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ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBUNITS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY USING CAMERON'S DIMENSION CALLED ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

The Ohio State University

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ASSESSING ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS IN CONTINUING EDUCATION SUBUNITS: A PRELIMINARY STUDY USING CAMERON'S DIMENSION CALLED ORGANIZATIONAL HEALTH

DISSERTATION

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree Doctor of Philosophy in the Graduate School of The Ohio State University

By

Dana B. Ciccone, B.S.J., M.A.

* * * * *

The Ohio State University

1986

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS .................................................... iii

VITA ........................................................................ iv

LIST OF TABLES ................................................... vii

LIST OF FIGURES ................................................... vii

CHAPTER PAGE

## I. INTRODUCTION

The Significance of Continuing Education .................... 1

Needs of the Non-traditional Student ......................... 3

Organizational Dissimilarity and Effectiveness

Criteria ......................................................... 4

Effectiveness Considerations in Higher Education

Organizations .................................................... 7

Organizational Considerations ................................ 9

The Aspects of Effectiveness .................................. 13

The Nature of Higher Education ............................... 17

The Study of Continuing Education Subunits ............... 20

Problem Statement ........................................... 21

Purposes of the Study ........................................ 22

Objectives of the Study: Research Questions ............... 24

Limitations of the Study ..................................... 25

Definition of Terms .......................................... 26

Summary ......................................................... 27

## II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction .................................................... 29

Organizational Systems ....................................... 31

Evaluating Effectiveness ...................................... 42

Brief History of Continuing Education ..................... 52

Program Organization ....................................... 60

Summary ......................................................... 62

## III. METHODOLOGY

Study Description ............................................. 63

Procedure ...................................................... 65

The Instrument ................................................ 65

The Participants ............................................. 69

Study Administration ......................................... 70
# TABLE OF CONTENTS--(Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHAPTER</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Procedure</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Analysis</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V. FINDINGS: IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings: General Trends</td>
<td>87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings: Internal Conditions</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings: External Environment</td>
<td>90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Findings: Organizational Structure</td>
<td>91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implications of the Factor Analysis</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recommendations</td>
<td>94</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>APPENDIX A</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LIST OF REFERENCES</td>
<td>101</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Means and standard deviations of twenty-four original variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Correlation coefficients of twenty-four original variables</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Communality values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Eigenvalues</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Factor matrix</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

LIST OF FIGURES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>FIGURE</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Scree test</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
CHAPTER I. INTRODUCTION

The Significance of Continuing Education

The commitment to education as a lifelong project has increasingly become a major endeavor for colleges and universities. The definitions, goals, purposes and structures surrounding this project have undergone significant changes in the last decade. The advancing age of students, the increased demands of technology and the diminishing resource pool for higher education in general have all played major roles in this change.

Students are coming to school for a variety of reasons that are more complex than those of previous generations. The complexity of demand placed upon higher education reflects the growing complexity of contemporary society. No longer is it sufficient to train once for a lifetime career. Constant technological advancement and change require that an individual follow a career training path that includes perpetual updating of skills in order to remain viable. Jobs are constantly being created and abandoned as the demands of society and technology shift. Individuals must be able to respond to change in the work environment in order to remain in the work force. They must be able to learn new competencies and skills at the same time that they are contributing to the productivity of the work force. For these students, the continuing education subunits of colleges and universities provide a solution to the challenge that they face as
they attempt to deal with change in the work place and in their professional development.

In 1947 the President's Commission on Higher Education noted that the education of adults was an important mission for higher education. Beginning in the forties and increasing with alacrity into the seventies, adult enrollment has become in this decade a very important segment of the mission of higher education.

As Cohen and Brawer (1982) note, "... continuing education was the learning effort of people whose principle occupations were no longer as students" (p. 256). While this continues to be true in the broadest sense, the increased demand for technological expertise and education has served to intensify this \textit{vital} of the adult student. The importance of education to non-traditional students has taken the form of pressure from companies and employers on the individual to incorporate education into their occupational ethic.

As the economic system upon which the national health is based becomes more complex, businesses and schools are finding it essential to adapt to its changing demands. The individual employee, as an essential resource is focused upon and required to demonstrate professional growth and flexibility. Lifelong learning and career education are the results of these demands.

In addition to these overt kinds of pressure placed upon the individual, there is another kind of impetus toward continued learning for the adult student. It is the need of the individual to satisfy a personal demand for growth. This need is intensified by the requirements placed upon the individual as a result of technologi-
cal and economic change. Personal need for lifelong education remains, but has taken a back seat to a series of imperatives placed on the non-traditional student. The social and economic imperative for adaptation is characterized by the currency of its constantly changing technological nature.

Needs of the Non-traditional Student

The responses of higher education to the needs of the non-traditional student have historically been varied. Depending on environmental factors, the structures designed to meet the demands of adult non-traditional students resist categorization. Factors involving funding, size of parent organization, mission, legal requirements and type of student body existing in the environment of the organization, have caused the development of specialized responses to the educational needs of adult students.

Non-traditional adult students exhibit varied needs for educational services which are often different from those of the traditional student. The adult student typically has responsibilities such as family obligations to evaluate along with their decision to continue their education. In like manner, the obligations of work are of prime importance. Due to the wide variety of special needs which the complex life of the non-traditional student exhibits, the organizational response of higher education organizations has been varied. Among the institutional responses some have elaborate extension programs which can offer the student a chance to earn a degree without ever setting foot on the campus of the home institution. Others provide degree programs which are available through correspond-
ence, so that the student need never leave the comfort of the home. Still others take education to the work site so that the student with the desire can advance professionally as well as educationally on the same site. Other programs offered by continuing education organizations are more traditional in that they make available to students the regular programs of the university of which it is part. Finally, there are programs which combine these approaches to addressing the needs of non-traditional learners in a myriad of ways that exhibit themselves in a variety of different program offerings.

Organizational Dissimilarity and Effectiveness Criteria

Continuing education subunits are in many cases self-supporting, but are also found in settings in which they derive significant amounts of resources from the larger university organization of which they are a part. Patterns of management and governance also resist categorization. Some continuing education units are governed through the mechanisms of the larger university body. Some have their own governance structures. Some have varying degrees of both of these. As educational delivery systems, these units reflect the specialized responses of individual organizations to special environmental circumstances.

In this way, they exhibit themselves as paradoxical organizations. On one hand they reflect a specialized response in structure and style to specialized environmental demands. On the other hand they defy analysis except on individual bases. The problem is then how to compare organizations with dissimilar structures against a meaningful set of criteria.
Structurally, these organizations differ across a governance spectrum that is too varied to lend itself easily to comparisons. However, it becomes essential to realize that no matter what the physical aspects of the organization, there is still the requirement that they operate as effective and efficient groups. The health and survival of an organization depend upon its ability to address these requirements.

Perhaps the most useful way to approach the problem of dissimilarity among continuing education subunits is to consider the common organizational outcomes that they share. Because these subunits exist within a larger organization, they are all responsible to a larger governing structure of the college or university for rules of administration. But they also share a second type of responsibility. They are all accountable not only to the parent organization, but also to the public which exists beyond the boundaries of the parent organization. The imperative for productivity felt by continuing education subunits is no less than that felt by businesses or corporations. And while it may be different in kind from the demands for effectiveness and efficiency indigenous to the business sector, it is similar in degree in that the prime directive is to make the most of raw materials and processes of production. The outcomes for both continuing education subunits as well as for organizations found in the business sector describe group processes that can garner resources from the environment in order to produce the kinds of products demanded by it.
Groups organize in order to accomplish specified ends in ways that are more effective than through individual effort (Thompson, 1967). The mobilization of resources to accomplish these goals creates patterns of response that will allow continued interaction with the environment, that is useful to the organization. According to Mott (1972), the result of this interaction is productivity. The idea that end products of organizational activity are vital to the organizational life of the producing group is the basis of open systems theory of organizing (Scott, 1981). Key to understanding the implications of this theory of organization is the idea that raw materials from the environment must first be identified and claimed by the organization before they can be processed and changed into outputs. The ability to process raw material is the key to survival of organizations.

Mott (1972) identifies this kind of process of production as one in which the organization is able to arrange its resources in such a way as to create the demanded output. Imbedded in this definition is the necessary ability of the organization to possess the skill of adaptability. This organizational characteristic is spoken of by Hedberg et al. (1976), as the flexibility needed by an organization to survive with its organizational tent pitched on the end of an environmental seesaw. It is the ability of an organization to enact change in its programs of production (Mott, 1972) that characterizes a current operational imperative for higher education organizations. This imperative requires that such organizations be able to enact change in the midst of a fluid and uncertain environment.
The continuing education subunit of the university is intrinsically involved in responding to changes demanded by the environment because its resource base depends on its ability to respond to demands made upon the educational organization by the community in which the college or university exists.

Effectiveness Considerations in Higher Educational Organizations

As Cameron (1978) notes, the problem of defining the meaning of organizational effectiveness is a difficult one. Determining how to define and measure this construct in the higher education framework is an even more complex matter. This is due in part to several specialized aspects of higher education organizations. Those aspects, broadly categorized, are three in number.

First, Thompson (1967) identifies the kind of technology used to produce the output of higher education as being "intensive" (p. 90), meaning highly specialized. In context, the way things are accomplished in higher education organizations reflects the highly specialized, interconnected and complex set of relationships that exist within the technical core of the organization. In this case, the core is considered to be the site within the organization where the process of education takes place, that is, the classroom.

Meyer and Rowan (1975) identify the second problematic aspect of higher education organizations. They define a concept labeled as "loosely coupled systems," which refers to the relationship between organizational structure and policy and the process of education. This looseness between official educational policy and what actually
occurs in the classroom exists, they note, due to traditional ideas regarding the proper way to conduct educational processes, as well as a belief in the inveterate correctness of the licensed and educated professional teachers.

The third aspect of the difficulty in defining organizational effectiveness in higher education organizations is the responsibility that these organizations have to a wide range of groups outside their organizational boundaries. Parents, legislators, alumni, and the federal government all have significant power that influences how and what kind of organizational decisions are made in higher education. The continuing education subunit is particularly sensitive to this kind of extensive extra-organizational accountability. It usually exists as a bridge between the technical core of the university and the organizational environment. In this role it operates as a link between the university and the community. Because of this, its mission usually encompasses responsibility for meeting the needs of non-traditional students whose life experiences include such complex issues as professional development, job security, and financial stability. In accomplishing this mission, the desires of the community are extremely powerful in determining the organizational response of the unit. Because of the position of continuing education subunits as boundary spanners (Scott, 1981), of higher education

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1The technical core of the university is defined by Scott (1981), Thompson (1967), and others as being the professorial staff engaged in teaching and research within a college or university.

2Boundary spanners are defined by Scott as activities of organization groups that provide for the "importing energy from the environment" by which the organization renews itself.
organizations, and because of the accentuated demands for accountability placed on them by the environment, organizational effectiveness becomes a particularly important issue.

Organizational Considerations

Almost a half century ago, Chester Barnard (1938) identified the components of organizations this way: "The elements of an organization are therefore (1) communication, (2) willingness to serve (by the members), and (3) common purpose" (p. 45). In short, organizations are groups of individuals willing to come together to accomplish a common purpose. The way in which that joining of individual wills comes about begins with the willingness to combine, and the ability to communicate that willingness to others. Parsons (1960) simplified this approach to understanding basis of organizations by noting that organizations exist in a social sense. Organizations are the way in which society accomplishes what is seen as necessary for its continued survival and health. The nature of this positive state of accomplishment influences the methodologies by which those ends deemed beneficial are achieved.

Ancient civilizations were not as complex as the social systems today. Goals were more easily identified, and accomplished by simpler methods. The smallness of the basic social structure, the limited nature of work tasks, the primitive state of technology all combined to make ancient organizations relatively simple by comparison. Thompson (1967) identifies the phenomena by which an organization goes about accomplishing its goal as technology. Simple, limited environments called for simple organizational technologies
in order to accomplish their ends. The cellular family, the tribe, the clan, the city state, were all relatively simple organizations, with a limited number of tasks to accomplish by which to ensure continued existence.

As environments became more complex over time (due to the demands made upon them through increased population, improvements in tools and machines, and mastery of basic forms of economics and governance), the methodologies through which the social organizations accomplished their ends became more complex. The charismatic leader was no longer able to hold and motivate the commitment of individuals to a common cause. The problematic nature of progress demanded that more and more time be spent on solving new and more complex algorithms of existence. Less time needed to be devoted to rebuilding structures and technologies to deal with recurring basic environmental demands on societies and their organizations. The emphasis focused on addressing the new problems that began within social systems as they became larger and more complex.

