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A Comparative Study of the Motivations and Academic Self-Concept of Midlife Male Graduate Students with Those of Midlife Female, Early Adulthood Male, and Early Adulthood Female Graduate Students

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A Comparative Study of the Motivations and Academic Self-Concept of
Midlife Male Graduate Students with Those of Midlife Female,
Early Adulthood Male, and Early Adulthood Female Graduate Students

by

Scott Brewer Clift

A dissertation submitted to
the Doctoral Program Faculty in Educational Leadership
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for the degree of

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COLLEGE OF EDUCATION AND HUMAN SERVICES

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Looking back over the course of my doctoral studies, the historian in me regrets that I did not keep a diary in which I accurately and fully inscribed the support I received from so many sources. I would like to pause now and thank all who offered me assistance along the way. I ask the indulgence of any who I leave unnamed.

As a later-in-life student finishing my masters in education studies, I received a gentle nudge from one of my professors, Dr. Robert J. Drummond, to consider enrolling in the educational leadership doctoral program. Little did he suspect how seriously I would take his suggestion. As my doctoral committee Chairperson, his wisdom and humor have lightened my way. He and my other committee members have kept me on course. I am grateful to Dr. Katherine Kasten for her commitment to quality; to Dr. Betty G. Gilkison, for her unflagging optimism and encouragement; and to Dr. Tuiren A. Bratina for her attention to detail and creative suggestions.

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

A Comparative Study of the Motivations and Academic Self-Concept of Midlife Male Graduate Students with Those of Midlife Female, Early Adulthood Male, and Early Adulthood Female Graduate Students.

by

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University of North Florida

Professor Robert J. Drummond, Chairperson

This study was designed to compare midlife male graduate students with midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students in terms of their motivations for returning to higher education and their academic self-concept as returning students. Data were gathered, using Boshiers's Education Participation Scale (1995) and Drummond's Academic Self-Concept Scale (1984), from graduate students at a comprehensive, urban, southeastern, public university of approximately 10,000 students. The 426 graduate student participants were enrolled in three colleges (Business, Education, and Health) at the university.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), univariate analysis of variance, and multiple comparison tests results indicate significant motivational and academic self-concept differences. Midlife males' mean scores were significantly lower in the motivation category of Professional Advancement than the other three age/gender groups. Midlife males' and females' academic self-concept mean scores were significantly higher than

early adulthood females in the category of Extraversion, and higher than early adulthood males in the category of Academic Skills.

These findings may be useful in educational recruitment and curriculum programming. Implications for practice and recommendations for research are provided.

Chapter I

Introduction and Background

Are midlife male students' reasons for pursuing graduate studies similar to other graduate student groups? Are midlife graduate students' perceptions of their experiences as returning students similar to other graduate student groups?

Because of the scarcity of research into midlife male graduate students, there are no definitive answers to these and other related questions.

This study undertakes to provide empirical data through examining and comparing the motivations and academic self-concept of male graduate students with midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students at a regional urban university. A basic premise of this study is that adult males, along with all other groups in American society, have been affected by the profound economic, social, health and cultural changes of the latter half of the twentieth century. The results of these changes can be seen in the no longer traditional family life, the no longer traditional workplace, and the need to prepare for multiple careers and longer lives.

Midlife male students are part of a trend of older students and returning younger adult students described as "nontraditional students" who have been enrolling in increasing numbers in all areas of higher education (Cross, 1981;

Lerner & King, 1992). At the same time, social, student demographic, and economic changes over the past decade have contributed to significant pressures on institutions of higher education to cope with shrinking total enrollment numbers and available financial aid (Kallio, 1995; Katz & Hartnett, 1976; Malaney, 1987).

These pressures have led to a growing interest in more effective ways to understand and project the potential populations of graduate students and the factors affecting their decision to go to graduate school (Olson, 1992). Researchers have noted the need for more information about midlife college students (Dellman-Jenkins, Fruit, & Lambert, 1984). Within this higher education population, the lack of citations concerning men in midlife indicates that they constitute one of the least researched student groups. Over the past several decades significant economic change including technology and downsizing have had a dramatic impact on many Americans, particularly traditional male workforce members. The economic changes first affected blue collar manufacturing jobs and more recently in white collar managerial jobs (Bouvier & De Vita, 1991; Easterlin, Macdonald, & Macunovich, 1990; Lewis, 1994; Rifkin, 1995). A number of research studies have been done in related areas of social and academic change such as the phenomenon of women returning to higher education and entering or reentering the workforce (Bonett, 1994; MacKinnon-Slaney,

Barber, & Slaney, 1988; Rose, 1986). Other studies have investigated nontraditional students including minorities and adults over the age of twenty-five (Metzner & Bean, 1987; Terenzini, Rendon, Upcraft, Millar, Allison, Gregg, & Jalomo, 1994).

A quantitative research process will be used to compare the motivations to return to school and the academic self-concept of midlife male students with those of midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students. The study was conducted using two questionnaires, the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale (1984a) and the Education Participation Scale (A-form) (Boshier, 1982, 1995).

Statement of Purpose

The purposes of this study of graduate students were: (1) to compare whether there are differences in the motivations of midlife male graduate students with other groups of graduate students (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students) returning to school; (2) to compare midlife male graduate students with other groups of graduate students (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students) in terms of their academic self-concept; (3) to compare graduate degree programs in a regional urban university in terms of their participants' (midlife males, midlife females, early adulthood males, and early adulthood females) motivations; (4) to

compare several graduate degree programs in a regional urban university in terms of their participants' (midlife males, midlife females, early adulthood males, and early adulthood females) levels of academic self-concept; (5) to compare how the motivations and the academic self-concept of graduate students differ based on the school-related independent variable of years out of school before starting their current graduate program; (6) to compare how the motivations and the academic self-concept of graduate students differ based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA.

Significance of the Study

This study is important in terms of the demographic factors related to the overall generational shift to an “aging America.” Members of the largest national cohort, known as the baby boom generation, are in their midlife years and have longer life expectancies than prior generations (Bouvier & De Vita, 1991; Cross, 1981). The large, midlife cohort is also experiencing growing economic pressures in terms of needing lifelong education and training for multiple careers as a result of corporate downsizing and global competition (“Baby Boomers Increasingly Flocking to Colleges,” 1996; Lerner & King, 1992; Lewis, 1994). The extent of these work place changes challenges even the expanded adult development stage career-role models such as the “Life-Career Rainbow” developed by Donald Super (Super, 1984). The pressures to plan for longer and more challenging work

lives have been heightened by upcoming government retirement benefit cutbacks, such as raising the age of eligibility for social security retirement, and the projected shrinkage of adequate retirement funding (Light, 1988).

The educational demographics indicate that members of the current midlife cohort have already achieved a higher level of education than their parents' generation with many baby boomers having attended some level of college as traditional students (Bouvier & De Vita, 1991). There has been a notable increase in the higher education enrollment of students over 40 years of age, going from 5.5% of the total enrollment population in 1970 to 11.2% in 1993. The forty-and-older students represent 10% of all undergraduates, 22% of all graduate students, and 6% of all professional students. Males comprise approximately 34% of the undergraduate and graduate students over the age of forty (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1996).

Existing studies on the broad subject of nontraditional students in higher education have emphasized the need for more research especially in the areas of minority and older students (Spanard, 1990; Terenzini & Pascarella, 1991). There appears to be a paucity of research, in terms of citations in educational research journals, counseling journals, dissertation abstracts, and on-line data bases, on the topic of midlife male students returning to higher education and graduate programs. At the same time, a number of studies have been undertaken

concerning women, minorities, and students over 25 years of age in terms of their motivations and academic self-concept as returning higher education students (Henry & Basile, 1994; Richter & Witten, 1984; Sewall, 1984; Smart & Pascarella, 1987; Spanard, 1990).

Studies of midlife male graduate students can serve to fill a gap in the research literature. More importantly, such studies can assist administrators of traditional and nontraditional programs in better understanding the needs of this emerging population of adult learners.

The results of this study have significance in the following ways. The study of midlife male graduate students has developed base-line data on the motivations and academic self-concept of four age/gender groups of graduate students at a regional urban university. The study compares midlife male graduate students with the midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate student populations in terms of their motivations and academic self-concept. The study further examined differences in the motivations and academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students based on variables of undergraduate GPA and years out of school before starting current graduate program. The data from the motivational orientation and academic self-concept instruments supplies information that will assist those engaged both in recruitment and services planning for the population of midlife male graduate students.

Definition of Terms

For purposes of this study, the following terms are operationally defined:

Academic major	Based on the participant's graduate program.
Midlife graduate students	Females and males between the ages of 40 and 59. (Levinson, 1986)
Early adulthood graduate students	Females and males between the ages of 20 and 39.
Motivation	Orientations that impel students to enroll in continuing educational activities, such as professional advancement. (Boshier, 1991; Morstain & Smart, 1977).
Academic self-concept	Learners' image of themselves as self-regulated learners (Drummond, 1988; Markus & Wurf, 1987; McCombs, 1989).

Objectives of the Study

There were two major objectives for the study. The first was to learn more about the motivations and the academic self-concept of a sparsely researched population of midlife males who have chosen to return to higher education and pursue graduate degrees. The second, closely connected to the first, was to

compare the motivations and self-concept of the midlife male graduate students with midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students.

Research Questions

The study was designed to provide data to answer the following questions:

1. Age/gender group comparisons:

1.a. Do the midlife male graduate students differ from midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students in terms of motivations?

1.b. Do the midlife male graduate students differ from midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students in terms of academic self-concept?

2. Within college comparisons for participant groups (midlife male with midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students):

2.a. Do the graduate student groups differ in terms of motivations at a college level?

2.b. Do the graduate student groups differ in terms of academic self-concept at a graduate degree program level?

3. Between college-comparisons:

3.a. Do graduate students' motivations differ significantly based on graduate college?

3.b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ significantly based on graduate college?

4. Comparisons based on the school-related independent variable of years out of school before current graduate program:

4.a. Do graduate students' motivations differ significantly based on the school-related independent variable of years out school before current graduate program?

4.b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ significantly based on the school-related independent variable of years out of school before current graduate program?

5. Comparisons based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA:

5.a. Do graduate students' motivations differ significantly based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA?

- 5.b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ significantly based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA?

Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations in the study that must be considered. One limitation of the study was one of accurate observation and measurement that is characteristic of survey research involving attitudinal or psychological constructs. Self-reporting instruments are influenced by many factors including the respondents' attitudes toward survey questionnaires, their honesty and degree of thoughtfulness in responding to the items on the surveys, and their understanding of the individual survey terminology.

A second limitation of the study is that the graduate student population was limited to graduate students attending a regional urban university. The selection of classes was determined by the willingness of professors teaching graduate classes to have their students participate in the study. As a result the study does not seek to represent a "universe" of graduate student motivational orientations and academic self-concept but does offer a starting base-line regarding these constructs.

Conclusion

Chapter One provides an initial overview of the nontraditional, older students returning to higher education and an overview of the sparse research of one group in particular, midlife male students. Chapter Two contains a review and analysis of literature related to the research. The first section deals with adult learners and lifelong learning in a changing society. The second section of the literature review presents theoretical concepts of developmental stages. The third section of the literature review addresses the theoretical work done on motivations for returning to higher education. The fourth section of the literature review addresses the theoretical construct of self-concept. The fifth section of the literature review deals with the research on the recruitment of graduate students.

