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Deterrents to Participation in Parenting Education

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The purpose of this study was to determine the deterrents to participation by adults in parenting education programs. The objectives were (a) to describe parents with children in selected day care facilities on selected sociodemographic characteristics, (b) to determine factors that deterred those parents from participating in parenting education, and (c) to determine if there was a relationship between selected sociodemographic characteristics and the parents' participation in parenting education programs. A simple random sample of parents was drawn from the accessible population. Factor analysis revealed five factors that deterred this population from participating in parenting education: Lack of Confidence, Lack of Course Relevance, Personal Problems, Situational Barriers, and Time. Correlation coefficients and mean differences revealed a significant relationship between factors and specific sociodemographic variables.

Keywords: *parenting education; deterrents to education; participation in education; deterrents to participation*

RATIONALE AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A unique aspect of parenting education programs, which this research will address, concerns issues affecting parental participation. Most available literature on parent education programs focuses on "implementing and evaluating specific interventions" (Thomas, 1999). Although the efficacy of a variety of programs is thoroughly documented (Adams, 2001), mechanisms that attract or deter parents from participation are not considered. This study addresses the

critical deterrents that dissuade parent participation in programs proven to be effective.

Historically, the need for parenting education has been recognized. According to Gruenberg (1931),

the significance of parent education as a vital part of adult education lies not so much in our discovery that parents are people as in the recent general recognition of the fact that most people are parents. No plan of education for adults can be complete that does not take into account this important aspect of adult life and interest. (p. 456)

Parents have significant responsibilities throughout their children's developmental years, and they are usually their children's only continuous source of guidance. A broad understanding of human growth and development is necessary throughout this time (Lee & Brage, 1989).

In the United States, parenting education programs have been in existence since 1815 (Croake & Glover, 1977). Education for parenthood in these early days was often informal in nature (Landerholm, 1984). Advice on parenting came from those individuals who demonstrated the ability to parent well. In recent years, parents have drawn on personal experience with their own parents and family members as well as on support and advice from friends, local resources, and other related sources to enhance parenting skills (Daro & Harding, 1999). Margaret Brown (1999) identified the goal of parenting education as "enhancing parent-child-relationships by reinforcing supportive behaviors of parents and altering non-productive or harmful behaviors" (p. 3). Parents in all socioeconomic and cultural positions have needed assistance in raising children (Pew Charitable Trust, 1996).

During the past 30 years, the American family has undergone a profound and far-reaching transformation. Both the structure of the family and family values have changed, and as a result, the American family has been altered (Smith, 1999). This change has resulted in large amounts of stress. Breuer and Moskovic (1994) asserted that parenting education has the potential to reduce this stress, which is formed in the home and transferred to the workplace. According to the Pew Charitable Trust (1996), there are more than 50,000 parenting programs reaching millions of parents and caregivers across the United States. Attracting and keeping participants in parenting education is crucial but often difficult (Brown, 1999).

In a learning society it is important for as many adults as possible to take advantage of opportunities offered to expand their education. To achieve this goal, there needs to be a better understanding of what deters individuals from participating in educational activities, and strategies to increase participation need to be developed (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985). Cervero and Kirkpatrick (1990) suggested that there is a high level of interest in factors deterring participation in adult education because most forms of adult education are voluntary. A secondary reason for this interest is that many adult education programs depend on a regular flow of participants for their survival.

A number of studies on participation in adult education have been done, and the work of Houle (1961) is one of the most influential studies. He determined that participation in learning activities by adults was goal oriented, activity oriented, or learning oriented. Houle felt that individuals participated according to one or more of these orientations or motivations. Knowing why adults participate in adult education does not answer the question of why many do not (Merriam & Caffarella, 1991). Professional literature in adult education, in general, has focused considerably on deterrents to participation (Beder, 1990; Blais, Duquette, & Painchaud, 1989; Cross, 1981; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990).

Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) used the Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS-G) to study 215 members of the general public. Using the 34 Likert-type items, six deterrents to participation were identified: lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, time constraints, low personal priority, cost, and personal problems. Blais et al. (1989) used a revised version of the Deterrents to Participation Scale (DPS) in a study of 1,651 nurses and found that there were five deterrents to participation identified: incidental costs, low priority for work-related activities, absence of external incentives, irrelevance of additional formal education for professional practice, and lack of information on effective support. Hayes and Darkenwald (1988) used a specially designed version of the DPS to study 160 adult basic education students in seven urban programs; five factors were found to describe reasons for nonparticipation: low self-confidence, social disapproval, situational barriers, negative attitude to classes, and low personal priority. Using a telephone interview of 129 adults in Iowa who were eligible for federal adult basic education, Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) asked the respondents to rate their reasons for not taking

classes to complete high school; the four factors identified were: low perception of need, situational barriers, perceived effort, and dislike of school.

