THE QUALITY OF LIFE OF STUDENTS IN A BUSINESS ADMINISTRATION PROGRAM AT A COMMUNITY COLLEGE

BY ELIZABETH OMENIUK

A Thesis
Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirement for the
Degree of Masters of Education
Department of Curriculum: Mathematics and Natural Sciences
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Abstract

The quality of life of students in post-secondary education evaluates the students' perception of satisfaction they are experiencing. This study used the quality of life questionnaire developed by Roberts and Clifton which measures the quality of student life in the affective domain. The population sampled was first and second year students in a Business Administration program at a community college. The response rate from the 485 students registered was 71 percent. Four dimensions were examined: positive and negative affective dimension, interaction with student dimension and interaction with instructor dimension. The positive dimension revealed general satisfaction with college life. The negative dimension indicated that although the students were not depressed they expressed some anxiety. There was general satisfaction in the interaction with students dimension but one-third of the respondents felt people did not think a lot of them. Students indicated that instructors need to take more personal interest in the students and their work. Analysis of variance and multiple regression analysis revealed that age was an influencing factor in several dimensions. Other independent factors found to influence the quality of life were: year in program, gender, and culture. It was determined that GPA was influenced by instructor and age of student.

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Community colleges across Canada, along with other post-secondary institutions, are being forced by decreased funding to review existing programs and make adjustments. In making these adjustments the quality of life of the students should not be compromised; it must continue to be a major factor considered in the internal efficiency of the institution. The primary source for identifying the quality of life is the students themselves. The administrators, deans and faculty cannot determine this aspect of the student's life in the program. University of Manitoba President, Arnold Naimark's remarks reflect that educational environments are changing: "It's just a tougher environment and less congenial and fruitful as far as the student experience is concerned" (as cited in Campbell, 1989). Gerson (1976) views quality of life in terms of individualistic achievement in a specific environment. Therefore, determining the quality of life of students can possibly reveal if they are achieving their goals in their present environment. Although educational institutions

cannot be all things to all people, the responsibility still exists to provide a supportive environment for students.

Quality of Life

Quality of life "encompasses different things to different individuals",(Atkinson, 1979). It is an expression of the degree of satisfaction that a person has, in either a general or specific context. Roberts and Clifton (1991) define quality of life as "the degree of satisfaction or sense of well-being people experience in a specific environment". Quality of life refers directly to the fulfillment of one's potential, achieving what one sets out to do, and other non-quantifiable aspects of a person's life. People's perceptions of their quality of life are based on the goals that are significant to them and are influenced by their subjective well-being. It is a subjectively based evaluation of their beliefs, expectations, and aspirations and is an expression of how they feel, their sense of satisfaction and frustration with their experience at the time (Williams & Batten, 1981).

The advantage of assessing the quality of life of students is that it measures their perception of their current situation based on individual goals and standards. The objective circumstances of the same people, however, cannot be inferred from their personal subjective experience. The quantitative dimensions of an individual's experience must be measured differently.

Roberts and Clifton (1988) recognize that ethnocentrism plays a significant role in a student's experience in a classroom. The understanding of the cultural differences and attitudes of students is necessary if the teachers and the school are to contribute positively to the quality of student life. Roberts and Clifton (1988) investigated Inuit attitudes and their predilection for cooperative learning. They state that it is important to recognize and understand the attitudes of students from non-white cultures. Effective teaching cannot take place otherwise: "Lacking such understanding, accurate emphasizing and role taking are hindered and the likelihood of designing and employing meaningful instructional strategies is reduced" (Roberts and Clifton, 1988, p. 216). Kleinfeld's (1975) work on effective teaching of Inuit and Indian students

concurs that without ethnocentric or other similar types of studies, teachers will be ill-prepared to teach in cross-cultural schools. Donald Phelps (1994) writes: "We are too comfortable with teaching and serving students as we always have, with little consideration for dramatic shifts and differences in their culture, ethnicity, gender and income" (p. 24).

The demographics of community colleges have shifted dramatically over the years. The culture, income, and average age of the student population has become more diverse. For example, a number of quality of life studies of students looked at the relationship of age and perceived quality of life. Results from Okun, Kardash, and Janiga (1986), and Wolfgang & Dowling, (1981) indicated that older students were more satisfied with college life than younger students. Social relationships were valued more by younger than by older students. In her comparison of older (>25 years) and younger (18-21 years) college women, Sturz, (1971) discovered that the older group of women were generally more satisfied with college and the quality of education. She concluded that "significant age differences may exist in student satisfaction with the

quality of their education and policies and procedures , and in their overall satisfaction" (Sturz, 1971, p. 222). These studies suggest that students vary in their needs and the expectations they hold for educational institutes to fulfill.

Academic achievement is not solely influenced by the cognitive ability of the student. Williams and Batten (1981) found that academic achievement is also related to quality of life. If students are satisfied and comfortable in their academic surroundings they will achieve academically. In their study, Liu and Jung (1980) looked at, among other variables, student satisfaction and academic achievement. They found that both age and grade had a moderate effect upon student satisfaction. In addition, the "internalized" subjective evaluation was more influential to student satisfaction than the objective evaluations. The quality of the experience plays a significant role in the self-esteem and success of the student. It is the student's experience inside and outside the classroom that is often neglected, resulting in the loss of self worth and the inability of the student to achieve academically.

Thus, quality of life research can serve many purposes. It is useful in its relationship with academic achievement. It identifies the "climate" of the student experience that may otherwise be undermined. It demands that the institution evaluate the human aspect of the organization instead of focusing on the business in the boardroom. Investigating quality of life gives the students a sense that the institution cares, that they have a share in the ownership of their education. This can contribute to the student's self-esteem. McComas (1989) has identified that "a university's inability or unwillingness to give a prompt response to legitimate concerns of students outside the classroom causes them to conclude that we really do not care for them as individuals"(p. 9).

In addition, quality of life studies can help identify areas of college life that affect student retention rates. This can assist educational institutions in policy review and instructional modifications.

These studies can help identify strengths in the process while initiating a look at areas where students are not experiencing satisfaction. Williams and Batten (1981) believe

that quality of life studies of students can more completely explain their behavior than assessing objective features such as age, gender, et. cetera. Bulcock, Mendoza, Crane, and Lee (1990) believe "... more complete explanations depend on an understanding of how people perceive their world" (p. 40).

Quality of life studies of post-secondary institutions have been somewhat limited compared to elementary schools and high schools. Fraser (1986) confirms that centers for higher education have seen limited study in the quality of life area. Only a few Canadian universities (the University of Guelph, Memorial University of Newfoundland, and the University of Manitoba, for example) have studied quality of life on their campuses (Benjamin, 1990; Bulcock et al., 1990; Roberts & Clifton, 1992).

Finally, quality of life studies of higher educational institutions can reflect directly on the institution itself and affect public support.

In summary, " From our theoretical perspective, university students should experience demanding cognitive challenges

within warm social environments" (Clifton, Etcheverry, Hasinoff, and Roberts, 1995, p. 1). Students who are happy, involved in the school, and feel confident usually are academically successful.

The Investigation

Studies in education have covered many areas such as individual achievement, teaching techniques, course relevance, and many more. What is missed in these studies is how the students feel. Identifying the feelings of the students can only enhance the institute's operations, reputation and ability to be recognized as a "quality" educational center. As Roberts and Clifton argue, "Attitudes comprise a fundamental component of the definitions of the situation since they signify persistent orientations towards objects and predispose people to actions" (Roberts & Clifton, 1988, p. 216).

The purposes of this study were to:

1. measure the quality of life of community college students in terms of global and specific affective dimensions, and
2. determine if there are correlation's between quality of life and age, gender, GPA, first year, second year, and cultural background.

Bloom and Krathwohl (1956) distinguish the affective domain concerns to include attitudes, interests and values. These will be assessed in terms of global quality of life which measures the person's sense of well-being in a general context. Specific domains of quality of life help determine if institutions are achieving their goals (Scheussler and Fisher, 1985). Campbell, Converse, and Rodgers (1976) concur that the global context is meaningful only if specific contexts are investigated.

