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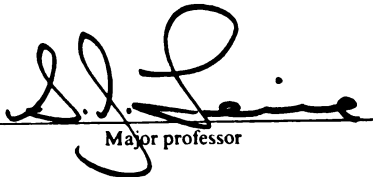
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICES TO
NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION:
PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

presented by

Chris J. Miko

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Adult & Continuing Ed.


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By

Chris J. Miko

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ABSTRACT

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SERVICES TO NONTRADITIONAL STUDENTS AND ORGANIZATIONAL TRANSITION: PERCEPTIONS OF ACADEMIC LIBRARIANS

By

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The purpose of this research was to identify the opinions of academic librarians toward nontraditional students and the services provided to them by their libraries and institutions and to compare the level of library service accessibility provided nontraditional students with the perceived state of organizational transition. This research attempted to identify the perceptions of individual academic librarians as they relate to existing library services accessed by nontraditional students as well as library services which could be improved. The research methodology used by this study was the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was mailed to every librarian employed by the academic library of each university within the Mid-American Conference. The questionnaire consisted of forced choice as well as written completion statements. Means were computed from the responses to the questionnaire to determine central tendency. The t statistic and chi square test were employed to test for the null hypothesis and to determine significant relationships. This research produced two major findings. According to the findings, academic librarians are

satisfied, in general, with the service provided to nontraditional students by their libraries. In addition, academic librarians perceive themselves as being sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students. They also believe, for the most part, that their institutions are sensitive to nontraditional student needs. The second major finding involves the impact which the perceived state of organizational change or transition on that perception of service satisfaction and sensitivity toward nontraditional students. From the results of this research, the perceived state of organizational change or transition does affect librarians' perceived service satisfaction and sensitivity toward nontraditional students. Librarians who perceive their organizations to be in a state of transition or change are more critical and less satisfied with the service provided to nontraditional students than those librarians who perceive their organizations to be relatively stable. Also, librarians who perceive their organizations to be in a state of transition or change feel less sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students than those librarians who perceive their organizations to be relatively stable.

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LIST OF NOMENCLATURE

Academic Community: the faculty, staff, and students served by a college or university.

Academic Librarian: any librarian holding a Master's of Science degree in Library Science or its equivalency and employed by an institution of higher education.

Academic Library: any library supported by an institution of higher education and whose primary clientele include the faculty, staff, and students of that institution.

Higher Education Institution: any post-secondary educational institution including four year colleges and universities as well as two year community and technical colleges.

Mid-American Conference: an association of mid-sized universities located in the States of Indiana, Ohio, and Michigan. The Conference is comprised of Ball State University, Western Michigan University, University of Akron, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green State University, Miami University, University of Toledo, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, and Ohio University.

Nontraditional Student: any college or university student over the age of twenty-two.

Traditional Student: any college or university student between the age of eighteen and twenty-two regardless of background, culture, race, sex, or full or part-time status.

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

As most college and university educators realize, the composition of the student body has changed dramatically in the last twenty-five years. Universities today are faced with the challenge of meeting the needs of an increasingly diverse student population (Gilley and Hawkes, 1989). As a reflection of the various changes taking place in society as a whole, colleges must now respond to not only the needs of the traditional student population base but also to the expectations and lifestyles of a vastly different and expanding nontraditional student population (Cross, 1981). Between 1970 and 1993, the number of students aged twenty-five or older enrolled in higher education institutions increased from 27.8 percent to 39.2 percent. Minority enrollments increased from 12 percent in 1972 to 23.2 percent in 1993. Enrollment of women increased from 32 percent of total enrollments in 1950 to 55 percent in 1993. Part-time students accounted for only 32 percent of enrollments in 1970, but represented 43.7 percent of enrollments in 1993 (*The Almanac of Higher Education*, 1995). The changes in higher education student population during the past few decades are clear, the trends obvious.

From all indications, the trend towards the diversification of the student population will continue (Hussar, 1993). As the next century nears, the number of nontraditional students on campus will grow as demographers predict an increase of 16 percent of those aged greater than twenty-four years in the United States's population (Sanders and Poynter, 1989). According to figures published by the National University Continuing Education Association, the greatest gain will be in the thirty-five and older groups (Roberts, 1990). Also, by the year 2010, about 55 million Americans will be between the ages of fifty-five and seventy-four. On the other hand, forecasts indicate an 8 percent decline in the population aged twenty-five and younger by the year 2000 (Sanders and Perfetto, 1993).

There are many implications of these figures and projections for institutions of higher education. Various studies have identified the needs of the nontraditional student. Nontraditional students want evening and weekend access to the registrar, bursar, and financial aid offices. They want convenient departmental office hours, faculty appointment times, and other services. They want adequate parking and public transportation, flexible day-care facilities, and quiet areas for studying, eating, and relaxing. They want class scheduling that recognizes their needs and lifestyles (Queeney, 1984).

Some colleges and universities have recognized the needs of the nontraditional student and have made

institutional changes to address them (Schlossberg, Lynch, and Chickering, 1989). Many universities have established satellite campuses, especially in urban areas, which often serve this new clientele almost exclusively. Evening colleges and extension programs, formed originally at the turn of the century, have been expanded. Evidence of creative class scheduling and course planning, among mostly small private colleges, is growing. Technology is being increasingly utilized to make classes more accessible through videotape, cable television, and satellite transition.

While some of the concerns of the nontraditional student are being addressed, much still needs to be done (Giczkowski, 1990). Curricula could be made more flexible to incorporate more of the work and life experiences of a more diverse student population. Scheduling patterns could still be improved to offer a much greater variety of options. Student life programs and activities could be altered to promote the new student community. Intramural activities could be geared to a variety of interests and goals and should be scheduled to accommodate the nontraditional students' needs. Other campus services should also be integrated into the schedules of this expanded student population. Physical facilities should serve the lifestyles of all students. Areas such as departmental offices, the registrar, the bursar, and the academic library should also recognize the unique needs of

the nontraditional student.

Statement of the Problem

The mission of the academic library is to serve the instructional and research needs of the academic community (Atkins, 1991). While the composition of the academic community may vary depending on the mission of the institution itself, the college and university library is charged with serving its faculty, staff, graduate and undergraduate students. In attempting to meet the instructional and research needs of its patrons, the academic library develops specific collections and designs appropriate services. The academic library's collections reflect the depth and breadth of the curriculum as well as the faculty's research initiatives (Hill, Hannaford, and Epp, 1991). The academic library's services are designed to promote and encourage the efficient and effective use of the library. Therefore, the academic library builds collections and establishes services unique to the population it serves. In very basic terms, the academic library identifies its audience, determines the instructional and research needs of that audience, secures adequate funding, and finally applies that funding toward appropriate collections and services.

The university is not a static institution. Universities function within society and therefore, reflect the challenges and needs of that society. Universities must

examine their mission and charge as it relates to the society they serves. The vital university reinvents itself repeatedly to meet the challenges of an evolving society.

All organizations, including universities and libraries, change. Organizations, including universities and libraries, respond to various factors and needs for change. However, the change process, in its basic terms, is universal. Any major organizational change involves three discrete conditions: the present state, the transition state, and the future state (Beckhard and Harris, 1987). The future state is the condition the organization wishes to realize. The present state is the existing condition. The transition state involves the set of conditions and activities that the organization must proceed through to move from the present to the future state.

Organizational change or transition is initiated by defining the need for change. Today, the forces requiring transition in organizations often tend to originate from outside the organization. Depending on the organization's nature and function, governmental legislation, consumer or market shifts, international competition, new technology, and/or social priorities may force it to redesign organizational structures and procedures, redefine priorities, and redeploy resources.

Two common sources of pressure for change in organizations, including universities, are emerging technologies and new customer bases. These two sources of

change also directly affect academic libraries. As automated processes develop into integrated library-wide systems, traditional methods and practices involving technical support are quickly becoming obsolete. For example, it is now possible to select, purchase, and catalog books in one integrated procedure through the utilization of compatible vendor software. As academic libraries have traditionally maintained separate collection development, acquisitions, and cataloging departments, this type of function consolidation will have obvious effects on the organization of the academic library. As the functions of these three departments are merged, the structure of the organization will need to be transformed and the functions and job responsibilities of several personnel will need to be modified and adjusted. The development of automated technology into the academic library will necessitate an organizational transition.

A change in the customer base could also compel an organization to enter a period of transition. For the university and academic library, society in general and the student population specifically are its customer base. The academic library, as an integral part of the university, is responsible to the broader society it serves and must respond to the changes within that society. The vital academic library examines the needs of its user population to ensure the relevancy of its collections and services. For example, as the curriculum shifts and as courses are

added and dropped, the academic library appropriately adjusts its collection development profile. The academic library's collection profile is also modified to meet the emerging research directives of the institution's faculty and staff.

The academic library must also examine the services it provides. If services are to be relevant and effective, they must be tailored to the needs of the targeted audience. If services are to be effectively tailored to the needs of a targeted audience, the academic library must identify and understand the characteristics of that audience. More specifically, if the services directed toward the student population are to be relevant and effective they must be designed to meet the needs of the student population based on that population's identified characteristics (Martin, 1994). The university student population has changed dramatically over the past twenty five years. Accordingly, the services provided to the university student population by the academic library should mirror these changes.

Without question, academic libraries do examine their role within the university and attempt to respond accordingly to the changing needs of its patrons. Over the years, collections and services have been altered and modified. The evolution of library technology, the adoption of electronic formats in collection building, and advances in teaching methodology have affected nearly every service the academic library provides (Spyers-Duran and Mann, 1985).

Changes in the student population have also affected academic library services. Academic libraries have long recognized the unique needs of groups traditionally underrepresented in higher education. Today, academic libraries are making important strides toward improving services to an increasingly diverse student population. Academic library resources, in terms of budget and personnel, have been directed meeting the needs of an increasingly multicultural student population.

An ever present challenge facing academic librarians is to recognize the library needs of all its patrons. The focus of this study was the university nontraditional student population. The problem that this study addressed was whether academic librarians recognized the library needs of nontraditional students. Information was collected for this study from academic librarians to determine the level of support and commitment provided by professional academic librarians toward the nontraditional student receives as well as the perceived adequacy of this support and commitment. More specifically, information was collected to determine the relationship between the perceived adequacy of support and commitment extended toward nontraditional students by academic librarians and their institutions and the relative state of organizational change or transition.