Although deterrents to adult education have been studied extensively, the deterrents to parenting education have not been studied. Brown (1999) cited the following as issues that need to be addressed to recruit and retain hard-to-reach parenting education audiences: parental efficacy or self-efficacy, severity of problems vs. susceptibility to problems, time commitments, incentives, staffing issues, learning style of the audience, and participant input. Brown further stated that engaging participants initially—and keeping them engaged during a sufficient period of time at a productive level of intensity—is critical but often difficult.

Knowledge of the specific reasons why individuals do not participate in parenting education programs is significant if adjustments are to be made to increase participation. The more parenting educators know about potential participants, the more readily they can address the needs of the participants. Identifying the reasons why parents are not participating in parenting education can help educators offer programs that are more attuned to the needs of the parents.

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVES

The purpose of this study was to determine the importance of selected items in deterring individuals from participating in parenting education programs as perceived by parents of children enrolled in selected day care facilities. The objectives of the study were to

1. Describe parents whose children were enrolled in selected day care facilities in a southeastern state using the following sociodemographic variables: gender, age, educational level, ethnic group, age of preschool children in the home, number of adults in the home, number of children in day care, employment status, and income level.
2. Identify the factors that served as deterrents for parental participation in parenting education program offerings using the DPS-G developed by Valentine and Darkenwald (1990).
3. Determine if relationships existed between the factors identified as deterring participation in parenting education and the sociodemographic variables. The sociodemographic variables included: gender, age, educational level, ethnic group, age of preschool children in the

home, number of adults in the home, number of children in day care, employment status, and income level.

METHOD

The population for the study was defined as parents of children enrolled in Type A day care facilities (those facilities which met requirements for receipt of federal funding) in one county of a southeastern state. The county selected for use in the study is primarily rural in nature; however, it does include one small city with an approximate population of 16,000. The remainder of the county consists of either rural areas or small towns (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 2001). At the time of the study, the population of the county was 85,709 and included 6,627 children who were younger than 5 years of age. Thirty percent of the population was living below the poverty level. Approximately 32% of the county population age 25 and older were high school graduates or the equivalent, 39% had less than a high school diploma, and 15% had a college degree. Thirty-seven percent of families had an annual income of less than \$15,000.

To establish the frame of the accessible population, the director of each of the 18 Type A day care centers in the selected county was contacted and asked to participate in the study. Directors from 7 of the centers agreed to participate, and parents of the children enrolled in these 7 centers were defined as the revised accessible population in the study. The locations for data collection included government-sponsored, privately owned, and employer-sponsored day care facilities. Each of the directors who agreed to participate in the study was asked to provide the researchers a nonduplicated list of the families represented by the children in the center. This list was provided to the researchers as a set of code numbers to protect the anonymity of the participants.

The minimum required sample size was determined to be 121 using Cochran's sample size determination formula (Snedecor & Cochran, 1980). However, because the researchers anticipated a response rate as low as 50%, the sample size was doubled to enable the researchers to maintain the acceptable margin of error in the measurements if as low as a 50% response rate was achieved. The researchers selected a random sample of the parents from each of the participating centers by identifying the code numbers of those who would receive a survey. In addition, because the sample was

proportionally stratified by each of the 7 participating Type A day care centers, the number of sample members from each center was rounded up to the next whole number. Therefore, the drawn sample consisted of 249 parents of children enrolled in participating day care centers.

Two instruments were used to collect the data in the study; one of these was the DPS-G, and the other was a demographic form that requested selected sociodemographic information from the participants. The DPS-G is an instrument that was initially developed by Darkenwald and Valentine in 1985. The scale was designed to be used with the general adult population and was based on earlier work by Cross (1981), Darkenwald and Merriam (1982), and Scanlan and Darkenwald (1984) that focuses on identifying and clarifying the multidimensional deterrent construct. Establishment of the scale included interviews with individuals from diverse groups, reviews by additional individuals who represented various segments of the population, field testing of the scale with a sample of socioeconomically diverse members of the general adult population, refinement of the scale based on the item analysis, and assessment of the internal consistency of the instrument based on the data collected. The overall reliability of the scale was estimated to be .91 using Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985). The demographic form was developed by the researchers to measure the specific items needed to accomplish the objectives of the study. The content validity of this demographic form was established through a review by a panel of experts.

