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An Exploratory Analysis of the Fayette- County Urban League Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP)

What are the barriers facing SCSEP Participants



Capstone in Public Administration
Spring 2005
By Kelly S Woodall

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Statement of the Problem

The Lexington Fayette County Urban League Senior Community Service Employment Program is a federally funded program designed to assist low-income senior citizens find unsubsidized employment. To accomplish this mission the SCSEP utilizes a number of activities in an effort to address barriers that inhibit successfully finding unsubsidized employment. The Executive Director believes that the extent to which she can successfully address the barriers of those considered hard-to-place will have an impact on how well the program meets future mandates.

Research Methodology

The research is an exploratory analysis of the barriers that current and former (successfully placed) participants identified as inhibitors to successful placement into unsubsidized employment. A combination of qualitative and quantitative analysis was used to answer the research questions. Qualitative analysis was designed using a focus group approach to determine what the barriers are as perceived by the participants. Quantitative analysis was designed using a multi-variant formula to find out what demographic characteristics could be considered predictors of success in the program. Variables under study included age, gender, race educational level, physical limitations, psychosocial issues and time in program. A literature review was used to determine what the 'best practices' were of similar programs.

Results

As to the quantitative analysis the research showed that the barriers faced by the SCSEP in Lexington, KY are not very different than those faced by participants of similar programs. These were a lack of technical training to prepare them for a workforce that is technology driven and a labor that is not receptive to hiring older workers. Participants identified that the training sites could do more to assist them in acquiring unsubsidized employment by aggressively seeking dollars to hire them. The qualitative analysis revealed that age, physical limitations and time in program are statistically significant, with the time in program being the greatest predictor of success. The longer one is in the program the less likely they are to find unsubsidized employment

Recommendations

Recommendations were limited to three areas computer training, seminars and Job Clubs. These were made based on the control the director has over program activities. Computer training needs to be more extensive and include other components related to work place skills. Seminars should be relevant to the clients with a focus on getting a job. And finally, the Job Club needs revamping to provide more focus and direction. Incorporating these recommendations should allow the SCSEP to more adequately meet the needs of its hard-to-place participants.

Problem Statement

The director of the local Senior Community Service Employment Program believes she will face difficulties meeting program mandates in the future based on requirements that gives priority enrollment to individuals facing significant employment barriers. These individuals are below the poverty line for their household size with poor employment prospects based on a number of socio-economic factors. According to the director, future success of the program is dependent on how well the program addresses the barriers clients identify as impediments to obtaining unsubsidized employment.

Program Overview/Background

The Senior Community Service Employment Program (SCSEP) is a federally funded empowerment/training program that services the community's senior citizens. The program, funded under Title V of the Older American Act through the Department of Labor and the National Council on Aging has two purposes: to provide useful community services and to foster individual economic self-sufficiency through training and job placement in unsubsidized jobs. The Lexington-Fayette County Urban League as a sub-grantee of the National Council on Aging has implemented the program since 1987. The Lexington-Fayette Urban League SCSEP serves 4 counties: Nicholas, Madison, Franklin and Fayette. The local SCSEP is allotted sixty-two slots for its program. From July 1, 2004 to present the local SCSEP has placed seventeen of its sixty-two slots into unsubsidized employment. Currently

there are fifty-nine clients enrolled in the program. Fayette County has the largest number of clients with thirty-eight, followed by Madison, Frankfort and Nicholas counties making up the remaining twenty-one.

Current federal guidelines require that forty percent of the sixty-two allotted slots move in to unsubsidized employment during the funding period (July 1 to June 30). With sixty-two allotted slots the SCSEP needs to place twenty-five clients into unsubsidized employment during the current funding period.

Participation in the program requires individuals to meet a stringent set of guidelines.

