

ENCOURAGEMENT AND THE COLLEGE

RE-ENTRY WOMAN

by

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A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of the
DEPARTMENT OF COUNSELING AND GUIDANCE
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
MASTER OF ARTS
In the Graduate College
THE UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Sincere appreciation is expressed to Dr. Betty J. Newlon, thesis director and mentor, to members of the thesis committee, Dr. Phil J. Lauver and Dr. Oscar C. Christensen, and to Dr. Ann Marie Bernazza Haase, consultant.

The assistance, guidance and encouragement provided by these individuals was very important to this author and to the completion of this project.

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ABSTRACT

This study sought to investigate the relationship between sources of encouragement and re-entry women's perceived success in college. Another goal was to determine the most important source of encouragement for the re-entry women. The final goal was to seek the definition of encouragement and its process, as perceived by the re-entry women.

For purposes of this study, encouragement was defined as: a process aimed at giving help, support, courage and confidence; an expression of faith. A re-entry woman was defined as: a woman over 30, married and currently enrolled in an institution of higher education, after a minimum break of 10 years in her schooling.

Forty-seven re-entry women volunteered to complete a questionnaire, and participate in this study. Ten of these 47 volunteers were randomly selected for an interview.

Results showed that encouragement was a definite factor that influenced the perceived success of the college re-entry woman. The most important source of encouragement was the husband. The self-encouragement or self-motivation of the re-entry woman was also a determining factor in her perceived success, as well as the over-all encouragement received from others.

INTRODUCTION

The average age for college students today is older than ever before, because as Powell and Rodgers (1975, p. 432) states, older adults are returning to the college classroom in increasing numbers. Statistics show that the percentage of the population (male as well as female) between 25 and 35 years old in higher education has more than tripled in the past 20 years (Howard, 1975, p. 44).

The return to the college campus by the mature woman has become commonplace across the country. The number of women over 30, who are enrolled in higher education courses has doubled during the past 10 years (Oliver, 1975, p. 430).

The reasons for the increase in the enrollment of these mature women students are fairly well-known. Today there is less importance placed on the composite roles of 'homemaker, wife and mother'. Because of the lengthening life expectancy and smaller families, the career of mothering has become short-term. Some women return because of an economic necessity, although this goal may be secondary to the woman's need for intellectual stimulation and fulfillment. Other reasons that women are returning to school are the desire for financial independence, increased job options, change in career, professional status or for security (Howard, 1975).

There seems to be ample research and evidence testifying to the fact that older women are returning to school, for a variety of reasons. Once enrolled in higher education, the question becomes "What promotes

success for some women and failure for others?" Why do some women succeed in their re-entry while others do not? Does the fact that older women have more responsibility; more varied roles; and possibly a larger support base, play a part in determining their success or failure, as opposed to their younger classmates?

These questions, if answered, could provide valuable insights for the re-entry women and the institutions who serve them.

Through counseling experience, based on Adlerian concepts, and through previous research, an awareness of the importance of encouragement in an individual's life, has surfaced. Dreikurs and Grey (1968) said, "The child needs encouragement as a plant needs water." Encouragement is important to people throughout their life span. This fact has been observed by the author through counseling with families, individuals, and mature college women, as well as through personal experience.

A number of programs have been developed in counseling centers and women's studies departments to assist women in fulfilling their educational and personal needs. Support groups have been organized to enable women to meet with peers and professional student personnel workers to discuss concerns and problems with courses and families. These support groups can also be an important source of encouragement for the re-entry woman.

A woman's self-motivation or self-encouragement will also be a factor in her success. "It is virtually a truism in psychology, that

achievement is a function of motivation, among other factors" (Kahoe and McFarland, 1975, p. 435).

For the purpose of this study, encouragement has been defined as: a process aimed at giving help, support, courage and confidence; an expression of faith. A re-entry woman has been defined as: a woman over 30, who is married and currently enrolled in an institution of higher education after an absence of at least 10 years. Self-motivation is defined as: a driving power inciting one to act upon a need or desire.

