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An Analysis of Success Center Directors' Perceptions Concerning College Remedial Education Programs

Melvin Steele Jr.

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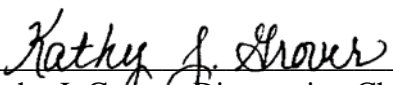
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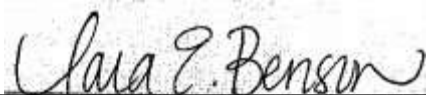
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Melvin L. Steele Jr.

This Dissertation has been approved as partial fulfillment

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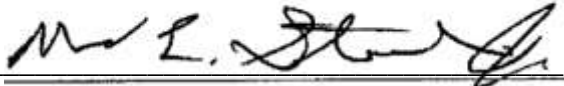|	
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Declaration of Originality

I do hereby declare and attest to the fact that this is an original study based solely upon my own scholarly work at Lindenwood University and that I have not submitted it for any other college or university course or degree.

Full Legal Name: Melvin L. Steele Jr.

Signature: _____   Date: _February 1, 2022_

Abstract

Success Centers are a component of community colleges that prepare students who need additional foundational coursework to proceed to college-level credit classes (Housel, 2020). In this study, the perceptions of Success Center Directors concerning their programs were explored through the lens of adult learning theory as advanced by Knowles and Lindeman (Merriam, 2018) using an online survey. Five research questions were investigated, which dealt with the services provided by Success Centers at community colleges, services that directors wanted to add, the credentials of those working in Success Centers, the impact of Success Centers on their stakeholders, and contingency plans used during unforeseen events such as the SARS-CoV-2 pandemic. This study was conducted in a two-state region of the Midwest United States, and the response rate was limited. An analysis of observations from the summation of survey responses indicated that directors do not perceive that their students have much success in completing college-level coursework to obtain a certificate or an associate's degree and, in many cases, to successfully complete remedial programs. Traditional classrooms and tutoring were the preferred course delivery methods, and Success Centers were often located in or near the community college library or within the English Department. Lack of student improvement was perceived to be due to a lack of effort by the student or life circumstances. Further study of the perceptions of Success Center Directors is recommended.

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Chapter One: Introduction

Developmental education or remedial education has been an important part of preparing students to succeed and earn a bachelor's degree (Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Often remediation is the result of efforts at the community college level (Turk, 2019). It is essential to examine community colleges and other two-year higher learning institutions to better understand how students advance through the development process (Valentine et al., 2017). Approximately two million students starting higher education are placed in remedial programs yearly (Turk, 2019, p. 1091). This volume of students and their subsequent outcomes are important to educators as well as sources of funding and potential future employers (Turk, 2019).

This chapter will include the importance of remedial education in community colleges and provide evidence of the importance of this issue. The background of community college remediation will be examined, followed by the theoretical framework which will guide this study. The statement of the problem follows as well as the purpose of the study. The significance of the study is then addressed, and definitions of terms are defined. The final component of this chapter focuses on the limitations and assumptions of the study.

Background of the Study

Community colleges were established by local communities to prepare students to transfer and eventually earn a bachelor's degree or to provide vocational training (Payton, 2020). The mission of community colleges has changed throughout the history of the institutions, with enrollment being a primary catalyst for change (Barringer &

Jaquette, 2018). The shift in mission and accompanying degrees offered again reflects the local community of the institution (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018).

Historically, studies have focused on the outcomes of the community college mission and demographic variables (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). Assessments of students' progression in reading, writing, and math via meta-analysis or course delivery form the bulk of research (Brand, 2018). Nix et al. (2020) studied various institutional stakeholders that included instructors and administrators, while Brand (2018) examined the unaffiliated Oregon community colleges. Additionally, Nix et al. (2020) investigated the Florida state community college system.

Theoretical Framework

Because the purpose of this study is to analyze Success Center Directors' perceptions concerning college remedial education programs, it is appropriate to utilize a theory that addresses the needs of the student population under **review** (Biasin, 2018). The role of the community college is to prepare students to successfully complete an associate's degree or higher or to prepare students to enter the workforce through the completion of a certification program (Davidson, 2017). Students in this study, by definition, are adult learners; therefore, an adult learning theory was used as the lens or framework for this thesis (Davidson, 2017). Community college Success Centers and their developmental education programs were examined specifically through adult learning theory pioneered by Eduard Lindeman and advanced by Malcolm Knowles (Franco, 2019).

Knowles was a renowned theorist who advanced adult learning theory andragogy (Franco, 2019). Knowles suggested that adult learners should be independent and have

self-motivation to learn (Franco, 2019). He saw adult learners as internally motivated students who were more likely to bring life experiences to the classroom and would thus be more likely to examine new material (Merriam, 2018). Knowles also observed that adult learners tended to be more mature, responsible, and self-directed than younger students (Merriam, 2018). He contended there is more to learning than just understanding new material (Yarbrough, 2018). Adult learners also learn how to learn; therefore, learning is a lifetime pursuit and is the primary focus of andragogy (Yarbrough, 2018).

Adult learning theory can be used to examine the students' successes (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Adult learning theory can also be used to evaluate community college (Payton, 2020). Success Center directors are in the best position to evaluate success as it relates to this study and provide insight into both adult learners and the service Success Centers provide for them (Franco, 2019).

Statement of the Problem

This study is designed to measure what Success Center directors think about their programs or the success of Success Centers as viewed by their respective directors. There is a need for more research into Success Centers and how they operate, although there have been several studies utilizing all methods (Bailey, 2018; Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Valentine et al., 2017). Studies to review other stakeholders' perceptions are scant, and more information is needed about the views of directors of the Success Centers themselves (Brand, 2018).

The majority of students enrolled in community colleges are required to take developmental math, English, and reading courses, and even though this coursework is designed to be supportive, the majority of the students find it difficult to complete the

classes and ultimately fail to obtain a degree (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Many studies have found remediation efforts have been successful (Bailey, 2018; Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Xu and Dadgar (2018) suggested while access to college has greatly improved over the last 50 years, with the advent of community colleges, there has been no improvement in success rates. Success Centers and their respective remedial efforts are a major focus of community colleges, and those institutions have the least success in graduating students (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Bahr et al. (2019) and (Valentine et al., 2017) also found dubious success rates implying that more can be done to educate students better and prepare them for further study or the job market.

Purpose of the Study

The goal for higher education is for students to obtain a degree from a community college ultimately or to earn a certificate and enter the workforce job-ready (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Success Centers within these institutions of higher learning must provide the proper environment for learning (Brand, 2018). Another ancillary academic support is also vital to assure success as well as to nurture non-academic assistance (Turk & Taylor, 2019). With these conditions in mind, the purpose of this study was to analyze the perceptions of Success Center directors concerning college remedial education programs.

Perceptions of Success Center directors were studied to ascertain the level and quality of services provided by their institution. Changing demographics, mission, local environment, and funding can impact institutions, and therefore changes in the services may be required (Turk, 2019). Credentialing of faculty and staff is another dimension in providing services (Franco, 2019). Perceptions of staff members who provide a wide range of Success Centers will be analyzed. The professional qualifications of the Success

Center staff are important when other stakeholders demand results and positive outcomes (Brand, 2018). Finally, the perceptions of Success Center directors were analyzed to determine what they deem as achievements. Student success is only one component in which there are additional areas that meta-analysis, outcomes research, and existing research might overlook. This was a quantitative study to gather more information on the aforementioned topics.

Research Questions

The following questions will guide this study:

1. What services are provided by college Success Centers within institutions of higher learning?

2. What services would make good additions to the portfolio of offerings of Success Centers?

3. What credentials are required for Success Center directors, faculty, staff, and peer workers?

4. What are the Success Center directors' perceptions of their departments, and what do they consider achievement with respect to satisfying their various stakeholders?

5. What are your plans for the Success Centers continuity of operations in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events?

Significance of the Study

This study was designed to collect information from Success Center directors. There is considerable research, sometimes conflicting, on the outcomes of students enrolled in remedial education programs (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018; Cooper et al.,

2019; Ngo, 2019). Meta-analysis and quantitative studies have been the primary instruments used to examine success (Ngo, 2020). There have been a few qualitative studies, but they were not focused on directors (Brand, 2018; Nix et al., 2020; Saxon et al., 2020). Quantitative studies can be relevant, and the literature revealed that this survey would fill a void with respect to Success Center directors (Saxon et al., 2020). More information was needed about services, perceived achievements, and the professionals who work in this field (Saxon et al., 2020).

Definition of Key Terms

The following terms are defined for this study.

Adult Learner

Adult learners are defined as those ages 18 and above (Davidson, 2017). They are distinguished as such because they are enrolled at a community college for either degree completion or for the attainment of a certificate to enter directly into the workforce from the typical college-age group of 18–24 (Davidson, 2017).

Developmental Education

Developmental education encompasses courses taken for institutional credit but not for college credit toward a degree (Weisburst et al., 2017). Developmental education is remedial and is more equivalent to courses offered at the secondary education level. Remedial courses falling in this category are math, reading, and writing or English (Cooper et al., 2019).

Passing Rates

Passing rates are the academic scores required to advance to the next level of study (Kosovich et al., 2019). This study will utilize a grade of "C" or better for any for

credit or developmental course final grade (Kosovich et al., 2019). This grading scheme is the accepted standard (Kosovich et al., 2019).

Persistence

Persistence is defined as the determination of students to complete a program of study which leads to a certificate of completion, a two-year associate's degree, or a baccalaureate degree (Hu, 2019).

Success Centers

Success Centers are the providers of the institution of higher learning remedial education (Brand, 2018).

Success Center Directors

Success Center directors are those who are entrusted with administering the development, remediation, academic support, and non-academic programs designed to help students successfully complete a degree or to obtain certification leading to entry into the workforce (Brand, 2018).

Successful Course Completion

Successful course completion is a grade of "C" or better for any developmental course or credit attempted (Kosovich et al., 2019). A "P" can represent a passing grade in a pass/fail course (Cooper et al., 2019). Additionally, passing grades can range in traditional letter grades from an "A" to a "D" (Cooper et al., 2019). Accepted passing grades at the institutions being studied range from an "A" to a "C"; therefore, this will be the acceptable standard for the research.

Delimitations, Limitations, and Assumptions

The study was conducted in the Fall semester of 2021 and was administered online. The sample group consists of Success Center directors, and many of the

participants in this study will have that title. Other respondents may have different titles but will be managing the Success Center at their respective institutions of higher learning. Other titles could be librarian, chair of the English or mathematics departments, and other similar roles at the college. Those in charge of Success Centers or their equivalent were asked to respond to this survey about their perceptions.

Variation was expected among the institutions in the study. Course offerings, student demographic variables, and geographic factors were expected to differ. A component of this study was to determine if the demographic and geographic variables play a role in the Success Centers as gauged by responses from center directors. The study was of community colleges and other two-year postsecondary institutions in two Midwestern states. As such, the results were limited due to the states selected for the study.

In addition, comparing adult learners through educators' views provided more information to address the gap in research. This study was designed to complement existing research on student remedial education and provide additional insight into adult learners' interactions with collegiate success programs. Information about the participating institutions remained anonymous, including information about participating directors, to elicit data and minimize potential bias in the study (Fraenkel et al., 2018). Participant anonymity was maintained to lessen the chance of bias in the research (Creswell et al., 2019; Fraenkel et al., 2018). All responses were submitted voluntarily and candidly. Given that all Success Center directors were given the survey, the sample was assumed to be representative of the population (Anderson et al., 2019).

Sample

The population for this study was Success Center directors in two Midwestern states and did include both rural and urban areas. All Success Center directors were administered the survey, and therefore the selected population had the opportunity to complete this census.

Replicability

This study was conducted in a two-state area in the Midwest United States. The findings are limited to the perceptions of directors of Success Centers within this geographic area. Replicability specifies the outcomes will be consistent (Fraenkel et al., 2018). The findings of this study were limited to the perceptions gathered at the time this survey was administered, 2021. Additionally, results from this study cannot be assumed to approximate input from other directors from different areas of the country or two-year institutions and community colleges.

Bias

A quantitative study was the best approach to researching perceptions of Success Center directors; however, there was a potential for bias (McMillan, 2022). Potential bias can result from a self-administered survey by respondents' failure to participate and those who supply inaccurate responses (Fraenkel et al., 2018). In addition, this quantitative study utilizing a survey may include researcher bias, but that was held to a minimum with a two-step field pretest (McMillan, 2022).

Furthermore, there was a possibility that respondents could lose anonymity (Fraenkel et al., 2018). This study included all Success Center directors, eliminating the

non-random sampling concern (Creswell et al., 2019). The possibility of associability did, however, still exist (Creswell et al., 2019).

Researcher bias was held to a minimum. The questionnaire was anonymous, and the researcher had no personal or professional ties to the survey participants.

The following assumptions were accepted:

1. Data supplied by Success Center directors were assumed to be correct and reflect their best judgment concerning their student assistance programs.

2. The data supplied by the institution was assumed to be complete, and all students enrolled in developmental education courses were represented.

3. The researcher did not postulate hypotheses and did not influence the data derived from survey respondents.

Summary

Developmental education is an important facet of community colleges with non-selective admissions policies (Bahr et al., 2019). Students seeking higher education often need to complete remedial courses in English and math before advancing to college-level credit courses (Bahr et al., 2019). Many studies have been conducted on developmental education programs, and their effectiveness and effective interventions are contingent on the specific circumstance (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Community colleges have the unique role of providing the most remedial education and, as such, are the focus of most research concerning development programs for college credit courses (Bahr et al., 2019).

Adult learners represent a significant segment of the college population (Turk, 2019). Many college students have extensive preparation in prior college work or life experience (McDonnell & Soricone, 2018). Yet adult learners may require developmental

courses to achieve their academic goals (Bailey, 2018). This project was designed to study the perspectives of Success Center directors and gain insight into what works and needs to be improved.

A broad overview of Success Centers and their developmental education programs in community colleges within the context of andragogy is provided in Chapter Two. Also offered is a comprehensive overview of adult learning theory, specifically andragogy as advanced by Knowles (Franco, 2019). A review of the research in the field of developmental education follows. Finally, research on Success Centers is explored.

Chapter Two: Review of Literature

The study was designed to measure Success Center directors' views on developmental education or collegiate remediation. In this chapter, existing literature on community colleges and Success Centers is reviewed. The review includes these topics and a brief history of higher education, community colleges, and their missions.