The criterion for SCSEP clients is outlined below:

- 55 years old or older at time of application
- Within 125% of the federal income poverty guidelines (Appendix 1)
- Unemployed at the time of application
- Residents of the state where the project is authorized

According to the U.S. Department of Labor Report, older workers with incomes at or near the poverty level do not have adequate pensions or savings...that would permit them to retire from the workforce. Even those 62 and older will probably have social security income that is inadequate for subsistence without training, the jobs low-income older workers get will keep them poor” (Gross, 1998). As a training/empowerment program the local SCSEP provides services designed to reduce barriers such as low income, poor computer skills, poor literacy skills and poor employment prospects that this population faces in its efforts toward economic

self-sufficiency. In addition to those barriers previously mentioned the director, through observation; interviews and surveys identified some barriers she believes affects a significant number of clients' inability to find unsubsidized employment.

- Lack of ability to conduct interviews
- Lack of knowledge on how to write resumes, cover letters and thank you notes
- Lack of confidence in their ability
- Lack of motivation
- Dependency on social service programs/sense of entitlement

Currently the program provides:

- Twenty hours of paid community service. Individuals are placed in nonprofit or governmental agencies to learn/enhance skills that will help them move into unsubsidized employment.
- Seventy-two hours of computer training. Introduction to computers, basic keyboarding, Internet access and e-mails, and the basics of MS Word.
- G.E.D. classes and one-on-one tutoring
- Job Club. Provides opportunities for the clients to network and discuss workplace issues that they identify as relevant.

As the SCSEP works toward fulfilling program mandates, the director is interested in determining if the correct barriers have been identified and are being addressed as well as identifying other barriers not currently addressed through program activities.

With new program guidelines, attention is being placed on ways to serve the hard-to-place population (Appendix 2). Consequently, the director believes if the some of the

barriers are removed or lessened the better the likelihood that future mandates are met with success.

Literature Review

When analyzing the administrative data used for quantitative analysis, the characteristics of the population under study are consistent with what is known about the larger population. Women make up the largest percentage of older workers eligible for federal programs (Gross, 1998). This fact is reflected in the Department of Labor SCSEP performances measures giving women preference behind veterans and persons over 60 years. The U.S. Census Bureau suggests that large portions of older individuals at or below the poverty line are minorities and displaced homemakers with low educational levels.

The focus of the literature review concentrates on welfare-to-work programs for two reasons. First the welfare population is similar to the population served by SCSEP. Second, the majority of these programs share key components, training, employment and addressing other barriers such as poor literacy skills and limited work histories.

Today, when training and support services in America are examined, it is apparent that there has been a major shift in these programs. Programs no longer seek to address one issue or problem but rather provide universal access to an array of employment, training and support services designed to meet their clients' total needs.

In compliance to the 1998 Workforce Investment Act, there is an attempt to integrate workforce development programs at the local, state and federal levels.

Welfare-to-Work programs generally employ one of three strategies to move recipients off the welfare rolls; education and training, job search and a mixed strategy that allows for a more flexible approach (Gueron, 2002). The research shows that all three strategies work but the best results came from programs using a mixed strategy.

Work first programs are designed with an emphasis on getting a job. What defines these programs is their overall philosophy: that any job is a good job and the best way to succeed in the labor market is to join it. Participants develop work habits and skills on the job as opposed to the classroom. The overarching goal is to move individuals from the welfare rolls to unsubsidized jobs as quickly as possible. Therefore the job search itself becomes the central activity of these programs with training and education a secondary activity. Work first programs ensure that the message of job attainment is communicated from the top down. Administrators, program staff, and service providers are made aware that employment is a crucial part of the program.

However, these programs recognize that some of their clients are not ready for the labor market. For those individuals a mixed strategy is employed, combining other activities while maintaining an emphasis on employability. San Diego's Saturation Work Initiative Model (SWIM) is an example of a successful work first program sited

in the literature. The basic structure of their program requires clients to participate in a two-week job search workshop. If after that time employment is not found, they (clients) engage in a three month unpaid work experience along with mandatory participation in a bi-weekly job club session. If none of the above produces employment the participants are then placed into education and training activities.