In Chapter Three the research methodology is presented. Included in this section is a discussion of the research questions, the research design, the population sample, and the statistical treatment of the data. Chapter Four presents the results of the study. A summary of the findings, including a discussion of the implications of the study for understanding the motivations and academic self-concept of midlife male students, and recommendations for future study is contained in Chapter Five.

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The review of literature for this exploratory study of midlife male graduate students includes five areas of concern. The first, as an introduction, is a discussion of the phenomenon of adult learners and lifelong learning. The second area of reviewed literature examines the theoretical concepts of developmental life stages. The third involves a review of the literature of adults' motivations to pursue further higher education. The fourth area includes a review of literature of the theoretical construct of self-concept and one of its subsets, academic self-concept. The fifth area includes a review of literature related to the recruitment of graduate students.

Adult Learners and Lifelong Learning in a Changing Society

That the adult learner as an entity has distinctive learning motivations and needs is a relatively recent concept. The voluntary nature of adult learners' choices to participate in education distinguishes them from younger students (grades K-12) who are required, or expected, to attend school. Malcolm Knowles and subsequent theorists developed the classification of andragogy to differentiate the instruction of adult learners from the traditional instruction of children and youths known as pedagogy (Elias & Merriam, 1995; Knowles, 1970). Though adult learning theorists appreciated that there were areas of overlap between adults

and younger learners, they found that adult learners as a category had greater experience-based capacities for self-direction and self-reflection (Brookfield, 1986; Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Brookfield (1993) states that “The one consistent element in the majority of definitions of self-direction is the importance of the learner’s exercising control over all educational decisions” (p. 233). The quality of choice is an important aspect of the adult learner’s exercise of self-direction whether in formal or informal educational settings (Knowles, 1984; Penland, 1979).

The recent attention to adult learners has been accompanied by a similar interest in the area of lifelong learning. Lifelong learning is a broad term used to describe individuals’ formal and informal learning needs throughout their life spans (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Dave, 1976). There have been notable demographic trends reflecting the aging of American society in the numbers of nontraditional age adults returning to school and adult educational attainment levels. The National Center for Education Statistics (NCES) noted in a 1987 study a 45% increase in the number of higher education students between the ages of 35 and 44 (U.S. Department of Education, 1987). In terms of educational attainment levels, the 1980 Bureau of Census study found that students over the age of 25 have increased their years of schooling from 8.6 in 1940 to 12.5 in 1979 (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). A more recent study completed in 1995 by the

National Center for Education Statistics revealed that, between the years of 1970 and 1993, the enrollment of students over the age of 40 in higher education had grown by 235% and that 79% of those students were enrolled part-time (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1996).

The changing educational demographic trends have been accompanied by significant socio-economic trends in America. In terms of workplace changes, the 1980's and 1990's were periods in which American corporations did substantial downsizing (Rifkin, 1995). Many of those who were affected by this trend were traditional, white, male middle managers who had never expected to experience the sort of job uncertainty that had hit their blue collar counterparts in the preceding two decades (Lewis, 1994; Rifkin, 1995; Rosenblatt, 1996). A second major change at the workplace has been the increasing presence of female workers, with many of them being career-oriented workers (Bouvier & DeVita, 1991; Rosenfeld & Stark, 1987). A final workplace trend related to the baby boom generation has been the decline of younger workers which could create a demand to retrain or recruit older workers. However, as Rifkin (1995) notes, many of the stable jobs that have been downsized have been replaced by technology, and a number of the remaining jobs require computer literacy.

Other significant social changes include the growth that has occurred in terms of the number of female heads of households which more than doubled

between 1970 and 1982 (Bouvier & DeVita, 1991). A similar trend occurred in divorce rates. Half of the marriages for men and women between the ages of 25 and 34 ended in divorce (Bouvier & DeVita, 1991; Rosenfeld & Stark, 1987). The educational and socio-economic trends of the current population of adult learners present a challenge for educational planners in both traditional and nontraditional settings.

Theoretical Concepts of Developmental Stages

The theoretical literature in developmental psychology suggests several important considerations which are relevant to this study. The first of these is that the human life span occurs in a sequence of identifiable stages each with its own significant life tasks (Erikson, 1959). The theorists emphasize the dynamics of self-identity and growth. Individuals' experiences, as they move through these developmental stages, are a function of their own personality traits as well as their historical, cultural, and social make-ups (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991; Woolfe, Murgatroyd, & Rhys, 1983). The second consideration is that the early theorists focused their attention on defining the formative stages from childhood to early adulthood. One of the most influential early theoretical models was defined by Erik Erikson with his eight stages. The first six of which were devoted to the ages of infancy through young adulthood; young adulthood being the end of college and the start of work and marriage years (Erikson, 1959). The last two stages

covered a long span of time with “adulthood” followed by “old age.” Subsequent theorists have worked on expanding the model to define the stages of adulthood in more detail.

Darkenwald and Merriam (1982) state, “Adulthood is no longer thought of as merely a plateau between adolescence and old age. There is increasing evidence that adulthood is a changing, fluctuating, developmental phenomenon” (p.87). Cross (1981) observes that “While, for the most part, individuals maintain personal consistency, some age trends can be identified. The common stereotype of the adult moving from adolescence to old age is one of generally rising self-confidence, autonomy, and sense of self up to old age...” (p.166). Theorists, including Erikson (1982), Havighurst (1952), and Levinson (1978), have defined this middle period as one with critical social and vocational tasks whose outcomes could lead either to a sense of continued growth and establishment or a sense of stagnation and nonaccomplishment. Levinson expanded on Erikson’s ideas with his study of a cohort of male adults. Levinson’s framework clearly defined adult male chronological life stages, “seasons,” connected to each other by five year transitional periods. His model describes early adulthood as the time period from the age of twenty-two to forty years of age in which the individual first enters the adult world and by the age of thirty is coming to terms with major life commitments in terms of social and work choices. This period is then followed

by a “settling down” substage leading up to the next crucial transition, the midlife transition, which Levinson’s model portrays as lasting from age forty to age forty-five (Levinson 1981). The midlife years are a life stage period in which Levinson and other theorists saw midlife adults struggling in varying degrees with questions about life’s meaning and their own eventual aging and death (Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968). Other theorists also have expanded on Erikson’s adulthood stage by adding a more elaborated list of developmental crises which include valuing wisdom versus physical powers, socializing versus sexuality, ego differentiation versus work-role preoccupation, and mental flexibility versus mental rigidity (Peck, 1968).

Other theorists such as Gilligan, Ward, Taylor, and Barding (1988) have questioned Levinson’s model as being too oriented to male developmental issues and too specific in terms of time sequences (Super, Osborne, Walsh, Brown, & Niles, 1992). At the same time, there does appear to be agreement around the fundamental issues of male midlife development-related challenges in terms of expanding social relations, moving beyond occupational centered identity, and adapting to declining physical prowess (Peck, 1968; Sheehy, 1995; Sherman, 1987).

Cross (1981) was one of the first to incorporate developmental theories with her Characteristics of Adults as Learners (CAL) conceptual framework

combining the life phase models (Levinson, 1978; Neugarten, 1968) with the psychological models (Erikson, 1959; Kohlberg & Turiel, 1973). CAL assists the educator in responding to the adult learner's situational and personal variables (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982). Further study is needed to furnish practical ways to relate developmental theory to guide educators in areas of adult learner-oriented recruitment, curriculum design, and instructional strategies.

Motivations For Returning To Higher Education

The theoretical literature about adult motivations for participating in higher education suggests several considerations that are relevant to the study. The first of these is that adults do have an identifiable spectrum of motivations for making the choice to voluntarily pursue further education. Early researchers in the field (Houle, 1961; Tough, 1971) used interviews to gather data. Houle's findings led to a basic three-way motivational typology: goal-oriented, activity-oriented, and learning-oriented. The typology has been built upon by subsequent researchers (Cross, 1981; Fujita-Starck, 1996; Morstain & Smart, 1977).

Herzberg (1962) defines motivation as "...man's compelling urge to realize his own potentiality by continuous growth" (p. 56). Bandura (1995) and Schunk (1989) propose that efficacy and causal attribution beliefs affect motivation and performance including students' decisions to pursue self-directed learning. Fishbein developed a theory of reasoned action which relates attitude and belief in

predicting behavior and motivation (Anderson & Fishbein, 1967; Fishbein, 1967; Pryor, 1990).

The second consideration is the demographic characteristics of the returning adult learners. Early national level studies of participation in adult education beginning with the Johnstone and Rivera study in 1965 found that typical adult learners fit a profile of being young, better educated, white, employed full-time, and married (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Henry & Basile, 1994). National level studies further confirmed that job-related concerns and interests were the most influential motives for adult learners choosing to participate in education (Aslanian & Brickell, 1980; Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974).

A number of researchers have sought to build on the early motivation typology developed by Houle. One of most recognized in this area is the work done by Roger Boshier who began his research in the 1970s (Boshier, 1971). He has focused his primary research methodology on refining a motivational orientation instrument, Education Participation Scale, which has been tested and refined in a spectrum of adult education settings (Fujita-Starck, 1996). Researchers in the United States, New Zealand, and Canada have used Boshier's instrument, the Education Participation Scale, which employed factor analysis to establish construct validity (Boshier, 1991; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Merriam,

1982). Statistical analyses of the Education Participation Scale and other motivational orientation instruments indicate that there are six factors: social relationships, external expectations, social welfare, professional advancement, escape/stimulation, and cognitive interest. These six correspond to Houle's basic typology (Cross, 1981; Morstain & Smart, 1977).

The findings on gender-based differences associated with motivational orientations are based, in large part, on studies of adults in continuing education programs. Researchers have found that more males than females are motivated to take vocational subjects, vocational management, or professional courses. Their research also found that more females than males choose college credit courses (Carp, Peterson, & Roelfs, 1974; Fujita-Starck, 1996). Boshier (1991) found that males scored higher on his Education Participation Scale in areas of communication improvement, social contact, and educational togetherness, whereas females were more motivated by family togetherness and cognitive interest.

There is considerable disagreement over the relationship between age-based, developmental stages and adult learners' motivational orientations. Early researchers such as Havighurst (1952) proposed a limited, three stage (early, middle, late) adult developmental model. Each stage had an education motivational focus appropriate to the stage role, e.g., young career male, young

female homemaker, middle-aged civically active males and females, and retired males and females. Other studies since then have continued to propose an definite difference between the younger career-oriented adults and the older learning for-its-own-sake adults (Darkenwald & Merriam, 1982; Morstain & Smart, 1977; Sewall, 1984). However, other researchers have not found a strong correlation between age and motivational orientations (Boshier, 1991).

Recent research using the Education Participation Scale has indicated that grouping adult learners by curricula may provide more accurate classification of motivational orientations than grouping them on the basis of general demographic characteristics (Fujita-Starck, 1996). The research on motivations and attitudes is continuing to evolve and more studies will need to be done to check for any change in trends, particularly as the need for lifelong education becomes more of a reality for adults.