Data for the study were collected by distributing instruments through the day care center directors. Center directors were asked to distribute survey forms, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, and self-addressed, stamped envelopes in which the completed surveys could be returned to the researchers. The coded sample members who had not responded within 2 weeks after distribution of the survey were identified, and center directors distributed a follow-up letter and second copy of the instrument to them. After the follow-up, a total of 112 of the 249 parents sampled had responded to the survey for a final response rate of 45%. Because this was less than the computed minimum useable response as determined by Cochran's sample size formula, the margin of error established by the researchers would be inflated to a higher level. Therefore, the researchers recalculated the margin of error of the study measure-

ments and determined that the original level of 3% was inflated to 3.1%. This was considered by the researchers to be a significant detriment to neither the data analysis procedures nor the validity of the research findings; therefore, the original data analysis plan was maintained. The reliability of the DPS-G was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and was found to be $\alpha = .91$.

In addition to the issue of maintaining the established acceptable margin of error, the researchers were unable to determine the representativeness of the data from the delivered sample to generalize findings to the drawn sample. Because an intensive follow-up of remaining nonrespondents was not possible due to the researchers' lack of access to individual names, an alternative strategy was sought to determine if the useable data were representative of the accessible population. Data were recorded on the specific date of response among the participants in the study, and the individuals who were established as early respondents were compared to those identified as late respondents. According to Miller and Smith (1983), evidence exists that late respondents are often similar to nonrespondents. Therefore, if early and late respondents in a study are compared and found to be similar, evidence exists that the respondents are not different from the nonrespondents. In this study, the early and late respondents were compared on the five summated factor scores as well as their age. No significant differences were found between the groups on any of the six measures.

FINDINGS

The results of this study are based on the objectives of the study. The objectives focused on: (a) sociodemographic characteristics, (b) factors which serve as deterrents for parental participation in parenting programs, and (c) the relationships between sociodemographic variables and the factors identified as deterring participation.

Objective 1: Demographics. The first objective was to describe parents whose children were enrolled in selected day care facilities in terms of educational level, income level, gender, age, marital status, ethnicity, age of children enrolled in day care, current employment status, and family income.

Of the total number ($n = 112$) of parents who responded to the inquiry, 95.5% (106) were female and 4.5% (5) were male. The mean age of the respondents was 30.2 years and ranged from 20 to 52 years.

The highest level of education completed by respondents ranged from less than a high school diploma to a graduate degree. Slightly more than half (50.5% or $n = 56$) of the parents had a high school diploma. Almost one fourth (23.4% or $n = 26$) of the respondents had less than a high school diploma. Slightly more than one fourth (26.1%) of the parents had a college degree ($n = 29$), with 7.2% ($n = 8$) holding an associate degree, 16.2% ($n = 18$) holding a bachelor's degree, and 2.7% ($n = 3$) holding a graduate degree.

Two racial/ethnic groups, White ($n = 56$ or 50.5%) and Black ($n = 49$ or 44.1%), composed 94.6% of the total number of parents responding to the survey. The remaining racial/ethnic groups accounted for 6 or 5.4% of the total sample and were combined into one category composed of American Indians ($n = 2$ or 1.8%), an Asian or Pacific Islander ($n = 1$ or .9%), and Hispanics ($n = 3$ or 2.7%). Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of preschool children in their home and the age of each child. The 112 study participants reported a total of 164 preschool children in their homes. Of these, 7 (4.26%) were younger than 1 year of age, 22 (13.42%) were 1 year of age, 10 (6.10%) were 2 years of age, 30 (18.29%) were 3 years of age, 42 (37.5%) were 4 years of age, 28 (17.08%) were 5 years of age, and 25 (15.24%) were older than 5 years of age.

More than two thirds ($n = 78$ or 70.3%) of the respondents indicated that there were two adults present in the home. In 24 (21.6%) of the homes, there was only one adult present. In 5 (4.5%) of the homes, there were three adults present. Four (3.6%) of the respondents indicated that more than three adults were present in the home.

Of the 112 respondents in the study, 62 (67.4%) reported that they had only one child enrolled in day care. An additional 23 (25.0%) homes had two children each enrolled in day care. In 5 (5.4%) of the homes, three children were enrolled in day care. In 2 (2.2%) of the homes, more than three children were enrolled in day care.