What was necessary was a common set of structures that could be passed down from generation to generation. These would provide a common systematic response to the basic demands of the environment. The identification of a formal structure, and set of procedures with which to deal with the continuation of social organizational needs was the answer to this need.

With the acceleration of technologies and the complication of social demands, the period of time from the middle of the last century until the present has become the most fertile one within which to
examine the concept of organizations and their usefulness. Weber's work on the bureaucracy of the German postal service, translated into English in 1947, can be said to be a strong base for intellectual examination of the functioning of organizations in the modern world. The definition which Weber placed on the concept of bureaucracy as being at the heart of effective organizational ability of a social system, stands as the definitive beginning of the study of organizations. The foundation established by Weber for the understanding of the structure and functioning of organizations provides a strong base from which organizational theory and the study of effectiveness in organizations has originated.

The Weberian concepts of organizational bureaucracy that include: strict division of labor, hierarchial authority of office, specific procedures, personnel selection based on technical ability, strict separation of personal and company property, and the consideration of employment by the organization as a vocation; provide the basis for understanding and evaluating the phenomenon of the modern organization. This rational approach to understanding the nature of organizations was exhibited in the Scientific Management school of organizational theory. Taylor and Fayol early in the twentieth century pioneered this method of examining organizations. Time and motion studies were the primary example of this type of approach to efficient management of organizations.

In the 1930's Roethlisberger and Dickson, as a result of the now famous Western Electric studies, laid the foundation for what was to be a more evolved state of organizational evaluation. Recognition
of the importance of the informal processes of organizations was accomplished. The structural approach to the understanding of organizations, and what made them function best, evolved into the recognition of the informal processes as being of significance to whether or not a group accomplished its goals. Emphasis of study passed from the formal structure and its impersonal nature, to rest on examining the personal and informal mechanisms indigenous to organizations as being key to evaluation of organizational processes. The Human Relations School of Management theory developed by Mayo (1945) most highly exemplified this trend in management evaluation and organizational study.

Scott (1981) notes, "... as we progress from simple to complex systems, the nature of the various 'flows' among the system elements and between the system and its environment change" (p. 103). In the late fifties and sixties the view of organizations embodied in this statement began to take shape in a concept understood as an open systems model of organization.

The dynamics inherent in this model reflect the rise of systems theory as a scientific methodology for inquiry into scientific and social phenomena. Organizations began to be examined as systems which not only used energy in the form of resources from the environment, but also created energy as product outputs usable within the environment in which they functioned. The simple understanding of structures whether formal or informal gave way to the realization that organizations were the expression of the very dynamics of a complex modern world. No longer could they be understood to be as
independent entities operating within the boundaries which they established for themselves. Structure, informal processes and procedures, and new technologies utilized to accomplish desired ends, were seen to be all part of a larger systemic design. That design responded to the demands of the environment for its shape, ends and methodologies of production.

As the view of organizations changed, the question of how well they were accomplishing their tasks also changed. The number of widgets produced as the result of production changes brought about through the time motion studies of the Scientific Management approach to evaluation was no longer a significant way to determine organizational effectiveness. The criteria of effectiveness began to shift to the realm of process evaluation rather than counting of outputs. The definition of organizational goals began to be seen as those activities which would allow for the continuation of healthy organizations. Educational organizations, having the same or greater requirements for effective operation as those groups in the business sector, also began to be evaluated from this point of view.

The Aspects of Effectiveness

Viewing organizational effectiveness as a construct presents several problems for the researcher. Which criteria will serve as indicators for the organizational measurement of effectiveness? Will the same set of indicators which identify measures of effectiveness for the organization as a whole also be the same as those for an organizational subunit? Will the nature of the criteria be normative
or descriptive? Which model of organizational processes will be used as a foundation for the determination of effectiveness criteria?

Cameron (1978) addresses this problem in detail by examining the possible organizational models which have been used to explain the operations of organizations. The rational, goal-centered model first described in the work of Weber (trans. 1947) and exemplified in the tenets of the Scientific Management school of organization theory, seems to have given way to more fluid systems of evaluating the processes of organizations.

Hoy and Miskel (1984) note that one significant measure of the ability of an organization to be effective is its ability to secure and make advantageous use of scarce environmental resources. While this is an appealing approach to identifying which organizations are healthy within the uncertain environment of education, it can be said that this is a variation on the goal-centered measurements of effectiveness.

It is the process by which this occurs that is at the heart of the matter. Steers (1979) expands on this point by interjecting the concepts of open systems theory into the dialogue of effectiveness. Katz and Kahn (1966) and others define organizations as systems of relationships that exist between and among organizational variables and environmental factors. This approach presents the most complete response to the problem of defining criteria with which to express the construct of effectiveness. It is a model that consists of three parts. They are: resources gleaned from the environment (inputs), processes of transformation (throughputs), and products useful to the environment (outputs).
The second aspect of arriving at a successful delineation of the effectiveness construct has to do with the level of examination of the organization under investigation. Thompson (1967) identifies the concept of task domain as important to the complete understanding of the relationship which an organization has with the environment in which it exists. Cameron (1978) echoes this in his use of the term "effectiveness domain." These concepts refer to the ability of any organization to effectively carry out the process by which it survives and grows. To do this it is necessary for the organization to determine how it stands in relationship to its surrounding environment.

The organization as a whole, while sharing some broad processes of resource acquisition, transformation and output production, does not reflect as well as the organizational subunit itself the particular demand relationship that the smaller group shares with its immediate environment. In order to explicate the construct of effectiveness, the particular level of examination must be identified (Cameron, 1978). What is useful and effective for assessing a smaller unit within the parent organization may be only tangential to that same kind of evaluation of the organization as a whole.

A third aspect of evaluation that relates to the question of assessing organizational effectiveness has to do with the nature of the criteria used in this process. Those aspects of evaluation that are useful in sustaining a viable construct of effectiveness for an organization can either come from definitions of what is significant for an organization, or from what should be significant for organizational effectiveness.
If we are to examine the organizational subunit in terms of its effectiveness against a backdrop of open systems theory, it becomes meaningless for that examination to be prescriptive. Because the goals and processes are intimately tied up with the particular flow of energy inputs from the environment, the flow of relationships that exist between the organization and its environment will by definition be particular to that organization. Therefore investigation along this line may be better served by descriptive rather than normative criteria.

Finally, if organizational effectiveness is to be assessed from the standpoint of fluidity of open systems theory, time must be a consideration. This consideration is especially important for assessment of higher education organizations. As organizations, these units exhibit in their very nature fluidity in goal setting, specialization in technologies and participation in decision making by the group members. Cohen and March (1974) identified these elements as creating for the organization an interactive state of "organizational anarchy" (p. 90).

If these three problematic aspects of defining effectiveness criteria are closely examined, the difficulty of explicating organizational effectiveness becomes more complex. However, if the question of evaluation is approached with these relevant aspects in mind, the process of evaluation can become one which will have as its result a more dynamic than stationary set of criteria.

The continuing education subunit is the prime example of an organizational group within the higher education framework that has
as a primary characteristic of its environment activity, the exchange of energy inputs and outputs between an organization and its environment. These subunits are in constant interaction with other groups that surround them.

As was noted earlier, both the parent organization and the external public have differing sets of demands which they place on the continuing education subunit. This organization truly lives on the end of Hedberg's et al. (1976) organizational "seesaw" (p. 41). The interaction of this subunit reflects the interaction of the larger university in concentrated miniature as the university attempts to deal with problems of accountability, resource acquisition, effective programming and problems of governance.

The Nature of Higher Education

Assessment of higher education organizations is problematic due to diversity and differentiation among those organizations brought about by the nature of some fundamental relationships that exist with external and internal environments. These relationships affect organizational structure, technologies and goals. It is the ambiguity created by this interaction which makes these organizations particularly challenging as subjects for the study of organizational effectiveness.

Higher education organizations while exhibiting characteristics of open systems also contain within themselves the same rational, bureaucratic structures identified by Weber (trans. 1947). These organizations are a curious amalgam of looseness and bureaucratic
structure; of fluidity and strictly ordered relationships; of professional independence and hierarchic governance.

Weick (1976) identified the fluid nature of higher education as that of "loosely coupled systems" (p. 1). This characterization of higher education organizations has as its basis an understanding of organizational relationships that exist in loose contingency to one another and the environment through a system of criteria which divorce structure from function. According to this model, what goes on in the classroom occurs in relative isolation from the formal processes of organizational structures. Due to what Meyer and Rowan (1975) identify as a "myth of professionalism," the activity of teaching is assumed to occur in an effective manner without organizational monitoring (p. 3). This "logic of confidence" (p. 7) assumes teachers to be completely effective due to the considerable training which they have undergone in order to become teaching professionals. Thus the relationship between the technical core (the teaching function) and the managerial/administrative group (the administrative function) is one characterized by a looseness uncommon in other organizations outside of the educational framework.

Another example of how higher education organizations differ from other groups is related to the factors and processes involved in decision making. Cohen, March and Olsen (1972) address the problem of evaluation of organizations that are unsure of their goals. This phenomenon consists of unclear goals that are to be accomplished through the use of ambiguous technologies by a changing group of actors who participate in making the relevant decision. March and
Olsen (1976) characterize the decision-making process of higher education organizations as being that of a "garbage can" (p. 3), into which decisions, problems and participants are all thrown. Within the environment of the higher education organization, this mix is constantly churning so that the problem which appears to have been solved today will resurface at some future time. It will be acted upon by a different set of actors, that arrive at a different solution and carry it out using another method.

Although these characteristics of higher education organizations make them difficult to evaluate on some common basis, all of these organizations have some important commonalities in structure, technology and goals, that cause the question of effectiveness to become meaningful as a categorical inquiry. Most prominent among the common characteristics is the reliance on hierarchical structures of administration to mediate with the external environment for the organization as a whole, and the technical core (the faculty) in particular (Thompson, 1967). Similarity of structure across the spectrum of higher education organizations also lends these groups to examination regarding their effectiveness as organizations. But perhaps the most significant reason for addressing the common question of organizational effectiveness comes from the particular demands of accountability which these organizations incur due to the place which they occupy in our social structure. Legislatures, taxpayers, administrative regulatory agencies and alumni all have significant power over higher education organizations. This power takes the form of resource control. Higher education organizations are held accountable to these
groups because it is these groups that have great control of the resources which the organization needs for its survival. Due to the general dwindling of resources for higher education that has occurred over the last fifteen years, it is this framework of external publics which have begun to prescribe common goals, technologies and structures for higher education organizations. This prescription calls for effectiveness and efficiency in execution not only for the organization as a whole, but for the organizational subunits as well. Thus the study of subunits such as the continuing education group is justified even though a great deal of indigenous ambiguity exists relative to organizational practices.

The Study of Continuing Education Subunits

Continuing education subunits are particularly exemplary of the organizational characteristics of higher education organizations. As was mentioned earlier, they are held accountable to two general classes of extra-organizational demands. The first comes from the parent organization. The administrative demands placed on the subunit by this larger organizational structure require adherence to procedures and specific goals if the subunit is to continue to exist in its particular relation to the parent organization.

The second comes from the external environment characterized by students, taxpayers, businesses and community needs. What is required from the organization by these groups can be seen as being different from the administrative demands emanating from the parent organization. Flexibility, entrepreneurial resource acquisition and
sensitivity to changing educational demands of the community characterize the organizational responses of the continuing education subunit to these groups.

These differing classes of organizational demands create for the continuing education subunit an intriguing dilemma. It is this dilemma that makes these organizations particularly useful in investigating the topic of effectiveness. The demand placed on continuing education subunits calls for effective responses that mirror the spectrum of demands placed on higher education organizations in general.

There are three justifications for this study. The first is to identify through a process of validating some criteria by which organizations such as the one under study can be assessed on their ability to operate as competent educational delivery systems. The second is to contribute to the literature of continuing education significant data which may help to further define this kind of educational endeavor as an independent organizational entity worthy of additional study. The third is perhaps the most significant. Educational organizations which can place some definitions on what effectiveness is for them in their particular setting, have the best chance of meeting the needs of their clients. The results of this study will aid continuing education subunits in assessing the criteria of effectiveness as it applies to them, and thus help them to respond to the needs of their clients more effectively.

Problem Statement

The research under consideration is that of validating some possible factors of effectiveness which can be used by continuing
education subunits to assess how well they may function as educational delivery systems.

