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AN EVALUATION OF PARENT EFFECTIVENESS TRAINING
PROVIDED BY A FAITH-BASED ORGANIZATION

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Social Work

by
Kim Lynette Braxton
June 2002


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June 2002

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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is an evaluation of parent effectiveness training that is provided by a faith-based organization entitled Project "R.E.A.C.H." (Realizing Every Area 4 Children's Health). The study focused on four areas of parenting knowledge, 1. discipline knowledge, 2. communication with children's teachers, 3. communication with children, and 4. effective parenting. A literature review indicated poverty influenced parenting style and parent from lower income neighborhoods were more like to have harsh disciplinary styles.

This research used the single survey group to determine if there is a difference in knowledge and perception about parenting after attendance at the training seminar. The results of this research showed that there was a significant difference in parents' knowledge after attending the training. Findings verified that income and religion were significant factors in whether or not a parent would benefit from parent training seminars.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

The focus of this study is to examine a segment of a faith-based organization entitled Project "R.E.A.C.H." (Realizing Every Area 4 Children's Health). Chapter one of this study will focus on the difficulties that some parents face in child rearing. Some of the difficulties that will be addressed include: social economic status, neighborhood instability and cultural diversity. In addition, chapter one will discuss and define family policy and how it relates to child rearing; and the many roles that social workers utilize in helping families face difficult issues. The final segment of chapter one will address the reasons why Parent Effectiveness Training is important in the area of social work.

Problem Statement

Parents face different opportunities and risks in rearing their children because of their mental make-up and because of the social environments they inhabit. Several theoretical and empirically supported neighborhood characteristics that affect parenting include poverty, residential instability, public services, limited social networks, and danger (Furstenberg, Belzer, Davis, Levine,

Morrow, & Washington, 1993; Leventhal & Brooks-Gunn, 2000; Sampson, 1987; Wilson, 1991).

In general these neighborhood characteristics tend to undermine positive parental behaviors, such as warmth and appropriate and consistent discipline, and tend to increase problematic parental behaviors, such as harsh interactions (Furstenberg et al.1993; Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, & Duncan, 1994).

In urban neighborhoods, poverty is found to be one of the most important influences on parenting (Wilson, 1987). When parents live among neighbors who are unemployed and have very limited incomes, they display less warmth and higher levels of harsh discipline and restrictive control (Jarrett, 1997; Simons, Johnson, Conger, & Lorenz, 1997). Moreover parents from lower social strata are characterized as being more controlling and less supportive in childrearing behaviors than parents from higher social strata (Gerris & Dekovic, 1997).

Socioeconomic factors may be considered as stressors that influence aspects of mothers' psychological functioning and thereby contributes to harsh or inconsistent disciplinary practices (Conger, McMarty, Yang, Lahey & Kropp, 1984; McLoyd & Wilson, 1990; Simons,

Whitbeck, Conger & Wu, 1991). Economic hardships are a predominant factor in harsh disciplinary tactics.

The historical record of industrial societies documents the widespread consequences of economic hard times for families and children, including greater risks of marital breakdown, child abuse, and neglect (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990).

In lower social classes, parents give priority to conformity and obedience, rather than to autonomy and self-determination (Kohn, 1969; Levine, 1974). In fact, neighborhood poverty appears to exert a unique negative influence on parental warmth (Klebanov et al., 1994).

Another problem that can compromise good parenting is neighborhood instability. Communities where few residents own their own homes and live in the same place over a number of years provide few opportunities for the development and maintenance of friendships and related support systems. The resulting social isolation can attenuate effective parenting (Furstenberg et al. 1993; Sampson, 1992). Communities in which residents seldom interact may promote social isolation, which can lead to nonoptimal parenting (Furstenberg et al., 1993).

In addition, parents living in high-risk neighborhoods that lack sufficient community services and

resources are more likely to physically abuse their children than comparable parents with access to those services and resources (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1993).

One interpretation of this correlation is that parents who are faced with rampant crime and violence experience chronic tension, stress and discipline reactively, using more harsh strategies in an inconsistent manner (Hill & Herman-Stahl, 2001; McLoyd, 1990). Alternatively, to prepare their children for life in a dangerous neighborhood, parents may intentionally use harsh strategies (Furstenberg et al., 1993).

Mirroring the more dismal influences of neighborhood characteristics, family context also has been linked to parenting. Low-income parents, less educated parents, single parents, younger parents, and parents with more children tend to display less warmth and more harsh discipline (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, Chase-Lansdale, & Gordon, 1997; McLoyd, 1990; Menaghan, 1999).

Neighborhood characteristics, family context, and past behavior may be an important influence on parenting. From infancy, children and their mothers affect the behaviors of one another in a transactional system (Sameroff, 1975).

As children get older, their behavior problems may increase the likelihood of parents' harshness, which in turn increases the likelihood of children's future behavior problems (Nix et al., 1999).

Furthermore, diversity and culture also have a definite effect on parenting; broad cultural influences may affect parenting in two ways. In the United States, broad cultural influences may vary by family race and locality in terms of their impact on parenting (Foster, Jones, Nix & PinderHughes, 2001).

First, there may be differences in prevalence members of some cultures may be more or less likely to exhibit a specific parental behavior. Second, there may be differences in processes. Members of some cultures may experience diminished or exacerbated effects of other factors, such as neighborhood influences, on parental behaviors (Foster, Jones, Nix, & PinderHughes, 2001)

Policy Context

The field of family policy was conceived in the 1970's and has come of age in the 1990's. The 1980 White House Conference on Families was instrumental in putting families on the political agenda, but it proved so politically contentious that it stymied any federal development for almost a decade (Steiner, 1981). With its

reemergence in the 1990's, family policy was much like an adolescent on the cusp of adulthood. Blankenhorn (1990) defined family policy as having four family functions: a) family creation, b) economic support, c) childrearing and d) family care-giving. At the heart of these examples of family policy terms is the critical family element, which moves beyond one individual to a relationship between two or more individuals, a distinction that is often overlooked in policy circles.