The literature review encompasses information about Success Centers and community colleges, the institutions studied, and how they function. Topics selected for review comprised these areas and were obtained from a review of the literature. The rationale for adult learning theory is presented first and will be the underlying theme for the following literature review. The remaining literature review immediately follows with a brief history and overview of community colleges, including changes in community college missions and access over time. Success Center history, an overview of Success Centers, a description of typical services offered, and formats used by Success Centers are presented. The placement of the Success Center within the institution, the format in which remediation is offered, and access are addressed next. Special circumstances faced by institutions and professionals working in Success Centers are covered, including special circumstances, student readiness, student background, and institutional environment. The literature review and all topics are presented within the lens of adult learning theory.

Theoretical Framework

The focus of this study is on remediation efforts for adult learners who attended a community college in two Midwest states. Adult learners and most students enrolled in community colleges require remedial education in the basics: English, math, and reading

(Bahr et al., 2019). Developmental education programs were examined through the lens of adult learning theory, and specifically, remediation was examined through adult learning theory pioneered by Lindeman (2000) and advanced by Knowles (2000) (as cited by Merriam, 2018).

Adult learning theory has evolved into a multifaceted set of concepts with the understanding that advancing the proper learning environment is instrumental in motivating adult learners (Merriam, 2018). Andragogy has been applied from a wide variety of learning perspectives, including self-directed, experiential, life-long, and transformative perspectives (Biasin, 2018). Adult learning theory emerged from the behaviorist's approach and the recognized theoretical fields, including cognition, feminist theory, critical social theory, and post-modern theory (Merriam, 2018). The facilitation of learning through instructor preparation, student preparedness, student experiences, the social context of learning, technology, and even the spiritual context are all aspects of adult learning theory and its multi-dimensional aspect (Merriam, 2018).

Adult learning theory focuses on the environment, learning process, and adult learner (Youde, 2018). Previous theories or orientations from social cognitive, constructivist, behaviorist, cognitivist, and humanist approaches helped shape the different perspectives that comprise adult learning theory (Jackson, 2009). Furthermore, adult learning theory is distinguished from the pedagogical model (Youde, 2018). Consequently, a four-tiered model postulated by Kiely et al. (2004) is appropriate for analyzing the various adult learning theories. Theorists and their contributions are examined from a learner, process, educator, and context perspective (Youde, 2018).

Knowles, a prominent learner-focused researcher, advocated andragogy or an individualist approach for examining adult learners (Youde, 2018). Knowles' pioneering work in adult learning theory, beginning in the 1960s, distinguished the field of study from pedagogy which examines how children are taught and learn (Yarbrough, 2018). Pedagogy emphasizes an instructor-focused methodology and is more conditioning in its approach, providing beginning learners with the basics in all fields (Yarbrough, 2018). Andragogy, contrastingly, recognizes adults are more mature and therefore are more learner-centered (Yarbrough, 2018). As students mature, rote learning becomes ineffective and is appropriately replaced by process learning (Yarbrough, 2018). Learning how to learn is the primary focus of andragogy (Biasin, 2018).

Knowles described andragogy as teaching adults as both an art and science and outlined six characteristics that described adult learners (Merriam, 2018). Adults are internally motivated and question topics and reasons for learning in part from life experiences (Merriam, 2018). Adults are also more likely to be internally motivated as learning is often job-related (Youde, 2018). Knowledge and experience from lifelong learners have brought responsible, self-directed, and independent thinkers into the classroom (Franco, 2019).

Mezirow's transformative learning theory resulted from a national study of women returning to higher education in community colleges in the United States (Youde, 2018). Women were forced to reexamine their typical roles and assumptions as they transitioned back into the higher education environment (Youde, 2018). Learning in this aspect is a process that alters preconceived concepts and, as Mezirow asserted, is the highest goal of adult education (Youde, 2018). Application of new knowledge and critical

self-reflection is at the heart of transformative learning, which seeks to elicit understanding from a different perspective (Biasin, 2018). Kiely et al. (2004), thus, classify transformational learning theory as one that best fits the process model. Mezirow's words regarding transformational theory were:

> The process by which we transform our taken-for-granted frames of reference (meaning perspectives, habits of mind, mind sets) to make them more inclusive, discriminating, open, emotionally capable of change, and reflective so that they may generate beliefs and opinions that will prove truer to guide actions. (as cited in Merriam & Bierema, 2014, p. 84)

Mezirow then proposed ten steps for the transformative learning process (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The first step is to experience a disorienting dilemma that causes one to undergo a self-examination, the second step (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Personal role assumptions and new roles require learners to conduct a thorough assessment which is the third step (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). Personal analysis and input from others present new options on which to act (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). The ten-step process then progresses to a specific course of action in which learners seek to build self-confidence (Merriam & Bierema, 2014). A specific course of action will lead to acquiring the necessary knowledge and training to be successful (Youde, 2018). Implementation of the new roles and proper feedback will serve to hone skills and reinforce the new perspective (Merriam & Bierema, 2014).

Merriam (2018) suggested, "That facilitating learning is at the heart of our practice" as educators (p. 93). Jarvis (2015), Merriam (2018), and Cafferella and Merriam (2000) are additional theorists who have advanced adult learning theory (as cited in

Youde, 2018). Cafferella and Zinn (1999) surmised that the environment is instrumental in forming adult learning outcomes and recognized the dynamics of situational events (as cited in Youde, 2018). Stakeholders and the community also help develop a new understanding (Youde, 2018).

Another facet of adult learning is the educator's contributions (Youde, 2018). Cafferella and Zinn (1999), with the inspiration from earlier work by Merriam, classified adult education traditions into five separate categories (as cited in Merriam, 2018). The behaviorist category focused on external stimuli with learning as a process, while in the liberal approach, intellectual development is stressed (Merriam, 2018). The humanist category is student-friendly and personalized, whereas the progressive approach stresses experiential learning (Merriam, 2018). Finally, the radical approach aimed to correct injustice and alter outcomes (Merriam, 2018). Educators must be aware of their approach and its impact on adult learners (Youde, 2018). Additionally, the adoption of the proper technique for the learner and the context in which learning occurs should provide optimal outcomes (Youde, 2018). Proper perspective and awareness on the part of the educator are instrumental in facilitating adults as they achieve knowledge (Youde, 2018).

Community Colleges

Community colleges are a segment of higher education and developed much later than other colleges and universities. The University of Bologna is credited as the first university followed closely by Oxford (Neem, 2016). Ancient universities were established all over Europe and eventually in America, with Harvard being established in 1636, followed by William and Mary (Neem, 2016). The original colonial colleges in America were King's College, Queen's College, College of Rhode Island, Dartmouth,

College of Philadelphia, College of New Jersey, New College, and Collegiate School (Geiger, 2019). New College was renamed Harvard, and Collegiate School was renamed Yale, while the College of Philadelphia became the University of Pennsylvania (Geiger, 2019). The College of New Jersey became Princeton, and King's College is now known as Columbia University (Neem, 2016). The College of Rhode Island was renamed Brown University, and Queen's College is (Neem, 2016). All of the universities in the colonial era were religiously affiliated with Harvard, Dartmouth and Yale being founded by the Puritans. Anglicans founded the University of Pennsylvania, Columbia, and William and Mary, but the University of Pennsylvania was officially a nonsectarian institution (Geiger, 2019). Princeton was founded by Presbyterians, and Brown was founded by Baptists (Geiger, 2019). Georgetown was the first Catholic college in America (Rizzi, 2018).

The first colleges in Colonial America were tasked with the mission of training clergy and providing training for future leaders of their respective areas (Geiger, 2019). The churches had a keen interest in educated scholars that could serve as clergy and work as missionaries (Neem, 2016). Colonial leaders were also needed for civic duties as the colonies grew and thrived (Geiger, 2019). America at that time was filled with more free colonies, and there was a need for local education (Geiger, 2019).

Not all colonies had colleges, and only one was considered to be in the south, William and Mary in Virginia. New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Massachusetts, and Rhode Island rounded out the colonies with colleges. Georgetown was founded near the largest Catholic communities and served the Maryland and Virginia areas (Geiger, 2019). The average student did not complete a degree and

completed as much education as they had the time or could afford (Neem, 2016). The common set curricula were delivered in rote form and required memorization (Neem, 2016).

Community colleges were first planned in the late 1890s (Geiger, 2019). Junior Colleges were first developed to provide quality education at an affordable price and thus were more accessible to students seeking higher education (Neem, 2016). Initial planning was done in Texas and Louisiana when small colleges had financial difficulty and needed to sustain enrollment (Geiger, 2019). The small Baptist colleges were encouraged to provide the first two years of study and an associate's degree with students expected to transfer to Baylor. The first two Junior Colleges were established in Goshen, Indiana, and Joliet, Illinois, with the assistance of the University of Chicago (Neem, 2016).

Other developments that helped foster the idea of the forerunners to community colleges were the Morrill Act of 1862, which created more practical and vocational training and agriculture programs (Geiger, 2019). Today the schools are often referred to as land-grant institutions (Neem, 2016). The 1944 GI Bill of Rights was another significant factor in the evolution of two-year institutions of higher learning and opened access to returning members of the armed forces after World War II (Geiger, 2019). Community colleges became open enrollment institutions beginning in the 1960s and 1970s and still offer education to everyone (Geiger, 2019). Another push for community colleges came from existing schools, districts, and colleges (Geiger, 2019). Community colleges formed from school districts that essentially provided education through a 13th and 14th-grade level, and their emphasis was vocational training as well as the first two years of a bachelor's degree program (Davidson, 2017). Just as cities and towns had

previously sought prestige by having a four-year college or university, community colleges were welcomed with the same level of enthusiasm (Neem, 2016).

Community colleges have been around for over 100 years and have often changed their missions to adapt to the needs of their various stakeholders (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). The first mission was to provide affordable education close to home and save failing colleges (Geiger, 2019). Today community colleges are often open enrollment institutions and provide access to higher education to everyone (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). This provision is a mission of access to higher education, often with the goal of a bachelor's degree as the ultimate goal (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). Community colleges' second common historical mission has been to prepare students to enter the workplace in a vocational career and complete an associate's degree or certification with less than two years of higher education (Davidson, 2017).

These dual missions reflect the needs of the communities of these institutions and change in importance over time (Davidson, 2017). Typical students entering higher education are in the 18-year-old and older group (Turk, 2019). Lifelong learning through a career and vocational training or advancing to complete a bachelor's degree or higher are part of adult learning theory through their self-directed, life-long, and transformative aspects (Biasin, 2018).

Success Center History

The state of student readiness for higher education has driven the need for remediation programs (Housel, 2020). Community colleges were tasked with preparing underprepared students from the beginning as many four-year degree-granting colleges and universities looked to community colleges to weed out weak students (Housel, 2020).

Today over half the students entering community colleges are enrolled in remedial

programs (Turk, 2019, p. 1091). Therefore, approximately two million first-time students

enter remedial programs in higher education institutions per year (Turk, 2019, p. 1091).

Two million is a significant number of students, which demonstrates the importance of

Success Centers offering remedial education (Davidson, 2017).

Success Centers have been in the business of providing remedial education since

the advent of community colleges (Housel, 2020). Community colleges were designed to

provide instruction at an affordable price and to initially either prepare a student to

transfer to a college or university to earn a bachelor's degree or to learn a vocational skill

(Neem, 2016). The ability to think, achieve, and advance as a student is often obtainable

when students take the initiative to learn independently (Turk & Taylor 2019). The

overarching objectives of community colleges can be summarized into three categories

knowledge, careers, and culture (Geiger, 2019). Adult learning theory advocates that the

learning environment is an important factor for adult learners (Merriam, 2018).

Andragogy has been applied from a wide variety of learning perspectives, including self-

directed, experiential, life-long, and transformative perspectives (Biasin, 2018).

Success Center Success

Success Centers provide instruction in remedial math, reading, and writing

(Davidson, 2017). Students must demonstrate proficiency in these areas to advance and

earn college-level credit (Davidson, 2017). Community colleges and other colleges and

universities have varied methods to achieve the goal of earning college-level credit and

student success as defined by earning a bachelor's degree; however, such success does

not always occur (Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Success can also be defined as

attaining an associate's degree or completing a certification program (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Success can also simply mean that students complete remedial education coursework (VanOra, 2019).

Remedial education programs in the disciplines of math, English, and reading have been found to be successful in some studies and not successful in others. (Bahr et al., 2019; Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Remediation efforts that better prepare students to be independent thinkers will help them progress and is consistent with adult learning theory (Payton, 2020; Biasin, 2018). Remedial education programs are designed to help student succeed and to advance in their chosen academic program (Payton, 2020).

Math is one subject many students struggle with and a core component of remedial programs (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Students at the lowest levels in need of the most remediation have a long path to complete a degree and recognize little or no benefit from their remedial math sequence (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). More success is noted when the sequence is shortened, and students are enrolled in corequisite courses that allow for concurrent enrollment in a prerequisite course and subsequent course that can be completed in shorter blocks of time (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). A utility-value intervention whereby students were goal-oriented and had confidence in their math skills was found to increase success primarily for male students (Kosovich et al., 2019). Success was also more likely when students were enrolled in shorter courses and had a remedial math class at the first opportunity (Watanabe-Rose & Guy, 2019). Students who were enrolled at later times, even as part of a semester, had a lower chance of success that increased over time (Watanabe-Rose & Guy, 2019). Redundancy with high school work tended to not be

as effective, and students quickly lost interest (Ngo, 2020). Students who closely miss math proficiency cutoffs usually error in the two common areas of fractions and word problems and being held back into remedial programs decreases persistence to continue with college (Ngo, 2019). Main streaming students and course redesign can improve math proficiency as well (Boatman, 2021). Overall, the state of math remediation is not good and successful outcomes are abysmal (Kosovich et al., 2019).

Basic English skills are also a major component of remedial education offered at Success Centers at community colleges, and often include a reading and writing component (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Combining two subject areas has been one way in which success rates have improved (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Paulson et al., 2021). Other factors inside and outside the classroom also influence reading and writing success (Relles & Duncheon, 2018). Student readiness, life circumstances, attitude toward remedial coursework, and perceptions of others are key factors (Relles & Dungeon, 2018). Writing is a social exercise, and classrooms, college facilities, and how courses are taught can negate success and hinder persistence (Schrynemakers et al., 2019). As is illustrated, many factors can hinder a reading and writing program, but combining these two disciplines into one course has been found to be an effective way to improve success rates (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Paulson et al., 2021; Relles & Duncheon, 2018).

Another factor to consider when examining success rates is student intent (Chan & Wang, 2020). Students often start college with a career path, which changes as they react to what they prefer (Chan & Wang, 2020). For example, students who may not have

an aptitude for math will forgo plans to attend a university and enter a STEM program (VanOra, 2019).