In the study students express how they feel in a global sense about their educational experience in a positive way. Feelings of loneliness, depression, and alienation typify the negative aspects of their overall experience. They also assess thier quality of life based on the specific affective dimensions: the interaction with other students and the interaction with instructors.

CHAPTER TWO

Literature Search

Defining Quality of Life

Quality of life encompasses different things for different people. The concept is as elusive as it is pervasive. Quality has multiple meanings and no single definition fits or is acceptable to all people. It is a concept with multiple dimensions and is seen in many contexts.

In an attempt to define quality of life, Schuessler and Fisher, (1985) identify that quality has the same meaning as grade which ranges from low to high, better to worse. The word 'life' refers to mental life. Often environmental conditions are thought to relate to quality of life. But in this instance, the environment is seen as facilitating quality. French, Rodgers and Cobb (1974) explain: "People live in an objectively defined environment, but they perceive a subjectively defined environment, and it is to this psychological 'life space' that they respond" (as cited in Campbell et al., 1976, p.13).

Atkinson (1979) explained that quality of life is different for each individual. All individuals have goals that are significant to them. Therefore, there is no single definition of quality of life for any one group, be they a class, a specific cultural group, or a nation.

Individuals assess their quality of life based on their own values, needs and expectations. It is therefore necessary to go to the individual to evaluate perceptions of quality of life. Campbell et al. (1976) explain that, "Satisfaction with a domain of life as expressed by an individual is seen as dependent on his evaluations or assessments of various attributes of that domain" (p.14).

The recent trend in quality of life research is to use satisfaction rather than happiness as the indicator. Using satisfaction enables individuals to evaluate their current situation based on their personal standards. This type of measurement is subjective and is based on the "... expectations, aspirations, perceptions of what others have, feelings of entitlement, and recollections of one's situation in the past" (Atkinson, 1979, p. 277). Burt, Wiley,.Minor, and

Murray (1978) agree that individuals evaluate their quality of life from the "... level of consumption of socially valued goods and services relative to socially prescribed norms" (Williams & Batten, 1981, p. 5). In addition, Burt et al. (1978) attribute a person's feeling of well-being to "...the extent to which an individual feels he has the power to determine his individual well-being within society" (p.387). Campbell et al. (1976) describe satisfaction as a "cognitive judgment of a current situation laid against external standards of comparison" (p. 31). Thus, satisfaction is more valid than happiness as an indicator for measuring quality of life since happiness is related to an emotional state of feeling or affect. One drawback with the use of satisfaction is that the degree of satisfaction is based on individual criteria, "Since satisfaction is a function of the difference between an individual's perception of what he / she has and some standard for comparison ..." (Atkinson, 1979, p. 277). Thus, individuals can assess their quality of life as high and yet be less than satisfied, since the quality is not high enough.

The study of quality of life in education has evolved in the quest to determine the non-cognitive influences of

achievement (Williams & Batten, 1981). This is based on the premise that students who are happier and more involved in school life are more likely to learn and perform at a higher level than students who are unhappy and unmotivated.

The Dimensions of Quality of Life

Individuals have a number of experiences each day. Bradburn (1969) explains that some of these experiences are good, others bad, but most often they are a mixture of good and bad. He describes the sum of these experiences as three dimensions of well-being: overall feelings of satisfaction with life as a whole; positive affect, or "good feeling", experiences; and negative affect or feelings of loneliness, depression or boredom. Bradburn (1969) postulated that social participation has positive affect on quality of life, whereas inter-personal tension is associated with negative affect. In addition, Bradburn (1969) found that positive and negative affective states are not related proportionately, even though they both relate to an overall sense of well-being. Bradburn developed his Affect Balance Scale based on his findings that feelings of well-being are derived from the relative balance of positive and negative affect (as cited in Williams & Batten, 1981).

A number of models for quality of life were developed in the 1960's. These models measured quality of life in terms of

general satisfaction: positive and negative affect. Campbell et al. (1976) and Andrews and Whithey (1976) conducted studies that, in addition to global satisfaction, measured specific dimensions of individual life experiences. They believed that the measurement of specific dimensions of life could assist in observing patterns of relationships between specific experiences and overall life satisfaction. Campbell et al. (1976) felt that there is a need to assess the reactions of individuals to more specific dimensions of life that ultimately affect one's global sense of well-being: "Which attributes are most relevant to satisfaction is an empirical question" (Campbell et al., 1976, p. 14).

The present study focuses on the quality of life of students attending a post-secondary educational institution. Roberts and Clifton (1991) state that measuring quality of life in post-secondary education can assist in determining if institutional goals are being achieved and can play an important role in policy development of the institute. Instruments developed to measure domain specific quality of life of post-secondary education focus on subjective well-being. Roberts and Clifton (1991) explain that "...the well-

being is interpreted as resulting from the interaction of the character of people, called their 'subjective-value context' and the nature of the environmental, cultural, and social structures to which they are adapting" (p.5). Educational institutions, as with any other organizations, can only gain from examining quality of life. Individuals will recognize that they are considered important by the organization and the organization can evaluate how well it is serving its clients.

The Domains of Quality of Life in Post-Secondary Education

In their development of an instrument to measure the quality of life of students, Clifton and Roberts (1991) argued that students' experiences are characterized by two domains: cognitive and affective. They believe that the university's role is to challenge the students intellectually while at the same time "enhancing" their feelings of self-worth. One is not accomplished without the other; that is, cognitive challenges can only take place successfully if the environment is supportive and non-distracting.

The Affective Domain

The affective domain of quality of life evaluates how students perceive their experience in the educational institute. Spady and Mitchell (1979) and Williams and Batten (1981) laid the ground work for measuring the affective domain upon which Roberts and Clifton (1991) developed their study.

In the affective domain there is a distinction made between global and specific dimensions. Global quality of life measures general feelings or students' perceptions of their experiences, assessing positive and negative affect. Spady and Mitchell (1979) initially developed a set of specific dimensions that measure quality of life in education, and these were reworked by Williams and Batten (1981). Dimensions are discrete components, which as a whole constitute a domain. Roberts and Clifton (1991) state that the difficulty lies in determining dimensions that are "relevant to education and quality of life" (p. 19). Campbell et al. (1976) justified the need for specific dimensions. They were convinced that specific aspects of life affect one's overall feelings or perception of life.

In their initial development of an instrument , Roberts and Clifton (1991) used the specific dimensions of the affective domain formulated by Spady and Mitchell (1979) and Williams and Batten (1981). Their instrument contained six specific dimensions to measure quality of life in the affective domain. The Roberts and Clifton (1991) instrument was then exposed to rigorous construct validity and factor analysis. This examination revealed that the quality of life of post-secondary students could be conceptualized into four dimensions instead of the original six dimensions. Roberts and Clifton concluded that the four dimensions of positive affect, negative affect, interaction with professors, and interaction with students, show "... strong theoretical and empirical support" (Roberts and Clifton, 1992, p. 133).

In this study, the four specific dimensions conceptualized by Roberts and Clifton (1992) were used to measure quality of life in the affective domain of Business Administration program students at a community college. Roberts and Clifton (1991) give credence to the combination of global and specific dimensions citing that the instrument has "considerable appeal"

and that it parallels "the general and specific dimensions identified in the research on social influence (p.133).

Global Dimensions

Positive Affective Dimension

This dimension pertains to students' feelings as a whole, in regard to their experience at a post-secondary institution. These experiences are described in such terms as: happiness, feeling positive, and general enjoyment. Bradburn (1969) developed this dimension to determine specific quality of life-as-a-whole feelings. See Appendix A for the specific questions in this dimension.

Negative Affective Dimension

Bradburn (1969) developed this dimension to identify negative quality of life contributors such as depression and loneliness. This dimension measures the intensity and frequency of negative global experiences of students. This set of questions assesses feelings of restlessness, alienation,

loneliness, and depression. See Appendix A for the questions in this dimension.

The sum of positive and negative experiences expresses the student's overall feelings or sense of well-being with life. Bradburn (1969) determined that negative affect did not appear to reflect positive affect. Those who had high levels of positive affect did not necessarily have low levels of negative affect. In addition, Bradburn (1969) concluded that the best predictor of global well-being was the difference between positive and negative affect. He found that both these dimensions balanced out to reflect a person's general feelings of well-being.