Assumptions

The charge of the academic library is to serve the library instructional and research needs of every segment of the university community. The academic library, within the constraints of its budget, cannot arbitrarily exclude groups of patrons from their services. For example, the academic library cannot refuse to serve a particular academic department or discipline. If the university creates a new department or program or initiates a new research directive, the academic library must respond and support these evolving activities. Similarly, if the university attracts or recruits a new group of students, significantly different than the traditional population, the academic library must also respond and support this new group of students. The university student population has grown increasingly diverse. The nontraditional student segment of the university community has grown in significance over the past few decades. The academic library must respond to the library needs of the nontraditional student.

Academic libraries have traditionally responded to the changing needs of vital universities. It is the charge of the academic library to continuously examine the needs of its various user groups and then apply its resources accordingly. Academic libraries have a long and distinguished history of successfully serving the needs of patrons. The academic library, once recognizing the

existence of an unmet service need, can reevaluate its mission statement and corresponding objectives to then formulate the appropriate action steps necessary to address these unmet needs. Without question, the academic library has the ability to identify and recognize the existence of an unmet service need and then act to fill that need. In the case of library service to the nontraditional student population, the academic library can if necessary redirect its resources to meet those needs.

The literature of the library profession provides evidence that the nontraditional student population is underserved by the academic library. Articles dating back to the 1960s address the need for academic library services directed toward extension and off-campus students. Early in the literature, Fisher (1978) claimed that, in many cases, there is a clear lack of responsibility toward the provision of library service for nontraditional students. Fisher stated that academic library service to off-campus students is underbudgeted. Librarians engaged in the daily business of serving the traditional student assume that the adult student is being well served in other locations and leave library needs up to the local public library or most convenient community college or university library. Fisher argued that nontraditional students have unique needs which differentiate them from the typical undergraduate and that they require special attention. Sheridan (1986) highlighted the need to alter the teaching methodology

employed in reference service and library user instruction designed for nontraditional students. Sheridan claimed that academic libraries have not recognized the differences in the learning processes between younger traditional students and adult learners.

In summary, three major assumptions formed the basis for this study. First, academic libraries have a responsibility to meet the library needs of nontraditional students. Second, academic libraries have the ability to meet the library needs of nontraditional students. Third, academic libraries are not fully meeting the library needs of nontraditional students.

Research Questions

The purpose of this research was to identify the opinions of academic librarians toward nontraditional students and the services provided to them by their libraries and institutions and to compare the level of library service accessibility provided nontraditional students with the perceived state of organizational transition. This research attempted to identify the perceptions of individual academic librarians as they relate to existing library services accessed by nontraditional students as well as library services which could be improved. The following are the specific questions that guided the research.

Research Question 1. What service points or offices are accessed by nontraditional students? Is this accessibility adequate and appropriate or does it need to be improved? Academic libraries traditionally staff a number of desks and offices which provide a variety of services and assistance. These service desks may include a reference desk, circulation desk, reserve desk, information desk, change desk, serials/microforms desk, and photocopying desk. Assistance and information is also available in various administrative offices such as the Dean's/Director's Office, heads of circulation, reference and branch libraries. This study attempted to determine which of these desks and offices are utilized by nontraditional students. This study also attempted to determine if the accessibility of these desks and offices is sufficient to meet the needs of nontraditional students.

Research Question 2. How sensitive are individual academic librarians to the needs of nontraditional students? Have academic librarians received specialized training which focuses on the needs and characteristics of nontraditional students? Academic librarians become aware of the characteristics and unique needs of specific populations of library users through various means. Direct experience and exposure with various types of library users is always helpful. In addition to this direct experience, articles in the professional literature often highlight and feature the special needs of growing or evolving patron groups,

including nontraditional students. Also, courses, workshops, and seminars are designed to help librarians stay current as to the needs of the people they serve. Through these and other types of activities, academic librarians may increase their sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students.

Research Question 3. Are academic library staff specifically assigned to meet the needs of nontraditional students? What library services exist which are utilized by nontraditional students? An indication of the relative importance any project or population may have within the academic library priorities is the staffing devoted exclusively to it. For example, librarians are traditionally assigned to specific departments to ensure adequate collection development. More recently, academic libraries have moved to assign specific staff to serve the needs of multicultural students. Therefore, an indication of an academic library's intent to more thoroughly meet the needs of nontraditional students is the assignment of specific staff to that task. Another measure of relative priority a population may have is the number of services the academic library has specifically designed for it. This study attempted to determine the level of staffing and services dedicated to the needs of nontraditional students.

Research Question 4. How supportive of nontraditional students is the library's university? Are efforts being made throughout the university which would indicate

commitment to nontraditional students? Based on certain evidence, the level of a university's commitment to nontraditional students can be determined. Curriculum and scheduling modifications at the college and departmental levels can be indicative of this commitment. Student programs and activities designed around the lifestyles of the nontraditional student would also suggest commitment. This study attempted to determine if academic librarians perceive an institutional commitment to nontraditional students at their university.

Research Question 5. Is the academic library presently in a period of transition or change? Has there been a major event which has affected the library organization and shifted it's direction? Academic libraries, as most organizations, progress through periods of major change or transition. The causes of transition are varied. For example, a transition could involve the hiring of a new Dean or Director of Libraries. It could also involve a change in organizational structure and reporting arrangements, with or without new personnel. A major transition could also occur when the library migrates to a new automated system. Today's integrated library systems involve nearly every library function and affects the daily job assignment of virtually every staff member. This study attempted to identify recent and/or current periods of transitions in academic libraries.

Delimitations of the Study

The definition of the nontraditional student often includes a wide variety of characteristics and backgrounds which lie outside of the historically narrow and traditional perception of the white, mostly male eighteen to twenty-two year old undergraduate. For the purposes of this study, however, the nontraditional student was defined as any student over the age of twenty two. Any student between the age of eighteen and twenty two regardless of background, culture, race, sex, or full or part-time status was considered, for the purposes of this study, a traditional student.

The institutions involved in this study are members of the Mid-American Conference. These universities provide a rich variety of major and minor fields of study and attract an international pool of talented students. However, most of the students enrolled in Mid-American universities graduate from high schools from the States of Michigan, Indiana, and Ohio. Most of the students are white, enrolled in full-time status, and reside on campus. Also, most of the conference universities are located in small and medium sized cities and no Mid-American institution is located in one of the thirty largest metropolitan areas of the United States.

Because of the two factors stated above, generalizations of the findings from this study are limited.

The first factor affecting the ability to generalize is the operational definition of the traditional and nontraditional student employed in this study. The second limiting factor involves the stated characteristics of the institutions of the Mid-American Conference. Therefore, any broad generalizations based on the results of this study should be limited.

Significance of the Study

There have been many studies related to nontraditional students over the past few decades. Numerous studies have dealt with the trend towards the increasing number of nontraditional students on today's campuses. The reasons behind this trend have also been analyzed. Results of these studies point to economic pressures, a changing workplace, the internationalization of the United States, the mass movement of women into the workforce, the rising aspirations of minorities, and the changes in American lifestyles as contributing factors to the new mix of students enrolled at America's universities and colleges.

Many studies have also addressed the response to the unique needs of the nontraditional student population by the university community. Studies have reported and described higher education's response ranging from pre-admission counseling to post-graduate employment advising.

A number of articles and studies have also been

published reporting the academic library's recognition of the needs of the nontraditional student. Most of the articles, mainly dating back to the 1960s, are concerned with the administration of services and the delivery of materials to nontraditional students located off-campus. More recently, articles have been published emphasizing the reference or bibliographic needs of nontraditional students. To date, however, no comprehensive study has been conducted identifying the level and amount of overall support provided for nontraditional students in terms of existing services and the perceived needs of nontraditional students by the professional librarians on staff at the academic library.

This study, with its stated assumptions and delimitations, attempted to identify those services and needs.

Within this chapter, the purpose of this research has been defined as the identification of academic librarians' opinions toward nontraditional students and the services provided to them by their libraries and institutions and to compare the level of library service accessibility provided nontraditional students with the perceived state of organizational transition. This chapter also identified specific research questions which guide this research as well as the delimitations and significance of this study. The next chapter will summarize the literature which serves as a basis and foundation for this research.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The review of related literature focuses on the specific problem being addressed by this study as well as the broader context in which it is framed. That is, literature describing higher education's relationship to the nontraditional student is presented followed by the literature dealing with the academic library and the nontraditional student. Also included in this review is literature describing organizational development and the process of transition. Even though much research has been documented about higher education and the nontraditional student, relatively little has been studied concerning the academic library and the nontraditional student.

Higher Education and Adult Education

As stated above, the study of the emerging relationship between higher education and the nontraditional student population is fairly well developed. Much of this literature is based on works describing efforts by universities and colleges providing adult education. In an early exploratory study, Hall-Quest (1926) identified and

assessed the adult educational programs conducted by universities. His was, he said, "a reconnoitering expedition through the territory of university extension".¹ While investigating a rather new field, he discovered that many efforts were underway. Almost twenty years later, Thompson (1943) published an account of what was being done in university extension in the United States while ten years later Morton (1953) conducted another statistical survey. In 1948 Burns and Houle presented a collection of addresses on the need for higher education to provide an opportunity for adults to master basic knowledge not acquired in earlier education. They were given by authorities from many fields, including industry and labor, as well as such segments of higher education as land-grant universities, liberal arts colleges, community colleges, teacher-training institutions, and urban universities. Brownell (1952) described in a series of essays the need for the community and the university to be brought into closer collaboration so that humanistic values may be reenforced. Schoenfeld in 1954 focused primarily on how a university is related to its public. The author proposed that the formal teaching of adults by various extension efforts influences the public's perception of the university. Shannon and Schoenfeld (1965), in one of a standardized series of books covering various aspects of higher education, composed an extended

¹Alfred Lawrence Hall-Quest, *The University Afield* (New York; Macmillan, 1926) p. 265.

encyclopedia entry on university extension.