Adult learning theory, as advanced by Knowles and Lindeman can be used to describe the environment of the Success Center (Merriam, 2018). Students must take responsibility for learning the basics presented in a remedial program to advance to college-level credit courses (Biasin, 2018). Learning is often self-directed, and adults often bring life or job experience to better relate to material (Bahr et al., 2019). They also tend to question more, which can foster learning (Youde, 2018).

Success Center Format

Success Centers are often called upon to provide developmental education courses and provide other services to students (Saxon et al., 2020). There are gaps in outcomes among underrepresented student groups, and other services are required to assist in attaining academic achievement (Payton, 2020). African American and Hispanic students, as well as other students who come from economically depressed areas, can benefit from additional student services offered through Success Centers (Payton, 2020). Typical services supplied by community colleges can include the following in addition to academic training and support: academic advising, career services, and employment opportunities, community service, counseling, and tutoring (Payton, 2020).

Placement for Success Centers within institutions varies (Saxon et al., 2020). The student services and traditional academic support dictate where remediation programs are placed (Saxon et al., 2020). Placement can range from libraries to English departments, math departments, student services, and stand-alone divisions (Saxon et al., 2020). Additional departments in technical community colleges can also be utilized, including

the business department (Saxon et al., 2020). Tutoring centers can be in various places (Payton, 2020). Community colleges can provide online remedial instruction, and in most cases, there are remedial centers at branch campus locations (Payton, 2020).

New methods have increased success rates (Brand et al., 2018; Campbell & Citron, 2018). These methods include combining reading and writing courses and allowing student self-determination (Campbell & Citron, 2018; Nix et al., 2020). In addition, student self-placement allows for coursework to be completed quicker and brings responsibility for placement at an appropriate level (Brand et al., 2018). Another approach to the completion issue is the concept of co-enrolling in courses (Anderson et al., 2020). Finally, a blend of online and classroom learning is suggested as an alternative for students who need additional support (Kozakowski, 2019). In this scenario, students work in class online with the assistance of an instructor who is close by (Kozakowski, 2019).

The formats in which courses are offered also vary (Cooper et al., 2019). Learning modules, intensive shorter courses, and in-person and online intensive programs are among the many offerings schools can provide (Housel, 2020). The traditional or enhanced classrooms are also optional formats for remedial coursework. Online access as an option can be problematic for students with internet access issues and affect students from economically disadvantaged and other under-represented groups (Cooper et al., 2019). Students who come from racially or ethnically diverse backgrounds and low-income areas will be best served by programs that allow for their unique circumstances (Relles & Duncheon, 2018, Turk, 2019). Adult learning theory encompasses the

environment, learning process, and learner, which are all factors in Success Center

Format selection (Youde, 2018).

Success Center Challenges

There are several challenges that Success Center Directors face when delivering

programs at their respective community colleges. The institution's location is one factor

(Schrynemakers et al., 2019). Other factors are student demographics, student readiness,

and the overall composition of the student body (Payton, 2020). A final challenge for

Success Center Directors is the occurrence of unforeseen events such as the SARS-CoV-

2 viral pandemic that has hit the world in 2020 and 2021 (Crespin-Trujillo & Hora,

2021).

Student backgrounds and readiness are major concerns for Success Center

directors (Cooper et al., 2019). Hispanic, African American, and economically

disadvantaged students find it more difficult to succeed and advance to college-level

credit courses (Cooper et al., 2019). Urban areas may have substandard facilities,

including buildings, classrooms, furnishings, dorms, libraries, and equipment

(Schrynemakers et al., 2019). These factors may be present for poorer rural communities

or other underserved populations (Payton, 2020). A state of disrepair can affect the

overall attitude of students and contribute to a lack of academic success (Relles &

Duncheon, 2018). Furthermore, poor transportation, unemployment, lack of internet

connectivity, and other similar issues can influence student attitudes (Relles & Duncheon,

2018).

Student readiness is also a consideration (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Students can come

to a community college straight from high school and not be ready to take college-level

credit courses (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Students may also have been out of school and in the workforce before reentering an academic program (Payton, 2020). Success Center Directors have the challenge of working with this diverse group and providing assistance to bring all students to the point they can achieve on the college level (Turk & Taylor, 2019).

Additional services beyond remedial classes may need to be provided to achieve desirable outcomes (Cooper et al., 2019). For example, students who become self-motivated are more likely to succeed (Chase-Mayoral, 2017). Unforeseen circumstances can also affect how remediation courses and programs deliver curricula to students (Cooper et al., 2019). Recent worldwide events such as the SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, pandemic are examples of how higher education institutions need to adapt quickly to guide remedial students to successful outcomes (Housel, 2020).

Adult learners present a unique challenge for higher education because some students have previous college hours or life experiences that can translate into college-level credit (McDonnell & Soricone, 2018). However, other adult learners may lack sufficient skills due to an extended time away from an academic environment and may require remediation before college-level classes (Housel, 2020). Therefore, academic supports beyond the classroom and non-academic support are tools in which Success Center staff can aid students toward completing a degree or obtaining a certificate (Saxon et al., 2020).

Secondary school preparation and time away from school are factors in student readiness (Housel, 2020). In addition, any student entering college may need remedial coursework (Housel, 2020). The role of the community college is to prepare students for

a transfer to a four-year college for a bachelor's degree or higher and prepare students to be job-ready upon the completion of an associate's degree or certification program (Davidson, 2017).

The SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19, pandemic is another major factor for all organizations inside and outside academia. Institutions of higher learning were especially hard hit given that the instruction and housing at most schools are combined. Extra precautions had to be taken to accommodate students and especially international students. In addition, sporting events were another major consideration for college administrators. Completion of semesters, retention of students, and the potential loss of revenue hit all colleges and universities along with every segment of society.

The responses from colleges varied, but overall, quarantines enacted by local and state governments set the parameters for decision-making on the institutional level. Worldwide there were quarantines, and the same was true for the United States (DeMartino, 2021). Colleges and universities worldwide offered courses remotely as a response, which continued for many schools into the 2021 school year (De Martino, 2021). Dorms were emptied, and students were sent home (DeMartino, 2021). Additionally, sporting events were canceled on all levels, including professional leagues across many sports and college events of all sports (Treve, 2021). Academic conferences and other collaborative events were moved online or canceled as a response to the virus (Treve, 2021).

Challenges facing all colleges in the aftermath of the initial wave are how to start up and keep faculty, staff and students distanced and safe (Treve, 2021). Libraries have gone digital but still have lots of material in physical form (Annett, 2021). All staff, even

those outside the library, who encounter students need still to maintain space and provide services for students and faculty (Annett, 2021). Computer enhanced delivery was used to solve this dilemma (Annett, 2021).

Other pandemic-related items are mask mandates, required vaccination, and social distancing protocol (Annett, 2021). Many colleges require vaccination to attend in-person classes and participate in other activities (Annett, 2021). The same is true of mask mandates (DeMartino, 2021). There is a responsibility to look out for others and consider personal freedoms (Treve, 2021). Considering other unforeseen events, there need to be contingency plans for all natural disasters (Treve, 2021). Weather events, terrorist attacks, and a host of other unforeseen items can occur, and planning will alleviate the pressure if and when action needs to be taken (DeMartino, 2021).

Overall, colleges need to look after the welfare of their students, faculty and staff, and the general public in which they interact. Course delivery is only one component, and online learning has been the overwhelming choice during the pandemic (Annett, 2021). Institutions of higher learning are also important in communities and serve as an example. Administrators should always be cognizant of this fact. Success Center Directors fall into an administrative role within the university and should follow established guidelines at their respective institutions and keep all stakeholders safe (Annett, 2021).

Summary

In this chapter, current literature on the most relevant topics associated with Success Centers housed in community colleges has been reviewed. The theoretical framework selected for this study was adult learning theory as advanced by Lindeman

and Knowles (as cited by Merriam, 2018). Through this lens, community colleges were reviewed throughout history, including their missions and accessibility. A review of the establishment of colleges in Europe and Colonial America was completed. Institutions of higher learning were first founded primarily by religious denominations and were designed to teach via the rote method. Junior colleges, precursors of today's community colleges, were then observed historically, and the changing and evolving missions of those schools were examined. Success Centers were then introduced and reviewed historically (Geiger, 2019). They have always been a part of junior and community colleges (Neem, 2016). Success Centers typically provide remedial assistance in three areas: reading, writing, and math (Kosovich et al., 2019).

The format of Success Centers was then studied, and this encompassed the placement of the center within the college. Often Success Centers are housed in an academic department or a library. Online access was explored as a course format, as was the traditional classroom and other alternatives. Access and additional services were reviewed as they pertain to student success (Turk & Taylor, 2019).

Challenges faced by Success Centers were addressed and included student demographics, student readiness, and planning for natural disasters, pandemics, and other unforeseen events were explored. Students come from diverse backgrounds, and environmental factors play a role in their success. Students come from various backgrounds, including race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and preparedness. Student readiness is another factor for adult learners (Davidson, 2017). Success with regard to math, English, writing, and reading was reviewed, and student readiness can be a problem for those coming straight from a high school or for those who have been in the

workforce and are reentering an academic program (Davidson, 2017). Math can be a difficult subject to master, and success rates are low (Kosovich et al., 2019). Studies indicating the success and failure of efforts and accompanying demographic data reveal that results are not always successful in retaining students and advancing their academic careers (Turk & Taylor, 2019).

The format in which remediation occurs was also evaluated, along with the placement of remedial programs within colleges. Access is still an issue for some students in an online format. Finally, challenges for Success Center directors were examined concerning the setting in which the school is located and student background (Nix et al., 2020). Those factors play a role in outcomes and other demographic variables (Turk & Taylor, 2019).

Special occurrences or events were addressed related to natural disasters, pandemics, or other events (Crespin-Trujillo & Hora, 2021). The recent pandemic has brought the need to have contingency plans to the forefront (Connell &Wallis, 2021). As a result of the pandemic, colleges and universities, including community colleges, went to an online format (Connell &Wallis, 2021). Dorms were shuttered, and sporting events were canceled worldwide (Connell &Wallis, 2021). The overwhelming response was for colleges to offer coursework in an online format which brought additional access issues (Crespin-Trujillo & Hora, 2021). Some community colleges could benefit and provide classes to returning students living in their region (Crespin-Trujillo & Hora, 2021).

Chapter Three includes the methodology of the study. First, the purpose of the study and research questions that will drive the report is presented. The description of the research design follows with the justification for the selected design and its

appropriateness. Next, the population is defined, and the sample is provided.

Instrumentation follows with an emphasis on reliability and validity. The necessary steps

were taken to ensure that both were maintained throughout the study. A description of the

data collection and precautions that were taken to ensure that data integrity was

maintained are provided. The data analysis is explained as well. The final section of

Chapter Three describes the ethical considerations made for this study.

Chapter Three: Methodology

The methodology selected to investigate Success Center directors is addressed in

this chapter for the selected community colleges in the Midwest region of the United

States. The problem and purpose of the study are briefly restated. Additionally, the

specific research questions and the resulting hypotheses for this inquiry are reaffirmed.

The justification of the chosen methodology is outlined with attention to the elements that

comprise the research design, the selection of the population and sample size,

instrumentation, relevant independent and dependent variables, data collection,

appropriate data analysis, validity and reliability, bias, and possible ethical

considerations.

Problem and Purpose Overview

Developmental education courses are an effective tool in preparing students for

college-level class work (Bailey, 2018). A vast amount of research in remedial education

has focused on the more traditional student population ages 18–22 (Valentine et al.,

2017). However, little is known about the perceptions of Success Center directors who

administer developmental education programs (Brand, 2018).

Developmental education programs have been effective and prepare students to

succeed in college-level courses (Bailey, 2018). Traditionally community colleges have

been the entry point for students in need of remedial education (Barringer & Jaquette,

2018). Community and technical colleges are open enrollment institutions of higher

learning that often accept students in need of developmental education (Barringer &

Jaquette, 2018). Students who successfully complete secondary education and have a

high school diploma or have alternative high school equivalency are accepted and can

enroll for course work (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). Community colleges are in a unique position to help unprepared students entering higher education since the majority of students enrolled in programs are deficient in reading, math, and English at the college level (Bahr et al., 2019).

The purpose of this study is to examine the perceptions of Success Center directors at community colleges in the Midwest section of the United States. Therefore, the population for this study will be directors who fall within a two-state region of the Midwest during the 2020–2021 academic year. Perceptions of Success Center directors will then be ascertained via a survey.

Research Questions

The following research questions will guide this study.

1. What services are provided by college Success Centers within institutions of higher learning?

2. What services should be added to the portfolio of offerings of Success Centers?

3. What credentials are required for Success Center directors, faculty, staff, and peer workers?

4. What are Success Center directors' perceptions of their ability to meet the needs of stakeholders?

5. What are your plans for the Success Centers continuity of operations in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events?

Research Design

A quantitative study will be used to assess Success Center directors' perceptions of their programs. Two states will comprise the study area, and all community colleges in

that geographic location will be surveyed (see Appendix A). Data will not be suitable for

rigorous scientific analysis but will be analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics (Anderson

et al., 2019). Descriptive statistics will be used to glean information and provide

meaningful results from participants (Creswell et al., 2019). Results are expected to be

representative and accurate for the institutions reviewed (Anderson et al., 2019).

Because a population will be reviewed, no sampling techniques will be used

(Creswell et al., 2019). All Success Center directors in the population will be examined.

Survey responses from participants will then be grouped and cross-tabulated to gain more

insight. Similarities and differences will then be evaluated for participating institutions

and programs.

When deciding to conduct this study, multiple methodologies were considered

and researched. A variety of methodologies have been used to evaluate the effectiveness

and efficiency of Success Centers and resulting student outcomes (Valentine et al., 2017).

The results of these studies draw differing conclusions, with some results purporting

success, while others have shown no significant improvement in student academic

performance due to remediation (Valentine et al., 2017). Previous research regarding

developmental education has been scrutinized and debated, including the research

methodologies chosen, results, and inferences (Bahr et al., 2019; Bailey, 2018; Brand,

2018; Barringer & Jaquette, 2018; Valentine et al., 2017; Saxon et al., 2020). Both

qualitative and quantitative research methods have been employed to examine

remediation efforts for students enrolled in college but who still need developmental

course work (Bahr et al., 2019; Bailey, 2018; Brand, 2018; Barringer & Jaquette, 2018;

Valentine et al., 2017; Saxon et al., 2020). Methodologies have ranged from qualitative,

quasi-experimental, mixed methods, quantitative, and the use of current and historical

data (Valentine et al., 2017). Bahr et al. (2019) conducted a quantitative study to

research the remedial math sequence and course completion selections for students who

could not complete all developmental course work. Quantitative studies have been

conducted for several demographic groups and adult learners who successfully complete

the English and math course sequence (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). These studies,

however, are still scant (Barringer & Jaquette, 2018). A quantitative study is the most

appropriate method of research for this study because it will measure what practitioners

deem important in their area of expertise (Creswell et al., 2019).