Thirty-seven (33.6%) of the parents who responded reported that they were unemployed. Seventeen parents (15.5%) were employed part-time. Fifty-six parents (50.9%) were employed full-time.

Respondents were asked to indicate their total annual family income before taxes, and 57 (51.8%) reported income in the category less than \$15,000. Twenty-four (21.8%) respondents reported \$15,000 to \$29,000 of annual family income. Thirteen (11.8%) respondents

reported \$30,000 to \$44,999. Sixteen (14.5%) respondents reported annual family income of \$45,000 or greater. Two respondents did not answer the question regarding income.

Objective 2: Deterrents to Participation. The second objective was to identify factors that serve as deterrents to parental participation in parenting education program offerings.

Each respondent was asked to rate the importance of the 34 items on the DPS-G. The directions for the survey instructed the respondent to think of something, "anything at all," related to parenting that they had wanted to learn in the past 1 to 2 years but never did. Examples of educational parenting activities included courses, workshops, seminars, and training programs offered by schools, colleges, churches, hospitals, and other organizations or community groups. The instructions noted that "in the questions below, the word 'course' refers to any type of educational activity, including courses, workshops, seminars, etc." The importance rating scale ranged from 1 to 5, with 1 = *not important*, 2 = *slightly important*, 3 = *somewhat important*, 4 = *quite important*, and 5 = *very important*. To facilitate the interpretation of this scale, the researchers developed an interpretive scale as follows: 1-1.5 = *not important*, 1.51-2.5 = *slightly important*, 2.51-3.5 = *somewhat important*, 3.51-4.5 = *quite important*, and 4.51-5 = *very important*.

Overall, 12 of the items were in the *somewhat important* category in deterring participation in parenting education and 22 of the items were in the *slightly important* category in deterring participation in parenting education. The item that received the highest rating was "Because I had trouble arranging for child care" ($M = 3.32$). The item receiving the second highest rating was "Because I did not know about the courses available to parents" ($M = 3.27$). The item receiving the third highest rating was "Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time" ($M = 3.23$). The overall mean rating of importance for the 34 items was 2.37 in the *slightly important* category in deterring parent participation in parenting education programs (see Table 1).

The remaining objectives of the study required examination of the identified factors deterring participation in parenting education by selected demographic measures. Because calculation of the necessary statistics to measure these relationships and differences for each of the scale items individually would create an unacceptable level of experiment error, the researchers conducted a factor analysis to determine if underlying constructs existed in the scale and to identify the items

TABLE 1: Mean Score, Rank of Importance, and Interpretive Category of the Deterrents to Participation Scale Items to Detering Participating in Parent Education

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Mean^a</i>	<i>Rank</i>	<i>Interpretive Category^b</i>	<i>Factor^c</i>
Because I had trouble arranging for child care	3.32	1	Somewhat Important	PP
Because I did not know about the courses available for parents	3.27	2	Somewhat Important	SB
Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time	3.23	3	Somewhat Important	SB
Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient location	3.05	4	Somewhat Important	SB
Because I could not afford miscellaneous expenses like travel, books, etc.	2.97	5	Somewhat Important	SB
Because participation would take away from time with my family	2.95	6	Somewhat Important	T
Because I did not think I could attend regularly	2.90	7	Somewhat Important	PP
Because I could not afford the registration or course fees	2.88	8	Somewhat Important	SB
Because I did not have time for the studying required	2.78	9	Somewhat Important	T
Because of the amount of time required to finish the course	2.74	10	Somewhat Important	T
Because my employer would not provide financial assistance or reimbursement	2.59	11	Somewhat Important	PP
Because of transportation problems	2.42	12	Slightly Important	PP
Because the courses available did not seem interesting	2.38	13	Slightly Important	LCR
Because I do not enjoy studying	2.37	14	Slightly Important	LC
Because I felt unprepared for the course	2.36	15	Slightly Important	LC
Because I did not think I would be able to finish the course	2.32	16	Slightly Important	LC
Because the available courses did not seem useful or practical	2.30	17	Slightly Important	LC
Because the course was offered in an unsafe area	2.30	17	Slightly Important	LCR

