and Smith (1987) identified some primary motivations for nontraditional female students’ decisions to pursue an undergraduate degree. Some of those motivations were self improvement, vocational, family and knowledge. Other developmental problems for females who returned to school were feeling guilty about not “being there” for their children, concerns about quality childcare, making compromises in career due to family obligations, little individual free time, and perceived lack of credibility when returning to college (Terrell, 1990).

Nontraditional students need various kinds of support and assistance from family, friends, and institutions of higher learning when they return to the classroom (Benshoff, 1991). Research suggested that nontraditional students have difficulties balancing the roles of student, worker, and family member (Muench, 1987). Adult students need assistance in building their self image and confidence as students, refreshing study skills, and in managing their time and other resources while in school (Benshoff). Also, adult students benefit from opportunities to interact with their peers and need to be actively involved in the educational process through sharing their work and life experiences (Muench). Some explanations on why adults return to college include family life transitions (marriage, divorce, and death), self-fulfillment and changes in leisure patterns (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980). Aslanian and Brickell proposed a “triggers and transitions” theory that relates the adult’s decision to return to school to crises faced during midlife. Transitions, which refer to the movement from one status to another, require new knowledge, skills, and credentials that often send people back to college (Benshoff).
Triggers on the other hand are those encounters of an adult’s decision to return to school such as career and family changes (Benshoff).

Educational institutions must also be prepared to provide course offerings through a variety of means, rather than relying on the traditional classroom environment for nontraditional students. According to Vangen (1998) several types of nontraditional education programs will often times include many forms of independent learning, open learning, contract programs, satellite classrooms and distance learning centers that allow students to work from course plans through the use of the Internet and to access class curriculum from anywhere (Vangen).

In general, nontraditional students enroll in college for different personal reasons but overall their goals are to change their lives for the better (Vangen, 1998). Nontraditional students generally seek full support, accurate guidance, training, and a quality education.

Issues and Concerns of Nontraditional Students

In recent studies, nontraditional students have made the additional suggestions such as a) “separate registration and advising, b) improved access to parking, c) improved information services, d) increased social networking, e) convenient counseling services specifically geared toward adults f) increased availability of weekend, evening, and off-campus classes, g) availability of child care and h) credit consideration for life and work experience” (Ely, 1997, p.6). This information not only sheds light on the area of what the nontraditional students need, but most of all what issues and concerns they have with the community college. Institutions faced with increasing numbers of nontraditional students who often face difficulties taking classes during regularly scheduled times
Daniel, 2000) should become creative with scheduling by offering coursework that is more conducive to the students’ schedules. Changes in the time frame of courses taught outside the traditional semester are becoming common ways many colleges and universities are responding to the increased number of nontraditional students (Daniel).

Many adult learners are commuters, married, work full time, and have children. These are some of the major problems that adult learners have to face in regards to college life. Not properly coping with life demands and course work can cause students to drop out (Timarong, Ternaungil, & Sukrad, 2001). The things of which they have no control are family, employment, and the desire to attend school. These are the most common and practical areas that should never be ignored. According to Kinsella (1998), in 1998, “the percentage of students who spend time on responsibilities outside of class is as follows: employment 68%, housework 85%, childcare 41%, adult care 23%, and homework/internship 17%” (p. 533). Other barriers reported by Timarong, Ternaungil, and Sukrad may include inability to obtain financial aid and poor financial planning; lack of motivation; gender; age; language; lack of support from employers, friends, and family; socioeconomic status; educational background; intelligence; poor study skills; poor stress management; lack of counseling services; and lack of flexible class scheduling. These are just some issues that adult learners may deal with from time to time in their pursuit of an education.

Another apparent problem includes the overall discomfort of older students (Bishop-Clark & Lynch, 1992). To overcome this discomfort or uncertainty, educational institutions have tried to put the student at ease, before entering the classrooms, by implementing some specific resources such accessible registration procedures and on-
going tutorials on how to use the institution’s website. Students are required to use the school website to access grades, enroll, and pay bills. This can be intimidating to individuals who are not familiar with the use of the Internet (Milheim, 2005). Such resources will aid the students during the first several weeks prior to the start of the semester and will allow them to feel more comfortable when they enter the classroom on their first day (Milheim).

Bishop-Clark and Lynch (1992) added to this by stating that once in the classroom, the adult student faces several barriers that the typical undergraduate might not face, including discomfort due to age, different learning styles and hostility between age groups. Milheim (2005) suggested that the course instructor is responsible for implementing course teaching methods and strategies to help overcome barriers that nontraditional students face. This includes encouraging personal contact, discussing differences during class, pointing out similarities among the students, and allowing time for students to get to know one another better through organized discussions (Bishop-Clark & Lynch).

The library is also a barrier for many nontraditional students. Nontraditional students, particularly those who have been away from the classroom for a significant period of time, may find the library to be intimidating, particularly if they are unfamiliar with technological advances within the library system (Milheim, 2005). The librarians at institutions of higher learning aim should be to assist nontraditional students’ with familiarizing themselves with the library so that they can succeed academically (Milheim). Some of the following suggestions made by Wynman (1988) provided starting points for working with nontraditional students in the academic library. It was
suggested that by assigning staff members to work specifically with nontraditional students, establishing a group of well equipped librarians that are available to give assistance specifically to nontraditional students in finding materials, explaining research skill and proper use of the index, providing precise guidance for nontraditional students who usually demand more thorough explanations than typical students and creating quiet areas and study areas, which are prized by common nontraditional students (Wynman).

Distance learning is an excellent method of reaching the adult learner due to their competing priorities of work, home, and school. Adult learners desire a high degree of flexibility (Galusha, 1997). The structure of distance learning offers adults the greatest possible control over the time, place, and place of education; however, distance learning is not flawless. Loss of student motivation due to the lack of face-to-face contact with teachers and peers, potentially prohibitive startup costs, and lack of faculty support are all barriers to successful distance learning (Galusha). There is also the issue of poverty with many nontraditional students, which means that many of them may not be able to afford a computer or Internet fees to even enroll in online classes. This is a critical area because many programs within the community college sector offer mandatory online courses toward graduation. This serves as a total disadvantage for many nontraditional students. Not to mention that many nontraditional students are computer and Internet illiterate; which was identified as another major barrier related to distance learning in community colleges.

Many nontraditional students face the issues above and many more. Furthermore, the “on campus” issues such as registration and admission problems demand major attention. There is an issue with the orientation process as well. Many community
colleges do not even offer orientation to adult students alone. This serves as a barrier as well because many of the nontraditional learners need time and patience from the faculty and administrators on course enrollment, what paper work needs to be completed, what prerequisites there are on their journey toward graduation, and what deadlines they may have in completing the process of admission and enrollment.

Many nontraditional students have been out of school for five or more years and have a difficult time adjusting to the academic arena after so long (Timarong, Ternaungil, & Sukrad, 2001). Many students may feel inadequate or incapable of completing many assignments and tasks because they have been out of school for many years. Many students feel their age conflict with their ability to comprehend, memorize, or even perform well. According to Kasworm (2005), all adult students believed that their aging influenced their learning performance. Kasworm advocated that all barriers faced by nontraditional students must be addressed properly in order to provide the best education for these particular students and to retain them.

Recruiting and Retaining Nontraditional Students

Wonacott (2001) points out the fact that nontraditional students must balance competing demands on their time to study with family, work, and other commitments. Nontraditional students usually have academic goals different from those of the institutions of higher learning, and their needs may change throughout their educational experiences (Wonacott). Wonacott studied the area recruiting and retaining adult learners in institutions of higher learning.
Wonacott (2001) suggested that recruitment should be viewed as a multi-step process of attracting nontraditional students to institutions of higher learning. Recruiting nontraditional students start with promoting the institution via personal contact, phone, print correspondence, and local informational sessions (Wonacott). Long (2001) found that nontraditional students cited their most common reason for not enrolling in college was not getting a call back. Wonacott advocated that promotional materials should be inexpensive and attractive to the eye. Recruitment of nontraditional students could be done through means of community based efforts tailored toward marketing the institution to these students (Lankard, Nixon-Ponder, & Imel, 1995).

