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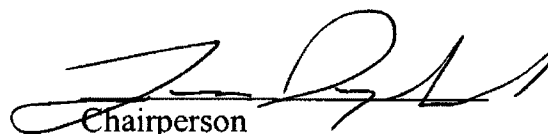
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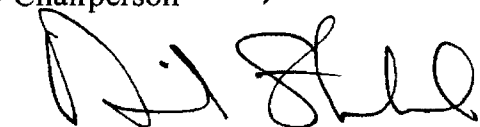
**An Investigation of Perceived Quality of Life
in School of Education Master Degree Students at The University of Montana**

By
Calan Roy Gibney
B.S., Ithaca College, 2002

Presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the degree of
Master of Science
The University of Montana
May 2004

Approved by:


Chairperson


Dean, Graduate School

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Thesis Abstract

Gibney, Calan, M.S., May 2004

Health and Human Performance

Investigation of Perceived Quality of Life in School of Education Master Degree Students at The University of Montana

Thesis Chair: Laura Dybdal, Ph.D. ^{LD}

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived quality of life of graduate students enrolled in the School of Education at the University of Montana during the spring 2004 semester. The study assessed whether a difference existed between demographic characteristics and support, as well as program satisfaction and attitude towards graduate school. Qualitative data assessed the whether graduate school at The University of Montana in the School of Education affects ones overall perceived quality of life, as well as negative and positive influences on ones quality of life. The GS-QOL survey, developed by the researcher was distributed to a convenience sample of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana.

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the quantitative data. A consistent difference was found between gender and perceived support received from friends. There was also a consistent difference found between in-state/out-of-state status students and perceived support from graduate advisor. Other relevant findings included the number of hours per week graduate students engaged in physical activity to maintain or improve physical health and physical activity level change since entering graduate school. A consistent difference was found between graduate programs and participation in graduate department activities.

Qualitative data was analyzed by interpreting themes and trends within the data. The theme that surfaced was that graduate school affected students' overall perceived quality of life. Themes that were also noticed were lack of time in the day, too busy because of graduate school, negative financial impacts, negative stress, positive family impact, positive environment, and furthering education as a positive impact.

The results of this study may possibly help the School of Education and The University of Montana know and understand its student's quality of life better. With this knowledge further research could be done to implement programs that can help and improve graduate students quality of life.

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To my friends and “wicked awesome” roommates who were always there to listen and support me.

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Chapter I

Introduction to the Study

More students are continuing their education after receiving their bachelor degree (NCES, 1999). Historically, students graduating from a college or university with a four-year degree were considered on top of their field (Brown, 2001). Presently, however, students continue to go on to graduate programs in search for better jobs, as a job requirement, and/or to further their knowledge in their chosen field (Brown, 2001). A master's degree today is almost a necessity for most professionals, including business, education, psychology, science, recreation management and geology (Brown, 2001). Some students continue to graduate school immediately following attainment of their bachelor's degree and some take a few years off, and still others go back to school after years of a professional career. Whatever the reason for continuing education, a major concern is the well-being of students (Coffman, & Gilligan, 2002).

Quality of life can be defined as “a person's sense of well-being that stems from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the areas of life that are important to him/ her” (Ferrans & Powers, 1990). The United States government thought health related quality of life (HRQOL) was important enough that they included HRQOL as a section of Healthy People 2000 (Healthy People, 2000). Well-being and quality of life can be traced back to Aristotle and the belief that well-being is the ultimate goal of all intentional action (Bernstein, 1998). To understand a person's overall satisfaction with life requires looking separately at the major life functions, such as support from others, physical fitness, and stress, which all have a unique and significant impact (Kahn & Juster, 2002).

There have been numerous quality of life studies of undergraduate students including the assessment of self efficacy, stress (Coffman, & Gilligan, 2002), support (Demakis, & McAdams, 1994), binge drinking (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003), and eating disorders (Arriaza, & Mann, 2001). Health behaviors in college students such as drinking, smoking, and eating habits have received great attention in the United states as well as eastern and western Europe (Vaez & Laflamme, 2003). College students also engage in behaviors that put them at risk for a number of health problems, for instance sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), obesity, (Brener & Gowda, 2001), and use of illegal drugs and other substances (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003).

There is little research on the quality of life of graduate students. There have been a few studies investigating graduate students fitness levels, (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002) teaching assignments versus research, (Kuther, 2003) assessment of social support, faculty mentoring and relationships with faculty (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). The relationship between faculty and graduate students at universities is extremely important (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Graduate students that receive some mentoring tend to do better then those who do not receive mentoring at all (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Ph.D. and professional students reported receiving more mentoring then did Master level students (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Graduate students also reported having difficulty finding time for exercise (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). Female body fat percentages increased significantly and men's lower extremity strength decreased at slower speeds after entering graduate school for a year (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). Fitness (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002) and social

support (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999) are just some of the factors that affect graduate students lives.

The University of Montana has limited data pertaining to graduate students' quality of life from the 2000 National College Health Assessment. A sample of 42 graduate students at The University of Montana participated in the National College Health Assessment during the year 2000 (NCHA, 2000). The majority (93%) of those in the sample reported their health as good, very good, or excellent (NCHA, 2000). However, 57% of the sample also reported three or less days of participation in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise or 30 minutes of moderate exercise (NCHA, 2000). Almost 74 % of Graduate students included in the study reported feeling so depressed one or more times within the last school year it was difficult to function (NCHA, 2000). Just over half (51%) of the sample of graduate students reported feeling hopeless one or more times during the last school year (NCHA, 2000). Depression, anxiety disorder, or seasonal affective disorder was experienced by 36.5% of the sample of graduate students (NCHA, 2000).

Quality of life is an ancient concept dating back at least to Aristotle (Bernstein, 1998), but it sometimes requires looking separately at life's majors functions, such as marriage, family, and environment (Kahn and Juster, 2002). College and graduate students are faced with issues everyday that can affect their quality of life (Kahn & Juster, 2002). Therefore, this research study examined the perceived quality of life of graduate students within the School of Education at The University of Montana.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceived quality of life of graduate students enrolled in the School of Education at the University of Montana during the spring 2004 semester. The study assessed whether a difference existed between demographic characteristics and support, as well as program satisfaction and attitude towards graduate school. The research study also assessed whether graduate school at The University of Montana in the School of Education affects ones overall perceived quality of life. Finally, the study examined the positive and negative influences that affected School of Education graduate students overall perceived quality of life at The University of Montana.

Need for the Study

The graduate school at The University of Montana had limited information on graduate students, except for demographics, previous degrees, enrollment numbers and dates, graduation date, and attrition rates. There was no information concerning University of Montana graduate student's quality of life. Thus, before new programs to improve quality of life can be created, it was critical that graduate students' quality of life be examined. This study helped determine if the perceived quality of life of graduate students changes from when they first enter graduate school at The University of Montana. It is important to study the quality of life in graduate students because of increasing concerns among graduate schools about depression and attrition rates among students.

Statement of the Problem

The problem in this study was to determine if being enrolled in a School of Education Masters degree program at The University of Montana affects the perceived quality of life of graduate students.

Research Questions

The problem statement was divided into five research questions.

1. Is there a difference between demographic characteristics and the amount of support School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana receive?
2. Is there a difference between type of Master degree program and reported attitude towards graduate school among School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana?
3. How do School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana rate their satisfaction with the graduate program in which they are enrolled?
4. Does graduate school within the School of Education at The University of Montana affect the perceived quality of life of its students?
5. What are positive and negative influences that affect graduate students' enrolled in the School of Education at The University of Montana overall perceived quality of life?

Delimitations

The study has a number of delimitations:

1. Only students attending The University of Montana-Missoula campus who are pursuing a master's degree in the School of Education classes during the spring 2004 semester were included in the study.
2. Distance education students were not participants in this research study.
3. Participation was voluntary and a convenience sample was used.
4. The time and place the survey was taken.

Limitations

The following limitations were involved in the proposed study:

1. It was not possible for the researcher to insure that subjects honestly and accurately record their perceived quality of life, since it is a self-report survey.
2. It was not possible to know the state of mind of the person filling out the survey.

Definitions of Key Terms

Quality of life (QOL): "a person's sense of well-being that stems from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the areas of life that are important to him/ her" (Ferrans and Powers, 1990, p.15).

Perceived quality of life: An individuals' perception on their overall quality of life.

Mental Health: A person's attitude, beliefs, and values with the ability to think clearly, reason objectively, analyze critically, and making sound, reasonable decisions that take into consideration all aspects of the situation (Donatelle, 2002).

Emotional Health: A person's self-esteem, self-confidence, self-efficacy, trust, love, and other emotional reactions and responses and reaction to life, expressed in a controlled and appropriate manner (Donatelle, 2002).

Physical Health: The ability to perform normal activities of daily living including characteristics such as body size and shape, sensory acuity and responsiveness, susceptibility to disease and disorders, body functioning, physical fitness, and recuperative abilities (Donatelle, 2002).

Social Health: Interacts and social bonds with others and the ability to adapt to social situations, whether listening and/ or expressing oneself appropriately (Donatelle, 2002).

Spiritual Health: A guiding sense of meaning or value in life and understanding and expressing ones purpose in life belief in a supreme being or a specified way of living prescribed by a particular religion (Donatelle, 2002).

Environmental Health: A person's daily surroundings and appreciation of the external environment and the role individuals play in preserving, protecting, and improving environmental conditions (Donatelle, 2002).

Chapter II

Review of Literature

The purpose of this study was to examine the overall perceived quality of life in University of Montana graduate students. The review of current and useful literature can be broken into four sections. The sections are as follows: 1.) Quality of life, 2.) Quality of life of college students, 3.) Quality of life of graduate students and 4.) University of Montana graduate students health assessment.

Quality of Life

Justification for well-being can be traced back to Aristotle and the belief that well-being (eudaimonia) is the ultimate goal of all intentional action and that we should and do live the “good life” and the life that makes us the best off (Bernstein, 1998). The activities that take place every day, week, month and year have a dramatic effect on life satisfaction and can change your level of life satisfaction or well-being (Kahn & Juster 2002).

Quality of life is an important and growing concern in the United States and abroad. Nearly eight years ago, the United States Surgeon General established goals to work towards achieving a better quality of life for all Americans (AAHA/ SOPHE, 1996).

Well-being, or quality of life, is a continuing goal for individuals and a major criterion for the evaluation of governments and societies. As a research concept, however it has been marked by persisting problems of definition and measurement and by uncertainties about its changing pattern over the life course. The supreme criterion by which a government can be judged is the quality of life

its citizens experience, including, of course, the duration of life itself. In life expectancy and in material standards, the 20th century was remarkable.

Especially in the prosperous and industrialized sectors of the world--the United States, Scandinavia, Japan, and Western Europe--the magnitude of positive change has been without precedent (Kahn & Juster, 2002, p.627).