Cameron (1978) has identified several clusters of variables which contain within themselves profiles of significant issues to be examined when measuring effectiveness in higher education organizations. However, the special characteristics of continuing education subunits as they respond to differing environmental demands for rationality as well as flexibility demand further investigation. Characteristics mentioned earlier such as high demand for accountability and visibility of the unit in the community, complicate the investigation and require more study.

**Purposes of the Study**

The research study has three purposes. They are: acquisition of information, generation of knowledge, and making that knowledge available for dissemination.

In pursuing the goal of assessing what factors are valuable in determining effectiveness of continuing education subunits, the perceptions that organizational leaders hold regarding these matters will be of primary importance. How organizational leaders regard criteria of effectiveness and how those criteria are expressed in an organizational context will serve as the modus operandi for the gathering of information relating to this investigation.

The first purpose of this study, acquisition of information, will focus on evaluating the factors suggested by the literature as being relevant in assessing effectiveness in higher education. An instrument developed by Cameron (1978) addresses the evaluation of
factors of effectiveness for higher education organizations. This instrument will be adapted for use to reflect this special application to continuing education subunits.

The information gathered will be based on the perceptions of organizational leaders of the groups under study. This approach to gathering the information will produce, in an efficient way, a range of evaluations for continuing education groups. It will present in a manageable and parsimonious manner a base line from which organizational effectiveness can be analyzed.

The second purpose of the study will be the production of knowledge that will be useful in assessing the effectiveness of continuing education subunits. The information gathered in accomplishing the first purpose of the study will generate some conclusions regarding the nature and structure of the criteria of effectiveness that will be useful in evaluating continuing education subunits.

Knowledge will be produced in the following manner. Analysis of the data will be performed in such a way as to test validity of the instrument in the continuing education setting. The data will come from responses to questions representing several dimensions of effectiveness that have been previously identified in the literature. The purpose will be to determine if the survey instrument can be shown to be useful in the more specialized setting of continuing education subunits of higher education organizations.

The third purpose of the study will be to make available for dissemination the information gathered to practitioners. The usefulness of data is particularly significant to continuing education
managers. If the usefulness of the instrument which is proposed holds under the particular conditions of a specialized higher education organization, then it will provide practitioners some viewpoints from which to assess effectiveness in their organizations.

The ability of administrators to assess effectiveness of their organizations is established largely due to the kind and quality of information available to them. It is anticipated that the findings of this study will continue to expand and refine that capability while at the same time adding to the literature relating to the assessment of effectiveness of higher education organizations.

Objectives of the Study: Research Questions

The purpose of the study as defined above will be achieved by meeting these objectives: (1) to describe special characteristics of continuing education subunits as organizations responding to environmental demands, (2) to identify and use for evaluation purposes special characteristics of the academic and community environments in which continuing education groups exist, (3) to evaluate some of the existing information regarding dimensions of effectiveness relevant to assessing higher education organizations within the framework of continuing education subunits.

The research objectives of the study will be met by determining answers to the research questions listed below:

1. What are the significant characteristics of continuing education subunits that distinguish them as organizations from among other kinds of higher education units?
2. What are the dimensions of effectiveness for higher education organizations suggested by the literature?

3. Which of the dimensions of effectiveness for higher education organizations are most relevant to the specialized environment and processes of continuing education subunits?

4. Are the dimensions of effectiveness useful in assessing effectiveness in larger, higher education organizations significant when applied to continuing education subunits?

Limitations of the Study

An investigation such as the one in question carries with it certain limitations which are beyond the control of the researcher. While the researcher may identify an appropriate research design and select a sample that is thought to be representative of the population, there are certain qualities of that population for which the researcher cannot control.

In this study a major limitation is one relating to the size of the continuing education subunit and how the governance of that unit is tied to the parent organization. Some continuing education subunits are self-governing, some are only partially so. This relationship of governance between the subunit and the parent organization is a variable which may affect the results of the study, and which cannot be controlled.

An additional limitation is one which has to deal with the size of both the continuing education subunit and the parent organization. The larger the organization and subunit, the smaller the real
span of control which individual administrative leaders can exert over those units. The limiting effect of this reality is that the responses which are generated by these individuals may not be entirely reflective of the true state of operations within the organizational subunit.

A third limitation which is related to the second is that the responses of those persons selected to perform the evaluation requested by the survey may not accurately reflect the actual case of operations within the rank and file of the organizational subunit. That is, the responses given by leaders may be only more or less accurately reflective of things as they really exist for the subunit.

Therefore, there are three major limitations to a study of this nature. They are concerned with: (1) governance patterns and the variance of these as they exist between the continuing education subunit and the parent organization, (2) the size of the organization and the corresponding subunit which may affect the span of control of responding individuals and thus affect the responses that they give to the survey, and (3) the validity of responses given by individual respondents as those responses are related to what is really happening at the front line of the continuing education subunit.

Definition of Terms

In discussing the concept of organizational effectiveness it should be noted that there is no system of formulae that will produce for us a set of criteria that will define organizational effectiveness. It becomes a necessity for the behavioral scientist who wishes to examine this variable to look at the processes involved which allow
organizations to achieve some sort of effectiveness. For the purposes of this study, the following definitions will be used:

**Organizational Effectiveness:** This is the ability of an organization to achieve the processes it determines are significant for fulfillment of its mission.

**Continuing Education Subunits:** The organizational designation for the group within the larger university that is primarily responsible for providing educational opportunities for adult, non-traditional students. Of primary concern for this study are the programs that provide credit opportunities for students as opposed to those noncredit programs which may be part of the mission and structure of the continuing education subunit.

**Non-traditional Students:** Those students who are enrolled in the credit programs offered through continuing education subunits of colleges and universities. For this study non-traditional students will be over twenty-two years of age, may have a college degree, or have had an hiatus in their education of two or more consecutive years.

**Organizational Leaders:** The individuals who are at or near the top of their organization. These persons hold titles of "dean" or "director."

**Summary**

This chapter has presented the basic research problem. That problem is to attempt to determine validity of a set of evaluative
criteria set out by Cameron (1978), as those criteria apply to the continuing education subunit of universities. The purpose is to create a useful body of knowledge by which continuing education subunits might be evaluated for effectiveness as organizational subunits.
CHAPTER II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Introduction

The literature relevant to the study of effectiveness assessment in continuing education subunits is found at the intersection of several bodies of work. Those groups of readings are: (1) the literature on organizational systems theory, (2) the literature on organizational effectiveness as it relates to educational organizations, and (3) the literature on continuing education. Included in less major ways are parts of the bodies of literature relating to governance in higher education organizations, and the literature relating to problems of satisfaction and motivation among organizational participants.

These three major and two minor areas of readings combine to present a body of literature that has very little replication in existing research. The work of Cameron (1978) acted as a primary influence during the germination of this study. As a seminal study into the measurement of effectiveness within higher education organizations, this work presented in great detail a process by which it seemed possible to address the questions of effectiveness assessment in the particular kinds of organizations that exist within the framework of higher education.

The literature relevant to organizational systems theory deals with structuring an understanding of organizations that begins with
basic bureaucratic structures and advances through natural systems presentations of organizational processes, culminating in a description of the outlines of open systems theory. This literature serves as a basis for understanding the theoretical issues surrounding such questions as how structure relates to technology in organizational systems.

The literature of organizational effectiveness as that concept relates to educational organizations deals with questions of identification, measurement, and basic definitions of terms. The usefulness of educational organizations of being able to perform this kind of evaluation comprises a large part of this body of work.

The literature relating to continuing education as a management problem has two major emphases. The first is that of examining governance issues of these kinds of subunits of larger, higher education organizations. Considerations relating to funding patterns, academic status within the larger university setting, and resource control problems are discussed throughout this body of literature. There is also some consideration given to the recent expansion of the functions of continuing education subunits as the average age of students increases.

Throughout the discussion of the literature it should be noted that significant amounts of literature come from work done by investigators of effectiveness considerations in the business arena (Steers, 79; Mott, 72). The significance of this work to the study at hand is that of transference of concepts and investigative formats from the business sector applications to that of higher education.
Business concerns in the private sector have always had to deal with the problems of effectiveness. Organizational behaviorists and theoreticians have attempted to identify and measure characteristics and processes that comprise effective organizational practice (Mott, 72; Steers, 79). With the recent demand placed upon educational organizations by a diminished resource pool, and a correspondent demand for accountability, it seems appropriate to examine and adapt the processes of the former area to the task of attacking the problem of the later area. While recognizing that higher education operates in a different environment than do business concerns (Baldridge, Ecker, Riley, 1972), it can be said that the organizational demands placed upon these two groups are similar in degree and intent (March, 1968).

Organizational Systems

Due to demands not only for organizational efficiency, but also for accountability, educational organizations possess elaborate administrative structures that are visible to groups outside of the organizational boundaries. With this in mind, an examination of organizational systems theory can be seen to begin with the work of Max Weber. Living from 1864 to 1920, this sociologist formulated the basic work relating to the definition of bureaucratic structures of governance. His work analyzing the German postal system put in place a group of fundamental parameters for the study of organizations.

According to Weber (trans. 1947) there are six basic characteristics of a bureaucracy. They are:

1. The duties of each office are clearly specified, with the result that the division of labor is determinate. 2. An official hierarchy of authority exists.
Each office is subject to discipline from a superordinate office, but only in regard to the duties of the office—the private life of the official is free from organizational authority. (3) The officeholder is an employee. The 'means of administration' are attached to the office, not the officeholder, and there are no ways whereby to gain personal rights to the office. (4) Membership in the bureaucracy constitutes a career with distinct ladders of career progression. (5) Hiring and promotion are governed by competence, as measured by certificated training or performance in office. (6) Impersonality, as contrasted to personal relationships, regulates activity. The body of specific and general rules regarding dealings with subordinates, peers, rank and file members and clients are binding. (p. 51)

It is this reliance on the structured hierarchy of authority, and a specific set of binding rules and regulations that characterizes the heart of the rational bureaucratic organizational system (Thompson, 67). Many organizations that we can think of rely on this kind of system of bureaucratic structure for their fundamental approach to regulating the day-to-day life of the group.

Schools as formal organizations rely on a set of rules and regulations that represent a bottom line definition of operational guidelines and procedures as well as a power structure (Bidwell, 68). But while this approach to setting the basic structure of authority is a direct and seemingly simple way to examine the operating of an organization, there is some confusion of meaning that has been identified in Weber's analysis of organizational systems.

Scott (1981) notes that the term rationality as it is used in the Weberian sense "refers to the extent to which a series of actions is organized in such a way as to lead to predetermined goals with maximum efficiency" (p. 121). It is the achievement (or the intent to achieve) that is at the heart of the rational set of rules and
procedures that forms the backbone of goal achievement for any organization.

There is some confusion that arises from a closer examination of Weber's work. Blau and Scott (1962), Scott (1981), and others find in Weber's definition of rationality a set of unclear meanings.

Scott (1981), Baldridge, Ecker, and Riley (1972) address this issue through discussion of professionalism within educational organizations. The combination within these groups of bureaucratic structure and professional values, creates a dilemma of governance in which accommodation must be made within the formal structure of the organization for those who have authority (the professionally trained faculty), due to their expertise. Holders of PhD's represent within the organization a base of authority that is due to the professional nature of their degree status (Scott, 1981). The importance of this group, grounded in individual expertise, is such that without them the organization would in great part cease to exist as we know it.

It can be seen even at this elementary level of organizational description, that other factors create the need for flexibility in the operational design of organizations. Higher education organizations are particularly susceptible to this accommodation due not only to the professional nature of members of its technical core, but also because the process of decision-making in the university is composed of many uncertain variables (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972). Those variables are: unclear goals, fluid participation of members in decision-making, and specialized technologies by which to accomplish organizational ends. Authority within higher educational organizations
is, then, at once dependent on a combination of authority of office
and the authority of expertise. Although this does not clarify the
confusion as to just what Weber meant in his discussions of the
sources of rational power in organizations, it introduces the ground­
work for a discussion that continues to expand and encompass more
complete models of organizational operation for higher education
applications.

If the understanding of contemporary organizations like those
in higher education is not effectively reflected in a rational model,
of what use is this model to organizations? Scott (1981) addresses
this question. He notes that the rational structure is what is most
visible in any organization to those who seek to assess and evaluate
the effectiveness of the organization from the outside. The formal
structure is what is seen by the non-members of the organization as
that which constitutes the identity of an organization. Thompson
(1967) addresses this question through looking at rational rules and
operating procedures as being that which give an organization the
"bounded rationality" that allows it to function as an entity unto
itself. It is this prescriptive nature of a rational system that is
important to its visible structure. This structure is very visible
to those outside that organization.