Political interest in children and families has rebounded from the lows of the 1980's, which has led to claims that families as a theme in policy making is at its highest peak in the last 20 years among policy makers, professionals and the public (Hutchins, 1998; Ooms, 1995; Whitehead, 1992).

In a public opinion poll by (Bennett, Petts, & Blumenthal, (1999) a resounding 99% of Americans reported that loving family relationships are extremely (91%) or somewhat (9%) important to them. Yet, in polls of families with children, four out of five reported that it is harder to be a parent today, owing in part to conditions outside the family that could potentially be shaped by policy-economic pressure, social isolation and unsafe

streets and neighborhoods (cited in National Commission on Children, 1994).

Most Americans probably agree that childrearing is primarily the responsibility of families, yet they believe that government has a responsibility to create the conditions under which parents can do their best. In 1998, only 6% of parents said government was doing a great deal to help them with their concerns, yet 47% said government could be doing a great deal to help them, and 37% said government could do something more to help them (Hewlett & West, 1998).

During this decade, as in the past, the question faced by policy makers in the debate of family issues was not whether families needed support, but whether support should be provided by government, particularly the federal government (Trzcinski, 1995). Also during this decade policies were enacted to address issues such as adoption, child abuse and neglect, childcare, children's health, child support, domestic violence, education, family leave, family preservation and family poverty.

Kamerman and Kahn (in Press) reported a tripling of expenditures on childcare, a doubling of direct cash benefits to families, and a 50% increase in family services. However, the trends in poverty rates in families

continue to be offset by growing income disparity between the rich and the poor. These economic trends have repercussions for families and particularly the well being of children. Family income is a potent predictor of children's development across income groups, with one third to one half of its impact accounted for by parenting practices, the home learning environment, and family structure (McMurrer & Saawhill, 1998).

Practice Context

There are many roles that social workers utilize in helping families face difficult issues. They help economically disadvantaged families find resources to help with food and housing. They also advocate for childcare for working or low-income families. In addition, they provide family counseling and psycho education to families that have difficulty with improper childrearing practices that sometimes result in maltreatment.

Research has proven that abusive parents often live in highly stressful environments plagued by poverty, family and community violence, substance use and abuse, as well as inadequate resources for housing employment, education, recreation, and transportation (Dore, 1999).

All these factors and many more have considerable implications for social workers. The family-centered

practitioner whose primary mission is the enhancement of the quality of life, endeavors to assist parents and families in building an adaptive balance between human beings and their ecological environments (Hartman & Laird, 1998).

As the number of child abuse and neglect reports has soared over the past two decades, family clinicians and researchers have increasingly implemented and evaluated parent training programs designed to insure capable parenting (Dore & Lee, 1999).

Social workers' knowledge of the factors that contribute to good parenting has increased as well as their understanding of the effects of poor parenting on outcomes for children. Many interventions have been developed that build on this knowledge. Social Service Practitioners' goals are to change poor parenting practices into good, or at least better ones. Others aim to prevent poor parenting skills in the first place. It is the challenge of social workers to help the family make use of its strengths, remove obstacles to growth and change, and alter destructive patterns (Dore & Lee, 1999).

One of Social work's goals is commitment to assisting clients with obtaining needed resources. Referring parents to parent education classes could demonstrate how social

workers intervene to help educate parents through the use of Psycho education. Social workers also advocate for families so that they have access to the resources they need to meet life's challenges and difficulties as well as access to opportunities than can enhance family relationships.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to examine the effectiveness of parent training seminars. The intention of this study is to find out if parents' knowledge increased in their understanding of 4 areas of parenting: discipline, communication between parent-child, communication with teachers and effective parenting style.

The training seminars are being offered by a faith-based organization entitled, Project R.E.A.C.H. In 1998, the outreach workers at Project R.E.A.C.H. conducted a needs assessment in the San Bernardino area, more specifically, in the low socio-economic neighborhood surrounding of the church, to find out exactly what were the most prevalent needs of the community (Project R.E.A.C.H. manual, 1998).

The results identified several problems in the community, including a need for parenting education

classes. This lack of parenting skills occurred commonly among at-risk families that had very low incomes and minimal education. Hence, parent education became a priority for Project R.E.A.C.H. Parenting workshops were developed by the faith-based organization to educate parents in these areas: budgeting, family communication, discipline and parent teacher interactions.

The aim of this study is to contribute to social work knowledge in the area of parent effectiveness training and to provide information about the roles faith-based organization have taken in providing services to communities.

The research project will utilize a pre-test and post-test to access parental knowledge prior to the workshop and after to gauge if parenting seminars are effective training interventions. The rationale for this method is that the pre-test will provide a baseline to measure the effect of the independent variable (Parenting workshops) to find out if there has been any change in parenting knowledge.

Significance of the study for Social Work Practice

There are several reasons why Parent Effectiveness Training is important in the area of social work. One

reason is that social workers can assist parents in the goals of improving their parenting skills. The goal of parent training has been to modify children's behavior by teaching parents skills such as reinforcement of prosocial behavior and the provision of discipline for antisocial behavior (e.g., Daly, Holland, Forrest & Felbaum, 1985; Fleischman, 1981; Sayget, Horne, Walker, & Passmore, 1988)

The main component of most parent training packages involves teaching parents social skills applicable in parent-child interactions.

When seeking family services, parents typically identify a child's disruptive behavior as the desired focus of treatment; however, rather than focusing on the child, family therapists typically envision the family system as problematic. The child's aberrant behavior is conceptualized as serving the family by bringing them into treatment. Social workers must understand that it is not exclusively the child but the family constellation, interactional patterns, and developmental level that must be considered (Carter & McGoldrick, 1989).