The United States Center for Disease Control (CDC) conducted the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance system (BRFSS) to determine the health related quality of life (HRQOL) of adults living in the United States, District of Columbia and Puerto Rico (CDC, 2000). Participants were asked to record how they felt mentally and physically about each day for thirty straight days (CDC, 2000).

The reported average of healthy days for adults in this study was an average of 24.7 healthy days and 5.3 unhealthy days out of 30 days (CDC, 2000). Younger adults ages 18-24 were more likely to report mentally unhealthy days in comparison with older adults, but older adults report more physical unhealthy days than younger adults (CDC, 2000). The BRFSS Puerto Rico participants who reported a normal Body Mass Index (BMI) had fewer unhealthy days than those who reported BMI greater or equal to 30 (CDC, 2000). College graduates, Asian Americans (English-speaking), and people reporting annual household incomes above \$50,000 reported the highest average number of healthy days (CDC, 2000). Conversely, the people who reported that they were unemployed, separated, aged 75 years or older, or with less than a high school education reported the least number of healthy days (CDC, 2000). Seasonal patterns also appear to impact the number of reported healthy days (CDC, 2000). A 10% difference in the number of healthy days was reported in the months of January, February, and March as

compared with summer months of July, August, and September (CDC, 2000). Another significant finding was the reported increase in Frequent Mental Distress (FMD), which is 14 or more mentally unhealthy days reported within 30 days (CDC, 2000). Women both young and old reported a higher rate of FMD, whereas this trend has not been seen in men (CDC, 2000). The CDC findings from the BRFSS in 2000 suggest that race, seasonal patterns, BMI, financial status, gender, and education influence health related quality of life (CDC, 2000).

To understand a person's overall satisfaction with life requires looking separately at the major life functions, such as marriage, family, work, income, housing, neighborhood, community and other factors, which all have a unique significance and impact (Kahn & Juster, 2002).

Health Risk Behaviors of College Students

Health behaviors in college students such as drinking, smoking, and eating habits have received great attention in the United states as well as eastern and western Europe, but little is known about quality of life (Vaez & Laflamme, 2003). Entering college can require many adjustments to stressors such as demanding coursework, time away from home, diverse roommates and living situations, time management, and financial obligations (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003). All of these stressors and adjustments can affect one's overall quality of life. College students also engage in behaviors that put them at risk for a number of health problems, such as unintentional injuries, violence, sexually transmitted diseases (STDs), Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV), obesity, (Brener & Gowda, 2001) and eating disorders and disordered eating patterns (Arriaza & Mann, 2001). These factors in addition to academic competition, job market, and limited

appreciation from teachers, friends, and family may account for the development of a variety of health problems. (Vaez & Laflamme, 2003) Stress, limited appreciation from others, violence, and sexually transmitted diseases are just a few of the health problems college students may encounter. Another health problem that can affect college students is the use and abuse of drugs.

Environmental conditions, such as less parental control and living situation, of college student life may influence the recreational use of drugs (Babcock & Byrne, 2000). Data from 119 US colleges and universities in the Harvard School of Public Health College Alcohol study found, significant increases in the percentage of students using marijuana in the past thirty days (from 13% to 17%), past year (23% to 30%) and lifetime (41% to 47%) between 1993 and 2001, with most of the increase between 1993 and 1997 (Mohlror-Kuo, Lee, & Wechsler, 2003). Methylphenidate has also become readily accessible in the college environment (Babcock & Byrne, 2000). Research regarding the recreational use of methylphenidate in college revealed more than 16% of the students reported they had tried methylphenidate recreationally, with use being more common among traditional students than among non-traditional students (Babcock & Byrne, 2000). Among traditional-age college students, reports of methylphenidate use were roughly equivalent to reports of cocaine and amphetamine use (Babcock & Byrne, 2000).

Ecstasy was the second most likely illicit drug to be used, marijuana being the first in college settings (Boyd, McCabe, and d'Arcy, 2003). Ecstasy use has increased dramatically among college students in the US; the prevalence of past year ecstasy use rose from 2.8% to 4.7% between 1997 and 1999, an increase of 69% (Strote, Lee, &

Wechsler, 2002). This increase was observed across nearly all subgroups of student and college type and a smaller sample revealed that the increase continued in 2000 (Strote, Lee, & Wechsler, 2002). Unlike other illicit drug users, ecstasy users were not academic underachievers and their satisfaction with education was not different from that of non-ecstasy users (Strote, Lee, & Wechsler, 2002). Approximately 10% of one research sample used ecstasy in their lifetime; 7% had used within the past year and 3% within the past month (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003). Ecstasy users to consider arts and parties as important, religion as less important, spend more times socializing with friends, and spend less times studying (Strote, Lee, & Wechsler, 2002). One study indicated that while men and women were equally likely to have used ecstasy, excessive partying, grade point average, and sexual identity were strongly correlated with ecstasy use (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003). The number of sexual partners increased the likelihood of ecstasy use, as did self-reported sexual identity; gay, lesbian, and bisexual students were more than two times more likely to have used ecstasy in the past year (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003). Ecstasy users were more likely to have multiple sexual partners, smoke cigarettes, engage in binge drinking, and use marijuana (Strote, Lee, & Wechsler, 2002). Significant relationships existed between ecstasy use and other substance use such as marijuana use, cigarette smoking and binge drinking (Boyd, McCabe, & d'Arcy, 2003).

The use of alcohol, but not cigarettes, marijuana and cocaine; is higher among college students than among non-college age-mates (O'Malley, Lloyd, & Johnston, 2002). Research indicates that approximately 80% of college students drink and that half of college student drinkers engage in heavy episodic drinking (Goldman, 2002).

Approximately two out of five American college students were heavy drinkers, defined

as having had five or more drinks (a 12 oz. bottle or can of beer, a 5 oz. glass of wine, or a 4 oz. shot of distilled spirits or a mixed drink) in a row in the past 2 weeks (O'Malley; Lloyd, & Johnston, 2002). Alcohol use is higher among male than female students (O'Malley; Lloyd, & Johnston, 2002). White students had the highest levels in heavy drinking, black students had the lowest and Hispanic students were intermediate in heavy drinking (O'Malley; Lloyd, & Johnston, 2002). Excessive alcohol intake among college students is associated with a variety of adverse consequences: fatal and nonfatal injuries; alcohol poisoning; blackouts; academic failure; violence, including rape and assault; unintended pregnancy; sexually transmitted diseases, including HIV/AIDS; property damage; and vocational and criminal consequences that could jeopardize future job prospects (Goldman, 2002).

Changes in alcohol consumption were significantly associated with changes in gonorrhea and syphilis rates from 1983 to 1998 (Chesson, Harrison, & Stall, 2003). Each 1% increase in per capita alcohol consumption in one study was associated with increases of about 0.4% to 0.7% in reported gonorrhea incidence rates and 1.8% to 3.6% in reported syphilis incidence rates (Chesson, Harrison, & Stall, 2003). The association between alcohol and risky sex is well documented at the level of the individual and might hold true at the population level as well (Chesson, Harrison, & Stall, 2003). College students drinking excessive amounts of alcohol may encounter undesirable consequences, which can affect the rest of their life. One consequence of excessive drinking can be contracting a sexually transmitted infection.

Each year, at least 3 million new cases of sexually transmitted infections (STIs) are reported among persons in the United States who are under the age of 25 years

(Barth, Cook, Downs, Switzer, & Fischhoff, 2002). Although the exact number of STIs among college students is unknown, college students frequently engage in sexual behaviors that place them at increased risk of STIs and any delay in diagnosis and treatment can increase the risk of disease consequences, including spreading the infection to others (Barth, Cook, Downs, Switzer, & Fischhoff, 2002). College men, of whom a large majority are sexually active, have a wide range of men's reproductive and sexual health (MRSH) needs, including some that are particular to their age and social environment (Forrest, 2001). College students often delay or avoid seeking testing for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), even if the services are readily available (Barth, Cook, Downs, Switzer, & Fischhoff, 2002). The most frequently mentioned factors were negative consequences of testing and perceived vulnerability to infection (Barth, Cook, Downs, Switzer, & Fischhoff, 2002). Other issues that influence decision making of getting tested included perceived benefits, perceived severity of diseases, public knowledge and opinion, social norms, provider characteristics, test-site characteristics, and personal considerations (Barth, Cook, Downs, Switzer, & Fischhoff, 2002).

Along with all the other health problems that may arise in college students, there is also the problem of college students not receiving appropriate nutrition. In one study college students prevalence of vitamin C deficiency ranged from 1%-2% (Johnston, Solomon, & Corte, 1998). Those who had a vitamin C deficiency took in significantly fewer servings of fruits and vegetables than those with adequate vitamin C (Johnston, Solomon, & Corte, 1998). Smokers with a vitamin C deficiency were associated with fatigue and greater severity of respiratory tract infections (Johnston, Solomon, & Corte, 1998). A more recent study suggests that college women practice diet and health

behaviors that contradict the 1995 Dietary Guidelines for Americans (Anding, Suminski, & Boss, 2001). A study by Haberman and Luffey, 1998 findings report 76% of students ate the same foods day after day. Participants in another study reported diets that were nutritionally adequate but exceeded national recommendations for fat, sugar, and sodium (Anding, Suminski, & Boss, 2001). The nutrient intake of college students suggests that they are exceeding some dietary recommendation and lower on other dietary recommendations.

Nutrition is not the only place college students are not getting the recommended amount; daily exercise is also becoming a challenge. Participants in one study reported exercise habits that suggested that 66% had lifestyles that were sedentary (Anding, Suminski, & Boss, 2001). Another research study found 39% of the students reported exercising three or more times per week (Haberman & Luffey, 1998). The results of a research study indicates that college students were more active on weekdays than on the weekend and that participation in ambulatory physical activity did not differ between male and female students (Behrens & Dinger, 2003). Most 20-year-olds do not exercise, and approximately 50% of the participants in exercise programs drop out in the first 3 to 6 months (Sullum, Clark, & King, 2000). The results of another study indicate that although academic performance maybe enhanced in children as a result of fitness, the same does not hold true for college-age individuals (Plunk, Stephen, & Bowden, 2001).

Research in exercise and depression revealed that college women were more physically fit than men, but when it came to body image, women were less satisfied with their appearance (Adame, Radell, Johnson, & Cole, 2003). Women placed more importance on appearance and were more invested in a physically healthy lifestyle than

men (Adame, Radell, Johnson, & Cole, 2003). The study also found men's higher depression scores were associated with lower physical fitness and greater unhappiness with most areas of their body (Adame, Radell, Johnson, & Cole, 2003). Preoccupation with exercise management and weight among women is particularly evident on university campuses (Kitsantas, Gilligan, & Kamat, 2003). Researchers found a direct relation between the level of eating dysfunction and depression (Gutzwiller, Oliver, & Katz, 2003). In addition, students with eating disorders reported more self-regulated strategies for managing their weight, a lower level of life satisfaction, and higher levels of negative affect than did at-risk students or individuals with normal weights in one research study (Kitsantas, Gilligan, & Kamat, 2003). The amount of exercise, dysfunctional eating patterns, and depression can affect life satisfaction in college students.

