



Research in Brief

Opinion Leadership in Families of the Expanded Nutrition Program

The extent to which low-income homemakers identify opinion leaders and whether these opinion leaders live within the immediate income area or reside outside the low-income area was the intent of a recent study in Ohio. In addition, the study tried to determine the degree to which opinion leaders and the low-income homemakers who saw them as opinion leaders were different on a number of criteria.

The data for this study were gathered from 131 homemakers enrolled in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program in Cincinnati, Ohio, and from the opinion leaders who were identified by the homemakers. The study was done in three distinct areas of the Cincinnati metropolitan area.

Some of the more important conclusions reached and implications from those conclusions are:

1. Opinion leaders did exist among the low-income homemakers. For this reason, the researcher reported the need to identify the opinion leaders as we move into new target areas with low-income work.
2. Opinion leaders among low-income homemakers were concentrated among a few individuals. For this reason, the researcher feels we should maximize this route in reaching low-income people.
3. Opinion leaders tend to be identified in relation to one subject area rather than related to advising on several subject areas. Therefore, it was felt that we need to be sure of the subject areas in which we want to identify opinion leaders as we move into new communities.
4. Opinion leaders lived within the neighborhood and also some distance from the neighborhood. This makes the job

This section is prepared by the editors in cooperation with the ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult Education.

of looking at opinion leaders in a new community more difficult.

5. The majority of opinion leaders had an education level of 10 to 12 years, which is slightly higher than that of the corresponding homemakers within the community. The majority of the opinion leaders also had a higher income than did the homemakers.

This study points up the need to continually try to identify opinion leadership because in low-income areas, as well as other programs, we're able to reach people effectively through those to whom they look for information.

"Opinion Leadership in Family Living Among Low Income Homemakers in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Program in Ohio." Doris H. Steele. Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, 1971.

C. Cunningham

Public Attitudes Toward Education

The following data were selected from the research report to reflect the editor's perception of data from a public education poll that are relevant to Extension work.

The sample for the study consisted of 1,614 adults representing a probability sample of the nation. The data were collected by interview using a questionnaire.

The American public thinks of education largely in a pragmatic way. Americans are a practical peo-

ple who believe firmly that education is the royal road to success in life.

Here are the responses and the percentage of respondents mentioning each goal for education:

1. To get better jobs—44 percent.
2. To get along better with people at all levels of society—43 percent.
3. To make more money—achieve financial success—38 percent.
4. To attain self-satisfaction—21 percent.
5. To stimulate their minds—15 percent.
6. Miscellaneous reasons—11 percent.

The public sample was asked to respond to nine specific programs for reaching educational goals. The nine programs were provided by the interviewer and the respondents were asked, first about elementary school children, then about junior and senior high school students. For elementary school (grades 1-6), the rank order was:

1. Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic.
2. Teaching students how to solve problems and to think for themselves.
3. Teaching students to respect law and authority.
4. Teaching students how to get along with others.

5. Teaching students the skills of speaking and listening.
6. Teaching students vocational skills.
7. Teaching students health and physical education.
8. Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday.
9. Teaching students how to compete with others.

With respect to junior and senior high school, grades 7-12, the following order was determined:

1. Teaching students to respect law and authority.
2. Teaching students how to solve problems and to think for themselves.
3. Teaching students vocational skills.
4. Teaching students how to get along with others.
5. Teaching students skills of speaking and listening.
6. Teaching students about the world of today and yesterday.
7. Teaching students the skills of reading, writing, and arithmetic.
8. Teaching students health and physical education.
9. Teaching students how to compete with others.

Editor's Note: Is the expectation of the public the same for Extension education as for public school education? If not, how do they differ? If so, how should Extension respond to these expectations? Do you feel it's more important for senior high school students

to "respect law and authority" than to "solve problems and think for themselves?"

"Fourth Annual Gallup Poll of Public Attitudes Toward Education." George H. Gallup. *Phi Delta Kappan*, LIV (September, 1972), 33-46.
D. Stormer

The Kuder Preference Record in Adult Vocational Guidance.

F. J. J. Butler *et al.* *Occupational Psychology*, XLVI (No. 2, 1972), 99-104.

This research report describes an experiment in which half the clients visiting 10 of the Department of Employment's Occupational Guidance Units completed a Kuder Preference Record as well as normal vocational guidance procedure.

The test data show that guidance officers seemed to make recommendations that were more in line with people's expressed job preferences, and therefore influenced these clients to choose jobs in line with these preferences.

One significant negative point, however, is that the use of the Kuder Preference Record didn't relate to the subsequent job satisfaction or even the satisfaction with the guidance that was received by the adult client.

An important point for Extension personnel to note in this study is that often professionals can use objective measuring devices. However, using these devices doesn't necessarily ensure the client's satisfaction with either the results or the help given by the professional.

P. Borich

“The Impact of Paraprofessionals on Home Economics Extension Personnel and Programs.” Shirley Evelyn Myers. Master’s thesis, Iowa State University, Ames, 1970.

This study looked at the changes in the role of the Extension home economist as she started working with paraprofessionals in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program. The study was conducted with seven Extension home economists who met the criteria of having been employed as a home economist before the expanded nutrition program, and who were training and supervising at least three food aides at the time of the study. Additional data were collected from the 38 food aides who worked with the 7 home economists.

Some of the major findings include the following:

1. Any unsatisfying experience by the home economists dealt with aspects of their new managerial role rather than with conflict because others saw the program differently.
2. Some changes occurred in interaction between the Extension home economist and those with whom she worked.
3. The Extension home economists were now teaching more food and nutrition education and had decreased many of their services to former Extension clientele.
4. The Extension home economists didn’t interact in any

way with the clients in the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program either by going directly to them or by the clients participating in existing Extension programs.