Because of family problems	2.28	18	Slightly Important	PP
Because the course was not on the right level for me	2.25	19	Slightly Important	LCR
Because education would not help me in my job	2.18	20	Slightly Important	LC
Because I did not meet the requirements for the course	2.18	20	Slightly Important	LC
Because I wanted to learn something specific, but the course was too general	2.18	20	Slightly Important	LC
Because I did not think the course would meet my needs	2.18	20	Slightly Important	LCR
Because my family did not encourage participation	2.17	21	Slightly Important	LC
Because I was not willing to give up my leisure time	2.05	22	Slightly Important	LCR
Because the courses available were of poor quality	2.01	23	Slightly Important	LCR
Because I was not confident in my learning ability	1.99	24	Slightly Important	LC
Because I prefer to learn on my own	1.95	25	Slightly Important	LCR
Because I am not that interested in taking courses	1.95	25	Slightly Important	LCR
Because I felt I could not compete with younger students	1.80	26	Slightly Important	LC
Because I felt I was too old to take the course	1.69	27	Slightly Important	LC
Because my friends did not encourage my participation	1.62	28	Slightly Important	LC
Because of a personal health problem or handicap	1.58	29	Slightly Important	LC

NOTE: Overall mean of importance equals 2.37.

a. Mean score based on importance rating scale.

b. Importance rating based on interpretive scale.

c. Factor rating: LC = Lack of Confidence; LCR = Lack of Course Relevance; PP = Personal Problems; SB = Situational Barriers; T = Time.

measuring each of these constructs. Although the scale had been used in previous studies and previous factor structures had been identified, the researchers determined that the most appropriate procedure was to reexamine this structure rather than simply test the structure identified in Darkenwald and Valentine's analysis. The reason for this decision was that Darkenwald and Valentine (1985) indicated that their research on this construct was insufficient to claim definitiveness. They also stated that "much more work is needed to establish the stability and universality of the DPS-G factor structure" (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985, p. 187). They went on to specifically suggest that the factor structure should be examined with different populations because this was a potentially confounding variable in determining the exact factor structure of the construct.

After inspection of the data using a predetermined loading value of .40, a five-factor solution was selected as the best representation of the data. Based on the items included in each factor, the factors were labeled as follows: Lack of Confidence, Lack of Course Relevance, Personal Problems, Situational Barriers, and Time. The results of the factor analysis, including the loadings for each item on each of the derived factors, the percent of variance explained by each of the factors, the label assigned to each of the factors, and the mean and standard deviation computed for each of the subscales for use in subsequent analyses, are presented in Table 2.

Factor 1 in deterring participation in parenting education was determined to be Lack of Confidence. The items, which loaded in Factor 1, represent a sense of low self-esteem, a need for encouragement, and low academic esteem. The overall mean rating for this factor was 2.05, indicating a slightly important effect in deterring parents from participating in parenting education.

Lack of Course Relevance was determined to be Factor 2 in deterring participation in parenting education. The items, which loaded in Factor 2, represent a sense of the course not meeting the needs of the individual and a teaching style inappropriate to the individual. Overall mean rating for this factor was 2.13, indicating a slightly important effect.

Factor 3 in deterring participation in parenting education was determined to be Personal Problems. The items, which loaded in Factor 3, represent financial, family, and transportation problems. The overall mean rating for this factor was 2.61, indicating a somewhat important effect.

TABLE 2: Factor Analysis of Deterrents to Participation in Parenting Education

<i>Factor: Lack of Confidence^a</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>	<i>Factor 5</i>
Because I was not confident in my learning ability	.76	.07	.16	.11	.04
Because I felt I could not compete with younger students	.74	.11	-.01	.00	-.03
Because I did not meet the requirements for the course	.70	.30	-.01	.23	-.06
Because I did not think I would be able to finish the course	.66	-.02	.19	.11	.14
Because I felt I was too old to take the course	.61	-.09	.02	-.01	.20
Because I felt unprepared for the course	.60	.40	.21	.13	-.12
Because I do not enjoy studying	.57	.23	-.16	.07	.04
Because my family did not encourage participation	.49	.23	.26	-.10	.25
Because I wanted to learn something specific, but the course was too general	.47	.36	-.01	.27	.03
Because my friends did not encourage my participation	.47	.12	.21	-.21	.39
Because of a personal health problem or handicap	.44	.34	.01	-.03	.16
Because education would not help in my job	.43	.34	.29	-.14	-.04
<i>Factor: Lack of Course Relevance^b</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>	<i>Factor 5</i>
Because the course was not on the right level for me	.18	.76	.16	.12	.06
Because the available courses did not seem useful or practical	.14	.72	.06	.25	.23
Because I did not think the course would meet my needs	.20	.72	.17	-.01	.04
Because the courses available were of poor quality	.15	.60	-.02	.31	.09
Because I prefer to learn on my own	.06	.60	.21	-.39	.07
Because the course was offered in an unsafe area	.02	.53	.22	.25	.19
Because I am not that interested in taking courses	.32	.46	.24	-.04	.24
Because the courses available did not seem interesting	.33	.44	-.14	.33	.07
Because I was not willing to give up my leisure time	.21	.43	-.19	-.11	.41