College students face a variety of issues, but violence against students on college campuses is a growing concern. Twenty murders, 1,240 rapes, and 2,267 aggravated assaults were reported to have occurred on 4-year college campuses in 1998 (Chronicle of Higher Education, 2000). Although it is generally agreed that the extent of violence greatly exceeds these reported statistics (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002). Some still believe the impression of college campuses as sanctuaries for learning and scholarship are impermeable to the problems of violence that affect surrounding communities (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002). One research study of students enrolled at a major southern university found that 7% of study participants reported having been a victim of violent crime (Hughes, 2000). About 15% of the women participating in the study reported having been raped, and 29% reported having been physically or emotionally abused in a relationship (Hughes, 2000). Participants in the

same research study reported greater fear of stranger rape and stranger attack than being raped or being beaten up by someone they knew (Hughes, 2000).

Violence is not just against women in college, men are affected by violence as well. One recent survey found approximately 4.3% of the students surveyed reported that they had a working firearm at college, and 1.6% of them had been threatened with a gun while at school (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002). Students are more likely to have a firearm at college and to be threatened with a gun while at college if they are male, live off campus, binge drink, engage in risky and aggressive behavior after drinking, and attend institutions in regions of the United States where household firearm prevalence is high (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002). Having a firearm for protection is also strongly associated with being threatened with a gun while at college (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002). Students who reported having firearms at college disproportionately reported that they engaged in behaviors that put themselves and others at risk for injury (Miller, Hemenway, & Wechsler, 2002).

The first and second leading causes of death among the college age group are unintentional injury and homicide (Barrios, Everett, Simon, & Brener, 2000). Suicide is the third leading cause of death among the US college-aged population (Barrios, Everett, Simon, & Brener, 2000). While the overall suicide rate for the general population has remained stable since the 1950s, the rate for young adults has tripled (King, 2000). Suicide among college and university students is estimated to be 50% higher than for other Americans of comparable age (King, 2000). Students who reported considering suicide were significantly more likely than students who did not report considering suicide to carry a weapon and engage in a physical fight (Barrios, Everett, Simon, &

Brener, 2000). Twelve percent of students had seriously considered attempting suicide while 4% had seriously considered attempting suicide during the past 12 months and another 4% reported they had attempted suicide (King, 2000). The most frequently used method to attempt suicide was overdosing on pills (King, 2000). Students who felt emotionally close to at least one family member were significantly less likely to have ever seriously considered suicide or attempted suicide (King, 2000). Similarly, students who felt emotionally close to one friend were significantly less likely to have ever seriously considered suicide or attempted suicide (King, 2000). Most students report that if they were contemplating suicide, the first person they would turn to for help would be a friend, but less than one in three (31%) strongly believed that they could recognize a friend at risk for suicide. (King, 2000). Research suggests that the presence of emotional connections with family members and friends tends to protect university students from suicidal thoughts and attempts (King, 2000).

Research has suggested that social support may have an effect on perceived stress by providing a person with integration into the community and by enhancing overall well-being (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003). Social support of first year college students is said to have a direct beneficial effect on life satisfaction. (Demakis & Adams, 1994) Students reporting higher levels of stress also reported lower levels of life satisfaction (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003). The students that reported higher life satisfaction also indicated that they are more satisfied with their social support networks (Newland & Furnham, 1999). A reported study by Coffman and Gilligan (2003) suggested that higher levels of social support and lower levels of perceived stress were correlated with higher ratings of life satisfaction. Students that reported greater levels of stress also reported less

satisfaction with life. (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003) When higher levels of perceived social support and lower levels of perceived stress are reported, it is believed to enhance life satisfaction (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003).

Self-regulation, work, recreation, and leisure seem to be the best predictors of college students' psychological well-being (Hermon & Hazler, 1999). Students who experienced success in tasks that represent the self-regulation variable (managing stress, sense of worth, control, emotional responsiveness, management, intellectual challenge, nutrition, exercise, sense of gender, and cultural identity) were also the students who felt the most positive about the way their lives were going (Hermon & Hazler, 1999). Participation in activities in higher education that help students gain control of stress levels, intellectual challenges, nutritional needs, a sense of self-worth, gender and cultural identities, seem to increase satisfaction with personal and educational experiences (Hermon & Hazler, 1999).

Quality of Life of Graduate Students

Graduate education has received increasing attention in regards to enrollment management, distance education, and orientation (Poock, 2001). With graduate education enrollment increasing dramatically (NCES, 1999-2000), research of graduate students is increasing (Poock, 2001). Research on graduate students includes fitness and exercise levels (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002), relationships, support, and mentoring from faculty (Kelly and Schweitzer, 1999).

During the 1999-2000 academic year, enrollment in the United States reached 2.7 million graduate students and first-professional students (NCES, 1999-2000). Even with an increase in enrollment, tuition and fees for graduate students has more then doubled

since 1990 (NCES, 1999-2000). Eighty-two percent of full-time and full-year graduate students receive some form of financial assistance, including financial aid, grants, loans, assistantships or work study (NCES, 1999-2000). Seventy-nine percent of students at the Master level of graduate school received aid, with an average amount of 7,600 dollars (NCES, 1999-2000). Master students average loans for full-time and full-year students averaged about 14,800 dollars (NCES, 1999-2000) which leaves the graduate student searching for various ways to pay for education. There were 129,066 education degrees, 116,475 business degrees, and 43,617 health professions and related science degrees Master degrees conferred by degree-granting institutions in 2000-2001 (NCES, 2000-2001).

The increase of graduate students has put more strain on advisors, mentors, and universities (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). The relationship between faculty and graduate students at universities is extremely important (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Overall graduate students that receive some mentoring tend to do better than those who do not receive mentoring at all (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). International students reported receiving less mentoring than Caucasian or minority graduate students (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Ph.D. and professional students reported receiving more mentoring than did Master level students (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Students with lower GPA's reported receiving less mentoring than those with higher GPA's (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). The same research study showed that graduate students in physical sciences received more mentoring than other departments and disciplines (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Business graduate students reported less mentoring than graduate students in other fields (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). It is suggested that business students receive less

mentoring due to the structure of the programs and large number of business students (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999).

Graduate students may delay their completion of school in order to be more successful at teaching responsibilities, and may also risk their success in graduate school (Kuther, 2003). The conflicting climate of teaching versus the graduate students' progress is not helped by departments that favor research over teaching (Kuther, 2003). This type of environment can further complicate the academic environment of the aspiring academic graduate student (Kuther, 2003).

On top of the responsibilities, graduate students have difficulty finding the time to incorporate fitness principles during graduate school (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). A study of physical therapy graduate students found a significant increase in female body fat percentages, and also found men's lower extremity strength decreased at slower speeds of 60 degrees/ second (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). Physical therapy graduate students also have the knowledge of fitness and still have a difficult time finding time for exercise (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). The conclusion of this study was that physical therapy students should be allowed more time to participate in fitness activities during their graduate school years (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002).

With increasing demands placed on Faculty and staff, graduate students may be left searching for the support and mentoring they need to succeed in graduate school (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Time management, stress, jobs, teaching responsibilities (Kuther, 2003), physical fitness (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002), mentoring and

social support (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999) are just some of the factors that affect graduate students quality of lives.

University of Montana Graduate Students Health Assessment

The American College Health Association’s National College Health Assessment (NCHA) (2000) survey at The University of Montana showed a glimpse of the issues and health problems that may affect graduate students quality of life. There were 42 graduate students who participated in the survey and 90.5% were full-time students at the time of the survey (National College Health Assessment at The University of Montana, 2000). Marital status was the following; 32.5% classified themselves as single, 35% classified themselves as married, 27.5% classified themselves as engaged or committed dating relationship, and 5% classified themselves as divorced (National College Health Assessment at The University of Montana, 2000). The following chart describes the responses of the graduate students sampled at The University of Montana during the 2000 academic year.

Table 1: National College Health Assessment at The University of Montana Results from the Sample of Graduate Students in 2000

Graduate Students (n=42)	Percentage of sample
Graduate students working 20 or more hours a week.	35%
Graduate students rating their health as good, very good, and excellent.	93%
Graduate students reporting some form of health insurance.	85%
Graduate students describing their weight as “the right weight”.	55%
Graduate students reporting not strengthening or toning muscles any day within the past week.	46.5%
Graduate students reporting zero days of participation in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise or 30 minutes of moderate exercise	19%
Graduate students reporting 1 to 2 days of participation in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise or 30 minutes of moderate exercise	19%
Graduate students reporting 3 days of participation in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise or 30 minutes of moderate exercise	19%

Graduate students reporting 4 or more days of participation in at least 20 minutes of vigorous exercise or 30 minutes of moderate exercise	43%
Graduate students total credit card debt of 1,000 US dollars or more carried last month that they were responsible for paying.	41.8%
Graduate students feeling hopeless 1 or more times during the last school year.	51%
Graduate students feeling so overwhelmed by all they had to do within the last school year	88%
Graduate students who felt exhausted, but not from physical activity 1 or more times during the last school year.	90.6%
Graduate students who felt so depressed 1 or more times it was difficult to function within the last school year.	73.8%
Graduate students that seriously considered attempting suicide within the last school year.	14.2%
Graduate students that experienced depression, anxiety disorder, or seasonal affective disorder.	36.5%
Graduate students that received a lower grade on a test or assignment because experienced depression, anxiety disorder, or seasonal affective disorder	7.3%
Graduate students having relationship difficulties within the last school year.	38%
Graduate students reported being in a relationship that was emotionally abusive.	16%
Graduate students who experienced stress within the last school year.	58.5%

A review of literature shows that quality of life is multidimensional and includes a wide range of social, mental, emotional, environmental, physical, and spiritual disciplines. College and graduate students are faced with issues everyday that can affect their quality of life (Kahn & Juster, 2002). Issues in college such as social support and perceived stress were directly related to life satisfaction (Coffman & Gilligan). Graduate students are faced with similar concerns such as mentoring and support from faculty (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999). Graduate students can have conflicting climates within their department and the University, which affects the students' overall quality of life (Kuther, 2003).

Chapter III

Methodology

Graduate schools have increased concerns about attrition rates and depression among their graduate students (American College Health Association, 2000). Little research has been done on graduate students' perceived quality of life. The purpose of the study was to investigate the perceived quality of life of graduate students enrolled in the School of Education at The University of Montana during the Spring 2004 semester.