Specific Dimensions

Campbell et al. (1976), as well as Andrews and Withey (1976) did extensive research in the area of social indicators of quality of life. They determined that specific aspects of an individual's life provide more detailed information on quality of life experiences compared to measuring only global feelings. Measuring the contributions of each specific dimension

contributes to the overall measurement of life satisfaction. Campbell et al. (1976) explain: "The utility of global assessments is somewhat limited, unless they are fleshed out with more detailed information about reactions to more specific domains of life..." (p. 61).

The Interaction with Students Dimension

This dimension is concerned with the ability of students to get to know and interact with other students. This dimension plays an important role in the quality of life of a student. Spady and Mitchell (1979) identified that the public expects the school system to provide for the interaction of students. They describe this interaction of students as status which "is created by the very existence of organizations which differentiate and order relationships among individuals ... through the development of systems of social recognition and privilege" (Spady and Mitchell, 1979, p.7-8). This specific dimension describes students' experiences within an organizational structure while simultaneously attempting to fulfill their personal expectations. See Appendix A for the questions in this dimension.

The Interaction with Instructor Dimension

The dimension concerned with interaction of students with instructors (professors, teachers) was developed empirically by Williams and Batten (1981). This dimension denotes the type of experience or relationship that students have with their instructors. It is designed to determine if the instructor is helpful and supportive of the student, contributing to the student's sense of well-being. Roberts and Clifton's (1991) review of the sociological literature found that a primary concern of the student is the perceived equity of the student - instructor interaction. Thus, fair and just conduct by professors affects a higher quality of life for students. See Appendix A for the questions in this dimension.

Post-secondary institutions, as with all other educational establishments, shape and influence the experiences of their students. Therefore, an important reason for educational establishments to study quality of student life is to determine if the institute provides a positive experience. In other words, do students experience a general sense of well-being at this institute? By providing a positive experience an

educational institution can begin to respond to the needs of the students. In addition, this can have a positive effect and at the same time, affect the institution and its mission. Thus, studying the quality of student life produces reciprocal effects.

The quality of student life consists of two domains, cognitive and affective. Roberts and Clifton (1991) summarize this concept by describing the role of the university: ..."to stimulate and challenge the students' intellect while supporting and enhancing the students' feelings of self-worth and dignity" (p. 13).

Quality of Life Studies in Post-Secondary Education

In North America, there have been few studies conducted in the area of quality of life in education. A review by Michalos (1986) of quality of life studies revealed that only 2 percent were in education. The majority of those studies were at the elementary and secondary school levels. Limited work has been done on quality of life at the post-secondary levels such as universities and colleges. One explanation is the absence of a

suitable instrument to measure quality of life at this level. Trevor Williams concurs that a quality of life model has a "slightly different structure" in post-secondary education compared to elementary and secondary schools (as cited in Roberts & Clifton, 1991). In addition, Williams explains that "this group of students is different in terms of their intellectual capabilities, educational achievements, and in terms of the aspects of their social origins and life experiences related to these attributes" (as cited in Roberts and Clifton, 1991, Foreword).

Quality of Life Study: The University of Manitoba

In 1987, the University of Manitoba Senate mandated a review of the Faculty of Education, its structure, procedures and programs. Part of this review was to assess the quality of undergraduate and graduate experiences in the faculty. The instrument was developed by Roberts and Clifton (1991), who at that time were members of a review sub-committee. The results were analyzed and a report was submitted (Clifton et al. 1987).

In the fall of 1991, the Dean requested that a follow-up study be conducted using the same instrument that was used in the 1987 study. The 1992 study was conducted only on undergraduates in the Faculty of Education. Only the report by Clifton et al. (1993) will be discussed as both studies were conducted similarly, used the same instrument, and compared.

Both studies used a random stratified cluster procedure to select approximately 20 to 27 percent of students from each year. The questionnaires were distributed and completed during class time. The response rates for 1987 and 1992 were 76 percent and 72 percent respectively. The average age of the students in the 1987 study was 24 years, and in the 1992 study, 23 years of age. Both studies consisted of approximately 33 percent females and 65 percent males. The predominant ethnic origin group was English, with German and Ukrainian as the next largest ethnic groups respectively. In this paper the results and comparison of the two studies is limited to the affective domain portion of these studies.

The instrument used in both studies assessed the six dimensions of the quality of life developed from the work of

Williams and Batten (1981). These dimensions are: general affect (positive and negative affect), status, identity, professors, and opportunity. The present study did not use the "identity" and "opportunity" dimensions that were used in the University of Manitoba studies.

The University of Manitoba studies indicated an approximate increase, from 1987 to 1992, of 26 percent in enjoyment of the faculty and of learning. There was a 7 percent increase in the 1992 study in liking to go to the faculty each day.

The negative affect dimension results for the two studies were very similar. Seventy percent of the respondents disagreed to feeling depressed or lonely. In the 1992 study there was a decrease of approximately 6 percent in feelings of restlessness and discontent. One significant change in the 1992 study from the 1987 study was an increase of approximately 7 percent of students who felt apprehensive.

In the status dimension there was an increase, from 1987 to 1992, in feelings of pride. There was also an increase in

the perceptions of the students that they were respected by their instructors and that their peers and instructors cared about their ideas. Approximately one-third of those surveyed felt that people "looked up to them", and thought well of them; in short, students felt more important.

The identity dimension revealed that the majority of both study groups felt accepted, were learning to get along with people, and understood themselves better by mixing with other people. The 1992 study showed a 13 percent increase of students agreeing that the things they learned were important to them and a 9 percent increase in students agreeing that they had learned to work hard.

The professor dimension revealed that the 1992 study group responded more positively to almost all items. The most substantial increase was a 15 percent increase on the item reflecting general fairness and justness. In addition, 12 percent more students agreed that professors listened to what they say and 7 percent more students agreed that professors took a personal interest in helping them in their work.

The opportunity dimension indicated that the majority of both study groups were positive about their competence and felt they achieved satisfactory standards. There was a 15 percent increase in the 1992 study from 1987 in students who agreed they liked learning in the Faculty.

In summary, the students in 1992 expressed more positive feelings about the quality of life experiences in the Faculty than the students in the 1987 study. Eighty percent of the items saw increases in positive feelings ranging from 5 to nearly 26 percent. Only ten items displayed less than a 5 percent increase or remained virtually unchanged from the 1987 study results.

Compared to the 1987 study group the 1992 students were more positive about the quality of their lives in the Faculty and had slightly higher grade point averages. In addition, the 1992 study group's self-concept of their abilities was slightly more positive. The 1993 report identified that the 1992 undergraduate students were substantially more motivated than the 1987 students.

Quality of Life Study: The Memorial University of Newfoundland

In the 1988-89 academic year at Memorial University of Newfoundland, Bulcock et al. (1990) conducted a study of the Faculty of Education's quality of life using the Roberts and Clifton (1987) instrument. The analysis included comparing Memorial University's results with that of the 1987 study at the University of Manitoba.

The results indicated a higher quality of life at Memorial University of Newfoundland (MUN) compared to the University of Manitoba (UOM). The MUN students reported more favorable standings in 83 percent of the forty quality of student life items. "On satisfaction, status, identity, and opportunity items, the Newfoundland students were overwhelmingly more positive than students from the province of X" (Bulcock et al., 1990, p. 44). The interaction with professors dimension showed very little difference in feelings of the students from either university. Less than 50 percent of the students from MUN believed that their professors took a personal interest in them or helped them do their best.

The MUN students indicated that their efforts and abilities were not appreciated. Bulcock et al., (1990) identified feelings of alienation in the Faculty of Education, indicating that the faculty may be too impersonal. Also, they believed it may indicate that opportunities for student-professor interaction are too few. Even though the results of the MUN study show that the majority of students were 'happy', Bulcock et. al.(1990) were disturbed to discover that approximately 40 percent of the respondents were not satisfied. Thus, in this study the two dimensions with significant findings were interaction with professors and status.

Bulcock et al.(1990) determined that the overall satisfaction level of students was in the 45 to 65 percentile range. They concluded that if only 39 percent of the students felt important and 40 percent felt proud to be students in the faculty that this was an indication of low self-esteem. They considered this an important issue requiring attention.