Adult education providers and community colleges must endeavor to implement marketing skills successfully so that recruitment ultimately takes place (Wonacott, 2001). Marketing should consist of developing a mission statement, program objectives, and specific activities geared toward nontraditional students (Wonacott). Wonacott suggested that the community colleges should avoid making the assumption that every nontraditional student understand and value a quality educational experience and intent of marketing should be to inform. Consequently, recruitment as related to nontraditional students is all about marketing.

Hadfield (2003) offered a unique addition to the research on recruiting and retaining adult students. Hadfield reported that across the country, colleges every year attempt to devise strategies for reporting their retention rates for adult students. Further Hadfield implied that the results of these strategies are an inaccurate report of retention because we continue to apply old thinking to a new process.
Hadfield (2003) implied that to address the issue of enrolling and retaining nontraditional students, collegiate administrators should take on a business style approach, looking at those strategies employed by successful business and industry leaders. According to Hadfield, one component of a successful business strategy is achieving a competitive advantage in an ever changing market by concentrating on customer satisfaction. In general, Hadfield advocated that colleges and universities that serve adult learners are in the business of providing customer service.

Although for many in academia, the word “customer” is not well accepted when referring to a student, but customer satisfaction is the key to attracting and retaining adult students (Hadfield, 2003). “Customer” is exactly how adult learners think of themselves, and they hold institutions of higher education accountable changing their lives for the better (Hadfield). Adult learners pay for these experiences with their time (Hadfield). When adult students are not pleased and do not find what they want at one school, they transfer to another (Hadfield).

Hadfield (2003) stressed that a focus on customer service is the catalyst for a proactive vision of the future. Hadfield stated that if nontraditional students expect their institutions to delivers superior customer satisfaction differ from other institutions in doing so. Hadfield offered and explained the following regarding the “customer service” phenomenon.

1. “We serve our customers when we make our school their school;
2. We serve our customers when we ask them what they need to learn;
3. We serve our customers when we ask them what they do not need to learn;
4. We serve our customers when we deliver what they need when they need it;
5. We serve our customers when we put great teachers in the classroom;
6. We serve our customers when we deliver meaningful learning experiences;
7. We serve our customers by continuously measuring our performance” (pp. 20-23).

Hadfield argued the notion that satisfied nontraditional students are not so concerned with administration, campus structure, and the ranking of their football team as they are with their interactions with employees such as academic and financial advisors and instructors. Hadfield suggested these people are the people that provide the consistent customer service that attracts and retains nontraditional students. Finally, Hadfield asked how do we attract and retain adult students. Institutions that invest their time, money, and efforts in ensuring that the nontraditional students enrolled perceive their institution as the sole provider of educational needs, will retain them (Hadfield).

Nontraditional students are in need of important details of educational programs (Wonacott, 2001). The information that adult educators provided should include purpose, goals, and schedule (Wonacott). Providing information on the General Education Development (GED) and its value may be provided to adult learners in order to retain them (Jensen et al. 2000). Nontraditional students often need to understand the reason for acquiring knowledge and skills they see as academic and not relevant to their own lives. Adults in distance education have the need of establishing and maintaining communication with their institutions related to technological advancements (Chyung, Winiecki, & Fenner 1998; Nelson, 1999). Wonacott suggested that in order to retain nontraditional students the institutions should implement realistic and clear expectations while monitor progress of these students.
Retention can be maintained by providing nontraditional students with information they need on services available to meet their individual needs in the community colleges. Other valuable services needed for nontraditional students’ retention are those related to quality child care, reliable transportation, opportunities of employment, and promising health care benefits (Rettinger, 1996). In general, nontraditional students at postsecondary institutions need a variety of communication related to academic services and job placement (Baker, 1998). Retaining nontraditional students requires offering support groups, task teams, seminars, and writing clinics in specific areas (Gerardi & Smirni, 1996; Kehrhahn, Sheckley, & Travers, 1999). In addition to this, Bernhard and Rulnick (1992), suggested that the academic advising needs of adults who are enrolled or planning to enroll in college can best be met by developing guidelines that will deal with short-term needs, long-term needs, and continuing needs for this population.

Summary of the Literature Review

Chapter II presented a review of literature relevant to the study of nontraditional students. The literature review offered clear understanding to the present study. The literature review included the following areas.

1. The community college mission;
2. Adult education movement and pioneering scholars;
3. Previous research and studies on nontraditional students;
4. Characteristics of nontraditional students;
5. Nontraditional students’ success in college;
6. Information on nontraditional students’ reasons for returning to school;

7. Issues and concerns of nontraditional students;

8. Literature on recruiting and retaining nontraditional students.

The underlying theme of the literature review was explaining who nontraditional students are, highlighting the importance of understanding why nontraditional students return to college, recognizing the issues concerning nontraditional students, and ultimately recruiting and retaining nontraditional students at community colleges.

After recruiting nontraditional students, they must be retained. Wonacott (2001) advocated that early and continuous follow-up and attention, both inside and outside the classroom, form a constant theme in adult student retention. Furthermore, after nontraditional students are recruited and retained, then a quality education is inevitable for the success of these students. After the community colleges prepare nontraditional students to compete in this ever changing world and economy, “human capital” will be meaningful and paramount regarding the economic aspect of the nontraditional student’s life (Knowles, 1980). The aim of the community college should be to prepare and invest in the nontraditional students in such a way that prepares them for the workforce and a four-year institution that they will valuably influence the economy to become a better one (Vaughan, 2006).
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Chapter III discusses the methodology of the study, the location, history, and mission of the institution being studied, which is Coahoma Community College, to better understand the participants. Also, Chapter III presents instrumentation, procedures, data collection, and data analysis.

Research Design of Study

The research design used in this study was survey research. This design was selected because the researcher sought the opinion (satisfaction) of a large group of people about a particular topic (Fraekel & Wallen, 2006). The population sample of this study included 81 nontraditional students of Coahoma Community College. The 81 participants fit the definition of nontraditional students as stated on the consent form (See Appendix A), enrolled at Coahoma Community College. The participants self-identified themselves as nontraditional students and participated in the study.

Location of Coahoma Community College

Coahoma Community College, located in Coahoma County, Mississippi, approximately four miles north of the city of Clarksdale (Coahoma Community College
The 99 acre campus is along Friars Point Road near the Mississippi River, which forms the western boundary of Coahoma County (Coahoma Community College Website, 2009).

History of Coahoma Community College

With the establishing Coahoma County Agricultural High School in 1924, Coahoma County became the first county in Mississippi to provide an agricultural high school for African Americans under the then existing “separate but equal” doctrine for education (Coahoma Community College Website, 2009). The junior college curriculum was added in 1949, and the name of the institution was changed to Coahoma Junior College and Agricultural High School (Coahoma Community College Website). With the approval of the Board of Trustees of Coahoma Junior College and Agriculture High School, the State Board for Community and Junior Colleges, Coahoma Junior College’s name was later changed to Coahoma Community College, effective July 1, 1989.

Mission of Coahoma Community College

The Coahoma Community College mission is geared toward serving as a catalyst for economic and community development. The mission is to provide accessible, affordable, diverse, and quality educational opportunities and foster a nurturing teaching and learning environment, promote intellectual and work readiness skills, supporting personal and professional growth, and prepare students to enter the job market or transfer to a university (Coahoma Community College Website, 2009). Again, the students that were included in the study were nontraditional students only. The students included in
this study were both male and female with various socio-economic backgrounds. The goal was to have a combination of students that are planning to attend a four-year university.

Instrumentation

To collect data, and provide responses to the research questions, a survey was developed and administered (See Appendix A). The primary source of data used was the survey. The survey was adopted from an instrument used by University of Colorado at Boulder Office of Planning, Budget, and Analysis directed by Stafford. On May 28, 2009, a letter requesting permission to utilize the survey was sent to Stafford at the University of Colorado at Boulder. On May 28, 2009, a letter granting permission was faxed to the researcher (See Appendix B). The goal of the survey was to determine satisfaction of nontraditional students with the services provided by Coahoma Community College. The current study met all the Internal Review Board requirements. The survey attempted to determine what factors influences nontraditional students’ perceptions of, satisfaction, and whether there were encountered problems regarding specific services at the community college. A copy of the instrument is included in Appendix A (Consent Form and Survey). The first part of the survey collected demographic information about the participants. The other sections of the survey addressed the research questions. Examples of the survey items are as follow: How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on financial aid opportunities, on-campus job opportunities, and job opportunities in your major; how satisfied are you with advising on choosing courses, advising on careers, and instructor
availability outside of class; Did you encounter or are currently having any problems with adjusting to college life, finding places to study on campus, having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities), and conveniently having access to campus services. The survey also asked if the participants had children (dependents) and if so, if they encountered any problems with finding quality daycare in the daytime, after school, in the evenings, and/or weekends. There was also a place where the participants could make any other comments on how to improve the college experience for nontraditional students.

