Family Support Factors Associated With the Self-Esteem of Mature Women Enrolled in Selected Louisiana Colleges and Universities.

Pamela Moore Lafont

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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FAMILY SUPPORT FACTORS ASSOCIATED WITH 
THE SELF-ESTEEM 
OF MATURE WOMEN ENROLLED 
IN SELECTED LOUISIANA COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES

A Dissertation
Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the 
Louisiana State University and 
Agricultural and Mechanical College 
in partial fulfillment of the 
requirements for the degree of 
Doctor of Education
in
The Department of Extension and International Education

by
Pamela Moore Lafont
B.S., Nicholls State University, 1978
M.Ed., Nicholls State University, 1980
August, 1986
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine factors of family support associated with the self-esteem of women over the age of 35 who were enrolled in selected Louisiana colleges and universities. This research was part of a larger project "Women Returning to School: Self-Esteem and Family Factors" which was conducted through the Agricultural Experiment Station at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge.

The sample consisted of 500 randomly selected women students born in or before 1946 who were enrolled in four Louisiana universities and colleges located in the southeast part of the state (excluding law, medical, and dental schools, and theological seminaries). The data from 211 (42.2%) usable responses were described and analyzed using frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, chi-square, and multiple regression analysis.

As determined by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), the majority of mature women respondents in this study had high self-esteem levels. This
conclusion was based on the finding that 71% of the respondents had high self-esteem (0-1 scores).

Four hypotheses were investigated using multiple regression analysis with three having statistically significant explanatory factors of the variance in self-esteem. Relative to hypothesis one, assistance with outdoor activities was found to be a significant factor ($F=5.67, p<.05$) when regressed on the dependent variable self-esteem. Concerning hypothesis three, self-confidence was found to be a significant factor ($F=27.01, p<.05$). Available alternatives was found to be a significant factor ($F=6.64, p<.05$) in relation to hypothesis four.

In reference to the family's reaction to college entry, the two variables of self-esteem of the respondents and the children's reaction to the respondent's college entry were examined. The calculated chi-square was significant ($x^2=6.15, p<.05$) which indicated that the two variables were not independent. Those respondents that had support from their children tended to have high self-esteem and those that had no support from their children tended to have low self-esteem.
Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter includes the introduction, statement of the problem, purpose of the study, basic assumptions, objectives, research hypotheses, definition of terms, and the limitations of the study.

A new kind of student appearing on college and university campuses in increasing numbers across the nation has been identified by Karelius-Schumacher (1977). This student is older than the traditional college student, female, married, usually between thirty and forty-five years old, a mother, and a homemaker. Today, this female is a student taken seriously by the college administration, faculty, and other students. This particular group of women in search of economic skills or a meaningful lifestyle represents a significant population in the college community. Those women who interrupted their education, either following high school or at some point during college, for a period of a few years or more have been defined as reentry women. The majority range in age from 25 to 50, but as a group vary widely in marital status, ethnicity, social class and
work experience (Project on the Status and Education of Women, 1980).

Recent research on women returning to school has focused on their problems and attendant needs. Role conflicts, study skills, time management, self-confidence, and various other issues were cited by returning women students as problems or concerns (Karelius-Schumacher, 1977; Lance, Lourie and Mayo, 1979; Smallwood, 1980). Added to these difficulties are fears of not being able to relate to younger students and new stresses in relationships with family and friends (Rawlins, 1979; Roach, 1976).

Reentry women understandably face some doubt, apprehension, and fear about going to college at an age that differs from the traditional college-age student. Many studies relate these insecurities and tell how some colleges have sought to alleviate them by sanctioning the formation of support groups (Brandenburg, 1974; Manis and Mochizuki, 1972; Waters, 1971). Berry (1972) and Rice (1979) report that studies on the self-esteem of women returning to school began to appear in the literature in the 1960's. In 1979, Rice stated that most studies of adult women going back to school indicated an increase in level of self-esteem upon return.
STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

A dramatic shift in the demographic profile of college students has transpired within the past decade. Educational institutions have experienced an influx of female students returning to school after an absence of five years or more.

Motivating factors that may be attributed to the mature women's college reentry are the feminist movement, self achievement needs, economic or occupational motivation, or a combination of these factors. To assess this phenomenon, a group of 107 adult women who had returned to college was studied to determine reasons why women went back to college and to explore some of the problems they encountered (Folland, et. al., 1977). The sample was comprised of women from varied backgrounds who expressed diverse reasons for returning to college. The majority stated their decision revolved around a need for personal stimulation or an alteration in their daily routines. Some stated their decision was derived from a need they labeled self-preservation.

Regardless of the reasons, there is clear evidence that mature women are entering college. In 1972, 418,000 females 35 years and over enrolled in college. That number increased 67.5 percent in 1976, when figures
indicated an enrollment of 700,000 females 35 years and over. In comparison, a 34.0 percent increase was exemplified by their male counterparts (Digest of Educational Statistics, 1979).

College reentry women who are working or who expect to work are cognizant that academic training is associated with well paid jobs. Education serves as a vehicle for admission into the paid work force by contributing to economic independence through the development of job skills. A relatively large proportion of mature women appear to enroll in college to expand their knowledge of career possibilities or to take refresher courses after being out of the labor force while rearing children (Young, 1979).

Several factors can be attributed to the large increase of women entering the work force. Some of these factors are: necessity caused by the rising inflation rate; longer lifespans; few children; modern conveniences; and new life styles which incorporate family rearing and paid employment.

Realistically, even with women wanting to enter the work force, the job market is not that receptive to the present unemployed population. With more than 11 million Americans unemployed, the job market is a very selective entity. Tuhy (1983) states, "if you are 40, female and the freshest experience you can offer is a career as a
wife, mother and head of the PTA, the prospects for earning a paycheck may seem nearly impossible (p. 4)."

Traditional housewives have found that they have no definite standards that can be checked to measure their success in this role. Building feelings of competence in any area may be difficult for housewives (Sales, et. al., 1978) since there are no specific job specifications nor raises for good performances or firing for poor performance (Lapata, 1972). O'Connell (1977) reports that women who return to school feel less satisfaction with their traditional housewife role than women who remain in this role.

Maccoby and Jacklin (1974) concluded that self-confidence, defined in terms of both performance expectancies and self-evaluations of abilities and completed performances, is lower among women than among men. Furthermore, college women are less likely to expect to succeed and to judge their own performance favorably.

Given that low self-esteem is likely to pose a significant barrier to women's achievement, it is important that research assess the nature and extent of this phenomenon. In studying the nontraditional woman student, the researcher was interested in determining if family support affected the self-esteem of mature women enrolled in Louisiana colleges and universities.
PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine factors of family support associated with the self-esteem of women over the age of 35 who were enrolled in selected Louisiana colleges and universities.

BASIC ASSUMPTIONS

In this investigation, the following basic assumptions were made:

1. Women 35 years of age and older are beyond the traditional age for college students.

2. The responses of the mature women will reflect current information in relationship to individual educational experiences and how these experiences have made an impact on their personal and family lifestyles.

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify demographic and academic characteristics of mature women returning to college.

2. To determine if family support in household maintenance activities, verbal cues from family members, and spouse and children's reactions are associated with the measurement of self-esteem.
3. To determine if college interference factors are associated with the measurement of self-esteem.

4. To determine if perceived influence of college enrollment on the individual is associated with the measurement of self-esteem.

5. To identify concerns which have arisen since college entry of mature women.

6. To identify the reasons given by mature women for returning to college.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

For the purpose of this study, the following hypotheses were tested:

Hypothesis 1

Household maintenance assistance factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana (measured by Question 8 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale).

Hypothesis 2

Verbal support sources received from the family will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana (measured by Question 10 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale).
Hypothesis 3

Selected interference factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana (measured by Question 9 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale).

Hypothesis 4

Selected influences of college enrollment will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana (measured by Question 11 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale).

DEFINITION OF TERMS

For the purpose of this study, the following terminology was used:

Family Support: functional support in the area of household maintenance assistance and family verbal support given to the wife/mother in her role as student.

Family Verbal Support: the actual voiced admiration of the wife/mother in her role as student by the family members (Rabe, 1983).

Household Maintenance Assistance: the family member's actual, physical help in the domestic activities required for the smooth running of the household (Rabe, 1983). For this study, tasks were divided into four
categories: (1) meal activities - prepares meals, washes dishes, sets table, cleans table; (2) indoor activities - vacuums, cleans floors, washes clothes, daily straightening, makes beds, cleans bathroom; (3) outdoor activities - takes out garbage, yard upkeep, car maintenance, feeds pets; and (4) other activities - transports children, helps children with homework, grocery shops, cares for ill, pays bills, balances checkbook.

**Mature Female Student:** a woman who is 35 years or older and is currently in college (Hiestand, 1971, p.11).

**Nontraditional Student:** unlike the traditional student, attends college at a later period in life. Astin (1976), Berkove (1979), and Brandenburg (1974) referred to nontraditional college age students as those 35 years and older. Current Population Reports show a category for students 35 years of age and older and refer to them as nontraditional college age students.

**Self-esteem:** a positive or negative attitude toward a particular object, namely, the self (Rosenberg, 1965). Rosenberg feels a person with high self-esteem respects himself but does not think he is better than others. A person with low self-esteem does not respect himself and desires to be different.

**Traditional Student:** Educational Facilities Laboratories (1978, p. 12) describes a traditional
college student as one who is in the 18-24 year age range.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The following limitations are acknowledged by the researcher:

1. The scope of this study was limited to a sample of Louisiana colleges and universities which excluded law, medical and dental schools, and theological seminaries. All universities and colleges used were from the Southeastern section of the state, and three of the four were located in urban centers. Therefore, the results of the study would be limited in generalizability to southeastern Louisiana.

2. The study did not assess self-esteem levels prior to college entry.

3. The question on household maintenance assistance was not differentiated in the analysis as to whether the aid was received from family members or employed help.
Chapter II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature is organized in six sections: (a) mature women's college reentry; (b) characteristics of the mature woman student; (c) college response to the nontraditional student; (d) women's achievement and career motivation studies; (e) family support; and (f) self-esteem of the mature woman student.

MATURE WOMEN'S COLLEGE REENTRY

The time between the ages of 35 and 40 is gaining increasing attention as a critical period for women (Brandenburg, 1974). This period is a time of renewed identity crisis and an important period for career exploration (Bart, 1972; Manis and Mochizuki, 1972). Today's adult women are part of a new generation; they grew up expecting that home and family would be a satisfying lifetime goal only to find that somewhere along the way, the rules were changed (Folland, Pickett, and Hoeflin, 1977; Stephenson, 1980). These women have come to the realization that there can be an
additional stage in their life plans. These are the women who are now joining the labor force or entering the college classroom (Durcholz and O'Connor, 1975; Zeltner, 1975).

Older women are returning to school in increasing numbers as indicated by recent college enrollment data (Traupmann, 1982). Nearly 1.3 million women, aged thirty and over, were enrolled in United States colleges and universities in 1979 (Census Bureau, Current Population Reports, 1980).

Mature women are returning to school for numerous reasons. Several studies have investigated reasons for returning to school. Young (1979) reports that many women perceive schooling as a way to attain personal development. Doty (1966) cited the fact that when children are grown, mature women have time to pursue higher education. Many women desire professional careers requiring a college degree (Mendelsohn, 1980).

Ryan (1984) states that many women and older students are going to college for the first time or returning to school because they have found that career advancement in the 1980's requires a college degree. Many older students attending college today are retired from other occupations or are women whose children are grown (Ryan, 1984).
CHARACTERISTICS OF THE MATURE WOMAN STUDENT

Nontraditional women students have received acceptance as achieving members of society (Pierce, 1981). Campbell (1972) reports that the mature college student has strong motivation, seriousness of purpose, persistence, and adaptability. Often, the mature college student performs better in school than other groups of women (Fagerburg, 1970).

The mature college students appear to define themselves in a more competent way with traits which cluster around achievement potential, intellectual interests, and efficiency as well as interpersonal adequacy (Pierce, 1981). Wolfgang and Dowling (1981) report that the mature college student is less motivated than traditional age students to pursue a college degree for reasons of forming social relationships or meeting the external expectations of another person or authority.

Sheehy (1974) states that nontraditional college students often seek new sources of self-esteem, identity, and autonomy. In a study conducted by Kasworm (1980) some of the characteristics of mature college women were: independence, identification with varied roles, awareness of personal capabilities,
diversified self-confidence and maturity, readiness to learn, and exposure to a variety of life opportunities and experiences.

A characterization of five types of adult learners ("non-directed"; "social"; "stimulation-seeking"; "career oriented"; and "life change") resulted from the study conducted by Morstain and Smart (1977) which utilized a typological analysis to identify unique motivational patterns which brought adults to colleges and universities. Morstain and Smart concluded that colleges and universities could better serve the adult learner if more careful attention was given to all segments of the population served by the institutions.