In 1960, Petersen and Petersen reviewed the whole field of adult education and the place of universities in it. Knowles (1969) described the trends and issues concerning higher adult education during the mid 1960s and includes a bibliography of the significant literature available at that time. Knowles work grew out of the deliberations of the Committee on Higher Adult Education of the American Council on Education.

In the 1970s, a number of major university leaders emphasized strongly the importance of full participation by universities in a society that was then accepting adult education in a wholly unprecedented fashion. The Carnegie Commission on Higher Education published in 1973 the report of its lengthy discussion on the nature of a learning society and the challenges and opportunities that it provided to higher education. Hesburgh, Miller, and Wharton (1973) supplied the results of three investigations concerning the functions of the university as a lifelong learning center. The contribution by Miller is an individual essay, that of Hesburgh is a highly compressed version of a study carried out by a number of task forces made up of national leaders, and that of Wharton is a report of a faculty group at Michigan State University. These reports together are a synthesis that captures the essential ideas of all three. Harrington (1977) writes from experience ranging from extension teaching and

administration to the presidency of the University of Wisconsin and the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges. His book weighs the evidence on both sides of many issues. However, his strong commitment to lifelong learning and the importance of higher education to it is obvious. In 1987, Gessner provided a compendium of chapters dealing with topics of interest to administrators of university programs of adult education, including structural models, financing, program planning, delivery system alternatives, and marketing. Other chapters treat such topics as the history of university continuing education, the forces influencing the field, and patterns of research and evaluation.

Higher Education and the Nontraditional Student

In the late 1960s and early 1970s, it became apparent that a number of trends were operating in such a way as to bring about profound changes in the traditional patterns of service of college and university education. The traditional college curriculum sequence originally designed for full-time students enrolling directly after graduation from high school imposed on students a rigidity not in accord with changing life-styles and an increasingly diverse student population. The Carnegie Corporation created the Commission on Non-Traditional Study made up of people drawn from various segments of higher education and headed by

Samuel Gould, formally chancellor of the State University of New York. The Commission published its report in 1973 and as Gould states, the nontraditional student presents a clear challenge and opportunity to higher education:

Despite our lack of a completely suitable definition, we always seemed to sense the areas of education around which our interests centered. This community of concern was a mysterious light in the darkness, yet not at all mysterious in retrospect. Most of us agreed that non-traditional study is more an attitude than a system and thus can never be defined except tangentially. This attitude puts the student first and the institution second, concentrates more on the former's need than the latter's convenience, encourages diversity of individual opportunity rather than uniform prescription, and deemphasizes time, space, and even course requirements in favor of competence, and even where applicable, performance. It has concern for the learner of any age and circumstance, for the degree aspirant as well as for the person who finds sufficient reward in enriching life through constant, periodic, or occasional study. This attitude is not new; it is simply more prevalent than it used to be. It can stimulate exciting and high-quality educational progress; it can also, unless great care is taken to protect the freedom it offers, be the unwitting means to a lessening of academic rigor and even to charlatanism (Gould, p. xv).

The Commission on Non-Traditional Study did its work at a time when other studies were also being made of the system of higher education in relation to the nontraditional student population. Although they sometimes included adult education at various points in their reports, the commission accepted the need for special arrangements for adult degree programs as a central element in its work. In addition to its own report, the commission sponsored three other studies. Houle (1973) looked closely at the external degree

which is rewarded to adults who had completed a special sequence of study designed especially for them. He traced the history of such a degree over the past century and a half. Gould and Cross (1972) compiled essays by several authors dealing with issues related to the provision of degree-level instruction to audiences not usually served by colleges and universities. Adults are not singled out for separate attention, but an underlying assumption of the authors is that mature students will be the chief beneficiaries of the nontraditional programs concerned. Cross and Valley (1974) focused more directly on adult education. They analyzed two major studies on adult learning, exploring a number of possible new ways of providing instruction, and discussing the problems of maintaining quality. An excellent annotated bibliography is also provided.

One of the most important events in the modern movement to provide degree programs for nontraditional students occurred in England. The Open University in the United Kingdom first came to the attention of educators throughout the world in 1963. It provided an opportunity for a new population of students to secure a degree and was centered on the use of electronic media for instruction. A major institution was created in a period of only three years, from 1968 to 1971. Perry (1977) provided an inside account of the development of that institution as he served as its first chief administrative officer.

A number of other books dealing with the Open University also appeared in the mid 1970s. Tunstall (1974) gave a general and diversified account of the institution dealing with all aspects of its structure and operation. Ferguson (1976) offered a highly personal account of the beginnings of the Open University, written by one of its key administrators. The book provided a rather subjective historical description of the institution. In 1976, the Open University itself issued a report by its Committee on Continuing Education. Although the original mission of the institution was to award degrees on the basis of unconventional study, its leaders soon realized that they could use the operational mechanisms in place as well as their theories of education to develop an all-encompassing program of continuing education that would parallel and exceed the degree work. The committee, whose deliberations were included in this report, identified the central goals and plans that would be used to create a comprehensive program. McIntosh, Calder, and Swift (1977) provided a heavily statistical longitudinal report on the first group of students enrolled at the Open University. The report described the groups composition and how it progressed during its first five years. Some data was also provided concerning newly matriculated students.

Since its conception and development, the Open University evoked a remarkably strong international interest and reaction. The nontraditional movement in the United

States was strongly influenced by the appearance and evolution of this institution. In the United Kingdom and elsewhere, it was widely believed that the Open University could serve as a model for similar ventures. An appraisal of this influence was presented in 1982 by Rumble and Harry, focusing on "those few universities mainly founded in the 1970s to teach only at a distance" (Rumble and Harry, 1982, p. 7). They described not only the Open University, but also universities or university-oriented programs in eight other countries: Canada, China, Costa Rica, the Federal Republic of Germany, Israel, Pakistan, Spain, and Venezuela. The authors did not hesitate to report on the problems encountered by the institutions they studied but the general tone of the book was positive and optimistic. It suggested that although the Open University's design, methods, and materials can be widely used elsewhere, they must always be adapted to suit the social and local setting in which they are tried.

In addition to the major efforts of the Commission on Non-Traditional Study and related studies, a number of other approaches have been made to provide credits, degrees, and programs for nontraditional students. The idea that advanced and theoretical knowledge could be achieved by the normal processes of life, as well as by formal study, has been advanced and systematized in various ways. Stern and Missal (1960) supplied an early report on the work done at Brooklyn College to test this idea in its experimental

degree program for adults. Much that was highly unconventional then is currently accepted practice. Meyer (1975) dealt with how undergraduate credit could be awarded for prior learning experiences. Nyquist, Arbolino, and Hawes (1977) provided a straightforward, directly written guide for potential nontraditional student degree seekers; they furnished practical information on how to use experiential learning, credit by examination, and other ways of receiving instruction. Moon and Hawes (1980) described how part of the credit required for a degree may be achieved by a nontraditional student by means of the assessment of life experience through portfolio completion, the passing of examinations, and the use of established assessments of military instruction programs that parallel those in civilian life. Chickering (1971) provided one critical analysis of experiential learning. He discussed how such learning could be provided for both conventional and nontraditional students in colleges and universities. He covered thoroughly the major elements, practices, and problems of such learning and gave many examples of his general principles. In theoretical and abstract fashion, Kolb (1984) considered the question of how experience itself educates, drawing particularly from the writings of Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget.

Part of the stimulus for creating new kinds of credit and degree programs has grown out of the desire to reach new students to compensate for an expected decline in enrollment

of traditional college-age students when the postwar "baby boom" came to an end. Vermilye (1974) reported on a national conference concerned with whether nontraditional students might become a major clientele group for American higher education. One of the most comprehensive papers is that of Ernest L. Boyer (1974), entitled "Breaking Up the Youth Ghetto," in which he described the changes that occur on a campus as it broadens its concerns to include nontraditional students. MacKenzie, Postgate, and Scupham (1975) used the term *open learning* to cover all the new teaching processes and systems designed to bring postsecondary education to new categories of students. Baskin (1974) assessed many arrangements that were made to adjust the standard curriculum patterns of American colleges and universities in order to make their programs more accessible to mature students. Teather (1982) reported on innovative practices in the British Commonwealth and one American institution. The reports are grouped together in four categories: adapting to new clienteles on campus; meeting course needs off campus through appropriate technology; using research and consultancy; and providing for the performing arts. The introductory paper by Teather is a summary of the nature of university-based community service in the 1980s.

Some works concerning higher education's response to the needs of the nontraditional student are collections of case studies. Hall (1974) reviewed a number of ventures by

colleges and universities to reach new students of conventional age as well as nontraditional students. Medsker and others (1975) made a cross-cutting analysis of sixteen innovative college degree programs established for mature students in the United States. The authors undertook an in-depth investigation of what was occurring and estimated the probable success of the various ventures. Greenberg, O'Donnell, and Bergquist (1980) analyzed programs founded in the 1960s and 1970s, chiefly by small liberal arts colleges, to provide formal education for adults.

Organizational Development and the Transition Process

Organizational development involves a process of change or transition in an organization's culture and behavior. The field of organizational development is a relatively young field having its origins around 1960. Most practitioners agree that three models are the underlying and guiding frames of reference for organizational development and transition. These models include the action research model, Lewin's three-step model of system change - unfreezing, moving, and refreezing, and the phases of planned change as delineated by Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958).