This study sought to investigate the relationship between the different sources of encouragement and a re-entry woman's perceived success in college, to determine the most important source of encouragement for the college re-entry woman; and to define encouragement and it's process, as perceived by the college re-entry woman.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Until the past decade, our society has seen the woman's primary role as motherhood (McClelland, 1976, p. 16). Today's adult women are part of a 'lost generation', in limbo. They grew up expecting to be fully content and satisfied with the lifetime goal of homemaking, only to find that somewhere along the way the rules have changed and they are 'out of a job'.

Seeking new means to end this period of 'limbo', many adult women choose to return to school. In a study of adult women returning to college, Folland, Pickett and Hoeflin (1977, p. 29) state: "The most significant factor (that precipitates the enrollment of mature women in school) we identified, one that was common to women of many ages and life styles, was a sense of emptiness, of not fulfilling vocational goals."

The re-entry woman feeling less needed and anticipating the eventual permanent departure of her children may have some serious concerns and questions that often result in her going back to school (Roach, 1976, p. 87).

A mature woman returning to school is subject to many anxieties. She wonders how accepting her husband will be of her new lifestyle; how the change will affect her children; will she be accepted by other students; will she succeed or fail; will she be discriminated against as a woman or an older student? How much of a financial strain will her education cause the family (Likert, 1967)?

Along with these anxieties, re-entry women will have some adjustment problems. The restructuring of their time is an important concern, considering the diverse roles of the adult woman. The adjustment of their schedule, to incorporate the new role of student, may prove difficult.

Many women find that their decision to return to school is both serious and significant. The decision changes not only their own values, perceptions, and self-images but also gives rise to stress and change in their relationships with their families (Roach, 1976).

Management of guilt feelings is another area of difficulty for the returning woman. There may be guilt for the neglect of the full responsibility for home, children and husband; for being so selfish to spend the family's money on her education; and guilt for the feeling of competition with the husband, and sometimes with the older children. Guilt may be especially pronounced when there is resistance from the family to the woman's re-entry in education.

In addition to the possible negative reactions of husband and family, the re-entry woman may feel isolated; separated by age and life style from the younger college students. She may concurrently suffer the loss of her friend group. Her peers may resent her new endeavor and withdraw their support. Roach (1976) states that "as the re-entry woman begins to achieve success on the campus, grows in self-confidence and self-esteem, broadens her perceptions and values, and becomes more accepting of others, those persons closest and most important to her become less accepting of her, and they react negatively or withdraw."

Fear of being inept in the college classroom is a concern for many re-entry women. They fear they have few personal resources to rely on, and initially have a low self-esteem. However, once involved in the classroom, her attitudes begin to change. According to Roach (1976), she becomes vitalized and stimulated by her environment and a peer group who sees her as worthwhile, an accomplishing individual in her own right, unrelated to and independent of her relationship with her family. As she struggles to assimilate these new perceptions, some of her former feelings of lack of confidence and low self-expectation begin to subside and her behavior and attitudes begin to change.

Many women experience some degree of resistance to their return. The reactions of husbands and families range from open hostility to open support. While some re-entering students do receive open encouragement and cooperation, little data exists as to how many women have ultimately felt forced to drop out of school as a result of the negative reactions of husbands, families and friends.

When returning to school, a woman needs encouragement, support and sensible advice (Hansot, 1973, p. 50). Because of the many demands, the increased pressures and anxieties a re-entry woman faces, the support and encouragement that she receives from significant others, school personnel and special services plays a very important role in supporting her success in school.

As stated by Kahoe and McFarland (1975), "achievement is a function of motivation, among other facts." Motivation can be seen as intrinsic or extrinsic; intrinsic pertaining to personal disposition

and extrinsic pertaining to external events. Since success or failure is influenced by motivation, a woman's intrinsic (self) motivation may be a significant factor in her re-entry.

Research by the Association of American Colleges Project on the Status and Education of Women (1974) shows that "women's studies courses and women's centers across the country have mushroomed and . . . many indications are that this is just the beginning--that interest in the women's issue on campus will increase as students, staff, and faculty continue to question and re-evaluate policies, practices and attitudes which work together to keep women in their place."