COLLEGE RESPONSE TO THE NONTRADITIONAL STUDENT

Beginning in the 1940's, college campuses across the country experienced several changes transpiring in relation to their traditional youth-oriented enrollment patterns. The first change was experienced through the enactment of the G.I. Bill which brought thousands of veterans into daytime collegiate programs. In 1945-46, 27.6 percent of the total undergraduate enrollment or approximately 462,079 veterans were enrolled at higher educational institutions (Brubacher and Willis, 1968; Greese, 1941; Federal Security Agency, 1949; Ferguson, 1966). The second change occurred when collegiate
undergraduate programs admitted "reentry women". The U.S. Department of Labor's Women's Bureau reported "more than a three-fold gain was registered from 1960-1972 by women students 25 to 34 ... and this probably was exceeded by women 35 years and older."

Since the 1960's, professional educational institutions have progressively addressed the re-education of older women (Schwartz, Schifter, and Gillotti, 1972). Programs called "Continuing Education for Women" were developed to help women resume their education successfully while maintaining a family (Buccieri, 1970). For example, the Center for the Continuing Education of Women at Michigan was established in 1964 and has counseled over 4,000 women in approximately ten years. Its services are available to all women of the community particularly reentry women with family and/or employment responsibilities to provide guidance in individual and vocational decision-making (Markus, 1973).

Mature women returning to college often experience high levels of stress. This stress accompanied by the frequent insensitivity to their needs calls for a special effort on the part of higher education administration (Brandenburg, 1974). Fear and anxiety are often reinforced in the reentry woman's mind by the typical college admissions procedures. Brandenburg
(1974) reports that entrance examinations stress skills that may be rusty after a long interruption of formal education. Waters (1971) contends that college entrance procedures are on the most part inappropriate for the woman returning to college. Waters (1971) reports it would be desirable to designate one person in the admissions office to be an adult specialist. This specialist would need training in adult development and adult counseling and be familiar with the special problems and anxieties of older students.

Reentry women feel they need assistance in re-establishing basic academic skills such as taking notes, studying, writing papers and using the library (Brandenburg, 1974). Jeanne Smith designed a class entitled "You Too Can Return to College" to assist the returning woman whom she describes as an individual who lacks confidence, has low self-expectations, and needs special counseling (Bolton, 1975).

Ekstrom (1972) reports that institutions have not been very responsive to reentry students needs; however, institutions actively recruit the adult student and facilitate their return to college through the development and expansion of services geared especially for them (Peabody and Sedlacek, 1981). This recruitment effort has helped universities compensate for the decline in enrollment of traditional students.
Studies indicate that a variety of programs have been established to meet the needs of mature college students. At St. Edward's University in Austin, Texas, a program featuring year-round admissions and registration has been established. Kentucky offers a course in test-taking, has established a buddy system during registration, and reserves a room in one of its libraries for senior citizens who go to school free. Mills College in Oakland, California, has on-campus apartments for single parents and a nursery school whose reputation is so strong that even local non-students sign their children onto the waiting list at birth (Newsweek, 1981).

Due to the large number of women and older students who are returning to college, colleges are adapting curricula and adding programs to meet the educational needs and class-time demands of all students, whether they be young, old, married, single, working or non-working. An example is Tulane University's master of business administration program for business executives in New Orleans, Louisiana, that allows executives to continue at their regular jobs and attend school every other weekend (Ruth, 1984).
WOMEN'S ACHIEVEMENT AND CAREER MOTIVATION

Since the time of the Industrial Revolution, norms of the middle classes of western societies have segregated work and family life and cast husbands as the economic provider of the family and wives as the provider of domestic services (Rapoport and Rapoport, 1971). This stereotyping of the female is characteristic of society's role expectations and has hindered women's achievements in careers.

The image of women found throughout history has with few exceptions expounded on the idea that femininity and individual achievements which reflect intellectual competence or leadership potential are desirable but mutually exclusive goals (Horner, 1972). Horner states that most women have a motive to avoid success, that is, a disposition to become anxious about achieving success because they expect negative consequences as a result of succeeding.

Anderson (1974) concluded that women often tend to view achievement motivation as incompatible with female gender roles; motivation to seek self-esteem, purpose, status, and fulfillment may be stress and anxiety producing.
Research conducted by Baruch (1967) indicated that after the child-bearing years, a woman's need for achievement increases. These findings suggest that a return to school, at least for the older woman, may be an attempt to reclaim the ground many women lose in personal development and self-esteem during the middle years of adulthood (Rossi, 1968; Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960). Several studies of returning women graduate students find that becoming a better person and developing one's potentials are in fact the chief motivating factors in returning to school (Withycombe-Brocato, 1968; Doty, 1966).

Research findings indicate that the motivation to return to school is strengthened by a need for independent achievement in other than interpersonal areas (Markus, 1973). Markus concludes that the extent to which women are successful in returning to school should increase feelings of competence and self-esteem.

FAMILY SUPPORT

Coinciding with uncertainty in ability to achieve and the direction of goals, many women are confronted with resistance from their spouse, family, and friends to return to school. Involvement in school work is often accompanied by some aspect of change in the
female student's life. Having less time for family and friends and a decrease in time devoted to housekeeping responsibilities are changes which often result in negative responses from those affected by these changes (Brandenburg, 1974).

Although the return to college for mature women suggests anticipated problems with combining school and family responsibilities, Davis (1966) reports that the mature students find ways to manage. The husband's favorable attitude toward his wife's college reentry is cited as a critical factor in continuing a program and the decision to begin school (Davis, 1966; Westervelt, 1971).

When considering the difficulties that confront married women with children who wish to pursue an education it is clear that the support of the husband is a crucial element to success (Fogarty, Rapoport, and Rapoport, 1971; Frank, 1969; Gross, Crandall, and Knoll, 1973). Stephenson (1976) concluded that in order for a woman to study or work effectively outside the home, it is necessary for the husband to participate to a large extent in the household and child care tasks. This participation results in a redistribution of the pressures that generally fall heavily on the mother of the family. Robinson (1977) and Walker and Woods (1976) report that young, highly
educated husbands help their wives with household work more than other husbands do.

Research has indicated that the favorable attitude of the husband is a determining factor in influencing actual or planned participation either in the labor force or in the further education of their wives (Berkove, 1976; Jeghelian, 1972; and Markus, 1973). Berkove (1976) and Van Meter (1976) report that many women indicated role strain and guilt about their families as the greatest problems about returning to school.

Adelstein (1979) indicates that children's age provides a key component which discriminates among the needs of returning women students. If the mature student has young children, her life tends to be focused on the children and child care. If the mature student has older children at home, this tends to create guilt, physical problems and difficulties in finding study time.

Research conducted by Nero (1975) revealed that women with high school age children remarked that their return to school had opened new avenues of communication between themselves and their children since they now shared the experiences of being in school. Mothers with preschoolers reported that their children had mixed feelings about their being in
school. The significance of these results is the recognition of the importance of family and peer support for women's decision to attend college.

Roach (1976) reports that mature, college reentry women tend to reject the "wife-mother-homemaker" role placed on them by the family. The family tends to respond to this rejection by continuing to value the woman in that role. This relationship produces an imbalance in family attitudes that usually result in conflict.

According to Markus (1973) the mature female student needs a supporting social and interpersonal environment even though college reentry was a self-initiated change supported by internal needs and motives. Mature women reported enjoying school more when support from their social environment was received. The mature woman who receives support will tend to return to school, remain enrolled, and receive pleasure from attending.

**SELF-ESTEEM OF THE MATURE WOMAN STUDENT**

Although research into the factors affecting the self-esteem level of mature women returning to school is limited, available research generally indicates that the women have positive attitudes about themselves.
According to Markus (1973) the evaluation an individual places upon himself is termed self-esteem.

For this study the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSE), which applies the Guttman method of scaling, was incorporated to measure self-esteem of the respondents. The scale has been used with 5,024 New York high school students in which a reproducibility score of .92 was obtained (Rosenberg, 1965). Guttman scales require that the coefficient of reproducibility equal or exceed .85 to be considered true Guttman scales. Reproducibility is considered as one index of reliability (Wylie, 1974). Wylie (1974) also indicates that "a coefficient of reproducibility (Rep.) of .90 or more has been taken as an arbitrary minimum for a possible inference that one is dealing with a satisfactorily reliable, unidimensional scale." In another study by Selber and Tippett (1965) where the Rosenberg scale was used with 28 college students a test-retest reliability coefficient of .85 was obtained. Wylie (1974) further reports that it is impressive that such high reliability is attainable with only 10 items.

Women who possess high self-esteem tend to think well of themselves and are more decisive, independent, and self-disciplined. They can effectively assess
their strengths and weaknesses and realistically decide what they can and cannot get from their college experience (Adelstein, et. al., 1979).

Women with low self-esteem tend to be depressed, bored, and lonely. Many of these women experience guilt feelings about returning to school, and are less clear about their academic and vocational goals (Adelstein, et. al., 1979).

Guttman (1980) reports that many women seeking mid-life career changes experience depression. This depression may be the result of self-inflicted feelings of guilt and self-reproach for wanting to get away from family responsibilities. Several studies indicate problems with lack of time or role conflict in women who return to school (Van Meter, 1976).

As Traupmann (1982) stated, attending school in mid-life will present "an opportunity to forge a new life, focusing on personal development rather than family (p.11)." Traupmann concluded that being a university student in mid-life does not significantly increase happiness or self-esteem. It does seem however to be associated with feeling more healthy physically and experiencing fewer symptoms of mental stress. Prager (1983) found a positive relationship between educational aspirations and self-esteem of returning college students. This conclusion agrees
with the results of research by Hendel (1983) which found that women responded positively to the attitude and opinion items on his questionnaire which dealt with the impact that the continuing education program had on their lives.

Societal expectations dictate that women are considered less important and less adequate; therefore, many women have lower educational aspirations (Elledge, 1978). Women also receive less encouragement to achieve at high levels and are less apt to be competitive. Competition might result in a loss of love or popularity, or become a threat to the woman's sense of femininity (Hoffmann, 1974).

A study by Baruck, Barnett, and Rivers (1983) showed that women who developed both sides of life through intimate relationships and fulfilling work, have a better chance of meeting their needs for achievement, esteem, productivity and affection.

According to Lopata (1971) and Self (1969), many women in mid-life have grown dependent on their husbands and have not developed their own identities. This dependency may produce resentment towards self and family, fear of taking risks and depression. Problems of dependency and lack of confidence may hinder the woman's ability to achieve success in an educational setting. Lopata concluded that it is the women who
feel competent who turn to higher education to reach their life goals.

In an article by Doyle (1984), Elise Krogstad, a housewife in her 60's who raised six children, related her personal feelings on returning to school. Krogstad stated that "returning to school has provided me with understanding not only of the world around me, but of myself and has given me a degree of security that I could not have achieved otherwise."

**SUMMARY**

In summary, this chapter has included a background of literature related to the characteristics of the mature woman student, family support, and self-esteem of mature women students. Additional research was also reviewed concerning mature women's college reentry, college response to the nontraditional student, and women's achievement and career motivation. The major aspects of this review are summarized as follows.

1. Increasing numbers of older women are presently returning to school where they exemplify independence, identification with varied roles, awareness of personal capabilities, diversified self-esteem, maturity, and readiness to learn.

2. The literature revealed that generally women returning to school had positive attitudes about
themselves. They reported enjoying school more when support from their social environment was received.
Chapter III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter describes the design of the study which includes the methods and procedures utilized in the investigation. The chapter is divided into four sections as follows: (1) sampling procedure; (2) instrument; (3) data collection procedures; and (4) analysis of data.

SAMPLING PROCEDURE

This research was part of a larger project "Women Returning to School: Self-Esteem and Family Factors" which was conducted through the Agricultural Experiment Station at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. This dissertation utilizes data concerning family support and self-esteem of mature women.

In the larger project, letters were sent to all Louisiana universities and colleges (excluding law, medical, and dental schools, and theological seminaries) requesting those institutions which kept age records to provide names and addresses of women students born in or before 1946. Usable information
was received from those universities which kept age records which included Louisiana State University-Baton Rouge, University of New Orleans, Our Lady of Holy Cross College-New Orleans, and Southeastern Louisiana University-Hammond. These four schools comprised the data base for this research. All universities and colleges used were from the Southeastern section of the state which limited the generalizations to the Southeastern section of the state, and three of the four were located in urban centers. From these four schools, 3,000 names were received from which 500 were randomly chosen by selecting every sixth name from the list.