This rational systems view is one of a closed system with
specifically definable goals (Hall, 72). And although it is recog­
nized that this view of organizations is indeed limited in its scope
(Scott, 81; Lindstrom, 72; et al.) it still can be seen as the
foundation of control over behavior of members due in part to its prescriptive structures and regulations.

This view has at its base a simplified perception of man that is reflected in the Scientific Management school of organizational operation that was germinated by the work of Frederic Taylor and others in the early part of this century. By simplifying production methods in a series of time, motion and fatigue studies, Taylor was able to increase productivity in numerous manufacturing concerns. In this way it was felt by many managers at the time that the product or output of an organization as it was visible to those in the environment who lived beyond the organizational boundaries, was in a significant part the result of the rational legal structure of the organization.

But more than the fact of visibility of rational processes and procedures, it is a fundamental reality that the rationality of an organization lies in its structure and not in the individual members (Scott, 1981). People in rational organizations act in prescribed ways that limit the choices which they have to make. The limitations exist because of the hierarchical set of rules that govern the ability of individual members to exercise personal direction in their particular organizational niche. Thus it becomes the rules and not the individuals that determine how the objectives of the organization will be achieved.

Gouldner (1954) insists that the complexity of the sets of rules governing organizations creates a particular sense of legitimized control for individual organizations. The effect of this control is to screen out the personalities of both manager and worker,
while at the same time lending legitimacy to the actions of both. For supervisors, the set of organizational rules permits control of workers across large spans of tasks without the need to bring in personality as the basis of legitimate management. For the worker, rules provide reasons for "going by the book" instead of becoming personally involved in order to meet company goals. The effect of rules for organizations is to emphasize the pattern of operation that is finally evinced in the structure of the group rather than in its members.

Rational legal systems of management by their nature tend to operate independently of environmental forces. Rational systems appear to exist despite, rather than because of, what is going on around them. This organizational model takes little notice of the social, cultural, and psychological forces which act upon organizations. This purposeful ignorance of behavior was reacted to by Natural Systems theorists beginning about fifty years ago.

The famous studies by Roethlisberger and Dickson (1941) that occurred in the bank wiring room of a Western Electric plant, produced serendipitous results that laid the foundation for the evolution of a natural systems approach to evaluating organizations. The principle findings in this study at first contradicted the organizational theory of rational structure which the researchers expected to find. The result of their study was to identify an informal system of behavior that existed among the workers whom they were testing. The lowering and raising of the amount of light at work stations produced in the workers actions that were opposite of the ones predicted. The
important findings of the study were related to how the informal social organization of the subjects affected the goals of production. After much confusion and subsequent examination of the findings of their experiments, the researchers concluded that it was not external variables such as lighting that affected the workers' rates of production. They concluded that it was the effect of the web of relationships among the workers that controlled the situation. This system of relationships developed spontaneously (Selznick, 1943), and was exercising powerful influence on the behavior of the member workers.

This study laid the foundation for examination of informal systems of power and control within organizations. The importance of this finding is that the formal, rational structure of organizations was seen to be a less than adequate explanation of the functioning of organizations.

Scott (1981) notes that the study of natural systems is one which emphasized commonalities among organizational systems instead of emphasizing the differences among organizations as the important factor in defining organizational identity. In this view it is the natural evolution of informal systems that determines the health and continued existence of organizations, not the formal power structure.

This is an important step in the evolution of organizational theory. Perhaps the most significant alteration brought about through the use of this approach to understanding groups is that the formal goals of the organization are supplanted in importance by the basic need for the organization to survive and prosper. The health of the organization becomes the primary goal (Scott, 1981).
A second aspect of natural systems theory is that of the emphasis placed on behavior rather than on structure as the life force of the organizational operation (Thompson, 1967). The behavior that is important is that of the members of the organization (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1941). It is this behavioral structure that is determined by the characteristics of the participants that stand in a power relationship in the determination of the organizational goals of the group (Selznick, 1954).

The study conducted by Gouldner (1954) of the effective forces at work within a gypsum factory illustrates the power of behavioral relationships that exist among the workers, and how those informal relational systems had great effect on the way work was done within the plant. The behavior of informal groups of workers affected the kind of response which workers gave to company directives. Changes in governance structures of the plant caused workers to resist and exclude management participants from the informal system. These participants were seen as working against the norms of work as established by the informal group of employees in the plant. It became clear that the informal system within the plant could affect the output of the group.

The structures that exist within the organization are evaluated according to the function they perform for the organization. Scott (1981) notes that the existence of an organizational element is analyzed according to the function it performs, and not in reference to its relation to a formalized structure.
The way in which the informal structures of worker relationships, supported by common work goals and values assigned to the tasks which workers had enacted, was to create another type of structure within the organization. This was able to cause the organization to react to the demands and evaluations of the workers as they viewed their environment within the company. Therefore the structure of informal relations among employees can be seen to be useful in the light of the function it performs for the group (Scott, 1981). This stands in opposition to the legal rational definition of organizational structure because it is something that arises within the organization in an evolutionary manner that bears little relationship to the formal structure of the company. This structural functionalism of organizations is an important characteristic of natural systems theories of organizational interpretation.

Parsons (1960) sees the structural factors of organizations as evolving in relationship to a larger environmental setting. Viewing the organization as a subunit of a larger system of intertwined groups, allows the establishment of a view of organizations that begins to span the gap between natural systems traditions and open systems interpretations. Similarly the reaction between structure and function is viewed by Parsons as a response of the organization to functions of basic survival needs of the group. Each organization is within itself a system in its own right (Thompson, 67). Differentiation among groups within the organization reflects the need of the organization to maintain its health in relation to other sectors of the environment in which it exists.
Further, Parsons (1960) identifies levels of systemic structure that perform particular functions for the organization in its quest for survival. The technical level, being where the work of the group is accomplished, rests at the bottom of a pyramidal structure that divides the functional parts of the organization into groups. The base of this pyramid is comprised of that part of the organization where the work is performed. Immediately above lies the managerial level that has as its chief duty to intervene for the technical core with the environment in which the organization exists. At the tip of this pyramid rests the institutional level. This group determines policy for the organization. It is this level of organizational action that creates for the group a legitimized place in the larger social arena in which the organization exists.

Parsons (1961) describes this structure of an organization, viewed in the natural systems tradition, as a social phenomenon. The organization is constantly in a state of interaction with the other parts of its environment. This concept introduces the idea by which the organization takes its cues from the environment. This description of an organization begins to span the gap between the natural systems theories of organization and those concepts that see organizations as open systems.

This generic school of systems evaluation has its roots in the recent past. Appearing soon after World War II, this view of organizational theory shifts the emphasis from one of examination of internal structures within organizations, to a point of view that emphasizes process as the important factor to be examined. Formal and informal
structures existing within organizations constituted the reason for evaluation of organizations in rational and natural systems frameworks. Open system theory begins to address the process by which organizations stay alive and healthy.

The crux of this school of theory lies in the viewing of organizations as cybernetic systems (Scott, 1981). The ability of systems to be self-regulating is fundamental to the system being able to adjust its output to the current demands of the environment in which it conducts its business. Thus as Katz and Kahn (1979) note, negative feedback is essential to continued successful operation of an organization. This is essential because an organization striving to operate responsively within its task environment (Thompson, 1967) has no other way of determining the effectiveness of its processes, procedures and products. There is an ongoing argument in the literature that points out the primary bases for evaluation of organizational effectiveness. It is the goal-centered versus the process-centered models of organizational effectiveness. Hall (1972), Perrow (1970) and others believe that effectiveness exists in the attainment of organizational goals. Others such as Yuchtman and Seashore (1967), Cameron (1978), Hannan and Freeman (1977) describe the ability to determine effectiveness for an organization as being essentially a matter of evaluating the processes by which the organization conducts itself within its environment. Others, like Pfeffer (1979) see effectiveness being a measure of the wishes of constituencies existing both within and outside of organizational boundaries. Still others refine another aspect of effectiveness. Campbell (1977) notes that
effective organizations first specify their objectives and then specify
the proper processes that will be useful in arriving at those objectives.
This seems to be a variation on the goal-centered theme of effective-
ness. However, it recognizes the political nature of the organization
in a way that has some correspondence with the constituency theories
of Pfeffer and Salancik (1979).

Evaluating Effectiveness

The variations on the theme of effectiveness lead directly
into problems with construct definition. It is important to note that
there is no final resolution in the literature that mediates among
these differing points of view. The variety, along with the small
points of similarity among these theoretical interpretations, points
out that effectiveness as a construct is as Campbell (1977) notes:

... not a truth that is buried somewhere waiting to be
discovered if only our concepts and data collection
methods were good enough. (p. 15)

If there is no ideal construct with which to attack the evaluation of
effectiveness, the researcher and evaluator are left with a problem
that is not able to produce results that do not suffer from lack of
utility and generalizability across differing organizational settings.

Cameron (1978) addresses the variability of construct defini-
tion by first examining the criteria problem which is faced in
assessing organizational effectiveness. There are major criteria
problems. The first is the decision as to what criteria will be
examined in defining organizational effectiveness. This point recaps
the problems noted earlier regarding the differences between and among
various theories regarding what effectiveness is for an organization
(Hall, 1972; Perrow, 1970). The other criteria problem relates to the source of the information gathered relating to organizational effectiveness (Weick, 1977). What is considered to be effective by one group at a certain level within the organization may be exactly what another group considers ineffective. An example of this is the recent strike of typographers against a Chicago newspaper.

The typographers were striking against the paper not for money or job security reasons. Good wages and lifetime job security had already been guaranteed by the paper. They were striking because they did not feel the company had the right to reassign them to other jobs as technological improvements in print production excluded more and more of this group from the task of composition which they had historically performed. The point to be made is that the typographers considered the company was acting ineffectively in reassigning individuals to other departments; while the company considered that reassignment was an effective use of manpower in a situation in which there were more workers than jobs.

Cameron (1978b) summarizes the criteria problem by noting the various characteristics of effectiveness as they exist in all kinds of organizations.

In short, organizational effectiveness may be typified as being mutable (composed of different criteria at different life stages), comprehensive (including a multiplicity of dimensions), divergent (relating to different constituencies), transpositive (altering relevant criteria when different levels of analysis are used), and complex (having non-parsimonious relationships among dimensions). (p. 110)

Criteria problems are addressed by almost anyone who sets out to define effectiveness. Hannan and Freeman (1977) go so far as to suggest that
effectiveness is more a term relating to how things are done and less of a term that can be used in defining theory in this area. "It is a concept of applications and engineering, but not of abstract scientific theory."

Zammuto (1982) suggests in response to the criteria problem a set of meta-criteria which he considers useful in defining effectiveness constructs whether the researcher is examining goals or processes. He says that whether the model used is goal-centered, system-centered, or constituent-centered (Pfeffer, 1979; Cummings, 1977), the three meta-criteria that can be applied to assessing effectiveness are "relativism", "power", and "social good". These criteria are not tied to any model, but can be applied to each type of model in determining which criteria will be examined in defining a construct for organizational effectiveness.

The meta-criterion of relativism when applied to a search for adequate criteria of effectiveness, essentially says that there are no criteria of effectiveness. This is so because of the mutability, comprehensiveness, divergence, transpositiveness, and complexity of such criteria (Cameron, 1978b). The view of organizations here is that there is no fundamental group of criteria, but many criteria of effectiveness attached to as many groups as exist within the organization. Therefore, a unilateral definition of criteria is foolish and undesirable from a research standpoint. The perspective of constituents is variable and varied, and a proper assessment of effectiveness must reflect this.
The power meta-criterion is related to the process of identifying the centers of power within an organization. This dominant coalition (Thompson, 1967) defines the measures of effectiveness for the organization. Therefore, to measure effectiveness, it is necessary to identify and assess the criteria of effectiveness as defined by this group.

The third meta-criterion defined by Zammuto (1982) is that of social good. According to this, the criteria of effectiveness can seem to be those which provide for the greatest good going to the least fortunate group either inside of or beyond the organization's boundaries. This criterion ties in with the multiple constituency approach to organizational theory (Pfeffer, 1979; Cummings, 1977).

Cummings notes that organizations operate effectively according to the wishes of groups as those wishes determine organizational ends. In short, organizations are instruments of the groups within them.