Portland NEWWS (National Evaluation of Welfare-to-Work Strategies) is another example of a successful program that stresses job search over education and training activities. A study conducted by the Aspen Institute's Sectoral Employment Development Learning Project found that earnings of their clients went up by approximately similar to the SWIM program; the Portland program conducts an assessment of their clients' literacy and job-readiness skills. Those individuals deemed less job ready are assigned to adult education, vocational, or life skills classes. A case manager makes the initial assessment as to whether or not a client is immediately placed into job search activities or job readiness activities. No matter, which comes first, all participants are encouraged to make the job search their number one priority.

A transitional job programs is another program comparable to SCSEP programs. Unlike work first programs, many of which have been in existence before welfare reform, transitional job programs are relatively new. These programs focus on those welfare recipients considered hard-to-employ. While they provide services similar to

work first programs one key difference is the provision of a stipend during their stay in the program.

The salient features of transitional work programs are that they are short-term in length, typically lasting no more than nine months. These programs are centered on the individual rather than a group providing opportunities to address barriers as they arise. Also they generally provide work opportunities in non-profit organizations this is due in part to the risk that program participants may displace regular employees.

Agencies that implement transitional job program follow the basic tenets with the opportunity to make adjustments based on the needs of clients in their areas. For example the Community Jobs Program, San Francisco, CA requires clients to participate in a two-week orientation and job skills workshop before placement into a job site. The GoodWorks! Program, Augusta, GA provides services in two phases: work evaluation and work adjustment. The first phase typically three to four weeks is used to evaluate clients' needs and develop a plan to address them. The second phase assumes that barriers are addressed and the clients are ready to work in an organization while simultaneously searching for unsubsidized employment. Wages for these program range from \$5.15/hr. to \$8.00/hr (Kirby, 2002).

Programs that focused primarily on education and training were not reviewed based on the dissimilarities between them and SCSEP. Proponents of programs that emphasize education and training argue that making initial investments in building

skills might enable welfare recipients get more stable jobs (Hamilton 2002, Zedlewski 1999).

SCSEP serves clients similar to those found in welfare-to-work type programs. These individuals typically face significant barriers to employment that must be addressed at some point during their stay in the program in order for them to successfully attain paid employment. How a particular welfare-to-work program affects its stakeholders, i.e. the welfare-to-work participants, the staff, the organization and the community depends on diverse factors such as the amount and use of resources, the mix of services provided, the message that is communicated to participants and the quality of the implementation.

However, when programs such as work first and transitional job have succeeded a set of specific elements is identified. They include a mixed strategy composed of the job search, education and training, and other activities and services with an emphasis on employment in all activities. Program staff and training sites communicate a strong consistent message to ensure that clients have a through understanding of program requirements and expectations.

Methodology

Objective:

The objective of the data analysis is to explore what barriers SCSEP clients perceive inhibit their successful participation in the program and determine if there are

variables that may indicate if a client is more likely to be placed into unsubsidized employment.

The first part of the data accumulation and analysis process relied on qualitative methodological techniques using a focus group scenario to identify the SCSEP clients' perception of barriers that inhibit successful participation in the program.

The second part of the data accumulation and analysis process relied on quantitative methodological techniques. A multivariate model was used to make inferences about two populations: the hard-to-place and those who successfully found unsubsidized employment.

Research Question(s)

1. What are the barriers (qualitative)
 - Addressed by the program
 - Not being addressed by the program

2. Is the expectation of employment clear (qualitative)
 - Are the clients aware of the expectations or
 - Do they see training as a means in and of itself (qualitative)

3. What characteristics predict placement success (quantitative)

Qualitative Design

Focus Group Assessment as Qualitative Methodology:

According to Morgan: "... as a form of qualitative research, focus groups is basically group interviews, although not in the sense of an alteration between a researcher's question and the research clients' response instead, the reliance is an interaction within the group based on topics that are supplied by the researcher who typically takes the role of a moderator" (1997). The hallmark of focus groups is their explicit use of group interaction to produce data and insights that would be less accessible without the interaction found in a group. It is through this group interaction that we can gain insight on the barriers that SCSEP clients perceive as prohibiting their successful participation in the program. This method allows the researcher to describe specific features of the local program and individual clients. The researcher looks for congruent themes and concepts in the analysis of the data as it relates to the clients ability to attain unsubsidized employment.