INSTRUMENT

The research instrument for this study was modeled after the following supported scales used in other family research, Pendleton, Paloma and Garland (1980) and Astin (1976). Guttman's (1980) procedures for attitude measurement were also applied. A number of self-esteem instruments were reviewed. Coopersmith (1959) developed a Self-Esteem Inventory. Since this test was especially designed for children and contained 58 items which were inappropriate for adults, it was felt that it was inappropriate for the present study. Likewise the Piers-Harris (1969) 80 item test for
children was also inappropriate. The Tennessee Self-Concept Scale (TSCS) is frequently used to measure self-regard. The scale consists of 90 items with half the items worded positively and half negatively. Wylie (1974) reports that this scale has been used by many researchers wherein scores have been computed and interpreted with little regard for methodology. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale was chosen to measure self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965). The decision to use this scale was based on the previous use of the scale or portions thereof by Kaplan (1970), Kaplan and Pokorny (1971), Bachman (1970), Brookover, Erickson, and Joiner (1967), Nocks and Bradley (1967), Schooler and Tecce. (1967), Yamamoto and Wiersma (1967), and Selber and Tippett (1965). In addition it had the following characteristics: (1) the items are heterogeneous, (2) there is ease and economy of time in administering, (3) it lends itself to Guttman's scaling techniques and (4) it has face validity for the scale items (Wylie, 1974). The scale has been used with 5,024 New York high school students, in which a reproducibility score of .92 was obtained. In another study by Selber and Tippett (1965) where the Rosenberg scale was used with 28 college students a test-retest reliability coefficient of .85 was obtained. Wylie (1974) further reports that it is impressive that such high reliability is
attainable with only 10 items. Rosenberg and others used the scale to study the self-esteem as related to other variables such as interpersonal insecurity and participation in activities and leadership. These two studies were done with young adults.

For this investigation, the researcher selected only those items from the original questionnaire which were related to the purpose of this study (Appendix B). The instrument included two parts. Part I contained items on college classification status, employment status, household composition, household maintenance assistance status, self-perceptions of college life in relation to personal and family life, family support and reactions, and demographic information.

Scales were developed for Questions 8, 9, 10, and 11 to measure attitudes in relation to women's perceptions of family assistance in household maintenance activities, selected interference factors, family support, and selected influence of college enrollment. Question 8 used a five point Likert-type scale which included 1=never, 2=almost never, 3=sometimes, 4=almost always, and 5=always. The researcher was interested in the "Self" column responses only; therefore, in summarizing the responses to this column, "sometimes", "almost always", and "always" were combined and given a score of "1" which
denoted "has little or no assistance"; and "never" and "almost never" were combined and given a score of "2" which denoted "has much assistance". To tally responses to Questions 9, 10, and 11, a four point Likert-type scale was used which included 1=none, 2=little, 3=some, and 4=very much.

To obtain verbal comments and reactions from the respondents, Question 24 was open-ended. Responses to this question were included in the discussion.

Part II of the instrument covered questions to establish each respondent’s self-esteem, the objectives and reasons for entering college, and influences of college enrollment.

The Rosenberg scale consisted of 10 statements to be ranked on a scale of 1 to 4 (Appendix B: Part II, Question 1). In the larger research project the researchers were interested in the respondents who could not make up their minds either positively or negatively so a "3" category was added to the Rosenberg scale as an "undecided" ranking. For the purpose of analysis in this study, if a respondent marked "3" it was scored as disagreement because apparently some doubt existed about the statement. The 10 statements were divided as stated by Rosenberg into 6 scale items to allocate scores to the respondent’s answers. Scale item I was contrived from the combined responses to the
first three questions of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. Scale item II was contrived from the combined responses to the fourth and fifth questions of the scale. Scale items III, IV, and V were contrived from the individual responses to the sixth, seventh, and eighth questions respectively. Scale item VI was contrived from the combined responses to the ninth and tenth questions of the scale. The ranking and scoring of the 6 scale items produced one score per respondent which ranged from 0 - 6. The self-esteem scores obtained were divided into levels: 0-1 (high self-esteem); 2-3 (medium self-esteem); or 4-6 (low self-esteem) (Appendix C).

In Part II, Question 2 used a five point Likert-type scale which included 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree or disagree, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree.

The content validity of the instrument was established in a field test conducted at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. Ten female students who met the sample criteria responded to the questionnaire for the purpose of detecting instrument deficiencies and contributing recommendations for improvement. The participants were timed to estimate the approximate time it would take to complete the questionnaire. The participants indicated they had no
trouble in understanding and completing the preliminary questionnaire.

DATA COLLECTION PROCEDURES

The final draft of the original questionnaire was prepared and duplicated. The questionnaire, accompanied by a cover letter (Appendix A) which briefly explained the project and assured confidentiality, was mailed to the random sample of 500 women students. The questionnaire was completed and returned by 221 women students aged 35 and over. However, 10 respondents did not completely answer all of the questions about self-esteem and were eliminated from the study. Thus, 211 respondents comprised the size for this study, for 42.2% usable return from the original sample. No follow-up procedures were conducted in the original data collection due to budgetary limitations.

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to describe and analyze the data obtained from the research instrument. Statistical procedures utilized in this analysis included frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, Pearson
product-moment correlation coefficients, chi-square, and multiple regression analysis.

A Pearson product-moment correlation was used to test stated relationships in Hypothesis One, Two, Three, and Four. The Pearson product-moment correlation is used to test the hypothesis of association to determine whether or not there is a relationship between two sets of measurements (Sprinthall, 1982). The computed correlation values may range from +1.00 to -1.00. The farther the Pearson r is from zero, in either direction, the stronger is the relationship between the two variables (Sprinthall, 1982). The Pearson r was selected to test these hypotheses because the researcher was interested in determining relationships between selected variables.

Chi-square was employed to determine if self-esteem was significantly related to husband and children's reactions to the respondent's college entry. Chi-square is a statistical test of significance used to determine whether or not frequency differences have occurred on the basis of chance (Sprinthall, 1982).

Multiple regression analysis was used in this study to identify a significant model of independent variables explaining a portion of the variance in the dependent variable. Sprinthall (1982) states that
"multiple regression is a technique using the multiple R for making predictions of one variable given measures on two or more others".

This study was an Ex Post Facto research design with the dependent variable of self-esteem and four sets of independent variables - household maintenance assistance, verbal support, college reentry interference factors, and the influences of college enrollment. The independent variable of household maintenance assistance was divided into four categories: (1) meal activities - prepares meals, washes dishes, sets table, cleans table; (2) indoor activities - vacuums, cleans floors, washes clothes, daily straightening, makes beds, cleans bathroom; (3) outdoor activities - takes out garbage, yard upkeep, car maintenance, feeds pets; and (4) other activities - transports children, helps children with homework, grocery shops, cares for ill, pays bills, balances checkbook. The sources of the independent variable of verbal support of family were husband, children, mother, father, brothers/sisters, in-laws, and other relatives. The factors of the independent variable of college interference were husband, children, health, distance to school, money, being employed, keeping house, self-confidence, personal goals, time, and personal energy. The independent variable of the
influences of college enrollment included focus and direction, goals, confidence, self-esteem, available alternatives, decisions about employment, employable skills, self-awareness, and happiness.

The level of probability for statistical significance was established a priori as .05.
Chapter IV

PRESENTATION AND DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

The purpose of this chapter is to present the demographic and academic profile of the respondents, the personal effect of college entry, and the results of statistical analyses related to the several hypotheses. The influence of four sets of independent variables - household maintenance assistance, verbal support, college reentry interference factors, and the influences of college enrollment on self-esteem (dependent variable) was assessed.

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following tables depict a demographic profile of the respondents. The sample size will differ in some of the tables due to missing data from some of the responses.

The majority of the respondents were between the ages of 35 and 45, white, married, and the parents of from one to five older children living at home. A small percentage (9%) had children aged 12 and under (see Tables 1 through 4).
Over two-thirds of the college reentry women in this study were employed, and almost two-thirds had family income levels of $30,000 or more. A small group (12%) lived in rural areas, which could be expected since three of the four universities in the study were located in the larger urban areas of the state (see Tables 5 through 7).
Table 1
Age of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>35 to 45 years</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>46 to 55 years</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>56 to 65 years</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>66 and over</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Race of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
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<td>93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black</td>
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<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
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Table 3
Marital Status of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
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<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Divorced</td>
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<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Widowed</td>
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<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single</td>
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<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
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<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
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<td>100</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Table 4
Parental Status of Native Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parent</td>
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<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Parent</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of Children</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 &amp; over</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>26</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Living at Home</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 &amp; over</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ages of Children</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under school age (0-6)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School age (7-12)</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Adolescent (13-20)</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Young Adult (21 &amp; over)</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of (0-6) &amp; (7-12)</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of (7-12) &amp; (13-20)</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of (7-12) &amp; (21 &amp; over)</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of (13-20) &amp; (21 &amp; over)</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Combination of (7-12), (13-20), &amp; (21 &amp; over)</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5

Employment Status of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Employment Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employed</td>
<td>147</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Employed</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 6

Income Levels of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Income Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$4,999-14,999</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$15,000-29,999</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$30,000 &amp; above</td>
<td>125</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Incomes are representative of 1980 dollars.
Table 7
Residency of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Residency</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>184</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ACADEMIC PROFILE OF THE RESPONDENTS

The following tables depict an academic profile of the respondents. The sample size will differ in some of the tables due to missing data from some of the responses.

Almost half of the nontraditional women students had attained one or more degrees prior to their most recent entry into college, with only 16 percent having never attended college or other training beyond high school. Therefore, it was not unusual to find that over half of the respondents were currently enrolled in graduate level courses (Tables 8 and 9).

Since it has been shown that 70 percent of the women students were employed, it seems logical that most of them (80%) would be part time, rather than full time, students (Table 10).

Table 11 shows that it had been 12 years or more since almost half of the women with college experience had enrolled in any college courses. This fact suggests the possible major adjustment and adaptation they faced in meeting class demands and in the redevelopment of study habits.
Table 8
Educational Level of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Education Level</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High School</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some College</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bachelor's Degree</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Master's Degree</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (e.g. nursing; vocational/technical; business school)</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Responses</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 9

Academic Rank of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Academic Rank</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Freshman</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sophomore</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Junior</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Student</td>
<td>104</td>
<td>51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other - Special Student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 10

Full Time/Part Time Status of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Full Time</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Part Time</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>211</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 11
Lapsed Time Since Mature Women Students Took College Courses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12-17</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18 &amp; above</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No Response</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>211</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. The mean number of years could be calculated since raw data was collected.
* mean years=13.23
PERSONAL EFFECT OF COLLEGE ENTRY

An open-ended question asked female students to indicate how they perceived that their decision to enter college had affected them (Question 24). A wide range of responses was elicited. A complete list of responses is presented in Appendix D. Responses were categorized by the researcher and the numbers responding were as follows:

- Increased self-awareness and self-esteem ....................... 95 (50%)
- Gained new interests and enjoyment of learning ................. 34 (18%)
- Increased happiness and feeling of security ................... 28 (15%)
- Increased stress and poor health ............................ 17 (9%)
- Able to meet goals and further career .......................... 14 (7%)
- Increased self-discipline and better organized ................. 3 (1%)
- No responses ........................................... 20

211 100%
SELF-ESTEEM SCORES

The scores obtained from the respondents in the sample on the six scale items of the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale are shown in Table 12. Seventy-one percent of the women obtained high self-esteem scores, 22 percent obtained medium self-esteem scores, and six percent obtained low self-esteem scores.

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA FOR HYPOTHESIS ONE

The first hypothesis stated that household maintenance assistance factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana. For this study, the household maintenance assistance factors were divided into four categories: (1) meal activities, (2) indoor activities, (3) outdoor activities, and (4) other activities (see Definition of Terms, page 8). This hypothesis was measured by Question 8 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix B).

The mean household maintenance assistance scores were calculated using values of "1" as having "little or no assistance" and "2" as having "has much
Consequently, the potential range of scores was from a low of 1.00 to a high of 2.00. The calculated mean scores are presented in Table 13. These scores range from a high of 1.39 for outdoor activities to a low of 1.05 for meal activities (Table 13).

The relationships between the household maintenance assistance scores and respondents' self-esteem were measured using the Pearson product-moment correlation. The calculated correlation values revealed that one of the four categories of household maintenance assistance was significantly related to self-esteem ($r = -.22$). This factor was outdoor activities. This correlation indicates a positive association since the two scores had reverse measurement scales. The higher value in household maintenance assistance indicated higher assistance, while the lower value on the self-esteem scale indicated high self-esteem (Table 14).