Data Collection Procedure

On June 1, 2009, a letter requesting permission to conduct research with Coahoma Community College was sent to Dr. Vivian Presley (President of Coahoma Community College). A copy of the request letter is included in Appendix B. On June 4, 2009, the letter of approval was received from Dr. Vivian Presley, giving the researcher permission to conduct research on the campus of Coahoma Community College (See Appendix B). The data collection procedure included visits to various classrooms distributing surveys to the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College. The surveys were accompanied by a consent form (See Appendix A) to provide the participants with detailed instructions and vital information. The students read the consent forms. The participants self-identified themselves as nontraditional students after reading the consent form. The surveys were passed out only to those who self-identified themselves as nontraditional students. The surveys were completed and placed in a box so that there were no identifiers. The researcher sought to maintain anonymity. During the data collection process, 81 useable surveys were collected.
Data Analysis

The survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, cross-tabulations and Chi-square analysis. The frequency and percentage tables were generated from Statistical Package for Social Science Software (SPSS) Version 17.0. Using the data collected from the survey, examination of the students’ responses were analyzed to determine first if their experience with the community college was a positive or negative one. Descriptive frequencies were analyzed to determine the satisfaction of the nontraditional students with the services provided by the community college. An analysis of descriptive statistics, frequency distributions, and cross tabulation, with Pearson Chi-square, was conducted in order to determine whether or not there was a significant relationship between encountering problems and expressions of satisfaction. The level of significance or alpha level was set at .05. The following research questions were used in this study.

1. What do nontraditional students perceive as important information and services at a community college?

2. Are nontraditional students satisfied with the services provided by community colleges?

3. Is there a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services?
CHAPTER IV
DATA ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

Chapter IV presents the data analysis and results of the study. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in both narrative and table format, answering the research questions of this study. Demographic data are presented using the descriptive statistics and frequency distribution provided from using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences, Version 17.

This chapter presents a description of the respondents (demographics), level of importance on areas surveyed, levels of satisfaction on areas surveyed, problems encountered, and general suggestions of the respondents. Mean scores and distribution tables are also presented to further explain findings.

Research Questions

The research questions that guided this study were as follow.

1. What do nontraditional students perceive as important information and services at a community college?
2. Are nontraditional students satisfied with the services provided by community colleges?
3. Is there a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services?
Profile of Respondents

Table 4.1 presents the profile of the respondents. Information such as gender of the respondents, race of the respondents, age of the respondents, diploma received by respondents, enrollment in college status of respondents (within a year after receiving High School Diploma or GED), and children (dependents) status of respondents are included in Table 4.1.
Table 4.1

Frequency Distribution of Respondents’ Demographics (N=81)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Choices Given</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender of the Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>(16%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>(84%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race of the Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>African American</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>(86.4%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Caucasian</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>(2.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age of the Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18-21</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>(19.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>22-25</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>(34.6%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>(14.8%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 or older</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>(30.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma Received by Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>72</td>
<td>(88.9%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diploma</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>(11.1%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>GED</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enrollment in College Status of Respondents (Within a year after receiving High School Diploma or GED)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>(76.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>(23.5%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children (dependents) Status of Respondents</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>(59.3%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>(40.7%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 81 respondents, only 13 (16%) were male and 68 (84%) were female. Of the 81 respondents, 70 (86.4%) were African American, nine (11.1%) were Caucasian, and only two (2.5%) were of other ethnic group. As for the ages of the participants, 16
(19.8%) were between ages 18-21, 28 (34.6%) were between ages 22-25, 12 (14.8%) were between ages 26-29, and 25 (30.9%) were 30 and older.

Of the 81 respondents, 72 (88.9%) of them had received their high school diploma and only nine (11.1%) had received their General Educational Development (GED). There were 62 (76.5%) of them that enrolled in college within a year after receiving their high school diploma or General Education Development and 19 (23.5%) did not enroll in college within a year after receiving their high school diplomas or General Education Developments. Those 19 (23.5%) respondents not enrolled in college within a year after receiving their high school diplomas or General Education Developments reported that reasons were due to lack of financial resources, family obligations, and entering the workforce. Of the 81 respondents, 48 (59.3%) reported having children and 33 (40.7%) did not have children.

Results of Data Analysis for Research Question One

Research Question one asked what nontraditional students perceived as important information and services at a community college. In order to answer this research question, data were collected and analyzed from surveys pertaining to importance. There were two parts of the survey pertaining to importance. The first part asked the respondents the importance regarding knowing about financial aid opportunities, on-Campus job opportunities, how to study and take tests, computers and the Internet use, job opportunities in their majors, campus events, and academic tutoring services (See Appendix A). The second part of the survey administered to the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College also asked the importance of getting advice on choosing
courses, getting advice on careers, taking an active part in what goes on in classes, interacting with instructors outside of class, developing friendships with others in their classes, getting to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, getting to know other non-traditional students, participating in social activities on campus, being involved in extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, student government), having one place to go to for general questions and problems, and having access to campus services and offices in evenings and/or on weekends. The respondents chose from a four point Likert Scale which was as follow: 1 = not at all important, 2 = somewhat important, 3 = quite important and 4 = very important (See Appendix A).

Table 4.2 provides mean scores and standard deviations related to level of importance related to information received from the community college. Descriptive statistics are provided in narrative format.
### Table 4.2
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Importance Related to Information Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (Financial Aid Opportunities)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.91</td>
<td>1.424</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (On Campus Job Opportunities)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.581</td>
<td>1.244</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (How to study and take tests)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.794</td>
<td>0.467</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (Computers and the Internet)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.547</td>
<td>0.708</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (Job Opportunities in your major)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.933</td>
<td>0.307</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (Campus Events)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.049</td>
<td>0.41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to know about (Academic tutoring service)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.209</td>
<td>0.980</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the 81 respondents, 77 (95.1%) indicated that knowledge of financial aid opportunities was very important, two (2.5%) indicated quite important, one (1.2%) indicated somewhat important and one (1.2%) indicated that not at all important. The mean score related to knowledge of financial aid opportunities was 3.91. The researcher concluded this to be overall very important.

The study revealed that of the 81 respondents, 76 (93.8%) of the respondents indicated that job opportunities in their majors were very important, four (4.9%) indicated job opportunities in their majors were quite important, and one (1.2%) indicated somewhat important. The mean score found was 3.93. The researcher concluded this to be very important.
This study also revealed that the respondents (nontraditional students at Coahoma Community) considered knowledge on how to study and take tests as highly important. Of the 81 respondents, 66 (81.5%) indicated how to study and take tests was very important, 13 (16%) indicated quite important, and two (2.5%) indicated somewhat important. The mean score found was 3.79. The researcher concluded this to be very important to the respondents.

Academic tutoring services were also important to the respondents (nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College). Of the 81 respondents, 43 (53.1%) indicated that academic tutoring services was very important, 16 (19.8%) indicated quite important, 17 (21%) indicated somewhat important and five (6.2%) indicated not at all important. The mean score found for academic tutoring was 3.20. The researcher concluded that this was quite important to the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College.

Based on these findings alone, the research concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community college deemed it important for the community college to provide services in the areas of financial aid opportunities, job opportunities in their majors, computers and Internet use, how to study and take tests and academic tutoring.

The areas reported with the lowest level of importance by the respondents were campus events and on-campus job opportunities. Of the 81 respondents, nine (11.1%) indicated that campus events were very important, 10 (12.3%) indicated campus events were quite important, 37 (45.7%) indicated campus events were somewhat important and 25 (30.9%) indicated campus events were not at all important. The means score found was 2.04. As related to on-campus job opportunities, 29 (35.8%) indicated on-campus job opportunities were very important, 12 (14.8%) indicated quite important, 17 (21%)
indicated somewhat important and 23 (28.4%) indicated not at all important. The mean score was found to be 2.58. Although the mean score of campus events and on-campus job opportunities indicated some importance, they ranked the least of the other areas as related to importance of information received. Therefore, based on these findings, the researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were least concerned with campus events and on-campus job opportunities as common for nontraditional students.