In cases such as these it is imperative that social workers know and understand that there are multiple methods to treating families and that parent training could be useful. Not only can parent education workshops

help within the family system, but also enable social workers another tool that can facilitate communication.

Parent training is also important to social workers because agencies are referring a lot of families to a variety of education and training activities for parents. Such services have arisen out of a need to support parents to undertake the complex task of rearing their children. The nature of these activities varies considerably, ranging from topics such as information delivery to active skills training (Matthews & Hudson, 2001).

In a time of escalating demands for financial accountability by service providers, there is increasing pressure to produce evidence that services given are valuable to consumers (Matthews & Hudson, 2001).

Apart from this fiscal accountability, a strong argument can be mounted on ethical grounds that service providers intervening with families demonstrate that positive outcomes have been achieved. Furthermore, service providers should be able to demonstrate that the interventions have not caused any damage to the family. Neither of these effects can be assumed, and they cannot be assured unless some form of evaluation is conducted (Matthews & Hudson, 2001).

Moreover, parenting education seminars are important to participants because they assist parents with issues of proper discipline. It is important to parents to know that training is available to them and that they can be inspired with hope. Parents can build a support system that they can learn from.

Finally, this study is important because it will add to the knowledge of how parents communicate with their children at home and how to effectively communicate with teachers; and how the field of social work merges with community based organizations to meet the needs of families. These are the reasons why it is significant to study this topic of: Does Parent Effectiveness Training Improve Parenting Skills?

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter Two consists of a discussion of the relevant literature regarding this study, more specifically looking at what previous authors have said about parent effectiveness training. Next, chapter two will examine the research on harsh discipline techniques and the implications it has on child maltreatment. Finally, an examination of social learning theory by which parents are taught or learn parenting strategies will be researched.

Parent Effectiveness Training

A wide variety of parenting training methods have been reported in the literature, ranging from the self-administered, written instructions to intensive therapist-administered interventions, including active training techniques such as a live or video taped modeling with feedback. In some circumstances, brief self-administered, written information for parents is sufficient to bring about positive child behavior change (Egon-Rowe, Ichinose, & Clark 1991; Endo, Sloane, Hawkes & Jenson, 1991).

Unfortunately, some of the literature designed to train parents requires a higher reading level than most parents have attained (Abram & Dowling, 1979; Davis et al., 1994). Davis et al. concluded that parent educational material for use in public health settings should be written at a reading level lower than high school.

McMahon and Forehand (1981) presented guidelines for evaluating self-administered parent training materials. They proposed that studies reporting on the use of written material for parent training should duplicate, as far as possible, the conditions under which the parents would be expected to use the manuals. Furthermore, a multiple outcome measures should be used; there should be a large subject population, appropriate control and comparison groups, and at least six-month follow-up assessment.

Sanders' (1996) review of behavioral family intervention concluded that active training programs provide clear written and verbal instructions to parents, model parenting skills, use behavioral rehearsal procedures and provide contingent feedback following direct observation of parent child interaction.

The study by Rickert et al. (1988) indicated didactic instruction alone did not promote skill mastery in parents and that competency-based training incorporating modeling

and behavioral rehearsal was necessary to achieve this aim.

Knapp and Deluty (1989) examined the interaction of socioeconomic status (SES) with parent training methods. They found that mothers of low SES were more successful if they had received parent training that included modeling and role-playing than were low SES mothers taught by written materials, short quizzes and discussion.

Webster-Stratton (1990) has reported long-term success with parent training that employs videotaped modeling. Families with the least success include those of single-parent status and those with maternal depression, low SES, or alcohol and drug abuse.

The recognition of the adverse effect of contextual factors, such as maternal depression, parental difficulties with anger control, social isolation, single parenthood, and marital discord, have led to the provision of adjunctive therapies with parent training for the families affected (Dadds & McHugh, 1992; Serketic & Dumas, 1996; Webster-Stratton, 1994).

Human Behavior in the Social Environment Theories Guiding Conceptualization

Hudson (1998) argued that the methods by which parents are taught parenting strategies should follow sound instructional principles based on established learning theories.

Contemporary behavior therapy arose simultaneously in the United States, South Africa, and Great Britain in the 1950's. Its focus was on demonstrating that behavioral conditioning techniques were effective and were a viable alternative to traditional psychotherapy. In the 1960's Albert Bandura developed social-learning theory, which combined classical conditioning and operant conditioning with observable learning (Corey, 1996).

It was during the 1970's that behavior therapy emerged as a major force in psychology and made a significant impact on education, psychotherapy, psychiatry, and social work. Behavioral techniques were developed and expanded, and they were also applied to fields such as business, industry, and child rearing (Corey, 1996).

Behavioral theories state that people learn or acquire their behaviors. For example, parents learn how to parent either by their parents or parent training. This

learning process follows certain basic principles. For example, Bandura (1977) postulated that social learning theory views human behavior as being determined by an interplay between the influence of the situation, the person's behavior, and the person's cognitions and emotions. The theory also implies that humans have some freedom in their actions, but options are limited by both environmental and personal factors. However, by increasing one's knowledge and skills one can exert more control over their life. Moreover, motivation is one of the most essential aspects of learning theories.

Maltreatment and Neglect

The historical record of industrial societies documents the widespread consequences of economic hard times for families and children, including greater risks of marital breakdown, child abuse, and neglect (Eckenrode & Gore, 1990).

In addition, parents living in high-risk neighborhoods and lacking community services and resources are more likely to physically abuse their children than comparable parents with access to those services and resources (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1993).

In 1998, child abuse and neglect statistics reported by states continued to decline to just over 900,000 children. The incidence rate of children victimized by maltreatment also declined to 12.9 per 1,000 children, the lowest record in more than 10 years. The decrease, the fifth in a row reported by the federal government comes as the nation marked April as National Child Abuse and Neglect Prevention Month (cited in Kharfen, 2000).