Multiple regression analysis using self-esteem as the dependent variable was calculated to determine the influence of the four categories of household maintenance assistance factors on self-esteem. One of the household maintenance assistance factors was found to explain a statistically significant portion of the variance in self-esteem. This factor was assistance
with outdoor activities (Table 15). Therefore, a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem was found and that model consisted of one factor — assistance with outdoor activities (Table 15).
**Table 12**

Self-Esteem Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*mean self-esteem score=1.10*
Table 13
Mean Household Maintenance Assistance Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assistance</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Activities</td>
<td>1.39</td>
<td>.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Activities</td>
<td>1.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Activities</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activities *</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Assistance Scores
  1 = Has little or no assistance
  2 = Has much assistance
*Includes transports children, helps children with homework, grocery shops, cares for ill, pays bills, balances checkbook.
Table 14
Correlations Between Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students and the Types of Household Maintenance Assistance Received

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assistance</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Activities</td>
<td>-.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meal Activities</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Indoor Activities</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Activities *</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.45</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Includes transports children, helps children with homework, grocery shops, cares for ill, pays bills, balances checkbook.

Table 15
Regression of Types of Household Maintenance Assistance Received on Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assistance</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Outdoor Activities</td>
<td>.16</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>5.67</td>
<td>.02</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA FOR HYPOTHESIS TWO

The second hypothesis stated that verbal support factors received from the family will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana. Potential sources of family support were husband, children, mother, father, brothers/sisters, in-laws, and other relatives. This hypothesis was measured by Question 10 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix B).

The mean verbal support scores were derived from responses on a four point Likert-type scale with values ranging from 1=no support to 4=very much support. The reliability of the verbal support sub-scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Procedure. The alpha for this sub-scale was .76. The calculated mean scores are presented in Table 16. The individual perceived as giving the highest levels of verbal support were husbands (mean=2.69) and children (mean=2.27). The lowest level of support was given by in-laws with a mean verbal support score of 1.26 (Table 16).

The relationships between the verbal support scores and respondents' self-esteem were measured using
the Pearson product-moment correlation. The calculated correlation values reveal that none of the verbal support factors were significantly related to self-esteem (Table 17).

Multiple regression analysis using self-esteem as the dependent variable was calculated to determine the influence of the verbal support factors on self-esteem. No significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem was found.
Table 16
Mean Verbal Support Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Support</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>2.69</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2.27</td>
<td>1.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>1.12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>1.68</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/Sisters</td>
<td>1.66</td>
<td>1.02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td>1.40</td>
<td>.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-laws</td>
<td>1.26</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Verbal Support Scores
1 = No support
2 = Little support
3 = Some support
4 = Very much support
Table 17
Correlations Between Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students and Verbal Support Factors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Assistance</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brothers/Sisters</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mother</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Father</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.66</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Relatives</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-laws</td>
<td>.03</td>
<td>.68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>.005</td>
<td>.95</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
STATISTICAL ANALYSIS OF DATA FOR HYPOTHESIS THREE

The third hypothesis stated that selected interference factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana. The factors of college interference were husband, children, health, distance to school, money, being employed, keeping house, self-confidence, personal goals, time, and personal energy. This hypothesis was measured by Question 9 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix B).

The mean perceived interference scores were derived from responses on a four point Likert-type scale with values ranging from 1=no interference to 4=very much interference. The reliability of the perceived interference sub-scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Procedure. The alpha for the sub-scale was .83. The calculated mean scores are presented in Table 18. The factors that received the highest interference scores were time (mean=2.83), personal energy (mean=2.52), and being employed (mean=2.34). The factors which interfered least with the respondents being in school were self-confidence
(mean=1.55), health (mean=1.55), and personal goals (mean=1.55) (Table 18).

The relationships between the interference factor scores and respondents self-esteem were measured using the Pearson product-moment correlation. Four factors were found to be significantly related to self-esteem. These factors were self-confidence ($r=.34$), personal energy ($r=.22$), personal goals ($r=.22$), and distance to school ($r=.15$). These correlations indicate a negative association between the degree of interference and self-esteem since the two scores had reverse measurement scales. The higher value in interference scores indicated higher interference, while the lower value on the self-esteem scale indicated high self-esteem (Table 19).

Multiple regression analysis using self-esteem as the dependent variable was calculated to determine the influence of the interference factors on self-esteem. One of the interference factors was found to explain a statistically significant portion of the variance in self-esteem. This factor was self-confidence (Table 20). Therefore, a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem was found and that model consisted of one factor - self-confidence (Table 20).
Table 18
Mean Interference Factor Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interference Factor</th>
<th>Mean Scorea</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>2.83</td>
<td>1.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Energy</td>
<td>2.52</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Employed</td>
<td>2.34</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping House</td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>1.03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>2.09</td>
<td>1.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>1.97</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>1.77</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance To School</td>
<td>1.73</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Confidence</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Goals</td>
<td>1.55</td>
<td>.89</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Interference Factor Scores
1 = No interference
2 = Little interference
3 = Some interference
4 = Very much interference
Table 19
Correlations Between Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students and Interference Factors of College Enrollment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interference Factor</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Energy</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal Goals</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>.002</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Distance to School</td>
<td>.15</td>
<td>.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Money</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keeping House</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Being Employed</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
<td>-.001</td>
<td>.99</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 20
Regression of Interference Factors of College Enrollment on Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interference</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
<td>.34</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>27.01</td>
<td>.001</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The fourth hypothesis stated that selected influences of college enrollment will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana. The influences of college enrollment were focus and direction, goals, confidence, self-esteem, available alternatives, decisions about employment, employable skills, self-awareness, and happiness. This hypothesis was measured by Question 11 and the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (Appendix B).

The mean influences of college enrollment scores were derived from responses on a four point Likert-type scale with values ranging from 1=no influence to 4=very much influence. The reliability of the influences of college enrollment sub-scale was measured using Cronbach's Alpha Procedure. The alpha for the sub-scale was .92. The calculated mean scores are presented in Table 21. The items that received the highest influence scores were happiness (mean=3.32) and self-esteem (mean=3.27). All of the items were perceived to be in the category of "some influence"
since all mean scores fell between 2.50 and 3.50 (Table 21).

The relationships between the influence factor scores and respondents self-esteem were measured using the Pearson product-moment correlation. The calculated correlation values reveal that one of the nine influences of college enrollment was significantly related to self-esteem ($r = -.18$). This factor was "available alternatives". This correlation indicates a positive association since the two scores had reverse measurement scales. The higher value in influence of college enrollment scores indicated higher influence, while the lower value on the self-esteem indicated high self-esteem (Table 22).

Multiple regression analysis using self-esteem as the dependent variable was calculated to determine the influence of college enrollment factors on self-esteem. One of the influence factors was found to explain a statistically significant portion of the variance in self-esteem. This factor was "available alternatives" (Table 23). Therefore, a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem was found and that model consisted of one factor — available alternatives (Table 23).
### Table 21
Mean Influences of College Enrollment Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of College Enrollment</th>
<th>Mean Scorea</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>3.32</td>
<td>.81</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-esteem</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>3.22</td>
<td>.94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus &amp; Direction</td>
<td>3.14</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>3.12</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employable Skills</td>
<td>3.04</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Available Alternatives</td>
<td>3.02</td>
<td>1.07</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions About Employment</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*a Influence Scores
1 = No influence
2 = Little influence
3 = Some influence
4 = Very much influence
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of College Enrollment</th>
<th>r</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available Alternatives</td>
<td>-.18</td>
<td>.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Employable Skills</td>
<td>-.11</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Esteem</td>
<td>-.10</td>
<td>.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Happiness</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Confidence</td>
<td>-.08</td>
<td>.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Decisions About Employment</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Focus &amp; Direction</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>.43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Goals</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>.65</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-awareness</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 23
Regression of Influences of College Enrollment on Self-Esteem of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Influence of College Enrollment</th>
<th>Multiple R</th>
<th>R²</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>Sig.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Available Alternatives</td>
<td>0.18</td>
<td>0.03</td>
<td>6.64</td>
<td>0.01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
For discussion purposes, the following information has been presented using means and frequency distributions. The information deals with the spouse and children's reactions to college entry (Questions 12 and 13), the concerns which have arisen since college entry (Question 14), and the reasons given for returning to college (Question 2 of Part II) (Appendix B).

**FAMILY'S REACTION TO COLLEGE ENTRY**

Chi-square was used to determine whether the husband's and children's reactions to the respondent's college entry were independent of the self-esteem. For analysis purposes, self-esteem was categorized into high, medium, and low based on Rosenberg's recommendation (Appendix C).

An examination was conducted between the self-esteem of the respondents and the husband's reaction to the respondent's college entry (Table 24). It was concluded that the variables were independent ($x^2 = 0.27, p > .05$).

The two variables of self-esteem of the respondents and the children's reaction to the respondent's college entry were examined also (Table
The calculated chi-square value was significant \( (x^2 = 6.15, p < .05) \) which indicated that the two variables were not independent.

There were 132 respondents (72.53\%) who possessed high self-esteem. Two-thirds (66.67\%) of these respondents perceived that they had support in relation to their college entry from their children. Of the 39 respondents who had medium self-esteem, approximately half (51.28\%) received support from their children.

A total of 11 respondents (6.05\%) possessed low self-esteem. There were 63.64\% of these who stated they were not supported by their children in relation to their college entry. Therefore, the majority of respondents with high self-esteem perceived they had support from their children and the majority of respondents with low self-esteem perceived they did not have support from their children.
Table 24
Self-Esteem by Husband’s Reaction to Mature Woman Student’s College Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Husband’s Reaction)</th>
<th>Supported</th>
<th>Not Supported</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Self-Esteem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>56.10a</td>
<td>18.29</td>
<td>74.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.41b</td>
<td>24.59</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>75.41c</td>
<td>71.43</td>
<td>146.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.02</td>
<td>5.49</td>
<td>19.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>71.87</td>
<td>28.13</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.85</td>
<td>21.43</td>
<td>40.28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.27</td>
<td>1.83</td>
<td>6.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>70</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.74</td>
<td>7.14</td>
<td>12.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>122</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>74.39</td>
<td>25.61</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>217.28</td>
<td>82.72</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. "Neither" and "Opposed" were combined to create the "Not Supported" category.

a cell percentage
b row percentage
c column percentage
\(x^2 = (2, N=164) = 0.27, p > .05\)
Table 25

Self-Esteem by Children's Reaction to Mature Woman Student's College Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>(Children's Reaction) Supported</th>
<th>Not Supported</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(Self-Esteem)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>48.35°</td>
<td>24.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>66.67°</td>
<td>33.33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>78.57°</td>
<td>62.86</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.99</td>
<td>10.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>51.28</td>
<td>48.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>17.86</td>
<td>27.14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.20</td>
<td>3.85</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>36.36</td>
<td>63.64</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3.57</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>61.54</td>
<td>38.47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>154.31</td>
<td>145.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. "Neither" and "Opposed" were combined to create the "Not Supported" category.

a cell percentage
b row percentage
c column percentage

$x^2=(2,N=164)=6.15$, $p<.05$
CONCERNS WHICH HAVE ARISEN SINCE COLLEGE ENTRY

Respondents were asked to identify concerns which have arisen since college entry. The items identified most frequently were "lack of time" (n=141), "time of day classes offered" (n=117), and "lack of energy/endurance" (n=110) (Table 26). These three concerns were identified by a majority of the respondents. The item mentioned least frequently was "lack of direction/purpose" (n=13).

REASONS FOR RETURNING TO COLLEGE

The mean reasons for returning to college scores were derived from responses on a five point Likert-type scale with values ranging from 1=strongly disagree to 5=strongly agree. The calculated mean scores are presented in Table 27. In relation to reasons for returning to college, the items that received the highest mean scores were "become more educated" (mean=4.38) and "receive a degree, certificate, or college credit" (mean=4.21). The items least agreed with as reasons for returning to college were "moved to this location" (mean=1.87) and "marital tensions and conflicts" (mean=1.82) (Table 27).
Table 26
Concerns Which Have Arisen Since College Entry

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Concern</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Time</td>
<td>141</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Time of Day Classes Offered</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Energy/ Endurance</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost</td>
<td>85</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family Obligations</td>
<td>68</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Job Responsibilities</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt About Neglect of Housework</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location, Distance, &amp; Transportation</td>
<td>57</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guilt About Neglect of Children</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Problems</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonsupportive Family Attitudes</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Self-Confidence</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Special Skills &amp; Abilities</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of Direction/ Purpose</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note. Numbers do not total 100% since respondents were requested to check all that apply.*
Table 27

Mean Reasons for Returning to College Scores of Mature Women Students

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reason</th>
<th>Mean Score</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Become More Educated</td>
<td>4.38</td>
<td>.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive a Degree, Certificate, or College Credit</td>
<td>4.21</td>
<td>1.04</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepare Myself For a Better Job</td>
<td>3.69</td>
<td>1.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Develop Skills to be More Effective in My Family/Community</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>1.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Achieve Independence &amp; Sense of Identity</td>
<td>3.37</td>
<td>1.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess Myself Academically</td>
<td>3.36</td>
<td>1.05</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encouragement and/or Recommendations From Others</td>
<td>3.09</td>
<td>1.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Make Contact With Other People</td>
<td>2.88</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Funds Were Available</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>1.32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lessening Family Responsibilities</td>
<td>2.74</td>
<td>1.37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored at Home</td>
<td>2.50</td>
<td>1.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bored With My Job</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>1.19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Receive Counseling, Testing, &amp; Information</td>
<td>2.38</td>
<td>1.10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved to This Location</td>
<td>1.87</td>
<td>1.01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marital Tensions &amp; Conflicts</td>
<td>1.82</td>
<td>.98</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. N=211
* Reasons for Returning to College Scores
  1 = Strongly disagree
  2 = Disagree
  3 = Neither agree or disagree
  4 = Agree
Chapter V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter summarizes the purpose of the investigation, the methods and procedures used, and the findings of the study. The conclusions drawn from the statistical analyses of the data, implications, and recommendations for practice and further research based on the findings and conclusions are also included in this chapter.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this study was to determine factors of family support associated with the self-esteem of women over the age of 35 who were enrolled in selected Louisiana colleges and universities.