(continued)

TABLE 2 (continued)

<i>Factor: Personal Problems^c</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>	<i>Factor 5</i>
Because of transportation problems	.14	.21	.66	.22	-.08
Because I had trouble arranging for child care	.03	-.01	.65	.13	.02
Because of family problems	.40	.15	.55	-.08	.14
Because I did not think I could attend regularly	.13	.23	.54	.05	.27
Because I could not afford miscellaneous expenses like travel, books, etc.	.30	.14	.54	.45	.05
Because my employer would not provide financial assistance or reimbursement	.04	.24	.53	.27	.13
<i>Factor: Situational Barriers^d</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>	<i>Factor 5</i>
Because I could not afford the registration or course fees	.17	.17	.27	.66	.16
Because the course was offered at an inconvenient location	-.16	.34	.24	.61	-.01
Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time	-.20	.07	.33	.48	.44
Because I did not know about courses available for parents	.18	-.03	.17	.44	-.02
<i>Factor: Time^e</i>	<i>Factor 1</i>	<i>Factor 2</i>	<i>Factor 3</i>	<i>Factor 4</i>	<i>Factor 5</i>
Because I did not have time for the studying required	.23	-.02	.16	.18	.77
Because participation would take away from time with my family	.02	.29	.10	-.12	.66
Because of the amount of time required to finish the course	.11	.19	-.03	.38	.66

a. 25.5 % of variance explained; $M = 2.05$, $SD = .83$.

b. 9% of variance explained; $M = 2.13$, $SD = .83$.

c. 6.6% of variance explained; $M = 2.61$, $SD = 1.02$.

d. 5.2% of variance explained; $M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.02$.

e. 4.7% of variance explained; $M = 2.82$, $SD = 1.07$.

Situational Barriers was determined to be Factor 4 in deterring participation to parenting education. The items, which loaded in Factor 4, represent cost, location, awareness, and expense. The overall mean rating for this factor was 3.11, indicating a somewhat important effect.

Factor 5 in deterring participation in parenting education was determined to be Time. The items, which loaded in Factor 5, represent time to study and time away from family. The overall mean rating for this factor was 2.82, representing a somewhat important effect.

Objective 3: Relationship Between Selected Demographics and Deterrent Factors. The third objective was to determine if relationships existed between the factors identified as deterring participation in parenting education and the sociodemographic variables.

Continuous and Ordinal Variables

The relationships between variables measured on an ordinal scale (educational level, number of adults currently in the home, number of children in the home who are now enrolled in day care, and approximate family income before taxes) and the five factors determined to deter participation were measured using Kendall's tau correlation coefficient. The relationships between variables measured on an interval scale (age of respondent) and the five factors deterring participation in parenting education were measured using Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients. To facilitate interpretation of the results, the relationships between factors deterring participation in parenting education and variables measured on a nominal scale were examined by comparing the means of the groups using either the *t*-test procedure or the one-way ANOVA, depending on whether there were two or more categories of the demographic.

Educational level. When the correlation coefficients between educational levels were completed and each of the five identified deterrent factors was computed, only one significant coefficient was found. This relationship was with the factor Lack of Confidence. The nature of the correlation ($r = -.35, p < .01$) indicated that lower levels of education tended to be associated with higher perceived importance of the items in the factor Lack of Confidence as a deterrent to participation in parenting education programs.

Number of adults in the home. The relationships between the number of adults in the home and each of the five factor subscale scores were determined using Kendall's tau correlation. No significant relationships were found.

Number of children in the home. A significant positive correlation ($r = .23, p = .01$) was found between the number of children in the home and the deterrent factor labeled Time. The nature of this association was such that a higher number of children in the home tended to be associated with higher perceived importance of the items in the factor Time as a deterrent to participation in parenting education programs.

Family income. When family income level was correlated with the deterrent factor labeled Lack of Confidence ($r = -.31, p < .01$), lower levels of family income tended to be associated with higher perceived importance of the items in the factor Lack of Confidence as a deterrent to participation in parenting education programs.