Health Human Service (HHS) Secretary Donna E. Shalala stated, "Although we can be encouraged that the number of children who suffer abuse and neglect continues to decline, these numbers are still unacceptably high". Shalala further comments on the former President Clinton's concerns about child abuse, She state "The Clinton administration is firmly committed not only to preventing child abuse and neglect before it occurs, but also to providing safe, permanent and loving homes for children who have been harmed. We must not tolerate this daily human tragedy in our children's lives" (cited in Kharfen, 2000).

Based on data reported by states, HHS estimates that child protective service agencies received about 2,806,000 referrals of possible maltreatment in 1998. Of the 66 percent of those referrals investigated, states found that

there were an estimated 903,000 children who were victims of abuse and/or neglect.

Parents continue to be the main perpetrators of child maltreatment. The most common pattern of maltreatment (45 percent) was a child victimized by a female parent with no other perpetrators (Kharfen, 2000). More than half of all victims (54 percent) suffered neglect, while almost a quarter (23 percent) suffered physical abuse. Nearly 12 percent of the victims were sexually abused. The number of child fatalities caused by maltreatment remained unchanged at about 1,100.

Tower (1989) described a typical neglectful parent as "an isolated individual who has difficulty forming relationships or carrying on the routine tasks of everyday life." Burdened with anger and sadness over unmet childhood needs, this parent finds it impossible to consistently recognize and meet the needs of her or his children" (Zastrow & Kirst-Ashman, 2000).

The abusive family is a complex system influenced by sociological, cultural, psychological, and interactional variable. Many authorities feel that parents who abuse their children demonstrate some particular personality characteristics (Crosson-Tower, 2002).

Cadzow 1999; and Miller, 1999 found that low self-esteem is universal among abusive parents. They noted that these parents feel unloved and unworthy themselves. According to Crosson-Tower (2002) their lives have been fraught with rejection and losses, with the loss of nurturing in childhood as the foundation.

Summary

The literature that was important to this project was presented in Chapter two of this research paper. This paper reviewed the impact of parent effective training and the role it played in child abuse and maltreatment. It further discussed the important role that parenting played on behavioral learning theory within families.

CHAPTER THREE

METHODS

Introduction

This research design method utilized a pre-test and post-test to determine if parenting training seminars enhanced parenting skills. Participants were recruited using a systematic non-probability sampling method. Specifically, the study's sample was recruited from individuals in the R.E.A.C.H. program.

Study Design

The study design consisted of one-group pre-test and post-test, which was used to evaluate whether parenting education increased knowledge of parenting skills. A pre-test questionnaire was presented to the participants to gauge the level of parental knowledge prior to any formal parent education training. The post-test questionnaire was presented to the participants after they had completed a parenting workshop seminar. The seminar took six hours. The topics in the parenting workshop included: finance/budgeting, setting boundaries with children, disciplinary methods and communication skills. Professionals that had obtained their degrees in the

fields of Social Work, Education and Psychology presented these seminars.

For the purpose of this research, knowledge of parenting skills were operationally defined as follows

1) Ways to express knowledge of feelings and ways to communicate positively, 2) Knowledge of ways to discipline children that are appropriate given the developmental stage of the children, 3) Knowledge of effective coping tools to deal with parental stressors (Briggs & Mora, 1997).

Sampling

This research used a non-probability sampling, which relied on the availability of participants. In this case 75 participants involved in the project R.E.A.C.H. program were mailed letters encouraging them to participate in a seminar based on parenting education training.

There were several factors that had to be taken into consideration in the design this study. For example, it was imperative to the study that all participants had children and; that participants of this sample lived within a specific geographic community in the San Bernardino area.

Data Collection and Instruments

A questionnaire was designed specifically for this study. This researcher and the R.E.A.C.H program manager designed the questionnaire. It consisted of eighteen questions concerning the participants parenting styles on methods of discipline, parenting skills and communication styles. Moreover, this instrument solicited information regarding age, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, living arrangements and education level.

In an attempt to test content validity related to the training, three educators provided information for the seminar. Each instructor was asked to validate that there were adequate sample questions in their specific area of expertise and that those questions represented an aspect of the variable that was measured.

The instrument was structured so that it accurately measured the variables (content validity) and also appeared as a relevant measurement of those variables (face validity). The reliability of the instrument was not proven because it was the first time it was utilized.

This study design consisted of one-group pretest and posttest. Because there was not a control group to make comparisons with there were some limitations in terms of validity.

Procedures

The researcher distributed to each participant a packet that contained a consent form, a questionnaire, and a debriefing statement. All answers were kept confidential, and only group data was used in the study. Subjects were asked to sign a consent form, which described the study and the nature of their participation.

The participants were read a statement that explained the purpose of the study. They were also given a pre-test. The respondents were then asked to answer the questions as truthfully as possible. Participants were given $\frac{1}{2}$ hour for the pre-test.

The seminar took 6 hours. After the parenting seminar was completed the posttest was given. The respondents were given $\frac{1}{2}$ to answer the post test questions. Participation in the seminar was voluntary and did not affect participation in other R.E.A.C.H. programs or activities. Results of the posttest will be made available upon request. There were not any rewards for participation in this seminar; however, refreshments were available both during and after the workshop.

Protection of Human Subjects

The confidentiality and anonymity of the study was a primary concern of this researcher and all efforts were considered to accomplish this. For sake of protecting the participants' anonymity and inputting the data, a numbering system was utilized. No participant names were used. Participants were asked to sign informed consents before they participated in the study and they were informed that they could stop at any time during the study.

The participants were given debriefing statements with the names of the researcher and the advisor along with a phone number to contact the researchers if they had any questions concerning the study.