The objectives of this study were as follows:

1. To identify demographic and academic characteristics of mature women returning to college.

2. To determine if family support in household maintenance activities, verbal cues from family members, and spouse and children's reactions are associated with the measurement of self-esteem.
3. To determine if college interference factors are associated with the measurement of self-esteem.

4. To determine if perceived influence of college enrollment on the individual is associated with the measurement of self-esteem.

5. To identify concerns which have arisen since college entry of mature women.

6. To identify the reasons given by mature women for returning to college.

In addition, the following hypotheses were investigated:

1. Household maintenance assistance factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana.

2. Verbal support sources received from the family will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana.

3. Selected interference factors will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana.

4. Selected influences of college enrollment will yield a significant model explaining a portion of the
variance in the self-esteem of mature college women in Louisiana.

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

This study was part of a larger project "Women Returning to School: Self-Esteem and Family Factors" which was conducted through the Agricultural Experiment Station at Louisiana State University in Baton Rouge. This study utilized data concerning family support and self-esteem of mature women. The sample consisted of 500 randomly selected women students born in or before 1946 who were enrolled in four Louisiana colleges and universities (excluding law, medical, and dental schools, and theological seminaries).

Each of the women students was sent a questionnaire, accompanied by a cover letter which briefly explained the project and insured confidentiality. The instrument included two parts. Part I contained items on college classification status, employment status, household composition, household maintenance assistance status, self-perceptions of college life in relation to personal and family life, family support and reactions, and demographic information. Part II of the instrument covered questions to establish each respondent's self-
esteem, the objectives and reasons for entering college, and influences of college enrollment. Once completed, the instruments were returned. The data from 211 (42.2%) usable responses were described and analyzed using frequency distributions, means, standard deviations, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients, chi-square, and multiple regression analysis.

FINDINGS

A demographic profile of respondents revealed that the majority were between the ages of 35 and 45, white, married, and the parents of from one to five teen-aged and older children living at home. Most were employed, were attending college part-time, had family income levels of $30,000 or more, and lived in urban areas.

Academically, almost half the women had attained one or more degrees prior to their reentry into college, and over half were enrolled in graduate level courses. Twelve years or more had lapsed since almost half of them had last enrolled in a college class.

As determined by the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), the majority of mature women respondents in this study had high self-esteem levels. This conclusion was based on the finding that 71% of the respondents had high self-esteem (0-1 scores).
The four hypotheses were investigated using multiple regression analysis with three having statistically significant explanatory factors of the variance in self-esteem. Relative to hypothesis one, assistance with outdoor activities was found to be a significant factor \( (F=5.67, \ p<.05) \) when regressed on the dependent variable self-esteem. Concerning hypothesis three, self-confidence was found to be a significant factor \( (F=27.01, \ p<.05) \). Available alternatives was found to be a significant factor \( (F=6.64, \ p<.05) \) in relation to hypothesis four.

In reference to the family's reaction to college entry, the two variables of self-esteem of the respondents and the children's reaction to the respondent's college entry were examined. The calculated chi-square was significant \( (x^2=6.15, \ p<.05) \) which indicated that the two variables were not independent. Those respondents that perceived they had support from their children tended to have high self-esteem and those that perceived they had no support from their children tended to have low self-esteem.

In identifying concerns which have arisen since college entry, respondents most frequently identified "lack of time" \( (n=141) \), "time of day classes offered" \( (n=117) \), and "lack of energy/endurance" \( (n=110) \). These
three concerns were identified by a majority of the respondents.

In relation to reasons for returning to college, the items that received the highest mean scores were "become more educated" (mean=4.38) and "receive a degree, certificate, or college credit" (mean=4.21).

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings presented in this study, the researcher has drawn the following conclusions, implications, and recommendations. The findings are not that important in explaining the self-esteem of the respondents.

1. Only a small portion of mature college women perceived that reentering college had had a negative effect upon them. This conclusion was based on the findings that 9% of the respondents on an open-ended question reported increases in stress and poor health. In addition, 50% reported positive influences in the form of self-awareness and self-esteem.

Young (1979) reports that many women perceive schooling as a way to attain personal development. Doty (1966) cited the fact that when children are grown, mature women have time to pursue higher
education. Many women desire professional careers requiring a college degree (Mendelsohn, 1980).

Ryan (1984) states that many women and older students are going to college for the first time or returning to school because they have found that career advancement in the 1980's requires a college degree. As Traupmann (1982) stated, attending school in mid-life will present "an opportunity to forge a new life, focusing on personal development rather than family (p.11)".

In an article by Doyle (1984), Elise Krogstad, a housewife in her 50's who raised six children, related her personal feelings on returning to school. Krogstad stated that "returning to school has provided me with understanding not only of the world around me, but of myself and has given me a degree of security that I could not have achieved otherwise".

2. The majority of mature women respondents in this study had high self-esteem levels. This conclusion was based on the finding that 71% of the respondents had high self-esteem (0-1 scores) as determined by Rosenberg (1965). This conclusion is supportive of the study by Prager (1983) and Hendel (1983) which found a positive relationship between
educational aspirations and self-esteem of returning college students.

According to Adelstein, et. al. (1979) women who possess high self-esteem tend to think well of themselves and are more decisive, independent, and self-disciplined. They can effectively assess their strengths and weaknesses and realistically decide what they can and cannot get from their college experience. The women in this sample have had some time to become accustomed to the new role of being a student; therefore, it would seem that as fears of the new experience lessen, the self-esteem level would likely increase. However, it was not possible to measure the self-esteem levels of the women in this study prior to entering college.

These findings and conclusions have led the researcher to recommend that research of a longitudinal measure be undertaken which would assess the self-esteem of mature women entering college at the point of their initial entry. Then a follow-up study would need to be conducted with that same group to ascertain how their self-esteem changes throughout their college career and how those changes are related to support and other demographic factors.

3. Assistance with outdoor household maintenance
activities had a significant influence on the respondents' self-esteem. This conclusion is based on the finding that a significant model explaining a portion of the variance was identified. Assistance with outdoor activities was found to be a significant factor ($F=5.67, p<.05$) when regressed on the dependent variable self-esteem.

According to Stephenson (1976) in order for a woman to study or work effectively outside the home, it is necessary for the husband to participate to a large extent in the household and child care tasks. This participation results in a redistribution of the pressures that generally fall heavily on the mother of the family. Robinson (1977) and Walker and Woods (1976) report that young, highly educated husbands help their wives with household work more than others do.

Even though the assistance in outdoor activities had a significant influence on their self-esteem, this influence was negative in nature since these two factors were measured on reversed measurement scales. One possible explanation for this phenomenon would involve the fact that all other household maintenance assistance activity scores were very low indicating that respondents were receiving very little assistance in other areas. Outdoor activities was the area where help was received which consists of traditionally male
activities (takes out garbage, yard upkeep, car maintenance, and feed pets). Since these are traditional male activities, the respondents may not have perceived these activities as supportive.

4. Verbal support of family members did not influence respondents' self-esteem. This is based on the finding that no significant model explaining a portion of the variance in self-esteem was found.

This conclusion is in contradiction to much of the literature such as the research by Davis (1966) and Westervelt (1971) which found that the husband's favorable attitude toward his wife's college reentry was a critical factor in continuing a program and the decision to begin school. The literature also indicated that the favorable attitude of the husband was a determining factor in influencing actual or planned participation either in the labor force or in the further education of their wives (Berkove, 1976; Jeghelian, 1972; and Markus, 1973).

These findings and conclusions have led the researcher to recommend that further research be done in this area to determine which direction would be substantiated by additional findings.

5. Self-confidence as a selected interference factor had a significant influence on the respondents' self-esteem. This conclusion is based on the finding
that a significant model explaining a portion of the variance was identified. Self-confidence was found to be a significant factor ($F=27.01, p<.05$) when regressed on the dependent variable self-esteem.

Reentry women understandably face some doubt, apprehension, and fear about going to college at an age that differs from the traditional college-age student. Many studies relate these insecurities and tell how some colleges have sought to alleviate them by sanctioning the formation of support groups (Brandenburg, 1974; Manis and Mochizuki, 1972; Waters, 1971).

These findings and conclusions have led the researcher to recommend that a procedure be developed to assess the self-confidence of mature women upon entry into college. Since their level of self-confidence had a significant influence on their self-esteem, then a knowledge of students self-confidence could be an important factor to assess upon college entry. This could be advantageous in referring students, who possess low self-confidence, to support groups or using counseling techniques designed to aid students with adjusting to the initial uncertainties of college life. This is consistent with the suggestions of Waters (1971) to designate one person in the admissions office to be an adult specialist. This
specialist would need training in adult development and adult counseling and be familiar with the special problems and anxieties of older students.

6. Available alternatives as an influence of college enrollment had a significant influence on the respondents' self-esteem. This conclusion is based on the finding that a significant model explaining a portion of the variance was identified. Available alternatives was found to be a significant factor \( (F=6.64, p<.05) \) when regressed on the dependent variable self-esteem.

Young (1979) proports that college reentry women who are working or who expect to work are cognizant that academic training is associated with well paid jobs. Education serves as a vehicle for admission into the paid work force by contributing to economic independence through the development of job skills. A relatively large proportion of mature women appear to enroll in college to expand their knowledge of career possibilities or to take refresher courses after being out of the labor force while rearing children.

7. Those respondents that perceived they had support from their children tended to have high self-esteem and those that perceived they had no support from their children tended to have low self-esteem. This conclusion was based on the findings derived when
the independence of the variables self-esteem of respondents and children's reaction to college entry were examined. The calculated chi-square was significant indicating that the two variables were not independent.

Research conducted by Nero (1975) revealed that women with high school age children remarked that their return to school had opened new avenues of communication between themselves and their children since they now shared the experiences of being in school. The significance of these results is the recognition of the importance of family and peer support for women's decision to attend college.

According to Markus (1973) the mature female student needs a supporting social and interpersonal environment even though college reentry was a self-initiated change supported by internal needs and motives. Mature women reported enjoying school more when support from their social environment was received. The mature woman who receives support will tend to return to school, remain enrolled, and receive pleasure from attending.

8. The majority of respondents have identified "lack of time", "time of day classes offered", and "lack of energy/endurance" as concerns which have arisen since college entry. Each of these items was
identified as a concern by more than 50% of the respondents in the study (67%, 56%, and 52% respectively).

Role conflicts, study skills, time management, self-confidence, and various other issues were cited by returning women students as problems or concerns (Karelis-Schumacher, 1977; Lance, Lourie, and Mayo, 1979; Smallwood, 1980). Added to these difficulties are fears of not being able to relate to younger students and new stresses in relationships with family and friends (Rawlins, 1979; Roach, 1976).

These findings and conclusions have led the researcher to recommend that special consideration be given to the time of day that classes are scheduled, and to classes being held once a week for a longer period rather than meeting several times a week for shorter periods.

9. Regarding the reasons for returning to college the items which respondents most agreed with were items that related to educational or occupational improvement. This is based on the findings that the items that received the highest mean scores were "become more educated" (mean=4.38), "receive a degree, certificate, or college credit" (mean=4.21), and "prepare myself for a better job" (mean=3.69).

Research conducted by Baruch (1967) indicated that
after the child-bearing years, a woman's need for achievement increases. These findings suggest that a return to school, at least for the older woman, may be an attempt to reclaim the ground many women lose in personal development and self-esteem during the middle years of adulthood (Rossi, 1968; Gurin, Veroff, and Feld, 1960). Several studies of returning women graduate students found that becoming a better person and developing one's potentials were in fact the chief motivating factors in returning to school (Withycombe-Brocato, 1968; Doty, 1966).