When the relationship was examined between family income ($r = -.24, p < .01$) and the deterrent Personal Problems, the correlation was found to be significant. This negative correlation indicated that lower levels of family income tended to be associated with higher perceived importance of the items in the Personal Problems factor as a deterrent to participation in parenting education programs.

Age of respondent. No significant correlations were found when the variable age of the respondent was correlated with the five factors identified as deterring participation in parenting education programs.

Nominal Variables

Sociodemographic variables, which were measured on a nominal scale of measurement, were examined for their influence on each factor by comparing the factor scores of respondents among the categories of each of the demographic variables.

Age of children. The factor scores were compared for those who did or did not have a child younger than the age of 1 in the home. One factor, Time, was found to be significantly different ($t_{107} = 2.13, p = .05$). Respondents who indicated that they did not have a child younger than the age of 1 in the home perceived higher importance of the items

in the factor Time than the individuals who indicated that they did have a child younger than the age of 1 in the home.

When the factor scores were compared for those who did or did not have a 1-year-old child in the home, the factor Lack of Course Relevance was found to be significantly different ($t_{107} = 2.05, p = .04$). Respondents who indicated that they did not have a 1-year-old child in the home perceived higher importance of the items in the factor Lack of Course Relevance than the individuals who indicated that they did have a 1-year-old child in the home.

Factor scores were compared for each of the three variables whether a 2 year old was present in the home, whether a 3 year old was present in the home, and whether a 4 year old was present in the home. The groups represented in the three variables found no significant differences in the deterrent factor scores.

When the factor scores were compared for those who did or did not have a 5-year-old child in the home, the factor Lack of Confidence was found to be significantly different ($t_{107} = 3.01, p = .005$). Respondents who indicated that they did have a 5-year-old child in the home perceived higher importance of the items in the factor Lack of Confidence than the individuals who indicated that they did not have a 5-year-old child in the home.

Factor scores were compared for those who did or did not have a child older than 5 in the home. Three factors were found to be significantly different. Individuals with a child older than 5 in the home perceived significantly higher importance ($t_{107} = 2.55, p = .01$) of the items in the factor Personal Problems than those who did not have a child older than 5 in the home. Lack of Confidence was found to be significantly different ($t_{107} = 3.01, p = .005$). In addition, parents with a child older than 5 in the home perceived significantly higher importance ($t_{107} = 2.37, p = .02$) of the items in the factor Situational Barriers than those who did not have a child older than 5 in the home. Also, individuals with a child older than 5 in the home perceived significantly higher importance ($t_{107} = 2.41, p = .02$) of the items in the factor Time than those who did not have a child older than 5 in the home.

Racial/ethnic group of respondent. Comparison of the factor scores for Factor 1, Lack of Confidence, revealed at least one significant difference ($F_{2,106} = 3.84, p = .03$) existed among the three racial/ethnic groups in the study. Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test was used to determine specifically which of the three racial/ethnic groups included in the study had significantly different Lack of Confidence

scores. Results of this test showed that Black respondents ($M = 2.28$, $SD = .96$) perceived significantly higher influence of the items in the Lack of Confidence factor in deterring them from participating in parenting education classes than did White respondents ($M = 1.84$, $SD = .68$). Individuals in the third racial/ethnic group category ($M = 2.04$, $SD = .52$) were found not to be significantly different from either the Black or the White respondents.

Comparison of the factor scores for Factor 4, Personal Problems, revealed that at least one significant difference ($F_{2,106} = 3.27$, $p = .04$) did exist among the three racial/ethnic groups in the study. Results of Tukey's post hoc test showed that Black respondents ($M = 3.01$, $SD = 1.00$) perceived significantly higher influence of the items in the Personal Problems factor in deterring them from participating in parenting education classes than did White respondents ($M = 2.53$, $SD = 1.02$). Individuals in the third racial/ethnic category were found not to be significantly different from either the Black or the White respondents ($M = 3.03$, $SD = .94$).

Employment status of respondent. The one-way ANOVA procedure was also used to compare the five deterrent factor scores by categories of the sociodemographic variable employment status of respondents, which was measured on a categorical scale. Results of these tests revealed a statistically significant difference for two of the five factors examined. When the scores of the factor Lack of Confidence were compared by the categories of the variable employment status, the significant F test results ($F_{2,105} = 3.79$, $p = .03$) indicated that at least one significant difference did exist among the categories of employment status in the study. Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test showed that unemployed respondents ($M = 2.35$, $SD = 1.01$) perceived significantly higher influence of the items in the Lack of Confidence factor in deterring them from participating in parenting education classes than did respondents who were employed full time ($M = 1.88$, $SD = .71$). Individuals in the employed part-time group were found not to be significantly different from either the unemployed or the employed full-time respondents ($M = 2.01$, $SD = .59$).