Focus groups were held over a 3-week period (one session per week). An attempt was made to keep the groups as homogeneous as possible by inviting clients based on length in program (>12 months and < 12 months) and successful placement (Appendix 3). A total of 31 individuals participated in the sessions: 11 in the first, 14 in the second, followed by 6 in the last group. Recruitment of the last group was the most difficult because of time and space constraints. During the sessions clients answered a series of questions to identify common themes on their thoughts, attitudes and perceptions about the program in general and their barriers specifically. The

questions were designed after several conversations with the director, direct observation and review of the literature (Appendix 5). Each session lasted approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours. Clients were given a 10-minute break near the midway point. While not encouraged, clients did approach the moderator during the break to continue a discussion or attempt to get moderators' thoughts about the questions under discussion.

Limitations of the study's qualitative analysis

There are four limitations to the qualitative analysis identified. First, only one focus group per class of clients was queried. By conducting only one discussion per group, generalizations had to be made about the broader population. This could lead to incorrect identification of predominate barriers or overstate the importance of identified barriers leading to faulty assumptions and inconsistent recommendations.

The second limitation is inherent in focus group methodology. These include interactions within the group might be influenced by the group. This makes it difficult to determine if the responses generated are those of the individual or if they are agreeing because the majority has the same viewpoint leading to conformity. On the other end of the spectrum participants may make comments in an attempt to cause conflict within the group causing polarization. Focus groups are driven by the researcher therefore it is not always known in advance the ability of clients to discuss the topic. There is also the possibility that the moderator will influence how the participants respond to the discussion.

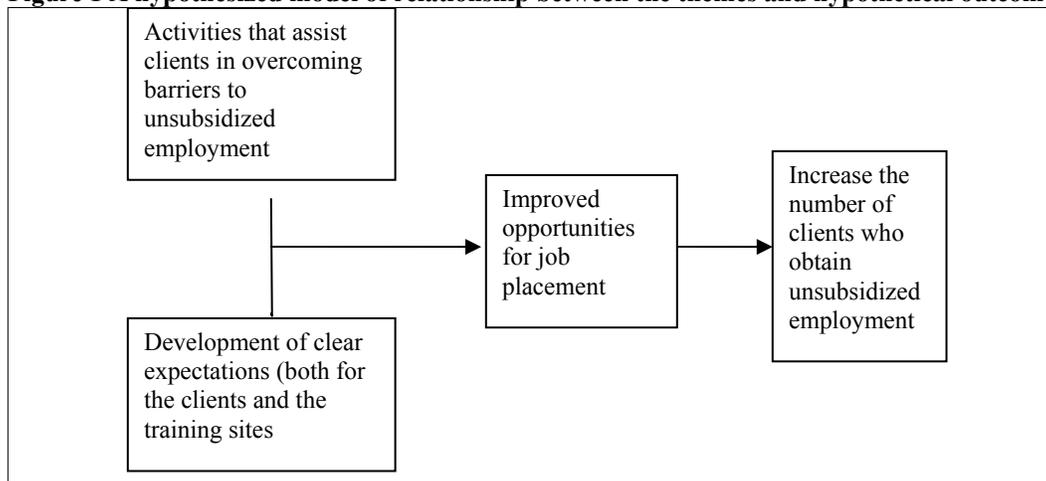
The third limitation is the lack of pilot study to determine if the focus group questions are free of ambiguity and clearly get at the information. While an effort was made to ensure that the questions were clear, a pilot test with a similar group might have produced better questions for the research question under study.