Special counseling and guidance, financial assistance, flexible scheduling and procedural policies are the most pressing concerns of women who want to continue their education, according to Howard (1975). The following brief summaries, describe some of the women's programs around the country.

Expanding Horizons, at Northern Michigan University, helps returning women, in opening seminars, to assess their strengths and abilities, realize their values and roles, and to set goals for themselves. These initial sessions can be followed by others geared to more specific concerns in life planning, assertive training, and career awareness.

In the California Community Colleges, re-entry programs have expanded rapidly, partly in response to the needs of low-income women. Stressing, as they do, community-based, self-help, and group dynamics,

these programs encourage a spirit of camaraderie by establishing groups which meet for tutoring, peer-counseling, and group reinforcement. One such community college program is the Women's Re-Entry to Education Center (WREC) at City College of San Francisco, which offers help to "any woman who, because of age, lack of confidence, economic position, or family situation feels that she is barred from further education for either enrichment or employment."

At the four-year level in California, San Jose State University offers a Re-Entry Advisory Program (R.E.A.P.), a special counseling and service center for older students, women and men, whose educational careers were interrupted several or many years ago. From a small scale service, first formed in 1972, to provide initial support to the returning students, the program has expanded, and runs the gamut from providing general information about university admissions, possible majors, lifelong learning opportunities, and administrative procedures, to presenting special group and workshop programs designed to ease the mature adult's transition back into college life.

The following areas are incorporated into the Brooklyn College's Project Second Start: Small scale programs for adults with their own supportive services; relatively small classes that allow for interaction of people and ideas; free tutoring services; and the opportunity to get credit for life experience.

Many of these programs, and others, were founded on the assumption that Hansot (1973) made; that because of increased anxieties and

pressures a woman who returns to school will need encouragement and support.

Encouragement is a complex process (Dreikurs, Grunwald and Pepper, 1971) not a unique event; its' development is dependent on a number of gross and minute circumstance which shift continuously. Further, it is a continuous process aimed at giving a sense of self-respect and a sense of accomplishment (Dreikurs and Stoltz, 1964).

The main focus of encouragement has been with children. Very little emphasis has been placed on encouraging adults, except in the process of teaching adults 'how to' encourage children in the home and in the classroom. Dinkmeyer and Dreikurs (1963, p. 50) state that:

the person who encourages: 1. Places value on the child as he is. 2. Shows a faith in the child that enables the child to have faith in himself. 3. Has faith in the child's ability; wins the child's confidence while building his self-respect. 4. Recognizes a job 'well done.' Gives recognition for effort. 5. Utilizes the group to facilitate and enhance the development of the child. 6. Integrates the group so that the child can be sure of his place in it. 7. Assists in the development of skills sequentially and psychologically paced to permit success. 8. Recognizes and focuses on strengths and assets. 9. Utilizes the interests of the child to energize instruction.

The encouragement for parents is offered by Dreikurs and Stoltz (1964, pp. 55-56) by stating that as parents:

Unless we discover our errors, we may be unable to make progress. In pointing out the mistakes in child-raising practices that are customary today, we in no way infer criticism nor condemnation of today's parents. They are victims of circumstances beyond their control. We try to offer help and to show the way out of present difficulties. . . . The importance of courage in parents cannot be over-emphasized. . . . You need to constantly reinforce your own courage, and to do so, you need the 'courage to be imperfect'.

They further stress the process of minimizing our own mistakes and dwelling on the successes, with the realization that parents are not working for perfection, only for improvement. "Each small improvement is a step forward. Each step forward is a source of further encouragement" (Dreikurs and Stoltz, 1964).

While many tend to equate encouragement and praise, there is a significant difference. Praise is a response for a specific event, a task completed or done well. Encouragement is a continuous positive attitude, belief or action toward an individual. Praise rewards the individual and tends to fasten the attention upon self. Encouragement stimulates the effort and fastens the attention upon one's capacity to join humanity and to become aware of interior strength and native capacity to cope.