Table 4.3 provides mean scores and standard deviations for level of importance related to services provided by the community college. The survey asked the nontraditional students how important was being able to receive specific services by the community college.
Table 4.3
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Importance Related to Services Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Get advice on choosing courses)</td>
<td>813.60</td>
<td>60.785</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Get advice on careers)</td>
<td>813.69</td>
<td>69.683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How important is it for you to be able to (Take an active part in what goes on in your classes)</td>
<td>813.68</td>
<td>68.683</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Interact with instructors outside of class)</td>
<td>813.16</td>
<td>16.968</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Develop friendships with others in your classes)</td>
<td>812.77</td>
<td>71.052</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds)</td>
<td>813.15</td>
<td>15.896</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Get to know other non-traditional students)</td>
<td>812.93</td>
<td>93.972</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Participate in social activities on campus)</td>
<td>812.04</td>
<td>04.955</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Be involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, student government)</td>
<td>812.33</td>
<td>33.955</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Have one place to go for general questions and problems)</td>
<td>813.48</td>
<td>48.760</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How Important is it for you to be able to (Have access to campus services and offices in evenings and/or on weekends)</td>
<td>813.19</td>
<td>19.989</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The descriptive statistics revealed that the respondents (nontraditional students) were most concerned with the community college providing information and services on
financial aid opportunities, how to study and take tests, computers and Internet use, job opportunities in their majors and academic tutoring. The respondents perceived knowledge about job opportunities in their majors as most important ($M = 3.93$). The second most important was knowledge on financial aid ($M = 3.91$). The third most important was knowledge on how to study and take test ($M = 3.79$).

The survey asked the nontraditional students what they perceived as important for them to be able to do at the community college. The top five services that were found to be the most important to the respondents were getting advice on careers, getting advice on choosing courses, taking an active part in what goes on in their classes, having one place to go for general questions and problems, and having access to campus services and offices in evenings and/or on weekends.

As for getting advice on careers, of the 81 respondents, 63 (77.8%) indicated getting advice on careers was very important, 14 (17.3%) indicated getting advice on careers was quite important, one (1.2%) indicated getting advice on careers was somewhat important, and three (3.7%) indicated getting advice on careers was not at all important. The mean score found was 3.69. The researcher concluded this to be very important to the respondents.

As for getting advice on choosing courses, 60 (74.1%) indicated getting advice on choosing courses was very important, 14 (17.3%) indicated quite important, three (3.7%) indicated somewhat important, and four (4.9%) indicated not at all important. The mean score found was 3.60. The researcher concluded that that getting advice on choosing courses was very important to the respondents.
As related to taking an active part in what goes on in their classes, 59 (72.8%) indicated this was very important, 19 (23.5%) indicated quite important, two (2.5%) indicated somewhat important, and only one (1.2%) indicated not at all important. The mean score found was 3.68. The researcher concluded that taking in active part in what goes on in classes was very important to the respondents.

As for having one place to go for general questions and problems, 50 (61.7%) indicated very important, 22 (27.2%) indicated quite important, seven (8.6%) indicated somewhat important, and only two (2.5%) indicated having one place to go for general questions and problems was not at all important. The mean score found was 3.48 for having one place to go for general questions and problems. The researcher concluded having one place to go for general questions and problems was quite important.

As related to having access to campus services and offices in the evenings and/or on weekends, 41 (50.6%) indicated very important, 21 (25.6%) indicated quite important, 12 (14.8%) indicated somewhat important, and seven (8.6%) indicated not at all important. The mean score found was 3.19 for having access to campus services and offices in the evenings and on weekends.

The results also revealed that the respondents were least concerned with being able to participate in social activities on campus and being involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, and student government. As for participation in social activities, 10 (12.3%) respondents indicated that participation in social activities was very important, eight (9.9%) indicated quite important, 38 (46.9%) indicated somewhat important, and 25 (30.9%) indicated participation in social activities on
campus was not at all important. The mean score found was 2.04 for participation in social activities on campus.

As for being involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations and student government, 16 (19.8%) respondents indicated very important, 13 (16%) indicated quite important, 34 (42%) indicated somewhat important, and 18 (22.2%) indicated that being involved in extracurricular activities was not at all important. The mean score found was 2.33 for being involved in extracurricular activities. The researcher concluded that participating in social activities on campus and being involved in extracurricular activities were the least important to the respondents.

The results revealed that respondents perceived getting advice on careers ($M = 3.69$) as the most important service provided by the community college. The second most important service was opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in their classes ($M = 3.68$). The third most important service was getting advice on choosing courses ($M = 3.60$).

Results of Data Analysis for Research Question Two

The second research question asked if the nontraditional students were satisfied with the services provided by the community college. In order to answer this research question, data were collected and analyzed from survey items pertaining to satisfaction. There were two parts of the survey pertaining to satisfaction. The first part asked the respondents how satisfied they were with the amount of information received on financial aid opportunities, on-campus job opportunities, how to study and take tests, computers and the Internet use, job opportunities in their majors, campus events and academic
tutoring services. Respondents chose from the following five-point Likert scale in which
1 = very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

The second part of the survey asked the respondents how satisfied they were with
services such as advising related to choosing courses, advising related to careers,
opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes, instructors availability
outside of class, opportunities to develop friendships with others in their classes,
opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, opportunities
to get to know other non-traditional students, availability of social activities on campus
and availability of extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, student government).
The respondents chose from the six-point Likert scale in which 0 = does not apply, 1 =
very dissatisfied, 2 = dissatisfied, 3 = neutral, 4 = satisfied and 5 = very satisfied.

To determine whether or not the respondents were satisfied with the services
provided by Coahoma Community College, the researcher analyzed the descriptive
statistics. The researcher basically observed the mean scores. Conclusions were drawn on
whether or not the respondents were satisfied with the services provided by Coahoma
Community College.

Table 4.4 provides mean scores and standard deviations for level of satisfaction
related to amount of information received by the community colleges. Descriptive
statistics are provided in narrative format.
Table 4.4

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Satisfaction Related to Information Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (Financial aid opportunities)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>11.4</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (On-campus job opportunities)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.151</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (How to study and take tests)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>1.233</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (Computers and the Internet)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>9.930</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (Job opportunities in your major)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>1.198</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (Campus events)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.077</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with the amount of information you’ve received on: (Academic Tutoring Services)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>81</td>
<td>0.053</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on financial aid opportunities, 34 (42%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 35 (43%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 12 (14.8%) indicated they were neutral. However, the mean score with financial aid opportunities resulted in 2.91. The researcher concluded that the respondents were neutral.
As related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on on-campus job opportunities, 13 (16.1%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 34 (42%) were dissatisfied, and 34 (42%) were neutral. The mean score found was 2.56 for satisfaction with on-campus job opportunities. The researcher concluded that the respondents were neutral regarding satisfaction on the amount of information received on on-campus job opportunities.

As related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on how to study and take tests, 39 (48.2%) of the respondents were satisfied, 22 (27.1%) were dissatisfied, and 20 (24.7%) were neutral. The mean score found was 3.32. The researcher concluded that the respondents were neutral regarding satisfaction with the amount of information received on how to study and take tests.

As related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on computers and the Internet use, 55 (72.9%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, seven (8.6%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 15 (18.5%) indicated they were neutral. The mean score found was 3.90. The researcher concluded that the respondents were overall satisfied with the amount of information received on computers and the Internet use.

Related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on job opportunities in their majors, 50 (61.7%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 13 (16.1%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 18 (22.2%) indicated they were neutral. The mean score found was 3.63. The researcher concluded that the respondents were satisfied with the amount of information received on job opportunities in their majors.

When respondents were asked about their satisfaction regarding the amount of information received on campus events, 20 (24.7%) of the respondents indicated they
were satisfied, 20 (24.7%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 41 (50.6%) indicated they were neutral. The mean score found was 2.88. The researcher concluded that the respondents were neutral related to the satisfaction with the amount of information received on campus events.