The meta-criterion of social good is based on the social theory that each person in a society has a right to the broadest system of social liberty and rights that is compatible with a system of liberty for all. Thus an organization that exists within a social setting (Parsons, 1971) can organize and determine its goals of operation based on those of the groups that exist within and beyond its organizational boundaries. It cannot help but be noted that this perspective seems to fit well with Marxian concepts of social good bestowed on a society by its industrial base as that base is composed of a broad unification of social classes.
This meta-criterion is one which is particularly meaningful when it is seen that the enactment process by which organizations operate for the social good is dependent on whether or not legitimacy is bestowed on the organization by the relevant groups in its environment. Schools benefit as organizations from the legitimacy conferred on them by a society that perceives them to be a legitimate source for intellectual, social and moral training. When it is perceived that the schools are no longer performing this task at the level required by the organizational environment, then legitimacy is withdrawn from these organizations.

Zammuto (1984) elaborates further on this theme. He responds to the problems of identifying and assessing multiple criteria as they relate to measuring effectiveness by proposing a model which deals with this ambiguity. What is proposed is a methodology for assessment of effectiveness which is composed of two elements. These are: the multiple nature of organizational constituencies, and societal legitimation that is adapted to an evolutionary framework. Quinn and Cameron (1983) also propose a model of assessment. The model recognizes the evolutionary nature of organizations, and the fact that effectiveness for an organization at one stage of its life will be in all probability not relevant later on, due to changes in the organizational life as they occur over time. These broad categories of criteria problems are further specified by Cameron (1978a, b) into several groups. The organizational aspects which will be examined in evaluating effectiveness can be either goal-centered or based on systems models of organizing. The universality of criteria presents
a problem in that different groups have different structures and organizational needs. The goals of an organization may be specific to that organization. The problem here is that of utility of findings determined in evaluating other organizations. Another criteria problem is that of determining whether the criteria examined are normative or descriptive in nature. As Hannan and Freeman (1977) note, the concept of effectiveness is more of an engineering question than a question of theory. The criteria which are examined can determine whether or not theory or practice is taken as the outcome of assessment of an organization's effectiveness.

Related to this is the criteria problem of whether the aspects used to build the construct of effectiveness are static or dynamic. Whichever they are, so too will be the prescriptions coming out of an evaluation. Miles and Cameron's study (1977) of the tobacco industry is one study which recognized the effect of time on data. Most other studies deal with data gathered at a single given point in the life of an organization.

As mentioned above, the other major category of criteria problems facing those who investigate organizational effectiveness lies in the sources from which data are gathered (Cameron, 1978a, b; Cameron & Whitten, 1983). These questions revolve around methodological considerations. Each group of organizational members and clients has a set of values and biases which affect its particular definition of what effectiveness for the organization is. Data gathered from these groups are bound to reflect this. Again we can refer back to the example of the striking typographers. The version of organizational
effectiveness to which this group ascribed varied greatly from that of management. A strike was the result. The proposal in the study at hand is to rely on members of the dominant coalition (Thompson, 1967) for the evaluation of organizational effectiveness in continuing education subunits. It was hoped that the biases of this group will reflect an organizational understanding of the needs and demands of other client groups that place environmental stresses on the continuing education subunit. This seems to be a reasonable assumption since continuing education subunits act as boundary spanners (Thompson, 1967) for the larger organization, the university. Higher education organizations, while they may be "loosely coupled" (Cohen & March, 1974), need to operate with Zammuto's (1982) criterion of social legitimation in mind if they are to be successful. The great increase in assessing organizational effectiveness that has arisen in the past decade is evidence of this. In many cases the emphasis has been on evaluation of what Hannan and Freeman (1977) refer to as efficiency rather than effectiveness.

The level of analysis is an important consideration in the proper assessment of organizational effectiveness. In large organizations like state universities a global evaluation of effectiveness is difficult due to size and complexity of subgroups within the larger organization, and the differentiation of the needs of those groups.

Katz and Kahn (1979) foster the idea that the best level from which to examine organizational effectiveness is to examine the super-system of groups acting in the environment of the organization. In
this sense it is the ability of the organization to adapt to condi-
tions in the environment, that determines its effectiveness. Others like Weick (1977) consider that the proper analysis of effectiveness is at the organizational level itself.

Other writers have concentrated their studies on organizational subsystems (Pennings, 1975; Pennings & Goodman, 1977). Still others have used the individual member as the level of analysis in their assessment of organizational effectiveness (Argyris, 1962; Lawler, Hall & Oldham, 1974; Cameron, 1978a, b). Cameron (1978a) constructs a grid in which some twenty studies are compared according to type and source of criteria. The evidence presented by means of this grid show that in only nine of forty-three cells, representing choices of source and type of criteria, was there any similarity. The meaning of this is that most of the current literature relating to the assessment of organizational effectiveness has results which are not comparable to other organizations.

Some authors have approached the problem by combining both what Campbell (1977) calls objective data (company records, memos, etc.) and subjective data (perceptions of individuals). This criteria problem relating to source of data is further complicated when organizations such as those in higher education are examined.

Educational organizations suffer from a chronic lack of goals that are clear and specific (Cameron, 1978). In addition, the professional core of these organizations resists investigations aimed at assessing their effectiveness. Scott (1981) identifies this as an aspect of the problems that bureaucratic organizations have when the
core technology is in the hands of professionals. Professionals in bureaucracies resist any attempts to measure or evaluate ability, skill or performance, that come from any other source than their own ranks (Scott, 1981).

Thirdly, the use of organizational effectiveness as a fruitful construct has been questioned by many writers. March and Olsen (1975) have generated a garbage can metaphor to describe the decision-making process within higher education organizations. Rowan and Meyer (1975) note that there is a lack of linkage between process and product in higher education organizations. The "loose coupling" of these kinds of organizations causes each group to behave more or less independently in the decision arena. Generalizability of data evaluating organizational effectiveness can therefore be seen as difficult if not impossible to establish.

Competition for reduced resource pools increased during the last fifteen years for colleges and universities. More cost efficient methods were sought with which to accomplish the mission of each educational organization. Those evaluations of organizations tended to be ones of efficiency, not effectiveness (Hannan & Freeman, 1977). Therefore, the criteria used to assess efficient methods of operating were sometimes confused with those that demonstrated effective use of resources. Cameron (1978b) points out that the differences between efficiency and effectiveness are that efficiency concerns the economic ratio of dollar inputs to outputs, whereas effectiveness addresses whether or not the process occurring during this transformation, was that which is most conducive to producing a high quality product. As
he notes:

The problem of studying organizational effectiveness in organizations which vary on the loosely coupled to tightly coupled continuum lies in identifying a core group of effectiveness criteria that are relevant to organizational members, applicable across subunits, and comparable across institutions. (p. 611)

The criteria problems presented thus far point to the general conclusion that a single definition or construct of organizational effectiveness is probably not possible. The variation in organizational composition, processes and goals existing among organizations causes this to be true. It is also due methodologically to an inability to define or draw boundaries around the proper constructs which could define effectiveness in organizations. Finally, the lack of common sources of reliable criteria across the spectrum of organizations presents a source problem which affects the generalizability and utility of effectiveness studies.

The various special characteristics of educational organizations present an additional set of complications to the problem of criteria source and selection. The problem of goal definition in these organizations creates a situation where it is difficult to define bounded constructs for assessment. Also, due to what Cohen and March (1974) identify as "problematic preferences", and shifting groups of decision-making stakeholders, the problems of source and criteria selection become all the more difficult.

In Cameron's studies (1975a, b) the attempt is made to address the problem of effectiveness in higher education organizations when the limitations of such an endeavor are fully understood. The attempt was to identify characteristics that were more indicative of effective-
ness in higher educational organizations. The studies were looked upon as an attempt to outline criteria that would be useful even when the problems of this kind of research relating to higher education organizations was taken into account.

The literature of continuing education seems to be relatively recent and anecdotal in many ways. There is little addressing the particular proposition presented in this study. That is, little attention is paid to the fact that an effective continuing educational organization must operate as effective organization before it can become effective educational delivery system. The measurement of effectiveness at this organizational sub-level is only obliquely addressed in the literature.

**Brief History of Continuing Education**

Continuing education had its beginnings in the 1890's with the movement toward extending the availability and utility of higher education called the Progressive Movement (Rudolph, 1962). Hailing back to Jakcsonian populism, this movement in American higher education sought to place the university at the service of the people and not at the service of the educated wealthy (Rudolph, 1962). It had as its objectives the training of individuals in the problems and methodologies of governance, and the bringing of knowledge from the isolated classroom of the university directly to the practitioners in the field. The passage of the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 establishing the permanent connection of the Federal Government with agricultural extension services in the field, guaranteed that funding for these services would be permanent and on-going.
The University of Wisconsin and the University of Chicago as well as other land grant universities established by the Morrill Act of 1862, played major roles in the expansion and establishment of this kind of education as an integral part of the mission and programs of higher education in America. Although begun as the attempt of education to serve the needs of a growing and still largely agricultural nation, this movement contained within itself the fundamental rationale for what later became a complex expression of the social requirement of universities to serve the education needs of the broad spectrum of society. Continuing education as it is perceived today had its initial molding in the concept of the agricultural extension service in the early years of this century (Strothers & Klus, 1982).

The concept of university service lies at the base of this extension of knowledge for the use of the citizenry. While this is a fully accepted and promoted precept of modern public universities, it is still found to be wanting in attaining a status equal to the ideals promoted in the concepts of teaching and research (Strothers & Klus, 1982). Still seen as an auxiliary service on campus, departments of continuing education have in recent years found themselves viewed as the country cousins of the university community. And while it is seen as having a valuable public relations effect on the community in which the parent institution resides, it is "academically suspect" (Strothers & Klus, 1982).

According to the above authors and others, there now exist two major trends which will have positive effects on the legitimation of the continuing education subunit on campus. The first trend
is the increasing age of the population in general, so that the average age of students across the nation in higher education institutions is twenty-seven or twenty-eight. Along with this age increase there is the growing trend to require from individuals a commitment to lifelong learning in order to be current in their fields. Recertification and licensure are becoming major issues in many states. The current move toward teacher recertification is perhaps the best example of the recent increased demands for accountability. The public is no longer willing to confer for a lifetime the legitimate role of purveyor of socially grounded knowledge to those who are not willing to improve their ability through continued learning in their given field.

The departments of continuing education in higher education institutions have as their heritage the mission to bring to the public learning that will serve the needs which the public expresses. As Strothers and Klus (1982) put it, "The enrollment decline of eighteen-to twenty-two-year olds in the 1980's prompts an intensified search for new academic markets in many institutions." The vehicle through which this reassessment of the educational marketplace can occur is the continuing education function of those colleges and universities which find it imperative to shift academic gears. These educational organizations launch out along a somewhat different path aimed at persons who are older, will usually attend part time, and look at education as a practical necessity for achieving their own social and economic legitimacy. But as Strothers and Klus (1982) point out, the competition from noneducational organizations will be stiff. Corporations and private organizations are finding the benefits of
training and learning conducted in-house to have strong results and positive implications for productivity. These programs have large resource pools from which to draw in order to build effective educational structures. These could undercut the ability of academic institutions to compete effectively in the new marketplace of education. While an evaluation of marketing strategies is not germane to this discussion, it must be noted that this aspect of organizational strategy certainly has a place in the productivity of such a group.

In the last ten to fifteen years there has been a change in the leadership aspect of continuing education subunits. Those in charge of these operations, as well as those on the front lines of such groups, have come out of degree programs in adult education. Not only do these individuals have reason to be committed from an organizational viewpoint, but they have demonstrated, through their choice of discipline, a personal commitment to the continuing education of a more mature population (Strothers & Klus, 1982). Administrators of continuing education programs are more often coming to the position through degrees carried in adult education and related fields. This runs counter to the historical pattern of administrators being placed in charge of continuing education chiefly as part of their movement through the academic ranks.

As organizational entities, continuing education subunits operate under some particular qualifications. These conditions of qualification derive from the environment in which continuing education exists. Continuing education subunits attempt to take learning
beyond the traditional classroom setting. The programs that are brought to the public may differ in form and content from traditional academic programs. The challenge, then, is for continuing education to build from its organizational structure a delivery system which will effectively bring educational opportunities to its clients.

Central to this challenge is the authority with which the continuing education organization operates within the traditional academic structure of colleges and universities. Miles (1980) notes that organizational environments in general are moving toward more and more turbulent states. With the resource problems which have faced colleges and universities in the past fifteen years, the environments in which these organizations operate have become more unsettled. Emery and Trist (1965) identified this kind of environmental situation as the "turbulent field" environment. In these kinds of environments the organization has to use more and more of its resources in boundary spanning (Thompson, 1967) in order to understand and adequately respond to conditions affecting the organization. The fact that in order for the organization to successfully adapt itself to its environment, information must be continually flowing into the organization from that environment (Emery & Trist, 1965) is important here.