A quantitative study will be used to measure the perceptions of Success Center

directors. Analysis of qualitative studies is different than quantitative studies (Creswell

et al., 2019). Data cannot be used for statistical tests in the same manner (Creswell et al.,

2019). This study is quantitative and will rely on descriptive statistics to provide insight

into survey responses. In addition, this study will not be conducted with a random sample

but rather a population. Therefore, errors due to random selection will not be an issue as

all Success Center directors will be surveyed (Anderson et al., 2019). Results are

consequently expected to be representative and accurate (Anderson et al., 2019).

Population and Sample Size

The population of the study will be defined as Success Center directors in a two-

state area in the Midwest United States and comprise 45 institutions. All 45 community

colleges will be surveyed; therefore, the study is a census of the population. The study

will include urban and rural institutions as well as institutions of various sizes. A

population will be studied, and sampling errors and irregularities will be a non-issue

(Anderson et al., 2019). This form of quantitative research does, however, introduce the

possibility of bias and that the bias or perception will form the basis of information

(Creswell et al., 2019). This method of data collection will include complications that

could arise from the use of participants under review (McMillan, 2022). Additionally,

non-response errors can impact this survey (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Therefore, failure to

respond is a concern that could lead to errors within the study (McMillan, 2022).

However, a qualitative approach may have a sampling error while reducing researcher

bias (Anderson et al., 2019).

Instrumentation

A survey will be implemented for this quantitative study. Specific information

regarding Success Center Directors' perceptions, their credentials, the services offered at

their community colleges, the services that they would like to add to improve their

programs, their perceptions of all stakeholders and contingency plans for unforeseen

events including natural disasters and pandemics will be collected for analysis (Fraenkel

et al., 2018). All survey administration and responses will be conducted online using the

Lindenwood University survey system. The survey has not been previously used and has

not been published. It was developed through the review of the literature and what was

deemed important to ascertain from Success Center directors. The survey was peer-

reviewed by educators and field-tested by non-participating peers, and revisions were

made as deemed necessary. Research instruments must maintain validity and reliability to

assure meaningful results (Fraenkel et al., 2018).

Reliability

Reliability indicates instrument results will be consistent (Fraenkel et al., 2018). The survey has been designed after a review of literature. Furthermore, the survey has been designed to elicit information from survey respondents who serve as directors of Success Centers within a two-state region of the United States. Every effort will be made to test this instrument with non-participating peers and education professionals before being provided to study participants. The created instrument will be administered through the Lindenwood University system, and all responses will remain anonymous. Attention to detail will be maintained throughout the collection and analysis phase as well to assure reliability. A valid survey is also a reliable survey, and validity will also be maintained (Anderson et al., 2019).

Validity

Validity implies the study measures what it is supposed to measure (Fraenkel et al., 2018). Validity refers to the significance and precision of the data to provide meaningful results that can be replicated by future researchers (Fraenkel et al., 2018). In this study, the research will be examined concerning the potential differences that may exist among survey participants who administer collegiate Success Center programs. The population in a two-state area of the Midwest United States will be examined, fulfilling the requirement of a selected sample from a defined population (Anderson et al., 2019). The study also meets the requirements of aptness, accuracy, meaning, and efficacy of the data and therefore provides valid data (Fraenkel et al., 2018). The survey will be pretested by peers and reviewed by educators before it is administered. The instrument

will also be completed with the approval of the Lindenwood University Institutional Review Board and with the approval of survey participants and their respective schools.

Data Collection

Data collection will commence with the approval of the Institutional Review Board at Lindenwood University. Additional approval (see Appendix B) was sought to conduct research from the selected community college institutions. Once approval was granted, the survey link was dispensed via email communication to the Success Center directors (see Appendix C). Survey respondents will indicate their informed consent by reading the consent form (see Appendix D) on the first page and completing the survey. All collected data will be anonymous, and all identifying characteristics will be removed. Anonymity will assure more accurate responses and allow respondents to have confidence by knowing they remain unidentified. Control of the survey data will ensure that it is kept safe and confidential.

The additional approval phase was conducted in phases. The first phase was to obtain email addresses and contact information for the Provost or Chief Academic Officer at each institution. Email addresses were also obtained for Success Center Directors at each institution. The Chief Academic Officer, Provost or a person holding a similar title was then contacted and permission was sought to administer the survey. In many cases that was the necessary step to contact Success Center Directors. A few community colleges did require formal approval through their respective Institutional Review Boards and that step was completed as required. A second attempt was made to contact a Provost or similar individual when there was no response. The second contact was made two weeks after the first.

Success Center Directors were then contacted where approval was granted to survey a community college. A second follow up email was sent two weeks after initial contact to give an opportunity for all approved directors to participate in the survey. Success Center Directors were given a link to complete the survey in emails and their anonymous responses were collected.

Data Analysis

Data collected for this study will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and then cross-tabulated to further observe differences and similarities in categorical variables. The most appropriate analysis for descriptive, categorical data is descriptive statistics (Fraenkel et al., 2018). Measures of frequency, including count and percent of responses, will be tabulated for the survey data (Fraenkel et al., 2018). Measures of frequency are used to establish which selections are made and in what quantity (Anderson, 2019). Next, responses will be categorized according to the preference of the survey respondent. Cross-tabulation of data and additional measures of frequency will add more in-depth insight to the analysis as well (Fraenkel, 2018). Additionally, measures of central tendency will be calculated for the survey data, which will include the mode, mean, and median for ordinal questions (Fraenkel et al., 2018). Quantitative research is done from the perspective of the participants and their views (Anderson et al., 2019).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations concern research participants, the data under review, and the researcher (Creswell et al., 2019). On the participant level, care must be given to not harm those being studied (Creswell et al., 2019). The assurance of anonymity, absence of coercion, and confidentiality of participants can provide an environment in which more

accurate information is obtained (Creswell et al., 2019). Collected data must also be safeguarded to ensure that it is not contaminated (Creswell et al., 2019). Proper data collection, data analysis as well as storage are paramount (McMillan, 2022). Researchers must adhere to standards of conduct that follow these principles (Creswell et al., 2019). Every effort to maintain objectivity and to truly represent the information provided will be observed without any attempt to skew results, findings, and recommendations (McMillan, 2022).

Ethical concerns will be minimized by maintaining the anonymity of survey participants (Creswell et al., 2019). Additionally, associability will be monitored and all other potentials for errors to ensure that accurate data are collected and to reduce potential conflicts of interest (Creswell et al., 2019). All steps will be taken to assure confidentiality and anonymity are maintained. Participant and collector bias will be monitored and minimized throughout data collection, analysis, and presentation phases (Creswell et al., 2019).

Summary

In this research study, quantitative methodologies designed to assess the success of Success Centers based on the perceptions of Success Center directors was utilized. The problem to be researched was clearly defined, and research questions were established. The research design was set to ensure that proper research procedures were followed. The population for this study was defined as a two-state area of the Midwest United States that comprises 45 schools. The sample size for this study is all 45 colleges in the defined population. Instrumentation guidelines were detailed in this chapter, as well as a detailed process for data collection. The utmost care was given to assure quality throughout the

survey administration and data collection phase. The data collections phase followed all

prescribed details and was administered as planned. Data analysis was done using

descriptive statistics. Finally, all ethical considerations have been addressed to eliminate

all foreseeable challenges.

Chapter Four: Analysis of Data

This study was designed to measure the perceptions of Success Center Directors regarding their respective remedial or developmental education programs. Insight into the quality of services and the resulting student outcomes was gained through a survey consisting of 22 questions. Through the survey, information on the types of services offered at Success Center Directors' respective institutions was sought. Success Center Directors' perceptions about additions to their programs were also ascertained. A third area explored was the credentials of those working in corresponding success centers. Additionally, Success Center Directors were asked what they perceived to be program success and the overall opinion of their various stakeholders regarding the program's success. Finally, crisis management and program continuity in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events rounded out the areas of investigation.

In this chapter, a description of the survey area and an overview of institutions are provided. An analysis of survey responses for each question follows. The final component of this chapter is an overall analysis of the survey.

Survey Area and Institutions

The survey covered a two-state region of the Midwest United States. The area is home to two major cities within the country. This region comprises rural and urban centers and encompasses several smaller metropolitan statistical areas covering both states. The two-state area is known for agriculture, various high-tech industries, and an assortment of major industries, including aerospace. The population is representative of divergent racial groups, including a sizeable Hispanic population. The survey region across both states also ran the spectrum from lower to higher-income neighborhoods. In

general, the two-state region displayed variance in many aspects to that of the nation but retained other regional characteristics concerning religion and political viewpoint in addition to other aspects of its distinct subculture.

Higher education institutions range from large state universities to well-known nationally recognized private universities. Smaller state universities are prevalent, as are smaller private and religious-based higher learning institutions. In addition, there are a few institutions that offer well-respected engineering and science, STEM, curriculums. Colleges and universities within this region encompassed a wide variety and reflected the needs of the area in which they serve.

The community colleges and other two-year institutions studied embody the areas in which they are located. Some schools were established to provide technical training in specific industries and agriculture. A few were established to serve as an extended branch for a larger institution, especially state universities. Others ranged from very large urban community colleges to very small rural schools with a fraction of the size.

Similarly, schools varied in programs offered and the number of programs, certifications, and associate's degree programs. Specialty institutions tended to serve the high-tech industries with graduates located close to potential employers, while other community colleges were established to serve a specific county or section of the state. Overall, the area reviewed was diverse in the scope of the economy, population, colleges, universities, and community colleges.

Data Analysis

A 22-question survey was designed and administered to community college Success Center Directors. The purpose was to ascertain the directors' perceptions about

their programs, and the responses obtained from this process are analyzed in this section. A caveat, findings, and question by question analysis follow. Responses to each survey question are provided, as are observations from analysis of the responses to the survey overall.

Caveat

The survey area provided a rich location from which to gather data. As was demonstrated, the two-state region had a diverse population, large metropolitan areas, rural areas, and a diverse economy. The goal was to obtain enough survey responses from the participating community colleges to picture Success Center Directors' perceptions accurately. Therefore, every institution meeting the community college definition was given the opportunity to have a Success Center Director complete the survey. By definition, this included all two-year education institutions in the two-state area, including those that specialized in technical fields.

Survey responses were less than expected. Approximately one-third of the schools given the opportunity to complete the survey participated. A low response rate can be problematic for generalizations of the population and is less accurate; however, the responses received still explain the perceptions of Success Center Directors. Demographic data and other identifying information were left out of the survey to maintain anonymity. The size of the institution and the focus on specialty technical programs would have identified community colleges. There were also both private and public community colleges, and that identifying information was omitted as well from the survey. As a result, information gathered from this study was less likely to provide a complete image of all schools in the study area. Thus, information from those

participating in the survey was treated as data from a small sample (Anderson et al., 2019).

Results by Survey Question

Questions for analysis appear in the same order as the survey. Analysis by research question is provided after each survey question is addressed. Responses and a narrative accompany each survey question, including any additional comments from respondents.

Survey Question 1.

Where is your Success Center housed? Six directors stated their success center was housed in the college's library, while five stated that their success center was housed in an academic college or department. Two respondents selected other and specified answers, while none stated that the success center was a separate entity. One director mentioned the success center was not in the library but next to the library. The second comment from another category was that their school did not have a success center but that developmental programs were housed in different divisions and named writing and tutoring centers (see Table 1). The sample, $n = 13$. Information gathered from this question points to the significance of the library as a domicile for success center programs. Equally important is the academic support of a department that would provide specific academic support, such as the English or math fields of study.

Table 1

Success Center Housing

Survey Response	Number of Responses
In an academic college or department	5
Library	6
It is a separate entity	0
Other, please specify	2

Survey Question 2.

What is your Success Center tutor-student ratio? Responses for the second question were nearly evenly split. Student ratios were from 1:10 or less for two institutions with two responses to 1:26 or higher with three responses. Additionally, the 1:11–1:25 category garnered three responses. Surprisingly, three Success Center Directors stated that the information on the tutor-student ratio was unavailable. Overall, there was balance in the responses with the different strategies and programs that could be utilized. School size and area of emphasis could be factors that influence student ratios. Not all factors were known in this case, but responses remain diverse for the second question. The sample size of $n = 11$ for question two and responses are below in Table 2.

Table 2

Success Center Tutor-Student Ratio

Survey Response	Number of Responses
1:10 or less	2
1:11–1:25	3
1:26 or higher	3
Information is unavailable.	3

Survey Question 3.

What areas of instructional support does your Success Center provide? Mark all that apply. The goal of this question was to get more information, and therefore all areas that applied could have been selected. In this case, there were four options and eight respondents who answered the question, or $n = 8$. Interestingly, all eight respondents selected every option. As shown in Table 3 below, answers were evenly split across the board for each response.

Table 3

Success Center Instructional Support

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Reading comprehension	8
Writing workshops	8
Math assistance	8
Subject matter and course specific assistance	8

Survey Question 4.

How are your programs delivered? Mark all that apply. Question four was also

not limited to a single answer and sought to elicit all forms in which courses are delivered

to students. As seen by the responses, multiple methods are often employed, and, in this

case, the traditional classroom was selected by all respondents. Online was selected by all

but one, while two respondents indicated that their community colleges utilized the self-

directed module approach. Four respondents offered other responses, including one-on-

one workshops and tutoring, whether in a group, individualized or with minimal support.

The distribution of responses is shown in Table 4 below, and again there is variety, but

online and the traditional classroom are most common. The sample is *n* = 11.

Table 4

Success Center Program Delivery

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Traditional classroom	8
Online	7
Self-directed modules	2
Via another format, please specify	4

Survey Question 5.

What programs do you find most effective? The traditional classroom was selected

as the most effective by most survey respondents. Eight Success Center Directors

indicated it was the most effective way to administer developmental programs for their

students. Another format was second with three responses, and it encompassed tutoring

developmental students. No directors selected self-directed modules or an online option

for their students. The accompanying Table 5 illustrates the results for this question.