When respondents were asked about their satisfaction with the amount of information received on academic tutoring services, 21 (26%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 27 (33.3%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 33 (40.7%) indicated they were neutral. The mean score found was 2.88 for the amount of information received on academic tutoring. The researcher concluded that the respondents were neutral related to satisfaction with the amount of information received on academic tutoring.

In general, the respondents were most satisfied with computers and Internet use ($M = 3.90$). Job opportunities in their majors ($M = 3.63$) was the second most satisfying area in regards to the amount of information received from the community college. How to study and take tests ($M = 3.32$) was the third most satisfying area related to the amount of information received from the community college.

These findings suggested that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were either neutral or satisfied related to the amount of information they received in the specific areas. Although some respondents reported to be dissatisfied in some areas, the majority of the nontraditional students were either satisfied or neutral with the amount of information received on financial aid opportunities, on-campus job opportunities, how to study and take tests, computers and the Internet use, job opportunities in their majors, campus events and academic tutoring.
To further answer the second research question, the researcher analyzed the data received on satisfaction with the services provided by the community college. The services included advising on choosing courses, advising on careers, opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes, instructor availability outside of class, opportunities to develop friendships with others in their classes, opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students, availability of social activities on campus, and availability of extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, and student government) on campus.

Table 4.5 provides the mean scores and standard deviations for levels of satisfaction related to services provided by the community colleges. Descriptive statistics are in narrative format.
Table 4.5

Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Level of Satisfaction Related to Services Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Advising on choosing courses)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Advising on Careers)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in your classes)</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>4.07</td>
<td>0.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Instructors availability outside of class)</td>
<td>814</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>0.92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Opportunities to develop friendships with others in your classes)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>7.41</td>
<td>1.27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>7.51</td>
<td>0.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Opportunities to get to know other non-traditional students)</td>
<td>813</td>
<td>7.81</td>
<td>0.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Availability of social activities on campus)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>7.01</td>
<td>0.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How satisfied are you with: (Availability of extracurricular activities “clubs, organizations student government” on campus)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>7.21</td>
<td>0.60</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

In response to the level of satisfaction with advising on choosing courses, 48 (59.3%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, nine (11.1%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 17 (21.0%) indicated they were neutral, and seven (8.6%) indicated did not apply. Although there were more indications of satisfaction with advising on choosing courses, the mean score found was 3.41. The researcher concluded that the
nontraditional students were neutral related to satisfaction with advising on choosing courses.

Relates to satisfaction with advising on careers, 47 (58.8%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 12 (14.8%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 16 (19.8%) indicated they were neutral, and six (7.4%) indicated did not apply. The mean score found was 3.36. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students were neutral related to satisfaction with advising on careers.

Related to satisfaction with opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes, 65 (80.2%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 4 (4.9%) indicated they were dissatisfied, and 12 (14.8%) indicated they were neutral. The mean score found was 4.07. This finding suggested that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes.

When respondents were asked about their satisfaction regarding instructors’ availability outside of class, 70 (86.4%) of the respondents were satisfied, 5 (6.2%) were dissatisfied, and 6 (7.4%) were neutral. The mean score found was 4.23. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of class.

As for satisfaction with opportunities to develop friendships with others in classes, 50 (61.7%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 3 (3.7%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 26 (32.1%) indicated they were neutral, and 2 (2.5%) indicated did not apply. The mean score found was 3.74. The researcher concluded that the
nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the opportunities to develop friendships with others in classes.

Related to the level of satisfaction regarding opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, 48 (59.3%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 2 (2.4%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 29 (35.8%) indicated they were neutral and 2 (2.5%) indicated did not apply. The mean score found was 3.75. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds.

Related to satisfaction of opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students, 49 (60.5%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 1 (1.2%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 29 (35.8%) indicated they were neutral, and two (2.5%) indicated did not apply. The means score found was 3.78. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students.

Regarding the satisfaction with availability of social activities on campus, 22 (27.2%) of the respondents indicated they were satisfied, 12 (14.8%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 35 (43.2%) indicated they were neutral, and 12 (14.8%) indicated did not apply. The mean score found was 2.70. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were neutral related to the satisfaction with availability of social activities on campus.

Relates to satisfaction with availability of extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, and student government, 22 (27.2%) of the respondents indicated they
were satisfied, 8 (9.9%) indicated they were dissatisfied, 38 (46.9%) indicated they were neutral, and 13 (16.0%) indicated did not apply. The mean score found was 2.72. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students were neutral related to satisfaction with availability of extracurricular activities on campus.

In terms of satisfaction with services provided by the community college, the respondents were most satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of class ($M = 4.23$). Opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes ($M = 4.07$) was the second most satisfying area of services provided by the community college. Opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students ($M = 3.78$) was the third most satisfying area of services provided by the community college.

Results of Data Analysis for Research Question Three

The third research question asked if there was a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems with the community college and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services. In order to answer this research question, data were collected and analyzed from survey questions pertaining to satisfaction of services such as advising on choosing courses, advising on careers, opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes, instructors availability outside of class, opportunities to develop friendships with others in classes, opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds, opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students, availability of social activities on campus and availability of extracurricular activities on campus. These items served as the independent variables in the data analysis to answer the research question. Also, to answer the third
research question, survey questions pertaining to encountering problems were also analyzed. The items pertaining to encountering problems served as the dependent variables in the data analysis.

Table 4.6 provides the mean score and standard deviations for respondents’ encountering problems related to services provided by the community college. Items such as finding enough time to study and prepare for classes, finding time to socialize, finding time for recreational activities, balancing all activities (academics, work, home life), having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities), having enough money to pay for tuition and academic related expenses, finding places to study on campus between classes, finding places to relax on campus between classes, finding where to go for general questions and problems, and having access to campus services and offices at times convenient were on the instrument. The respondents were given three answer choices in which 1 = no problems, 2 = some problems, and 3 = major problems.
Table 4.6
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Respondents’ Encountering Problems Related to Services Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Adjusting to college life)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>3.53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding time to study/prepare for class)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>3.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding time to socialize)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>7.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding time for recreational activities/exercises)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>7.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Balancing all activities (academic, work, home life)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>0.76</td>
<td>6.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.08</td>
<td>8.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Having enough money to pay for tuition and academic-related expenses</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>9.68</td>
<td>8.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding places to study on campus between classes)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>3.25</td>
<td>5.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding places to relax on campus between classes)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>6.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Finding where to go for general questions and problems)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>5.47</td>
<td>7.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you encounter or currently having problem with: (Having access to campus services and offices at times convenient to you)</td>
<td>811</td>
<td>5.87</td>
<td>7.72</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The results revealed that the respondents had the most problems with the having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities) \((M = 2.20)\); balancing all activities (academic, work, home life) \((M = 2.07)\), and finding time for recreational activities and exercises \((M = 2.05)\). The results also revealed that the respondents had the least problems with adjusting to college life \((M = 1.28)\), finding places to study on campus between classes \((M = 1.32)\), and finding places to relax on campus between classes \((M = 1.35)\).

Table 4.7 provides means scores and standard deviations for respondents’ encountering problems related to finding quality child care. As for daycare, the survey asked, “Did you or are you currently having problems with finding quality child care (in the daytime, after school, evenings, and/or weekends). The answer choices were 1 = no problems, 2 = some problems and 3 = major problems.
Table 4.7
Mean Scores and Standard Deviations for Respondents’ Encountering Problems Related to Quality Child Care Services Provided by the Community College

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Did you or are you currently having problems with finding quality child care: (In the daytime)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you or are you currently having problems with finding quality child care: (After School)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.47</td>
<td>1.388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you or are you currently having problems with finding quality child care: (In the evenings)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.51</td>
<td>1.370</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did you or are you currently having problems with finding quality child care: (On weekends)</td>
<td>812</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>1.397</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The respondents also encountered problems finding quality childcare in the daytime (M = 2.51), after school (M = 2.47), in the evening (M = 2.51), and on weekends (M = 2.48). However, the results revealed that the respondents’ encountering problems with specific services did not influence their expressions of satisfaction with the community college.

The researcher performed a cross-tabulation utilizing Pearson Chi-square to determine the level of significance. For the purposes of the study, the .05 level of significance was used since this level is the most common level used in research. There were four significant relationships found from the cross-tabulations.
Table 4.8 provides the results of the Chi-square test for advising on choosing courses and finding a place to go for general questions and problems. Significance was found for advising on choosing courses and finding a place to go for general questions and problems.