Research findings indicate that the motivation to return to school is strengthened by a need for independent achievement in other than interpersonal areas (Markus, 1973). Markus concludes that the extent to which women are successful in returning to school should increase feelings of competence and self-esteem.
REFERENCES


Kasworm, Carol E. "The Older Student As An Undergraduate." *Adult Education*, 1980, 30-47.


APPENDIXES
Dear Student:

The school of Home Economics is presently conducting research under the direction of Dr. Gladys Hildreth relating to mature women in college. We will be examining such factors as household maintenance activity changes, family members' verbal support and the students' self-esteem. Several graduate students will be writing theses from, and assisting with, this research.

Records indicate that you are, or have recently been, enrolled in college. The completion of the project depends in part on your willingness to participate by filling out the enclosed questionnaire. Of course, all information will be confidential and used only for research purposes.

Findings from the research will be useful to family researchers, academic administrators and mature women students enrolled in college or contemplating returning to school.

Your cooperation in filling out this questionnaire will be appreciated not only by the researchers, but by all mature women enrolled in college. Findings from the research will be made available to all research participants upon request.

Kindly complete the questionnaire and return it in the self-addressed stamped envelope at your very earliest convenience. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Gladys J. Hildreth, Ph.D.

GJH/gr
QUESTIONNAIRE

Part 1.

DIRECTIONS: Please answer the questions listed below.

1. Indicate your present college classification:
   - Freshman ___
   - Sophomore ___
   - Junior ___
   - Senior ___
   - Graduate Student ___

2. Are you a full time or a part time student?
   - Full time ___
   - Part time ___

3. How much education had you completed before your most recent entry into college?
   - High School ___
   - Some College ___
   - Bachelors Degree ___
   - Masters Degree ___
   - Other (Explain) ___________________________

4. When you first came back to school, how long had it been since you last took any college courses? ___________________

5. Are you currently employed outside the home?
   - Yes ___
   - No ___
   - If yes, do you expect to continue the same job after you complete school?
     - Yes ___
     - No ___
   - If no, what do you expect to do? ___________________________

6. If you are not currently employed, do you expect to look for employment after completing school?
   - Yes ___
   - No ___
7. What is the composition of your present household?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relation To Self</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Present Educational Attainment</th>
<th>Occupation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Spouse</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Son(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Daughter(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other(s)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8. Please indicate who performs each of the following activities in this order: 1 = never, 2 = almost never, 3 = sometimes, 4 = almost always, 5 = always.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self</th>
<th>Spouse</th>
<th>Son</th>
<th>Daughter</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Doesn't Apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Prepares meals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washes dishes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vacuums</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cleans floors</td>
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<tr>
<td>Washes clothes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Takes out garbage</td>
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<tr>
<td>Yard upkeep</td>
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<tr>
<td>Daily straightening</td>
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<tr>
<td>Transports children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Helps children with homework</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Grocery shops</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cares for ill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Pays bills</td>
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<tr>
<td>Balances checkbook</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
9. To what extent do the following factors interfere with your being in school:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Factor</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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<tr>
<td>Health</td>
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<td>Distance to school</td>
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<tr>
<td>Money</td>
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<tr>
<td>Being employed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Keeping house</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-confidence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal goals</td>
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<tr>
<td>Time</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personal energy</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

10. To what extent did the verbal support of the following have on your decision to enter college:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Support</th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Husband</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Children</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

(continued on next page)
11. To what extent has entering college influenced the following:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Very Much</th>
<th>Some</th>
<th>Little</th>
<th>None</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Your focus and direction</td>
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<tr>
<td>Your goals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your confidence</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your self esteem</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your available alternatives</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your decisions about employment</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Your employable skills</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your self awareness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Your happiness</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
12. What was your husband's reaction to your entering college?
   He supported the idea ______
   He neither supported or opposed the idea ______
   He opposed the idea ______

13. What was your children's reaction to your entering college?
   They supported the idea ______
   They neither supported or opposed the idea ______
   They opposed the idea ______

14. If any of the following concerns have arisen since you entered college, please indicate:
   [____ Costs
   [____ Location, distance, transportation
   [____ Time of day classes offered
   [____ Job responsibilities
   [____ Medical problems
   [____ Lack of self confidence
   [____ Lack of direction or purpose
   [____ Lack of specific skills, abilities
   [____ Guilt about neglect of children
   [____ Guilt about neglect of housework
   [____ Nonsupportive family attitudes
   [____ Family obligations
   [____ Lack of time
   [____ Lack of energy/endurance
   [____ Other

15. Please answer the following questions with the following ranks:
   1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree

   Since you have entered college you have found:
   [____ school and other outside responsibilities impinge upon your ability to be a good, effective parent
   [____ your family has less time together
   [____ your family has become more self reliant and organized
your family has become closer and talks things over more
marital tensions and difficulties have increased
marital relations have improved, you have greater rapport with your husband
being a parent affects your ability to be effective in school
your children's respect and regard for you has increased
your children are upset and resent your involvement in school
you have less time for social life
others respect you more
your status on the job has improved
your friends, neighbors, co-workers are disapproving

16. Your present age is:

  35 - 45  46 - 55  56 - 65  66 and over

17. Your race is ____________________

18. Your marital status is  married  divorced  widowed

19. Your parental status is  parent  nonparent

   If you are a parent, how many children do you have? ______ How many are at home? ______ What are the ages of your children? ______________

20. Since you entered college, do you perceive a change in your household work load?

   Yes ____
   No ____

21. If yes, have others taken over some chores?

   Yes ____
   No ____

   If yes, who?  husband  sons  daughters  other relative  paid help

22. Do you live in town?

   Yes ____
   No ____

   If yes, which town or city? ________________________________
23. What is your approximate family income?

- $4,999 - 14,999
- $15,000 - 29,999
- $30,000 or more

24. Please briefly explain how your decision to enter college has affected you personally.

Part II.

DIRECTIONS: Follow the directions and answer the questions listed below.

1. Please indicate your agreement with the following statements:
   1 = strongly agree, 2 = agree, 3 = neither agree or disagree, 4 = disagree, 5 = strongly disagree
   
   - I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.
   - I feel that I have a number of good qualities.
   - All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.
   - I am able to do things as well as most other people.
   - I feel I do not have much to be proud of.
   - I take a positive attitude toward myself.
On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

1. I wish I could have more respect for myself.
2. I certainly feel useless at times.
3. At times I think I am no good at all.

2. With the same ranks, please answer the following indicating your objectives and reasons for entering college:

1. I entered college to prepare myself for a better job.
2. I entered college to become more educated.
3. I entered college to assess myself academically.
4. I entered college to receive a degree, certificate or college credit.
5. I entered college to receive counseling, testing, and information.
6. I entered college to make contact with other people.
7. I entered college to achieve independence and a sense of identity.
8. I entered college to develop skills to be more effective in my family or community.
9. I entered college because I was bored with my job.
10. I entered college because I was bored at home.
11. I entered college because of lessening family responsibilities.
12. I entered college because of marital tensions and conflicts.
13. I entered college because I moved to this location.
14. I entered college because funds were available.
15. I entered college because of encouragement and/or recommendations from others.

3. With the same ranks, please indicate the ways in which college has influenced you.

1. It has provided focus and direction.
2. I feel more confused about my goals.
3. It has given me confidence and increased self esteem.
4. It has informed me of alternatives and options.
5. It has caused me to seek employment.
6. It has made me decide my place is at home.
7. I feel better educated.
8. I have developed employable skills.
It has increased my self-awareness and insight.
I am a happier person.
I feel tired and depressed.
I have become more open to new ideas and people.
APPENDIX C
EXPLANATION OF RATING AND SCORING OF ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Instructions were: "Please indicate your agreement with the following statements." 1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neither agree nor disagree, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree. (Number 3 category was added for this study as a "catch-all" or "undecided" ranking, and if a respondent marked "3", when scoring it was considered disagreement because apparently some doubt existed about the statement).

Scale Item I was contrived from the combined responses to the three questions listed below. If a respondent answered 2 out of 3 or 3 out of 3 positively (see "NOTE" on last page of this handout), he received a positive score for Scale Item I. If he answered 1 out of 3 or 0 out of 3 positively, he received a negative score for Scale Item I.

I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

1 ____ Strongly agree
2 ____ Agree
*3 ____ Disagree
*4 ____ Strongly disagree

I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

1 ____ Strongly agree
2 ____ Agree
*3 ____ Disagree
*4 ____ Strongly disagree
All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Scale Item II was contrived from the combined responses to two self-esteem questions. 1 out of 2 or 2 out of 2 positive responses were considered positive for Scale Item II.

I am able to do things as well as most other people.

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree

I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree

Scale Item III

I take a positive attitude toward myself.

1 Strongly agree
2 Agree
3 Disagree
4 Strongly disagree
Scale Item IV

On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

1 ____ Strongly agree
2 ____ Agree
*3 ____ Disagree
*4 ____ Strongly disagree

Scale Item V

I wish I could have more respect for myself.

*1 ____ Strongly agree
*2 ____ Agree
3 ____ Disagree
4 ____ Strongly disagree

Scale Item VI was contrived from the combined responses to two self-esteem questions. 1 out of 2 and 2 out of 2 positive responses were considered positive.

I certainly feel useless at times.

*1 ____ Strongly agree
*2 ____ Agree
3 ____ Disagree
4 ____ Strongly disagree

At times I think I am no good at all.

*1 ____ Strongly agree
*2 ____ Agree
3 ____ Disagree
4 ____ Strongly disagree
Note: "Positive" responses indicate low self-esteem.

All "positive" replies = 1 point; all "negative" replies = 0.


(Rosenberg, 1965, pp. 305-307)
RESPONDENTS RESPONSES TO HOW THEY PERCEIVED THAT THEIR DECISION TO ENTER COLLEGE HAD AFFECTED THEM

More self-confidence and pride.

This decision has forced me to be more organized and less frivolous with my time and more in tune with my industry and its developments.

I have become more confident.

I feel more confident in my ability to concentrate and feel like I could take other courses and do well.

My decision to enter college has affected me personally in my organizing of my time. My schedule is arranged around the time of day classes are offered. Despite the demands on my time and energy, I feel I manage both effectively.

I've always wanted a better education. I enjoy learning.

I like myself and the world in general much more. I have the confidence in myself now to be more open and sharing with others. When I make decisions now, they are based on sound reasoning, and I am not afraid to stand by them.

I feel horizons and knowledge have been given to me that I did not know existed. I feel proud about what I have accomplished so far. I enjoy learning and being intellectually stimulated.

I feel more independent, confident, and worthy. Above all, college has broadened the way I view the world and its people. It has also increased my self-awareness and insight. I am now less critical of other people whose opinions differ from mine. In fact I have become more open-minded to people and their ideas.

I feel alive. The years before seem almost dream-like in retrospect. I sometimes feel unhappy about the time I wasted, but that's essentially unproductive, so I don't waste too much energy on it. There is enough time left to do something with myself, and I have set about doing it. I am happiest at the university.
I feel more secure with myself and my capabilities. I feel more intellectually independent.

I don't feel that I'm the same person in that I've grown emotionally and intellectually. I used to detest studying, but now it is something of value for me when the workload is not too heavy.

College is rather now a hobby for me and I enjoy and look forward to it.

I feel better about what I'm doing. There's job security and I just feel great about myself. Pleased with my accomplishments and very happy and proud of my family for their help and support.

Better focus on what I really want at this time in my life - that is, I will probably pursue an M.B.A., rather than finish a Ph.D. in anthropology.

Because much of my work has been in the area of psychology, I am more understanding and aware of others and my own reactions to them. I am learning not to judge others. I often find I am more aloof, and I am satisfied with this, because petty things rarely bother me.

I've had to give up alot of my social time and friends. I have learned to discipline myself in order to meet all the new demands in my life.

I have wanted to be a learned woman and a scholar.

Entering college has helped to achieve this desire.

It has broadened my goals. I am now determined to receive my Ph.D.

Made me realize I had taken a course over my head.

I feel enriched and am growing.

It has helped me to mature and to be more understanding of how difficult it is to work outside the home. In that respect, I think I am more understanding of my husband's difficulties on the job and my son's and daughter's problems at school and work. I am also in closer touch with more age groups through contacts at L.S.U. and that helps relate to my children better. I am also more my own person and less dependent on my family for intellectual and social stimulation.
It has given me a purpose for living and fills my time with something constructive.

The most noticeable change has been in my thinking process. I am now better able to analyze situations.

My college education has given me much more self-confidence. I am much more articulate and while it has not changed my overall philosophy, I am better able to back up my thoughts with words. I have also become a much better painter and feel I will be able to accomplish something with my art.

I feel that I have more social status, and my job is certainly better than if I did not have a degree, and I am undoubtedly better educated, but I still don't feel that I know as much as I should for being nearly forty years old.

My life has changed for the better since I entered college. I am more outgoing. I have more self-confidence. I enjoy going to class. My life is more fulfilled.