As Brown (1972) indicates, the words "action research" in practice are reversed. Initially research is conducted and then action is taken as a direct result of what research

data are interpreted to indicate. As French and Bell (1978) have pointed out, action research originated from two independent sources, John Collier and Kurt Lewin. Collier worked to bring about change in ethnic relations and was a strong advocate of conducting research to determine the "central areas of needed action" (1945). Collier labeled this type of research as "action research." As Morrow (1969) describes, Lewin was an academic but also a man of action. Moreover, Lewin (1946) stated that there is "no action without research, and no research without action." Lewin and his colleagues and students conducted several action research projects in several domains: community and racial relations, leadership, eating habits, and intergroup conflicts. The action research project that is most relevant to organizational development and change was conducted by John R. P. French (a student of Lewin's) and his client, Lester Coch. Their study (1948) of workers' resistance to change in a pajama factory not only illustrated action research but also provided the theoretical basis for what is now called participative management. Marrow, Bowers, and Seashore summarized the results of this effort in *Management by Participation* (1967). French (1969) and Frohman, Sashkin, and Kavanagh (1976) applied the action research model and made it directly relevant to the organization development/change process. According to Lewin (1958), the first step in the process and change or transition is unfreezing the present

level of behavior. To reduce prejudice, for example, the unfreezing step might be catharsis as Allport (1945) describes or participation in a series of sensitivity training sessions as Rubin (1967) provides. Blake, Mouton, Barnes, and Greiner (1964) and Shepard (1960) illustrated the unfreezing step involving organizational change/transition as a series of management training sessions in which the objective for change might be a more participative approach. Bowers (1973) and Nadler (1977) cited the use of data feedback from a survey that showed serious problems in the managerial process of the organization.

The second step, movement, is to take action that will change the social system from its original level of behavior or operation to a new level. This action could be organization restructuring as described by Foltz, Harvey, and McLaughlin (1974), team development as proposed by Beckhard and Lake (1971), or any number of what organizational development researchers have labeled interventions.

The refreezing step which Lewin (1958) described involves the establishment of a process that will make the new level of behavior "relatively secure against change." This refreezing process may include different conforming patterns, or new norms, including collaboration rather than competition characterized by Davis (1967) and Tannenbaum and Davis (1969), a new approach to managing people proposed by

Marrow, Bowers and Seashore (1967) and Seashore and Bowers (1970), and a new reward system that will positively reinforce the desired behavior change delineated by Lawler (1977).

Thus, according to Lewin, bringing about lasting change means initially unlocking or unfreezing the existing social system. As Beckhard (1967) states, this effort might require some type of confrontation or a process of reeducation. Next, behavioral movement must occur in the direction of desired change, such as a reorganization. Finally, deliberate steps must be taken to ensure that the new state of behavior remains relatively permanent. Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958) clarified these steps by elaborating further on them.

The Lippitt, Watson, and Westley (1958) model of planned change expanded Lewin's three steps to five phases. They used the word *phase* deliberately, as *step* connotes a discrete action or event rather than the more likely reality that an individual step probably had not been completed when the next step was initiated. Their five phases are:

1. Development of a need for change (Lewin's unfreezing)
2. Establishment of a change relationship
3. Working toward change (Lewin's movement)
4. Generalization and stabilization of change (Lewin's refreezing)
5. Achieving a terminal relationship

Academic Libraries and the Nontraditional Student

Libraries are collections of instruments of knowledge, information, entertainment, and enlightenment. Therefore, everything that has to do with a library is, in the broadest sense, educational. However, the essential theme stimulating adult and lifelong learning in libraries in this century has been the desire to provide an increased and more discriminating use of those collections to achieve personal and social goals. This active thrust can be found in public, school, college and university libraries; research and special collections; and in all other places where books and other communication and information resources are meaningfully assembled.

The literature produced by the library profession since the 1970s reveals much about the evolution of library services provided by academic libraries for adult or nontraditional students. The literature also provides evidence of an increasing awareness of not only the existence of nontraditional students but also that they have unique needs which must be addressed.

Many of the general works concerning the academic library's response to the adult or nontraditional student are reviews or analyses of the Open University movement in the United Kingdom. Hannabuss (1981) documented the ways in which libraries in the United Kingdom attempted to meet the needs of open learning students during the 1970s. Using a

survey approach, he covered such issues as access, multimedia, learner-centered systems, and public library support for open learning. In a paper published in 1983, Payne recognized the heterogenous nature of part-time students. He recommended special funding for resource allocation targeted at this population as well as flexible hours and procedures in view of the students' time constraints, distribution of publicity on the library, personalized service provided by assigned staff, the provision of special loan collections, and access to local libraries.

While addressing a conference on off-campus library services in the United States, Scott (1987) emphasized the need for academic institutions to adapt to a changing student population. Scott identified four factors to be addressed in educational reform: "demographics, characteristics of the student population, trends in higher education governance and finance, and the condition of the academy" (p. 251). He claimed that a reformed educational program must provide services which are "responsive to the needs and interests of clients" (p.254). He further stated that institutions of higher education should experiment with innovative approaches to the delivery of education and cooperate "with such diverse partners as the public schools, state and local governments, social service agencies, the military, business, and industry" (p. 256). Trullinger (1987) at the same conference urged librarians to

aggressively seek program information from faculty and administrators, provide on-site library orientation programs, institute flexible service hours, and ensure that library staff are knowledgeable about the needs of nontraditional and off-campus students.

The appropriate role of librarians in service to the nontraditional student population, including those involved in off-campus and distance learning is represented in the literature. These works are of a philosophical or theoretical nature, focusing primarily on the ideals of library service. Dale (1978) examined the role of liaison librarians in Open University course teams. She advised liaison librarians to interact with faculty by offering services such as current awareness, literature searches, and preparation of literature guides for students. Librarians should also attend faculty and course team meetings whenever possible to keep informed as to students' needs and to remind faculty about library resources. De Silva (1985) recognized the role of the academic library in terms of open learning methods often associated with nontraditional students. The success of these methods hinges partially on the academic library providing appropriate and effective retrieval facilities and services, flexible service hours, and the participation of librarians in curriculum planning.

A number of works have addressed the planning, organization, and guidelines necessary for academic libraries to meet the needs of nontraditional students.

Dadswell (1983) described the Frank Crean Adult Education Resource Center as an example of a library serving students in a nontraditional educational institution. The library organization has moved away from a hierarchical structure to one which is more flexible and responsive to the needs of individual adult learners. In 1988, the Library Association in London issued the guide for library services for adult education and independent learning. Developed through the Adult Learning and Libraries Sub-Committee, this guide was intended for librarians in public, college, polytechnic, and university libraries involved in serving nontraditional students. The scope of the guidelines covered all types of adult learning including part-time courses, external studies, distance education, open learning, and independent study. The aim of this work was "to present a reasonable achievable level of library provision and service, not an abstract statement of ideals" (Fisher, 1988, p.3).

The provision of information and reference services to nontraditional students has also been addressed in the literature. Copler (1989) describes Indiana University's "Academic Information Environment" which was designed, in part, to meet the needs of faculty and students from remote locations. Library users are provided remote online access to a number of library services. Options on the main menu include general information, interlibrary loan, reference services, library tours, OCLC access, and document delivery. Crocker and Grimison (1989) provided a checklist for library

users summarizing area British libraries which adult students could utilize when access to their home libraries was difficult. Entries for 49 institutions included the names of librarians responsible for services for nontraditional students, and provided information on the following: answering service, methods for requesting materials (mail, telephone), types of materials loaned, free or fee-based photocopy services, courier delivery services, information\reference services, online search services (free or fee-based), and evening/weekend service. Central Michigan University's telephone reference service is described by Leasher in a paper presented in 1988. The paper, published in 1989, outlines the differences between in-person and telephone reference interviews. The mission statement and goals of CMU's remote user library service are listed and examples are provided of the types of inquiries received by CMU's specially assigned librarians.

While academic libraries have long provided bibliographic instruction or library user education, only recently have provisions been made to accommodate the needs of nontraditional students. Howard pointed out in 1983 that adult students in either full- or part-time programs require library instruction programs which are designed to suit their time schedules, education/experience levels, age levels, and learning styles. Dommer and Van Meer (1983) indicated computer-assisted instruction could be utilized as an effective teaching tool for the nontraditional student

population. It's advantages include programming flexibility, availability at the student's convenience, distance portability, and effectiveness.

Recognizing the ways in which nontraditional students differ from traditional students, Brown (1983) advocated incorporating Macolm Knowles' concept of "andragogy" into the bibliographic instruction program. The program must be rooted in a framework that embodies flexibility, adaptability, and the notion of "learning to learn." Sheridan in 1986 claimed that library instruction for nontraditional students was still based on traditional educational relationships and teaching techniques. She recommended adopting the concept of andragogy as well as alternative teaching styles and collaborative techniques.

Steffen (1988) described a course-related bibliographic instruction program designed to meet the needs of adult students. The program is designed to meet four major needs of adult students: proficiency in information retrieval, confidence, familiarity with new information technology, and efficient time management. Chabot (1989) presented a description of a library orientation/bibliographic session required of all students in the Adult Degree program of Mary Baldwin College. Since the majority of the students in this program are nonresidential and are involved in an individualized study approach, the session emphasizes techniques and strategies for information retrieval that are applicable to all types of libraries.

As nontraditional students are often nonresidential, cooperation among libraries is essential in meeting the needs of this population. Richards and Oakey (1974) discussed the programs of the following nontraditional post-secondary institutions in relation to library support: Open University of Pennsylvania, British Open University, University of Maryland, University Without Walls-Skidmore, Empire State College-Saratoga, Minnesota Metropolitan State College, and Cambridge Public Library. For many of these institutions, local public libraries serve the needs of a significant number of nontraditional students. In several cases, formal arrangements exist. Fletcher (1975) defined nontraditional education and the Open University and its various counterparts in the United States were described. She suggested that to serve the students of these institutions a national network should be established through which information about learning resources and library and audio-visual materials can be obtained. In 1983, Forrest described the delivery of library services to students in a geographically extended graduate studies program in West Virginia. Library service was extended to 120 classes offered in 21 different locations within 16 counties. Service outlets included dozens of public libraries, a private college, two undergraduate libraries, and school libraries. Outlets were provided with microfiche copies of the main library's catalog and relevant indexes, including ERIC, etc. Students used a toll-free telephone

line to request materials which were delivered by U.S. mail, faculty, or librarians. A bookmobile equipped with a reference collection and audio-visual equipment was also used.