Table 4.8
Chi-Square Test (advising on choosing courses and finding a place to go for general questions and answers)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>asymp. sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>30.529(a)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>32.086</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear Association</td>
<td>6.173</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.013*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05.

Considering there were 59.3% of the respondents that were satisfied with advising on choosing courses and a mean score of 1.54 for those that encountered problems finding where to go for general questions and problems, there was a significant relationship found. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between satisfaction on advising on choosing courses and encountering problems finding where to go for general questions and problems with p value of .000. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students did encounter some problems.
Table 4.9 provides the results of the Chi-square test conducted for advising on careers and finding a place to relax on campus between classes. Significance was found for advising on careers and finding a place to relax on campus between classes.

Table 4.9
Chi-Square Test (advising on careers and finding a place to relax on campus between classes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>asymp. sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>18.360</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.005*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>19.094</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>8.235</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.004*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05.

Considering there were 58.8% of the respondents that were satisfied with advising on careers and a mean score of 1.35 for those that encountered problems where to go to relax on campus between classes, a significant relationship was found. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between advising on careers and encountering problems finding places to relax on campus between classes. The p value was 0.05. The mean score indicated that the respondents encountered major problems finding somewhere to relax on campus between classes.
Table 4.10 provides the results of the Chi-square test conducted for advising on careers and finding where to go for general questions and problems. A significance relationship was determined.

Table 4.10
Chi-Square Test (advising on careers and finding where to go for general questions and problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>asymp. sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-square</td>
<td>34.145</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>32.998</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.000*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>9.531</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* p<.05.

Considering there were 58.8% of the respondents that were satisfied with advising on careers and a mean score of 1.54 for those encountering problems finding where to go for general questions and problems, there was a significant relationship found. Therefore, there was a significant relationship found between advising on careers and encountering problems finding where to go for general questions and problems. The p value was .000. The mean score indicated that the respondents encountered major problems finding where to relax on campus between classes.
Table 4.11 provides the results of the Chi-square test conducted for instructors’ availability outside of class and finding where to go for general questions and problems. A significance relationship was determined.

Table 4.11

Chi-Square Test (instructors’ availability outside of class and finding where to go for general questions and problems)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>value</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>asymp. sig. (2-sided)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pearson Chi-Square</td>
<td>19.951(a)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Likelihood Ratio</td>
<td>17.203</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>.002*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Linear-by-Linear</td>
<td>11.512</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>.001*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05.

Considering there were 86.4% of the respondents that were satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of class and a mean score of 1.54 of those that encountered problems finding where to go for general questions and problems, a significant relationship was found. Therefore, there was a significant relationship between instructors’ availability outside of class and finding where to go for general questions and problems. The p value was .001.

Based on these findings, the researcher concluded that there were not statistically enough significance found between the variables to indicate that there is a relationship...
between respondents’ encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with services. Although the respondents encountered problems, the results indicated satisfaction with services.

General Comments

In response to item number seven on the instrument that asked for other comments on how to improve the college experience for nontraditional students the following were general comments.

1. Most of the respondents suggested an improvement with registration. The statement “registration is difficult and unorganized at Coahoma Community College” was as theme of the respondents.

2. Several of the respondents commented that the financial aid department was unorganized and more financial aid assistance was needed for nontraditional students.

3. Although the respondents conveyed a positive attitude for interactions and availability with instructors, respondents suggested that some instructors should slow down during instruction time for the older students.

4. A few of the respondents suggested that a more selective admission process should be implemented for programs such as nursing.

5. Some of the respondents suggested a daycare for single parents during evening/weekend classes to relieve a great deal of stress during classes.

Summary of Findings

In general, there were 81 respondents for this study. Only 13 (16%) were male and 68 (84%) were female. Of the 81 respondents, 70 (86.4%) were African American, nine (11.1%) were Caucasian, and only two (2.5%) were of other ethnic group. As for the
ages of the participants, 16 (19.8%) were between ages 18-21, 28 (34.6%) were between ages 22-25, 12 (14.8%) were between ages 26-29, and 25 (30.9%) were 30 and older.

Of the 81 respondents, 72 (88.9%) of them had received their high school diplomas and only nine (11.1%) had received their General Educational Developments (GEDs). Sixty-two (76.5%) of the respondents were enrolled in college within a year after receiving their high school diplomas or General Education Developments and 19 (23.5%) did not enroll in college within a year after receiving their high school diplomas or General Education Developments.

In general, the respondents perceived knowledge about job opportunities in their majors as most important ($M = 3.93$) as related to information provided by the community college. The second most important was knowledge on financial aid ($M = 3.91$). The third most important was knowledge on how to study and take tests ($M = 3.79$).

In general, the respondents perceived getting advice on careers ($M = 3.69$) as the most important service provided by the community college. The second most important service was opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in their classes ($M = 3.68$). The third most important service was getting advice on choosing courses ($M = 3.60$).

In terms of satisfaction with the amount of information received from the community college, the respondents were most satisfied with computers and Internet use ($M = 3.90$). Job opportunities in their majors ($M = 3.63$) was the second most satisfying area in regards to the amount of information received from the community college. How
to study and take test ($M = 3.32$) was the third most satisfying area in regards to the amount of information received from the community college.

In addition to satisfaction with services provided by the community college, the respondents were most satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of class ($M = 4.23$). Opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes ($M = 4.07$) was the second most satisfying area of services provided by the community college. Opportunities to get to know other nontraditional students ($M = 3.78$) was the third most satisfying area of services provided by the community college.

Based on these findings, there were more indications of satisfaction than dissatisfaction in many areas. The respondents were either satisfied or neutral in the areas of amount of information received and services provided. On average, the respondents were more satisfied with the amount of information received and services provided by the community college than they were dissatisfied. The respondents were mostly satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of class and the opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes. The researcher concluded that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were significantly satisfied with the services provided by the community college.

In terms of encountering problems, the respondents had the most problems with having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities) ($M = 2.20$); balancing all activities (academic, work, home life) ($M = 2.07$), and finding time for recreational activities and exercises ($M = 2.05$). The respondents also encountered problems finding quality childcare in the daytime ($M = 2.51$), after school ($M = 2.47$), in the evening ($M = 2.51$), and on weekends ($M = 2.48$). Overall, the results revealed that
the respondents’ encountering problems with specific services did not influence their expressions of satisfaction with the community college.
CHAPTER V
SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

Chapter V includes a summary of the study, conclusions, and recommendations based on the results. The summary includes the purpose of the study and describes the procedures used in collecting the data. The conclusions present a discussion of the research questions, related literature and mirror the findings. Recommendations are given for further research.

Summary

Chapter I provided background information for the study, the statement of problem, purpose of the study, justification of the study, research question, limitations, delimitations, and definitions of the study. Chapter II presented a review of literature relevant to the study. Chapter II also included the following:

1. The community college mission;
2. Adult education movement and pioneering scholars;
3. Previous research and studies on nontraditional students;
4. Characteristics of nontraditional students;
5. Nontraditional students’ success in college;
6. Information on nontraditional students’ reasons for returning to school;
7. Issues and concerns of nontraditional students;

8. Literature on recruiting and retaining nontraditional students.

All of these segments increase the understanding of the study.

Chapter III discussed the methodology of the study, the location, history, and mission of the institution being studied, which is Coahoma Community College, to better understand the participants. Also, Chapter III presented a narrative of the instrumentation, procedures, data collection, and data analysis.

Chapter IV presented the data analysis and results. The results of the statistical analysis are presented in both narrative and table format, answering the research questions of this study. Demographic data are presented using the descriptive statistics and frequency distribution provided from using Statistical Packages for the Social Sciences, Version 17.

Chapter IV also presented a description of the respondents (demographics), level of importance on areas surveyed, levels of satisfaction on areas surveyed, problems encountered, and general suggestions from the respondents. Mean scores and distribution tables were also presented to further illustrate findings.