Happy, fulfilled as a person. It was defeating to be known as "Sal's wife", or "Fertitta children's mother". I'm now "Joy", a person in my own right, financially independent if necessary. I have financed trips to South America, Russia, South Pacific, and Continental U.S. I urge all women to continue their education for their own sake.

I have more self-confidence in me. I feel worth more now than before although this was not a problem. I have more self-confidence in the job I have and my ability to do my job effectively. I am happy to be able to go on to school. I am happy that my family takes enough of the load from me to make it easy.

I always have felt good about myself but my ability to do well in school and at home have made me feel better about myself. My acceptance by the younger students and their turning to me for help has increased my confidence. I enjoy the mental activity and feel more aware of everything than in the past.

My perception of myself has changed considerably, although college is only one factor in this change. My three daughters have grown up and moved away from Baton Rouge. The "mother role" is less prominent in my life. This would have happened whether or not I was in school. Although I originally entered graduate school
mainly for professional advancement, my present degree is more directly tied to personal enhancement, a fulfillment of a long-stifled desire for scholarship. Whether or not this leads to greater happiness is something that remains to be seen. Regardless, this was something I personally had to do.

Made me realize that contrary to popular belief - college graduates are not an elite class; but rather a necessary ingredient for a well rounded society. But as is often the case, along with a degree (B.A., B.S., etc.) also may come a degree of snobbery! This I detest.

I have been in and out of college for a long time. I have always wanted to get a degree, and will finally receive one in December. It makes me feel that I have accomplished one of my goals - it is a good feeling!

My self-confidence and self-esteem has taken a bad beating. I feel what little I did know is not important and my IQ is zero and the time and effort that I spend on homework and studying was a waste.

Made me feel "good" about doing well in each class - caused more tensions due to increased work load. Other than that, hasn't really effected me.

Have more to do, have to manage time more efficiently.

My decision to enter college has resulted in my feeling good about myself in spite of my age. Although my responsibilities at home have increased in some areas (hubby is in poor health) I still manage to make good grades. College is a place where I can relax and forget my troubles for a while.

More confident in what I think is good (good writing, good photography). Before, if I thought that I had written a great short story or taken a great picture - my personal taste - I was ashamed to admit it - thought it wasn't really good enough. Now I know to follow my hunches and my instincts.

I have more self-confidence, and I also feel that I understand my environment better. I believe I am a better mother to my children because of my studying courses in elementary education. I better understand children now so my going to L.S.U. had definitely been one of the best things I have done in my life.

Positive - increased assertiveness, feeling of
intellectual stimulation, decreased shyness, feeling of accomplishment of a goal in sight; independence and ability; satisfaction of association with people who have interests similar to mine. Negative - guilt about not enough time with husband and kids; frustration because I can't carry a full load; depression and some confusion as to exact nature of goals (depression got so bad that I began to see a psychiatrist); anger and impatience with myself for not living up to my academic potential.

Become more open minded; feel more sure of myself; enjoy learning; not afraid of challenges; and proud of my grades and accomplishments.

It affected my free time mostly. I was already working 40 hours per week and doing most of my household chores and shopping on the weekend. Going back to school meant no more free evenings to attend PTA or church meetings, watch TV, read for fun, practice the piano or gab for an hour with a friend. It meant limited and extremely selective use of a few evenings per semester to attend concerts, school-related functions for my children, or job-related social outings. It meant Christmas shopping after December 15, and spending spring break getting caught up on papers and reading assignments. It meant arranging my entire life around the next test, term paper or any other special class assignment.

At times I want to give up college; I would like to have more time so I could spend more time on studies. I enjoy my classes and learning - I enjoy the mind stimulation.

My latest entry in college has not affected me personally very much. My entry in 1975 affected me greatly. It had been 25 years since I had last been in a college class. I worried for fear I could not learn as rapidly as I had when I was young. I dreaded the ridicule I would encounter from young students, but I was determined to give it a try. I soon found that not only did I learn rapidly, but also I was learning more rapidly and more easily than I had as an undergraduate. I could concentrate better and retain what I had learned better. The young students did not ridicule me; they accepted me as a fellow student and frequently asked my assistance in various ways. My self-confidence increased by leaps and bounds as I made "A's" one after another.

I enjoy going to school and get a thrill out of
learning something new. I will probably take a course at L.S.U. every semester for the rest of my life. I feel more aware and in touch with college-age students. It has helped my self-confidence to know I can still compete on the college level.

I feel better about myself. I have more self-confidence. The time I've had to spend studying was less time I had to worry about the long, contested divorce I've been through. I have achieved an independence that I could never have gained in my marriage. I don't need anyone to take care of me anymore. I can do it myself.

Being in college is a joy and a delight. The learning experiences are great and I feel very privileged. This has enhanced my concept of self worth and my confidence that I can and will be an asset to the community in which I live. Their life is richer and fuller.

I have become more ambitious as far as job possibilities. I am less bored.

I feel great!

It is a very satisfying as well as frustrating experience. The enjoyment of learning is a reward - the tests and grade point average are unwanted pressures.

Once I stopped feeling out of place because I was so much older. I thoroughly enjoyed learning something I've wanted to know for years. I feel a sense of accomplishment, but it's been a terrible struggle - physically, mentally, and financially.

I have become more pleased and self-satisfied with myself and my achievements.

I have always had a good self-image, but now I feel even better about myself. I am looking forward to working with, and perhaps helping young people in the future. I feel as though I am doing something that is truly worthwhile. Most important to myself personally, I feel that I am growing.

I am a little more confident about my ability to compete with others; therefore, I am a little more outgoing than I was before. I enjoy school and I feel like I am a more cheerful person because I am happy. I am more aware than before; therefore, I am more sensitive to others.
I'm proud of my work, but miss having any free time.

I have met many people that I would not have met and have enjoyed these contacts. The teachers I have had in Home Economics and Horticulture are competent and effective teachers, although I know there are ineffective teachers at L.S.U. To this extent, I have been encouraged. The ineffectiveness on campus remains a matter of serious concern to me.

Proved I could go back and do fairly well after 20 years.

It took one year to get over the guilty feeling of taking a younger person's place in college. As I walked across the campus to class, I would be thinking, "What are you doing here? You should be home cleaning out a closet or something!" Now I can talk and laugh with the boys and girls and have made lots of friends. My children are in awe when one of my college friends calls me by my first name on the telephone to ask information about class or to do homework.

I have learned the extent of my competence. I have learned that I am quite competent and that my years spent out of school have been put to good use in terms of my overall employment objectives. I feel that I have a firmer grip on my future. I have found that I am academically inclined and that being in an academic environment is satisfying as opposed to just functional.

Sharpened my wits. Makes me feel good about myself. Gives me a chance to perhaps get a better job.

I enjoy the challenge of learning something new and feel good about "growing" again.

I feel relaxed, well-rounded, and confident to succeed in my profession.

I'm becoming more goal directed in my profession.

Liberating.

Has helped me grow and enjoy life more.

I have become more knowledgable and people respect me for my skills and drive.

More susceptible to pressure.
I have always been a person who stays busy. I find the busier I am the more efficiently I manage my time. If two responsibilities conflict I quickly decide which has first priority and who it affects, then I do the most important one. If time permits I do the other.

Working toward a degree is very self-satisfying. It has closed the generation gap - I understand youth better. My husband resents my getting a degree - I've learned one thing - I feel no guilt about going to school; the resentment is his problem and he'll have to learn to deal with it.

I am enjoying the personal growth. This is something "fulfilling" and "completing" to me. I have really responded to an "inner guidance" type of direction - "pushing" me back into school. I will be very interested to see where the final outcome of this endeavor will lead.

I have learned so much. I find my interests are different. I enjoy talking to people more and just feel a better person for having attended college.

I feel more knowledgeable and realize how little I know of what there is to know.

I feel comfortable and confident in my abilities. I have shared experiences that if not in college they would not have taken place.

To some degree, I am intimidated by the need to constantly prove myself (via quizzes and tests). I probably over study on the few courses that I take each semester in order to match the memory capacities of 20-year-olds. On the other hand, I am satisfied and challenged by the subject matter and am greatly enjoying the learning experience.

I have become more independent as far as doing things for my family is concerned - I have made them more independent. If they drop their clothes on the floor, they pick them up. This includes my husband as well! I am more calm in dealing with other people, I don't feel as intimidated by others as I once did.

I feel healthier and happier since I'm always so busy. I also find my self-confidence has grown.

It has made me more tired physically and more aware of how much I do not know about literature.
My scope and focus has broadened. The exposure has given me a change in direction; and also changed many values. My dimensions have expanded.

It helped me understand I have the same opportunity to get a degree as the 18 year olds. My confidence has been boosted by knowing I can do college level work and made a decent average too. It is up to me to get through. When I tell someone I’m going to college, the shingles seem to fall off their eyes. And, they look at me in a different perspective now, whereas in the past, another opinion was held.

It gave me a great sense of accomplishment and pride and a sense of entering a new phase of my life.

Made me more confident.

Somewhat happier.

My mental horizons have expanded. There are more people to talk to and share with. I have more self-confidence, greater self-esteem and I’m more open to doing new things today instead of putting them off until tomorrow. I view my children’s decisions and my own in a less rigid way.

It has given me self-esteem and has helped me to relate to others in the teaching profession.

I enjoy it.

Without a degree I’d become totally dependent. The only painful thing about going back, for a person who has had a reponsible job is that every day is begun in total ignorance and there is never a chance to do what you do well. I have come to dislike the attitude of faculty toward students, in general. Think it establishes very poor behavior patterns in student body. This is observed. I have not been so treated. Most have been most helpful to me.

I do enjoy the class work but find it too hard to work (a full work week) and go to college too. Not so much the time as the cumulative effect of too much to remember and see to.

Entering college has given me a better outlook for an interesting future.

It was the best decision I ever made for myself with the possible exception of my second marriage. I have
been able to change careers in midlife and am now within sight of fulfilling all the career goals I have set up for myself.

It has increased my self-image, confidence, and independence. It has broadened my outlook to a degree. I am looking forward to returning for another class.

Very satisfying most of the time, when energy levels are up. You can operate on pure enthusiasm for a long time but being very tired is part of the whole scene. Usually a person tries to be all things to all people and it takes a while to learn to compromise. I feel as if I have accomplished a great deal, a challenge I set for myself and completed. Now that I have finished seven years of school, I am ready for a whole new set of challenges.

It has opened a great world for me. I love my profession and I enjoy my professional classes.

I love it and hate to see it come to an end. I plan to take more courses after I receive my degree.

I am more convinced than ever that growth in learning takes place in proportion to the amount of time one spends in research reading on one's own.

Have a greater self-esteem.

Reentering college has given me a method of "mainstreaming" as it were. I have not yet decided on the focus of a degree but the PASS program has made me get out of the house and get moving at a time when I needed a boost in morale and a chance to redirect my life.

I feel better about myself.

From the information and exposure I have had in my three semesters there has been a tremendous change in personality and attitude.

Little time to do creative things such as sewing, art, etc... Difficult to find study time. Because of major medical problems, I can now accept a "B" grade. Before, I had to make an "A".

I reached by goal - earned the respect of those whom I met at school and applied myself well academically and am proud of my efforts. I'll never have to wonder whether I am a worthy individual. I've tried myself
and not found myself wanting. I was able to achieve this attitude because of my husband's continuing support. His pride in my efforts is evident now, for which I will be continually grateful.

I'm afraid my entering college has made me a much less "together" person. With a large family, my time is much in demand, and I seem to be less able to meet those demands, even though I do have the support of my family.

At times, I ask myself why I put myself through the "agony" of tests, term papers, etc. (I am highly competitive and have always been self-motivated. Not only do I expect A's from myself, I am not happy unless I am first in the class). When I see the final exam grades posted the exileration is what makes it worthwhile! I have then regained a feeling of worth. In addition, I enjoy learning for just the sake of learning; so I am happier now. If I were forced to discontinue my studies, I think I would probably sink into a state of deep depression!

It has helped me to again feel competent and given me a consuming interest.

It has renewed and enhanced a lifelong sense of life as adventure! Learning has always been exciting and still is. I am gaining confidence in my ability to assimilate and retain, reviewing math on the side, eagerly anticipating becoming a full time student. How altogether wonderful to have new goals at an age when so many people choose of become old! I'm forever grateful to the friend who said, "You enjoy new ideas so much, why don't you"

It has made me extremely aware that as a person I am able to learn after 50 years of my life has been spent. Personally, I feel that our colleges today have much to offer and improve a person's life especially when years of experience in that life has been satisfying and productive.

Convinced me that I'm capable of learning and there is a lot to learn.

I feel better.