If the university is viewed as an organization that exists in an environment that has changed significantly in the past years in terms of environmental demands, it can be seen that the role of the continuing education subunit of the organization has is important. The continuing education organization has traditionally been between
the community and the university. Now that link is becoming more important. The continuing education mission is to bring learning not only beyond the classroom, but to address the educational needs of the geographic area that it serves. This is the extension idea discussed earlier. As Strothers and Klus (1982) note, "... the institutional structure must be problem-centered and results-oriented." (p. 4) An organization which operates within these kinds of boundaries will have a good chance of being able to sense what the demands of its environment are, and thus be able to react accordingly.

Continuing education organizations have some problems which they face in attempting to build effective organizational structures and programs. One of these problem areas is that of authority. The authority of the organizational leaders rests in the economic control which those individuals have over the budget of the organization (Strothers & Klus, 1982). In many continuing education organizations the administrators responsible for the distribution of rewards must defer to others within the leadership structure of the parent college or university for the confirmation of distributed rewards. As Strother and Klus (1982) note in order to have a chance at being effective, the continuing education subunit must have control of its own budget.

Another problem area relating to the ability of an organization to respond effectively to environmental demands is that of the legal authority of administrators. This authority allows the organizational leaders to make decisions regarding the running of the organization, and have those decisions respected by the group.
Strother and Klus (1982) note that much of this power and authority has been eroded due to many recent legal decisions. In this area as in the area of economic authority, it is necessary that the continuing education administrator be able to make decisions which will not be countermanded by some other authority within the parent institution.

Legal authority extends into the area of making contracts with other agencies and outside groups either for service, delivery, or use. The continuing education organization must be able to make these kinds of arrangements with the assurance that a higher authority will not interfere. Beyond these general questions of organizational design, there are some significant criteria set forth by Strother and Klus (1982) regarding effectiveness in continuing education organizations. Those are: institutional commitment, budgetary identity, administrative responsibility, integration with the whole institution, mission definition and geographic decentralization.

Institutional commitment is the support which the parent organization has for the programs operated by the continuing education subunits. An organization that has the commitment of its parent unit will be more effective because funds, equipment and manpower will be easier to obtain from the parent organization.

Budgetary identity is the ability which a continuing education unit has to distribute its own resources and rewards. This is vital in continuing education groups where much of the work is done on a project basis as opposed to a formalized, on-going program as evidenced in the academic structure of the parent institution.
Administrative responsibility means that the individual responsible for running the continuing education unit should hold equal administrative rank with those in the institution that operate other important subunits. This kind of authority, when allowed to function within the framework of the parent institution, exhibits institutional support for the continuing education program.

Mission definition is also important to the successful running of a continuing education program. It is important that the program in continuing education reflect deliberate decisions made by the organization as to how the continuing education function will develop. Effectiveness is less likely to occur when programs are left to grow randomly.

The last criteria which Strother and Klus speak of is that of the importance of geographic decentralization. In many, but not all, continuing education subunits there is staff that are housed in facilities away from the parent institution. This goes along with the extension idea. In order to serve the clientele who are scattered across a geographic area it is necessary that there be staff members who operate satellite offices. This profile of staffing demonstrates the fundamental tenet of the continuing education function. The extension ideal places individual staff members by deliberate decision in centers that exist in the field. The establishment of satellite campuses in shopping centers, in downtown offices and in rural centers is the norm for continuing education units.
Program Organization

According to Strothers and Klus (1982) there are two fundamental models of organizational structure in continuing education subunits. They are the centralized model and the decentralized model. Both contain within themselves inherent advantages as well as disadvantages.

The centralized model makes possible an organizational unit that has a great deal of organizational self-control. That is, through centralized structure of organization it is possible to recruit a staff of front line and support personnel who are committed to the field. In addition, it is a distinct advantage for the centralized organization to be in control of its own budgetary function. Thirdly, as Strother and Klus put it, "... it makes possible the maintenance of a mission-oriented, problem-centered, cross disciplinary kind of operation." Fourthly, the committed personnel who are hired by such an organization with its own budgetary control are more apt to be innovative and committed to researching the field and starting new programs.

Strother and Klus note that a disadvantage of this kind of centralized organization is that there develops a separation of the organization from the teaching function of the main university body. This is simply because an organization that is fully contained may have as a general rule little need or desire to take advantage of the regular teaching resources of the parent institution.

In a decentralized structure, there is more commerce between the continuing education unit and the regular academic staff (Strothers
and Klus, 1982). When the continuing education function is fully integrated into the regular organizational structure of the university, individuals are more likely to have continuing education duties as part of their ordinary teaching assignment.

Budgetary problems present a disadvantage to decentralized continuing education functions. This is possibly the most critical drawback of a decentralized system. If an organization does not control its own resources, it runs the risk of capitulating to the group that has control of the resources it needs to perform effectively.

In Strothers and Klus (1982) there is presented an integrated framework that includes in itself an additional, integrated model of the continuing education subunit. This model is integrated in that it presents a dual role for faculty members of the continuing education subunit. These individuals in essence have two sets of functions. One is the regular faculty duty of the individual in the academic department. The other is the duty of these persons toward the continuing education function of the university. Faculty and staff members report to the director of the continuing education in matters of assignments and schedules relating to the extended function of the subunit. Pay and time commitment is under the director of the continuing education subunit. This person reports directly to the president of the university, and has control of the subunit's budget. In this way the subunit can govern itself as well as take advantage of the resources of the parent institution in which it resides. The disadvantage of this model is that it may create repetition of effort due to the dual accountability of the staff members.
There is no single model for continuing education subunits. There is a spectrum running from the centralized to completely decentralized structure. Each, as we have seen, has its own advantages as well as disadvantages. Because of the nature of the mission of continuing education subunits, this organizational flexibility is an asset in allowing useful responses to be made by the organization to the demands of the environment and clientele.

Summary

In this chapter we have examined the literature relevant to this study. There were three components to this literature review. Those were: the literature on organizational theory, the literature of effectiveness and its assessment, and the literature of continuing education. It should be noted that in all three areas the emphasis was applied to the relationship between organizational structure and the environment in which the group functions.
CHAPTER III. METHODOLOGY

Study Description

This was a descriptive study designed to be exploratory in nature. Van Dalen (1973) notes the value of this kind of study to educational research. He notes that much current educational research is encumbered with determining what objects, persons, activities or processes are before problems can be solved. The study at hand was one such. The study attempted to explore a factor which may be present or relevant for examination of a profile of a specific kind of higher education unit. The organizations examined were the continuing education subunits of college and university higher education organizations.

The data gathered from the investigation, although quantitative in nature, was used to begin to suggest in an exploratory way the value of assessing higher education organizations with respect to conditions within these organizations. The factor chosen for use in this study was taken from work by Cameron (1978). It was presented by that author as a dimension or possible category of effectiveness which might be present in higher education organizations. The category was identified as "Organizational Health" (Cameron, p. 51).

The conditional nature of the study stemmed from the fact that there is no global or all-encompassing definition of effectiveness in
organizations. As Cameron points out, "It is possible, for example, for an organization to be 'ineffective', even when accomplishing its goals . . or to be 'effective' in the areas outside of its goal focus" (p. 17). The study at hand recognizes this as a fundamental presupposition upon which the research design was based.

The dimension used in this study was one which Cameron (1978) identified as "Organizational Health." This proposed construct referred to the maintenance of "organizational vitality and viability" of a group (Cameron, p. 28).

Both of these concepts related to the internal processes of an organization. "Vitality" is meant to indicate the ability of an organization to exist as an operating entity in the environment. "Viability" is meant to indicate the internal practices and procedures of an organization. Because organizations can be said to strive at being "viable" and "vital," the approach of the study using the category of "Organizational Health" seemed proper.

Baldridge, Ecker and Riley (1978) identified three special conditions of higher education organizations that have an impact on the examination of their processes. The conditions are those of problematic preferences, unclear technologies, and fluid participation in decision making. Thus, the fluidity and changeability of governance processes within higher education organizations have an additional impact on the choice of "Organizational Health" as the dimension for examination used in the study. This dimension seemed to be useful in suggesting a profile of organizational activity, as that activity may be part of an overall examination of organizational effectiveness.
The study served the knowledge-creating function of research in higher education organizations by beginning to suggest whether it was possible that a dimension called "Organizational Health" could load as an item in examining the larger question of what may constitute effectiveness in continuing education subunits.

Procedure

The procedure used in this study is based on an instrument created by Cameron (1978). This instrument was to be administered to a population of organizational leaders employed by continuing education subunits in colleges and universities. Two types of results were expected. The first was to determine if the items of the survey, when subjected to a process of factor analysis, loaded in such a way as to show the existence of a single factor. The second result was to suggest in an exploratory manner what the quantitative finding suggested in the way of additional implications for more specialized investigation into the dimensions of organizational health and its possible relation to organizational effectiveness. This second exploratory research direction could prove valuable in initiating a line of inquiry into continuing education subunits and how their organizational processes may be related to evaluations of the organization and its possible relation to effectiveness.

The Instrument

Developed in 1978, this instrument was a result of a four-year study that attempted to determine the dimensions of effectiveness for higher education organizations. The study determined that
there were nine dimensions. This was accomplished by first identifying a set of categories on an a priori basis from the literature and from interviews with top administrators in a group of colleges and universities in the northeast. The colleges from which the interviewed individuals came all had enrollments of under 10,000. The choice of this kind of school was, Cameron (1978) felt, due to the difficulty that administrators in large institutions would have in being able to obtain and use effectively information required for effective management.

The assumption, therefore, that dominant coalition members in smaller organizations had more access to collegewide information seemed to be a reasonable one if one accepted Thompson's (1967) argument that dominant coalition members as representatives of the internal organizationwide information system as they function in their roles. The information gathered was then placed in the form of a survey and administered to the dominant coalition members of the administration in the colleges and universities mentioned above. This survey relied on the perception of the subjects regarding evaluation of the conditions within their organizations.

A second survey of objective indicators of effective organizational practices and outcomes was administered to the same survey participants.

From these results a third survey, meant to provide an evaluative framework with which to assess organizational effectiveness in higher education organizations was developed.
It was a modified version of this instrument that was used here. There were certain minor changes in wording that were made to the items so that they reflected an investigation of continuing education subunits rather than the whole college or university unit.

Below is a list of nine a priori categories of variables included in the original instrument.

1. **Student Educational Satisfaction**—meant to evaluate the degree of satisfaction which students felt with their educational experience as that experience was provided through the higher education organization under question.

2. **Student Academic Development**—meant to evaluate the extent of academic achievement, growth and progress as a result of students' experience at the particular higher education organization under examination.

3. **Student Career Development**—meant to evaluate career and occupational development of students as the result of the amount of emphasis placed on this goal by the organization in question.

4. **Student Personal Development**—meant to indicate students' development in non-academic areas such as socially, culturally and emotionally as a result of the emphasis placed on this kind of development by organizations in question.

5. **Faculty and Administrator Satisfaction**—meant to indicate satisfaction of faculty and administrators with their employment at the organization under question.
6. **Professional Development and Quality of the Faculty**—meant to indicate the amount of professional development and achievement accomplished by the faculty as a result of stimulation from the particular organization.

7. **Systems Openness and Community Interaction**—meant to indicate the external connections, community service responsiveness and adaptability of higher education organizations of the type under examination toward their environment.

8. **Ability to Acquire Resources**—meant to indicate the capability of the organizations under study to acquire resources from their environment. These include human, monetary and capital resources.

9. **Organizational Health**—meant to indicate the vitality and viability of the internal operations of the higher education organizations under examination.

In the interests of manageability and simplicity of design, and because the population under study was a novel one as far as this instrument was concerned, only one of the nine dimensions was selected for testing. That dimension was: (9) Organizational Health.

The dimension assessing "Organizational Health," contains questions that address the areas of organizational design, communication, structure, employee satisfaction and management style. Organizational characteristics relating to these areas of inquiry are to be found in any organization regardless of size, arena of action, or complexity of design. It was felt that this dimension had the
broader implications for organizational life because the survey was germane to organized groups on a broad basis.

The particular survey used here contained 28 questions. It was felt that this was an appropriate number of questions because a high rate of return was hoped for; and in order to maximize this possibility, the researcher wished to keep the survey manageable for the respondents. It was estimated that it took about 20 minutes to complete all questions.