The last limitation is the size of the population from which to sample. The focus group clients were limited to the Fayette-County area consisting of thirty-eight clients. The program overall is small with a maximum of 62 clients at any point in time.

Interpretative Summary of Focus Groups

Questions asked during the focus groups attempted to derive information related to two key themes generated by the research questions. The first theme relates to the barriers that this population faces as they seek unsubsidized employment. The second theme relates to expectations of the program. The following logic model shows a hypothetical relationship between these two themes and unsubsidized employment.

Figure 1 A hypothesized model of relationship between the themes and hypothetical outcome



Theme 1

The literature reveals common barriers that individuals in this population might have in obtaining unsubsidized employment. Age discrimination, under-educated, low lifetime earnings, inadequate economic resources, and lack of basic skills are but a few revealed in the literature (Moore 1995). Technological changes have also been a major barrier that older workers in general and SCSEP clients in particular identify as a barrier to unsubsidized employment (Kramer 2000).

During the discussions clients had a lot to say about their experiences with technology, most notably computers. When the question “what activities were useful was posed, to varying degrees all clients indicated the computer training component. It became evident during the discussion that the quality of instruction was not at issue. Rather some clients stated that the amount of time devoted to the training was not enough. Others, while having some familiarity with computers in the past expressed a need for instruction specifically related to their training site. Inability to use basic office equipment such as copy machines, faxes and multi-line telephones were not mentioned as significant skill clients needed to perform at their training sites. Of those who expressed an opinion, most stated that they learned those skills on their own. It was also evident based on the discussion that clients did not feel as though everyone receives the same lessons.

Typical comments by the clients included:

I don't remember how to use a computer. I don't have a computer in my house. (R. R., March 23)

You can't learn the computer in six weeks (B. R., March 16)

I used a computer on my job I had before retiring but it was just to do those things I needed to do my job. (J.W., March 16)

I didn't learn how to use excel in my classes (O.M., March 16)

Computer training was good, especially learning Excel (L.S., March 30)

Elaine is excellent (all who expressed a comment about instructor)

Out of the 31 individuals who attended the sessions only 3 indicated a need for G.E.D. classes.

I need the G.E.D. because they won't hire you (G. C., March 16)

It is interesting to note that some indicated a preference for having tasks shown to them expressing little interest in something written. Even with written instructions at least two individuals from the first session arrived for the second session. About a third of them went to their training site before attending the focus group. These instances are reported in an effort to show that even though not specifically mentioned, poor literacy skills (not understanding written instructions) is a barrier clients are not addressing.

Seminars were mentioned briefly, in response to what activities could be changed. Clients stated that some of the seminars, while interesting did not provide useful information. Clients felt they lacked knowledge in basic office etiquette and dress, job search skills and information deemed useful to people of their age. The overall effect of the seminars can be summed up by one client's account of a banking seminar.

According to this client, “*individuals our age need information on investments, not how to open a checking account or manage our money, most of us have had checking accounts for years; we know how to do that, teach me something I can use*”.

Typical comments by clients:

Tell me, do you know how to go back out there to get a job (K.K, March 16)

I know how to get on the computer to look for a job (J.W., March 16)

I want skills (did not define what skills were wanted) (D.S., March 23))

We need people to tell us how to dress (M.T., March 23)

It is important to note that only one of the successfully placed clients mentioned seminars as an activity. The majority stated that they had few if any difficulties in obtaining unsubsidized employment while in the program.

Other barriers not mentioned above but receiving some consensus during the discussion were age discrimination, not being taken seriously by potential employers and feelings of worthlessness. Some of these were not mentioned specifically but inferred based on the stories they told. One client told the group that during a job fair a recruiter said he was not hiring immediately before offering someone else the job. Another stated that her resume was tossed in the trash; she knows this because she saw him. While not predominate in the focus group discussions self-esteem issues was mentioned occasionally by all three groups. Although not all was negative, one of the clients who successfully completed the program said that her participation in the program gave her the self-confidence to seek unsubsidized employment.