In addition, when the scores of the factor Personal Problems were compared by the categories of the variable employment status, the significant F test results ($F_{2,106} = 6.45$, $p = .002$) indicated that at least one significant difference did exist among the categories of employment status in the study. Tukey's post hoc multiple comparison test was used to determine specifically which of the three employment

status groups included in the study had significantly different Personal Problems scores. Results of this test showed that both unemployed respondents ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 1.09$) and respondents who were employed part-time ($M = 3.18$, $SD = .97$) perceived significantly higher influence of the items in the Personal Problems factor in deterring them from participating in parenting education classes than did respondents who were employed full-time ($M = 2.44$, $SD = .91$).

Sex of respondent. Each of the five factor subscale scores was compared between the male and female respondents in the study using the *t*-test procedure. No significant differences were found between the two groups.

DISCUSSION

Parenting skills required to meet the basic needs of young children are not always present in the parent/child relationship (Horney, 1937). Fortunately, parenting skills can be taught, and there is evidence that a wide variety of parenting programs are effective (Adams, 2001). Thus, the need lies in getting the parent into some form of effective parenting-skills educational program. This study has identified five factors that parenting-skills educators must address to effectively recruit the most receptive parent audience.

The five factors identified in this study differ slightly from the previous research (Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Hayes & Darkenwald, 1988; Valentine & Darkenwald, 1990); given the differences in the populations and the parenting education focus, this is not unexpected. Valentine and Darkenwald (1990) identified four of the five factors found in this study (Lack of Confidence, Lack of Course Relevance, Time Constraints, and Personal Problems).

Child care seemed to be the most important issue influencing the participation of parents in available parenting education programs. The item "Because I had trouble arranging for child care" received the highest mean rating by the study respondents. Although the rating for this item was classified only in the "somewhat important" response category, the fact that it was the highest rated item makes it of particular interest to individuals and agencies offering parenting education programs. The ability to effectively reach many of the parents who currently are not being provided with the parenting education they need would seem to be related to providing and/or

ensuring that quality child care be made available to potential clientele for a minimal cost.

The item identified as the second most important issue was "Because I did not know about the courses available." To address this issue, education providers need to explore effective ways to market programs to specific target audiences. For example, identifying and using mentor parents to promote parenting programs to other parents may be helpful.

The items "Because the course was scheduled at an inconvenient time" and "Because the course was offered at an inconvenient location" were ranked as third and fourth, respectively. Parenting educators could focus on offering video-based and internet-based programs to help address this issue. Utilizing existing child care centers, churches, doctor's office waiting rooms, and other locations to which parents have access is also suggested.

Lack of confidence, lack of course relevance, personal problems, situational barriers, and time deter parents from participating in parenting education programs. This is consistent with studies using the DPS with other populations (Blais et al., 1989; Darkenwald & Valentine, 1985; Hayes & Darkenwald, 1988; Martindale & Drake, 1989; Noel, 1988).

The findings from this study indicate that relationships do exist between some factors identified as deterring participation in parenting education and sociodemographic variables. Black respondents perceived significantly greater influence on the lack of confidence than did White respondents. Similarly, those respondents who are currently unemployed attributed a greater influence to confidence factors than respondents who were employed full-time. Therefore, when marketing parenting programs, attention should be given to self-confidence issues. Lower levels of family income tended to be associated with higher perceived importance of the items in the Personal Problem factor as a deterrent to participation in parenting education programs. Parenting educators should pay particular attention to transportation, child care, and cost issues when low-income families are the targeted clientele. Financial sponsors for programs could aid in offering assistance of this kind.

Because this study involved mainly female respondents, further study of male parents is recommended to determine if differences exist between genders in regard to deterrents to participation in parenting education.

Further research to explore the effect of level of education on deterrents to participation is recommended. Research to further investigate barriers of specific ethnic groups and single parents is also recommended to help better meet the needs of these populations. Finally, further studies using the DPS-G with a larger and more ethnically diverse group of parents is recommended to strengthen generalizability.

Because parents have significant responsibilities throughout their children's developmental years and are a source of guidance, it is important that they are able to take advantage of as many educational opportunities as possible. It is through recognizing the deterrents to parenting education that we will be better able to meet the needs of parents in regard to parenting education.

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