A process of factor analysis was used to examine the results. The research question that was tested using this methodology was: A factor identified by Cameron (1978) as "Organizational Health," exists if it accounts for 30 percent of the total variance among the continuing education subunits surveyed. The amount of variance indicated here is similar to the variance which Cameron found was accounted for by this dimension in the original study.

The Participants

The population used in this study was taken from the membership of Region IV of the National University Continuing Education Association (NUCEA). The membership involved came from the states of Minnesota, Iowa, Missouri, Michigan, Wisconsin, Illinois, Indiana, and Ohio.

It was decided to use the entire population of chief administrators of continuing education subunits in the states previously mentioned. These subunits have the quality of being a manageable size like the schools in the original study.
The population was represented by the responses of those holding high positions within the organization. Again, according to Thompson (1967) and Cameron (1978), the responses of these individuals seemed to reflect the most complete understanding of the goals and management philosophy of the organization.

**Study Administration**

The instrument (see Appendix A) in the form of a survey questionnaire was sent to 205 chief administrators of continuing education organizations. Letters of transmittal were mailed to each correspondent along with a copy of the survey. After two weeks a follow-up letter was sent to those who did not respond initially. Each respondent received a letter of thanks and a request card that could be returned if the individual was interested in receiving a summary of the study findings.

Appropriate statistical packages were used in order to perform factor analysis procedures on the survey responses. The results of this application were meant to indicate if the survey items did load as those items were meant to in order to meet the qualifications of the operational research question.
CHAPTER IV. ANALYSIS OF THE DATA

A major goal of the study was to determine if an instrument authored by Cameron (1978) could be useful for expressing some possible organizational factors that may be in operation in continuing education organizations. Cameron's original study identified nine factors that seemed to be useful in assessing effectiveness in higher education organizations, principally colleges in the northeast. To make this study track in a similar vein, the researcher determined that to test for all nine variables in a new setting was not strategically possible nor useful to understanding the kinds of organizations assessed in this study. Many of the variables in Cameron's original work were not applicable in the realm of continuing education organizations. Because of this, these factors were not used in the study. From the original list of nine, five construct dimensions remained. In the interests of relevance and manageability the dimension identified as "Organizational Health" satisfied the requirements of this study.

The items relating to "Organizational Health" that appeared in the original study by Cameron seemed to have universal relevance to the issues of management that are germane to most organizations. Items in the instrument relating to issues such as communication within the organization, internal work atmosphere, and perceived management style seemed to have a connection with the continuing edu-
cation organizations under examination. This factor addressed a common set of organizational variables and the items contained wording that made them suitable, with only minor changes, for the population examined in this study. The changes were minimal in that simply removing the word "college" and inserting in its place "continuing education unit," made the items feasible for use in the realm of continuing education organizations. In some of the items additional syntactical changes were necessary for keeping with the rules of grammar.

The final instrument contained twenty-four items relating to the dimension of "Organizational Health," and four items that assessed basic demographic data.

Factor analysis was selected as the analytical method for several reasons. The primary reason was that the study took a previously used instrument and applied it to a different population. Applying an existing set of items to a different population required that some method of determining if the constructs identified in the original setting could be operating in the new setting. By examining the loading of the items in the instrument, the process of factor analysis indicates whether or not there is present a factor or factors that may be used to describe the responses from the population.

The use of factor analysis was exploratory. To begin to suggest what organizational variables might be active within continuing education organizations, factor analysis seemed a good way to start what promised to be a much longer process of investigation. As Hinkle, Wiersma and Jurs (1979) noted, "The general purpose of factor analysis is to identify the number and nature of the constructs or traits
underlying a set of measures." (p. 436) It is in this way that the study was exploratory.

Procedure

A total of 205 questionnaires were mailed to individuals who had responsibility for directing continuing education organizations and subunits. These persons were responsible for the day-to-day decision-making that occurred within their groups. It was their perceptions as leaders of continuing education organizations that provided the responses to the survey items.

The demographic data gathered on these individuals related to sex, date of birth (age), highest degree earned (education) and length of employment in their current unit. More men (N=95) returned surveys than women (N=42). For the most part respondents ages were between 46 and 55. (N=58) The second largest age group was 36 to 45. (N=39) The number of respondents who possessed doctorates was 86, with 44 holding master's degrees. Six individuals held only bachelor's degrees, and two individuals elected not to respond to this item. The majority of respondents (N=46) had been with their current unit for five years or less. The six to ten-year group had only six fewer people than the first group. Seven individuals had been with their organization for twenty years or longer.

After a follow-up mailing, a total of 137 responses were received. This represented a 66.8% return rate for the survey. In addition, the entire population of continuing education managers was polled by the survey. As mentioned in the previous chapter, these individuals represented the seven-state midwestern region of the
National Continuing Education Association, NUCEA. All respondents were assured strict confidentiality regarding their responses. In addition to the valid responses, three surveys were returned in which the individuals elected not to participate. Some persons (N=2) had left the field of continuing education and also returned their surveys. Other individuals (N=3) had left their original organization and their surveys were not forwardable.

Analysis

The mean for the 24 variables ranged from a low of 2.9174 to a high of 5.8595. These "averages" while not of great value in themselves reflect the broad range of scores among individual items. The standard deviations ranged from a low of 1.3637 for variable one to a high of 1.6373 for variable 15. Table 1 contains the means and standard deviations of the 24 variables.

Correlations among the different items are found in Table 2. An initial glance across the correlations matrix reveals that there are few strongly correlated variables. Using the definitions set up by Downie and Heath (1974), strongly related variables should have a value of .8 or more, moderately related variables should have a value of .5 or more, and insignificant relationships are identified by values below .5. The strongest correlations in the matrix are between variables 11 and 12 (.77116), 15 and 16 (.77051), and 17 and 18 (.73406). These numbers represent only a moderately strong relationship according to the criteria mentioned above.
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The variables 11 and 12 directed the respondent to evaluate the levels of conflict and friction and the level of conflict resolution in the organizational unit. It was not surprising that these two variables were related. The positive direction of this relationship could lead to an interpretation of the responses to these items that would place high amounts of conflict resolution in organizations where little friction was perceived.

The variables 15 and 16 show a similar type of relationship. This time the respondents were directed to evaluate the external environment in which the continuing education organization was operating. The continuum represented in the possible responses for variable 15 ranged from a score of "one" in which imposed regulations were placed on the organization from the external environment, to a score of "seven" which represented an autonomous organizational position. The continuum represented in the responses to variable 16 ran from an external operating environment that was "controlling, dominating" to an environment that was "unobtrusive, unimposing." Again there was a strong correlation between these two variables when compared with the weak relationships among the majority of the other variables in the survey.

Finally the relationship between variables 17 and 18 also fell into the same range of magnitude as 11, 12, and 15, 16. These two survey items addressed the "turbulence" and "unpredictability" of the external environment. The relationship seemed to confirm that as respondents perceived the external environment as "stable" or "peaceful" they tended to view the environment as "predictable."
Perhaps the next most interesting variable relationships can be seen in the responses to item 24. This item asked the respondents to evaluate their own certainty as to whether or not the ratings given to the factors in the survey were the "same as the 'official' institutional position." The range of correlations produced in this column were low. This weak set of correlations led to an interpretation which recognized that respondents did not think that their responses were similar to the official position of the institution. A second interpretation for the weak relationships could be that respondents did not know what the "official institutional" response was. Third, but probably least plausibly, the respondents were not sure what organizational "position" was within their own group.

The next step of analysis involved examining the communality and eigenvalues of the data. Communality is an effort to determine if the variance for a specific variable can be accounted for by a combination of all other variables. Since the list in Table 3 contains figures that are very similar, these data suggest that the variables are somewhat independent.

The eigenvalues of the factors shown in Table 4 indicated that there were five factors that accounted for 65% of the variability within the set. Factor one accounts for 35% of the variability associated with the instrument.

A scree test (Fig. 1) visually presents the percentage of variance attributable to each of the 24 factors. Figure 1 presents this graph. The five factors that were introduced in Table 4 are shown to account for the major portion of the cumulative percentage
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of variance. In addition, the greatest portion of the percentage of variance was shown to be accounted by the first three factors.

Factor 1 had the strongest loading of all the factors. The variables 6, 8, 9, and 13 all registered loadings of .7 or higher. These variables all had loadings on the remaining four columns that were close to zero. This suggested that there was one major factor that was in operation in the continuing education organizations.

These four variables addressed informal processes of the organization. They dealt with the fluidity of information flow, the flexibility of management style, general social environment and the perceived organizational health of the continuing education organizations.

The common thread running through these variables was one that could be described as the ability of an organization to process information in an open manner within a supportive social atmosphere. Variable 13 directly addressed the question of the "Organizational health of the unit." Since the loading on this item was at the same level as the other three items, it seemed safe to say that respondents
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equated item 13 (organizational health) with the first three significant items.

The result seemed to present a factor which could be called "organizational health" at work within continuing education organizations. The nature of the factor seemed to have to do with the general openness and trust within the unit between groups and individuals which fostered a free flow of information. Administrative style within this framework was seen as being flexible and adaptable.

Finally, the strongest loadings were on items in the internal processes section of the survey. The sections with items relating to external environments and organizational structure had no strong loadings. The conclusion which seemed logical was that the construct of "organizational health" was related to the internal processes of a continuing education group which affected the perceptions that individuals had of their organizations.
CHAPTER V. FINDINGS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The general purpose of this research was to assess the usefulness of an instrument created by Cameron (1978) in evaluating possible dimensions of effectiveness in higher education organizations. The research focused upon an adapted instrument aimed at organizational leaders in these continuing education groups. With the increase in age of college students the ability of a continuing education organization to operate as an effective delivery system of higher education has become imperative. For many years private sector business groups have had in place programs to evaluate the effectiveness of their organizations. Cameron's original attempt to make use of some of the same kinds of tools and approaches in assessing higher education organizations was a pioneering study that inspired this investigation. Since higher education organizations operate in environments different from private sector businesses, Cameron's original study as well as the current investigation were undertaken as exploratory works. This study attempts to suggest some possible ways by which leaders of a particular kind of higher education organization might begin to assess their groups.

The research accomplished in this study attempted to answer the following questions:
-what special characteristics of continuing education organizations distinguish them from other kinds of higher education groups?

-what does the literature suggest are dimensions or characteristics of higher education organizations?

-which of the special characteristics of higher education organizations are most relevant to the environment and processes of continuing education organizations?

-what is the usefulness of these characteristics or dimensions when applied to the specialized realm of continuing education organizations?

In the interests of manageability and simplicity of design in this initial study, only one dimension from the original study was used. The characteristic called "organizational health" became the basis of investigation into the areas suggested by the research questions. This characteristic provided the basis for an instrument that was mailed to the entire population of continuing education leaders in a seven-state midwestern region. Responses received totaled 137.

Factor analysis was used as the statistical approach to data evaluation. The object was to determine if it could be said that a single factor was at work in the study. That factor might serve as an indicator of the value of the survey as it began to suggest ways to get at assessing the effectiveness of continuing education organizations.
Findings: General Trends

The simplification of the data that was accomplished through the statistical process of factor analysis was useful in answering some of the research questions and not others. The findings of the study were tempered by some generalized trends in the numbers. These trends affected the strength of the statistics produced, and thus the conclusions drawn from them.

The first trend noted was that the statistical readings produced by the data were not strong. Readings of statistics such as correlation coefficients tended to be only of moderate strength. A great many of these readings were below a level of .3 which can be considered to be insignificant. With this in mind a reading of the data that would show some contrasting results had to be made on a comparative basis. That is, if a correlation was in the .6 range it was considered to be relatively strong in relation to the overall pattern of statistics.

A second trend that was noticed was that the range of scores on the items tended to be fairly consistent and somewhat positive. Most respondents seemed to answer in a way that presented a favorable picture of their organization. There were many responses that showed on the highest positive end of the scale on a given item. There were relatively few correspondingly negative responses. The overall pattern of response was homogeneous. The standard deviations of the individual items did not exhibit widely differing readings.

These findings led to a series of inferences regarding the nature of the population of respondents. The first inference seemed
to be that the respondents shared in the same positive view of their organizations. That is, they for the most part saw their group as running well as an organization. The second inference is an off-shoot from the first. It is that since the responses were generally similar, did this reflect a true evaluation of conditions? Or was it perhaps a perception by an individual of conditions as they would like to think they existed. This is a limitation which was recognized from the beginning as being insurmountable in this kind of survey.