Library user studies have been useful in measuring the needs of different populations. A number of user studies have been conducted in the past 20 years attempting to identify the library practices and needs of nontraditional students. Nolan (1975) conducted a survey of students enrolled at two learning centers of New York's Empire State College, a nontraditional liberal arts college which provides an independent learning experience. The results of the survey indicated that students tended to use campus libraries about once a week and private academic libraries (where they lacked borrowing privileges) more often. Students did not use interlibrary loan heavily and suggested the establishment of libraries in the learning centers. Nolan recommended that libraries wishing to better serve nontraditional students should work to develop regional finding tools and union lists and should offer seminars in library use skills at remote locations. Alexander and Steffen described a variety of needs assessment tools and methods employed by Northwestern University Library in 1989 to determine the information needs of nontraditional and part-time graduate management students. Responses to the questionnaire indicated low use of services which the library had developed especially for adult part-time

students. In reaction to the findings, a number of small changes and innovations were introduced to improve service to these students, including the expansion of publicity and bibliographic instruction programs. The authors concluded that since there does not seem to be a simple, effective way of meeting the library needs of adult part-time students, it is best to offer a variety of services taking into account differences in learning styles, levels of interest, and commitment. Wong (1987) surveyed nontraditional students enrolled in part-time degree programs at the University of Saskatchewan. Students rated library service as fair compared to counseling and financial assistance. When students were asked for suggestions for "things the University could do to help me in my studies" the library received 9.6% of the total suggestions, ranking third in importance after the need to improve courses and academic counseling.

Hammond (1994) compared responses from traditional and nontraditional students concerning certain library related activities. Hammond's survey indicated no significant difference between the responses of traditional and nontraditional students in six areas. These areas included the pressure due to lack of time, their ability to find what they need in the library on their own, the importance of instruction on using electronic sources, concerns about library hours, the adequacy of collections, and the role of the library in providing access to materials. Differences

between traditional and nontraditional students were identified in areas related to technology, perceived value of information literacy and library skills, the willingness to pay for services, and the use of the library as study space.

This chapter has presented and summarized the relevant literature in the areas of higher education and adult education, higher education and nontraditional students, academic libraries and nontraditional students, and organizational development and the transition process. The next chapter presents the methodology for this research.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Subjects

The research methodology used by this study is the survey questionnaire. The survey questionnaire was mailed to every librarian employed by the academic library of each university within the Mid-American Conference. The Mid-American Conference is comprised of the following institutions of higher education: Ball State University, Western Michigan University, University of Akron, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green State University, Miami University, University of Toledo, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, and Ohio University.

The Mid-American Conference was selected as the sample population primarily because of their similarity not only to each other but also to other public, residential four year universities. According to enrollment figures published by *The Almanac of Higher Education* (1995) over 70% of the nation's universities fall within the enrollment ranges of Mid-American institutions. While Mid-American universities have their own unique services and programs, they are similar in many ways. On average, they are predominately undergraduate institutions. Most of the students enrolled

in Mid-American universities are residents of the States of Michigan, Ohio, and Indiana. Most of the students are white, enrolled in full-time status, and reside on or close to campus. Also, most of the conference universities are located in small and medium-sized cities and no Mid-American Conference institution is located in one of the thirty largest metropolitan areas of the United States. However, every Mid-American Conference university offers a wide selection of Master's and Doctoral programs. A number also include professional schools such as Law and Engineering. Most importantly, however, they are all medium-sized, public-supported, midwestern universities.

Librarians employed by Mid-American Conference universities are required to hold a Master's of Science degree in Library Science or its equivalency. The Master's of Science degree in Library Science must be granted from a graduate program accredited by the American Library Association. Each librarian also holds a Bachelor of Arts or a Bachelor of Science degree. The individual major and minor fields of study of the undergraduate degree vary depending on the particular librarian's position responsibilities. A small, yet growing, number of academic librarians hold a Doctorate of Philosophy. The specific area of advanced study varies based on individual interest and academic background as well as position responsibilities.

Design of the Study

The following steps were utilized to implement this study:

1. The survey questionnaire was designed to gather the data necessary to identify academic librarians' perceptions concerning the level of support provided by their academic library to nontraditional students.

2. The Deans and Directors of the academic libraries of the Mid-American Conference were written introducing the study and describing the survey questionnaire. The Deans and Directors were also asked to submit the names of librarians on their staff. This written communication was followed by a telephone call to each Dean or Director. The questionnaire was then mailed to the lists of names received from the Deans and Directors.

3. In requesting the subjects to complete the questionnaire, they were promised anonymity and confidentiality. Accordingly, a self addressed postcard was included in the questionnaire mailing. The subjects were asked to separately mail the postcard when their questionnaire was completed and mailed. By this means, a confidential, anonymous double-check was possible and reminders were mailed to those subjects for which no postcards were received.

The university libraries of the Mid-American Conference were also promised anonymity and confidentiality.

Accordingly, the response rate by institution was not recorded.

Instrumentation

The utilized instrument was created for this survey. The survey examined the following questions through this instrument:

1. What service points or offices are accessed by nontraditional students? Is this accessibility adequate and appropriate or does it need to be improved?
2. How sensitive are individual academic librarians to the needs of nontraditional students? Have academic librarians received specialized training which focuses on the needs and characteristics of nontraditional students?
3. Are library staff specifically assigned to meet the needs of nontraditional students? What library service exist which are utilized by nontraditional students?
4. How supportive of nontraditional students is the library's university? Are efforts being made throughout the university which would indicate commitment to nontraditional students?
5. Is the library presently in a period of transition or change? Has there been a major event which has

affected the library organization and shifted it's direction?

The questionnaire consisted of forced choice as well as written completion statements (Appendix A). The questionnaire required approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was mailed to 265 subjects. One hundred sixty four questionnaires were completed and returned accounting for 62% of the total mailed.

Data Analysis

Means were computed from the responses to the questionnaire to determine central tendency. The t statistic and chi square test were employed to test for the null hypothesis and to determine significant relationships.

Means were computed from the responses to the questions involving the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the reference/information desk, circulation desk, fines/change desk, and the dean's/director's office to determine central tendency. Means were also computed from the responses to the questions involving individual and institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students to determine central tendency. To analyze the relationships between individual and institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students and the perceived state of organizational stability

or change, the t statistic was utilized. The chi square test was used to analyze the relationships between the perceived appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's major service points and the perceived state of organizational stability or change.

This chapter has described the research methodology used by this study. The subjects, design of the study, and instrumentation were also presented. Additionally, the types of planned data analysis were included in this chapter. The next chapter will present the findings of this research.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION OF FINDINGS

The findings presented in this chapter summarize the responses from the survey results submitted by academic librarians of the Mid-American Conference concerning library service provided by academic libraries and their institutions to nontraditional students. The findings 1) summarize the opinions of academic librarians toward nontraditional students and the service provided to them by their libraries and institutions and 2) compare the level of library service accessibility provided nontraditional students and the individual librarian and institutional sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students with the perceived state of organizational transition. The Mid-American Conference is comprised of the following institutions of higher education: Ball State University, Western Michigan University, University of Akron, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green State University, Miami University, University of Toledo, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, and Ohio University. Academic librarians employed at Mid American Conference universities hold a Masters Degree in Library Science as the profession's terminal degree or its equivalency. The

findings are presented according to the organization of the five research questions which have guided this study.

Nontraditional Student Accessibility

Table 1 presents the responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk and circulation desk as perceived by academic librarians. Subjects were asked whether accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. One hundred sixty four subjects responded to question.

Table 1

Appropriateness of Accessibility by Nontraditional Students to the Reference/Information and Circulation Desks

	Reference/Information Desk n=164	Circulation Desk n=164
Appropriate Accessibility	77% (127)	76% (125)
Minor Changes Needed	20% (33)	14% (24)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	3% (4)	10% (15)

As is shown in Table 1, a majority of subjects feel comfortable with nontraditional student accessibility at the library's major public service points. Approximately three-

quarters of the subjects feel that reference/information desk and circulation desk accessibility by nontraditional students is appropriate. Conversely, approximately one-quarter of the subjects feel that reference/information desk and circulation desk accessibility by nontraditional students needs to be greatly improved or needs minor changes.

Table 2 presents the responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's fines/change desk and dean's/director's office as perceived by academic librarians. Subjects were asked whether accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. 81 subjects responded to the fines/change desk component and 142 subjects responded to the dean's/director's office component of the question.

Table 2

**Appropriateness of Accessibility by Nontraditional Students
to the Fines/Change Desk and Dean's/Director's Office**

	Fines/Change Desk n=81	Dean's/Director's Office n=142
Appropriate Accessibility	89% (72)	83% (117)
Minor Changes Needed	7% (6)	15% (21)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	4% (3)	2% (4)

As shown in Table 2, a majority of subjects are satisfied with nontraditional student accessibility at the library's fines/change desk and administrative offices. Approximately 90% of the subjects feel that fines/change accessibility by nontraditional students is appropriate. Over 80% of the subjects feel accessibility by nontraditional students to the Dean's/Director's Office is appropriate.

Individual Sensitivity to Nontraditional Students

Subjects were asked to rate their sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students. Table 3 presents the responses to that question. Subjects were asked to rate their sensitivity on a five point scale with one being low sensitivity and five being high sensitivity. One hundred sixty two subjects responded to the question.

Table 3

Individual Sensitivity to Nontraditional Student Needs

1	2	3	4	5
Low				High
2% (4)	6% (10)	11% (17)	26% (46)	55% (85)

Mean = 4.2
n = 162

As shown in Table 3, most subjects feel they are sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students. Over 80%

of the subjects rated themselves as either four or five on the five point scale while less than 10% rated themselves as either a one or two. The mean is 4.2.

Subjects were asked to identify any training received which focused on the needs of nontraditional students. Nineteen subjects responded that they had received some type of training directed toward meeting the needs of nontraditional students. The types of training included primarily workshops and professional readings.

Library Staffing

Subjects were also asked if they would reassign library personnel to areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure. Table 4 summarizes the responses to that question. The question is based on the assumption that there is no additional staff involved in any reassignment. One hundred sixty one subjects responded to the question.

Table 4

Would You Reassign Personnel to Areas
Not Adequately Staffed?

Yes	18% (29)
No	82% (132)

n = 161

As shown in Table 4, over 80% of subjects reported that they would not reassign library personnel to areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure. The question is based on the assumption that no additional staff is involved in any reassignment.

If subjects responded affirmatively to the previous question, they were asked to identify areas to which staff would be reassigned. The vast majority of responses involved the shifting of personnel from library technical services to library public services. Subjects would reassign personnel to reference, circulation, and document delivery areas. They would also reassign staff to library instruction specifically involving electronic resources. A number of subjects would reassign library staff to provide improved outreach or remote user services.