Study Design

This descriptive study assessed the perceived quality of life in University of Montana School of Education graduate students. Participation in this research study was voluntary and anonymous. The study used a convenience sample survey to assess the perceived quality of life of University of Montana graduate students who were currently enrolled in the School of education during the Spring 2004 semester.

Study Participants

The participants for this study were approximately 174 graduate students over the age of 18 (Master degree candidates). The participants were enrolled in School of Education graduate courses during the spring 2004 semester at The University of Montana, Missoula campus. The study included part-time and full-time students.

Protection of Human Subjects

This project was submitted to and approved by The University of Montana Institutional Review Board (IRB) before the survey was distributed.

Procedures

Selection of Sample

Study participants were selected via a convenience sample from The University of Montana School of Education of graduate students who were enrolled in classes during the Spring 2004 semester. The total population of graduate students enrolled in a non-external Master's degree program in the School of Education at The University of Montana was 174 for the spring semester. Classes within the School of Education were selected based on the department and level of graduate class and approval from the professors. Each of the departments within the School of Education had at least one class selected to participate in the survey, with consent of the professor. The primary researcher contacted individual professors by email regarding survey distribution. Following approval from the professor, the primary researcher delivered and distributed the survey to graduate students in class and read a brief statement to the students. Participation in the survey was voluntary and anonymous for all. The researcher left the room while students' who chose to, filled out the survey. Students put the completed survey into a large envelope marked survey which was located in the front of the classroom. The primary researcher returned to the room to collect the large envelope when all participants were finished completing the survey. Participants were not contacted again by the researcher.

Instrument

The survey instrument was developed by the primary researcher and was reviewed by a panel of professors for content validity. It was then pilot tested by students with similar characteristics as those who will be participating in the study. The instrument

was comprised of eight different sections which include a demographic, general, social health, physical health, mental health, environmental health, spiritual health, and a quality of life section.

The demographic section included age, race, in-state or out-of-state status, expected graduation date, part-time or full-time status, number of semesters completed, grade point average (GPA), major, and marital status. The reason for asking demographic information was studies have shown that gender, age, and race may impact your overall quality of life (Kahn & Juster, 2002). The questions in the demographic section helped determine if certain demographic characteristics affect perceived quality of life in School of Education Master degree students (Appendix B).

The section on general information asked about satisfaction with the graduate program and the support received from their graduate department, advisor, graduate students, friends, and family. This general section also asked about their overall attitude towards graduate school. The recent review of literature suggested that more social support and mentoring increased success in graduate school (Kelly & Sweitzer, 1999).

The social health section included questions about the importance of social interactions. The section also asked about graduate social activity participation and if it had changed since first enrolling in the graduate program. Questions about social health were included because stress, time management, and social responsibilities were a few factors that affected quality of life in students (Kuther, 2003).

The third section targets physical health. This section asked about the activities one does to maintain or improve physical health, if any. The physical health section had a question on how their present level of physical health had changed since enrolling in

graduate school. Involvement in athletics in their undergraduate programs was also asked in the physical health section (Appendix B). A question about athletic involvement was asked to help determine why a decrease of activity level happened for those study participants who did not take time off between undergraduate and graduate school. A study on physical fitness of graduate students suggested that women graduate students increased body fat percentages after a year of graduate school (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002).

The environmental health section included six questions about surroundings, financial well-being, living situations and about the importance of their daily environment. Another question in this section asked about the affect of one's living situation had on their quality of life. The last question in the environmental health section asked about whether one's financial situation had changed since entering graduate school (Appendix B). The surrounding environment affects quality of life in the general population (Kahn & Juster, 2002), therefore it was important to see if it holds true in Master degree students.

The emotional and mental health section had three questions. The first question asked about the importance of mental health. The second question was about a positive or negative attitude on a daily basis. The last question in the emotional and mental health section asked about change in mental health since entering the graduate program (Appendix B). Stress and other mental and emotional issues were factors affecting quality of life in the general population (Kuther, 2003), therefore made the case for studying mental and emotional health in the graduate school population.

In the spiritual health section there were three main questions and a follow-up question. The questions in this section asked about the importance of spirituality and how it had changed since entering graduate school at The University of Montana. Another question asked about whether graduate school had affected spirituality (Appendix B). Spirituality is another dimension of health, which impacts the quality of life (Kelly & Schweitzer, 1999), therefore making it important to study.

The last section was about how graduate school had affected ones quality of life. This section contained a list of the six different health categories (physical, mental, social, emotional, spiritual, and environmental) and asked participants to rank importance of each. If the health category was not important, then participants were asked to enter a zero. If the health categories were important they were asked to rank them on a one to six, one being the most important and six being the least important. Ferrans and Powers 1990 quality of life definition suggests that quality of life was affected by what a person's views as important to him/her. The quality of life section also asked five qualitative open ended questions about quality of life and the positive and negative impacts it has on the individuals. The last question asked study participants to describe their overall quality of life (Appendix B).

Data Collection

Primary data was collected by the use of the survey. The survey was given out in selected School of Education graduate classes with at least one class being from each Masters program within the School of Education (with approval). Participants completed the Graduate Student Quality of Life (GS-QOL) survey one time. The survey took an average of ten to fifteen minutes to complete. Students filled the survey out and put the

survey in a large envelope at the front of the class. The surveys were collected and the data was entered into Microsoft excel. Copies of the results were given to Graduate School and School of Education at The University of Montana.

Data analysis

Data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel and GB-Stat computer programs. Each question was entered into a column. Each answer for each question was assigned a point value. The responses from individual surveys were then entered into the program as a point value. The data was reported as frequency data for each research question.

The data from Excel was then copied and pasted into GB-Stat, a statistical computer program. The data was then analyzed using the crosstabs (bivariate) option in GB-Stat. This analysis compared two variables against each other, which was reported as percent variables. The probability level was set at .05, and data that was not relevant to the research questions with a probability greater of .05 was not reported. Additional relevant data was included if the probability was .05 or less.

Chapter IV

Results

This chapter includes three major sections: (a) demographics, (b) research questions, and (c) other relevant findings. The demographics section describes the sample populations program, minor, expected graduation date, undergraduate grade point average (GPA), graduate GPA, number of semesters completed, age, gender, full-time or part-time status, in-state or out-of-state status, the amount of time taken off, race, and marital status. The five research questions address program support, attitude, satisfaction, the impact of graduate school on the quality of life, and positive and negative influences on the quality of life. A return rate of 99% for a total of 91 surveys were completed and included in this analysis. For additional frequency data see the summary tables (Appendix E, p.76).

Demographics

The sample population of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana was 91 respondents from four Masters degree programs offered in the School of Education at The University of Montana. These degree programs include Curriculum and Instruction (C&I), Counseling, Educational Leadership (EDLD), and Health and Human Performance (HHP) (Table 2).

Table 2: Program Breakdown: (n=89)

Program	Frequency in each program	Percentage in each program
C&I	38	43%
Counseling	25	28%
EDLD	7	8%
HHP	19	21%

There were 25 program emphasis/concentrations represented among the sample of School of Education Master degree students. The Exercise Science and Counselor Education emphases had the highest reported frequencies (n=9).

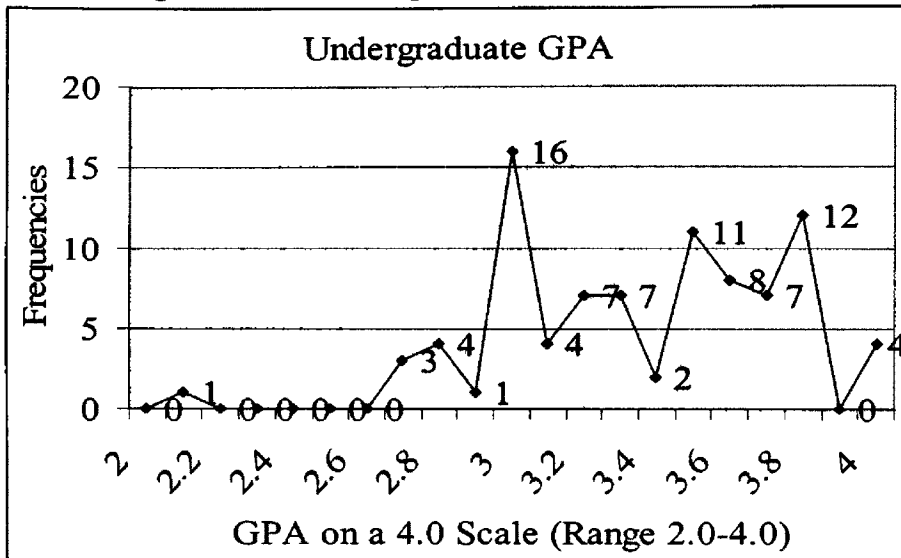
The expected graduation date with the highest percentage was a May 2005 graduation date. Those who reported an expected graduation date of 2006 or later were combined into one group (Table 3).

Table 3: Expected Graduation Date: (n=80)

Expected Graduation Date	Frequency	Percentage of Expected Graduation Date
May 2004	17	22%
Summer 2004	7	9%
December 2004	10	12%
2004	1	1%
May 2005	20	26%
Summer 2005	6	7%
December 2005	2	2%
2005	8	10%
2006 and later	9	11%

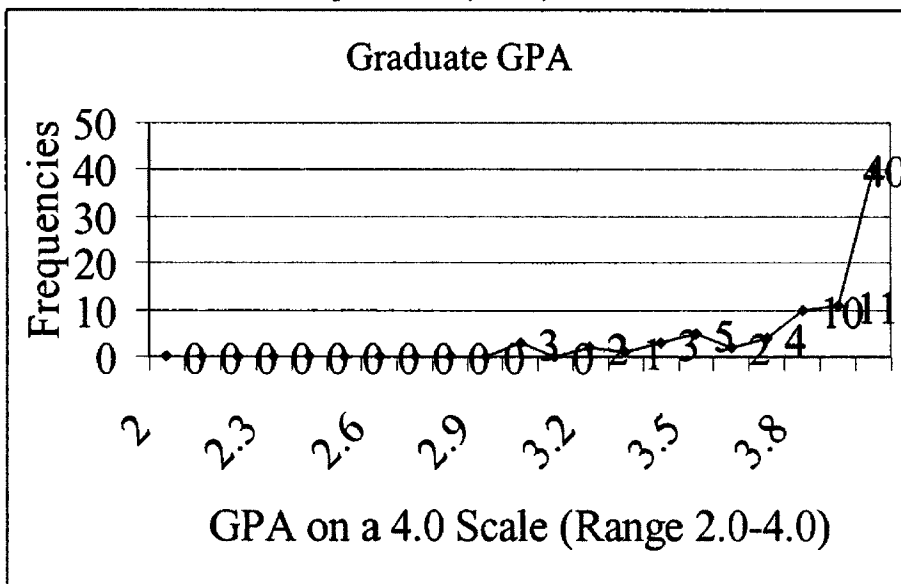
Study participants had a mean undergraduate Grade Point Average (GPA) of 3.4 on a 4.0 scale. The lowest reported undergraduate GPA was 2.1 and the highest undergraduate GPA was a 4.0 (Chart 1, p. 32).