This study’s general purpose was to examine and determine nontraditional students’ satisfaction with services provided by community colleges. A survey was administered to 81 students who identified themselves as nontraditional students. The Nontraditional Students’ Satisfaction Survey was designed to examine and determine the needs and satisfaction levels of nontraditional students. This study only involved respondents from one rural community college, Coahoma Community College, located in Clarksdale, Mississippi in the Mississippi Delta.
The survey was administered within one semester. The researcher made contact with Stafford at the University of Colorado at Boulder requesting permission to use the survey for this study. A permission letter was granted immediately. The researcher then contacted Dr. Vivian Presley (President of Coahoma Community College) requesting permission to collect the data at Coahoma Community College. Dr. Vivian Presley granted permission to conduct the study with nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College. The researcher visited classrooms on campus to administer the surveys. A three-page survey accompanied by a consent form was distributed to all students that self-identified themselves as nontraditional students. After completion of the surveys, they were returned to the researcher immediately.

The research questions that guided this study were the following.

1. What do nontraditional students perceive as important information and services at a community college?
2. Are nontraditional students satisfied with the services provided by community colleges?
3. Is there a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services?

Discussion of the Findings

The first research question asked what nontraditional students perceived as important information and services at a community college. The nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College perceived knowledge about job opportunities in their majors as most important \((M = 3.93)\). The second most important was knowledge on financial aid \((M = 3.91)\). The third most important was knowledge on how to study and take test \((M = 3.79)\).
The respondents perceived getting advice on careers ($M = 3.69$) as the most important service provided by the community college. The second most important service was opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes ($M = 3.68$). The third most important service was getting advice on choosing courses ($M = 3.60$).

Research question two asked if nontraditional students were satisfied with the services provided by community colleges. The results revealed that the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the services provided by the community college.

Research question three asked if there was a relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services. The results revealed that there was no relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with community college services.

This study sought to determine if nontraditional students were satisfied with the services provided by the community college. The research data indicated that the nontraditional students were satisfied with the services provided by Coahoma Community College. The nontraditional students were more satisfied with opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes and instructors’ availability outside of classes than any other services provided by the community college. This implied that Coahoma Community College’ faculty are dedicated to fostering lifelong learning in regards to nontraditional students. Although the nontraditional students are satisfied with the services provided by Coahoma Community College, there is always room for
improvement. The sole efforts of the institution of higher learning should be to better accommodate the student body.

The research data suggested that there was no significant relationship between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction. Although encountering problems did not impact the nontraditional students’ expressions of satisfaction, Coahoma Community College should continue to put forth effort to eliminate as many of those problems as possible. The community college should seek to meet the needs of all nontraditional students. Therefore, in order to meet the needs of such student body, the community college must first seek to become educated on what those needs are. This study attempted to shed light on those needs and what the nontraditional students deemed relevant.

Community colleges have always served a vital part of communities. Many of the community colleges are faced with the abundant flow of nontraditional students. With the changes in society and the United States economy, the enrollment of nontraditional students is inevitable. If the community colleges take a holistic approach to reaching the nontraditional students, there will exist an extraordinary impact on the strengthening of communities. Every community college should use the opportunity to become more educated on what the nontraditional students need and expect from their institution. This study should enlighten Coahoma Community College specifically on the institution’s status in regards to meeting the needs of nontraditional students.

The current study suggested needed accommodations that should be made to meet the needs of nontraditional students. The suggestions made in the current study are similar to those made by Ely (1997) study. Suggested accommodations include separate
registration, advising, and orientation; special assistance with financial aid; improved information services and networks; and availability of childcare. The community colleges should also develop a more business like mind when accommodating the nontraditional students as encouraged by Hadfield (2003) work suggests. This notion motivates the community colleges to endeavor to satisfy the nontraditional students (customers) at any cost.

Nontraditional students are unique students with unique characteristics. Therefore, unique approaches are a necessity for the improvement of the college experience of nontraditional students. This study indicates in order for community colleges to improve their services to nontraditional students they should become more discerning of the nontraditional students’ needs and interests. As the old cliché states, “Knowledge is power” and power is knowledge. Once the community college leaders are knowledgeable of the needs of these students, they will become better equipped on how to accommodate these needs.

Although the community colleges will continue to face an array of new challenges, the community colleges must never forget their commitments, goals, missions, and role for which they were established. Perhaps, the power of responding to the global economical issues lie in the hands of the community college leaders, faculty, and staff preparing and equipping the nontraditional students and student body as a whole to compete and become innovators for positive dramatic change.
Conclusions

The following conclusions are based on the results of the study conducted with regards to nontraditional students’ satisfaction with the services provided by Coahoma Community College:

1. Related to the amount of information provided by Coahoma Community College, the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College deemed getting information on financial aid opportunities, how to study and take test taking, computers and Internet use, job opportunities in their majors and academic tutoring as most important.

2. The nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College deemed getting information on campus events and/or campus job opportunities as least important.

3. Related to services provided, the nontraditional students perceived getting advice on careers, getting advice on choosing courses, taking an active part in what goes on in their classes, having one place to go for general questions and problems, and having access to campus services and offices and/or on weekends as most important.

4. The nontraditional students perceived being able to participate in social activities on campus and being involved in extracurricular activities such as clubs, organizations, and student government as least important.

5. Related to satisfaction with the amount of information received and the services provided by Coahoma Community College, statistically, the nontraditional students were either satisfied or neutral.

6. The nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were more satisfied with the amount of information received on job opportunities in their majors and computers and Internet use.

7. Regarding satisfaction with services provided, the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College are most satisfied with instructors’ availability outside of classes and opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in classes.

8. Overall, the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College were satisfied with the services provided by the community college.

9. There was no significant relationship found between nontraditional students encountering problems and their expressions of satisfaction with the community college services at Coahoma Community College.
10. Regarding childcare, the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College encountered problems finding quality child care.

**Recommendations**

The following recommendations for future research are proposed based on the results of this study:

1. The current study took place at Coahoma Community College during one semester. The same study could be conducted during another semester at Coahoma Community College to increase sample size.

2. The current study sought only nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College, the same study could also be administered to traditional students to further investigate the satisfaction of the entire student body with the services provided by Coahoma Community College.

3. The current survey study could also be conducted at various junior and community colleges in Mississippi and collect and compare the results to further investigate and offer worthwhile data on whether or not the Mississippi junior and community colleges are meeting the needs of nontraditional students.

4. The use of findings from the current study should assist Coahoma Community College leaders in strategic planning for the future by analyzing current and future practices in regards to accommodating the needs of nontraditional students.

5. Further research on the recruitment and retention of nontraditional students is needed. Perhaps, some amendments to the survey used in this study could ask the respondents to make suggestions specifically on recruitment and retention strategies.
REFERENCES


Wonacott, M. E. (2001). *Adult students: Recruitment and retention*. Practice Application Brief No. 18. ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education, Columbus, OH.


APPENDIX A

CONSENT FORM & SURVEY
An investigation of a rural community college meeting the needs of nontraditional students

Nontraditional Students’ Satisfaction Survey

-Consent Form-

Project Title and Purpose
The project title is: An investigation of a rural community college meeting the needs of nontraditional students. The Nontraditional Student’s Satisfaction survey is designed to examine and determine the needs and current satisfaction of new and continuing nontraditional-aged students.

Nontraditional Student Defined: Any student who has return to college full/part time after delaying enrollment in post secondary education in the same year completing high school. He or she attends primarily evening classes while balancing employment, family (primarily single parents), and perhaps did not receive a high school diploma. Nontraditional students can also be an adult that works full time (35 hours or more a week) while enrolled in school and is eligible for financial aid.

Investigator(s)
The investigators conducting this study are:

- Kishki K. Hall, Graduate Student at Mississippi State University
- Dr. James Davis, Professor and Program Coordinator at Mississippi State University

Overall Description of Participation
For this study, you are invited to participate in a written survey that will take approximately 10 minutes to complete. You need only participate in the study once, and you will not be asked to complete any other forms or questionnaires. The questionnaire will be used to determine the importance of and students' satisfaction with the information they have received on various issues. All survey responses are completely anonymous; no names or other identifying information is being collected. To participate in this research, you must be at least 18 years of age and have been in the past or is a nontraditional student at any college or university.

Volunteer Statement
The decision to participate in this study is completely up to you. If you decide to be in the study, you may stop at any time. You will not be treated any differently if you decide not to participate in the study or if you stop once you have started. You may refuse to answer any specific questions.