The review of literature provided a great deal of information regarding the needs and problems of re-entry women, services that are supportive and vital to the re-entry woman, and encouragement in relation to children. However, there is a dearth of information available relating encouragement to adults, particularly to the mature college re-entry woman.

METHOD

Description of Subjects

The sample group for this study was conveniently selected from the population of women students currently attending classes at a four year university and a two year community college located in the southwest. Forty-seven women comprised the sample. No distinction was made as to the institution attended.

All women in the sample were over 30 years of age, married, had a minimum break of ten years in their schooling, and were currently enrolled as students.

The age range for the re-entry women was from 31 to 64, with the mean age being 41.4 years. The years out of school ranged from 10 to 47, with the mean years out of school 21.5. This would indicate that the average re-entry woman discontinued her schooling at age 20.

The number of children living at home varied from none to six, and the ages ranged from 4 years to 22 years. Twenty-six percent of the re-entry women had no children currently living at home.

Description of Instruments

In order to gather information about re-entry women and encouragement, it was necessary to develop a questionnaire and interview format.

The questionnaire was designed using information from a previous study, (Carlson, Northcutt and Haase, in press), and with the

supervision of a faculty member of the Educational Psychology Department and the members of this thesis committee, at The University of Arizona.

The interview questions were developed specifically for this study, to determine how encouragement was defined and what the process of encouragement involved, with assistance and supervision of the aforementioned faculty.

Both instruments were designed to investigate the relationship of encouragement and self-motivation to the perceived success of the college re-entry woman. The questionnaire and interview format were field tested by having three women complete the questionnaire and two women participate in the interview, in order to provide feedback regarding specific items, clarity, and direction of the instruments.

Although the instruments have not been tested extensively and there is no evidence of reliability or validity statistically; there was ample content validity to test the hypothesis.

The questionnaire (Appendix A) asked for demographic data; used rating scales; questions that were multiple-choice in nature; and rank order questions to obtain information to test the hypotheses.

Anonymity of the responses was assured by having the women list their names and phone numbers on a separate sheet of paper, in order to make a random selection for the interviews. They were not asked to provide any other information which would readily identify them.

The interviews (Appendix B) were conducted privately and no names or other information was asked or recorded that would identify any individual.

Research Design

The project was a correlational study to determine what, if any, relationship existed between the variable of perceived success and each of four other variables. Those variables are: A. Encouragement from the husband, as stated by Hypothesis 1, College re-entry women are more likely to consider themselves successful if they receive sufficient encouragement from the husband. Question IV, husband, was used to correlate with Question VII to determine relationships. B. Most important source of encouragement, as stated by Hypothesis 2, The husband is the most important source of encouragement for the college re-entry woman, and correlated between Question III and Question VII. C. Self-motivation, Hypothesis 3, Re-entry women who have sufficient self-motivation, regardless of the encouragement from others, will perceive themselves as having a high potential for success, was correlated between Question II, self, and Question VII. And D. Overall encouragement from others, Hypothesis 4, The greater the amount of overall encouragement that re-entry women receive from others, the greater will be their perceived success, was correlated between Question II, excluding self, and Question VII.

For each hypothesis a Pearson Product Moment correlation was computed to determine correlation coefficients and levels of significance (Appendix C).

The interview responses were included as anecdotal narrative, and providing the definitions of encouragement and its' process.

Procedure

Women were contacted through classes, on the campuses; in women's groups and centers and common ground, and asked to complete the questionnaire.

The following explanation was given when requesting participation:

"I am conducting a study, for a master's thesis, on women who are returning to college. I am interested in looking at the relationship of encouragement and the re-entry woman's success, as she sees it. The women I am focusing on, are currently enrolled in classes, are over 30, married, and who have a minimum 10 year break in their schooling. If you fit this category and would be willing to take 10-15 minutes to fill out a questionnaire, please take one of these questionnaires.