Chart 1: Undergraduate GPA Frequencies: (n=87)



Study participants had a mean graduate GPA of a 3.8 on a 4.0 scale. The lowest graduate GPA was a 3.0, with the highest being a 4.0 (Chart 2).

Chart 2: Graduate GPA Frequencies: (n=81)



The average number of semesters completed in the graduate program by study participants at The University of Montana was 2.5 semesters. The highest frequency of study participants (n=30) completed one semester at (38%) (Table 4, p.33).

Table 4: Number of Semesters Completed: (n=78)

Semesters Completed	Frequency	Percentage of semester completed
2 Semesters	14	18%
3 Semesters	17	22%
4 Semesters	6	8%
5 Semesters	5	6%
6 Semesters	4	5%
7 Semesters	0	0%
8 Semesters	2	3%

The mean age of the sample population was 31 years of age. The youngest reported age was 22, and the oldest reported age was 57 years (Table 5).

Table 5: Age of Study Participants: (n=90)

Age	Frequency	Percentage of Age
21-25	29	32%
26-30	26	29%
31-35	17	19%
36-40	6	7%
41-45	4	4%
46-50	2	2%
51+	6	7%

The University of Montana's (UM) gender difference for all graduate students for the Fall 2003 semester as of October 15th, 2003 was 44.7% males and 55.3% females. The percentage of the School of Education (SOE) graduate sample is as follows: (Table 6).

Table 6: Gender by School of Education and The University of Montana: (n=90)

Gender	Frequency	Percent SOE	Percent UM
Males	26	29%	44.7%
Females	64	71%	55.3%

Full-time status was defined by The University of Montana for graduate students as enrolled in nine or more credits per semester. The breakdown of campus-wide full-time and part-time graduate students at The University of Montana for the Fall 2003 semester was 56.8% full-time and 43.1% part-time. The full-time/ part-time status breakdown for the School of Education graduate students is the following: (Table 7).

Table 7: Full-time/ Part-time Status: (n=91)

Full-time/ Part-time Status	Frequency SOE	Percent SOE	Percent UM
Full-time	62	68%	56.8%
Part-time	22	24%	43.1%
Did not respond	7	8%	0%

In-state status was defined by The University of Montana residency standards as “a demonstration of a bona fide intent to become a Montana resident” (Table 8).

Table 8: In-state/ Out-of-state Status: (n=91)

Full-time/ Part-time Status	Frequency	Percent by In-state/ Out-of-state Status
In-state	58	64%
Out-of-state	15	16%
Did not respond	18	20%

More than three-fourths of the participants in the sample had taken time off after receiving their bachelors' degree before enrolling in the Masters program at The University of Montana (Table 9, p.35).

Table 9: Time Off Between Undergraduate and Graduate School: (n=91)

Time Off	Frequency	Percent of Time Off
No time off	15	16%
Time off	76	84%

The mean number of years for participants who took time off between receiving the Bachelor’s degree and enrolling in a graduate program at The University of Montana was 5.7 years. The longest amount of time participants reported taking off was 32 years (Table 10).

Table 10: Time Taken Off: (n=75)

Time Taken Off	Frequency	Percent of Time
1-5	51	68%
6-10	15	20%
11-15	3	4%
16-20	3	4%
21+	3	4%

The racial profile of the total graduate population at The University of Montana is 86% Caucasian, 3% Native American/ Alaskan Native, .7% Asian/ Pacific Islands, 1% Hispanic, and .4% African American. The study sample’s racial profile is below: (Table 11).

Table 11: Racial Profile of SOE and UM: (n=90)

Race	Frequency	Percent SOE	Percent UM
African American	0	0%	.4%
Asian/ Pacific Islands	4	4%	.7%
Caucasian	75	83%	86%
Hispanic	2	2%	1%
Native American/ Alaskan Native	6	7%	3%
Other	3	3%	0%
Did not respond		1%	8.9%

The study participants who classified themselves as other reported being currently engaged or divorced (Table 12).

Table 12: Marital Status: (n=90)

Marital Status	Frequency	Percent by Marital Status
Single	52	58%
Married	34	38%
Other	4	4%

Those who reported being married (n=34), 60% reported being married before beginning graduate school. The remaining 40% were married after starting graduate school.

Research Questions

The quantitative research questions were asked in order to investigate demographic information, amount of perceived support received, attitude about graduate school, and satisfaction with the graduate program. The quantitative data were analyzed using GB-Stat and bivariate crosstabs in order to compare different responses from the GS-QOL survey. The qualitative research questions looked at the themes and trends of how graduate school within the School of Education at The University of Montana affects Master degree students, and the positive and negative influences on quality of life of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana.

Quantitative Results

The first finding dealt with differences between seven demographic characteristics and five different types of support received, such as perceived support from the graduate department, graduate advisor, other graduate students, friends, and family. Consistent differences were found from analyzing the data using bivariate crosstabs were between gender and perceived support from friends (Table 13, p.37).

Table 13: Gender and Perceived Support from Friends: (n=88)

Support From...	Amount of Support	Percent Male	Percent Female
Friends	None	12% (n=3)	0% (n=0)
	A little	27% (n=7)	13% (n=8)
	Adequate	42% (n=11)	31% (n=20)
	Exceptional	15% (n=4)	55% (n=35)

The difference in percentage of none to a little support received from friends was important since males reported 39% compared to females reporting 13%. This shows that a consistent and important difference exists for males and females support.

A reliable difference was found from the crosstabs analysis for in-state/out-of-state status and support received from one's graduate advisor (Table 14).

Table 14: In-State and Out-of-State Status and Perceived Support from Graduate Advisor: (n=73)

Support From...	Amount of Support	Percent In-State	Percent Out-of-State
Graduate Advisor	None	3% (n=2)	27% (n=4)
	A little	26% (n=15)	0% (n=0)
	Adequate	35% (n=20)	20% (n=3)
	Exceptional	36% (n=21)	53% (n=8)

The second research question looked at the type of Masters degree program and the perceived attitude towards graduate school among School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana (Table 15).

Table 15: Program and Attitude: (n=84)

Attitude about Graduate School	Percent of C&I	Percent of Counseling	Percent of EDLD	Percent of HHP
Bad Attitude	8% (n=3)	8% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)
Good Attitude	79% (n=30)	92% (n=23)	100% (n=7)	95% (n=18)

The third research question investigated how School of Education Master degree students rated their satisfaction with their graduate program which they were enrolled (Table 16).

Table 16: Program and Satisfaction

Graduate Program Satisfaction	Percent of C&I*	Percent of Counseling	Percent of EDLD	Percent of HHP
Not Satisfied	27% (n=10)	4% (n=1)	14% (n=1)	21% (n=4)
Satisfied	73% (n=27)	96% (n=24)	86% (n=6)	79% (n=15)

The fourth research question investigated if enrollment in graduate school within the School of Education at The University of Montana affected the perceived quality of life of its students. The qualitative data trend showed that graduate school in the School of Education at The University of Montana did affect one’s quality of life. The most common theme relating to graduate schools affect on quality of life was lack of time.

Research Question Four Qualitative Results

One of the general themes throughout the sample population of School of Education graduate students at The University of Montana was that graduate school affected their quality of life.

Lack of Time:

Some common themes within the qualitative data suggested that graduate school affected one’s quality of life by lack of time. Some comments from study participants about quality of life and lack of time include the following: “I have to budget my time and resources very tightly, which is stressful,” “I am busier and have less time for fun activities,” “I am busier, more stressed, and it seems like too many things to do,” “Graduate school means less time with my dog and friends,” “[Graduate school] has

decreased the amount of time to do the fun things in life.” The quotes were responses from the GS-QOL survey about how graduate school had affected one’s quality of life.

Research Question Four Quantitative Results

The quantitative data from the GS-QOL survey suggested that overall emotional (n=29) and mental (n=27) health was reported as the most important aspect of the six different health dimensions (Table 17, p.39).

Table 17: Importance of the Six Dimensions of Health (Frequencies): (n=87)

Categories	Most Important-----Least Important							Not Important
	Rank	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Emotional Health	1	29	30	10	10	7	1	0
Mental Health	2	27	23	23	5	7	2	0
Physical Health	3	19	21	18	16	12	1	0
Social Health	4	5	8	21	26	17	10	0
Spiritual Health	5	15	7	5	7	14	37	2
Environmental Health	6	6	4	12	16	23	25	1

The fifth research question looked qualitatively at the positive and negative influences that affected University of Montana School of Education graduate students overall perceived quality of life.

Research Question Five Qualitative Results

Negative Influences:

There was a common theme of not enough time, stress, and money. The comments about not enough time are as follows: “There is not enough time for my family,” “I don’t have much time and free time to pursue intimate friendships,” and “Grad school is taking time away from family to ‘jump through hoops’.”

Stress:

The responses about stress include the following: “My stress levels increase when I hear the word ‘Thesis’,” “I have the stress of college, a stalker, and I smoke,” and “Dealing with school is emotionally challenging.”

Financial Situations:

The comments about financial situations were another common trend from the study participants. Quotes about financial situations as a negative impact on quality of life are the following: “There are too many obligations tied to financial aid,” “There is a lack of financial aid given,” “There is bad pay in Montana,” and “Damn bills and lack of income affect my quality of life negatively.”

Other Negative Influences:

There were other comments that stood out when analyzing the themes and trends of the qualitative data. The following comments about negatively influences on quality of life were the ones that stood out: “With no advisor, it makes you feel unwanted in the program, lost in the crowd, and not getting all out of what I could out of the program”, “Sometimes I feel purposeless, like I’m not mentally prepared or deserving of grad level education,” “The pressure to conform to a liberal (extreme) viewpoint that is based entirely on idealism and not in reality,” and “taking a professor’s class made me very ill and was a very negative experience.”

Positive Influences:

The positive influences on quality of life themes were ones of family, friends, education, and the environment.

Family and Friends:

The theme of family and friends as positive influences were themes that stood out the most. The following quotes are about family as a positive influence affecting ones quality of life: “My partner has had a positive effect, he does the things I don’t have time to do,” “My fiancée has a positive effect on my quality of life,” “Friendships and the direction my life has taken is good,” and “My family and children are a positive influence [on my quality of life].”

Education:

Themes relating to education were also very common. Some of the quotes about education include the following: “The inclusion of the Native American viewpoint in the School of Education,” “The advantage of improving my knowledge and self-esteem, with the advantage of an increased salary,” and “It feels good to be learning again and I am glad to be back in school.”