Data Analysis

The data was analyzed to determine whether the hypothesis was supported, to find out if there was a relationship between participating in the parent education classes (independent variable) and improvement in parenting skills (outcome variable). Descriptive statistics were used to summarize and describe the data. Bivariate statistics were analyzed to determine if there was a difference between the pre and post test scores.

After the data was collected from the pre-test and post-test questionnaire, a formal statistical analysis was performed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Version 10.1. This questionnaire was coded and reverse scored on questions 4, 9, 10, 11, 12 and 17. Summative scores for 4 constructs were calculated. The data was analyzed utilizing t-tests and ANOVAs, to determine whether there was a relationship between the demographic variables and the test scores.

Four constructs were defined by combining questions 1, 4, 9 & 10 to determine the level of discipline knowledge and attitudes of parents about appropriate ways to discipline children. The second construct to define effective parent/child communication and ways to express feelings and communicate positively utilized questions 5, 6, 7, 11, 12, 13, & 18. The third construct of understanding effective parent/teacher communications utilized questions 3, 14 & 16. The final construct understanding of what determines effective parenting skills, utilized questions 2, 8, 15 & 17.

Summary

Chapter three of this research focused on the methodology involved in conducting this research project.

The methodology included a study design, sampling methods, data collection, measurement instruments, procedures, and protection of human subjects and data analysis. All of these tools of research were utilized to determine if parent education had an impact on parenting skills.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS

Introduction

This chapter will report on the significant statistical findings of the research as well as present the frequencies of the variables. The results of the findings in this chapter are based on frequencies, measures of central tendencies, t-tests, and ANOVAS. These tests were found to be the most appropriate to analyze the data obtained through this research.

Presentation of the Findings

The data was analyzed using SPSS 10.1 and was presented in tables. The sample size consisted of 47 participants (see table 1). The participants ranged in ages from 20 years old to 44 years old. The average age of the participants was 30 years old. Eighty percent of the participants were female. Twenty percent of the participants were male. Forty-six percent ($n = 22$) of the participants were African American. Thirty-four ($n = 16$) of the participants were Hispanic. Twelve percent ($n = 6$) of the participants were Caucasian. Four percent ($n = 2$) were other. Two percent ($n = 2$) were missing. More than half fifty-one percent ($n = 24$) of the participants live

in a single-parent household. Forty percent (n = 19) live in a two-parent household. Six percent (n = 3) live in with others not defined in this sample. Two percent (n = 1) live in a household with a stepparent. More than half of the participants have 3-4 children.

Forty-four percent (N = 21) of the participants have some high school education. Twenty-seven percent (n = 13) of the participants graduated from high school or obtained a GED. Seventeen percent (n = 8) of the participants had some college education. Eight percent (n = 4) of the participants had a college degree. Fifty-nine percent (n = 28) of the participants were not employed. Nineteen percent (n = 9) of the participants are employed part-time. Seventeen percent (n = 8) of the participants are employed full-time. Four percent (n = 2) are other, not defined, in the questionnaire. Forty-eight percent (n = 23) had an income of \$0-\$5,000 per year. Twenty-one percent (n = 10) had an income of \$5,000-\$10,000 per year. Seventeen percent (n = 8) had an income of \$10,000-\$20,000 per year. Four percent (n = 2) had an income of \$20,000-\$30,000 per year. Six percent (n = 3) had an income of \$30,000 or more. Two percent (n = 1) did not respond to this question. Eighty-five percent (n = 40) of the participants were of the Christian faith. Eight

percent ($n = 4$) were other. Six percent ($n = 3$) did not respond to this question. Ninety-five percent ($n = 45$) found this seminar to be useful. Additionally, eighty-seven percent found this seminar to be helpful.

Paired t -tests were performed to determine if there was any significant differences between the pre and post-test mean scores. The t -tests showed significant findings when comparing the pre- and post-test mean scores on all constructs as evidenced by the following statistics: Pair one, discipline pre-test mean score/discipline post-test mean score ($n = 47$), $t = 1.257$, $p < .05$; Pair two, parent/child communication pre-test mean score/parent/child communication post-test mean score $t = .270$, $p < .05$; Pair three, parent/teacher communication pre-test mean score/parent/teacher communication post-test mean score $t = 2.012$, $p < .05$; and Pair four, effective parenting pre-test mean score/effective parenting post-test mean score $t = 1.554$, $p < .05$ (see table 2).

ANOVA's were performed to examine the relationship between the demographic characteristics of the respondents and how they scored on the tests. The ANOVA yielded statistically significant findings for the following: income and discipline pre-test mean scores, income and

parent-child communication post-test mean scores, religion and pre-test parent/child communication mean scores and religion and post-test parent-child communication mean scores. All were found significant at the $p < .05$ level (see table 3).

Summary

This chapter reported significant finding among the four constructs of parenting education of project R.E.A.C.H. There were also significant findings related to the demographics. These findings allow for evaluation of the seminar. It is this researcher's intent to use the significant findings to discuss outcomes in order to improve services to those attending the workshop.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION

Introduction

This chapter will present the discussion of the research findings. It will also evaluate the limitations of the research. This chapter will also explore the implications for Social Work practice, policy, and research as suggested by the research findings.

Discussion

This research evaluated the effectiveness of a faith-based parenting education program known as Project R.E.A.C.H. This program offered training on budgeting, family communication, discipline, and parent teacher interactions. The goal of this research was to provide quantitative evidence that the training program improved participants' knowledge and attitude about parenting skills. Furthermore, it was the intent of the researcher to provide outcomes to further improve the training for Project R.E.A.C.H. educators.

The hypothesis stated that by attending the seminar offered by Project R.E.A.C.H. parents would improve their parenting styles and become more aware of important

parenting skills. The results of this research showed that there was a significant difference in parent's knowledge.