Table 5

Most Effective Programs

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Traditional classroom	8
Online	0
Self-directed modules	0
Via another format	3

Note. N = 11

Survey Question 6.

What percentage of students work in self-directed programs? As shown in Table

6, self-directed programs were not utilized for most students in the responses garnered

from Success Center Directors who completed this survey. Only one response was

recorded for the 21–40% range, and all other responses were in the 0–20% range. Self-

directed programs were not found to be a popular choice, and as indicated, all selections

above 40% were not selected. The sample for this question is *n* = 10, and the specific

responses are illustrated in Table 6.

Table 6

Percentage of Students in Self-Directed Programs

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0-20 percent	9
21-40 percent	1
41-60 percent	0
61-80 percent	0
81-100 percent	0

Survey Question 7.

What percentage of students work in a traditional class setting? Self-directed

modules were not the favored option, as indicated in the sixth question. However, the

traditional classroom was not the overwhelming favorite. Respondents had varying

percentages of students in this setting, with all quintiles represented in the sample. The

traditional classroom is not the preferred style and is used more heavily at some

institutions and not as often in others. The sample was $n = 8$, and the results were nearly

uniform, as shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Percentage of Students in Traditional Classroom Setting

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	2
21–40%	2
41–60%	2
61–80%	1
81–100%	2

Survey Question 8.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete reading courses and then successfully complete a college-level credit course? There is no agreement among the Success Center Directors who completed the survey. Answers vary across the range, except the 81–100% option, which was not selected. Three respondents indicated that their students either do not pass a developmental reading course or do not pass the succeeding college-level course. Two indicated that over half of their students complete a developmental reading program and advance to complete a college-level for-credit course successfully. The remaining directors specified that around half of their students could complete a developmental reading course and complete a college-level for-credit course. The sample was $n = 8$, and the distribution is shown in Table 8.

Table 8

Percentage of Students Who Complete Reading Course then College-Level Course

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	2
21–40%	1
41–60%	3
61–80%	2
81–100%	0

Survey Question 9.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete writing workshops and then successfully complete a college-level course? Writing is another component of a Success Center and one that a student must master to complete an academic program successfully. There was a total of 8 responses for this question, and four of those responding marked that only 0–20% of their students were able to complete writing workshops and then succeed in a college-level course. Other respondents were more inclined to indicate that more students could achieve this accomplishment. One respondent was confident that over 80% could complete writing workshops and complete a college-level course. The sample was $n = 8$, and the skewed distribution is shown in Table 9.

Table 9

Percentage of Students Who Complete Writing Workshop then College-Level Course

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20 percent	4
21–40 percent	0
41–60 percent	2
61–80 percent	1
81–100 percent	1

Survey Question 10.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete an associate's degree program? Community colleges offer associate's degree programs and certificate programs with fewer requirements. Community college Success Center Directors did not indicate that a high percentage of their students would successfully complete an associate's degree. Most respondents quantified that less than half could attain that level of success. Two directors reported that 41–60% of their developmental students went on to earn an associate's degree. The results for this question are shown in Table 10, which had a sample size $n = 7$.

Table 10

Percentage of Students Who Complete an Associate's Degree

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	2
21–40%	3
41–60%	2
61–80%	0
81–100%	0

Survey Question 11.

What percentage of Success Center students complete a certificate program? The requirements for certificate programs are usually less rigorous than those for a degree and can be one year or less in duration. Surprisingly, most respondents thought that 20% or less of their developmental students would achieve that academic goal. Another two directors thought that 20–40% of their students would earn a certificate, while just one thought that 40–60% of their students would earn a certificate. No director selected a response that exceeded a 60% completion rate for a certificate program. The percentage for this level of academic achievement would exclude those earning an associate's degree and those who did not attain the certificate level. The skewed results are shown in Table 11, where the sample is $n = 7$.

Table 11

Percentage of Students Who Complete a Certificate

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	4
21–40%	2
41–60%	1
61–80%	0
81–100%	0

Survey Question 12.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete a bachelor's degree program? All education institutions track students. While they may not obtain a bachelor's degree in residence at a community college, students can transfer and earn a higher degree. This question garnered the lowest number of responses and a sample of n = 5. Sixty percent of directors thought that less than 20 percent of their students completed a bachelor's degree, while one thought the completion percentage was between 21–40%. There was an outlier, and that director selected the 61–80% range for students going on to complete a bachelor's degree program. Table 12 shows the details.

Table 12

Percentage of Students Who Complete a Bachelor's Degree

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	3
21–40%	1
41–60%	0
61–80%	1
81–100%	0

Survey Question 13.

What percentage of Success Center students do not successfully advance through the complete remedial program? Just looking at completing a remedial program that allows a student to take credit courses was the focus of this question, and again answers were not indicative of a wide range of success. Four respondents thought that 0–20% of the students enrolled in a remedial program would advance, while another thought the range was higher at 21–40%. Two respondents selected the 41–60% range. There was variation in responses, but the highest percentages were not selected. Directors did not indicate that large percentages of students could complete remedial programs. The sample was $n = 7$, and the results are shown in Table 13.

Table 13

Percentage of Students Who Do Not Complete Remedial Program

Survey Response	Number of Responses
0–20%	4
21–40%	1
41–60%	2
61–80%	0
81–100%	0

Survey Question 14.

What prohibits a student from successfully completing a remedial program? Completion levels were the focus of the previous questions. This question switched the spotlight to roadblocks that a student might face. Four options were given, and five directors perceived that a student's lack of effort was a primary culprit that prohibits successful remedial program completion. One director also indicated that grasping the material was also a stumbling block. Two directors selected the *other* option. Life circumstances were mentioned by one. The *other* comments were more comprehensive and indicated that all options listed were factors, including familial history, socioeconomic factors, and k-12 preparedness, that contributed to the lack of success. The sample size was $n = 8$, and the results are found in Table 14.

Table 14

Obstacles to Completing a Remedial Program

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Lack of effort	5
Unable to grasp the material	1
Improper assistance	0
Other, please specify	2

Survey Question 15.

Do you feel your Success Center would be better housed in a separate academic unit, and if so, which academic unit? Answers to this question were split into several categories. Two academic units not selected as optimal units to house a Success Center were business and the science and mathematics department. One director mentioned the library was a good place to house remedial programs, while another said the English and Languages Department. Three respondents selected another stand-alone academic division, and two chose the other option. Comments from the *other* category included their success center also houses advisors and counselors. Another commented they house their Success Center in the English Department but did not select that option from the list provided. Overall, different institutions operate with other structures, and there is no set conformity in the survey group. The sample was *n* = 7, with the accompanying Table 15 providing more detailed information.

Table 15

Success Center Housing Preferences

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Library	1
Business	0
Science and Mathematics	0
English and Languages	1
Academic division	3
Other unit, please specify	2

Survey Question 16.

What specific resources would be most beneficial to increasing your rate of student success? There were two answers individually given that directors thought would most likely benefit their Success Centers. First, better programs received three responses and more staff two. A larger budget and more self-directed learning were not selected independently by the directors responding to this question. Most responses to this question were *all of the above,* including a larger budget, more staff, better programs, and more self-directed learning. The tally for question 16 is in Table 16, with the sample *n* = 9.

Table 16

Resources to Increase Student Success

Survey Response	Number of Responses
A larger budget	0
More staff	2
Better programs	3
More self-directed learning	0
All of the above	4

Survey Question 17.

Do you have a peer assistance program? The community colleges surveyed either had a formal peer assistance program or no peer assistance program. There were no informal peer programs that provided remedial student courses or tutoring. The answers to the question were evenly split, with five responses stating that there was a peer assistance program and five responses stating that there was no peer assistance program. The sample was $n = 10$, and the corresponding Table 17 shows the responses.

Table 17

Existence of Peer Assistance Program

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Yes	5
No	5
Informal program not associated with the Success Center	0

Survey Question 18.

     What qualifications are required for peer assistants? Peer assistance can be a valuable resource for a Success Center. Qualifications are important, and two directors stated that peer tutors were utilized after successfully passing the course they are assisting. Three directors said they require course competition for the course in which the tutor is assisting, along with peer training. One additional comment was that their institution utilizes peers in the writing lab, but they did not mention any qualifications for the peers who provided assistance. The sample size was $n = 6$, and the results are in Table 18.

Table 18

What qualifications are required for peer assistants?

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Successful completion of the course tutoring	2
Successful completion of the course tutoring and peer training	3
Other, Please specify	1

Survey Question 19.

What qualifications are required for full-time Success Center directors? This

question was designed to assess the qualifications of Success Center directors. A doctoral

degree was not required for representatives of the schools responding to the survey. The

bachelor's degree option was listed as a requirement by directors, and four directors

indicated a master's degree was required for the Success Center director position at their

community college. Additionally, no respondents selected the other option for this

question. The sample size was *n* = 8, and Table 19 shows the results.

Table 19

Full-Time Success Center Director Qualifications

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Bachelor's degree	4
Master's degree	4
Doctoral degree	0
Other, please specify	0

Survey Question 20.

What qualifications are required for paid tutorial staff? Tutorial staff was

expected to have a lesser qualification than a director, which was reflected in the answers

provided by the directors. Five directors indicated that their staff needed to possess a

bachelor's degree. No survey respondents mentioned that staff was required to have

either a master's degree or a doctoral degree. There were, however, four responses in the

other category. Two of the responses revealed that Success Center staff was required to

have an associate's degree. One director mentioned that the staff consisted of paid work-

study students. The last director stated that they employed student workers who had a

3.00-grade point average and a faculty recommendation. As shown in Table 20, there was

variation in the qualifications for staff in the Success Centers whose directors completed

the survey, and a bachelor's degree was the top qualification while selected work-study

students were at the least qualified level. The sample size for this question was $n = 9$.

Table 20

Paid Tutorial-Staff Qualifications

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Bachelor's degree	5
Master's degree	0
Doctoral degree	0
Other, please specify	4

Survey Question 21.

Do you have a plan for program continuity in case of natural disasters,

pandemics, or other unforeseen events? The last two questions of the survey again

switched focus. The topic shifted to unforeseen events and the corresponding institution's

plans for continuity. A total of seven directors replied that their community college did

have a plan to address natural disasters, pandemics, or any other unforeseen event that

would potentially interfere with normal college operations and education programs.

Given the situation for 2020 and 2021, it was somewhat surprising that all responses were

not yes. Two directors were uncertain of the schools' plans in unusual circumstances, and

one was not aware that such a plan existed. The sample size for this question was $n = 10$,

and Table 21 shows the results.

Table 21

Program Plan for Unforeseen Events

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Yes	7
No	1
Uncertain	2

       Survey Question 22. *How will you offer remedial programs in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or other unforeseen events?* The answers to this question indicate that the community colleges whose directors completed the survey did not plan to continue with the status quo and that courses would be offered in a different format in the occurrence of unexpected events. The most noted format to opt for in an emergency was that courses would be offered online. A total of seven directors selected this option. There were no directors who listed self-directed programs as a viable option. Two directors indicated that programs would be in a to-be-determined format, and one was uncertain about what might be selected. The uncertainty that appeared in question 21 is reflected in question 22 and is consistent. The sample size was $n = 10$, and the corresponding Table 22 shows the answers.

Table 22

Remedial Program Formats During Unforeseen Events

Survey Response	Number of Responses
Courses will be offered in the current format.	0
Courses will be offered online	7
Students will work in a to be determined format	2
Students will work in a self-directed format	0
Uncertain	1
No plans have been finalized to date	0

Analysis of Observations from Summation of Survey Responses

The analysis of individual questions from the survey provided information on specific aspects of Success Center Directors' perceptions. A summation of those responses provided another perspective for analyzing those perceptions. The response rate was lower than expected, as stated in the caveat to this study and chapter. However, valuable information was collected to provide an insight into the directors' perceptions in the two-state region under study. Further emerging observations are included in this section from the question analysis of the survey responses.

Success.

The results from Survey Question 13 demonstrate that directors do not believe that most of their students successfully complete remedial course work. Considering the responses regarding higher levels of achievement, the perception persists. Most students in developmental education at community colleges were not expected to transfer to a four-year college or university or obtain a bachelor's degree according to responses of

Success Center Director. These students were not expected to earn an associate's degree or obtain a certificate at a community college. Responses from Success Center Directors to Survey Questions 10 through 12 consistently emphasized this pattern.

Furthermore, according to directors who completed the survey, it is unlikely that students enrolled in Success Center programs would complete and pass the necessary coursework successfully. Responses to Survey Questions eight and nine did not indicate a success story for developmental education concerning reading and writing curriculums. Thus, a significant group of students would not be expected to have the necessary skills to proceed with an academic program.

According to the responses to questions posed in this survey, Success Center Directors often did not view their programs as successful. Comments from provosts whose permission was sought to administer the survey also indicated this perception. One comment offered was that Success Centers do not have remedial, success, or developmental coursework at our community college. Another comment was that the information was not available. In general, there appeared to be an effort to quash access to data. Success was not a topic some institutions were interested in sharing, even with anonymity.

Organization.

The organization and placement of the Success Center vary from one community college to another. Some institutions house the success center in the library or as an extension of the school library. The results of question one indicated that the library at the community college is the favored location for the Success Center, with an academic college or department as a close second choice.

Some colleges host the Success Center in the English Department. The responses to question 15 specifically suggested that the English Department is favored over the Business and Math Departments as a home for the Success Center. Differing organizational structure also included standalone units and tutoring centers. The historical placement of the Success Center and the school's mission also played a role in the placement choice. No one structure was universally considered the best choice. Community colleges whose directors completed the survey had a placement that best fit the needs of all institution stakeholders, including students, faculty, various divisions and departments, existing and new programs, and administrators.

Question four revealed that all schools utilized the traditional classroom, and many had online programs. Tutoring programs and other one-on-one programs were also popular. Organization and placement were primarily in a few locations according to what worked best for each institution. Community colleges were presumed to make optimal choices given their unique circumstances, students, and constituent groups.

Uniformity.

As is demonstrated with organization and placement, there was uniformity in the programs offered. In response to question three, all respondents indicated that they offered a wide variety of services that included assistance in reading, writing, math, and specific subject content areas. This wide range of services was expected and standard in a Success Center. Continual assistance could be maintained after a student advanced to college-level credit courses. Delivery of developmental education from those surveyed favored the traditional classroom, as indicated in the results of question four. Self-directed programs and online formats were not -seen as successful in providing

instruction. Tutoring and other one-on-one learning sessions or small group sessions were the second most preferred option.