Environment:

The environment was another common theme within the responses towards the positive influences on the quality of life. The following are examples of comments about the environment being a positive influence on ones quality of life: “My dog, my cottage, friends, family, and sunshine are a positive influence,” “The Mountains [are a positive influence],” “Surrounding teachers are a positive aspect,” and “A positive influence on my quality of life is my loving wife and family live in Missoula.” There were a number of things that were reported as positive influences on School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana quality of life.

Other Relevant Findings

There were other significant findings from the research study that were not part of the research questions. Only the consistent differences findings were reported.

There was a consistent difference found between graduate program and in-state and out-of-state status (Table 18).

Table 18: In-State and Out-of-State Student Profile by Program: (n=71)

Status	Percent C&I	Percent Counseling	Percent EDLD	Percent HHP
In-State	63% (n=24)	72% (n=18)	71% (n=5)	53% (n=10)
Out-of-State	5% (n=2)	12% (n=3)	0% (n=0)	47% (n=9)

There was a consistent difference between the graduate programs and time off between receiving a bachelor's degree and entering graduate school at The University of Montana. There was a significant difference between HHP program and the other School of Education programs of C&I, Counseling, and EDLD programs (Table 19).

Table 19: Program and Time Off Between Undergraduate and Graduate School: (n=87)

Time Off	C&I Program	Counseling Program	EDLD Program	HHP Program
No Time Off	8% (n=3)	8% (n=2)	0% (n=5)	53% (n=10)
Time Off	92% (n=35)	92% (n=23)	100% (n=0)	47% (n=9)

There was a consistent difference between the graduate program and participation in graduate department activities. Master degree students in the Counseling program reported the largest percentage of decreased participation in graduate department activities compared to the other School of Education programs at The University of Montana. The percentage of graduate students in the HHP program had the largest percentage of students reporting an increase in participation in graduate department activities (Table 20, p.43).

Table 20: Program and Participation in Graduate Department Activities: (n=89)

Participation	Change	Percent C&I	Percent Counseling	Percent EDLD	Percent HHP
Participation in Graduate Department Activities	Decrease	5% (n=2)	28% (n=7)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=2)
	Same	79% (n=30)	60% (n=15)	71% (n=5)	37% (n=7)
	Increase	16% (n=6)	12% (n=3)	29% (n=2)	53% (n=10)

The total number of hours a week graduate students are engaged in activities to maintain or improve their overall physical health compared to graduate programs in The School of Education at The University of Montana was found to be a consistent difference (Table 21).

Table 21: Program & Hours Per Week to Maintain Physical Health: (n=81)

Hours of Activity	Percent C&I Program	Percent Counseling Program	Percent EDLD Program	Percent HHP Program
0-6	40% (n=15)	32% (n=8)	14% (n=1)	11% (n=2)
7-12	24% (n=9)	36% (n=9)	43% (n=3)	16% (n=3)
13-18	11% (n=4)	16% (n=4)	29% (n=2)	26% (n=5)
19-24	3% (n=1)	4% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	16% (n=3)
25-30	8% (n=3)	4% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	11% (n=2)
31-36	3% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	14% (n=1)	11% (n=2)
37-42	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	5% (n=1)
43-48	3% (n=1)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)
49+	0% (n=0)	8% (n=2)	0% (n=0)	0% (n=0)

A consistent finding was found between the number of hours per week graduate students participate in activities to maintain or improve their physical health and perceived physical activity level change since enrolling in graduate school (Table 22, p. 44).

Table 22: Hours of Physical Activity & Physical Activity Changed Since Entering Graduate School: (n=76)

Hours of Activity Per Week	Decreased	Same	Increased
0-6	100% (n=26)	0%	0%
7-12	80% (n=19)	20% (n=5)	0%
13-18	0%	100% (n=15)	0%
19-24	0%	0%	100% (n=5)
25-30	0%	0%	100% (n=6)
31-36	0%	0%	0%
37-42	0%	0%	0%
43-48	0%	0%	0%
49+	0%	0%	0%

Those who reported 19-30 hours per week of exercise also reported an increase in physical activity level since entering graduate school. Those who reported 13-18 hours per week of activity reported staying the same in activity levels since entering graduate school. Study participants who reported 0-6 hours per week of activity reported a decrease in activity level since entering graduate school.

Chapter V

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceived quality of life of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana during the Spring 2004 semester. Data was collected on the target population quantitatively by the GS-QOL survey, while qualitative data was collected by open-ended questions in the GS-QOL survey.

Discussion of Results

Results from the GS-QOL survey revealed important information in relation to School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana's perceived quality of life. The discussion is broken into three sections; demographics, research questions, and other relevant findings.

Demographics:

The results of the sample population showed that more females than males were currently enrolled in the School of Education Master degree program at The University of Montana. The general ratio of male to females in the general graduate population at The University of Montana is very different from the sample of School of Education students. The data suggests that the School of Education at The University of Montana has more female master degree students than male master degree students.

Study participants also reported a higher rate of in-state status than out-of-state students. The higher percentage of in-state status students could be caused by the high percentage of study participants who reported The University of Montana being a convenient and local location as being the reason they chose to enroll in the graduate

program. Another factor to look at would be the cost difference between in-state and out-of-state students, since out-of-state students pay more than in-state students, the cost of attending grad school could be a reason a difference was seen. The qualitative data showed a theme of lack of income and financial aid obligation as being a negative influence on the study participant's quality of life. The qualitative data about financial issues and cost of attending graduate school is supported by education finance data (NCES, 2000-2001).

The results from the GS-QOL survey about graduate GPA suggest that almost half of the graduate students in the School of Education receive high academic marks, such as the 4.0 (0 to 4.0 scale). When data from this study was compared to Kelly & Schweitzer (1999) study, which suggested that students with higher GPA's receive more mentoring from advisors than students with lower GPA's, the opposite was found for graduate advisor support with this study.

The racial profile of the sample population was similar to that of the total population of all graduate students at The University of Montana. Study participants in the School of Education at The University of Montana reported a higher percentage of Asian/ Pacific Islander compared to the general graduate population at The University of Montana. The Hispanic and Native American/Alaskan Native study participant population was double the racial profile breakdown percentage of the general graduate population. The African American and Caucasian races were slightly lower in the graduate study population than in the general graduate population. The study participants from the School of Education had a more diverse racial profile compared to the general graduate population at The University of Montana. Kelly and Schweitzer's 1999 study

about mentoring and support between faculty and graduate students found that Caucasian and minority students reported more support than international students, which slightly contrasted the findings of this study. Findings from this study showed Asian/ Pacific Islanders and Caucasian races reported less support received from graduate advisor compared to Native American/ Alaskan Natives, Hispanic and other races.

Research Questions:

Statistically consistent findings based on probability values were scarce because of the small sample population. This was apparent when there were three or more answer choices for a question on the GS-QOL survey. Gender and perceived support from friends had an experimentally consistent finding, which suggested that males received less support from friends than did females. Female study participants reported twice the amount of perceived support from friends than male study participants reported.

Although data was not collected in this study about health problems specifically, limited appreciation and support from friends may account for a variety of health problems according to a study by Vaez and Laflamme, 2003.

Out-of-state study participants reported a consistently higher rate of not receiving any support from their graduate advisor compared to the study participants who were in-state. This finding can not be compared to another research study at this point. Further research will need to be completed about in-state and out-of-state status students and the amount of support they receive from graduate advisors.

Even though no consistent difference was found, the difference in reported satisfaction with the graduate program in which the students were enrolled in was very diverse. Curriculum and Instruction students and Health and Human Performance

students had a much greater rate of not being satisfied with the graduate program than did Counseling and Educational Leadership students. The Curriculum and Instruction students had the highest dissatisfaction rate compared to the other programs (Counseling, EDLD, and HHP) resulting from C&I students reporting the highest percentage “bad” attitudes towards graduate school.

The fourth research question examined whether graduate school within the School of Education at The University of Montana affected Master degree students’ perceived quality of life.

Research Question Four Qualitative Conclusions

The themes and trends of the qualitative data suggest that graduate school in the School of Education at The University of Montana impacts students’ quality of life, both positively and negatively. The most common theme reported was that graduate students didn’t have enough time to enjoy the things they usually do (exercise), spend time with family and friends, or just take time for themselves. McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy’s (2002) study on graduate students concluded that graduate students should have more time to exercise. This parallels what some study participants reported in the qualitative section. The following quote from a study participant about needing more time to exercise would be an example of parallel findings: “I don’t have anytime for my sport or exercise and that throws everything off.” Lack of free time may be because some graduate students work full-time jobs as well as being a full-time student.

Research Question Four Quantitative Conclusions

The quantitative data from the GS-QOL survey implied emotional and mental health were the most important health dimensions out of mental health, physical health,

social health, emotional health, spiritual health and environmental health. Some of the study participants were in the Counseling program with a study area of mental health, which might help explain why emotional and mental health were rated by the majority of study participants as the most important health dimension. The importance of physical health was rated close to emotional and mental health, which might be due to the study participants in Health and Human Performance program. Also, all of the study participants reported physical health as important to them on the GS-QOL survey. Spiritual health was rated as the second least important of the six different health dimensions, which may be due almost a twelfth of the study participants reporting spirituality as not being important to them on the GS-QOL survey. Further research is needed to look at how the importance of the six health dimensions affects the perceived quality of life of graduate students.

The Fifth research question examined the positive and negative aspects that influenced the quality of life of graduate students in the School of Education masters program at The University of Montana. The most common negative influence on the quality of life was the trend of not having enough time, which was also the most common trend for how graduate school affected perceived quality of life. Needing more time to participate in activities by graduate students is supported by current research (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002). Another negative theme from the qualitative data was financial concerns and obligations, which is supported by research with the cost of attending graduate school (NCES 2000-2001). With not enough time and financial concerns graduate students might be more stressed. The qualitative data from the GS-QOL survey supports graduate students high stress levels. Stress was a theme seen in the

qualitative data as negatively affecting Master degree students quality of life. Further research needs to look at graduate students stress levels in relation to lower levels of life satisfaction, which according to Coffman and Gilligan's (2003) study was found to be true for undergraduates.

Study participants reported family and friends as positive influences on perceived quality of life. The finding about family and friends as positive influences on ones perceived quality of life parallels current research (Vaez & Laflamme, 2003). Research also suggests social support has a direct benefit on life satisfaction for undergraduate students (Coffman & Gilligan, 2003), which might hold true for master degree students. Furthering education by the way of graduate school was seen as a positive influence on ones quality of life for a number of reasons. Study participants reported that by furthering their education they would receive an increase in pay. Others reported furthering education was beneficial and rewarding, and still other study participants reported that furthering their education was to change to a career they really felt passionate about. There are many negative and positive influences that affect ones overall perceived quality of life; even though themes were seen within the data, influences on ones quality of life are very personal and different for each person.