Theoretical Construct of Self-Concept

The theoretical literature about self-concept suggests four important considerations relevant to this study. The first is that the literature establishes that self-concept, serving as a self-regulatory function, is related both to psychological constructs of perceptions of one's self and one's perceptions of how one is being evaluated by others (McCombs, 1986; Zimmerman, 1989). The second relevant consideration is that there are a number of models of self-concept ranging from a

global view of self to models which consist of a hierarchy of domain-specific self-concept levels, some academic and some nonacademic (Byrne, 1984; Marsh, 1992). The third consideration is that definition and use of the term self-concept has been intermixed with other self constructs including self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-perception, self-evaluation (Byrne, 1996; Hattie, 1992; Strein, 1993). The fourth consideration is that while much has been studied about self-concept, the understanding of the mechanisms of how social phenomena influence an individual remains an ongoing field of inquiry.

The phenomenological origins of the role of the self-regulation as it relates to self-concept was explored by Zimmerman, "Human experience was assumed to be filtered through a reactive self-system that could distort the incoming information either positively or negatively in accordance with one's self-concept" (Zimmerman, 1995, p. 9). Theorists have proposed the motivational influence of the self-system in achieving desired self-conceptions by closing the gap between the actual self and the ideal self (Higgins, 1987; Markus & Wurf, 1987).

Many theorists agree that the self-concept is not a passive, unitary mediator, but is a complex phenomenon with multiple facets. Early theorists noted a difference between the affective self that reacted to others and the cognitive self that was more stable (Breytspak, 1974; Erikson, 1959). McCombs

(1989) posited that “Global self-concept in the context of self-regulated learning can be defined as individuals’ beliefs and perceptions of their ability to control their cognition, affect, motivation, and behavior in learning situations in general” (p.61). The relationship of self-evaluation to self-regulated learning has been documented in a number of studies (Bandura, 1977; Harter, 1982; Zimmerman, & Pons, 1986).

More recent theorists have evolved a hierarchical model in which there is a global level of self-concept branching down to academic self-concept and nonacademic self-concept (Harter, 1982; Hattie, 1992; Markus & Wurf, 1987; Marsh, 1992). Theorists have further proposed that the learner’s global academic self-concept has related domain-specific sublevels relating to subject areas (McCombs, 1989; Shavelson, Hubner, & Stanton, 1976).

The research on gender-based differences associated with academic self-concept and academic achievement have produced conflicting results. Hattie (1992) in his meta-analysis of gender-based differences found more studies indicated that males in several age groups had a slightly higher correlation between self-concept and self-achievement than did females. Marsh (1993) in his extensive study of Australian adolescents found no support for gender stereotypic self-concept models favoring male students.

Research on age-based, developmental stage differences associated with academic self-concept is in agreement that both overall self-concept and academic self-concept go through stages of becoming more multifaceted and stable from childhood through to early adulthood (Byrne, 1996; Hattie, 1992; Marsh, 1993). There is less research done on adult academic self-concept. Hattie (1992) in his meta-analysis found that there is a decrease in correlation between educational attainment and self-concept by the time students are at college and university level. Byrne (1996) notes this same decreasing linkage phenomenon after college years when the individual's source of self-concept shifts from academic achievement to an increasing focus on the workplace and home life. After the age of 40, researchers have suggested that there is also a shift in social comparison from similar others to dissimilar others (Suls & Mullen, 1982).

The research on self-concept in older adults is limited (Byrne, 1996). One of the few instruments designed for older adult students in career transition is the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale (Drummond, 1984a). It has been used to measure academic self-concept of older returning students at the community college level (Drummond, 1984b) and at the public university level (Gilkison & Drummond, 1989).

Recruitment of Graduate Students

The review of literature about recruitment of graduate students will be brief and will examine the major themes including: (1) demographic trends, (2) issues and experiences of diverse and nontraditional graduate student populations, and (3) the phenomenon of older graduate students. The demographic trends note the declining numbers of the traditional student population in the 1980's and the accompanying shift in patterns of enrollment and resource allocation (Kallio, 1995; Olson & King, 1985). Another trend noted is the need for graduate schools to train academics who will both fill the teaching gaps and reflect the changes in the student populations (Kallio, 1995; Olson, 1992).

The second theme is the issues and contributions of diverse and nontraditional graduate student populations. Adler (1976) posits that women with stronger academic records than their male counterparts have a higher likelihood of dropping out of graduate school due to "differential treatment and the nature and extent of conflicts experienced between personal and professional life" (p. 205). Similar problems were noted for minority students in terms of feelings of isolation and differential treatment by instructors (Duncan, 1976). Hartnett and Katz (1977) state that "many of the graduate faculty simply are not aware of some of the difficulties faced by today's graduate students-including women and minorities..."(p. 65). A more recent study advocates the need for diverse and

engaged graduate students with a multiplicity of experientially-based perspectives (Haworth & Conrad, 1997).

The third theme is the phenomenon of older graduate students. Reaching the growing market of older graduate students will include increasing the use of technology through distance learning and offering courses at off-campus sites convenient to the students whose work and family schedules discourage higher commuting times to campus (Brazziel, 1993; Cirasa-Parish, 1993). Research on older graduate students found that they experienced more difficulty than younger graduate students in graduate business programs (Palmer & Wright, 1996), and performed better than younger graduate students in other programs such as graduate public affairs (Oldfield, 1994). Graduate student recruitment research has found that older graduate students' choice of graduate program is strongly affected by whether the student has an extrinsic/opportunity orientation as opposed to an intrinsic/quality orientation (Kirk, 1990).

Conclusion of the Review of Literature

In summary, the review of the literature suggests, by omission, that there appears to be a paucity of research on midlife male graduate students. Further research is needed to focus on the motivations of midlife male graduate students who return to obtain further education. A broad study is needed to not only focus

on motivations but also on academic self-concept to help illuminate the characteristics of midlife male graduate students.

The following chapters will describe the study and its findings. Chapter Three will explain the research design and methodology including the population sample and collection and treatment of the data. Chapter Four contains the data analysis and summary of the findings for the motivation and academic self-concept surveys. Finally, Chapter Five presents the conclusions, the implications of the study, and the recommendations for areas of future research.

CHAPTER III

Research Methodology and Procedures

The methodology employed in this study was survey research comparing the motivations for returning to school and the academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students with three other graduate student populations: (1) a sample from a population of midlife females, (2) a sample from a population of early adulthood males, and (3) a sample from a population of early adulthood females. Additionally, within group comparisons were made on the basis of the school-related independent variables of undergraduate GPA and years away from school before the current program. The data collection and analysis for this comparative study were undertaken using two survey instruments, the *Education Participation Scale* (Boshier, 1992, 1995), which assesses motivational orientations for returning to school, and the *Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale* (Drummond, 1984a) which assesses the learner's self-evaluation of academic ability within the perceived learning environment (Appendix A).

Research Questions

The study undertook to answer the following questions:

- 1.a. Do midlife male graduate students differ from the other three graduate student subgroups in terms of their motivations for returning to school?
- 1b. Do midlife male graduate students differ from the other three graduate student subgroups in terms of their academic self-concept?
- 2a. Do midlife graduate student subgroups differ from the other three graduate student subgroups within each of the three colleges in terms of their motivations for returning to school?
- 2b. Do midlife male graduate students differ from the other three graduate student subgroups within each of the three colleges in terms of their academic self-concept?
- 3a. Do graduate students in the three colleges differ, based on their college, in terms of their motivations for returning to school?
- 3b. Do graduate students in the three colleges differ, based on their college, in terms of their academic self-concept?
- 4a. Do graduate students' motivations differ based on the school-related independent variable of years out of school?

- 4b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ based on the school-related independent variable of years out of school before current program?
- 5a. Do graduate students' motivations differ based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA?
- 5b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ based on the school-related independent variable of undergraduate GPA?

Research Instruments

The instrument selected to measure motivational orientation, *Education Participation Scale (A-form)* (Boshier, 1995), is a 42-item questionnaire that was designed, researched, and developed by Roger Boshier of the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, and published by Learningpress Ltd, Vancouver, B.C. It is the latest version of the *Education Participation Scale* originally developed in 1971 and tested across a spectrum of different student and cultural contexts.

The *Education Participation Scale* defines a seven factor structure of motivation to participate in education: (1) Communication Improvement, (2) Social Contact, (3) Educational Preparation, (4) Professional Advancement, (5) Family Togetherness, (6) Social Stimulation, and (7) Cognitive Interest in a Particular Subject. Students respond on a 4-point scale (No Influence, Little

Influence, Moderate Influence, Much Influence). The reliability of the instrument has been established through test-retest procedures and discriminant function equation analysis. The test/retest reliability coefficient was .65. The internal consistency analysis of the 42 items yielded coefficient alphas ranging from .76 to .91 (Boshier, 1991).

The instrument selected to assess academic self-concept, *Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale* (Drummond, 1984a), is a 55-item questionnaire that was designed, researched, and developed by Robert J. Drummond of the University of North Florida at Jacksonville, Florida. The *Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale* defines a nine factor structure of dimensions of academic self-concept: (1) Extraversion, (2) Locus of Control, (3) Love of Learning, (4) Self-Confidence, (5) Self-Doubt, (6) Time Management, (7) Self-Efficacy, (8) Academic Skills, and (9) Fear. The construction of the instrument is based on a 5-point scale (Completely False, Mostly False, Half-True/Half-False, Mostly True, Completely True). The internal consistency of the instrument, using Cronbach's alpha, was .84. The validity correlation with the Coopersmith Self-Esteem inventory was determined to be .62 (Drummond, 1984b).

Population Sample

The population sample consisted of 426 graduate students attending a regional urban university. The demographic composition included 147 males and

279 females. A total of 86 participants identified themselves as belonging to a racial or ethnic minority other than white. The participants' range of age included: 173 in the under 30 years of age group; 113 in the 30-39 years of age group; 113 in the 40-49 years of age group; 25 in the 50-59 years of age group; and 2 in the 60 and older years of age group.

Graduate students in three colleges at a regional urban university took part in the study: 218 (51.2%) from the College of Education and Human Services, 130 (30.5%) from the College of Business Administration, and 78 (18.3%) from the College of Health. Of the 59 midlife male participants in the study, 49 of them were in the 40 to 49 age category and 10 were in the 50 to 59 age category. The largest number of midlife male participants, 34, were from the College of Education and Human Services; 18 were from the College of Business Administration; and 7 were from the College of Health.

Out of the total graduate student sample 81.2% indicated that they were employed full-time, 11.0% were employed part-time, and 7.8% were unemployed. Additionally, 72.5% were in professional/management occupations, 2.8% were in sales, 3.3% were in technical occupations, 2.6% were in clerical positions, and 15% were in occupations other than those specified on the survey form. Midlife females had the highest group percentage, 86.4%, in the professional/management category. The other groups displayed lower percentages in this category with

midlife males at 76.3% followed by early adulthood females at 73.8%, and lastly by early adulthood males at 72%. In employment status, midlife males had the largest full-time employment percentage, 89.8%, closely followed by young adult males, 88.6%, and midlife females, 87.2%.