A third inference relating to the population of respondents was linked to the number of requests for the results of the study. About one-third of the respondents asked that they be sent a synopsis of the study. This suggested that the interest of the respondents represented a lack of available study results on topics in their field. When the literature of continuing education was considered for an earlier chapter, it became apparent that hard data regarding any aspect of this area was just now beginning to appear in print. This population exhibited a great interest in building a knowledge base that related to the area of organizational practices and processes. On a demographic basis 95 men and 42 women returned questionnaires. This represented a rate of return of 67%. This trend generally followed the breakdown of men and women in the original mailing.

Findings: Internal Conditions

The first fourteen items on the survey were aimed at assessing the internal conditions of the continuing education organization as those conditions were perceived by a unit leader. A general profile of these conditions seemed to show that the majority of respondents
felt that the conditions within their organization tended to be positive, productive and harmonious. The fact that the greatest percentage of response on any given item tended to be just one notch below the positive end of the scale infers this description. The range of responses appearing at the positive end of the scale varies from a low of 35% on item one to a high of 51% on item eight.

The responses to these questions suggested that continuing education leaders felt that they managed organizations in which the following kinds of conditions held sway. In the realm of interpersonal relationships the respondents felt that there was a good social environment with much trust among people in the unit. They felt that people were treated fairly and recognized for good work. They felt that the flow of information was generally "authentic" as opposed to "screened." They also felt that feedback was most usually available. This left people inside the unit with a secure sense of being informed.

In terms of the conditions within the organization which characterized the management processes, the respondents had generally positive responses. These responses tended to be more heavily weighted as higher percentages of respondents placed their evaluations at the higher end of the scale. The leaders of these units felt that they managed an organization that contained little conflict and made use of high conflict resolution practices. These managers seemed to feel that the administration of the unit was characterized by flexibility and was open to change. They also felt that the style of management allowed for individual autonomy in the group and discouraged rigid patterns of control and supervision.
A possible explanation for the positive nature of the evaluation of internal conditions within the respondents' organizations may be related to the way in which these groups must gather resources. Funding of continuing education organizations is usually the individual responsibility of each group. Unlike other groups within a college or university, continuing education subunits are responsible for raising their own funds. This may cause a general esprit de corps to develop that leaves no room for wasting resources on internal conflict.

Findings: External Environment

Section two of the survey aimed at assessing the responses of those questioned regarding how they perceived the environment in which the organization functioned. As was noted earlier on, the external environment has a strong impact on continuing education organizations. This is due perhaps to the fact that most of these units must earn their own keep. The interesting finding in this area was that these managers tended to see the external environment in positive ways. That is, their responses seemed to indicate that they felt that the external environment was not hostile, or unpredictable.

A possible interpretation of this finding may speak more to the quality of leadership provided by the unit leaders than to an objective evaluation of the external environment. That is, in order for a manager to be successful with the organizational endeavors of these higher education organizations there must be a perception on that individual's part that they were not powerless when coping with the demands of the environment. This could suggest a reason for the positive responses of managers to the items in this section.
The findings discussed in this section suggest that a characteristic of continuing education leaders is a positive view of the external environment in which they function successfully as an organizational entity. Presumably this environment includes relations with the parent institution as well as the general public.

**Findings: Organizational Structure**

The positive trend of responses found in the first two sections of the survey was continued in the third section. This part dealt with the perceptions of unit leaders of the organizational structure of the group. The questions in this section aimed at assessing the rigidness of the governing processes of the group. These items asked the manager to respond to what can be seen as a sense of "wholeness" among the members of the unit. Another way of describing what was being evaluated in this section is to say that within the organization, individual members had in some way personalized the goals and mission of the organization.

The first three items asked for evaluation on the sense of "mission," "unique identity," and "satisfying internal processes" of the organization. The responses were at the same high end of the scale and were even stronger with regard to positive responses than answers to previous items.

The fourth question in this section seemed to serve the purpose of checking the perception of the individual respondent as that person evaluated the previous three questions. It asked for an assessment by the person of the certainty they felt relating to their evaluation. More specifically the item checked to see if the ratings given were in
line with the "official institutional positions." The ratings were at the positive end of the scale. An inference that may be made is that these leaders perceived that their management of the organization was strong, productive and synchronized with the demands of the group itself and those of the environment.

Implications of the Factor Analysis

The results of the quantitative analysis performed on the data seemed to be less than explicit. As noted in the previous chapter the independent variables six, eight, nine and thirteen loaded heaviest on factor one. This set of items present two conclusions. The first is that these items all have information flow within the organization as a common thread. The second is that these items all come from the first part of the survey which assessed the "internal conditions" of the organization. None of the other items in the survey loaded as heavily as these four.

The implication of this is that the survey in actuality is assessing only the internal conditions of the organization. Secondly, the remaining parts of the survey dealing with "external environment" and "organizational structure" are of little use in assessing "organizational health" of continuing education organizations. The usefulness of the survey may therefore be contained within the first fourteen items which attempt to assess the "internal conditions" of the organization.

Cameron's original description (1978a) of this dimension noted that the purpose of this was to assess the "benevolence, vitality and viability of internal processes and practices" at the organization (p. 51). The independent variables noted above seem to address this
construct in an adequate manner. The internal environment item loaded heavily as did the items relating to social environment and information flow. Item thirteen directly addressed the evaluation of the "organizational health" of the group. The loadings on these imply that the construct dimension called "organizational health" by Cameron could be the factor that is at work in continuing education organizations.

A second implication from these results is that when one is assessing the "organizational health" of a group, it is the internal process and practices that one is evaluating. Correspondingly the evaluation of organizational structure and external environment is not relevant to an assessment of this type.

A third implication is that the items which are useful in assessing "organizational health" are not tangible. The items in the section assessing internal conditions address evaluation of conditions which are not readily quantifiable as a production quota or an organizational chart would be. They are subjective evaluations of real but intangible factors that affect all members of the group. The implication is that the "organizational health" of a group is dependent on subjective evaluations of intangible conditions.

This implication, when examined against the background of the literature, draws support from concepts relating to open systems theory. The significance of this theory of organizational operation centers on the flow of information and the internal flexibility of the group. These frameworks present the fundamental propositions of this theory.

A fourth implication is that in continuing education organizations, it is the intangible factors that were spoken of above which
can produce a useful evaluation of the health of an organization. A corollary to this is that it is the informal rather than the formal practices and processes that contain within themselves the substance of organizational health in continuing education organizations.

An additional point should be made. It may be considered, due to the only moderate correlations produced, that the factor at work is better named something other than "organizational health." It could be said that this instrument is only moderately useful when evaluating continuing education subunits.

**Recommendations**

The implications of the findings in the study lead to the presentation of several recommendations. Some relate to the continuation of the line of inquiry started here. Some relate to practical responses which continuing education organizations can use to affect the health of their organizations.

Regarding further research, it seems that the items in the first part of the survey present some valuable insights into what is important to organizational assessment. They also identify the major framework within which the evaluation of effectiveness in continuing education organizations can occur. But this is only a beginning. A future study might be conducted by beginning with the content of the items in this survey, and asking leaders in the field to evaluate them and suggest other categories which they consider are important to the effectiveness of continuing education organizations. Questions might then be constructed and tested regarding their validity in the continuing education arena.
Regarding the practical responses which may be appropriate to continuing education organizations as based on the study, it seems that staff development programs may be useful. Since the factors which affect the health of an organization are shown to be intangible and based in personal responses to informal processes and practices, staff training in these areas may be appropriate. Topics such as conflict resolution, problem solving techniques, stress management and team building seem to be relevant. Other areas such as professional development may also have beneficial outcomes for the health of the organization. When the staff feels as if they have opportunity to advance themselves in their profession it can have positive effects on the intangible practices of the group through a change in individual perceptions.

Further research is needed in the field of effectiveness in higher education organizations. (It should be noted here that Cameron's original statistics regarding validity and reliability for the dimension organizational health were only moderate.) The special nature of these organizations seems to affect the ability of any single approach to assessment to produce items that are valid across a continuum of these organizations. Some of the approaches used in the business arena are adaptable to these kinds of assessment, but not without special adjustment. Cameron's work and this study are only a beginning.
APPENDIX A
Section I

THIS SECTION ASKS YOU TO RATE YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF THE GENERAL DAY-TO-DAY FUNCTIONS OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT WITH WHICH YOU ARE INVOLVED. PLEASE Respond By CIRCLING THE NUMBER THAT BEST REPRESENTS YOUR PERCEPTIONS OF EACH ITEM. IF YOU AGREE STRONGLY WITH ONE END OF THE SCALE, CIRCLE A NUMBER CLOSER TO THAT END OF THE SCALE. IF YOU FEEL NEUTRAL ABOUT THE ITEM, CIRCLE A NUMBER NEAR THE MIDDLE OF THE SCALE.

For example:

***How is the weather in this town?

warm, bright, and sunny 1 2 3 4 5 6 7  
cold, wet, and dismal

HOW DO YOU PERCEIVE THE FOLLOWING:

1. **Student/faculty relationships**
   - unusual closeness, lots of informal interaction, mutual personal concern
   - no closeness, mostly instrumental relations, little informal interaction
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

2. **Interdepartmental relations in the unit**
   - lots of coordination, joint planning, collaboration, no friction
   - no joint activity, conflict, lack of coordination and communication
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

3. **General pattern of supervision and control**
   - rigid control, strict supervision, pressure for conformity
   - respect for differences, personal freedom, individual autonomy
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7

4. **Equity of treatment and rewards**
   - people treated fairly and rewarded equitably
   - favoritism and inequity present, unfair treatment exists
   - 1 2 3 4 5 6 7
5. Recognition and rewards received for good work from superiors
recognition received
for good work,
rewarded for success

no rewards for good work,
no one recognizes success

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

6. The amount of information or feedback you receive
feel informed, in-the-
know, information is
always available

feel isolated, out-of-it
information is never
available

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

7. Type of information that is typical
guarded, screened,
cautious, formal

open, authentic,
personal, free

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

8. The general social environment
cooperative, supportive,
mutual concern for
others, humane

competitive, no support,
unsympathic, "every man
for himself."

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

9. The flexibility of the administration
willing to change,
adaptable, progressive,
flexible

rigid, unwilling to change,
stagnant, unyielding

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

10. General levels of trust among people here
high suspicion, fear,
distrust, insecurity

high trust, security,
openness

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

11. Conflicts and friction in the unit
large amount of con-
flict, disagreements,
friction

no friction or conflicts,
friendly, collaborative

1 2 3 4 5 6 7

12. Resolution of disagreements or conflicts
imposition, avoidance,
dictum, suppression;
bad feelings result

face-to-face, compromise,
democratically; positive
feelings result

1 2 3 4 5 6 7
13. Organizational health of unit
   college runs smoothly, healthy organization, productive internal functioning
   college runs poorly, unhealthy organization, unproductive internal functioning
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

14. Long term planning and goal setting
   much goal-directed activity, long term planning, continuous goal assessments
   no goal-directed activity, no planning, no goal assessments
   1 2 3 4 5 6 7

Section II

PLEASE RATE THE EXTERNAL ENVIRONMENT OR MILIEU OF THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT WITH WHICH YOU ARE INVOLVED IN THE FOLLOWING SCALES. CIRCLE THE APPROPRIATE NUMBER

15. Imposes regulations 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Allows autonomy
16. Controlling, dominating 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Unobtrusive, unimposing
17. Turbulent, changing 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Stable, peaceful
18. Unpredictable 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Predictable
19. Accepting 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Rejecting
20. Hostile, competitive 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 Cooperative, supportive

Section III

PLEASE INDICATE TO WHAT EXTENT THE FOLLOWING STATEMENTS ARE TYPICAL OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE OF THIS UNIT. PLEASE USE THE SCALE BELOW FOR YOUR RATINGS

Very true or highly typical of this institution
   (7)
Neither typical nor atypical
   (5)
Very untrue, or highly atypical of this institution
   (3)
21. ____ Most people view this unit as having a special mission or role to perform.

22. ____ There is a general sense that this unit possesses a unique identity.

23. ____ Having productive and satisfying internal processes and practices in the unit is important.

24. ____ How certain are you that your ratings of the importance of the above factors is the same as the "official institutional position?" (Please circle the appropriate response)

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<tr>
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<td>Neither certain</td>
<td>Very uncertain</td>
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</table>

PERSONAL DATA SECTION
Select appropriate response

I. Sex
   ____ Male
   ____ Female

II. In what year were you born? _____

III. Education
   ____ Bachelors degree
   ____ Masters degree
   ____ Doctorate

IV. Length of employment in this continuing education unit
   ____ years.
LIST OF REFERENCES