You will notice that there is no identification on the questionnaire, so that any information you record will be completely anonymous. And, upon reading the questionnaire, if you should decide that you do not care to participate, that is strictly up to you. Your participation is completely voluntary.

If you choose to participate I would appreciate your signature and telephone number on a separate sheet of paper, in the event that you might be one of the 10 who will be randomly selected for an interview, to help in the definition of the encouragement process.

Again, may I remind you that your participation, while greatly appreciated, is strictly voluntary and you are at liberty to withdraw your participation at any time."

Forty-seven completed questionnaires were collected. Data were tabulated to determine the mean age, mean years out of school, number of children at home, and the individual definitions of success.

The separate listing of names was used to randomly select ten women to participate in the interview process.

The data from the questionnaires were then compiled and the Pearson Product Moment correlations were computed to obtain the correlation coefficients needed for each of the stated hypothesis (Appendix D). The information from the interviews was used to identify what encouragement means and what the process of encouragement involves; and to provide further insight, via anecdotal record from the re-entry women.

RESULTS

Hypothesis 1: College re-entry women are more likely to consider themselves successful if they receive sufficient encouragement from the husband; was supported. The relationship showed significance at the .001 level.

Women generally ranked themselves higher than their husbands as being the most important source of encouragement. However, the success rating showed a significant decrease when they were asked to rate themselves as if their most significant person were to stop encouraging them.

Hypothesis 2: The husband is the most important source of encouragement for the college re-entry woman; was supported. This relationship showed significance at the .001 level, also.

Of the ten women, who were randomly selected from the total sample for in-depth interviews, five stated that their husbands were the most important source of encouragement. One woman stated, "I have a lot of drive--but--I depend, probably too much, on my husband." Another stated, "I wouldn't have made the decision to return to school if I'd not had his encouragement." Another husband encouraged by saying, "It's important for you to reach your capabilities."

Husbands who are discouraging to the re-entry woman can prompt self-encouragement. One woman remarked that, while her husband was not overtly discouraging, "because of our current marital problems--I do not want to be dependent on him--emotionally or financially!" Another

woman, whose husband was very vocal and critical about her return to school, stated simply, "I'm fighting for survival!" A 41 year old woman, whose husband was also "completely discouraging," related that she felt encouraged when she heard other women discussing similar situations of their own in her classes, and she realized she was not the only one with this problem.

Hypothesis 3: Re-entry women who have sufficient self-motivation, regardless of the encouragement from others, will perceive themselves as having a high potential for success; was also supported. The relationship showed significance at the .05 level.

Some of the women's comments regarding self-motivation or self-encouragement, were: "I believe I motivate myself, if I want to do it bad enough--I'll do it--regardless of others." "If I want to achieve, then I'll use my own measurement to determine my success." If the encouragement [from others] stopped. . . . "I would definitely continue--because I'm encouraging myself." And, encouragement of others "isn't all that important [to my success], it's helpful and I don't think any of us reach a point when we don't need encouragement--that's not an absolute--but--it paves the way and makes it a lot smoother."

Hypothesis 4: The greater the amount of overall encouragement that re-entry women receive from others, the greater will be their perceived success; was supported. The relationship showed significance at the .01 level.

The women interviewed stated that they received encouragement from a number of different sources, ranging from a daughter-in-law to a

professional writing organization. "I wouldn't have come back [to school] if no one cared." "I get a lot of group reinforcement from my classmates." "My daughter-in-law encouraged me to return to school, that's how I got started. The rest of my family and my priest are verbally very encouraging to me." "I really need encouragement, because they're [husband, children, friends] very important to me." "My sister encouraged me by believing I could do it, and reminded me that 'You turned down a scholarship to get married'." "My teachers have rewarded me with good grades." "I have stayed in school because of the encouragement from my friends and myself." "My friend, an elderly lady who is an important person, accepts me, encourages me, and builds me up." "The Pen Women Organization encourages me to reach out and try new fields."