Other Related Studies

A few post-secondary educational institutions have studied the experiences of students in the Freshman year. One such study was conducted at the University of Guelph, in Ontario. The student experience was assessed by the completion of a daily diary, bi-monthly unstructured interviews with a student services 'buddy' and the completion of four standardized instruments. In general, the instruments covered areas dealing with students' attitudes and values, their social development, the dynamics of their family origin, and their perceived level of stress.

This study covered a wide range of student experiences. The data revealed that one-third of the freshman adjusted easily to university, 40 percent took longer to adjust and found the process more difficult, and the remaining one quarter (27%) did not adjust until the end of the semester, finding the experience painful (Benjamin, 1990). The study also indicated that shifts in self-esteem were associated with the adjustment process, experience of academic work, and achievement.

The study covered the dimension related to peer relationships. The student subjects "... indicated that such relations ... were a central feature of classroom life..." (Benjamin, 1990, p. 59). Benjamin (1990) concluded that students "... tended to perceive course satisfaction, classroom comfort, ..., through the lens of class - based peer relations" (p. 61).

The study also covered student - faculty interaction. The responses indicated that the influence of faculty on students are dependent upon a number of variables such as frequency, duration, and the quality of faculty - student contact. The data from this study indicated that the degree of satisfaction was low for all three variables. "Positive student - faculty contact was invariably more likely - although still not assured - in small rather than large settings" (Benjamin, 1990, p. 70).

This study identified the complexity of the daily experiences of freshman students. Two areas studied were student interaction and student-faculty interaction. These factors were found to influence a student's quality of life. Benjamin (1990) concluded from the findings that the

environment should fit the student, not the student fit the environment. Social relationships with significant others were identified as salient to the freshman experience. Benjamin (1990) explains that the student experience is complex and interventions to enhance this experience "must match in complexity the phenomenon they seek to alter" (p. 239).

In conclusion, the number of studies conducted to evaluate the quality of life of post-secondary education have been limited. The studies which have been conducted on quality of life in post-secondary education have revealed valuable insights. Follow-up studies, as in the case of the University of Manitoba, have contributed to evaluating whether positive change has taken place.

CHAPTER THREE

Methodology

This chapter describes the methodology employed in the study. Described below are the: research design, sample selection, instrument development and validation, data collection and data analysis.

Overview

The study utilized descriptive methodology. The independent variables in the study were age, gender, first or second year status, cultural group, and grade point average. The dependent variables were global positive affective dimension, global negative affective dimension, interaction with students and interaction with instructors dimensions. In addition, analysis of variance and multiple regression tests were run to identify any relationships between independent and dependent variables.

Only the affective portion of the Roberts and Clifton questionnaire was used in this study. It was administered to first and second year Business Administration program students at a community college on two separate occasions.

The Sample

The subjects used in the study were students enrolled in the two year Business Administration Diploma program at a community college. There were 485 students enrolled in this program, 240 enrolled in first year and 245 enrolled in second year. This program was chosen based on the large sample size and an approximate even distribution of male and female students. The total population of first and second year students, available at the identified class sessions, was surveyed.

The first year students were surveyed as an entire group. These students assembled for an informational session on optional courses in the second year of the program. Surveys were distributed prior to the students arrival. The students

were read instructions (see Appendix B) and given approximately fifteen minutes to complete the survey and return it.

Second year Business Administration students were surveyed in the Management course, a compulsory course. This course is offered in six sections and has an enrollment of 235 second year students. All six sections were surveyed. The students were given the questionnaire as they arrived. The instructions were read to them immediately before the class started (see Appendix B). The students completed the survey after the class material was covered and their assignment for the class was handed in. In all classes, there was sufficient time to complete the survey. The author conducted the survey in all the above sessions.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire used in the study was developed and validated by Lance W. Roberts and Rodney A. Clifton. It was designed based upon the conceptualization that quality of student life in a university (or other post-secondary

institutions) comprises both the cognitive and the affective domains (Roberts & Clifton, 1991).

The instrument is designed to collect self-reported data, commonly used in the social sciences and quality of life research. Roberts and Clifton (1991) identified four advantages of using self - report measures:

1. self-report data provides useful information at a low cost
2. student's assessments of the quality of their lives is probably more reliable than measures using observations
3. data collected from a large sample and aggregating measures, such as quality of life, takes into account multiple perspectives as opposed to the observations of a single observer
4. Moos and David (1981, p.61) account "a phenomenological [self-report] approach provides important data that the objective observer, who counts cues or behaviors may miss..." (Roberts & Clifton, 1991, p.26).

The instrument was developed specifically for Faculty of Education students (Roberts and Clifton, 1992). The survey, as

a whole, measures cognitive and affective outcomes in the context of quality of life. The survey also measures the environment and learning that is provided by the institution.

For the purposes of this study, only that part of the survey dealing with the affective domain was used (see Appendix C). The cognitive portion of the survey is specifically designed for Faculty of Education students. Rewriting the questions to survey a different group may invalidate the questions (Clifton and Roberts, 1991). Clifton and Roberts (1992) feel that the affective domain questions are far superior to those of the cognitive domain for the following reasons:

1. The questions are applicable to other groups of students.
2. There is a significant number of questions for each dimension compared to the cognitive domain.
3. There is a greater percentage of the original items (78%) kept in the final survey as compared to the number that were kept in the original cognitive domain set (48%).
4. There is a greater degree of reliability coefficients for the affective scale items (Clifton and Roberts, 1992).

The reason for the discrepancy is that the affective scale was developed from established, validated quality of life scales that have been used in specific research in educational settings.

The questions in each dimension index on one single construct. This was established by subjecting the original set of questions to Piazza's technique for attitudinal scales. It was after this process that 78% of the items were kept. It is felt that all of the remaining questions reflect each specific dimension and are empirically sound (Roberts and Clifton, 1991).

CHAPTER FOUR

Findings

The quality of life questionnaire was administered to all first and second year students in the Business Administration program at a major community college. There were a total of 485 students registered in both years of the program. There were 345 completed questionnaires returned and data entered. This is a response rate of approximately 71 percent. One hundred and sixty-five or approximately 69 percent of students registered as first year students participated in the survey. The number of second year students registered who participated in the survey were 166 or approximately 69 percent. Four percent of the participants did not identify their year of registration in the program. Those students who did not volunteer to complete the questionnaire or those who did not attend the class sessions had no data collected on them.

Characteristics of Students

The questionnaire requested demographic and background information on the students. These characteristics were: gender, age, cultural group, G.P.A., year in program and full or part-time status. These questions are found in Part II of the questionnaire (See Appendix C).

Age

The mean age of the students surveyed is 23 years, with a median age of 21 years. A median split was employed to create two age categories approximately equal in size. Choosing age 22 gave two age categories: young (<22) and older (22+). There were 57.1 percent of students that fell in the young age group and 42.9 percent in the older age category. Table 1 presents descriptive statistics on age.

Table 1

Age

Average Age	Median	< 22 years %	22+ years %
23.142	21.0	57.1	42.9

The average age of students at the community college enrolled in programs other than continuing education for the 1994-95 academic year was 26.9 years. Two year diploma programs had a lower average age of 24.6 years in 1994-95 (Annual Academic Report, 1994-95). Thus, the average age of students surveyed in the Business Administration program fall within the average age of students enrolled in two year programs at the community college.

The average age of year 1 and year 2 students was determined. The average age for year 1 students is 21.4 years and for year 2 students it is 24.4 years. Table 1a presents the descriptive statistics for the average age of year 1 and year 2 students.

Table 1a

Ages in Year 1 and Year 2

	Year 1	Year 2
Average age	21.44	24.46

An independent t-test was performed to determine if there was a significant mean age difference between year 1 and year 2 students. The t value was 4.66 for 326 d.f., $p = 0.000$ ($p < .05$). Thus, there is a significant difference in the average age of Year 1 and Year 2 students.