Findings verified that income and religion were significant factors in whether or not a parent would benefit from the seminar. Those in higher SES brackets were found to score higher on the discipline pre-test. This indicated that they had less knowledge than those in higher SES brackets regarding parenting skills prior to the seminar. Another significant relationship was found between income and parent/child post-test mean scores. These results indicate that those with higher incomes were more likely to benefit from the seminar. Results of the ANOVA measurement of religion and pre-test parent-child communication demonstrated that those with a religious affiliation had good parent/child communication reported prior to taking the seminar.

The findings concur with the literature that states that poverty is an important influence on parenting styles (Wilson, 1987) (See Table 1). The findings about discipline and pre test score verified what the literature stated that low-income parents were likely to display less warmth and more harsh discipline than their counterparts (Klebanov, Brooks-Gunn, Chas-Lansdale, & Gordon, 1997; McLoyd, 1990; Menghan, 1999). Findings also indicate that

parents in lower SES brackets did improve their parent/child communication skills upon completion of the seminar. Results from this study that those from higher income were more likely to benefit from the training offered; yet no participant was in an extremely high-income bracket (see Appendix E).

Limitations

Due to time constraints this researcher was unable to do a longitudinal study to measure application of the knowledge gained from the training. Such a study would identify whether or not parents had applied the parenting skills they reported useful and helpful. As post-test was given immediately following the six-hour seminar the participants were able to recall what they had just learned, rather than voicing the skills they actually planned to implement. Another limitation was also due to time constraints. It may have been important to compare test results from other parenting trainings and/or seminars. For example it may be beneficial to determine if the faith-based seminars are more effective than non-faith based parenting workshops.

Furthermore, the literature states that certain training methods such as modeling, role-playing and

videotaped modeling were more likely to be successful with parents in a low socioeconomic status (Knapp & Deluty, 1989; Webster-Stratton 1990). Due to the nature of this project, this researcher was unable to assess different training methods of the Project R.E.A.C.H. educators.

Recommendations for Social Work Practice, Policy, and Research

Much of Social Work is to provide case management that enhances the lives of the people served. It is in the interest of the Social Work profession to locate community services and resources that will benefit the needs of the consumers. Social Workers endeavor to encourage parents and families to build a balance between themselves and their ecological environments (Hartman & Laird, 1998).

This research's findings concur with the literature that parents in lower SES brackets are likely to have less knowledge about effective parenting than parents in higher SES with access to services and resources (Garbarino & Kostelny, 1993). Family clinicians and researchers have increasingly implemented and evaluated parent training programs designed to ensure capable parenting due to increased reports of child abuse (Dore & Lee, 1999). Evaluating parenting seminars allows the Social Worker to determine the most helpful resources for parents in need

and build upon existing resources that are effective. With the stressors of living in poverty that relate to the consumer's basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing, improving parenting skills can improve the quality of life for all family members. Consequently, it is vital that Social Workers provide access to effective education.

Evaluating and improving parent training programs should be the goal of both the educators and the Social Workers. With proven evidence of effective training programs, Social Workers can build on these programs and/or model after these programs to provide resources for families in need. By doing so, it is quite possible that child maltreatment and/or abuse could be reduced in our society.

It is suggested by this researcher that Social Workers who provide counseling groups for children recommend the children's parents to a parenting class such as the one evaluated in this research. Another implication for Social Workers is to team and facilitate a parenting group to run concurrently with the children's group. Providing psycho educational parenting groups can help families recognize their strengths, teach appropriate social skills for communication with teachers and other

school staff, and help parents value the importance of positive interactions with their children.

A recommendation for Social Workers would be to lobby for policy change to require the offering of parenting classes as a service for consumers. Many of the consumers who are in the lower SES brackets have Medi-Cal as their primary insurance. Instituting a mechanism for change in the policy to provide parenting classes for pregnant women could have a significant influence on the number of reported cases of child abuse and/or maltreatment within this socioeconomic status.

Recommendations for further research would be to further upon the findings of this research. That could include a longitudinal study, a comparison of parenting seminars, or studying different training techniques. Further research could initiate more evaluation of current programs in order to provide Social Workers with improved resources to share with consumers.

The research indicated that the faith-based seminar provided by Project R.E.A.C.H. was successful in imparting parenting skills to their consumers. The data showed significant results indicating that parents improved their knowledge of parenting practices as a result of enrollment in this workshop. Limitations of this research were

discussed and recommendations were made. Future research comparing various parenting seminars could provide Social Workers with increased resources for families.

Summary

This chapter discussed how the findings affect the role of the Social Worker. The research findings discussed indicated important implications for Social Work practice, policy, and research, as well as identifying target areas for improving resources for parents. It is the researcher's intent to aid Social Work Practitioners in their attempts to improve the consumer's quality of life.

APPENDIX A
INFORMED CONSENT

INFORMED CONSENT

I consent to serve as a participant in the research investigation entitled Parent Effectiveness Training. This research project is being conducted by Kim Braxton, a social work graduate student at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB) under the supervision of Dr. Trang Hoang, Professor of Social Work at CSUSB. The purpose of this research is to examine the Parent Effective Training Seminar that is being offered by the R.E.A.C.H. program, a faith-based organization. The purpose of this research is to examine Parent Effectiveness Training and the impact it has on parenting skills, child/parent and parent/teacher relationships.

Participation in this research is voluntary and you are free to withdraw consent or stop participating at any time. The withdrawal from the research project will not exempt you from participating in the Parenting Seminar. Please be assured that any information you provide will be held in strict confidence by the researcher. At no time will your name be reported nor any responses. Any questions that you may have about this research will be answered by the researcher or by an authorized representative of CSUSB.

On the basis of these statements, I voluntarily agree to participate in this project. I acknowledge that I am at least 18 years of age. Please mark your signature with an X below.