Subjects were asked if library staff are specifically assigned to serve the needs of nontraditional students at their institution. One hundred sixty three subjects responded to the question. Table 5 summarizes the responses to that question.

Table 5

Are Library Staff Specifically Assigned to Serve the Needs
of Nontraditional Students?

Yes	5.5% (9)
No	94.5% (154)

n = 163

As shown in Table 5, the overwhelming majority of subjects, 94.5%, reported that there are no staff specifically assigned to serve the needs of nontraditional students within their academic library. If the subjects responded affirmatively to the previous questions, they were asked to describe the level of nontraditional student staffing. The only staffing specifically assigned to serve the needs of nontraditional involved an off-campus library services staffed by nine librarians, approximately ten clerks and specialists, and twenty-five student assistants.

Subjects were also asked to identify services specifically designed for nontraditional students. Extended library hours, evening library instruction/workshops, off campus document delivery, and long-distance interactive television and teleconferencing were identified as services specifically designed to meet the needs of nontraditional students.

Institutional Sensitivity to Nontraditional Students

Table 6 summarizes the responses to the question concerning institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students according to academic librarians employed at those institutions. Subjects were asked to rate their institution's sensitivity on a five point scale with one being low sensitivity and five being high sensitivity. One hundred sixty three subjects responded to the question.

Table 6

Institutional Sensitivity to Nontraditional Student Needs				
1	2	3	4	5
Low				High
4% (5)	5% (8)	14% (22)	65% (101)	12% (20)

Mean = 3.6
n = 163

As shown in Table 6, most subjects feel their institution is sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students. More than three-quarters of the subjects rated their institution as either a four or a five on a five point scale while less than 10% rated their institution as either a one or a two. The mean is 3.6.

Transition Stages and Accessibility by
Nontraditional Students

Table 7 summarizes the responses to the question involving individual librarian sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students. Subjects were asked to rate their sensitivity on a five point scale with one being low sensitivity and five being high sensitivity. One hundred sixty two subjects responded to the question. The responses were sorted into two groups - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being

grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the means of the two groups. That is, the state of organizational stability/transition has no effect on the librarians' sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

Table 7

Transition Stages and Individual Sensitivity to the Needs
of Nontraditional Students

Sensitivity	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
1 (low)	0% (0)	2% (2)
2	0% (0)	5% (6)
3	8% (4)	21% (24)
4	14% (7)	60% (66)
5 (high)	78% (40)	12% (13)
Mean	4.7	3.7
t=9.00		
p < .05		
n =162		

As is shown in Table 7, the results of the t test performed on this data are $t(160) = 9.00$; $p < .05$. The obtained value, $t = 9.00$, is in the critical region. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this test, there is a significant difference between the two populations concerning individual sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

Table 8 summarizes the responses to the question

involving institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students according to academic librarians employed at those institutions. Subjects were asked to rate their institution's sensitivity on a five point scale with one being low sensitivity and five being high sensitivity. One hundred sixty three subjects responded to the question. As stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the means of the two groups. That is, the state of organizational stability/transition has no effect on the librarians' perception of their institution's sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

Table 8

Transition Stages and Institutional Sensitivity to the Needs
of Nontraditional Students

Sensitivity	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
1 (low)	2% (1)	1% (1)
2	0% (0)	5% (6)
3	6% (3)	48% (53)
4	72% (37)	32% (36)
5 (high)	20% (10)	14% (16)

Table 8 (cont'd).

Mean	4.1	3.5
t=4.6		
p < .05		
n = 163		

As is shown in Table 8, the results of the t test are $t(161) = 4.6$; $p < .05$. The obtained value, $t = 4.6$, is in the critical region. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this test, there is a significant difference between the two populations concerning institutions' sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

Table 9 summarizes responses to the question involving the willingness of librarians to reassign personnel to other areas within their library not adequately staffed by their present organizational structure. The question assumes that this possible personnel reassignment would occur with no additional staff. Subjects were asked to respond either in the affirmative or negative. One hundred fifty subjects responded to the question. As stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the population sets. That is,

there is no significant relationship between the state of organizational stability/transition and librarians' willingness to reassign personnel to other areas of the library not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure.

Table 9

Transition Stages and Possible Staff Reassignment

Reassign Staff	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
Yes	12% (6)	50% (50)
No	88% (45)	50% (49)
$X (1, n = 150) = 8.83$ $p < .05$ $n = 150$		

As is shown in Table 9, the results of the chi square test are $X (1, n = 150) = 8.83, p < .05$. The obtained chi square value, 8.83, exceeds the critical value (3.84). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this test, there is a significant relationship between librarians' willingness to reassign staff and the state of organizational stability/transition.

Table 10 summarizes responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk as perceived by academic librarians. Subjects were asked whether reference desk

accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. One hundred sixty four subjects responded to the question. As stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their library is organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the state of organizational stability/transition and librarians' perception of the appropriateness of accessibility to the reference/information Desk.

Table 10

Transition Stages and Accessibility by Nontraditional Students to the Library's Reference/Information Desk

	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
Appropriate Accessibility	88% (45)	68% (77)
Minor Changes Needed	12% (6)	26% (29)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	0% (0)	6% (7)
$\chi^2 (2, n = 164) = 7.985$ $p < .05$ $n = 164$		

As is shown in Table 10, the results of the chi square test are $X(2, n = 164) = 7.985, p < .05$. The obtained chi square value, 7.985, exceeds the critical value (5.99). Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this test, there is a significant relationship between perceived reference/information desk accessibility and the state of organizational stability/transition.

Table 11 summarizes responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's circulation desk as perceived by academic librarians. Subjects were asked whether circulation desk accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. One hundred sixty four subjects responded to the question. As stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their library is organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the state of organizational stability/transition and librarians' perception of the appropriateness of accessibility to the circulation desk.

Table 11

**Transition Stages and Accessibility by Nontraditional
Students to the Library's Circulation Desk**

	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
Appropriate Accessibility	88% (45)	77% (87)
Minor Changes Needed	12% (6)	19% (22)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	0% (0)	4% (4)
$\chi^2 (2, n = 164) = 3.37$ $p < .05$ $n = 164$		

As is shown in Table 11, the results of the chi square test are $\chi^2 (2, n = 164) = 3.37, p < .05$. The obtained chi square value, 3.37, does not exceed the critical value (5.99). Therefore, the results fail to reject the null hypothesis. Based on this test, there is no significant relationship between perceived circulation desk accessibility and the state of organizational stability/transition.

Table 12 summarizes responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's fines/change desk as perceived by academic librarians. Subjects were asked whether fines/change desk accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. Ninety subjects responded to the question. As

stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their library is organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the state of organizational stability/transition and librarians' perception of the appropriateness of accessibility to the fines/change desk.

Table 12

**Transition Stages and Accessibility by Nontraditional
Students to the Library's Fines/Change Desk**

	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
Appropriate Accessibility	93% (13)	78% (59)
Minor Changes Needed	7% (1)	20% (15)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	0% (0)	2% (2)
$\chi^2 (2, n = 90) = 2.235$ $p < .05$ $n = 90$		

As is shown in Table 12, the results of the chi square test are $\chi^2 (2, n = 90) = 2.235$, $p < .05$. The obtained chi square value, 2.235, does not exceed the critical value

(5.99). Therefore, the results fail to reject the null hypothesis. Based on this test, there is no significant relationship between perceived fines/change desk accessibility and the state of organizational stability/transition.

Table 13 summarizes responses to the question concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's dean's/director's office. Subjects were asked whether dean's/director's office accessibility is appropriate, could be improved with minor changes, or needs to be greatly improved. One hundred thirty seven subjects responded to the question. As stated above, the responses were sorted into two populations - subjects who feel their library is organizationally stable and those who feel their library is exiting a transition state being grouped together and those subjects who feel their library is beginning or in the middle of a state of transition being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states there is no difference between the population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the state of organizational stability/transition and librarians' perception of the appropriateness of accessibility to the dean's/director's office.

Table 13

**Transition Stages and Accessibility by Nontraditional
Students to the Library's Dean's/Director's Office**

	Stable/Exiting	Beginning/Middle
Appropriate Accessibility	94% (46)	74% (64)
Minor Changes Needed	6% (3)	13% (12)
Needs to be Greatly Improved	0% (0)	13% (12)
$X (2, n = 137) = 8.614$ $p < .05$ $n = 137$		

As is shown in Table 13, the results of the chi square test are $X (2, n = 137) = 8.614, p < .05$. The obtained chi square value, 8.614, exceeds the critical region. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. Based on this test, there is a significant relationship between perceived dean's/director's office accessibility and the state of organizational stability/transition.

Subjects were asked to list the indicators of transition present within their organization if their library was in fact in a state of transition. These responses could be grouped into four categories. Changes and advances in library and office technology was the leading indicator of change according to the subjects. Examples of changing technology include the introduction of statewide electronic consortia, the internet, increasing

numbers of electronic resources and full-text accessibility, and emerging multimedia technology. Following advances in technology, subjects cited changes in administrative leadership as a leading indicator of a transition. Subjects identified changes in leadership within the library ranging from the unit or department level through the Dean's or Director's Office as transition state indicators. They also cited administrative changes at the University level as indicators of transition. These changes typically involved the University President or Vice President. The third indicator category includes a shift in the institution's mission and/or goals statement. Again, this category includes mission and goals shifts within both the library and university. The final indicator of transition involved library reorganization. Based on the subjects' responses, libraries are reorganizing at an increasing frequency.

Summary

The findings presented in this chapter address the five specific questions around which this research was designed. The first question sought to determine the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's major service points. According to the findings, a majority of subjects are satisfied with nontraditional student accessibility to the library's major service points. Approximately three-quarters of the subjects feel that

reference/information desk and circulation desk accessibility is appropriate. Approximately 90% of the subjects feel that fines/change desk accessibility is appropriate. Over 80% of the subjects feel that dean's/director's office accessibility is appropriate.

