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COUNSELING AND  
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STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF VARIOUS OPINIONS THOUGHT TO  
CONTRIBUTE TO THE SUCCESSFUL COMPLETION OF A BACHELOR'S  
DEGREE FROM A PRIVATE, CHRISTIAN COLLEGE: A Q-METHODOLOGICAL  
STUDY (198 pp.)

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The purpose of this study was to examine students' perceptions of variables believed to contribute to the attainment of a college degree. Research on contributors for college success has centered on traditional methodologies involving measures of central tendency. This study used Q methodology where factor analysis is possible by inverting the variables so that individuals measure a particular statement.

Fifty-four graduating seniors from a small, private Christian liberal arts college located in the Midwest were asked to rank 42 statements as to their importance in the attainment of their bachelor's degree. Using the principal components method of factor analysis three factors were determined to represent the data most adequately. The factors were named Faith and Family Support, Personal Motivation and Personal Control, and Family, Personal Relationships, and Self-Efficacy. Distinguishing statements that represent each factor are discussed and compared against demographic data.

It was concluded that Q methodology might be a valid methodology in ascertaining individual perspectives relative to students' perceptions of what accounts for their college success. The results present findings that differ in some ways from the traditional theories and research on retention that may marginalize individual perspectives. The study further points out the importance of allowing the individual to measure statements rather than to be measured.