The undergraduate educational profile of the total graduate sample reflected the following undergraduate GPA information: 4.7% were in the 2.00-2.50 range; 23.7% were in the 2.51-3.00 range; 34.3% were in the 3.01-3.50; and 37.3% were in the 3.51-4.00 range. The midlife graduate students had the greatest within age/gender group percentages in the top undergraduate GPA range; 39% of midlife males' group and 51.9% of midlife females' group were in the 3.51-4.00 range. They were followed, in this top GPA range, by 36.9% early adulthood females and 23.9% early adulthood males. Of the total participants, 241 rated their level of satisfaction with undergraduate education as High, 169 as Medium, and 15 as Low. The within age/gender group percentages for High level of satisfaction reflected 66.7% midlife females, followed by 55.6% early adulthood females, 55.2% midlife males next, and 51.1% early adulthood males last. The "years out of school before current program" groupings showed that the two midlife groups had the greatest within group percentages for the longest periods of time, 10+ years, 40.7% midlife males and 60.7% midlife females. Table 1 provides the summary of graduate students' demographic information. Tables 2,

and 3 provide expanded graduate student data based on specific categories. All graduate students participating in this study did so voluntarily during class time and without any remuneration or other type of incentive. Anonymity of responses was ensured through not requesting specific identifying information. Participants completed the research study surveys, *Education Participation Scale* and *Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale*, as well as a *Graduate Student Survey Demographic Cover Sheet* which contained independent variables relating to the research questions. Each participant's completed surveys and demographic data sheet were linked with a unique ten-digit code that was assigned sequentially following class administration and collection.

The comparative analyses of data were based on the mean score of responses for each subgroup (by age, gender, college, race, employment status, occupation type, years out of school, undergraduate GPA, and level of satisfaction with undergraduate education).

Procedure for Data Collection

The data for this survey study to compare midlife male graduate students motivations for returning to school and academic self-concept with those of three other graduate student subgroups (midlife females, early adulthood males, and early adulthood females) were collected over the summer of 1998 at a regional urban university.

The survey process consisted of providing each participating class with a brief verbal introduction and description of the purpose of the survey and its voluntary nature, the distribution of the research survey packets, their completion, and collection. Completion of survey instruments required approximately twenty minutes. Surveys were distributed to a total of twenty-seven classes within the three participating colleges. A total of 426 graduate students completed the survey packets. In order to avoid duplication of results, graduate students were requested not to complete the survey research packet if they had already done it in another class. The average class participation rate was about 95%.

Table 1.
 Graduate Students' Demographic Data (N=426)

VARIABLES			
		<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
GENDER			
	Males	147	34.5
	Females	279	65.5
AGE GROUPINGS			
	30< years old	173	40.6
	30-39 years old	113	26.5
	40-49 years old	113	26.5
	50-59 years old	25	5.9
	60≥ years old	2	.5
COLLEGE			
	Business Administration	130	30.5
	Education & Human Services	218	51.2
	Health	78	18.3
RACE/ETHNICITY			
	Black	48	11.3
	Hispanic	14	3.3
	White	340	79.8
	Other	24	5.6
EMPLOYMENT STATUS			
	Full-Time	345	81.2
	Part-Time	47	11.0
	Not currently employed	33	7.8
OCCUPATION			
	Prof./Mgmt.	309	75.4
	Sales	12	2.9
	Technical	14	3.4
	Clerical	11	2.7
	Other	64	15.6

Table 1. cont.
 Graduate Students' Demographic Data

VARIABLES		
	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
YEARS OUT OF SCHOOL BEFORE CURRENT PROGRAM		
10>	102	25.6
6-10	51	12.0
2-5	158	37.0
0-1	109	25.4
UNDERGRADUATE GPA		
3.51-4.00	159	37.3
3.01-3.50	146	34.3
2.51-3.00	101	23.7
2.00-2.51	20	4.7
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION		
High	241	56.7
Medium	169	39.8
Low	15	3.5

Table 2.
Graduate Students' Demographic Data - By College

VARIABLES	COBA		COEHS		COH	
	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
GENDER						
Males	77	59.2	54	24.9	16	20.5
Females	53	40.8	163	75.1	62	79.5
AGE GROUPINGS						
30< years old	69	53.1	60	27.5	44	56.4
30-39 years old	37	28.5	63	28.9	13	16.7
40-49 years old	24	18.4	72	33.0	17	21.8
50-59 years old	0	0	21	9.7	4	5.1
60≥ years old	0	0	2	.9	0	0
RACE/ETHNICITY						
Black	8	6.1	31	14.2	9	11.5
Hispanic	6	4.6	7	3.2	1	1.3
White	107	82.4	173	79.4	60	76.9
Other	9	6.9	7	3.2	8	10.3
EMPLOYMENT STATUS						
Full-Time	105	81.4	187	85.8	53	67.9
Part-Time	11	8.5	22	10.1	14	18.0
Not currently emply'd	13	10.1	9	4.1	11	14.1

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: COBA= College of Business Administration,

COEHS= College of Education & Human Services, COH= College of Health

Table 2. cont.
 Graduate Students' Demographic Data - By College

VARIABLES	COBA		COEHS		COH	
	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
OCCUPATION						
Prof./Mgmt.	95	76.6	169	79.4	45	61.6
Sales	5	4.0	4	1.9	3	4.1
Technical	9	7.3	0	0	5	6.9
Clerical	3	2.4	2	.9	6	8.2
Other	12	9.7	38	17.8	14	19.2
YEARS OUT OF SCHOOL BEFORE CURRENT PROGRAM						
10>	19	14.6	74	33.9	16	20.5
6-10	25	19.3	22	10.1	4	5.1
2-5	51	39.2	80	36.7	27	34.6
0-1	35	26.9	42	19.3	31	39.8
UNDERGRADUATE GPA						
3.51-4.00	33	25.4	98	45.0	28	35.9
3.01-3.50	53	40.7	61	28.0	32	41.0
2.51-3.00	37	28.5	49	22.4	15	19.2
2.00-2.51	7	5.4	10	4.6	3	3.9
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION						
High	67	51.9	134	61.5	40	51.3
Medium	55	42.7	78	35.8	36	46.1
Low	7	5.4	6	2.8	2	2.6

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: COBA= College of Business Administration,

COEHS= College of Education & Human Services, COH= College of Health

Table 3.
Graduate Students' Demographic Data - By Age/Gender Groups.

VARIABLES	MLM		MLF		EAM		EAF	
	N	P	N	P	N	P	N	P
GENDER								
Male	59	100	0	0	88	100	0	0
Female	0	0	81	100	0	0	198	100
COLLEGE								
COBA	18	30.5	6	7.4	59	67.0	47	23.8
COEHS	34	57.6	61	75.3	20	22.7	102	51.8
COH	7	11.9	14	17.3	9	10.3	48	24.4
RACE								
Black	2	3.4	10	12.3	8	9.2	28	14.1
Hispanic	1	1.7	1	1.2	4	4.5	8	4.0
White	54	91.5	69	85.3	67	76.1	150	75.8
Other	2	3.4	1	1.2	9	10.2	12	6.1
EMPLOYMENT. STATUS								
Full-Time	53	89.8	67	82.8	78	88.6	147	74.6
Part Time	2	3.4	7	8.6	5	5.7	33	16.8
Not Curr.Emp.	4	6.8	7	8.6	5	5.7	17	8.6
OCCUPATION								
Prof./Mgmt	45	76.3	66	84.6	62	73.7	136	72.0
Sales	4	6.8	0	0	5	6.0	3	1.6
Technical	1	1.7	0	0	4	4.8	9	4.8
Clerical	0	0.0	0	0	1	1.2	10	5.3
Other	9	15.2	12	15.4	12	14.3	31	16.3

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife

Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females.

Table 3. cont.
 Graduate Students' Demographic Data -By Age/Gender Groups

<u>VARIABLES</u>	<u>MLM</u>		<u>MLF</u>		<u>EAM</u>		<u>EAF</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
YEARS OUT SCHOOL								
10>	24	40.7	50	61.7	11	12.5	24	12.1
6-10	12	20.3	5	6.2	13	14.8	21	10.6
2-5	15	25.4	14	17.3	44	50.0	85	42.9
0-1	8	13.6	12	14.8	20	22.7	68	34.4
UNDERGRADUATE GPA								
3.51-4.00	23	39.0	42	51.9	21	23.9	73	36.9
3.01-3.50	18	30.5	20	24.7	34	38.6	74	37.4
2.51-3.00	16	27.1	12	14.8	27	30.7	46	23.2
2.00-2.50	2	3.4	7	8.6	6	6.8	5	2.5
LEVEL OF SATISFACTION WITH UNDERGRADUATE EDUCATION								
High	32	55.2	54	66.7	45	51.2	110	55.6
Medium	25	43.1	26	32.1	37	42.0	81	40.9
Low	1	1.7	1	1.2	6	6.8	7	3.5

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

Procedures for Treatment of Data

The analyses of the research data were based on: (1) multivariate analysis of data (MANOVA) to arrive at the primary statistical differences, (2) univariate analysis of variance (ANOVA) of data to determine whether the mean score of the population groupings were significantly different from one another (F ratio/value), and (3) Bonferroni's and Scheffé's tests to determine between what level of the independent variable significant differences were found.

Summary

The purpose of this study was to compare the motivations and the academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students with those of midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students. The study was conducted at a regional urban university

The data were collected in classroom settings where graduate students completed the two survey instruments. The data collection occurred during the summer of 1998. The report of the data and full description of the results are presented in Chapter Four.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this survey study was to compare the motivational orientations and academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students with three other graduate student sample populations (midlife females, early adulthood males, and early adulthood females). Comparisons were made between the four sample populations as total groups, and group comparisons were made based on the participants' colleges (Business Administration, Education and Human Services, and Health) at a regional urban university. The data were collected over the summer term of 1998 with 426 graduate students completing the surveys in their classroom settings.

As was discussed in Chapter Three, the dependent variables were measured by two surveys, one on motivations for returning to school and the other on academic self-concept. The demographic data included two school-related independent variables of years out of school before current program and undergraduate GPA.

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and analysis of variance (ANOVA) statistics were used to analyze the data. The alpha level was set at .05. The demographic characteristics of the graduate student population was described

in Chapter Three. The report of the data and a discussion of its analysis are presented in this chapter.

Research Findings

MANOVA was calculated for the motivation scale and the academic self-concept scale separately with the dependent variables being the scales on the instrument and the independent variable the age/gender groups. Significant differences were found between the groups. The data are presented in Appendix B. Follow up ANOVAs were computed for the two surveys to identify where the differences were. The Education Participation Scale had ANOVAs computed by graduate student age/gender groups, combined, within-college, and between colleges (Tables 4, 6, 7, 8, and 12). The Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale had ANOVAs computed by graduate student age/gender groups, combined, within-college, and between colleges (Tables 5, 9, 10, 11, and 12).

The means, F values, and probabilities for the two surveys are reported in the tables at the scale/factor level. Multiple comparison tests (Bonferroni and Scheffé) were computed when the F values were significant at the .05 level to identify which age/gender groups differed from each other.

Research Question 1a: Do motivations for choosing to continue education differ significantly between midlife male graduate students and other

graduate student groups (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students)?

The means of the graduate student groups were compared on the Education Participation Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Education Participation Scale as the dependent variables and the graduate student age/gender grouping as the independent variable. The results are presented in Table 4.

Table 4.