I now feel I am an artist because I have had four semesters of art history, an invaluable course in art structure, two essential basic courses in oil painting, and three in drawing. I was afraid to draw and traced
whenever I could. Now I have confidence and ability, and have almost learned not to apologize! Before I entered LSU, I seemed to be on the bottom rung of the ladder with my painting friends — and I was tired of my role.

So far, I have realized I can do the work. Even though I took only six hours each semester, I was afraid. Now I do have more confidence — still a little afraid. My interests are more varied.

It has fulfilled a need I felt.

I enjoy balancing job, family, and school. Each adds a dimension to the others and there is pleasure in each.

More self-esteem and hopes of better paying jobs.

Feel more confident about ideas and I now have facts to back opinions.

I have increased my personal art skills and my artistic horizons have expanded.

I have a new outlook on life. Upon graduation I will have more control over my life.

I never feel I have enough time to get everything done. Most of all classes and school work are done after 4:30 P.M. when I am tired from a day's work. I don't have much time for fun and social activities.

I am very busy! I feel I am accomplishing something I have long desired. I began college in 1950 and have struggled to balance work and family responsibilities. When demands were too great I had to put aside my education activities. Now that I have retired, I am completing my studies and enjoy the work.

I find that at age 60 my learning mode has changed. I find assimilation hard to do in short time periods.

My decision to enroll in college was a result of my going into teaching and it is impossible at times to separate the effects of the two. In general, both have been fulfilling, as my children have grown up; my biggest regret is that the time I spent on teaching and school has taken me away from friends too much. I have some colleagues who are friends, too, however.

Entering college has been one of the most rewarding decisions I have ever made. Academic achievement has
given me more confidence in my ability to perform. Also, there is so much reading, writing, studying, researching, and general preparation to do that I am never bored. Among the greatest rewards has been the exposure to new personalities and ideas. The study and experiences in college life have helped me to understand myself better, an insight that could not have been gained had I remained outside of advanced education. The course of study I have pursued has opened up a vast world of information and has supplied me with food for the soul as well as the mind.

Happier. More secure - always had fear would not be able to provide for myself and youngest son if something happens to husband. More interested - no "empty nest" problems - enjoy fellowship with other "mid-age" coeds.

I enjoy school. I love learning. Learning keeps me interesting and interested in what is happening in my major, the city, and the world. It keeps me enthusiastic, the more I learn and do - the more I want to learn and do.

It as provided a great deal of personal growth, self-awareness, improved thought process capacity and skill, and increased ease in problem solving.

Some stress and worry over responsibilities.

Beautifully, I have met the nicest people.

Personally, I have conflicting emotions now that graduation is here - a trifle apprehensive at getting a more demanding job than I have now. I work in the day - school and home at night.

I have become more aware of my feelings for wanting to become more independent and I am less tolerant of those people who will not look at opportunities objectively.

First - it has put me in the position to be able to take the CPA exam which will be a big boost in my career. Second - it has increased my confidence and self-esteem because I have found my knowledge, experience, and education to be so superior to students entering at 18.

Only took two courses - was not prepared for the depth of the courses and needed more time for myself at the time. I dropped them when I'd gotten all I wanted from them.
I am better informed, better educated, have more self-esteem, confidence, and I am aware that I have the ability to pass a college course as well as someone of any age.

I got rattled in the overheated classroom and went blank on simple math problems I do in everyday life. I did not return to UNO until "UNO-DOWNTOWN" developed at 1001 Howard with its open-door policy on special students. Went in to get feet wet — terrified — and found it delightful. It has given me more courage to speak aloud in gatherings other than advertising meetings (or onstage as someone else; always easy) and to have a wonderful time with zinging quotations, from Ben Franklin to Shakespeare — at appropriate moments. It was wonderful, too, to have the latter's work brought to life in clear explanation. (I'd done readings in earlier life for the Shakespeare Society here, without understanding a word I was saying. High school Shakespeare is not enough).

I feel good that I'm achieving a goal that I set for myself. I always felt inferior in not having a college degree. That feeling is going away the closer I get to finishing. At my age, I'm often times embarrassed to tell people I'm going to college. In fact, it is unknown to my husband’s associates. I felt that if I didn’t do well grade wise or if I decided college wasn’t for me I didn’t want to have to tell them I quit. I plan to tell them once I graduate.

I got a divorce (it helped give me the confidence to overcome the fear of loneliness and failure). I feel stifled because it will take so long for me to get a degree since I have to work full time.

By learning more about people and their behaviors and their way of life it helped me to understand them better and myself.

There has really been little affect on my personal life. I enjoy my work, school, and being a minister’s wife.

I enjoy going to class. The mental stimulation is great. But, most of all, I have enjoyed the young people! They have all been so helpful and polite.

I feel compelled to excel at what I do to compensate for being older. This has affected my health. I am now learning to pace myself and thus resolve this
problem.

I'm much happier with myself and I feel that I'm accomplishing something I've wanted to do for a long time.

I feel that I know more about the trends that have taken place since 1961 when I got my B.A. I feel more comfortable at work.

I'm proud of my work but too tired and am depressed about what I have to give up.

I do not feel it has changed very much. I have a little more confidence in myself.

I have gained more confidence and self-awareness in my ability to deal with personal problems and decision making. I also have eliminated the feeling of failure.

I feel much more fulfilled in being a teacher than I did as a homemaker.

Has made me more secure upon reaching retirement era.

I feel good about exercising an almost stagnated brain.

I get frustrated. Classes are too fast and too much material is covered. I only study to take an exam. My curiosity is aroused many times and I cannot spend time satisfying my own personal interests in a subject. I can only satisfy the test and therefore the knowledge gained is only a fleeting thing. Last summer I sustained injuries to both knees - resulting in surgery. Sitting for long hours in class and at study causes me much discomfort and saps my energy potential.

I graduated from NSU in Natchitoches in 1955 with a diploma in Nursing. It was first for my personal satisfaction that I decided to go back to get a Bachelor of Science degree. I was satisfied with my job - I didn't have to have the degree - it's just something I wanted to do and so I did!

I have gained much self-confidence and am very proud of my graduate status.

I feel overaged when faced with this question. I want to have professional standing to increase my earning power to be more independent.

Increased my self-confidence but restricted my social
life considerably because have less time and out of my
element age-wise.

My college years have been the most fulfilling,
interesting, and happiest years of my life thus far.
Currently, I am investigating graduate schools and am
anticipating greater and happier years in the future.

I feel it will be easier to obtain a job if the need
arises. I also am pleased to see I can do equal or
better work than the younger students. I have also
been accepted by the younger students and can relate to
them. If I decide to go on with my education and
become a certified teacher I think I would be an
effective teacher.

It has definitely improved my self-image. I know I am
capable of learning and expanding my potentials -
intellectually rather than just physically.

It has already enabled me to attain several
miscellaneous goals (that is discovering a dinosaur,
doing museum research). I am less tolerant of personal
"ivory-tower" forbles of egotistic professors, and more
willing (I hope) to stand up for principles.

I'm much busier now and have less time to do things I
enjoy - less time to be alone. My life is much more
structured and every minute scheduled for either work,
class, study or housework.

A high sense of purpose, exciting goals, feeling of
independence, self-confidence, and higher interest in
life. Totally positive!

I am now my own person, not just someone's wife.

It gave me a goal.

I have been able to prove to myself that I too can
obtain this education. For years, I believed I was too
stupid because I struggled through high school. It has
given me alot of self-confidence.

I enjoy the mental stimulation - feel better about
myself.

It has made me more confident, much more independent,
and sure of the direction I want to go.

I am much happier. Four of my children attend LSU and
we suddenly have alot in common.
I think that I am much more self-confident and self-assured. I feel good about myself, and I know that I am more interesting. I will continue to go to school when I want to. I still want to study art and plan to do this in the near future. I hope that I can always learn and grow.

I have much more self-confidence, am better able to express myself verbally, have a wider range of interests, and have a better opinion of myself.

I'm enjoying learning new things. I'm also pleased that even though at my age I have more trouble studying for tests, I usually get A's.

A feeling of accomplishment of life time goal. Has raised my self-esteem.

I have always wanted to go to college and get a degree.

I have become more self-confident and am less bothered by petty happenings.

I feel better about myself. Have a better rapport with my husband. The future, whatever it holds, does not frighten me because I think I have skills now that will enable me to cope with most any situation or event.

I am a far more serious student this time through academia. The "reentry problems" that I experienced were due primarily to the changes in science, math, and technology that had occurred since 1962. Set theory, mathematical modeling, and computer assisted course work have been the biggest hurdles. The challenge was similar to that faced when I entered a scientific college curriculum following the junior year of high school, equipped with only one science course - chemistry and three dismal math courses, Algebra I & II and plane geometry. So far have successfully met every challenge that I have chosen to confront.

By increasing my education and certification I've found many new jobs available. Changing from a regular education teacher (1st grade) to a special education teacher, a resource teacher, and now an assessment teacher has kept me from becoming stagnant. I just wish the monetary rewards were greater.

I enjoy my job as a teacher and all the children. I am pleased with what I am doing.
I feel I have a broader scope of knowledge.

My self-esteem and confidence have increased tremendously. My ability to read better literature (my favorite activity) has increased. I am proud of myself for doing this and I am proud of my grades.

I am more confident in my learning abilities. Met some interesting people. Bettered myself career wise and now am legally separated, but happy.

As a substitute for inability to quit work and return full time to R.N. school; from a major in education to get work with summers off at decent pay, to transfer to general studies program when discovered could never finish this program because of day class times; to resignation in finally getting any degree, as I have become sort of a joke because of length of time I've been attending school - but always working full time, managing my home, earning a real estate brokers license, and a private pilots license.

I feel much better about myself. I don't feel stagnant mentally. Learning is exciting. Things I used to dislike (research in the library) is interesting and even fun on occasion. I feel like I'm developing more as a human and a parent.

I am happier and can't wait to continue my education.

I am delighted to discover that my work in the fine arts curriculum is above average and has been chosen on several occasions by faculty members for undergraduate shows. This is a great boost to me. The attitude of students has been wonderful. I feel if I were isolated or excluded it would be very difficult for me to work long studio hours in close contact with people. There is a shared joy in good design and no jealousy, certainly a change from office work!

More confident of myself around colleagues and superiors. Meet people more easily. More independent.

It has given me a feeling of accomplishment and fulfillment. My husband and daughters are proud of me. My principal and fellow teachers have more respect for me. I am very happy that I received a Master's degree in Education in December 1981.

I am more outgoing with people now. I feel secure, confident, and have gained more self-esteem. I really feel good about myself as a person now.
I'm happy and enthusiastic!

Although I spent too much time, energy, and money in attending college, I did not feel sorry. The decision to enter college caused another decision which is that I wish I could spend more time in studying and take more courses at a time.

I am tired all the time - happy and relieved when I get exams over - enjoy class time.

No affect. I wanted to teach and to teach I had to go to school.

I have become much more confident in my abilities and I am much more satisfied with myself. I feel this has been good for my children.

It has made me more aware of the need for higher education.

Had more interesting things to talk about and was able to converse better with others on modern day technology, that is computers and business ideas.

* To summarize the above information, only a small portion of mature college women perceived that reentering college had had a negative effect upon them. This conclusion was based on the findings that 9% of the respondents on an open-ended question reported increases in stress and poor health. In addition, 50% reported positive influences in the form of self-awareness and self-esteem. Other positive influences reported by the respondents included gained new interests and enjoyment of learning (18%), increased happiness and feeling of security (15%), able to meet goals and further career (7%), and increased self-discipline and better organized (1%).
VITA

Pamela Moore Lafont was born November 12, 1956, in Jacksonville, Texas. She was graduated from South Lafourche High School in May, 1974, and entered Louisiana State University that fall. In 1977 she transferred to Nicholls State University and received her Bachelor of Science degree in Vocational Home Economics Education in December, 1978.

Following graduation, she taught Home Economics eight months at Raceland Junior High School in Lafourche Parish. The following year, she accepted the position of Home Economics graduate assistant at Nicholls State University. In December, 1980, she received a Master of Education degree in Supervision and Administration from Nicholls State University.

In May, 1980, she was married to Victor R. Lafont. They are the proud parents of one daughter, Lauren Vienne born February 15, 1986.

In 1981, she became an instructor at Nicholls State University and presently is teaching in the Department of Home Economics.

In September, 1981, she received permission from the Louisiana State University Graduate School to
pursue a terminal degree. She has completed course and residence requirements, and is now a candidate for the Doctor of Education degree in Extension Education.
DOCTORAL EXAMINATION AND DISSERTATION REPORT

Candidate: Pamela M. Lafont

Major Field: Extension Education

Title of Dissertation: Family Support Factors Associated with the Self-Esteem of Mature Women Enrolled in Selected Louisiana Colleges and Universities

Approved:

[Signatures]

Major Professor and Chairman

Dean of the Graduate School

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures]

Date of Examination:

June 20, 1986