5. Extension home economists had very little experience in managerial functions before working with nutrition aides. They liked best the training and supervision of aides, but weren’t overly fond of recruiting and controlling functions.
6. Although there was not great stress in the eyes of the aides, the five conditions in which they cited the most stress were:
 - a. Having to do paper work.
 - b. Not being able to help clients with problems beyond food and nutrition.
 - c. Not knowing the criteria on which the home economists evaluate their performance.
 - d. Lack of ability to develop satisfactory relationships with clients.
 - e. Having too little to say in decisions that affect their work.
7. The Extension home economists felt that if paraprofessionals could be expanded within the Extension Service, it would be better to give the food aide increased responsibility rather than employing aides in each specialized subject-matter area.

C. Cunningham

“Effect of Televised Simulated Instruction on Subsequent Teaching.” Larry C. Jensen and Jon I. Young. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, LXIX (No. 4, 1972), 368-73.

Education students exposed to simulated instruction microteaching and similar students not exposed to such simulated instruction were compared when both groups did their student teaching. The group trained by microteaching outperformed the control group on five of six specific performance factors; personality traits such as poise and general appearance, warmth of teacher behavior, general classroom atmosphere, lesson usefulness, and teacher interest in pupils. Thus, microteaching experience seemed beneficial.

All six factors were checked three times during the eight weeks of student teaching. In “teacher interest in pupils,” it wasn’t until the third measurement—the seventh through eighth weeks—that the experimental group exceeded the controls. The controls decreased steadily on this factor over the three measurements.

On the “general classroom atmosphere” factor, the control group scored best the first period, the experimental group best the second and third.

The sixth factor was “teacher interest in student achievement.” While the experimental group received higher ratings than the controls—and both improved significantly—the difference wasn’t significant.

“Poultry and Prejudice.” Ralph L. Rosnow. *Psychology Today*, V (March, 1972), 53-56.

The author cites his early experiences in an urban Jewish culture where the *shochet* (the ritual butcher) ceremoniously decapitated a chicken. The author describes the scene: “Blood spurting from the neck, the torso throbbed and trembled, and the wings flapped wildly.” Viewing the killing of poultry created nausea in the author and consequently he’s unable to eat chicken to this day. He makes this point: early learned prejudices have a way of enduring no matter how distorted or irrational they may come to seem. The author uses Harry Triandis’ four stages in the progressive development of attitudes to discuss the development of prejudice.

The stages are:

- Stage 1: The child begins to distinguish one category of stimuli from another.
- Stage 2: The child begins to perceive interrelationships among the categories of stimuli.
- Stage 3: The child begins to compare his cognitions and evaluate them. He differentiates between positive and negative feelings in his evaluation.
- Stage 4: The child’s repertoire of categories grows larger, more stable, and more highly differentiated as he grows older.

With respect to prejudice, we now know that by the age of four most children have recognized the distinction between black and white.

Stage 1: The child recognizes racial-ethnic difference as the first stage of attitude development.

Stage 2: In the second stage, his powers of observation become sharper. He starts noticing physical traits, such as body size and general coloring, and behavioral traits, such as manners of speech and gestures. However, he's doing more than noticing it—his mind is busy cataloging the observations and making associations. Related perceptions cluster into categories that are the embryos of stereotypes. This clustering process, by which the mind consolidates related ideas and perceptions into distinct categories, is the principle agent of attitude formation.

Stage 3: In the third stage of attitude development, the child begins to attach affective labels to his various cognitions. What were formerly neutral clusters of perceptions are becoming relatively distinct and potentially enduring stereotypes.

Stage 4: Attitudes become more stable and highly differentiated in the fourth stage. The passage of time tends to reinforce the child's racial and ethnic stereotypes. The child draws his racial and ethnic stereotypes from his parents, books, films, television, folklore, newspapers, and magazines—all of which influence his developing images and impressions. The author summarizes by saying:

Cultural stereotypes may change, but an individual's prejudices have a way of becoming firmly entrenched even as the time passes them by. We may pity persons who so stubbornly maintain a prejudice in the face of logical, compelling counterargument, but his stubbornness is more properly a cause for concern. The irrational, sometimes violent, consequences of the prejudice are what make it intolerable.

Editor's Note: What can be done through youth development education in Extension to help children perceive differently? Does Extension have a responsibility to help alleviate prejudice? D. Stormer

"How Education Affects the Youth Vote." Seymour Martin Lipset. *Saturday Review*, LV (November, 1972), 68-70.

Author Lipset cites several pieces of research on the political views of youth. Of particular interest is a survey conducted by Gilbert Youth Research for the *Saturday Review of Education* in August of 1972.

The findings include:

1. Nonschool youth are more likely than those in college to identify themselves as conservative or rightist. Conversely, a high proportion of collegians identify themselves as liberal or radical left. High school students, most of whom aren't destined to be college graduates, resemble the working youth much more than the collegians.
2. The less-educated and the less-privileged youth aren't as sympathetic to the underprivileged as are those who have been exposed to higher education.
3. Among college students, self-reported grade averages are associated with opinions—the higher the marks, the more liberal the attitudes. High school students, however, behave somewhat less consistently. Those who report higher grades are generally more liberal but less strikingly so. This may reflect the fact that high school grades are much more correlated with parental status than are college grades; and the higher the family income, the more likely its members are to be exposed to more conservative views.
4. One of the major factors associated with vote choice, despite all the discussions of the generation gap, even among college students, remains parental opinion.

D. Stormer