Of the twenty-two women who responded to Question V, on the questionnaire (where would you like to get more encouragement?), fourteen listed their husband, three listed self, family and teachers, two listed parents and friends, and one each listed employer, children counselor, and role models. This was another indication of the value placed by the re-entry women, on the husbands attitude toward her new endeavor, as well as the importance of other significant people in her life.

The responses to the Question (VI) asking for the individual's definition of success indicated that most women defined success as, learning new skills, completing a degree, and making A's and B's, in that order.

When asked to rate their chances for success, in their present circumstances, 64 percent rated themselves as having excellent or great chance; 34 percent rated their chances as good and only 2 percent rated fair. No one rated themselves as having a poor chance for success.

However, if the encouragement from significant people should stop, the ratings changed drastically. The responses to their chance for success under these circumstances were: only 24 percent rated excellent or great (compared to 64 percent previously); 37 percent (compared to 34 percent previously) rated good; 28 percent rated fair (compared to a previous 2 percent) and 11 percent rated their chances as poor. Such a reduction in the individual's perception of their success would emphasize the important role that encouragement from others plays for the college re-entry woman.

When asked, in interviews, what difference the encouragement made, comments were varied. One woman replied, "All the difference in the world. I would have given up on the whole human race--if not for the encouragement." Other comments were: "It reinforces--reassures my self-worth." "It's nice to have--but--I'd continue if I didn't have it." "Everything! I wouldn't be in school at all (without it)!" "You get low and the encouragement gives a boost." And, "The encouragement I received from my New Horizons class underscored my own rights to my own feelings--it was my salvation!"

Only the women interviewed were asked why they were returning to school. In response, four indicated specific marital problems, with the imminent prospect of divorce. Therefore, the need to prepare to

support self and children (14 total) was paramount. Another common factor for three of these four, was the fact that the husbands were extremely negative. They overtly discouraged the woman's return to school by such things as: looking for mistakes on papers the wife brings home; refusing to give any money toward the cost of tuition, fees, and books; downgrading the importance of a college education; and criticizing the institutions irrationally. In spite of this discouragement, these women continued and sought more encouragement from self and others to meet their needs.

Two of the ten interviewed listed boredom with household routine and a desire to do "something for themselves" as reasons for their re-entry. These women, both over 40, are exploring a variety of fields of study, without having specific degree programs in mind. Of the husbands, one is discouraging, and the other is moderately encouraging. Both of these women place a good deal of importance on the encouragement they receive from their "women's classes" and from friends.

The remaining four women interviewed had common goals of self-improvement and expanded employment prospects as reasons for their re-entry. These women were all encouraged by their husbands and/or family members. Three of these four listed their husbands as their main and most important source of encouragement.

"What is Encouragement?" Encouragement is--positive support, both verbal and physical, from other people; helping; a basic belief in

the capabilities of an individual. This was the consensus of all ten of the women interviewed.

"What is the process of encouragement? How do people encourage?" "My husband is very cooperative, he asks about my classes." "My husband helped me choose some classes--he helps around the house." "My professional organization provided a reward system." "My husband says 'You can do it!', he helps with the children and takes care of things that need fixing." "Encouragement from my children makes the road much easier." "My husband says 'Don't listen to negative people.'" "Public recognition for my work has been encouraging." "My self-motivation is the most important. My New Horizons class emphasized the "sameness" of re-entry women." "My sister said 'You can do it!'" "My husband asks for specific information about my classes and is impressed."

The process of encouragement involved physical cooperation as well as verbal statements. Many of the women who were receiving only verbal encouragement stated that they would also like to have more physical helping or encouragement.

CONCLUSIONS, IMPLICATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The results of this study permit several conclusions:

1. Encouragement was a definite factor that influenced the perceived success of the college re-entry woman.
2. College re-entry women were more likely to consider themselves successful if they received sufficient encouragement from the husband.
3. The husband was the most important source of encouragement for the college re-entry women.
4. Re-entry women who were sufficiently self-motivated, perceived themselves as having a high potential for success.
5. The more overall encouragement the re-entry woman received from others, the more they perceived themselves as being successful.
6. If the re-entry women were not receiving the encouragement desired from their husbands, they sought encouragement from other sources, i.e., self, friends, families and organizations, in order to meet their needs.
7. Encouragement was defined as: positive support, both verbal and physical, from other people; helping; a basic belief in the capabilities of the individual.
8. The process of encouragement involved physical cooperation as well as positive verbal statements.
9. The re-entry women who were receiving only verbal encouragement, desired the addition of physical, helping encouragement.