Cultural Group

There were ten cultural group categories for the students to select from. The tenth category was designated as "Other". Table 2 presents descriptive statistics on the cultural background of the population. The largest groups are European at 61 percent, "Other" at 16.8 percent and Aboriginal at 7.3 percent. Seventeen participants did not respond to the cultural group question.Table 2 presents the descriptive statistics on cultural status.

Table 2

Cultural Distribution

Cultural Group	Number of Respondents	Percent
European	200	61.0
Aboriginal	24	7.3
Metis	10	3.0
Inuit	1	.3
African	2	.6
Latin American	9	2.7
Asian	17	5.2
Caribbean	8	2.4
East Indian	2	.6
Other	55	16.8

Gender

There is almost an even distribution of male and females in this student sample. There are approximately 48 percent males and 50 percent females that responded to this question. Three respondents did not fill in this question. Table 3 presents the descriptive statistics on gender.

Table 3

Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percent
male	166	48.5
female	174	50.9
errors	2	.6
missing	3	

Year 1 and year 2 responses on gender were analyzed to determine the distribution of male and female students in each year. The data reveal an approximate even distribution of male and female students in year 1 and year 2 of the program. Table 3a presents the descriptive statistics on gender distribution.

Table 3a

Gender Distribution for Year 1 and Year 2

Gender	Year 1	Year 2
male	80	82
female	84	83
missing	2	3

Status in Program

Question five of Part II asked students to indicate if they were in the first or second year of the program and if they were full or part time status. Table 4 presents the descriptive statistics in this category. From the completed questionnaires, approximately 49 percent are first year students and 50 percent are second year students. Fourteen respondents did not answer this question. Only 44 percent of the respondents answered the full or part time status item. All of those who responded reported their status as full time.

Table 4

Year in Program

Year in Program	Frequency	Percent
Year 1	165	49.8
Year 2	166	50.2
Missing	14	

Grade Point Average (G.P.A)

The students were asked to choose their approximate G.P.A. at that point in the program. Table 5 presents descriptive statistics on this characteristic. Approximately 31 percent of the students have a G.P.A. of 2.5 (C+). This is followed by 24 percent with a G.P.A. of 3.0 (B) and 16 percent with a G.P.A. of 3.5 (B+). Five respondents did not answer this question.

Table 5

Grade Point Average

G.P.A./ Grade	Frequency	Percent
1.0 D	13	3.8
2.0 C	36	10.6
2.5 C+	107	31.5
3.0 B	82	24.1
3.5 B+	55	16.2
4.0 A	45	13.2
4.5 A+	2	.6

Perceptions of the Quality of Life in the

Business Administration Program

The Positive Dimension

The questionnaire used four dimensions to measure the quality of school life. The first two dimensions, positive and negative, measure well-being with respect to the community college on a global level. The other two dimensions measure feelings of well-being in reference to specific experiences with school. These two dimensions are interaction with students and interaction with instructors. Table 6 presents descriptive statistics for the positive dimension for all subjects. For the purpose of discussing the data, the responses were collapsed from four to two categories: disagree and agree.

Table 6

Positive Dimension

Business Administration at R.R.C.C. is a place where...	Percent Strongly Disagree	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
the things I learn are important to me.	.6	2.1	58.7	38.7
I really like to go each day	8.2	37.9	47.9	5.9
the work I do is good preparation for my future.	.6	6.2	55.9	37.4
I have learned to work hard	1.8	13.5	57.9	26.8
I find that learning is a lot of fun.	3.3	27.5	57.3	11.9
people look up to me.	4.2	42.0	48.0	5.7
I really get involved in my work.	2.1	22.7	59.9	15.3
I like learning	.6	7.9	64.8	26.7
I enjoy being.	2.4	15.7	61.9	19.9
I have acquired skills that will be of use to me.	0	4.4	45.6	50.0
the things I learn will help me in my life.	0	2.9	56.5	40.6
I am given the chance to do work that really interests me.	2.4	24.5	61.7	11.5
the things I am taught are worthwhile learning.	1.5	9.8	63.3	25.4

The positive dimension measures quality of life "-as-a-whole" feelings (Bradburn, 1969). It is designed to "capture a sense of how students feel about their experience in the institution" (Roberts & Clifton, 1991, p. 18). The responses for the thirteen statements reveal, in general, that the responses of the Business Administration program students are

positive. There is a high combined agree response of greater than 60 percent for eleven of the thirteen items.

Looking at the individual statements in Table 6 it is evident that the students value the information that they learn and feel that it plays an important role in their future profession. Thus, the majority of the students are strongly aware of the importance of the curriculum in the program.

Continuing to look at the individual statements in the positive dimension (Table 6.0), the statement " I really like to go each day" had a high combined disagree response of 46.1 percent. Comparing this response to the University of Manitoba (UOM) the combined disagree responses were 29.9 percent for the 1987 and 14.3 percent for 1992 (Clifton et al., 1992). The present study has a much higher negative response to this item. The study at Memorial University of Newfoundland's (MUN) had a 15.0 percent combined disagree response to the above statement (Bulcock et al., 1990).

The statement "I find that learning is a lot of fun" also has a high combined disagree response rate of 30.8 percent. The

UOM 1987 study showed a 17.5 percent combined disagree response and the 1992 study response was 6.1 percent (Clifton et al., 1992). The MUN study's combined disagree response rate to this item was 10.4 percent (Bulcock et al., 1990).

Additionally, the statement " people look up to me" had a high combined disagree response of 46.2 percent. This is greater than the 1987 (34.4%), 1992 (21%) UOM studies and the MUN study with a 38.6% combined disagree response.

The high disagree or negative response rate for the three items identified above indicates that there is a sizable number of students who responded negatively even though a majority of students responded positively to all thirteen items.

All four Quality of Life dimensions were analyzed for internal consistency using Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient measure. Internal consistency is evidence that the items probably measure much the same thing (Abramson, 1988). The possible values for this measurement is 0-1, with 0 indicating no internal consistency (Carmines and Zeller, 1979). There are varied opinions as to the acceptable alpha

reliability coefficients for research purposes. Smith and Glass (1987) argue that coefficients over 0.50 are acceptable, while others, such as Bohenstedt and Knoke (1982) and Abrahamson (1988) consider alphas of 0.70 or higher as satisfactory. Roberts and Clifton's (1991) 1987 study obtained a Cronbach alpha for the positive dimension of 0.87.

Most often Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient is used to determine the quality of new scales (Roberts & Clifton, 1992). In the present study this reliability measurement was performed to determine the internal reliability of the scale for this specific population. The author accepts that the 0.87 Cronbach alpha reading for the positive affective dimension in this study is within acceptable limits.

The Negative Dimension

The negative affective dimension deals with questions on feelings of depression, loneliness, of being upset, or feeling restless with respect to the community college. There are four statements which measure this dimension. A response of disagree

is a positive response for this dimension. Table 7 presents descriptive statistical information on this dimension.

Table 7

Negative Dimension

Business Administration at R.R.C.C. is a place where...	Percent Strongly Disagree	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
I feel depressed.	35.5	44.5	16.7	3.3
I feel restless.	9.7	42.2	38.4	9.7
I get upset.	15.2	42.5	33.1	9.1
I feel worried.	14.8	41.4	32.2	11.5

Eighty percent of the respondents do not feel depressed. This is a higher positive response to this item than the studies at the UOM and MUN. The 1987 UOM study reported a 53.3 percent combined disagree response and the 1992 study's combined disagree response was 70 percent. The disagree response rate for the MUN study was 62.5 percent.

The remaining three items in the negative dimension raise some concern. Items 2 through 4 average an agree response rate of approximately 45 percent. Thus, almost fifty percent of the

population feel restless, get upset and feel worried with respect to the community college. The community college study has a much higher average combined agree response rate than the UOM studies: 1987(21.8%), 1992 (19.8%) and the MUN study (19.8%). The Cronbach alpha for this dimension is 0.79 and is within acceptable limits.

The results for this dimension suggest that there is an influence in the college environment affecting the feelings of security of the students. Pascarella & Terenzini (1991) review work done on academic self-concept of college students. Their review indicates that "Student's academic self-concepts, for some at least, may even decline during the first year" (Pascarella & Terenzini, 1991, p. 172-173).