Mean Comparison Between Graduate Student Groups on the Education Participation Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Cognitive Interest	15.44	17.03	14.45	16.36	3	424	5.36	.001
Comm. Improvement	9.17	9.68	9.95	9.93	3	422	.81	.490
Family	7.68	8.53	8.10	8.23	3	423	1.60	.188
Prof. Advancement	18.00	20.34	19.75	21.09	3	423	10.77	.000
Social Stimulation	8.29	8.95	8.26	8.57	3	423	.93	.424
Social Contact	7.98	8.83	8.90	9.25	3	423	2.15	.093
Educ. Preparation	10.92	11.29	10.40	11.43	3	421	1.99	.115

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

Significant differences in Table 4 were found on Professional Advancement ($F(3, 423) = 10.77, p = .0000$), and Cognitive Interest ($F(3, 424) = 5.36, p = .001$) between the graduate student age/gender groups. Bonferroni's test was used then to identify between what levels of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife males rated Professional Advancement at a significantly lower level of motivational importance than the other three age/gender graduate student groups. On the other significant scale, midlife females and early adulthood females rated Cognitive Interest at significantly higher levels of motivational importance than did early adulthood males. In all four groups the Professional Advancement scale had the highest mean score followed by Cognitive Interest and Educational Preparation as the second and third highest mean scores.

Research Question 1b: Does academic self-concept differ significantly between midlife male graduate students and other graduate student groups (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female graduate students)?

The graduate student groups were compared on the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale as the dependent variables and the graduate student age/gender grouping as the independent variable. The results are presented in Table 5.

Table 5.

Mean Comparison Between Graduate Student Groups on the Academic Self-
Concept Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Extraversion	36.34	36.11	33.68	33.49	3	416	5.95	.001
Locus of Control	4.64	5.40	4.83	4.94	3	424	2.09	.101
Love Of Learning	16.00	17.43	14.03	15.67	3	423	8.81	.000
Self-Confidence	17.08	17.76	16.71	17.09	3	423	3.65	.013
Self-Doubt	9.04	8.94	9.33	8.99	3	423	1.15	.329
Time Management	11.68	12.04	10.95	11.35	3	424	3.34	.019
Self-Efficacy	10.92	11.29	10.40	11.43	3	422	1.19	.312
Academic Skills	21.76	21.76	20.20	20.65	3	422	5.77	.007
Fear	-.51	.20	.21	.70	3	420	2.54	.056

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

Significant differences in Table 5 were found on Extraversion ($F(3, 416) = 5.95, p = .001$), Love Of Learning ($F(3, 424) = 8.81, p = .000$), Self-Confidence ($F(3, 423) = 3.65, p = .013$), Time Management ($F(3, 424) = 3.34, p = .019$), and Academic Skills ($F(3, 422) = 5.77, p = .007$) between the graduate student age/gender groups. The Bonferroni test was used then to identify between what level of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife males and midlife females had significantly higher Extraversion than did early adulthood females. Early adulthood males reported significantly lower Love Of Learning than did the other three age/gender groups. Early adulthood males reported significantly lower levels of Self-Confidence and Time Management than did midlife females. Midlife males and midlife females reported higher Academic Skills than did early adulthood males.

Research Question 2a: Do motivations for choosing to continue with education differ significantly between graduate student groups within colleges?

The graduate student groups, within each of the three colleges, were compared on the Education Participation Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Education Participation Scale as the dependent variables and the within college graduate student age/gender grouping as the

independent variable. The summary table for each of the colleges is presented in Tables 6, 7, and 8.

Table 6.

Mean Comparison Within College of Business Administration on the Education Participation Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Cognitive Interest	14.89	13.33	14.12	16.40	3	129	2.69	.049
Comm. Improvement	10.50	10.67	10.12	10.47	3	128	.13	.944
Family	7.33	8.50	8.02	8.19	3	129	.88	.451
Prof. Advancement	19.06	20.83	20.25	20.94	3	129	1.34	.265
Social Stimulation	8.11	7.83	8.16	8.53	3	129	.28	.839
Social Contact	7.88	7.83	8.83	9.77	3	129	1.74	.161
Educ. Preparation	10.89	10.83	9.86	10.83	3	127	.94	.422

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 6 no significant differences, at the .05 level of confidence, were found in the motivation scales for the graduate student groups in the College of Business Administration. Although Cognitive Interest had a *p*-value of .049, it did not show a significant difference on the Scheffé test. In all four graduate student groups, Professional Advancement had the highest mean score, and Cognitive Interest the second highest mean score, and Educational Preparation as the third. The four graduate student groups differed as to what their lowest score was, Social Contact, Social Stimulation, or Family.

Table 7.

Mean Comparison Within College of Education and Human Services on the Education Participation Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u> <u>M</u>	<u>MLF</u> <u>M</u>	<u>EAM</u> <u>M</u>	<u>EAF</u> <u>M</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Cognitive Interest	15.71	17.05	15.25	16.05	3	215	1.03	.381
Comm. Improvement	9.23	9.48	8.75	9.22	3	215	1.13	.272
Family	7.74	8.53	7.70	8.25	3	215	1.12	.341
Prof. Advancement	17.65	20.33	18.00	21.09	3	215	8.41	.000
Social Stimulation	8.12	8.44	7.85	8.44	3	214	.85	.466
Social Contact	8.06	8.93	8.25	8.49	3	215	.65	.585
Educ. Preparation	10.74	11.27	10.45	11.45	3	214	.69	.557

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 7 all four graduate student groups in the College of Education and Human Services had Professional Advancement as their highest mean score,

Cognitive Interest the second highest mean score, and Educational Preparation the third. Social Contact held the lowest mean score with Social Stimulation the next lowest mean scores in all four groups. Significant differences were found on Professional Advancement ($F(3, 215) = 8.41, p = .000$). The Scheffé test was then used to identify between what levels of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife males rated Professional Advancement at a significantly lower level than midlife females and early adulthood females.

Table 8.

Mean Comparison Within College Of Health on the Education Participation Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Cognitive Interest	15.57	18.50	14.89	16.95	3	77	1.61	.194
Comm. Improvement	10.50	10.07	11.56	10.87	3	76	.26	.854
Family	8.29	8.50	9.56	8.23	3	76	.73	.538
Prof. Advancement	17.00	20.14	20.33	21.30	3	76	2.84	.044
Social Stimulation	9.57	9.57	9.67	8.81	3	77	.35	.787
Social Contact	7.86	8.79	10.78	10.38	3	77	1.42	.244
Educ. Preparation	11.85	11.57	13.67	11.94	3	77	.85	.471

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 8 all four graduate student groups in the College of Health agreed with their counterparts in the College of Business Administration and the College of Education and Human Services. Professional Advancement received the highest mean score with Cognitive Interest the second highest mean score and the

lowest were Social Stimulation trailed by Social Contact. Significant differences were found in the College of Health on Professional Advancement ($F(3, 76) = 2.84, p = .044$). The Scheffé test was used then to identify between what levels of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife males rated Professional Advancement at a significantly lower level of motivation importance than midlife females and early adulthood females.

Research Question 2b: Does academic self-concept differ significantly between graduate student age/gender groups within different colleges?

The graduate student groups, within each of the three colleges, were compared on the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale as the dependent variables and the within college graduate student age/gender grouping as the independent variable. The summary table for each of the colleges is presented in Tables 9, 10, and 11.

Table 9.

Mean Comparison Within College of Business Administration on the Academic Self-Concept Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Extraversion	34.44	36.00	32.92	33.54	3	128	.78	.508
Locus Of Control	4.39	5.00	4.53	4.94	3	129	.83	.480
Love Of Learning	14.06	14.50	13.68	15.83	3	129	2.34	.076
Self-Confidence	16.56	18.17	16.59	17.09	3	128	1.30	.277
Self-Doubt	9.78	8.67	9.69	9.23	3	129	1.68	.174
Time Management	10.56	12.67	10.71	11.34	3	129	1.73	.164
Self-Efficacy	12.33	11.00	11.85	11.24	3	128	.61	.608
Academic Skills	20.89	22.33	20.05	21.15	3	129	2.06	.109
Fear	.28	-1.00	.17	.87	3	129	2.03	.114

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 9 no significant differences, at the .05 level of confidence, were found between graduate student groups in the College of Business Administration on any of the nine academic self-concept categories. All four age/gender groups of graduate students had the highest means on Extraversion followed by Academic Skills, Self-Confidence, and Love of Learning. The lowest mean score across the three colleges was in Fear with Locus of Control as the next lowest.

Table 10.

Mean Comparison Within College of Education and Human Services on the Academic Self-Concept Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Extraversion	37.65	36.38	34.65	33.43	3	211	5.21	.002
Locus Of Control	4.85	5.22	5.25	4.89	3	215	.49	.691
Love Of Learning	16.79	17.28	14.95	15.90	3	214	2.05	.108
Self-Confidence	17.29	17.82	16.90	17.26	3	215	1.45	.228
Self-Doubt	8.76	9.03	8.60	8.97	3	214	.52	.668
Time Management	12.21	11.78	11.20	11.29	3	215	1.73	.161
Self-Efficacy	11.82	11.97	11.85	11.27	3	215	.54	.658
Academic Skills	22.12	21.76	20.32	20.33	3	213	4.48	.005
Fear	-.18	.31	.75	.61	3	213	1.26	.288

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 10, all four graduate student groups from the College of Education and Human Services also had their highest mean score on the Extraversion scale followed by Academic Skills, Self-Confidence, and Love of Learning. The graduate students' lowest mean score was Fear, and Locus of Control was the next to lowest. Significant differences in the College of Education and Human Services were found on Extraversion ($F(3, 211) = 5.21, p = .002$), and Academic Skills ($F(3, 213) = 4.48, p = .005$).

The Scheffé test was used then to identify between what levels of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife females and midlife males had higher Extraversion than did early adulthood females. This same age/gender pattern occurred in Academic Skills with midlife females and midlife males reporting significantly lower focus on Academic Skills than did early adulthood females.

Table 11.

Mean Comparison Within College of Health on the Academic Self-Concept Scale

<u>Variable</u>	<u>MLM</u>	<u>MLF</u>	<u>EAM</u>	<u>EAF</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>				
Extraversion	34.67	34.83	36.56	33.44	3	77	.71	.548
Locus Of Control	4.29	6.36	5.89	5.04	3	77	2.39	.076
Love Of Learning	17.14	19.29	14.33	14.94	3	77	5.15	.003
Self-Confidence	17.43	17.36	17.11	16.75	3	77	.43	.729
Self-Doubt	8.42	8.64	8.56	8.79	3	77	.14	.934
Time Management	12.00	12.86	12.00	11.52	3	77	1.32	.273
Self-Efficacy	13.00	11.31	13.11	11.58	3	76	1.03	.384
Academic Skills	22.29	21.50	20.89	20.88	3	77	.54	.655
Fear	-.29	.29	-.67	.67	3	75	1.25	.298

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females

In Table 11, the scores for all four graduate student age/gender groups in the College of Health corresponded with their counterparts in the College of Business Administration and the College of Education and Human Services on the two highest scales. The highest mean score occurred in Extraversion followed by Academic Skills. On the third and fourth highest scales, all groups in the College of Health, except midlife females, also agreed with their counterparts at the two other colleges on Self-Confidence followed by Love of Learning. Midlife females in the College of Health rated Love of Learning higher than Self-Confidence. Significant differences, in the College of Health, were found on Love of Learning ($F(3, 77) = 5.15, p = .003$). The Scheffé test was used then to identify between what level of the independent variable significant differences were found. Midlife females reported significantly higher Love of Learning than did early adulthood males and females.