Signature _____

Date _____

APPENDIX B
DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

DEBRIEFING STATEMENT

I would like to thank you for voluntarily participating in this research project. The purpose of this study was to assess the Parent Effectiveness Training offered by the R.E.A.C.H. program so that they may provide effective service to their clients. I would like to emphasize that all information collected is strictly confidential and at no time will your identities be revealed. I encourage participants to contact Dr. Trang Hoang at CSUSB (909) 880-5559 if you have any questions regarding this project. The study results will be available after June 2002, in Pfau Library at California State University San Bernardino (CSUSB)

APPENDIX C
PRE AND POST QUESTIONNAIRE

PRE-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

This is a study of Self-Evaluation, Parent/Child Communication Techniques and Discipline Styles among parents.

Please write the first two letters of your **last name** and the **month** you were born in the boxes.

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Example: If your name were John Brown and you were born in February, you would write in the boxes BR and 02 because February is the second month of the year.

B	R	0	2
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Part 1: Background

In this section I would like to ask you about a few questions about yourself. Please write CHECK BOXES OR FILL IN ANSWERS. There are no wrong answers and all responses will be kept confidential.

1. What is your gender?

- ☐ 1. female
☐ 2. male

2. How old are you? _____ Years

3. What is your ethnicity?

- ☐ 1. Caucasian
☐ 2. African American
☐ 3. Hispanic
☐ 4. Asian/Pacific Islander
☐ 5. Other (Please specify) _____

4. Which of the following best describes your household?

- ☐ 1. Two-parent family
☐ 2. Single-parent family
☐ 3. Relative/Guardian
☐ 4. Step-parent family
☐ 5. Other (Specify) _____

5. How many children do you have? _____
6. Ages of children _____
7. Education Status
- ☐ 1. None
 - ☐ 2. High School (Didn't graduate)
 - ☐ 3. High School Graduate/GED
 - ☐ 4. Some College
 - ☐ 5. College Degree
8. What is your current employment status?
- ☐ 1. Not employed
 - ☐ 2. Part-time
 - ☐ 3. Full-time
 - ☐ 4. Seasonal
 - ☐ 5. Other _____
9. Income
- ☐ 1. 0-\$5,000
 - ☐ 2. \$5,000-\$10,000
 - ☐ 3. \$10,000-\$20,000
 - ☐ 4. \$20,000-\$30,000
 - ☐ 5. 30,000-Higher
10. What is your religious faith?
- ☐ 1. Protestant
 - ☐ 2. Christian
 - ☐ 3. Jewish
 - ☐ 4. Catholic
 - ☐ 5. Other (Specify) _____

For the next set of questions please rate how much each statement reflects you.

1 = Very Often

2 = Often

3 = Sometimes

4 = Rarely

5 = Never

- _____ 1. I know the difference between discipline and punishment.
- _____ 2. I feel that I understand what is effective parenting.
- _____ 3. I feel comfortable in approaching my child/children's teacher.
- _____ 4. I am angry when I discipline my children.
- _____ 5. My child/children's opinions are important to me.
- _____ 6. My child/ children's and I have a good relationship
- _____ 7. I listen to what my child/ children have to say.
- _____ 8. I am a good parent.
- _____ 9. I use punishment as a method of discipline.
- _____ 10. I spank my kids when I discipline my children.
- _____ 11. I repeat my instructions to my child/children.
- _____ 12. I yell at my child/children.
- _____ 13. When my child/children and I disagree I am right.
- _____ 14. I can communicate the need of my child/children with his/her teacher.
- _____ 15. I help my child/children with their homework.
- _____ 16. I attend my child/children's parent/teacher conferences.
- _____ 17. I feel that I am not a good parent.
- _____ 18. I make time when my child/children need to talk.

POST-TEST QUESTIONNAIRE

Please write the first two letters of your **last name** and the **month** you were born in the boxes.

--	--	--	--

For the next set of questions please rate how much each statement reflects you.

1 = Very Often

2 = Often

3 = Sometimes

4 = Rarely

5 = Never

- _____ 1. I know the difference between discipline and punishment.
- _____ 2. I feel that I understand what is effective parenting.
- _____ 3. I feel comfortable in approaching my child/children's teacher.
- _____ 4. I am angry when I discipline my children.
- _____ 5. My child/children's opinions are important to me.
- _____ 6. My child/ children's and I have a good relationship
- _____ 7. I listen to what my child/ children have to say.
- _____ 8. I am a good parent.
- _____ 9. I use punishment as a method of discipline.
- _____ 10. I spank my kids when I discipline my children.
- _____ 11. I repeat my instructions to my child/children.
- _____ 12. I yell at my child/children.
- _____ 13. When my child/children and I disagree I am right.
- _____ 14. I can communicate the need of my child/children with his/her teacher.
- _____ 15. I help my child/children with their homework.
- _____ 16. I attend my child/children's parent/teacher conferences.
- _____ 17. I feel that I am not a good parent.
- _____ 18. I make time when my child/children need to talk.

Overall, I found this parenting seminar helpful.	Yes	No
I would recommend this seminar to other people.	Yes	No

The part of this seminar I found most useful was?

The part of this seminar I found the least useful was?

APPENDIX D

TABLES

Table 1.

Demographic Characteristics of Sample Showing Numbers and Percentages

Variables	Numbers n	Percentages %
Gender		
Male		19%
Female		80%
Ethnicity		
African American	22	46%
Hispanic	16	34%
Caucasian	6	12%
Household		
Single parent household	24	51%
Two parent household	19	40%
Live with others	3	6%
Education		
Some High School	21	44%
Graduated or GED	13	27%
Some College	8	17%
College Degree	4	8%
Employment Status		
Unemployed	28	59%
Part-time	9	19%
Full-time	8	17%
Income		
Between 0-\$5,000	23	48%
Between \$5,000- \$10,000	10	21%
Between \$10,000-\$20,000	8	17%
Between \$20,000-\$30,000	2	4%
\$30,000-above	3	6%
Religious Affiliation		
Christian	40	85%
Other	4	8%
Age		
Median	30	
Range	20-44 years	

TABLE 2.