Stress may also play a role in the responses seen in this dimension. Abbey and Andrews, 1985 (as cited in Andrews, 1986) identify several contributors of stress which relate negatively to life quality . Two such examples of contributors to stress which may relate to the present study are lack of control over one's life and social support (Abbey & Andrews, 1985).

The Interaction with Students Dimension

The interaction with students dimension deals with a student's feelings of status which is mainly derived from interaction with other students. The types of student interactions, what others think of them, and the confidence that others have in them, play important roles in the student's well-being and achievement (Rutter, et al., 1979; Mitchell, 1967; Weber, 1971; Epstein & McPartland, 1976). Table 8 presents descriptive statistics on the student interaction dimension.

Table 8

Interaction with Students Dimension

Business Administration at R.R.C.C. is a place where...	Percent Strongly Disagree	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
I get on well with other students in my class.	1.2	15.2	56.0	27.7
Other students accept me as I am.	2.4	19.0	59.5	19.0
people think a lot of me.	1.8	32.6	58.0	7.6
mixing with other people helps me to understand myself.	.9	6.5	71.8	20.9
I find it easy to get to know other people.	.3	3.5	66.5	29.7

The response to the item "I get on well with other students in my class" resulted in a combined agree response of 83.7 percent. This is comparative to the UOM results: 1987 (90.1%) and 1992 (93.1%). The MUN combined response rate was 91.1 percent. For the item "other students accept me as I am", all three former studies are in the 78 percentile range. This is consistent with the findings of the present study.

There was a high combined disagree response of 34.4 percent to the item "people think a lot of me". The UOM studies and the MUN study combined disagree responses to this item were approximately 25 percent.

The remaining items in this dimension indicate a strong positive response indicating that the majority of students get along with others and have a high level of status and feelings of well-being in their relationships with others.

In Table 6, the item "people look up to me" and in Table 8 the item "people think a lot of me", both had a high combined disagree response rate of 46.2 and 34.4 percent respectively. A Pearson correlation statistical analysis was performed to

determine if there was significant correlation between those students whose response was disagree or strongly disagree to the items identified above. The correlation value is 0.5849 with $p = 0.000$ ($p < 0.05$). This indicates that the students who responded negatively (disagree) to the item in the positive dimension (Table 6) also responded negatively (disagree) to the item in the interaction with student dimension (Table 8). These results may indicate low self-esteem.

Williams and Batten (1981) explain that students have their own expectations of school in terms of its role in their personal fulfillment. It is the type of experience that influences their "self-worth, intimacy, adequacy, and security" (Williams & Batten, 1981, p. 10).

Stones (1992) notes that "for professional socialization to occur, more than organizational conditions need to be met; the needs of the students being socialized must also be considered" (in Clifton et al., 1994, p.181). Bredemeier and Bredemeier (1978) explain that self-respect is "...derived from interaction with other people..." (in Clifton et al., 1994, p.181). Thus, Clifton et al. (1994) believe that educational

institutions "need to be concerned with enhancing the self-respect of student teachers" (p.189).

As Spady and Mitchell (1979) state: " ... personal expectations further constrain and shape the school as an organization, pressuring it to serve as a vehicle for personal fulfillment as well as societal achievement" (p. 6). The Cronbach alpha for this dimension was 0.64 and is marginal in terms of acceptable limits.

The MUN study (Bulcock et al., 1990) had high disagree response rates to the same two statements. They concluded: "This implies that many students are alienated; that university life in Faculties of Education is too impersonal; that there are too few opportinites for professors and students to interact" (p. 44).

The Interaction with Instructor Dimension

This dimension deals with "empirical indicators of student-teacher interaction" (Clifton et al., 1992, p.16). The interaction of student and teacher is valued by the student if

the interaction is fair and just. Table 9 presents the descriptive statistics on this dimension.

Table 9

Interaction with Instructor Dimension

Business Administration at R.R.C.C. is a place where...	Percent Strongly Disagree	Percent Disagree	Percent Agree	Percent Strongly Agree
Instructors treat me fairly.	3.5	7.9	74.4	14.1
Instructors give me the marks I deserve.	1.5	12.7	72.9	13.0
I achieve a satisfactory standard in my work.	.6	12.1	69.4	17.9
People care about what I think.	2.9	21.2	67.8	8.0
Instructors take a personal interest in helping me with my work.	6.5	35.8	47.9	9.8
I am treated with respect.	1.5	12.0	75.1	11.4
Instructors help me to do my best.	3.9	31.2	58.2	6.8
Instructors are fair and just.	2.7	18.4	70.3	8.6
Instructors listen to what I say.	4.4	17.2	66.3	12.1

There are two items in this dimension in which over one-third of those surveyed responded negatively or disagreed to the statement. The item "instructors take a personal interest in helping me with my work" had 42.3 percent combined disagree response. This response rate is higher than the combined disagree response rates for the UOM studies and the MUN study.

This constitutes over a third of the student population in the program and should be investigated further.

The item "instructors help me to do my best" had a 35.1 percent combined disagree response. Again, this combined response rate is considerably higher than the UOM and MUN studies. The MUN study had a 46 percent satisfaction rate to "personal interest in helping me in my work". The MUN combined disagree responses to all items in this dimension ranged from no higher than 21 percent to as low as 10 percent. In spite of the low percentage results, Bulcock et al. (1990) found the results of their study disturbing as "2 out of 5 students were not satisfied" (p.45).

The last two statements address fairness and just treatment by instructors and the willingness of instructors to listen to what students say. More than 20 percent of the students had a combined disagree response to these two statements. Thus, there appears to be a need in this programs for instructors to provide social support and to take a personal interest in their students which may foster the students' self-respect.

The high negative results identified in the present dimension are disturbing and indicate that the area of student - instructor interaction should be looked at more closely. The Cronbach alpha for this dimension is 0.82 and is well within acceptable limits.

Analysis of Variance (ANOVA)

In order to compare each dimension with the characteristic categories of age, gender, cultural background and year in program, an analysis of variance test (ANOVA) was performed on all four dimensions. The results of the ANOVA compared the mean score for each dimension. The mean score for each dimension was obtained by combining the scores for each question, which were ranked from 1-4, and then dividing the sum by the number of questions in the dimension.

The positive affective dimension did not show any two, three, or four-way interaction. The ANOVA revealed that older students had a significantly higher combined positive (agree)

response to the positive dimension. Table 10 presents the statistical data for the ANOVA for this dimension.

Table 10

ANOVA Table - Positive Dimension

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance of F
agecat	1	11.618	.001 *
gender	1	.996	.319
culture	1	.092	.762
year	1	1.912	.168

* = significance value < .05

The literature on age differences and quality of college life reveals inconsistent findings (Okun et al., 1986). The study conducted by Okun et al., 1986, sets out to determine if "college satisfaction was determined by age, grade level, GPA, and perceived benefits of education" (p. 409). Their study reported that age was significantly correlated ($r=22$, $p < .05$) with perceived quality of college life. The results of the present study also support this hypothesis. Okun et al. (1986) state that it appears that older students have "higher...

college education satisfaction than younger adults because they are more appreciative of the opportunity to enact the college student... roles" (p. 413). In addition, the literature (Okun et al., 1986; Aitken, 1982) indicates that older students value quality of education more than younger students. This may explain the higher positive response by the older age category students in this and other dimensions.

The difference in age and quality of life may have significant implications for post-secondary institutions. Enrollment of older students is increasing in post-secondary institutions. At the community college in this study for the academic year of 1994-95 the average age of students registered in one year or less certificate programs was 29.2 years old. Because certificate programs have higher enrollments than two year diploma courses, the needs of older students play an important role in the delivery of services by the college. "Perceptions of institutional quality" (Okun et al., 1986) plays a major role in their choice of educational institution. In addition, Okun et al. (1986) emphasize that improving the quality of life of students is important to increasing student retention.

Sturz (1971) studied two age categories of female college students: category 1 (25+) and category 2 (18-21) years of age. Sturz hypothesized that the older age category would generally be more satisfied with college. The ANOVA for this hypothesis was significant to $p < .01$ level. Hypothesis 3 of the Sturz study stated that adult students (25+) would be more satisfied with the quality of education and the hypothesis was supported by a $p < .01$ significance level.