Research Question 3a: Do motivations for choosing to continue education differ significantly for graduate students, all four age/gender groups combined, based on college?

The three colleges' combined graduate student groups were compared on the Education Participation Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Education Participation Scale as the dependent variables and

the college as the independent variable. The results for the college comparison of combined graduate student groups are presented in Table 12.

Table 12.

Mean Comparison Between Colleges on the Education Participation Scale

	<u>COEHS</u>	<u>COBA</u>	<u>COH</u>				
VARIABLES	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	df	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Cognitive Interest	16.20	15.02	16.87	2	423	4.52	.011
Comm. Improvement	9.10	10.34	10.78	2	421	9.26	.000
Family	8.20	8.01	8.44	2	422	.86	.423
Prof. Advancement	20.05	20.36	20.58	2	422	.62	.541
Social Stimulation	8.46	8.28	9.12	2	422	2.08	.125
Social Contact	8.52	8.99	9.91	2	422	4.90	.007
Educ. Preparation	11.19	10.41	12.06	2	420	5.96	.002

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: COBA= College of Business Administration, COEHS= College of Education & Human Services, COH= College of Health.

In Table 12 the combined graduate student groups at the three colleges gave highest mean scores to Professional Advancement, followed by Cognitive Interest. Their lowest mean scores were for Family with Social Stimulation as

the next lowest. Significant differences between colleges were found on four scales; Communication Improvement, Cognitive Interest, Social Contact, and Educational Preparation. The summary data are presented in Table 12.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferonni identified the significant differences between the colleges. The graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services differed in their lower mean on Communication Improvement than those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration and the College of Health. Graduate students in the College of Health differed significantly in their higher scores on Cognitive Interest than those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration. Graduate students in the College of Health also differed significantly in their higher mean scores on Educational Preparation than those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration, and in their higher mean scores on Social Contact than those of the graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services.

Research Question 3b: Does academic self-concept differ significantly for graduate students, all four age/gender groups combined, based on college?

The three colleges' combined graduate student groups were compared on the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale as the dependent variables and the college as the independent variable. The results for the college comparison of combined graduate student groups are presented in Table 13.

Table 13.

Mean Comparison Between Colleges on Graduate Student Groups' Academic

Self-Concept

	<u>COEHS</u>	<u>COBA</u>	<u>COH</u>				
VARIABLES	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>M</u>	<u>df</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>F</u>	<u>p</u>
Extraversion	35.03	33.50	34.13	2	415	2.60	.075
Locus of Control	5.01	4.68	5.31	2	423	2.78	.063
Love of Learning	16.33	14.55	15.85	2	422	6.93	.001
Self-Confidence	17.39	16.84	16.96	2	422	3.16	.043
Self-Doubt	8.92	9.49	8.71	2	422	7.89	.000
Time Management	11.56	11.01	11.86	2	423	3.81	.023
Self-Efficacy	11.61	11.66	11.84	2	421	.13	.876
Academic Skills	21.01	20.67	21.12	2	421	.68	.507
Fear	.42	.39	.36	2	419	.02	.976

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: COBA= College of Business Administration, COEHS= College of Education & Human Services, COH= College of Health

In Table 13 the combined graduate student groups at the three colleges gave highest mean scores to Extraversion, followed by Academic Skills. Their lowest mean scores were for Fear with Locus Of Control as the next lowest. Significant differences were found on three scales: Love Of Learning, Self-Doubt, and Time Management. The summary data are presented in Table 13.

Post hoc comparisons using Bonferroni identified significant differences between colleges. Graduate students in the College of Health differed significantly in their higher scores in the area of Time Management than those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration. Graduate students in the College of Business Administration differed significantly in their higher score in the area of Self-Doubt than those of the graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services and the College of Health. Graduate students from the College of Education and Human Services differed significantly in their higher score in the area of Love Of Learning than those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration.

Research Question 4a. Do graduate students' motivations differ significantly on the school-related demographic variable of Years Out Of School?

The midlife male and female graduate students were out of school for longer amounts of time than the early adulthood male and female graduate students. One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Education Participation Scale as the dependent variable and Years Out Of School as the independent variable. However, there were no significant differences found on the independent variable of Years Out Of School and the motivation scales.

Research Question 4b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ significantly on the school-related demographic variable of Years Out Of School?

One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale as the dependent variable and Years Out Of School as the independent variable. There were no significant differences found on the independent variable and the academic self-concept scales.

Research Question 5a. Do graduate students' motivations differ significantly on the school-related demographic variable of Undergraduate GPA?

One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Education Participation Scale as the dependent variable and Undergraduate GPA

as the independent variable. There were significant differences found on Educational Preparation ($F(3, 421) = 5.34, p = .001$) and Communication Improvement ($F(3, 422) = 3.67, p = .012$). The Scheffé test was used to identify between what level of the independent variable significant differences were found. Graduate students in the lowest Undergraduate GPA range, 2.01-2.50, had greater motivation level on Education Preparation than graduate students in the higher Undergraduate GPA ranges. Graduate students in the 3.01-3.50 Undergraduate GPA range displayed higher motivation level on Communication Improvement than graduate students in the top 3.51-4.00 range.

Research Question 5b. Does graduate students' academic self-concept differ significantly on the school-related demographic variable of Undergraduate GPA?

One way analysis of variance was computed with the scales of the Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale as the dependent variable and Undergraduate GPA as the independent variable. There were significant differences found on Extraversion ($F(3, 416) = 4.03, p = .008$), Academic Skills ($F(3, 422) = 7.62, p = .001$), Time Management ($F(3, 424) = 12.48, p = .000$), Self-Confidence ($F(3, 423) = 3.84, p = .010$), and Self-Efficacy ($F(3, 422) = 7.03, p = .000$).

The Scheffé test was used to identify between what level of the independent variable significant differences were found. Graduate students in the highest Undergraduate GPA range, 3.51-4.00, had greater scores on Extraversion than graduate students in the next two lower Undergraduate GPA ranges. Graduate students in the 3.51-4.00 Undergraduate GPA range also displayed higher motivation level on Academic Skills, Time Management, and Self-Confidence than did graduate students in the lower three Undergraduate GPA ranges. Finally graduate students in the 3.51-4.00 Undergraduate GPA range displayed a higher level of Self-Efficacy than students in the 2.00-2.50 and the 2.51-3.00 Undergraduate GPA ranges.

The presentation of the school-related independent variables has shown that one of the variables, Undergraduate GPA, has a number of significant differences with both motivation and academic self-concept categories. The association between the most significant range, GPA 3.51-4.00, and midlife graduate students can be seen when examining the percentages within age/gender groups who scored in this range. Table 14 reports the statistical data supporting this finding.

Table 14.

Primary Statistical Data: Comparison Based on Undergraduate GPA and Graduate Student Age/Gender Groups.

<u>GPA</u>	<u>MLM</u>		<u>MLF</u>		<u>EAM</u>		<u>EAF</u>	
	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>	<u>N</u>	<u>P</u>
3.51-4.00	23	39.0	42	51.9	21	23.9	73	36.9
3.01-3.50	18	30.5	20	24.7	34	38.6	74	37.4
2.51-3.00	16	27.1	12	14.8	27	30.7	46	23.2
2.00-2.50	2	3.4	7	8.6	6	6.8	5	2.5

Note. Abbreviations in the Table: MLM= Midlife Males, MLF= Midlife Females, EAM= Early Adulthood Males, EAF= Early Adulthood Females.

Conclusion

Significant differences were found in both the motivations and academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students when compared with three other graduate student age/gender groups. Midlife males exhibited a lower interest in the motivation category of Professional Advancement when compared with all

three other groups. In the area of academic self-concept, midlife males differed from some of the groups on several academic self-concept categories, including a higher level of interest in Academic Skills than early adulthood males and a higher level of Extraversion than early adulthood females. Midlife female graduate students displayed a similar pattern in both these categories. Finally, the high range scores of midlife students on the school-related independent variable of Undergraduate GPA are also positively reflected in significant differences on a number of academic self-concept categories including Academic Skills, Time Management, and Self-Confidence. A discussion of the significance of the results is presented in the Chapter 5.

CHAPTER V

Summary, Results, Implications and Recommendations

The latter part of the twentieth century has seen the trend of increasing numbers of nontraditional students, including women, minorities, and older students, enrolling in higher education. The change in educational trends is one of a number of profound economic, social, and cultural changes that have offered greater access to historically restricted groups such as women and racial minorities (Lerner & King, 1992).

More students over the age of 40 are now enrolled in higher education than in the past. One of these populations, midlife males, represents an understudied, nontraditional student group. The other nontraditional student groups which have been the focus of a number of research studies include women, minorities, and to a lesser extent, the “over sixty” populations. These studies occurred during a time period when these nontraditional groups were seeking and achieving increased social and legislative recognition. Many of the studies examined nontraditional student issues including their educational motivations, needs, barriers, performance, and satisfaction. Midlife males, individuals between the ages of forty and sixty, were not singled out but included into studies of larger combined male/female groupings, such as studies of midlife students and older students, and studies of “adult” students twenty-five years of age and older.

The midlife male student group has also been significantly affected by the economic and social changes that have taken place starting with the tumultuous 1960s and continuing to today. As a group, midlife males have seen an erosion of traditional work expectations. Technology and downsizing have particularly affected midlife males first in reductions in high paying blue collar jobs and subsequently in large scale right-sizing of white collar managerial jobs. Coincidental with the loss of traditional jobs (with their benefits) are the projected cut backs in government retirement programs, such as raising the age of eligibility for social security benefits and the shrinkage of adequate retirement funding (Light, 1988). Simultaneously, changes to another major social support system, the traditional family, have occurred with the increase in divorce rates, and of subsequent blended families, and of couples who delay starting families. All these trends translate into growing demands on males to find ways to successfully adapt to rapidly changing economic and social environments as they enter their midlife years. One of the arenas in which this adaptation is occurring is in the increased numbers of male students over 40 returning to higher education, both at the undergraduate and graduate levels (Institute for Higher Education Policy, 1996).

Much has been written on the topics of adult learners and lifelong learning. At the same time, the one thing most scholars can agree on is the lack of

clear cut definitions and soundly researched theoretical bases for either of the topics (Elias & Merriam, 1995). Reviews of literature on adult graduates in higher education highlight the avenues that have been explored including age-based comparable performance; influences and motivators for student entry/reentry; adaptation influences; adult student needs, concerns and difficulties; and adult role expectations and role support (Cross, 1981; Kasworm, 1990). Researchers in the related field of human development psychology have extensively investigated the stages of childhood intellectual and emotional development to assist in the design of age-appropriate learning (Kohlberg & Turiel, 1971; Piaget, 1954). Fewer developmental stage studies have been done of adults after their early twenties following the completion of undergraduate college education. The one major exception has been the area of gerontology in which older learners' intellectual capacities and interests have been researched (Harootyan & Feldman, 1990; Kasworm, 1980; Stone, 1979).