Implications

Although caution must be exercised in not generalizing beyond this sample, the results suggest that several implications could be considered.

The data indicate that, at least with the study population, the classes designed for re-entry women were important sources of encouragement for women. The feelings of camaraderie and of support, both overt and covert, were factors in increasing the self-encouragement for those involved. This could be particularly true for those women who do not receive the encouragement desired from the husband and family. The realization that other women had similar concerns and were coping successfully with these concerns was encouragement to many.

Some of the women, whose marriages were shaky, were returning to school in order to prepare themselves for the future. The fact that these husbands may have been overtly discouraging could have a "boomerang effect". The more discouraging the husband was, the more important encouragement from self and others became, and the more these women actively sought other sources of encouragement and support. Also, the more determined these women became to achieve their goals of success.

The re-entry women who had specific goals, such as a degree program, set for themselves had more positive feelings of success. Those women who had very vague goals, such as general self-improvement, were not likely to have strong perceptions of their success. The more vague the goals, the more difficult it was to know when they had been achieved.

The fact that some of the re-entry women had children at home, while others did not, seemed to have no influence upon the perception of success. Other than the possible need to provide income for these children, their presence or absence in the home seemed to have no appreciable effect. Children were not listed as one of the sources from which the re-entry women desired more encouragement.

Finally, the re-entry women who were desirous of a greater amount of encouragement, expressed a need for more physical encouragement. They may place a greater importance on the process or act of encouraging, than on the words alone.

Recommendations

For others wishing to extend the findings of the present study, the following modifications are recommended:

1. Provide a research design in which random sampling may be obtained, so that generalizations may be made to a larger segment of the population.
2. Implement the study on a regional basis, using a random selection procedure to choose colleges and universities for participation.
3. Design an instrument that would be appropriate for the comparison of unmarried re-entry women and married re-entry women.
4. Compare the perceived success of re-entry women who are in their first semester to the perceived success of the re-entry women who are in their second or more semester.

5. Identify re-entry women who have dropped out during or immediately following the first semester to determine the causes for their lack of success.
6. Design the study to compare the perceived success of the women enrolled in re-entry classes or support groups, against those women who have not participated in the classes or support groups.
7. Design an instrument that would determine the reasons for the women's return, and compare these reasons or goals to the perceived success of the re-entry women.
8. Include a follow-up evaluation after 6 months to see if the perceived success has changed.
9. Compare the perceived success of the re-entry women enrolled in a graduate degree program against those re-entry women enrolled in an undergraduate degree program.

It would appear that the information obtained in this study could be instrumental in promoting change or giving support for re-entry programs currently being offered in colleges and universities. Perhaps with further refinement and supporting research, the encouragement process could be intentionally included for re-entry women.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

YEARS OUT OF SCHOOL _____ AGE _____ PRESENT EDUCATION LEVEL: GRAD _____ UNDER-GRAD _____

AGES OF CHILDREN AT HOME _____

I. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING HAVE BEEN THE MOST INFLUENTIAL IN YOUR DECISION TO RETURN TO COLLEGE? CIRCLE THE NUMBER THAT INDICATES THE DEGREE OF IMPORTANCE THESE PEOPLE PLAYED IN YOUR COLLEGE RE-ENTRY. (circle only those that apply)

5 - most important 3 - important 1 - not very important
4 - very important 2 - somewhat important

SELF	5	4	3	2	1
HUSBAND	5	4	3	2	1
CHILDREN	5	4	3	2	1
PARENTS	5	4	3	2	1
FRIENDS	5	4	3	2	1
OTHERS _____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1