Thus, it would appear that age impacts on quality of student life in several dimensions; global and specific. Educational organizations may need to explore the needs of younger students without sacrificing those being met for older students.

The ANOVA of the negative dimension revealed a significantly higher combined negative response by second year students to the four items in this dimension. A negative response for this dimension is strongly agree or agree. Table 11 presents the statistical data for this dimension.

Table 11

Anova Table - Negative Dimension

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance of F
Significance			
agecat	1	.043	.835
gender	1	.242	.623
white	1	2.649	.105
year	1	9.052	.003 *

* = significance value < .05

Again, these data may reflect the age difference between first and second year students. Older students may be less self-confident or have external influences playing a role in their increased feelings of restlessness and concern. The study by Hofmann et al.(1994) revealed that adult learners are unique in their needs, citing "multiple role demands with related issues of time and stress", as examples (Hofmann, 1994, p. 6). Also, Hofmann's (1994) study found students' needs to be: support and development of basic skills, advisement, library resources and hours of operation, and orientation programs.

Another explanation of the negative response may be that second year students are not achieving in the program as they had expected. Campbell et al. (1976) argue "that one's

subjective satisfaction with any given aspect of life reflects the gap between one's *aspiration level* and one's *perceived situation*;..." (as cited in Andrews, 1986, p. 3).

The ANOVA for the dimension of interaction with instructor indicates that age and year in program influenced the mean responses. The older age category (22+) had a higher positive (combined agree) response to the items in this dimension than the younger age category (<22). The analysis also indicated that first year students had a higher positive score than second year students for this dimension. There were no two, three, or four way interactions identified. Table 12 presents the ANOVA statistical data for this dimension.

Table 12

Anova Table - Interaction with Instructor Dimension

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance of F
Age Categories	1	4.008	.046 *
Gender	1	.214	.644
Cultural	1	1.684	.195
Year	1	5.438	.020 *

* = significance level < .05

Again, age may play a role in quality of life within this specific dimension. It is difficult to explain why first year students with a lower mean age than second year students responded more positively in this dimension.

The ANOVA for the interaction with student dimension identified a two - way interaction of culture and year in the program. First year , non-European students recorded a higher positive (combined agree) response to the items in this dimension than second year non-European students. Second year, European students responded with a higher positive (combined agree) response compared to first year European students for this dimension. Table 13 presents the statistical data for the two-way interaction in this dimension.

Table 13

Anova Table - Interaction with Student Dimension

Source of Variation	Degrees of Freedom	F Value	Significance of F
agecat X gender	1	.004	.948
agecat X cultural	1	.022	.883
agecat X year	1	2.892	.090
gender X cultural	1	.056	.812
gender X year	1	.114	.736
cultural X year	1	4.908	.028 *

X = interaction between
* = significance < .05

The data support the findings of Okun et al. (1986) that younger students are more likely than older students to value social relationships . The second year students are significantly older than first year students (see Table 1a). Therefore, age may be a factor in this dimension and account for the ANOVA results. Okun et al., 1986 have offered several explanations for this response:

1. younger and older students vary in the needs that they expect the institution to meet, and
2. younger students have greater need for various campus programs.

The wide range of cultural groups to select from makes it difficult to determine the relationship between culture and student interaction. Collapsing the cultural groups into two groups for data analysis further adds to the difficulty of explaining this result. Anderson (1982) may offer some explanation: "The values and belief systems of various groups within a school have shown a definite relationship with climate and student outcomes. Although we still know little about how they interact with other variables sic." (Anderson, 1982, p.402).

Grade point average and the four sources of variation were subjected to ANOVA analysis. The data reveal a higher GPA attainment for older, non-European students. In addition, a two-way interaction was identified between gender and cultural background. The ANOVA reveals that female, non-European students have the highest GPA scores. Table 14 presents the statistical data for both categories.

Table 14

Anova Table - GPA

Main Effects	df	F	Significance of F
agecat	1	10.253	.002 *
gender	1	.608	.436
cultural	1	11.356	.001 *
year	1	.002	.961
2-Way Interaction			
agecat X gender	1	2.574	.110
agecat X cultural	1	.001	.976
agecat X year	1	.068	.795
gender X cultural	1	10.000	.002 *
gender X year	1	.869	.352
cultural X year	1	2.590	.109

X = interaction between
* = significance level < .05

Multiple Regression

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine the relative contribution of the independent variables to GPA. The independent variables selected are the four dimensions and age. The analysis revealed that the instructor dimension and age are contributing factors to GPA. The statistics reveal that the instructor dimension contributes approximately 10 percent

(r^2 = 0.1097) with age contributing only 2 percent (r^2 = 0.0258). Table 15 presents the multiple regression statistical data.

Table 15

Multiple Regression - GPA

Dependent Variable: GPA	t-value	Probability Level
Independent Variables		
Instructor	4.18	0.0000 *
Student	0.47	0.6361
Positive	0.78	0.4351
Negative	0.53	0.5985
Age	2.31	o.0208 *

* = significance level < .05

A review by Anderson (1982) of the work of several researchers (Brookover et al., 1979; Brookover and Lezotte, 1979; Phi Delta Kappa study, 1982) reveals that teachers committed to improve students academic performance is a significant variable" in quality of life (p. 402). The results of the multiple regression support Anderson's (1982) review.

An analysis of variance was performed to support the above relationship. The ANOVA reveals that approximately 12 percent of GPA attainment may be contributed by age and instructor dimension characteristics (adjusted $r^2 = 0.1185$). Table 16 presents the statistical data.

Table 16

Analysis of Variance: Dependent Variable: GPA

Source	df	Sum of Squares	Mean Square	F-Ratio	Probability Level
Constant	1	4256.938	4296.938		
Model	5	65.79735	13.15947	8.80	0.000 *
Error	285	426.2545	1.495665		
Total	290	492.0619	1.696765		

Root Mean Square Error	1.222974
Mean of Dependent Variable	3.824742
Coefficient of Variation	.3197533
R squared	0.1337
Adjusted R Squared	0.1185

Although the regression identifies some of the factors that play a role in GPA attainment, approximately eighty-two percent remains unexplained.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the quality of life of students enrolled in a program at a community college. It employed a validated questionnaire that focused on the affective domain in global and specific dimensions of student life.

The positive dimension revealed that generally the students in the Business Administration program at the community college are satisfied with their quality of school life. They are enthusiastic and like learning. They strongly believe that what they are learning will play an important role in their future careers. Thirty to forty percent of the students did not enjoy going to the college each day, did not find learning fun, and the college did not improve their social status.

The negative dimension indicated that although the majority of students were not depressed; 45 percent were upset, worried and felt restless.

There was a strong positive response in the interaction with student dimension. One-third of the population did not feel that people admired or even liked them, indicating low self-esteem.

Academic performance was found to be influenced by the quality of interaction with the instructors. Two areas of this dimension which were low in positive response are: 1) instructors taking a personal interest in helping students with their work and 2) assisting students in their work.

The age of the student proved to be an influencing factor (directly or indirectly) in many of the dimensions. Older students (22+) responded more positively in the positive and instructor dimensions and they were more negative in the negative dimension than younger first year students. The older students had higher GPA's with age contributing 2 percent to this dependent variable.

Year in program and culture gave a two-way interaction in the student dimension. Gender and culture appear to influence

GPA with female, non-European students attaining the highest GPA.

Finally, a multiple regression analysis revealed that for this group of respondents the instructor dimension and age contributed approximately 12 percent to the student's GPA attainment.

Thus, the study brought to light students' perceptions of their quality of school life in terms of the four affective dimensions. Analysis showed that age, year in program, culture and gender influence how students perceive their quality of life. The study has also identified areas where students have less than optimum feelings in regard to certain aspects of their life in the program at this community college.

Recommendations

The results of this study can be used as valuable information in a number of ways by the college. For example, the Business Administration program can use the data to review policy and make changes. The same instrument and this study can be used in the future to re-evaluate the quality of life of students in the program.

This instrument may be used to determine quality of life in other programs in the college. Community colleges offer a wide range of programs to a diverse student population. It may be valuable to discern the quality of student life in a number of these programs throughout the college.