Other Relevant Findings:

There was a consistent difference between in-state and out-of-state students and the graduate program which they were enrolled. The results from the GS-QOL survey found that the HHP program had significantly more out-of-state students compared to the other three School of Education Master degree programs (C&I, Counseling, and EDLD).

Further research is needed to look at why some programs at The University of Montana have significantly higher rates of out-of-state students.

The difference between graduate programs and participation in graduate department activities was found to be significant. The percent of students in the Counseling program who reported a decrease in their graduate department activities was five times the percent than those study participants in C&I and double the percent of the study participants in the HHP program. There was not a question on the survey about the amount of opportunities for participation in graduate department activities, so it was difficult to draw a conclusion comparing programs and participation in graduate department activities.

Another statistically consistent finding from the GS-QOL survey was the amount of hours per week students reported to maintain or improve their overall physical health. The study participants in HHP program reported the highest percentage of hours per week to maintain or improve their overall physical health. The HHP program studies exercise science, health promotion, and exercise and performance psychology. The study participants in HHP program also had a higher percentage of younger students.

One of the most important finding of the study was the number of hours per week of physical activity to maintain or improve ones physical health and how physical activity has changed since entering graduate school. The study participants who reported an increase in physical activity were also those who reported the highest hours per week of physical activity to maintain or improve physical health. Study participants who reported the most hours were those in the HHP department. These findings contrast with research by (McWhorter, Wallmann, & Tandy, 2002), who said physical therapy graduate students

exercised less after entering graduate school, even though they are studying in the area of health. Further research is needed to look at exercise patterns of graduate students, especially those in a health and exercise field.

Limitations

Limitations of this study included the instrument being a self-report survey, which the researcher had no way of knowing whether participants answered questions accurately and honestly as possible. The researcher also had no way to know the state of mind of the person completing the survey. Other limitations of this study included the time and place the participants took the survey, since the survey was completed in a class setting. Participation was voluntary and only a convenience sample was used in School of Education graduate classes at The University of Montana, which limited the data. Limitations included only going to graduate classes available to the researcher at the time of the study, which did not include those students enrolled in independent studies or online and weekend classes. The study could have used randomized sampling techniques and included a broader scope of departments for a larger sample size. Experimentally consistent findings were limited by probability values of .05 or fewer, which was influenced by the amount of data in each category. If there were five or less data points in any of the categories being analyzed through GB-STAT crosstabs (bivariate) the probability value was reported as a high p-value. Categories and data were not manipulated by combining data to create more than five data points per group, although this could have been done with a few questions and a chi-square could have been used to analyze those questions.

Implications for Further Research

Recommendations for further research would be to examine quality of life of graduate students more in-depth, with a variety of instruments and research techniques. Entrance, exit, and follow-up surveys could collect valuable data for universities and colleges to use when re-designing or improving graduate programs. Further research would benefit graduate students and universities around the world in helping create a better quality of life for all. One recommendation would be for further research about the amount of support graduate students perceived from advisors along with the perception of support graduate advisors give their graduate students. Asking about support received and supported needed would also be beneficial to see if graduate students' needs are being met. The influence of gender on graduate students' perceived quality of life would be another area to further investigate, since differences in gender were seen in this study. Graduate students' satisfaction with the program and how satisfaction affects their attitude towards graduate school would be another area of research as well. Satisfaction in this study was measured quantitatively, but further research could also look at satisfaction qualitatively, and possibly gain a better perspective on individuals' satisfaction with the program. Researching satisfaction with graduate school and the program and how satisfaction affects one's attitude towards the program and graduate school would be another area that could provide valuable information for graduate schools. The six different health dimensions and how they relate and impact graduate students' quality of life needs to be researched further. Since this study only touches the surface of this area, further research on quality of life would benefit graduate students, graduate schools, communities, and the education system.

Conclusion

The findings from this research project suggest that students perceived quality of life was impacted by graduate school within the School of Education at The University of Montana. Certain demographic characteristics, such as gender and program were found to be related to perceived support from friends and graduate advisors. Participation in activities within graduate departments was found to be significantly different between programs in the School of Education. The themes and trends of the qualitative data suggested that graduate school affects students' perceived quality of life. Students have limited time to do the things they enjoy, such as spending time with family and friends or just relaxing and taking time for themselves. Negative influences on University of Montana School of Education graduate students' perceived quality of life included not enough time, stress, and financial issues. Graduate students in the School of Education reported that positive influences on their perceived quality of life were family, friends, education, and the environment.

There are many factors and variables that affect student's quality of life. This research study may benefit graduate students quality of life by showing students that they are not alone in how they feel. Graduate students may possibly be motivated by this research study to start a quality of life improvement task force. All of these findings from this study will benefit the graduate school and School of Education at The University of Montana, to know and understand their graduate student population. Hopefully, research will continue to study the quality of life of graduate students and find ways to help improve or maintain a great quality of life.

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Appendix A

University of Montana Institutional Review Board (IRB) Application and Approval

For Use Only

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MAR 05 2004

PROPOSAL # 48-04
Form RA-108
(Rev. 3/03)

The University of Montana
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
CHECKLIST

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Submit one completed copy of this Checklist, including any required attachments, for each project involving human subjects. The IRB meets monthly to evaluate proposals, and approval is usually granted for one year. See *IRB Guidelines and Procedures* for details.

✓ Project Director: Calan Gibney Dept.: HHP Phone: 829-0760
Signature: [Signature] E-mail: calan77@yahoo.com
Date: 3/5/04
Co-Director(s): _____ Dept.: _____ Phone: _____

Project Title: Investigation of perceived quality of life in School of Education Master degree students at the University of Montana.
Project Description: To investigate the perceived quality of life in School of Education Master degree students at the University of Montana.
(in non-technical language)

All investigators on this project must complete the self-study course on protection of human research subjects, available at the UM IRB website: <http://www.umt.edu/research/irb.htm>.

Certification: I/We have completed the course - (Use additional page if necessary)

Signature	Date	Signature	Date
<u>[Signature]</u>	<u>3/3/04</u>	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____	_____

Students Only:

Faculty Supervisor: [Signature] Dept.: HHP Phone: 6988
Signature: [Signature]
(My signature confirms that I have read the IRB Checklist and attachments and agree that it accurately represents the planned research and that I will supervise this research project.)

For IRB Use Only

IRB Determination:

- Approved Exemption from Review — Exemption # 2
- Approved by Expedited/Administrative Review
- Full IRB Determination:
 - Approved
 - Conditional Approval (see attached memo)
 - Resubmit Proposal (see attached memo)
 - Disapproved (see attached memo)

RECEIVED

MAR 12 2004

UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA
VICE PRESIDENT FOR RESEARCH

Signature IRB Chair: [Signature] Date: 3/16/04
(over)

11 Point Summary for the Institutional Review Board at The University of Montana

1. Purpose of the research project

The purpose of the current study is to investigate the perceived quality of life of graduate students enrolled in the School of Education at the University of Montana during the Spring 2004 semester.

2. The Participants

The participants are graduate students of both genders over the age of 18, currently enrolled for the spring 2004 semester in the School of Education Masters degree programs at the University of Montana, Missoula, MT. The subjects will be part-time and full-time students currently enrolled in Missoula campus classes.

3. Recruiting Subjects

The primary researcher will contact by email individual professors about distributing the survey packets, which will contain a consent form and the survey. Approval from the professor, the primary researcher will come into the classroom and distribute the appropriate number of surveys per student in each class. The primary researcher will then read an explanation of the study and leave the classroom with the professor. Participants will be recruited from graduate level classes in School of Education at the University of Montana. Participation is voluntary. The primary researcher and professor will remain outside of the room while the students who have opted to participate in the study fill out the consent forms and surveys. Whether students participated in the survey or not, they will put the consent form in one envelope mark consent forms and the surveys in another envelope marked surveys. When all the students have finished the surveys, a student will open the door and the primary researcher will enter the classroom again and collect the two envelopes with the consent forms and surveys. The primary researcher will leave and not contact the participants again.

4. Where the study will take place

The research study will take place at The University of Montana, Missoula campus during the spring 2004 semester. The study will be within the School of Education graduate classes and students will take the survey in class.

5. Activities the subjects will perform

Subjects will take one Graduate Student Quality of Life (GS-QOL) survey. The survey takes about an average of 5 to 10 minutes to complete. The participant will be asked marital status, age, graduate program enrolled in, minor or options within the graduate program, in-state or out-of-state status, gender, race, expected graduation date, number of semesters completed in graduate program and both undergraduate and graduate grade

point average (GPA) in the demographics section. A review of the current literature shows that racial differences exist between perceived quality of life in the general population (Kahn & Juster, 2002). Marital status can also be a factor in overall perceived quality of life (Kahn & Juster). The review of current and useful literature shows that both race and marital status can affect the quality of life in the general population, so examining race and marital status in the graduate population would be beneficial (Kahn & Juster). The survey will also ask about the physical activities they engage in on a weekly basis, importance and happiness of physical health and how activity levels changes, if any since the beginning of their graduate program. The participants will also be asked about importance of mental health and importance of support from family, friends, and graduate advisors. Environmental health such as financial situation and daily living environments will also be included in the survey. There is a section on spirituality and social health and whether they are satisfied and how satisfaction levels have changed, if at all, since enrolling in graduate school. The last section of the survey asks a question on ranking the importance of each dimension of health. This section also asks four open ended questions about quality of life and the positive and negative impacts it has on the individuals overall quality of life. When students are completed with the survey, they are to put both the consent form and surveys in the designated envelopes at the front of the classroom.

6. Benefits of the Research

The benefits of this research will give the Graduate School and the School of Education some information regarding Master degree students that are enrolled in its programs. This information may be used to help continue useful programs and/or improve areas that affect graduate students perceived quality of life. This research study data may also be helpful in improving attrition rates and recruiting out-of-state students.

7. Risks and Discomforts

There are no anticipated risks in completing this survey. Your name will not be tied to your responses in any way. The survey should not be uncomfortable for anyone, since it is a voluntary and anonymous survey. The participants will be asked about their demographics, attitude and feelings towards six different dimensions of health as well as overall quality of life.

8. Means to minimize each such deleterious effect

This survey is optional and if they don't feel comfortable answering a question, they can refrain from answering it. The consent form and directions on the survey, both state that the survey is voluntary and anonymous. Anyone participating in the study may withdraw or not finish the survey at anytime, even if they agreed to participate. There will be a consent form attached to each survey with a description of the study and contact information if they have questions about the study. Each participant will read and sign the consent form before participation in this study.

9. Protection of the subject's personal privacy

Information will be kept confidential by separating the consent form and the survey before any data is recorded. The data will not single out any participant and results will be used as a summary only.