Often many different delivery methods were offered at a school. Online formats were popular and second only to the traditional classroom as was gleaned from question three, but Success Center directors did not prefer the format. Tutoring programs were also seen as effective in delivering content to developmental students and somewhat popular among survey respondents. Student preference and director input were determining factors that influenced delivery methods and options.

There was uniformity among community colleges in that they assisted students needing developmental education. The basics of math, reading, writing, and course content were consistently provided according to the school directors surveyed. Uniformity was not so common in delivery, but the traditional classroom followed by tutoring was found to be preferred by directors, as demonstrated with the results from question five.

Improvement.

Directors seemed to think that student effort was the primary factor in failing to complete a developmental education program. According to those completing surveys, other life events and circumstances were also thought to play a role, specifically results from question 14. Directors thought that improvement could be made if these concerns were addressed. Furthermore, directors indicated that there were additional enhancements to be made to improve their curricula. More staff and better programs were two areas they perceived could be improved according to responses from question 16. The budget was also an issue, and directors believed that increasing the budget would be beneficial.

Finally, directors envisioned that student success could be improved by more support from college administrators and more commitment from students enrolled in developmental courses.

Results by Research Question

There was a total of five research questions. Analysis by each research question, along with a narrative, is provided in this section. This review supplements the survey question assessment and the presented observations from the survey.

Research Question 1.

What services are provided by college Success Centers within institutions of higher learning? A variety of services are provided by Success Centers at community colleges in the two-state region of the Midwest that the survey was conducted. Questions 3–6 specifically addressed the services offered at these institutions. As can be seen, by the responses to question three, reading comprehension, writing workshops, math assistance, subject matter, and course-specific assistance were provided by all survey respondents. Course delivery of this developmental curricula was through three primary methods that included the traditional classroom, online learning, and tutoring as specified in question four. Success Center Directors most often selected the traditional classroom as the preferred delivery method, followed by tutoring. None of the directors surveyed opted for the online learning method as a preference for developmental education programs at their respective institutions. Finally, in question six, Success Center Directors were not enthusiastic about self-directed learning, with nine listing students enrolled in such programs falling in the 20% or less category.

Research Question 2.

What services should be added to the portfolio of offerings of Success Centers?
Success Center Directors selected a collection of additional offerings they would like to
see in their programs. The list included all survey options for question 16, including a
larger budget, more staff, better programs, and more self-directed learning. Not all
directors agreed, and priorities ranged from all to one of the services on the list.
Surprisingly, a larger budget was not independently selected as a stand-alone priority.

Research Question 3.

*What credentials are required for Success Center directors, faculty, staff, and
peer workers?* Success Center Directors were required to have a master's or bachelor's
degree as indicated by directors who completed survey question 19. Answers were split
with four responses for each option. None of the directors surveyed selected the doctoral
degree option, and none selected a level of education less than a bachelor's degree for the
director position. Staff qualifications varied but were generally less than expected for the
director. Findings from question 20 showed that many directors preferred staff to hold a
bachelor's degree while work-study students rounded out the staff. Question 18 addressed
peer support specifically and student qualifications. Successful course completion, a
recommendation from a faculty member, and training were mentioned as hiring
requirements, but qualifications varied among respective community colleges.

Research Question 4.

What are Success Center directors' perceptions of their ability to meet the needs of stakeholders? Stakeholders included students, faculty, and the administration of community colleges. Success Center Directors balanced the needs of all three constituent groups and provided quality programs that were efficient and effective. Survey question five selections revealed that the traditional classroom was the preferred delivery method as stated by Success Center Directors. The preferred course delivery method was the traditional classroom, followed by tutoring. However, survey questions eight through 13 showed that Success Center Directors did not feel that most students successfully completed course work. Directors attributed the lack of effort by students as a primary cause for the lack of success, with life and other family events as other contributing factors in question five.

Research Question 5.

What are your plans for the Success Centers continuity of operations in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events? The last two survey questions dealt with the continuity of operations. Question 21 simply asked directors if they had a plan for contingency situations. Seven of ten responses were yes. Surprisingly, two Success Center Directors stated that they had no plan, and one director was uncertain about emergency plans. The last survey question followed the same pattern, and seven of ten Success Center Directors stated that they would offer courses via an online format in the case of an emergency. Two said they would provide programs in a to-be-determined format while the last Success Center Director was uncertain about course delivery.

Summary

      This chapter began with a description of the two-state region of the Midwest surveyed, and an overview of the schools studied. Data analysis of the 22 survey questions followed. Each question was addressed independently, and results from the survey were presented. Additional observations were presented based on a summary of the survey responses. Success, organization, uniformity, and improvement from Success Center Directors' perspectives were advanced. Finally, research questions were analyzed with respect to the supporting survey questions. All five of the research questions were addressed independently and evaluated. All aspects of the survey were examined to garner as much information as possible. Chapter Four concluded with results by research questions.

      Chapter Five, entitled Conclusions and Implications, follows. In Chapter Five, survey findings and conclusions are presented. Implications for practice regarding Success Centers and their potential impact on curricula are then presented. The final component for Chapter Five is recommendations for future research.

Chapter Five: Conclusions and Implications

Success Center Directors are an essential part of a community college and provide academic assistance to students in need of remedial coursework (Brand, 2018). Typically, math, reading, writing, and English are the courses in which students need a refresher (Kuenher & Hurley, 2019). An examination of two-year higher learning institutions was conducted because the bulk of remedial developmental learning takes place in community colleges. Student success and advancement to earn a certificate, associate's degree or a bachelor's degree is often the goal. Often those goals are not met, and the success of getting to take college-level credit courses is often forgone (Davidson, 2017). Remedial education at community colleges comprises over half of the student body, including roughly two million new students nationally each year (Turk, 2019, p. 1091). The number of students in remedial programs is important to study for community colleges, other colleges, universities, and employers.

Success Center Directors are best positioned to gauge success in their respective community colleges. Their perceptions were measured in this study through a 22-question survey. Five research questions were used to explore the perceptions, and the findings, conclusions, and implications for further research are presented in this chapter. The impact on curricula is addressed, and Chapter Five concludes with suggestions for further research.

Findings

This study was designed around five research questions, and the results of this study compose the findings for those questions. The first research question identified the services provided at each director's Success Center. The second research question sought

to determine which services directors would like to add to their existing programs. The third research question asked Success Center Directors about the credentials of their employees. Director and staff credentials were examined. The fourth research question elicited the Success Center Directors' perceptions about success with stakeholders. This question was designed to include all stakeholders, not only the students enrolled in remedial programs at the schools. Finally, the fifth research question asked about plans during natural disasters, pandemics, and other unforeseen events. Specific survey questions were used to gather information, and the group of questions provided information to answer the research questions.

Results by Survey Question

Survey questions are listed in order and start with the first question. The findings for each question appear below and result from the survey conducted in the Fall Semester of 2021.

Survey Question 1.

Where is your Success Center housed? Six directors stated their success center was housed in the college's library, and another mentioned that their Success Center was located next to the library. A total of five directors stated that their success center was in an academic college or department. The English Department was specifically mentioned the most. One director noted that the Success Center was located in the tutoring center at their community college. Information gathered from this question illustrates the significance of the library as a domicile for success center programs. Equally important is the academic support of a department that would provide specific academic support, such as the English or math fields of study.

Survey Question 2.

What is your Success Center tutor-student ratio? Responses for the second question were nearly evenly split. Ratios were from 1:10 or less for two institutions with two responses to 1:26 or higher with three responses, and 1:11–1:25 category had three responses. Three Success Center Directors stated that the information on the tutor-student ratio was unavailable. There was balance in the responses with the different strategies and programs that could be utilized. School size and area of emphasis could be factors that influence student ratios

Survey Question 3.

What areas of instructional support does your Success Center provide? Mark all that apply. The goal of this question was to get more information, and therefore all options offered could be selected. All eight respondents selected every option.

Survey Question 4.

How are your programs delivered? Mark all that apply. Question four was not limited to a single answer and sought to elicit all forms in which courses were delivered to students. As seen by the responses, multiple methods are often employed. The traditional classroom was selected by all respondents. Online learning was selected second and by all but one director. Two respondents indicated that their community colleges utilized the self-directed module approach. Finally, four respondents offered other responses, including one-on-one workshops and tutoring.

Survey Question 5.

What programs do you find most effective? The traditional classroom was selected as most effective by most survey respondents. Eight Success Center Directors indicated it

was the most effective way to administer developmental programs for their students.

Another format was second with three responses, which included tutoring developmental

students. No directors selected self-directed modules or an online option for their

students.

Survey Question 6.

What percentage of students work in self-directed programs? According to the

responses obtained from Success Center Directors who completed this survey, self-

directed programs were not utilized for most students. Only one response was recorded

for the 21–40% range, and all other responses were in the 0–20% range. Self-directed

programs were not found to be a popular choice.

Survey Question 7.

What percentage of students work in a traditional class setting? Self-directed

modules were not the favored option, as indicated in the sixth question. However, the

traditional classroom was not the overwhelming favorite. Respondents had varying

percentages of students in this setting. The traditional classroom is not the preferred style

and is used more at some institutions and not as often in others.

Survey Question 8.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete reading

courses and then successfully complete a college-level credit course? There is no

agreement among the Success Center Directors who completed the survey. Answers vary

across the range, except the 81–100% option, which was not selected. Three respondents

indicated that their students either do not pass a developmental reading course or do not

pass the succeeding college-level course. Two indicated that over half of their students

complete a developmental reading program and advance to complete a college-level for-credit course successfully. The remaining directors specified that around half of their students could complete a developmental reading course and complete a college-level for-credit course.

Survey Question 9.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete writing workshops and then successfully complete a college-level course? Writing is another component of a Success Center that a student must master to complete an academic program successfully. There was a total of 8 responses for this question, and four of those responding marked that only 0–20% of their students were able to complete writing workshops and then succeed in a college-level course. Other respondents were more inclined to indicate that more students could achieve this accomplishment. One respondent was confident that over 80% could complete writing workshops and complete a college-level course.

Survey Question 10.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete an associate's degree program? Community colleges offer associate's degree programs and certificate programs with fewer requirements. Community college Success Center Directors did not indicate that a high percentage of their students would complete an associate's degree. Most respondents indicated that less than half could attain that level of success. Two directors reported that 41–60% of their developmental students went on to earn an associate's degree.

Survey Question 11.

What percentage of Success Center students complete a certificate program? The requirements for certificate programs are usually less rigorous than those for a degree and are usually one year or less. Most respondents thought that 20% or less of their developmental students would earn a certificate. Another two directors thought that 20–40% of their students would earn a certificate. One director thought that 40–60% of their students would earn a certificate. No director selected a response that exceeded a 60% completion rate for a certificate program.

Survey Question 12.

What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete a bachelor's degree program? All education institutions track students. While they may not obtain a bachelor's degree in residence at a community college, students can transfer and earn a higher degree. This question had the lowest number of responses. Sixty percent of directors thought that less than 20% of their students completed a bachelor's degree, while one thought the completion percentage was between 21–40%. There was one outlier, and that director selected the 61–80% range for students going on to complete a bachelor's degree program.

Survey Question 13.

What percentage of Success Center students do not successfully advance through the complete remedial program? The completion of a remedial program was the focus of question 13. A remedial program that allows a student to take for-credit courses was the focus of this question, and again answers were not indicative of a wide range of success. Four respondents thought that 0–20% of the students enrolled in a remedial program

would advance, while another thought the range was higher at 21–40%. Two respondents selected the 41–60% range. Directors did not indicate that large numbers of students could complete remedial programs.

Survey Question 14.

What prohibits a student from successfully completing a remedial program? This question inquired about roadblocks a student might face. Four options were given, and five directors perceived that a student's lack of effort was the primary factor prohibiting successful remedial program completion. One director also indicated that grasping the material was also a stumbling block. In addition, life circumstances, familial history, socioeconomic factors, and k-12 preparedness contributed to lack of success.

Survey Question 15.

Do you feel your Success Center would be better housed in a separate academic unit, and if so, which academic unit? Answers to this question were split into several categories. The science and mathematics department and the business department were not selected as ideal places to house a Success Center. One director mentioned the library was a good place to house remedial programs, while another mentioned the English and Languages Department. Three respondents selected another standalone academic division, and two chose the *other* option. Other comments preferred the Success Center be placed in a department with advisors and counselors or in the English Department. Overall, different institutions chose to operate with a different structure, and there was no set conformity in the survey group.

Survey Question 16.

What specific resources would be most beneficial to increasing your rate of student success? There were two answers given that directors thought would most likely benefit their Success Centers. First, better programs received three responses, and more staff received two responses. A larger budget and more self-directed learning were not selected independently by the directors responding to this question. Most responses to this question were for the "all of the above" response, including a larger budget, more staff, better programs, and more self-directed learning.

Survey Question 17.

Do you have a peer assistance program? The Success Center Directors surveyed indicated they had a formal peer assistance program or did not have a peer assistance program. There were no directors who utilized informal peer programs for remedial student courses or tutoring. The answers to the question were evenly split, with five responses that there was a peer assistance program and five responses that there was no peer assistance program.

Survey Question 18.

What qualifications are required for peer assistants? A peer assistance program can provide an additional resource for a Success Center. Peer assistant qualifications are important, and two directors stated that peer tutors were used after successfully passing the course they are supporting. Three other directors said they require successful course completion and a peer training program to qualify as a peer tutor. The remaining comment offered that the community college utilized peers in the writing lab only, but additional qualifications for the peer support were not stated.

Survey Question 19.

What qualifications are required for full-time Success Center Directors? Success Center Director qualifications were the subject for this question. The community colleges represented in this survey did not require a doctoral degree for the director position. A bachelor's degree was listed as a requirement by four directors. A master's degree was required for the Success Center Director position at four other community colleges. There was an *other* option for this question, but there were no responses recorded for that option for this question.

Survey Question 20.

What qualifications are required for paid tutorial staff? Tutorial staff was not expected to have the same qualifications as the director position, and that was the case as indicated in the responses for this question. The director position at participating schools was either a master's or bachelor's degree. Five directors indicated that their staff also needed a bachelor's degree. At the same time, no Success Center Directors answered that a master's degree or higher was a requirement for this position. An associate's degree was a requirement for staff, as stated by two directors. One director mentioned that their staff was comprised of paid work-study students. A final director asserted that they employed student workers with a grade average of 3.00 and higher recommended by faculty. The minimal qualification for staff in a community college Success Center was to be a selected student worker, while a bachelor's degree was cited as the highest qualification for this position.

Survey Question 21.