Anonymity
The data collected in this study does not contain any information that will link your answers back to you or to your participation in this study. To ensure anonymity the survey does not contain questions that can be used to identify individual respondents and will placed in a box with other surveys whereas you will not be identified.

Contact
The researchers want to make sure that you are treated in a fair and respectful manner. Contact the Mississippi State University’s Research Compliance Office (662-325-3994) if you have questions about how you are treated as a study participant. If you have any questions about the actual project or study, please contact Kishki Hall (662-402-8837, Kishki@yahoo.com) or Dr. James Davis (662-325-0944, jed11@colled.msstate.edu).

(Please keep this form for your records. Your participation in this research indicates your consent.)
Nontraditional Students’ Satisfaction Survey

Demographics

Gender: ____Male  ____Female

Race: ____African American  ____Caucasian  ____Hispanic  ____Other

Age: ____18-21  ____22-25  ____26-29  ____30 or older

Which did you receive: ____High School Diploma  ____GED

Did you enroll in college within a year after high school graduation or receiving the GED:  ____Yes  ____No

If you answered No to the previous question check all that explains why:

____Entered the Workforce  ____Entered the Military

____Family Obligation  ____Lack of Financial Resources

____No Personal Desire  ____Other Reasons (Please Specify________________)

1. How IMPORTANT is it for you to know about:
   1=not at all important  2=somewhat important  3=quite important  4=very important
   ____  Financial aid opportunities
   ____  On-campus job opportunities
   ____  How to study and take tests
   ____  Computers and the Internet
   ____  Job opportunities in your major
   ____  Campus events
   ____  Academic tutoring services

2. How SATISFIED are you with the amount of information you've received on:
   1=very dissatisfied  2=dissatisfied  3=neutral  4=satisfied  5=very satisfied
   ____  Financial aid opportunities
   ____  On-campus job opportunities
   ____  How to study and take tests
   ____  Computers and the Internet
   ____  Job opportunities in your major
   ____  Campus events
   ____  Academic tutoring services
3. How IMPORTANT is it for you to be able to:
1=not at all important 2=somewhat important 3= quite important 4=very important

______ Get advice on choosing courses
______ Get advice on careers
______ Take an active part in what goes on in your classes
______ Interact with instructors outside of class
______ Develop friendships with others in your classes
______ Get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds
______ Get to know other non-traditional students
______ Participate in social activities on campus
______ Be involved in extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, student government)
______ Have one place to go to for general questions and problems
______ Have access to campus services and offices in evenings and/or on weekends

4. How SATISFIED are you with:
0=does not apply 1=very dissatisfied 2=dissatisfied 3= neutral 4=satisfied 5=very satisfied

______ Advising on choosing courses
______ Advising on careers
______ Opportunities to take an active part in what goes on in your classes
______ Instructor availability outside of class
______ Opportunities to develop friendships with others in your classes
______ Opportunities to get to know persons of different racial/ethnic backgrounds
______ Opportunities to get to know other non-traditional students
______ Availability of social activities on campus
______ Availability of extracurricular activities (clubs, organizations, student government) on campus

5. Did you encounter or are currently having any PROBLEMS with:
1=no problems 2=some problems 3=major problems

______ Adjusting to college life
______ Finding time to study/prepare for class
______ Finding time to socialize
______ Finding time for recreational activities/exercise
______ Balancing all your activities (academic, work, home life)
______ Having enough money to pay for living expenses (rent, food, utilities)
______ Having enough money to pay for tuition and academic-related expenses
______ Finding places to study on campus between classes
______ Finding places to relax on campus between classes
______ Finding where to go for general questions and problems
______ Having access to campus services and offices at times convenient to you
6. Do you have children? ____Yes  ____No

If yes, answer the following questions; if no, skip to question 7

Did you have or are you currently having any PROBLEMS with finding quality child care:

1=no problems 2=some problems 3=major problems

_____ In the daytime
_____ After school
_____ In the evenings
_____ On weekends

7. ANY OTHER COMMENTS on how to improve the college experience for non-traditional students?

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________

__________________________________________________________________________________
APPENDIX B

REQUEST & APPROVAL LETTERS
PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH USING YOUR SURVEY

Date: May 28, 2009
To: Susan Stafford (University of Colorado at Boulder)

I am presently a doctoral student at Mississippi State University in the Community College Leadership Program. I am asking for your support in my endeavors to conduct research for my dissertation. I noticed your Fall 1997 Nontraditional Student Survey relates to my present study "An investigation of a rural community college meeting the needs of nontraditional students" that I am conducting. I am requesting your permission to use your survey that you used in your 1997 study. Please grant me permission to use your Nontraditional Student Survey in writing so that I can proceed with my study. (A copy of the survey is also attached to this letter below)

Your permission will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks,

Kishiki K. Hall, ABD
Oral Communication Adjunct Instructor at Coahoma Community College
Public Speaking/Debate Teacher at East Side High School
Motivational Speaker/Youth Evangelist
kkhall@coahomacc.edu
Kishiki@yahoo.com
662-402-8837

If you agree that I can use the survey for purposes of my present study, please sign and date below.

Signature: Susan Stafford
Date: 5/28/2007
May 28, 2009

Kishki K. Hall  
Community College Leadership Program  
Mississippi State University

Dear Ms. Hall,

I am giving you permission to use my 1997 Nontraditional Student Survey. I would be interested in seeing your findings regarding a rural community college meeting the needs of nontraditional students.

Sincerely,

Susan Stafford  
Director
PERMISSION LETTER TO CONDUCT RESEARCH

Date: June 1, 2009
To: Dr. Vivian Presley (President of Coahoma Community College)
From: Kishki K. Hall

I am presently a doctoral student at Mississippi State University in the Community College Leadership Program. I am asking for your support in my endeavors to conduct research for my dissertation. This is a request of your permission to conduct a survey study of the nontraditional students at Coahoma Community College. The purpose of the study is to determine if the community college is meeting the needs of the nontraditional students enrolled at the institutions.

Title of Study: An Investigation of a Rural Community College Meeting the needs of nontraditional students

Your permission is greatly appreciated.

Kishki K. Hall
Oral Communication Instructor at Coahoma Community College
Public Speaking/Debate Teacher at East Side High School
Motivational Speaker/Youth Evangelist
kishki@yahoo.com, Primary Email
kkhall@coahomacc.edu
662-402-8837
MEMORANDUM

To: Whom It May Concern

From: Vivian M. Presley
President

Date: June 4, 2009

Re: Approval to conduct study at Coahoma Community College

This communication serves as an official approval for Kishki Hall to conduct a research at Coahoma Community College. I understand that the purpose of this research is to determine if community colleges are meeting the needs of non-traditional students.

Please contact me if additional information is needed.
APPENDIX C

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY IRB LETTER
June 8, 2009

Kishki K. Hall
714 Beach Street
Cleveland, MS 38732

RE: IRB Study #09-118: An investigation of a rural community college meeting the needs of nontraditional students

Dear Ms. Hall:

This letter reflects the change in title which was approved on 6/08/2009 via administrative review in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2).

The above referenced project was reviewed and approved via administrative review on 5/12/2009 in accordance with 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2). Continuing review is not necessary for this project. However, any modification to the project must be reviewed and approved by the IRB prior to implementation. Any failure to adhere to the approved protocol could result in suspension or termination of your project. The IRB reserves the right, at anytime during the project period, to observe you and the additional researchers on this project.

Please note that the MSU IRB is in the process of seeking accreditation for our human subjects protection program. As a result of these efforts, you will likely notice many changes in the IRB's policies and procedures in the coming months. These changes will be posted online at http://www.orc.msstate.edu/human/aaahpp.php. The first of these changes is the implementation of an approval stamp for consent forms. The approval stamp will assist in ensuring the IRB-approved version of the consent form is used in the actual conduct of research. You must use copies of the stamped consent form for obtaining consent from participants.

Please refer to your IRB number (#09-118) when contacting our office regarding this application.

Thank you for your cooperation and good luck to you in conducting this research project. If you have questions or concerns, please contact me at cwilliams@research.msstate.edu or call 662-325-5220.

Sincerely,

[For use with electronic submissions]

Christine Williams
IRB Compliance Administrator

cc: James Davis