Adult developmental stages are categorized by researchers into three broad age groups: early adulthood, middle adulthood, older adulthood (Erikson, 1959; Havighurst, 1952). Researchers of midlife males who did extensive study of cohorts in the 1970s were primarily interested in the phenomenon of the midlife crisis and its impact on the midlife males career direction and emotional relationships (Levinson, 1978; Vaillant, 1977). However, even their extensive

studies did not include investigation of midlife male educational interests and concerns. This gap in midlife male data is representative of prevailing research that has dealt with midlife males as having concluded their significant educational years in their twenties.

The motivations of adults returning to higher education and their academic self-concept as returning students to higher education are two areas of adult learners that have been researched to assist educational administrators in the evaluation and planning of their enrollment and academic support programs. Theoretical literature on motivations suggests that as adult students grow older in years, their interests tend to be more focused on studying topics more for intrinsic reasons of interest to the learner than extrinsic reasons such as vocational/career concerns. However, differences have been noted in the past between male and female learners with more nontraditional age female adult learners returning to school to prepare to enter the job market following life changes such as divorce, need for a second family income, or children having left home.

Theoretical literature on the academic self-concept of adult students, while not as extensive as that on motivations, supports the idea that academic performance of nontraditional age students 25 years and older is comparable to that of younger adult students. Differences between the nontraditional and younger students were found in the nontraditional students having more positive

feelings about their academic pursuits and an enjoyment of learning for learning's sake (Malin, Bray, Dougherty, & Skinner 1980; Werring, 1987). Gender-based comparisons of adult students' levels of self-esteem and self-confidence have been less conclusive. Although theoretical literature has explored the motivations and self-concept of adult students, very little descriptive data are available about midlife male students in higher education regarding their reasons for returning to school and their academic self-concept, particularly at the graduate level. This study was designed to explore whether there were differences in the motivations and academic self-concept among the four groups of graduate students.

The design of the study was based on a comparative survey research methodology with the use of the *Education Participation Scale* and the *Drummond Academic Self-Concept* instruments. The research data were collected during the summer of 1998 from 426 graduate students enrolled in the Colleges of Business Administration, Education and Human Services, and Health at a regional urban university. The data were analyzed to compare the motivations for returning to school and the academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students with three other groups, midlife females, early adulthood males, and early adulthood females. Additional comparisons of graduate student motivations and academic self-concept comparisons were performed at the between-college level

and the between-group independent variables of undergraduate GPA, and years out of school before current graduate program.

Summary of Results

Analysis of the findings of this study provides the following summarized results:

1. Midlife male graduate students' motivations for returning to school were found to differ significantly in one area from the three other graduate student age/gender groupings (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female). The midlife males were found to be less influenced by interest in using education for reasons of Professional Advancement than the other three groups.

2. Midlife male graduate students' academic self-concept was found to differ significantly in several areas from the three other graduate student age/gender groupings (midlife female, early adulthood male, and early adulthood female). Midlife male graduate students were found to differ from early adulthood male graduate students in having more interest in Love Of Learning and greater interest in Academic Skills. Midlife women differed similarly in the same areas from early adulthood males.

3. Within college comparisons of motivations of midlife male graduate students with the other three graduate student age/gender groupings showed several significant differences. Within the College of Health, midlife male

graduate students indicated less interest in Professional Advancement than those of midlife female, and young adulthood female graduate students. The midlife male graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services also had lower mean scores in Professional Advancement than midlife female and early adulthood female graduate students.

Within college comparisons of academic self-concept of midlife male graduate students with the other three graduate student age/gender groupings showed several significant differences. Within the College of Education and Human Services, the mean scores of midlife male graduate students were higher for Academic Skills and Extraversion than those of early adulthood females.

4. Between college comparisons of the motivations of each college's combined graduate student age/gender groupings showed significant differences. Graduate students' mean scores in the College of Business Administration displayed a lower level of motivation based on Cognitive Interest than did those of the graduate students in the College of Health. A similar difference between the mean scores of graduate students in those same two colleges was observed for the motivational factor of Educational Preparation. The College of Education and Human Services graduate students' mean scores displayed a lower level of motivation based on Communication Improvement than did those of the graduate students in the College of Health and the College of Business Administration.

Between college comparisons of the academic self-concept of each college's combined graduate student age/gender groupings showed significant differences. Graduate students' mean scores in the College of Education and Human Services displayed a greater emphasis on Love Of Learning than did those of the graduate students in the College of Business Administration. College of Business Administration graduate students reported a higher level of Self-Doubt than those of graduate students in the College of Health and the College of Education and Human Services. College of Health graduate students' mean scores displayed a greater emphasis on Time Management than did those of graduate students in the College of Business Administration.

5. Midlife male graduate students were found to differ from two other graduate student age/gender groups on the independent variable of Years Out Of School before current program. Midlife male students were found to have been out of school for more years than early adulthood male and early adulthood female students. Midlife female graduate students also differed from the early adulthood male and female graduate students in terms of having been out of school for more years before their current program. There were no significant differences in the motivations or the academic self-concept of the graduate student groups based on the Years Out Of School variable.

6. On the independent variable of undergraduate GPA, it was found that midlife male and female graduate students had the largest percentages in the top undergraduate GPA range. There were significant differences in the motivations of graduate students in the top GPA range. Their mean scores were higher in the categories of Educational Preparation and Communication Improvement. Significant differences were also found in the academic self-concept of graduate students in the top GPA range. Their mean scores were higher in the categories of Extraversion, Academic Skills, Time Management, Self-Confidence, and Self-Efficacy.

Discussion

Midlife Male Graduate Students' and Other Age/Gender Graduate Student Groups' Motivations For Returning to School

Statistically, at the .05 level, the findings show that there are significant differences between the sampled populations in the motivations for returning to school. Significant differences in the motivations of the sampled populations at the within-college groupings were found on the motivation scales of Professional Advancement and Cognitive Interest. Post hoc multiple comparison tests were run to identify where the differences between graduate students were.

On the motivation scale for Professional Advancement, the findings consistently and clearly display the midlife male graduate students as having

lower mean scores than the other three age/gender groups. The within-college mean scores for the Professional Advancement category reflect a similar pattern. It is worthwhile to note here that, in spite of between group differences, all the graduate student age/gender groups rated Professional Advancement the highest of the seven motivation categories (see Tables 4, 6, 7, and 8). The graduate student age/gender groups were also in agreement that Cognitive Interest was the second highest category followed by Educational Preparation as a distinctly lower third. This result was also found in a number of studies on the motivations of adult college students (Houle, 1961; Sewall, 1984; Smart & Pascarella, 1987; Spanard, 1990).

While the comparative examination of mean score data for the Professional Advancement category reflects a significant difference in the midlife male graduate students' lower mean score, it is possible that there may be a number of considerations related to this difference. A frequent theme of life stage developmental theory for adult males suggests that they may become less focused on career in their midlife years as they expand their interests in areas they have neglected due to career (Levinson, 1986; Neugarten, 1968). Another possible explanation is that their difference is a function of the midlife male groups' probable longer total working experience, which has left them with a more reserved outlook on the motivational aspects of work than the other three

age/gender groups. It is unlikely, based on the noncontroversial nature of the item-questions, that the difference between midlife males and the other graduate students' mean scores on Professional Advancement category were due to typical survey biases such as "social correctness."

On the motivation scale for Cognitive Interest, the findings display early adulthood male graduate students as having lower mean scores than midlife female and early adulthood female graduate students. However, no significant differences in Cognitive Interest were found in the within college comparisons of the four graduate student groups.

Midlife Male Graduate Students' and Other Age/Gender Graduate Student Groups' Academic Self-Concept

Significant differences were found in the academic self-concept between the sampled populations. The academic self-concept scales of Extraversion, Love Of Learning, Academic Skills, Self-Confidence and Time Management were the ones for which significant F ratios occurred. Post hoc multiple comparison tests were run to identify where the differences between the graduate student groups were.

Midlife males and midlife females displayed significantly higher Extraversion scores than those of early adulthood males. Midlife females displayed a similar difference with higher Love Of Learning than that of early

adulthood females. Midlife males and midlife females displayed significantly higher scores on Academic Skills than those early adulthood males. Midlife females displayed a similar difference with a greater focus on Academic Skills than that of early adulthood females. Early adulthood males displayed significantly lower scores on Self-Confidence and Time Management than did midlife females and early adulthood females.

The College of Education and Human Services was the only one of the three participating colleges with within-college academic self-concept mean scores which differed significantly for midlife male students. Midlife males and midlife females mean scores were significantly higher on Extraversion than were those of early adulthood females. Midlife males' and midlife females' mean scores were greater on Academic Skills than those of early adulthood females.

The midlife male and female higher mean scores on the academic self-concept categories of Extraversion and Academic Skills are consistent with prior research that has found a relationship between increased life experience and increased interest in participating in sharing experiences and sense of importance of relevant task skills (Drummond & Gilkison, 1989; Neugarten, 1968). The similar differences in the Love Of Learning category could be related to motivation research and developmental stage findings which indicate an increase in interest in learning for its own sake as adults mature into their midlife and later

years. It is not likely that any of the differences in the academic self-concept mean scores of the age/gender groups were influenced by typical survey biases such as “social correctness” or “the right way to answer” based on the neutral nature of the question-items.

A fourth academic self-concept category in which significant differences were found between two graduate student age/gender groups was Time Management. The difference occurred in early adulthood male graduate students having lower mean scores than those of midlife females.

Years Out Of School, Undergraduate GPA-Groupings

The effect of these two school-related demographic variables on the graduate student age/gender groupings was examined. As could be expected there was a significant difference, based on the mean scores of the age/gender groupings, as a stand-alone function of the Years Out Of School variable. Both midlife males and females had greater length of time out of school than did early adulthood males and females. Midlife males and midlife females scored more in the “6-10” and the “10+” years out of school categories. The early adulthood females and males scored more in the “2-5” years out of school categories.

However, there were no significant differences detected at the .05 level of significance, based on comparing the motivation scales with the Years Out Of School independent variable.

The other school-related demographic variable, Undergraduate GPA, produced significant differences in the graduate student age/gender groupings. Midlife females displayed a significantly higher Undergraduate GPA level than that of early adulthood males. Overall, midlife females and midlife males scored higher than the GPA range of 3.01-3.50; early adulthood males scored at the low end of the GPA range of 2.25-3.00.

There were significant differences, at the .05 level of significance, detected in Undergraduate GPA variable and two of the motivation scales on Communication Improvement and Educational Preparation. There were also several significant differences in the academic self-concept scales on Extraversion, Self-Confidence, Time Management, Self-Efficacy, Academic Skills, and Fear.

Between-College Grouping

The combined age/gender graduate populations of the three colleges were compared in both motivation and academic self-concept categories. Based on the mean scores of the colleges, significant motivation differences at the .05 level of confidence were found. Post hoc multiple comparison tests were run to identify where the differences between the graduate student groups were to be found.

On the motivation scale for Communication Improvement, graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services differed in having a

significantly lower mean score than did the graduate students in the College of Business Administration and the College of Health. Graduate students in the College of Health differed in having significantly higher mean motivation scores in the area of Cognitive Interest than that of graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services. On the Educational Preparation scale graduate students in the College of Health differed in having significantly higher mean scores than those of graduate students in the College of Business Administration.