The dimension interaction with instructors revealed two statements which had a high disagree response. The remaining statements had combined disagree responses of approximately twenty percent. This data indicates other areas of concern in this dimension which should also receive attention.

In addition, it may be helpful to study the quality of student life in the cognitive and the affective domain. The original instrument developed by Roberts and Clifton (1991) has been revised so that the cognitive portion of the instrument is thought to be applicable to any program / faculty in a post-secondary institution. Thus, this instrument "may be useful in evaluation research..." (Roberts & Clifton, 1992, p. 189).

In summary, the study has presented descriptive statistics of the quality of life of students enrolled in a two year program at a community college. Much of the data are supported by similar studies. The instrument limits the ability of the author in determining the reasons for the results; it is only possible to form broad based hypotheses. Thus, it is difficult to make specific conclusions in regard to influences on the quality of student life; this is clearly explained by Anderson (1982):

"A fundamental problem [with explaining the perceptions of students] is the severe confounding of student background with school variables, ..., in which differences in outcome cannot

be clearly assigned to the nature of the institute ..., or to the nature of the students as individuals" (p. 371).

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Appendix A

Items measuring the four dimensions of quality of life:

Positive affect dimension

-The things I learn are important to me.
-People look up to me.
-I really get involved in my work.
-I like learning.
-I enjoy being.
-I have acquired skills that will be of use to me.
-The things I learn will help me in my life.
-I am given a chance to do work that really interests me.
-The things I am taught are worthwhile learning.
-I really like to go each day.
-The work I do is good preparation for my future.
-I have learned to work hard.
-I find that learning is a lot of fun.

Negative affect dimension

-I feel depressed.
-I feel restless.
-I get upset.
-I feel worried.

Interaction with student dimension

-I find it easy to get to know other people.
-Mixing with other people helps me to understand myself.
-People think a lot of me.
-Other students accept me as I am.
-I get on well with the other students in my class.

Interaction with Instructors dimension

-Instructors treat me fairly.
-Instructors give me the marks I deserve.
-I achieve a satisfactory standard in my work.
-People care about what I think.
-Instructors take a personal interest in helping me with my work.
-I am treated with respect.
-Instructors help me to do my best.
-Instructors are fair and just.
-Instructors listen to what I say.

Appendix B

Directions to be read to students before they fill out the survey.

My name is Elizabeth Omeniuk and I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education, University of Manitoba. I am conducting a study of the quality of life of students enrolled in the Business Administration program at Red River Community College. This study will meet the thesis requirements for a Masters in Education degree.
You should have picked up an envelope with a questionnaire in it, as you came in. Those who have not picked up a questionnaire, please do so at this time. I will continue with the instructions in a few minutes, once everyone has a questionnaire.
The questionnaire should take approximately 20 minutes to complete.
Please read the cover letter which explains the purpose of this study.
You are under no obligation to fill out this questionnaire. The information obtained from the questionnaires are strictly confidential. No individual will be identified.

Please check only **one** response box.
If you do not wish to fill out the questionnaire I would appreciate if you could fill out Part III. Part III asks your age, gender, year in the program and reason for not filling out the questionnaire. Again, this is strictly voluntary.
Please place all questionnaires, completed or not completed, into the envelope provided and seal the envelope. Deposit the envelope into the box marked "Quality of Life", which is located at the exit.
I will collect the envelopes once they are handed in.

Thank you for your time and comments. They will provide me with valuable information on the quality of life at Red River Community College.

Elizabeth Omeniuk

Appendix C

Questionnaire

April 1996

Dear Business Administration Student:

I am a graduate student in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. I am conducting a study of the quality of life of students in the Business Administration program who are attending Red River Community College. Your help in this study is greatly appreciated. The study will meet the thesis requirements for a Masters in Education degree.
The purpose of the study is to:
* investigate the quality of life of students;
and
* to examine if there are any relationships between quality of life and age, grade point average, gender and cultural background.

You are invited to participate in the study on a voluntary basis by answering a questionnaire that takes approximately 20 minutes to complete. All the information obtained is **strictly confidential** and no individual will be identified. **You are under no obligation to answer the questions**. If you do not wish to answer the questionnaire, I would appreciate if you could indicate your reason in the space provided in Part III. **This response is also strictly voluntary.**

If you have any questions regarding this study, please contact me at 632-2495 or my advisor , Dr. Dexter Harvey at 474-9223. If you wish a copy of the results of this study, copies of the executive summary will be made available for pick up at the Dean of Business and Applied Arts Division , Rm D101. Notification will be posted in *The Projector* and the Student's Association notice board when the results are available.

Thank you

Elizabeth Omeniuk R.T., BSc.

Quality of Life: Business Administration program at Red River Community College

This questionnaire is about your life in, and your attitudes towards the Business Administration program at Red River Community College. There is no right or wrong answers - I am just trying to find out how students feel about their experience at Red River Community College. I am interested in your honest opinion.

Each item below starts with the phrase " The Business Administration program at **Red River Community College is a place where ...". Please respond to each statement by checking one of the response categories that best represents your feelings. Check one box for each statement.**

Business Administration at Red River Community College is a place where...	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Disagree
...the things I learn are important to me.	1	2	3	4
...people look up to me	1	2	3	4
...instructors treat me fairly.	1	2	3	4
...I feel depressed.	1	2	3	4
...I find it easy to get to know other people.				
...I really get involved with my work	1	2	3	4
...I like learning	1	2	3	4
...I enjoy being	1	2	3	4
...I feel restless	1	2	3	4
...Instructors give me the marks I deserve	1	2	3	4
...I have acquired skills that may be of use to me	1	2	3	4
...I achieve a satisfactory standard in my work	1	2	3	4
...people care about what I think	1	2	3	4
...instructors take a personal interest in helping me with my work	1	2	3	4
...I am treated with respect	1	2	3	4
...mixing with other people helps me to understand myself	1	2	3	4
...the things I learn will help me in my life	1	2	3	4
...people think a lot of me	1	2	3	4
...instructors help me to do my best	1	2	3	4
...I get upset	1	2	3	4
...I am given the chance to do work that really interests me	1	2	3	4
...the things I am taught are worthwhile learning	1	2	3	4
...instructors are fair and just	1	2	3	4
...I really like to go each day	1	2	3	4
...I feel worried	1	2	3	4
...the work I do is good preparation for my future	1	2	3	4
...other students accept me as I am	1	2	3	4
...I have learned to work hard	1	2	3	4
...I get on well with other students in my class	1	2	3	4
...I find that learning is a lot of fun	1	2	3	4
...instructors listen to what I say	1	2	3	4

This questionnaire was adapted from the original questionnaire developed by Lance W. Roberts and Rodney A. Clifton, University of Manitoba. The researcher wishes to thank the authors for permission to use parts of their questionnaire.

PART II

I would like to find out some factual information about you. Your answers to all these questions are confidential. I need this information in order to make statistical comparisons between students.

1.What gender are you? Male ☐ Female ☐

2.How old are you? _____

3.To which cultural group do you belong? Please check the one that best describes you.

☐ European	☐ Asian	☐ Caribbean
☐ Aboriginal	☐ African	☐ Inuit
☐ Latin American	☐ Métis	☐ East Indian

☐ Other (specify) _____

4.What is your approximate grade point average? **Check one box.**

☐ 4.0-4.5	☐ 2.5-2.9	☐ 1.0-1.4
☐ 3.5-3.9	☐ 2.0-2.4	☐ 0.0-0.9
☐ 3.0-3.4	☐ 1.5-1.9	

5.Please indicate your status in the Business Administration program.

☐ 1st year ☐ 2nd year ☐ full time ☐ part time

Thank you very much for taking the time and effort to respond to the questionnaire.

Please place the completed questionnaire in the envelope and seal it. Place the envelope in the box as you leave the room.

PART III

This section is for those who do not wish to answer the questionnaire. Please answer the following questions if you so desire.

Age _____ Female ____ Male _____

Year in program : 1st _____ 2nd _____

Reason for not completing questionnaire:

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

Thank you for completing this section. Please place the questionnaire in the envelope and seal it. Please place the envelope in the box as you leave the room.