10. Written consent form and participation information sheets

There was not an informed consent or participation information sheets that participants had to read and sign before participation in the study. The participants will be read a brief statement about the study and how to contact the researcher if needed (see Appendix C).

11. Waiver of written informed consent

Waiver of written informed consent was determined not to be needed.

Appendix B
GS-QOL Survey

GS-QOL Survey

Directions: This survey is voluntary and anonymous. Please take a few minutes to fill out this survey. Please put the appropriate information in the spaces provided or circle the answer that best describes yourself and feelings you may have towards each question and statement. A definition is provided below each section for every health dimension for clarification. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey.

Demographics: (Fill in and/or check appropriate response for each question)

Masters Program: _____	Age: _____
Minor/ Options: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Male or <input type="checkbox"/> Female
Expected graduation date: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> Full-time or <input type="checkbox"/> Part-time status
Undergraduate GPA: _____	<input type="checkbox"/> In-state or <input type="checkbox"/> out-of-state
Graduate GPA: _____	
Number of semesters completed in your Masters program at UM: _____	

Did you take anytime off between receiving your bachelor's degree and enrolling in your graduate program at The University of Montana? No Yes
If Yes, list amount of time taken off: _____

Race: (Check the box that best describes your race)

- African American
- Asian/ Pacific Islands
- Caucasian
- Hispanic
- Native American/ Alaskan Native
- Other: _____

Marital Status: (Check the box that best describes yourself)

- Single
- Married
- Other

If married, please circle one of the following statements.

- Married before entering graduate school.
- Married during graduate school.

General: (Please check the most appropriate response for each question)

1. How would you rate your satisfaction with the graduate program in which you are enrolled? Not satisfied Satisfied
2. How would you rate your attitude about graduate school? Bad Good

3. How much support do you believe you get from the following?

	none	a little	adequate	exceptional
Your graduate department?				
Your graduate advisor?				
Graduate students?				
Your friends?				
Your family?				

4. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has the present level of support you have received from the following changed, if at all?

	Decrease	Same	Increase
Your graduate department?			
Your graduate advisor?			
Graduate students?			
Your friends?			
Your family?			

Social Health: (Check the most appropriate response for each question)

Interactions with others and the ability to adapt to social situations. To listen and express yourself appropriately. Create and have social bonds and supports.

- Are your social interactions important to you? No Yes
- Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your level of social health changed, if at all?

 Decreased Same Increased
- Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your level of participation in activities through your graduate department changed, if at all?

 Decreased Same Increased
- How happy are you with your social health?

 Very unhappy Unhappy Happy Very happy

Physical Health: (Check or list the most appropriate response for each question)

Ability to perform normal activities of daily living includes characteristics such as body size and shape, sensory acuity and responsiveness, susceptibility to disease and disorders, body functioning, physical fitness, and recuperative abilities.

- Is your physical health important to you? No Yes

2. Please list up to 5 physical activities that you do to maintain or improve your physical health and the number of hours per week you do each activity.

Activity	Hours/ Week
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

3. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your level of physical activity changed, if at all?

Decreased Same Increased

4. Were you involved in collegiate athletics as an undergraduate? No Yes

5. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your present level of satisfaction with your physical health changed?

Decreased Same Increased

6. How happy are you with your overall physical health?

Very unhappy Unhappy Happy Very happy

Environmental Health: (Circle the most appropriate response for each question)

A person's daily surroundings and appreciation of the external environment and the role individuals play in preserving, protecting, and improving environmental conditions.

1. Are your daily surroundings important to you? No Yes

2. How satisfied are you with your present living situation?

Not satisfied Satisfied

3. Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at the University of Montana, how has your satisfaction with your present living situation changed?

Less Satisfied Same More Satisfied

4. If you live with another person or persons, how does this affect your quality of life?

Not Applicable Negatively Not at all Positively

5. Do you worry about how you are going to pay for food and housing each month?
 No Yes

6. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your present financial situation changed?

Worse Same Better

Emotional/ Mental Health: (Circle the most appropriate response for each question)

A person's values, attitudes, and beliefs. The ability to think clearly, reason objectively, analyze critically, making sound, reasonable decisions that take into consideration all aspects of the situation.

1. Is your mental health important to you? No Yes

2. How would you rate your attitude on a daily basis? Negative Positive

3. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana (UM), how has your present level of mental health changed?

Decreased Same Increased

Spiritual Health: (Circle the most appropriate response for each question)

A guiding sense of meaning or value in life. Understanding and expressing ones purpose in life Belief in a supreme being or a specified way of living prescribed by a particular religion.

1. Is spirituality important to you? No Yes

2. Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at the University of Montana (UM), how has your present level of spirituality changed, if at all?

Decreased Same Increased

3. Does graduate school affect your spirituality? No Yes

If Yes, in what way does graduate school affect your spirituality?

Negative Positive

Quality of Life Questions: (Write the appropriate response for each question)
A person's sense of well-being that stems from satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the areas of life that are important to him/her.

1. Rank only the following in order, if important to you; 1 being the most important, 6 being the least important, 0 being not important.
___ Social Health
___ Physical Health
___ Environmental Health
___ Emotional Health
___ Mental Health
___ Spiritual Health
2. How would you describe your overall quality of life?
3. How has graduate school affected your overall quality of life?
4. List or describe a negative influence on your overall quality of life?
5. List or describe a positive influence on your overall quality of life?

Thank you for completing this survey. All responses will be anonymous. Please put the survey into the large envelope located in the front of the classroom. The large envelope will be collected when everyone has completed the survey.

Appendix C

Explanation of Study

Explanation of Study

To be read by the primary researcher:

Hello, My name is Calan Gibney and I am a graduate student in Health and Human Performance (HHP). I am investigating the overall perceived quality of life of Master degree students within the School of Education at The University of Montana for my Thesis. Your responses to the questionnaire will help us to assess the overall perceived quality of life of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana. This information may help develop quality of life related interventions for the purpose of helping graduate students maximize their quality of life while enrolled in graduate school.

I would appreciate your participation in the study by completing the survey, which is anonymous. This is a voluntary survey and it is your choice to participate. If at anytime you wish to withdraw from the study you may do so without penalty. If you do not feel comfortable answering certain questions you may refrain from answering any of the questions.

If you choose to participate in this research study please complete the survey as accurately and honestly as possible. Please do not write your name or any identifying number or marking on the survey, so the surveys remain anonymous. When you have completed the survey please put the survey in the envelope marked survey. If you choose not to participate please put the survey in the envelope marked survey, so that no one will know whether you chose to participate or not. I will leave the room while you fill out the survey. When everyone has finished will one student please open the door to the classroom so I can collect the envelope. You will not be contacted by the researcher again. Thank you for taking the time to fill out this survey and participate in the study. If you have any questions about participating in the study you can contact me at (406) 243-5528.

Appendix D

Email Sent to Professors in the School of Education Asking Permission

Email Sent to Professors in the School of Education Asking Permission

(Professors name),

My name is Calan Gibney and I am a second year graduate student in HHP. My thesis is looking at the perceived quality of life of School of Education Master degree students at The University of Montana. I am trying to survey all of the School of Education Master degree students enrolled during the Spring 2004 semester. The survey takes about 5 to 10 minutes to complete and is anonymous and voluntary. Would it be possible to come into your (name of class) and hand out the survey and have them complete the survey in class? Since this is part of my Thesis I would like to collect data as soon as possible. Would it be possible to come into your classroom the week of April 5th through April 9th, 2004? If that week is not convenient, another time can be scheduled.

If you don't mind me coming in to your classroom to hand out the surveys, what day and time would be best for you?

Thank you,

Calan Gibney

Appendix E

Summary Tables of Frequency Results

Summary Tables of Frequency Results

Table 23: Survey Questions with Yes and No Answers

Survey Questions	No	Yes	Total
Are your social interactions important to you?	4	86	90
Is your physical health important to you?	0	90	90
Are your daily surroundings important to you?	0	91	91
Is your mental health important to you?	0	90	90
Is spirituality important to you?	10	79	89
Does graduate school affect your spirituality?	63	27	90
Were you involved in collegiate athletics as an undergraduate?	65	24	89
Do you worry about how you are going to pay for food and housing each month?	53	37	90

Table 24: Survey Questions about Satisfaction

Survey Questions about Satisfaction	Not Satisfied	Satisfied	Total
How would you rate your overall satisfaction with the graduate program in which you are enrolled? (n=90)	16	74	90
How satisfied are you with your present living situation? (n=)	10	81	91

Table 25: Survey Questions about Attitude

Survey Question about Attitude	Bad	Good	Total
How would you rate your attitude about graduate school?	6	80	86
How would you rate your attitude on a daily basis?	4	85	89

Table 26: Survey Questions about Support

Survey Questions about Support	None	A Little	Adequate	Exceptional	Total
How much support do you believe you get from your graduate department?	6	26	46	12	90
How much support do you believe you get from your graduate advisor?	7	17	33	32	89
How much support do you believe you get from graduate students?	0	18	36	35	89

How much support do you believe you get from your friends?	3	15	32	39	89
How much support do you believe you get from your family?	2	10	29	49	90

Table 27: Survey Questions about Change

Questions about Change	Decrease	Same	Increase	Total
Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your level of social health changed, if at all?	19	44	28	91
Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your level of participation in activities through your graduate department changed, if at all?	11	59	21	91
Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your level of physical activity changed, if at all?	31	34	26	91
Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana, How has your present level of satisfaction with your physical health changed, if at all?	35	37	18	90
Compared to when you first entered your graduate program at The University of Montana, How has your present level of satisfaction with your mental health changed, if at all?	11	52	27	90
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present level of support you received from your graduate department changed, if at all?	13	65	9	87

Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present level of support you received from your graduate advisor changed, if at all?	12	58	17	87
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present level of support you received from the graduate students changed, if at all?	4	48	36	88
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present level of support you received from your friends changed, if at all?	0	72	16	88
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present level of support you received from your family changed, if at all?	1	67	20	88
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at the University of Montana, how has your present level of spirituality changed, if at all?	8	65	17	90

Table 28: Survey Questions about Happiness

Questions about Happiness	Very Unhappy	Unhappy	Happy	Very Happy	Total
How happy are you with your social health?	0	13	64	13	78
How happy are you with your overall physical health?	1	28	57	5	91

Table 29: Survey Questions about Living Situation

Survey Questions about Living Situation	Less Satisfied	Same	More Satisfied	Total
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your satisfaction with your present living situation changed, if at all?	8	57	26	91

Table 30: Survey Questions about Quality of Life

Questions about QOL	Not Applicable	Negatively	Not at all	Positively	
If you live with another person or persons, how does this affect your quality of life?	15	9	9	54	87

Table 31: Survey Questions about Financial Situations

Survey Questions about Financial Situation	Worse	Same	Better	Total
Compared to when you first entered the graduate program at The University of Montana, how has your present financial situation changed?	50	23	17	90