Do you have a plan for program continuity in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events? The last two questions of the survey were designed to measure contingency planning for unexpected events. Institution continuity for these unforeseen events was the topic of this question. Most respondents, seven directors, replied that their community college had an emergency plan to address natural disasters, pandemics, or any other unforeseen event that could potentially interfere with routine college *operations* and education curricula. Given the situation for 2020 and 2021, it was odd that there were two responses indicating that directors' schools did not have alternative plans in place. One response revealed that the director was unaware of existing plans in the case of an emergency due to natural disasters, pandemics, or any other unanticipated event.

Survey Question 22. *How will you offer remedial programs in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or other unforeseen events?* Most responses to this question indicated that Success Center Directors are in favor of opting for online learning in the case of unexpected events interfering with course delivery. Two directors thought the format was better as a to-be-determined option, while the final response indicated uncertainty about the option that would be implemented in an emergency. The results for questions 21 and 22 are consistent.

Conclusions and Implications for Practice

The five research questions are addressed, and the resulting conclusions and implications for practice for each are presented in this section. Four observations

emerged from this study. The observations, including success, organization, uniformity, and improvement, are presented with the resulting conclusions.

Results by Research Question

An analysis of the five research questions of this study is presented in this section. Each of the five questions is evaluated independently with a narrative. The analysis for research questions supplements the evaluation of the survey questions.

Research Question 1.

What services are provided by college Success Centers within institutions of higher learning? Survey questions 3–6 provided information for the analysis of research question one. Community colleges in the two-state area of the Midwest that was surveyed were assessed as to the services they provided in their respective Success Centers. Reading comprehension, writing workshops, math education, and class-specific coaching were standard services offered as revealed by all survey participants.

Success Centers have been a vital part of community colleges since their inception and have been offering remedial education programs since the beginning (Housel, 2020). The typical courses provided are math, reading, writing, and English education (Housel, 2020). Specific course-related assistance is also an added component of Success Centers and contributes to successfully completing advanced college-level for-credit courses (Housel, 2020). Remedial or developmental classes are taken without college credit but serve to prepare students for college-level work and advancement in their chosen academic fields (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Developmental or remedial education programs in the subject areas of math, English, and reading have been found to be successful in some studies; however, some studies are not conclusive on the positive

impact (Bahr et al., 2019; Brand, 2018; Xu & Dadgar, 2018). The main objective of developmental programs is to provide basic instruction in areas where students have not mastered fundamental concepts and aid students in becoming independent thinkers who can then progress and earn a degree or a certificate (Biasin, 2018; Payton, 2020).

Success Centers provide instruction in remedial education in the core component cognate areas of math, reading, and writing, and students must demonstrate competence in these basic precepts to advance and earn college-level credit (Davidson, 2017). Community colleges and four-year colleges and universities utilize diverse techniques to help students attain success and earn a bachelor's degree; however, success is not always realized (Brand, 2018; Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Success can also be accomplished by completing either an associate's degree or completing a certificate program (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). At a minimum, success can be defined as successful completion of remedial education coursework (VanOra, 2019).

Math is a subject many students struggle with and a core component of remedial programs (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Students at the lowest levels of math proficiency who require the most development have a long track to complete a degree and may not recognize a benefit from their remedial math courses (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). Success is more likely achieved when shorter programs are offered or if students are allowed to enroll in corequisite courses (Xu & Dadgar, 2018). One intervention, utility-value, was not found to be successful for female students but was found to benefit male students (Kosovich et al., 2019). Success was also more likely when students were enrolled in shorter duration classes and when remedial math classes were taken at the beginning of a course of study (Watanabe-Rose & Guy, 2019). Students who postponed remedial math

classes were less likely to successfully complete the developmental math sequence and persist to certificate or degree completion (Watanabe-Rose & Guy, 2019). The longer delays were correlated with decreased completion rates (Watanabe-Rose & Guy, 2019). Repetitive secondary education was not found to be as effective in remediation (Ngo, 2020). Fractions and word problems are two stumbling blocks for remedial math students and often are the deciding factor in missing proficiency cutoffs (Ngo, 2019). Students who fail to meet the target have been shown to have decreased persistence to continue with college (Ngo, 2019). Course redesign and modification of the math sequence could improve math proficiency (Boatman, 2021). Generally, developmental math has not been as successful, and good outcomes are lower than desired (Kosovich et al., 2019).

Basic English skills are another part of the core courses in Success Centers at community colleges and include reading and writing (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019). Success rates have improved for English by offering courses that combine these two related skills, reading and writing (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Paulson et al., 2021). Reading and writing success can also improve when other factors inside and outside the classroom are optimal (Relles & Duncheon, 2019). Students' life circumstances, including readiness, attitude toward remedial coursework, and perceptions of others, all play a role (Relles & Dungeon, 2019). Writing can be viewed as a social exercise in the context of the environment in which learning occurs and encompasses college facilities, buildings, equipment, classrooms, and methods of instruction (Relles & Dungeon, 2019). The overall environment can positively or negatively influence student success (Relles & Dungeon, 2019). Many factors can influence success in remedial English programs, but

combining reading and writing has been found to be an effective method to improve

success rates (Kuehner & Hurley, 2019; Paulson et al., 2021; Relles & Duncheon, 2019).

Success Centers often provide other student services to supplement course work

(Saxon et al., 2020). However, there are disparities in outcomes among underrepresented

student groups, and other services may be needed to augment academic achievement

(Payton, 2020). African American and Hispanic students and students from economically

depressed areas can benefit from the additional student services offered through Success

Centers (Payton, 2020). Tutoring, academic advising, counseling, career services, and

employment opportunities are all services that Success Centers can offer in addition to

remedial and development education (Payton, 2020).

The placement of the Success Center varies among institutions of higher learning

(Saxon et al., 2020). English departments, math departments, student services, and

standalone divisions are all common locations (Saxon et al., 2020). There are more

options in technical community colleges, and course-specific disciplines and the business

department are options (Saxon et al., 2020). Tutoring centers can be found in a central

location or within departments as a combined or separate entity (Payton, 2020). Online

developmental and remedial instruction and remote site centers are other possibilities for

community colleges (Payton, 2020).

There are newer methods that have been used to increase success rates (Brand et

al., 2018; Campbell & Citron, 2018). These methods include combining reading and

writing classes and allowing student selection (Campbell & Citron, 2018; Nix et al.,

2020). Student self-placement allows for coursework to be completed quicker and brings

responsibility for placement at the appropriate level to the user level (Brand et al., 2018).

Co-enrolling has also been utilized to address course completion, and it has been shown to be successful (Anderson et al., 2020). Finally, a blended design has been used to enhance learning, and it is recommended for students who need more attention and support (Kozakowski, 2019). The traditional classroom is enhanced as an in-house online environment with an instructor present and accessible for assistance (Kozakowski, 2019).

Course formats for remedial and developmental education also vary (Cooper et al., 2019). The plethora of options that include learning modules, intensive shorter courses, and in-person and online intensive programs are among the many offerings community colleges can provide (Housel, 2020). The traditional and enhanced classrooms are standard options for remedial coursework (Housel, 2020). Online courses can be challenging for students with internet access problems and affect students from economically depressed areas and other under-represented groups (Cooper et al., 2019). Students from underrepresented and diverse backgrounds will be best served by programs that consider their unique circumstances (Relles & Duncheon, 2019, Turk, 2019).

Developmental curricula were delivered via the traditional classroom, online learning, and tutoring, as was stipulated in survey question four. Success Center Directors surveyed selected the traditional classroom as their preferred delivery method, followed by tutoring. Among survey respondents, online learning was not a preferred option for developmental course delivery. The responses to question six indicated that Success Center Directors did not utilize self-directed learning, with nine listing students enrolled in such programs falling in the 20% or less category.

As is shown, all programs cited in the survey were utilized by Success Center Directors. The literature review indicated the online option is a favorite, but there could

be accessibility concerns. Self-directed learning is a newer trend and one that is favored

by those surveyed. Overall, there is consistency with other directors.

Research Question 2.

What services should be added to the portfolio of offerings of Success Centers?

Success Center Directors opted for an assortment of additional offerings for their centers.

The list included all alternatives including a larger budget, more staff, better programs,

and more self-directed learning. Not all directors selected all options and prioritized a

specific alternative.

Generally, Success Center Directors' perceptions were consistent with the

literature. Self-directed learning is promoted by adult learning theory (Merriam, 2018). It

is also a popular technique used successfully in several states (Brand et al., 2018).

Programs unique to underserved populations should also be implemented, especially if

the school is in an economically disadvantaged region (Payton, 2020).

Research Question 3.

What credentials are required for Success Center Directors, faculty, staff, and

peer workers? Success Center Directors were required to have a master's or bachelor's

degree as indicated by directors who completed survey question 19. None of the directors

surveyed selected the doctoral degree option or other options lower than a bachelor's

degree for the director position. Staff qualifications varied but were generally lower than

what was expected for the director. Findings from question 20 revealed that many

directors had staff with a bachelor's degree down to a work-study student. Question 18

elicited responses that specifically addressed peer and work-study student qualifications.

Essential criteria noted were successful course completion, a recommendation from a

faculty member, and training was a hiring requirement in some instances. Qualifications for Success Center staff varied among respective community colleges.

The qualifications listed by survey respondents were in line with those from the literature. Typically, a master's degree is required for the Success Center Director position, as was indicated by the survey responses. It is also a requirement to teach on the community college level. A bachelor's or associate's degree was also standard for staff. Student-workers generally had qualifications set by the community college in question.

Research Question 4.

What are Success Center Directors' perceptions of their ability to meet the needs of stakeholders? Stakeholders included students, faculty, the administration of community colleges, and potential employers. Success Center Directors balanced the desires of the constituent groups and provided quality curricula that were both efficient and effective. Success Center Directors indicated in survey question five responses that they preferred the traditional classroom, followed by tutoring. Providing a good learning environment could increase the chances of student success. Nevertheless, survey questions eight through 13 showed that Success Center Directors did not perceive that most students successfully completed course work. Success Center Directors felt the lack of student effort was a primary cause for the lack of success, with life circumstances and other family events as additional contributing factors in question five.

Student readiness and life circumstances are also student issues (Housel, 2020). Underserved populations are a stakeholder group that requires more attention (Payton, 2020). Administration and faculty are stakeholder groups who look for more success in remedial programs and advancement through academic programs (Brower et al., 2021).

Finally, employers would benefit from the training provided to students in remedial programs and from the job-ready graduates of community colleges. Finally, self-directed learning showed promise to improve successful outcomes and has been used in programs in several states (Nix et al., 2020).

Research Question 5.

What are your plans for the Success Centers continuity of operations in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events? The last two survey questions dealt with continuity of operations. Question 21 asked directors if they had a plan for contingency situations. Seven of ten responses were yes there were contingency plans at their community colleges. Two Success Center Directors stated no specific plans were in place, while one director was uncertain about emergency plans. The last survey question revealed that seven of ten Success Center Directors would offer courses via an online format in the case of an emergency. Two said they would offer programs in a to-be-determined format while the last Success Center Director was uncertain about course delivery.

The SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 pandemic was another major factor for all organizations and not only in academia (Treve, 2021). Colleges and universities were hard hit because in-person instruction and housing at most schools were combined on campus (DeMartino, 2021). Extra precautions had to be taken to accommodate students, especially international students, upon the onset of COVID on campuses (Treve, 2021). Sporting events were another major consideration for college administrators (DeMartino, 2021). Student, staff, and employee safety, course completion, student retention, and the

potential financial loss hit colleges and universities along with every segment of society (DeMartino, 2021).

The responses from colleges varied, but overall, local and state governments set the parameters for institutional decision-making (Annett, 2021). Computer enhanced delivery was used to solve this dilemma and limit contact as much as possible (Annett, 2021). Additional pandemic-related items were mandates for masks, vaccinations, and social distancing protocol (Annett, 2021). Many colleges required vaccination to attend in-person classes (Annett, 2021). There were also colleges and universities with mask mandates and restrictions on gatherings (DeMartino, 2021).

There need to be emergency plans for natural disasters (Treve, 2021). In addition, weather events, terrorist attacks, and other unforeseen situations can occur, and planning will alleviate the pressure when action is required (DeMartino, 2021). Failure to plan could exacerbate an unpleasant situation (Treve, 2021).

Overall, colleges need to look after the welfare of their students, faculty, staff, and the public, and other stakeholders with whom they interact (DeMartino, 2021). Course delivery is only one component, and online learning was popular during the pandemic (Annett, 2021). Institutions of higher learning are also important in communities and serve as an example. Administrators should always be cognizant of this fact. Success Center Directors fall into an administrative role within the university and, as such, should follow established guidelines at their respective institutions and keep all stakeholders safe (Annett, 2021).

Analysis of Observations from Summation of Survey Responses

Success Center Directors' perceptions were analyzed and evaluated, and specific information was obtained from each survey question. The resulting perceptions were aggregated to provide additional information. The response rate was lower than expected, which remains an important caveat of this study. However, the study yielded information that is beneficial from the region reviewed. This section comprises emerging observations from Success Center Directors and the survey questions results.

Success.

The results from Survey Question 13 corroborate that Success Center Directors do not believe that many of their students successfully complete developmental education courses. Therefore, those students would not likely complete a bachelor's degree, an associate's degree, or even a certificate program. Success may only come in completing remedial course work as the collective responses for questions 10 through 12 indicate, and that is not guaranteed.

Responses to survey questions eight and nine indicated a problem with English skills, reading, and writing curricula. The same is true for developmental math courses. Students who take remedial courses are not likely to complete developmental programs, and they are not likely to advance to college-level courses. As a result, Success Center Directors did not perceive their programs as successful.

Provost approval was sought to administer this survey. This approval was challenging to obtain in a few cases, and provosts were reluctant to provide access to Success Center Directors. One provost commented that their school did not have

remedial or developmental programs, while another said the information was unavailable. Success was not a topic that some administrators were willing to discuss.

Organization.

Organization varies from one school to another, and there is no set placement for a Success Center that is optimal in all situations. Often Success Centers were housed in or near the community college library. A second popular location was within an academic department. The English department was a common location, but departments and locations varied from school to school depending on student and institution needs.

Surveyed community colleges primarily housed the Success Center in the library, followed by the English Department. The responses to question 15 indicated that English was preferred over other areas of study, including math and business. Standalone centers and centers combined with tutoring services were also mentioned. The historical placement of the Success Center, the school's mission, and student needs all play a role in the placement selection. No one structure was universally considered the best choice.

Question four results disclosed that all schools used the traditional classroom, and most had online programs. Tutoring programs and other one-on-one programs were also popular. Organization and placement were primarily dependent on what was deemed to work best for all stakeholders.