The second question involved the sensitivity of academic librarians to the needs of nontraditional students. According to the findings, over 80% of the subjects rated themselves as either a four or five on a five point scale while less than 10% rated themselves as either a one or two. The mean is 4.2.

The third question tried to determine if library staff were specifically assigned to meet the needs of nontraditional students. According to the findings, approximately 95% of subjects indicated that library staff were not specifically assigned to meet the needs of nontraditional students. An off-campus library services division was the only type of staffing identified as serving specifically nontraditional students. Also, less than 20% of subjects indicated that they would reassign library personnel to areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure. These respondents would reassign staff from library technical services to library public service areas.

The fourth question involved the sensitivity of the institution to the needs of nontraditional students. More than three-quarters of the subjects rated their institutions

as either a four or a five on a five point scale while less than 10% rated their institution as either a one or a two. The mean is 3.6.

The fifth question involved the relationship between organizational change or transition and individual/institutional sensitivity to nontraditional student needs, possible staff reassignment, and nontraditional student major service points accessibility. According to the findings, there is a significant difference involving individual and institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students between those subjects in a relatively stable organization and those subjects beginning or moving through a state of transition. There is also a significant relationship between librarians' willingness to reassign staff and the state of organizational stability or transition. According to the findings, there is a significant relationship between perceived reference/information desk and dean's/director's office accessibility by nontraditional students and the state of organizational stability or transition. The findings revealed, however, there is no significant relationship between perceived circulation desk and fines/change desk accessibility by nontraditional students and the state of organizational stability or transition.

Subjects identified four categories of change indicators present in libraries moving through a state of transition. These indicator categories include changes or

advances in technology, changes in library and university leadership, shifts in institutional mission and/or goals statements, and library reorganization.

As this chapter has presented and summarized the findings of the research, the next chapter will present a discussion of these findings. Also included in the next chapter will be recommendations involving further research and activities based on the results of this study.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND DISCUSSION

The purpose of this research has been to identify the opinions of academic librarians toward nontraditional students and the service provided to them by their libraries and institutions and to compare the level of library service accessibility provided nontraditional students with the perceived state of organizational transition. The specific questions which have guided the research are: (1) What service points or offices are accessed by nontraditional students and how appropriate is the accessibility?; (2) How sensitive are individual academic librarians to the needs of nontraditional students and have they received specialized training which focuses on nontraditional students?; (3) Are academic library staff specifically assigned to meet the needs of nontraditional students and what library services exist which are utilized by nontraditional students?; (4) How supportive of nontraditional students is the library's university and are efforts being made throughout the university which would indicate a commitment to nontraditional students?; (5) Is the academic library presently in a period of transition or change and has there been a major event which has affected the library's

organization and shifted it's direction?

As stated in the Introduction, the definition of the nontraditional student often includes a wide variety of characteristics and backgrounds which lie outside of the historically narrow and traditional perception of the white, mostly male eighteen to twenty-two year old undergraduate. For the purposes of this research, the nontraditional student was defined as any student over the age of twenty-two. Any student between the age the eighteen and twenty-two regardless of background, culture, race, sex, or full or part-time status was considered, for the purposes of this research, a traditional student.

The research methodology used in this research was the survey questionnaire. The survey was mailed to every librarian employed by the academic library of each university within the Mid-American Conference. The Mid-American Conference is comprised of the following institutions of higher education: Ball State University, Western Michigan University, University of Akron, Central Michigan University, Bowling Green State University, Miami University, University of Toledo, Eastern Michigan University, Kent State University, and Ohio University.

The survey questionnaire was designed to gather data necessary to identify academic librarian's perceptions concerning the level of support provided by their academic library to nontraditional students and to determine the state of relative organizational stability or transition

within the library. The Deans and Directors of the academic libraries of the Mid-American Conference were written introducing the research and describing the survey questionnaire. The Deans and Directors were also asked to submit the names of librarians on their staff. This written communication was followed by a telephone call to each Dean or Director. The questionnaire was then mailed to the lists of names received from the Deans and Directors. A self-addressed postcard was included in the questionnaire mailing. The subjects were asked to separately mail the postcard when their questionnaire was completed and mailed. By this means, a confidential, anonymous double-check was possible and reminders were mailed to those subjects for which no postcards were received. The university libraries of the Mid-American Conference were also promised anonymity and confidentiality. Accordingly, the response rate by institution was not recorded.

The questionnaire consisted of forced choice as well as written completion statements. The questionnaire required approximately 20 minutes to complete. The questionnaire was mailed to 265 subjects. Of this number, 164 were completed and returned accounting for 62% of the total mailed.

Means were computed from the responses to determine central tendency. The t statistic and the chi square test were employed to test for the null hypothesis and to determine the existence of significant relationships.

Discussion

In general, academic librarians are satisfied with the level of accessibility by nontraditional students to the reference/information desk, circulation desk, fines/change desk, and dean's/director's office. In response to the questions concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to these major service points, approximately three-quarters of the subjects indicated that reference/information desk and circulation desk accessibility is appropriate, approximately 90% of the subjects indicated that fines/change desk accessibility is appropriate, and over 80% of the subjects indicated that the dean's/director's office accessibility is appropriate. On average, 81% of the respondents indicated that nontraditional student accessibility to major service points within the academic library is appropriate.

Conversely, 23% and 24% of the subjects respectively indicated that reference/information and circulation desk accessibility needs to be greatly improved or needs minor changes. Only 11% and 17% respectively of the subjects indicated that fines/change desk and dean's/director's office accessibility needs to be greatly improved or needs minor changes. On average, 19% of the respondents indicated that nontraditional student accessibility to major service points within the academic library needs to be greatly improved or needs minor changes.

Upon drawing conclusions from the responses to these questions concerning nontraditional student accessibility to the librarys' major service points, the phenomenon of the socially accepted response or self-reporting bias must be considered. The subjects were asked to evaluate services which they themselves or their institutions' provide. In part, the positive response received concerning nontraditional accessibility to these service points could be attributed to the tendency toward socially accepted response and self-reporting bias.

Another possible factor which must be considered while analyzing these responses is the subjects' potential naivete concerning the needs of nontraditional students. While academic librarians provide service to a broad community of students, educators, and scholars, they may not be familiar with the specific and unique needs of the nontraditional student. This unfamiliarity may affect the subjects' responses to questions concerning the appropriateness of accessibility to the libraries major service points by nontraditional students.

In response to questions concerning their own sensitivity as well as their institutions' sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students, most subjects indicated that they as individuals and their institutions are sensitive to nontraditional student needs. Concerning individual sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students, over 80% of the subjects rated themselves as

either a four or five on a five point scale while less than 10% rated themselves as either a one or two. Concerning institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students, more than three-quarters of the subjects rated their institution as either a four or five on a five point scale while less than 10% rated their institution as either a one or two.

While the respondents rated their own individual and their institution's sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students rather high, there is a difference between the two mean measurements. The mean in response to the question concerning individual sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students is 4.2 on a five point scale. The mean in response to the question concerning institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students is 3.6 on a five point scale. According to the differences in these two mean scores, the subjects feel that their institutions are less sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students than they are as individuals.

Once again, the phenomenon of the socially accepted response or self-reporting bias must be considered while drawing conclusions from the responses concerning individual and institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students. The subjects were asked to evaluate their own personal sensitivity as well as their institutions' sensitivity to the needs of a segment of the student population. In part, the positive response received

concerning individual and institutional sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students could be attributed to the tendency toward socially accepted response and self-reporting bias.

Also, the subjects' potential naivete concerning the needs of nontraditional students may be a contributing factor to the positive responses involving individual and institutional sensitivity. The possible unfamiliarity of academic librarians with the special and unique needs of nontraditional students may affect the responses concerning individual and institutional sensitivity.

Questions were also asked concerning staffing within the academic library. In response to the question whether library staff were specifically assigned to serve the needs of nontraditional students, over 94% of the subjects responded in the negative. On the other hand, subjects were also asked if they would reassign library personnel to areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure. This question was based on the limitation that there were no additional staff involved in any reassignment. In response to this question, 82% of the subjects indicated that they would not reassign staff.

Given the relatively high level of satisfaction with the perceived appropriateness of accessibility to the major service points within the academic library as well as the relatively high individual sensitivity ratings toward to the needs of nontraditional students, the responses concerning

library staffing are consistent and compatible. That is, the subjects have indicated that, in general, their libraries are meeting the needs of the nontraditional student as presently structured. The subjects also indicated that they are personally sensitive to nontraditional student needs. While approximately 94% of the subjects indicated that no staff are specifically assigned to serve nontraditional students, it is clear based on the subjects' responses that they perceive that nontraditional students do not require specifically assigned staff. This conclusion, in part, is substantiated by the response to the question concerning the reassignment of staff to areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure - over 80% would not reassign staff. It is clear from the responses summarized in Tables 1 through 6 in Chapter IV that, in general, academic librarians perceive service provided to nontraditional students is appropriate. It is also clear that academic librarians, in general, perceive themselves as sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students. Based on these perceptions and the responses concerning library staffing, the subjects are satisfied with the level of service provided to nontraditional students by academic libraries.

The following discussion surrounds the results based on the effects which organizational stability or transition might have on the subjects' responses to various questions. That is, does the subjects' perceived state of

organizational stability or transition affect the responses to questions involving individual and institutional sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students, the willingness to reassign library staff, and the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk, circulation desk, fines/change desk, and the dean's/director' office.

The responses to the questions concerning individual sensitivity and institutional sensitivity were sorted into two groups - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable with those who feel their libraries are exiting a transition state being grouped together and those who feel their libraries are beginning or in the middle of a transition state being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the means of the two groups. That is, the perceived state of organizational stability or transition has no effect on perceived individual or institutional sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

In both cases, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the results of the t test, there is a significant difference between the two populations concerning individual sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional. There is also, based on the results of the t test, a significant difference between the two populations concerning the two populations concerning the institutions' sensitivity toward the needs of nontraditional students.

The results of this research indicate that the perceived state of organizational stability or transition does have an effect on how librarians rate their own sensitivity as well as their institutions sensitivity to the needs of nontraditional students. Librarians whose organizations are perceived as being relatively stable appear to rate themselves as more sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students compared to those librarians whose organizations are perceived as being in a state transition or change. Accordingly, librarians whose organizations are perceived as being relatively stable appear to rate their institutions as more sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students compared to those librarians whose organizations are perceived as being in a state of transition or change.