II. HOW MUCH ENCOURAGEMENT DO THESE PEOPLE PROVIDE YOU?

5 - complete encouragement 2 - occasionally encouraging
4 - encouraging most of the time 1 - seldom encouraging
3 - moderately encouraging

SELF	5	4	3	2	1
HUSBAND	5	4	3	2	1
CHILDREN	5	4	3	2	1
PARENTS	5	4	3	2	1
FRIENDS	5	4	3	2	1
OTHERS _____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1

III. WHICH OF THE FOLLOWING IS THE MOST IMPORTANT SOURCE OF ENCOURAGEMENT FOR YOU?

Rank the list in order of importance.
 5 = most important to 1 = least important

SELF _____ HUSBAND _____ CHILDREN _____ PARENTS _____ FRIENDS _____
 OTHERS _____

IV. INDICATE IF THE AMOUNT OF ENCOURAGEMENT YOU RECEIVE IS ENOUGH TO MEET YOUR NEEDS.

5 - overflowing 3 - have enough 1 - need a lot more
 4 - have a lot 2 - need more

SELF	5	4	3	2	1
HUSBAND	5	4	3	2	1
CHILDREN	5	4	3	2	1
PARENTS	5	4	3	2	1
FRIENDS	5	4	3	2	1
OTHERS _____	5	4	3	2	1
_____	5	4	3	2	1

V. IF YOU ARE NOT RECEIVING THE AMOUNT OF ENCOURAGEMENT YOU NEED, WHERE WOULD YOU LIKE TO GET MORE?

VI. WHAT IS SUCCESS FOR YOU?

check those that apply

- _____ staying in school
- _____ completing a degree
- _____ learning new skills
- _____ passing my classes
- _____ making A's and B's

VII. HOW DO YOU RATE YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS? (check one)

 5 - excellent

 4 - great

 3 - good

 2 - fair

 1 - poor

VIII. WOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR SUCCESS RATING (question VII) IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THE ENCOURAGEMENT FROM SIGNIFICANT PEOPLE?

 YES NO

IX. IF THE MOST SIGNIFICANT PERSON IN YOUR LIFE WERE TO STOP ENCOURAGING YOU, HOW WOULD YOU RATE YOUR CHANCES FOR SUCCESS?

 5 - excellent

 4 - great

 3 - good

 2 - fair

 1 - poor

THANK YOU! I APPRECIATE THE TIME YOU HAVE GIVEN IN ORDER TO COMPLETE THIS QUESTIONNAIRE!

7. What would happen (or did happen) if the encouragement stopped?
8. Was there a time, or do you envision a time, when you would drop out if you had NO encouragement?
9. Do you imagine a time when you would need no encouragement?
10. What are your expectations for yourself as a woman returning to school?
11. How do you define success for yourself? Rank your chances of success (scale 1-10, 1 is least).
12. How important is the attitude or encouragement of others to your success? List according to their importance. Why?

APPENDIX C

WORK SAMPLE

Formula: Pearson product moment.

$$r = \frac{\sum IV VII - \frac{(\sum IV)(\sum VII)}{N}}{\sqrt{\left[IV^2 - \frac{(\sum IV)^2}{N}\right] \left[VII^2 - \frac{(\sum VII)^2}{N}\right]}}$$

Work sample, Hypothesis 1:

$$r = \frac{56300 - \frac{(1400)(1805)}{47}}{\sqrt{\left[52800 - \frac{(1400)^2}{47}\right] \left[72225 - \frac{(1805)^2}{47}\right]}}$$

APPENDIX D

HYPOTHESES AND THEIR CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS

Hypothesis	r	p
1. College re-entry women are more likely to consider themselves successful if they receive sufficient encouragement from the husband.	.4679	.001
2. The husband is the most important source of encouragement for the college re-entry woman.	.4661	.001
3. Re-entry women who have sufficient self-motivation, regardless of the encouragement from others, will perceive themselves as having a high potential for success.	.2880	.05
4. The greater the amount of overall encouragement that re-entry women receive from others, the greater will be their perceived success.	.4071	.01

Note: df = 45

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