Uniformity.

Survey responses indicated that there was uniformity with respect to the programs offered. For example, all Success Center respondents offered remediation for reading, writing, math, and course-specific subjects. In addition, student assistance would be

available as needed throughout a student's academic career, even with college-level credit courses. This range of service is customary for Success Centers at community colleges.

The favored method of delivery for developmental education is the traditional classroom. However, online and self-directed programs were not perceived to be as successful as the traditional classroom in providing instruction. Therefore, tutoring and other one-on-one learning or small group sessions were the second most preferred option.

Online remedial programs were standard and were offered almost as much as the traditional classroom. However, Success Center Directors did not prefer this option. Tutoring programs provided at the schools surveyed were effective in delivering content to developmental students. Multiple delivery options were offered at many community colleges and used to cater to a variety of students and help in a convenient and preferred format.

There was uniformity among community colleges in that they provided remedial education to students who needed a refresher course. The basics were provided by all community colleges surveyed and consisted of math, reading, writing, and course subject content. Uniformity was not typical in delivery, but the traditional classroom followed by tutoring was preferred by directors, as demonstrated with the results from question five. Students might prefer an online format as it offers convenience, while Success Center Directors did not share their enthusiasm. On the other hand, students may have perceived online formats as beneficial and convenient.

Improvement.

Success Center Directors cited lack of student effort and life circumstances as reasons students fail to complete a remedial education program successfully. Increasing

student effort and alleviating student life concerns would improve overall success. Directors also indicated that improvement could be made if changes in the curricula were introduced. A budget increase, more staff, and better programs were also mentioned. The budget was also an issue, and directors thought that increasing the budget would be beneficial and improve program quality. Finally, Success Center Directors proposed that student success could be enhanced by more support from college administrators and more commitment from students enrolled in developmental courses.

Recommendations for Future Research

Although the study area had 45 community colleges within the two-state area, the survey response rate was lower than expected. Further research that can obtain a better response rate is recommended. This study's low response rate could be due to many reasons.

Additional research on preferred delivery methods is also recommended. Self-directed learning is currently a popular topic, with promising results in many states (Nix et al., 2020). Closer monitoring of success self-directed learning programs could provide improvement with more robust investigation.

There remains a gap in providing services for underserved communities (Turk, 2018). Additional research may reveal a better way to reach these student groups and increase success rates for these cohorts. Rural communities and urban areas are parts of these groups, and better solutions for all involved constituencies should be an objective.

Finally, more research is needed on the perceptions of Success Center Directors. The directors are uniquely positioned to supply information and deal with all stakeholder

groups affected by remedial services. Services and delivery formats are information-rich topics to focus on with Success Center Directors.

Summary

This study was constructed to measure the perceptions of Success Center Directors concerning their respective developmental education programs. Insight into the quality of services and the resulting student outcomes was obtained through a 22-question survey. Information was gathered on the types of services offered at Success Center Directors' institutions. Success Center Directors' perceptions about additions to their programs and services were also determined. A third area explored through the survey was the credentials of directors and staff working in community college success centers. Success Center Directors were asked about their perceptions of success from a program and student perspective. Directors were asked their overall opinions of their program's success and their various stakeholders regarding its success. Finally, the last area of study was crisis management and program continuity in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events.

Developmental and remedial education is an important component of community colleges which often have non-selective admissions policies (Bahr et al., 2019). Students seeking higher education are often required to complete remedial courses in English and math before advancing to college-level credit courses (Bahr, 2019). Many studies have been conducted on remedial education curricula, and their effectiveness depends on the specific circumstance (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Rather than colleges and universities, community colleges have the unique role of providing the most remedial education. As

such, community colleges are the focus of most developmental education research concerning programs for college credit courses (Bahr et al., 2019).

Adult learners represent a substantial segment of the college population (Turk, 2019). Many college students may have extensive training, prior college work, or life experience (McDonnell & Soricone, 2018). However, several may require remedial courses to achieve their academic goals (Bailey, 2018). This research was designed to study the perspectives of Success Center Directors and gain their perception of what works and needs to be modified.

Chapter Two revealed the current literature on the relevant topics associated with Success Centers contained in community colleges. The theoretical framework selected for this study was adult learning theory as advanced by Lindeman and Knowles (as cited by Merriam, 2018). Community colleges were reviewed throughout history through this lens, including their missions and accessibility. Next, a review of the establishment of colleges in Western Europe and Colonial America was presented. Institutions of higher learning were first founded primarily by religious denominations, and education was achieved via the rote method. Junior colleges, precursors of today's community colleges, were then detailed historically, and the changing and evolving missions of those schools were examined. Success Centers were then reviewed historically. Success Centers have consistently been a part of junior and community colleges and often assist with remedial reading, writing, and math (Kosovich et al., 2019).

The format of Success Centers was then investigated, which was comprised of the placement of the center in the community college. Frequently Success Centers are housed in an academic department or a library. Online access was explored as a class format, as

was the traditional classroom and other alternatives. Access and supplementary services were evaluated as they pertained to student success.

Challenges faced by Success Centers were addressed and included student demographics, student readiness, planning for natural disasters, pandemics, and other unforeseen events. Students come from diverse backgrounds, environmental factors and socioeconomic backgrounds play a role in their success. Such diversities include race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and preparedness. Student readiness is another factor for adult learners (Davidson, 2017). Success regarding math, English, writing, and reading was studied. Student readiness can be a problem for those coming straight from a high school or those in the workforce reentering an academic program after a long absence. Studies indicating the success of efforts and supplementary demographic data revealed that results are not always successful in retaining students and advancing their academic careers (Turk & Taylor, 2019). Math is a complex subject, and success rates remain low (Kosovich et al., 2019).

The format in which developmental education occurs was also examined, along with the placement of remedial programs within colleges. In addition, access is still an issue for some students in an online format. Finally, challenges for Success Center Directors were studied concerning the school's location and student backgrounds. Those factors played a role in outcomes and other demographic variables (Turk & Taylor, 2019).

Extraordinary occurrences or events were addressed related to natural disasters, pandemics, or other unexpected events. The recent pandemic brought the need to have emergency plans to the fore. As a result of the pandemic, colleges and universities,

including community colleges, went to an online format. Dorms were closed, and sporting events were canceled. The immediate response to offer coursework in an online format brought additional access issues. Some community colleges could benefit by offering classes to returning students living in their region.

In this research study, quantitative methods designed to assess the achievement of Success Centers based on the perceptions of Success Center Directors were utilized. The problem to be researched was clearly defined, and research questions were determined. The research design was set to ensure that proper research practices were followed. The population for this study was defined as a two-state area of the Midwest United States that contains 45 schools. The sample size for this study was all 45 colleges in the defined population. Instrumentation procedures and a comprehensive procedure for data collection were detailed in Chapter Three. The utmost care was taken to assure quality throughout the survey administration and data collection phase. The data collection phase followed all prescribed details and was administered as planned. Data analysis was accomplished using descriptive statistics. Finally, ethical considerations were addressed to eliminate all foreseeable challenges.

Chapter Four began with a description of the two-state region of the Midwest surveyed, and an overview of the schools studied. Data analysis of the 22-question survey followed. Each question was addressed independently, and results from the survey were presented. Additional observations were offered based on a summary of the survey responses. Success, organization, uniformity, and improvement from Success Center Directors' viewpoints were developed. Finally, research questions were investigated with respect to the supporting survey questions. All five of the research questions were

addressed independently and evaluated. All aspects of the survey were analyzed to garner as much information as possible. Chapter Four concluded with results by research questions.

In Chapter Five, the conclusions and implications of the study were presented. Findings from the survey questions and research questions were summarized in order. The results were then related to the literature review provided in Chapter Two. Conclusions, implications for practice followed. Finally, recommendations for further research concluded the chapter.

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Appendix A

Survey Questions

1. Where is your Success Center housed?
   a. In an academic college or department
   b. Library
   c. It is a separate entity
   d. Other, please specify

2. What is your Success Center tutor-student ratio?
   a. 1:10 or less
   b. 1:11-1:25
   c. 1:26 or higher
   d. That information is unavailable.

3. What areas of instructional support does your Success Center provide? Mark all that apply.
   a. Reading comprehension
   b. Writing workshops
   c. Math assistance
   d. Subject Matter and course-specific assistance

4. How are your programs delivered? Mark all that apply
   a. Traditional classroom
   b. Online
   c. Self-directed modules
   d. Via another format, please specify

5. What programs do you find to be most effective?
   a. Traditional classroom
   b. Online
   c. Self-directed modules
   d. Via another format

6. What percentage of students work in self-directed programs?
   a. 0-20 percent
   b. 21-40 percent
   c. 41-60 percent
   d. 61-80 percent
   e. 81-100 percent

7. What percentage of students work in a traditional class setting?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

8. What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete reading courses and then successfully complete a college-level credit course?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

9. What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete writing workshops and then successfully complete a college-level course?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

10. What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete an associate's degree program?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

11. What percentage of Success Center students complete a certificate program?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

12. What percentage of Success Center students successfully complete a bachelor's degree program?
      a. 0-20 percent
      b. 21-40 percent
      c. 41-60 percent
      d. 61-80 percent
      e. 81-100 percent

13. What percentage of Success Center students do not successfully advance through the complete remedial program?
        a. 0-20 percent
        b. 21-40 percent
        c. 41-60 percent
        d. 61-80 percent
        e. 81-100 percent

14. What prohibits a student from successfully completing a remedial program?
        a. Lack of effort
        b. Unable to grasp the material
        c. Improper assistance
        d. Other, please specify

15. Do you feel your Success Center would be better housed in a separate academic unit, and if so, which academic unit?
        a. Library
        b. Business
        c. Science and Mathematics
        d. English and Languages
        e. Stand-alone academic division
        f. Other unit, please specify

16. What specific resources would be most beneficial to increasing your rate of student success?
        a. A larger budget
        b. More staff
        c. Better programs
        d. More self-directed learning
        e. All of the above

17. Do you have a peer assistance program?
        a. Yes
        b. No
        c. Informal program not associated with the Success Center

18. What qualifications are required for peer assistants?
        a. Successful completion of the course tutoring
        b. Successful completion of the course tutoring and peer training
        c. Other, please specify

19. What qualifications are required for full-time Success Center directors?
        a. Bachelor's degree
        b. Master's degree
        c. Doctoral degree
        d. Other, please specify

20. What qualifications are required for paid tutorial staff?
      a. Bachelor's degree
      b. Master's degree
      c. Doctoral degree
      d. Other, please specify

21. Do you have a plan for program continuity in case of natural disasters, pandemics, or other unforeseen events?
      a. Yes
      b. No
      c. Uncertain

22. How will you offer remedial programs in the event of a natural disaster, pandemic, or other unforeseen events?
      a. Courses will be offered in the current format
      b. Courses will be offered online
      c. Courses will be offered
      d. Students will work in a self-directed format
      e. Uncertain
      f. No plans have been finalized to date

Appendix B

Permission Letter

Date:

RE: Permission to Conduct Research in (Community College)

To: (Provost's name), Provost Center Director

I am writing to request permission to conduct research at (Community College). I am currently pursuing my doctorate through Lindenwood University and in the process of writing my dissertation. The study is entitled, An Analysis of Success Center Directors' Perceptions Concerning College Remedial Education Programs. I am asking permission to survey Success Center directors. I will retrieve the Success Center director's email address from the institution's public website and send a letter inviting the director to participate in the study upon receiving your permission.

If you agree, please sign below, scan this page, and email to me, Mel Steele, at MLS486@Lindenwood.edu.

Your approval to conduct this study will be greatly appreciated. I would be happy to answer any questions or concerns you may have regarding this study.

Sincerely,

Mel Steele

I grant permission to Mel Steele to survey the institution's Success Center director.

_____   _____

         Signature   Date

Appendix C

Invitation to Participate

Date:

Dear Success Center Director,

My name is Mel Steele, and I am a doctoral student at Lindenwood University. I am

conducting a study for a dissertation titled, An Analysis of Success Center Directors'

Perceptions Concerning College Remedial Education Programs. The purpose of this study is

to analyze Success Center Directors' perceptions concerning college remedial education

programs.

As a participant in this study, you will have the opportunity to participate in a

survey. The survey questions can be accessed at the Qualtrics link <insert link to

survey>. The amount of time required to complete the survey is approximately 10

minutes.

If you are willing to participate, please click on the link above or at the bottom of

this page.

If you have any questions about the survey or the study, please feel free to contact

me. Thank you in advance for your time and participation!

Sincerely,

Mel Steele
Doctoral Student
Lindenwood University

<link to survey>

Appendix D

LINDENWOOD

Survey Research Information Sheet

You are being asked to participate in a survey conducted by Mel Steele, researcher, and Dr. Kathy Grover, faculty supervisor at Lindenwood University. We are doing this study to evaluate Success Center Directors' perceptions concerning college remedial education programs. Success Center Directors will be asked 22 multiple choice questions that will address success center organization, students, staff, and course delivery methods. It will take about 10 minutes to complete this survey.

Your participation is voluntary. You may choose not to participate or withdraw at any time by simply not completing the survey or closing the browser window.

There are no risks from participating in this project. We will not collect any information that may identify you. There are no direct benefits for you participating in this study.

WHO CAN I CONTACT WITH QUESTIONS?

If you have concerns or complaints about this project, please use the following contact information:

Mel Steele   mls486@lindenwood.edu

Dr. Kathy Grover   kgrover@lindenwood.edu

If you have questions about your rights as a participant or concerns about the project and wish to talk to someone outside the research team, you can contact Michael Leary (Director - Institutional Review Board) at 636-949-4730 or mleary@lindenwood.edu.

By clicking the link below, I confirm that I have read this form and decided that I will participate in the project described above. I understand the purpose of the study, what I will be required to do, and the risks involved. I understand that I can discontinue participation at any time by closing the survey browser. My consent also indicates that I am at least 18 years of age.

You can withdraw from this study at any time by simply closing the browser window. Please feel free to print a copy of this information sheet.

Vita

Melvin L. Steele Jr. currently works in behavioral health research. He graduated from Southwest Baptist University with a bachelor's degree in Business Administration and Speech and earned a Master of Business Administration degree from Louisiana Tech University. He also completed additional study in graduate education at the University of Nebraska.

Mr. Steele taught business administration for Missouri Valley College where he was an Instructor of Business and at Southwest Baptist University where he was an Assistant Professor. He has also served on an American Red Cross Regional Board and currently is a board member and an executive for another civic organization. Mr. Steele also serves as a small business and political consultant.