The between-college comparison of the academic self-concept scales revealed significant differences. Post hoc multiple comparison tests were run to identify where the differences between the graduate student groups were on the identified academic self-concept scales.

On the Love Of Learning scale, graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services differed in having significantly higher scores than graduate students in the College of Business Administration. On Self-Doubt scale, graduate students in the College of Business Administration differed in having significantly higher scores than those of graduate students in the College of Education and Human Services and the College of Health. Graduate students in the College of Health differed in having significantly higher mean scores on Time Management than those of graduate students in the College of Business Administration.

It is noteworthy that some of the between-college motivation and academic self-concept categories were not the same as appeared at the age/gender group and within-college group comparisons. The additional motivation category was Communication Improvement. The motivation category of Professional Advancement did not produce significant differences at the between-college level with combined age/gender graduate student groups. The additional between-college academic self-concept categories were Self-Doubt and Time Management. The academic self-concept categories of Extraversion and Academic Skills, which produced significant differences between graduate student age/gender groups, did not produce significant differences at the between-college level.

Though the differences in significant categories of the between-college combined age/gender graduate student groups with the within-college separate age/gender groups are apparent, the reasons for the differences are not so evident. Prior research has found significant differences in motivation categories for continuing education college students based on the type of college program, however the educational fields of concentration were not comparable to those of the colleges in this study (Fujita-Starck, 1996).

Implications and Recommendations

The study's results have a bearing on several areas: the phenomenology of midlife male graduate students in the lifelong learning spectrum, the recruitment of and academic needs of midlife male graduate students, and future research.

The Phenomenology of Midlife Male Graduate Students in the Lifelong Learning Spectrum

The primary research findings of this study have determined that the sample midlife male graduate student group, approximately 14% of the total sample, was a bona fide age/gender graduate student population actively participating in a spectrum of graduate programs. The midlife male graduate student group related to the three other age/gender graduate groups in varying ways, some of them predictable based on prior research on adult learners and some of them not expected.

Midlife male and female students, in terms of life stage theory and self-directed learning, typically are learners who come back to school bringing with them a significant amount of life experiences (Cross, 1981). These experiences include long-term emotional relationships, extensive work histories (both at jobs and/or raising families), and time to reflect on the value of their prior learning and to reevaluate their life goals including educational aims. This level of life experience brings with it a more established sense of self at social and work

settings and an interest in sharing experiences with others (Elias & Merriam, 1995).

Traditional age, younger graduate students differ from older ones in the words of one researcher,

...they, like others their age, are trying to establish themselves as adults.

But for the (younger) graduate student such a transition is often more difficult. Because of their dependent relationships on faculty and delayed freedom to establish financial independence, they find themselves in a position of prolonged adolescence (Hartnett & Katz, 1977, p. 650).

In terms of development stage theory, midlife males are also faced with a variety of challenging life transition issues, including an identity reformulation. This transition, sometimes called the “midlife crisis,” is influenced by factors such as the decline of youthful physical prowess, the reaching of plateaus in careers, and changes in emotional and family relationships through both divorce and children coming of age (Levinson, 1981; Sherman, 1987; Vaillant, 1977). At the same time, economic changes have increased the pressures on midlife males to adjust to diminished expectations in terms of secure jobs. The introduction of the computer into the school, the workplace, and the home has also added to the learning pressures of all parents and workers. These recent historical trends add to the known life stage transition challenges confronting midlife males.

The findings of the study indicated that midlife male graduate students only differed significantly from the other three age/gender graduate student groups on one of the motivation categories. The motivation category on which they varied was Professional Advancement. It was a notable difference which clearly separated them from all the other groups at both the age/gender level across colleges and within-colleges. Of special interest was the fact that the midlife males exhibited a lower level of motivation of returning to school for reasons of Professional Advancement. Their lower mean score on Professional Advancement on the one hand indicates that the rising economic pressures on recent years is not as significant a reason for their returning to school as it may be for the other three age/gender groups. On the other hand, their lower mean score on Professional Advancement is supported by life stage development research on midlife males which indicates a somewhat reduced focus on career and increased interest in activities which had been limited by earlier career demands. The findings of this study suggest the need for a more comprehensive review of the role that career goals play in midlife males choosing to return to higher education.

The findings of this study further indicate that midlife males' mean scores on academic self-concept categories are significantly different in several areas from some but not all of the three other age/gender graduate student groups. They and midlife female graduate students differ from young adulthood females in that

the midlife groups have a higher level of Extraversion and of Academic Skills than the early adulthood females. A similar pattern was found in the difference of the midlife male and female displaying a higher score than younger males on the academic self-concept scale of Love Of Learning. These age-based differences correspond again with life stage learning and the andragogical teaching theory in which increased life experience, including reflection on the value of learning disciplines, tends to be exhibited more by midlife than by younger adult learners. Of interest, though it was not a significant difference, midlife males scored the lowest on the academic self-concept of Fear. The reasons for this difference could be simply a statistical anomaly or it could indicate an area that needs to be studied in more detail.

The Recruitment of and Academic Needs of Midlife Male Graduate Students

With regard to the recruitment and academic needs of midlife male students, the findings of this study have several implications. Examination of the findings indicates that, as a group, the midlife males did not differ significantly from the other three age/gender graduate student groups on a majority of the motivation reasons for returning to school. The one on which they did differ, Professional Advancement, was a function of their being less motivated by this reason than the other age/gender groups, even though it was still the overall highest scores of all the motivation categories. So even a significant difference on

Professional Advancement does not suggest any specially adapted change in recruitment of midlife male students since it was the highest motivation category for all the graduate student groups. The second highest motivation category for all the graduate student groups was Cognitive Interest, with Educational Preparation as the third highest place. These findings, which correspond with prior studies of the motivations of returning higher education students, suggest that recruitment strategies for graduate students will benefit from emphasizing these three motivation dimensions in their outreach materials.

Examination of the academic self-concept findings reinforce two areas of perceived academic needs of both midlife men and midlife women. The two areas are found in their high scores on Extraversion and Academic Skills. The design and presentation of graduate student curricula, which includes the dimension of Extraversion, will enhance the educational experience of midlife students by providing opportunities to share experience and interact with other students. The high scores of the midlife students on Academic Skills indicate the value that midlife students place on exercising their skills and a higher level of scholastic confidence. The overall high level of midlife graduate students' perceived academic skills indicates that they do not need any special accommodation or assistance in adjusting to the required reading, writing, and research requirements of graduate studies.

Future Research

Future research is needed to expand the scope of the study of midlife male students in higher education. This study was based on the self-reported responses of two survey instruments which were administered at one regional urban university. As such the findings are limited in presenting a more complete picture of the motivations and academic self-concept of the midlife male and three other age/gender graduate student groupings. Future research could provide a more balanced picture by combining elements of qualitative as well as quantitative research. Qualitative research needs to be carried out based on in-depth interviews with appropriately selected graduate student informants. Quantitative research needs to be carried out with similar studies being done in a variety of graduate education settings including large research institutions, smaller for-profit graduate schools, and institutions offering distance degrees. In terms of the instruments, it might be valuable to develop a motivation instrument that is more tailored to the graduate student population in terms of its items and its wording.

Conclusion

In an earlier chapter the phenomenon of midlife male students returning to higher education was discussed as well as the sparse research about them as a nontraditional student group. This study focused on comparing midlife male

graduate students' motivations and academic self-concept with those of three other age/gender graduate student groups.

The results of the study, using two survey instruments, indicate that overall the midlife male graduate students were not significantly different from the three other age/gender groups. The one motivation area in which midlife males differed from the three other groups was in their lower scores on the motivation category of Professional Advancement. Midlife males and midlife females had similar higher academic self-concept scores in the category of Academic Skills than early adulthood males. Midlife males and midlife females scored higher in the Extraversion than did early adulthood females. Ongoing studies need to be conducted to increase understanding about the motivations and self-concept of midlife students to enhance student recruitment strategies and curricula design.

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Appendix A

Instruments

Survey instrument deleted, paper copy available upon request.

Survey instrument deleted, paper copy available upon request.

Survey instrument deleted, paper copy available upon request.

Survey instrument deleted, paper copy available upon request.

Appendix B

MANOVA Tests of Significance

For the Motivation and the Academic Self-Concept Scales

Education Participation Scale

EFFECT . . GROUP

Multivariate Tests of Significance

<u>Test Name</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Approx. F Hypoth.</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Error DF</u>	<u>Sig. of F</u>
Pillais	.13975	2.86169	21.00	1230.00	,000
Hotellings	.14997	2.90426	21.00	1220.00	,000
Wilks	.86526	2.88517	21.00	1172.11	.000

Drummond Academic Self-Concept Scale

EFFECT . . GROUP

Multivariate Tests of Significance

<u>Test Name</u>	<u>Value</u>	<u>Approx. F Hypoth.</u>	<u>DF</u>	<u>Error DF</u>	<u>Sig. of F</u>
Pillais	.21905	3.11131	30.00	1185.00	,000
Hotellings	.24523	3.20157	30.00	1175.00	,000
Wilks	.79328	3.15840	30.00	1154.21	.000

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EDUCATION

University of North Florida Doctoral Candidate in the Educational Leadership Program	October 1997
University of North Florida M.Ed. Counseling	May 1994
Harvard University A.B. History, Cum Laude	June 1962

TRAINING EXPERIENCE

Methodist Medical Center, St. John's Horizon House, at Jacksonville

1. Work Program Coordinator 1997 - present
 - a) Administer the day-to-day activity of the work program. Responsibilities include the placement of residents, living with HIV/AIDS, in back-to work training positions, and developing relations with other service agencies and corporate employers. Co-authored grant applications.
 - b) Facilitate trainings in substance abuse recovery and work issues.

2. Independent Residential Living Coordinator 1996-1997
 - a) Administer the day-to-day activity of independent living program. Responsibilities include assessment and goal planning with residents preparing for outside employment and living on their own.
 - b) Facilitate substance abuse recovery groups.

3. Mental Health Counselor, Intern 1994-1996
 - a) Assess mental health status of incoming St. John's Horizon House clients.
 - b) Provide staff trainings on dual diagnosis treatment strategies.

Boston University

1. Senior Systems Analyst 1985-1989
 - a) Designed and implemented campus information systems. Responsibilities included regular meetings with administrators and faculty to identify and assess priorities of long range university information needs. Consulted on expansion of automated library system.
 - b) Trained information analyst teams in systems analysis techniques.

2. Systems Analyst 1982-1985
 - a) Consulted and designed faculty and administration information systems.
 - b) Trained university staff in system planning and usage techniques.

John Hancock Mutual Life Company

1. Systems Manager 1974-1982
 - a) Administered the day-to-day activity of administrative/ financial teams.
 - b) Interviewed job applicants and administered team quality reviews.
2. Project Leader 1969-1974
 - a) Directed team in development of business information systems.
 - b) Trained programmers in data analysis..
3. Programmer 1967-1969
 - a) Developed business programs.

PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

American Counseling Association
American Psychological Association
Northeast Florida Mental Health Counselors Association

REFERENCES

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