The responses to the question concerning the willingness of librarians to reassign personnel to other areas within the library not adequately staffed by their present organizational structure were also sorted into two groups - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable with those who feel their libraries are exiting a transition state being grouped together and those who feel their libraries are beginning or in the middle of a transition state being grouped in the second set. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the perceived state of

organizational stability or transition and the willingness of librarians to reassign personnel to other areas within the library not adequately staffed by their present organizational structure.

In this case, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the chi square test, there is a significant relationship between the librarians' willingness to reassign staff and the perceived state of organizational stability or transition.

The results of this research indicate that the perceived state of organizational stability or transition does have an effect on the librarians' willingness to the reassign staff to serve unmet needs. Librarians whose organizations are perceived as being relatively stable appear to be less willing to reassign personnel to other areas within the library not adequately staffed by their present organizational structure compared to those librarians whose organizations are perceived as being in a state of change or transition.

The responses to the questions concerning the appropriateness of accessibility to the major service points within the library were also sorted into two groups - subjects who feel their libraries are organizationally stable with those who feel their libraries are exiting a transition state being grouped together and those who feel their libraries are beginning or in the middle of a transition state being grouped in the second set. The major

service points identified in the questionnaire included the reference/information desk, circulation desk, fines/change desk, and the dean's/director's office. The null hypothesis states that there is no difference between the two population sets. That is, there is no significant relationship between the perceived state of organizational stability or transition and the perceived appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's major service points.

In the cases concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk and the dean's/director's office, the null hypothesis was rejected. Based on the chi square test, there is a significant relationship between the perceived appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk and the dean's/director's office and the perceived state of organizational stability or transition.

The results of this research indicate that the perceived state of organizational stability or transition does have an effect on how the librarian perceives the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's reference/information desk and the dean's/director's office. Librarians whose organizations are perceived as being relatively stable view their reference/information desk and dean's/director's office as being appropriately accessible by nontraditional students as

compared to those librarians whose organizations are perceived as being in a state of change or transition.

In the cases concerning the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's circulation desk and fines/change desk, the results fail to reject the null hypothesis. Based on the chi square test, there is no significant relationship between perceived circulation and fines/change desk accessibility by nontraditional students and the perceived state of organizational stability or transition.

The results of this research indicate that the perceived state of organizational stability or transition does not have an effect on how the librarian perceives the appropriateness of accessibility by nontraditional students to the library's circulation desk and fines/change desk.

Conclusions

This research has produced two major findings. First, academic librarians are satisfied, in general, with the service provided to nontraditional students by their libraries. In addition, academic librarians perceive themselves as being sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students. They also believe, for the most part, that their institutions are sensitive to nontraditional student needs.

The second major finding involves the impact which the perceived state of organizational change or transition has

on that perception of service satisfaction and sensitivity toward nontraditional students. When the data are analyzed further, finer distinctions can be drawn. From the results of this research, the perceived state of organizational change or transition does affect librarians' perceived service satisfaction and sensitivity toward nontraditional students. That is, librarians who perceive their organizations to be in a state of transition or change are more critical and less satisfied with the service provided to nontraditional students than those librarians who perceive their organizations to be relatively stable. Also, librarians who perceive their organizations to be in a state of transition or change feel they are less sensitive to the needs of nontraditional students than those librarians who perceive their organizations to be relatively stable.

The more critical view taken by librarians toward the service provided nontraditional students, as well as individual and institutional sensitivity toward nontraditional students, as they move through organizational change can be explained and substantiated by organizational development literature. The first step of Lewin's (1958) process of organizational change or transition is the unfreezing of present behavior. Part of the process of unfreezing behavior involves the analysis and study of the organization itself. Rubin (1967) cites sensitivity training as an example of this analysis. Blake, Mouton, Barnes, and Greiner (1964) and Shepard (1960) illustrate

this beginning of organizational change as a series of management training sessions. Bowers (1973) and Nadler (1977) cited the use of data feedback from surveys to identify problems in the managerial process of organizations.

It is clear that as individuals begin to move through organizational change, they begin to rethink and critically analyze the operation of the organization. Through this rethinking and analysis, problems and shortcomings are identified within the organizations which then initiate the second step of Lewin's (1958) process of organizational change. The second step involves the action which will actually change the organization from its original level of behavior or operation to a new level.

It is also clear from this research that academic librarians involved in organizational change are rethinking and analyzing the operation of their library. As a result of this rethinking and analysis, they are more knowledgeable and, therefore, more critical of services provided to populations served by the library.

According to the results of this research, academic librarians involved in the process of organizational change are more critical of the service provided to nontraditional students as compared to academic librarians employed in organizationally stable environments. This behavior is consistent with findings in organizational literature.

Recommendations

The findings of this research suggest further study. Further research should involve the nontraditional student population. It would be useful to survey the nontraditional student population concerning their perceptions of library service and sensitivity. It would be interesting to compare the results of this research with studies identifying the perceptions of nontraditional students.

Further research should be directed at other areas of library services. Further research could be directed toward analyzing a wide variety of library services in light of organizational stability and change. For example, academic cataloging librarians could be surveyed concerning their perceived satisfaction with their work and procedures. Based on this research, one hypothesis would state that academic cataloging librarians involved in organizational change would be less satisfied and more critical of their work and procedures compared to academic cataloging librarians employed in organizationally stable environments.

Another example could involve reference service provided graduate students. Academic reference librarians could be surveyed concerning their perceived satisfaction with service provided graduate students. Based on this research, one hypothesis would state that academic reference librarians involved in organizational change would be less satisfied and more critical of service provided to graduate

students compared to academic reference librarians employed in organizationally stable environments.

In addition to further formal research, academic librarians should utilize the results of this study to improve service not only to nontraditional students but to their entire university community. As stated above, a characteristic of organizational transition is the critical study and evaluation of the present state of operation. Through this critical study and evaluation, service and policy assumptions are examined. Assumptions once considered acceptable are reexamined. Part of the critical study and evaluation should involve efforts to learn more about the various populations which comprise the university community. Through this type of investigation, academic librarians may be able to respond more effectively to the needs of all the library's patrons.

Based on the results of this research, academic librarians should continuously review and examine policies and procedures for relevance and currency. Based on this research, policy and service examination could reveal deficiencies and shortcomings. The results of this research suggest that satisfaction with present library services may be unfounded. The results of this research suggest the critical analysis and evaluation of present library service might reveal opportunities for improvement. Academic librarians, through formal research and continuous examination of operating policies and procedures, will

continue to improve service to all library patrons.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Survey Instrument

Appendix A

Survey Instrument

1. Institutions, including libraries, go through periods of transition. Indicators of these states of transition could involve changes in organizational structure, library systems introduction or migration, high levels of personnel turnover, institutional mission shifts, levels of funding, etc. Please check the statement below which best describes your library's present situation:

 Our library is at a point of stability. We are maintaining and fine tuning services, functions, and/or policies but we are not involved in a major transition at this time.

 Our library is at the beginning of transition. We have started the process of change.

 Our library is in the middle of transition. Previous services, functions, and/or policies are being revised or discarded while new directions are taking form.

 Our library is exiting this transition period. New or revised services, policies and/or functions are being implemented and the library is beginning to stabilize.

2. If your library is in a state of transition, what are its indicators?

3. During what year(s) did the last major transition occur in your library?

4. What were the indicators of the last major transition?

5. Please check the following service points or offices within your library which are accessed by nontraditional students. (Indicate 'NA' if your library does not have a particular service point or office.)

Reference/Information Desk	_____
Circulation Desk	_____
Fines/Change Desk	_____
Dean's/Directors Office	_____

6. Please check the statements below which best describe the accessibility by nontraditional students to those service points or offices indicated above:

Reference/Information Desk

_____accessibility could be improved with minor changes

_____accessibility is appropriate

_____accessibility needs to be greatly improved

Circulation Desk

_____accessibility could be improved with minor changes

_____accessibility is appropriate

_____accessibility needs to be greatly improved

Fines/Change Desk

_____accessibility could be improved with minor changes

_____accessibility is appropriate

_____accessibility needs to be greatly improved

Dean's/Director's Office

_____accessibility could be improved with minor changes

_____accessibility is appropriate

_____accessibility needs to be greatly improved

8. Please identify any training you have had which focuses on nontraditional students, i.e. courses, workshops, readings:

Yes **No**

11. What services have been specifically designed for nontraditional students at your library?

12. What services and/or innovations, while not specifically designed for nontraditional students, have been implemented at your library which could be utilized to meet the needs of nontraditional students?

13. Assuming no additional library staff are available, would you reassign personnel to other areas not adequately staffed by the present organizational structure?

____ Yes ____ No

14. If yes, in what areas would you reassign staff?

15. How supportive of nontraditional students is your university?

1	2	3	4	5
Not Supportive				Supportive

16. Please describe the reasons or rationale for your response to the previous question:

Please return the completed survey in the included, pre-addressed envelope. Once again, thank you for helping in this research effort.

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument Cover Letter

APPENDIX B

Survey Instrument Cover Letter

October, 1995

Dear Colleague:

I need your help in conducting research directed toward identifying the present level of support and commitment provided by professional academic librarians toward nontraditional students. I have chosen to survey academic librarians on staff at Mid-American universities.

For the purposes of this study and questionnaire, the operational definition of the nontraditional student population are those college and university students beyond the eighteen to twenty-five year old age range. I would appreciate your assistance in this study of nontraditional students and academic libraries by completing the attached questionnaire.

Your responses to the questionnaire will be kept anonymous. Accordingly, please separately mail the included pre-addressed postcard when you have completed and mailed the questionnaire.

Your participation in this study is completely voluntary and you indicate your voluntary agreement to participate by completing and returning this questionnaire.

Completion of the questionnaire will require about 15 minutes of your time. Please use the enclosed pre-addressed envelope to return the questionnaire. Your prompt reply is important to the success of this study. Please return the completed questionnaire by

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Sincerely,

Chris Miko

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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