T-test Showing Difference Between the Means of the Scores Related to Knowledge of Parenting Skills.

	Pre-test (N = 47)		Post-test (N = 47)		T
	M	SD	M	SD	
1. Understanding of knowledge of proper ways to discipline	2.8989	.7726	2.7819	.7420	1.257
2. Understanding of ways to effectively communicate with children	1.9848	.6171	1.9665	.5364	.270
3. Understanding of ways to effectively communicate with teachers	2.4326	1.9122	2.1631	2.0570	2.012
4. Understanding of effective parenting styles	2.3936	.7532	2.2500	.8738	1.554

TABLE 3.

ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Discipline pre test Mean score	Between Groups	2.669	1	2.669	5.010	.030
	Within Groups	23.440	44	.533		
	Total	26.109	45			
Post test parent child Communication mean Score	Between Groups	1.112	1	1.112	4.059	.050
	Within Groups	12.056	44	.247		
	Total	13.168	45			
Pre parent child Communication mean Score	Between Groups	3.160	1	3.160	9.943	.003
	Within Groups	13.346	42	.318		
	Total	16.506	43			
Post test parent child Communication mean Score	Between Groups	1.232	1	1.232	4.322	.044
	Within Groups	11.975	42	.285		
	Total	13.207	43			

ANOVA showing relationship between income and discipline pretest mean score

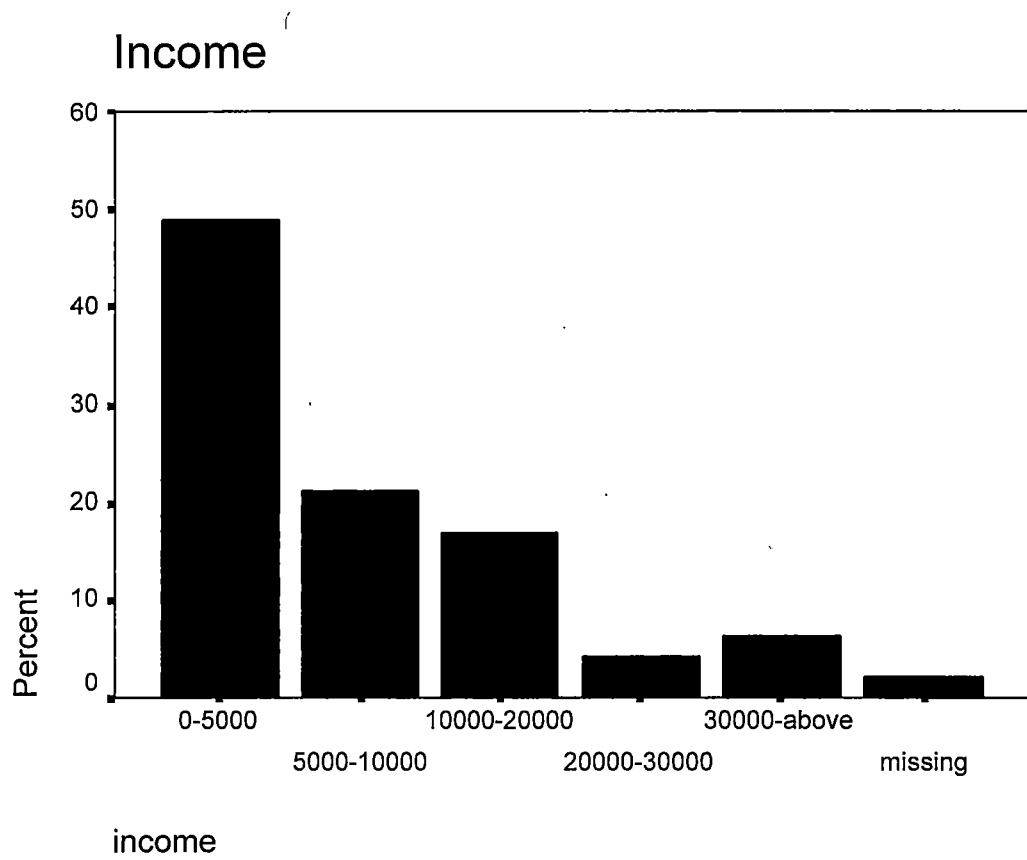
ANOVA showing relationship between income and post test child communication mean score

ANOVA showing relationship between religion and pre parent child communication mean score

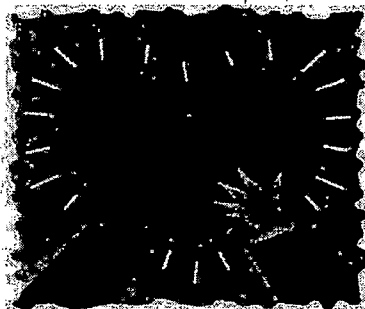
ANOVA showing relationship between religion and post test parent child communication mean score

APPENDIX E

INCOME



APPENDIX F
LETTER OF APPROVAL



Realizing Every Area 4 Children's Health

Project R.E.A.C.H.

December 5, 2001

Faculty Members

CSUSB

5500 University Parkway

San Bernardino, Ca 92407

To Whom It May Concern:

Kim Braxton has requested permission to conduct a research project on Project REACH. Please use this letter as authorization to conduct this research. We understand that the research will be used as Ms. Braxton's Masters Thesis.

We look forward to working with her.

Sincerely,

Danette Owens

Project R.E.A.C.H. Coordinator/Evaluator

1314 E. Date Street Suite G1 • San Bernardino, California 92404

(909) 881-2800 • 1-866-22REACH

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