They also expressed the view that sometimes they are not listened to by supervisors both at their training sites and at SCSEP. Some stated this made them frustrated with the program.

Theme 2

Surprisingly the second dominant theme, expectations, was answered not by the questions specifically asked during the focus group sessions instead from discussions about their training sites. The majority of those currently in the program related most of the questions to the training sites. Even when asked to limit their responses to the program itself, invariably clients' responses focused on the training sites. This led to valuable information as to the expectations clients had about the program.

During the sessions clients verbalized understanding of the program's overall objective i.e. placement into unsubsidized employment. However many of the clients seemed to believe that the training site should be the unsubsidized employment site. These views are understandable when the comments of the focus group sessions are analyzed.

Typical comments by clients

If I am good enough to work for them, why can't they (training site) hire me?

(J. R., March 23)

Some of these places are short of help. They need people. But they won't make a firm commitment (D.S., March 23)

The site should have a commitment to us (A.R., March 16)

The sites should provide more training (V.D., March 16)

I went to work today because they need me (B.D., March 16)

The training sites need to be screened (R.R., March 16)

The training sites act like they hired us. Told me that I had to come there first before attending this session because I had work to do (M.L., March 23)

They (training sites) take advantage of us. They have us doing the same work as others who are getting paid more. We are cheap labor for them

While the comments ranged from positive to negative, in general, clients were pleased with their training sites. Many viewed their site as the place where they hoped to find eventual unsubsidized employment. Those who were moved to alternative training sites expressed some resentment. Those who hoped to find unsubsidized employment elsewhere stated their site did not offer the type of employment they were seeking. Clients of the third focus group (successful placement) did not express the same concerns relating to the training sites. Of those that attended one started their own business, two found employment elsewhere and the rest were hired by their training site. One client stated that she was hired almost immediately because they were looking for a part-time receptionist.

Overall the focus group sessions went fairly well. Participants seemed genuinely interested in addressing some of the issues they perceive as barriers to their finding unsubsidized employment. The majority seemed to understand the expectation of the program with some correcting others when they referred to their training site as a job. It was also evident, at least with those currently in the program that some of the

services that would assist them in eliminating some of their barriers were not being used.

It was interesting that the first group (in the program >12 months) was also the most vocal. The second group (in program <12 months) admitted that some of the questions could not be answered because of their time in program. Roughly one-third had been in the program less than 3 months therefore they had not used some of the services provided by the program. The last group (placed into unsubsidized employment) generated the least comments to the questions posed; it was also the smallest. The lack of participation of the last group and the limited participation of the second showed what could happen when attention is not given to the study limitations.

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

While the bulk of the analysis focuses on client's attitudes and perceptions that are more suited to a qualitative approach, there is an abundance of literature that suggests demographic characteristics may play an important role in obtaining employment.

With respect to the local SCSEP, a quantitative analysis was conducted to determine if the two groups under study share characteristics that might be an indicator of placement success.

One hundred and forty-three records were reviewed to gather the data necessary for quantitative analysis (Appendix 5). Out of those 143 records 58 were selected for review. The records were selected based on the following guidelines: 1) individuals

who left the program after obtaining unsubsidized employment and 2) individuals who have been in the program for at least 12 months. Those individuals who have been in the program less than 12 months, ineligible, placed on a waiting list or terminated were not a part of the analysis. It is important to note that individuals terminated from the program is not related to program guidelines but rather personal reasons, ineligible or opt out of program (no explanation given).

The study used a census based on the small size of the population and the exploratory nature of the study. Population characteristics under study were limited to the following: age, gender, race, educational level, presence/absence of disability, presence/absence of psychosocial issues, and time in program (Appendix 6). Using a pooled-variance t-test the differences in the populations (hard-to-place clients and unsubsidized clients) are explored based on the aforementioned variables (Appendix 7). The other area of study using agency records is whether or not there is a relationship between those who found unsubsidized employment and the population characteristics using Pearson Correlation coefficient (Appendix 8).

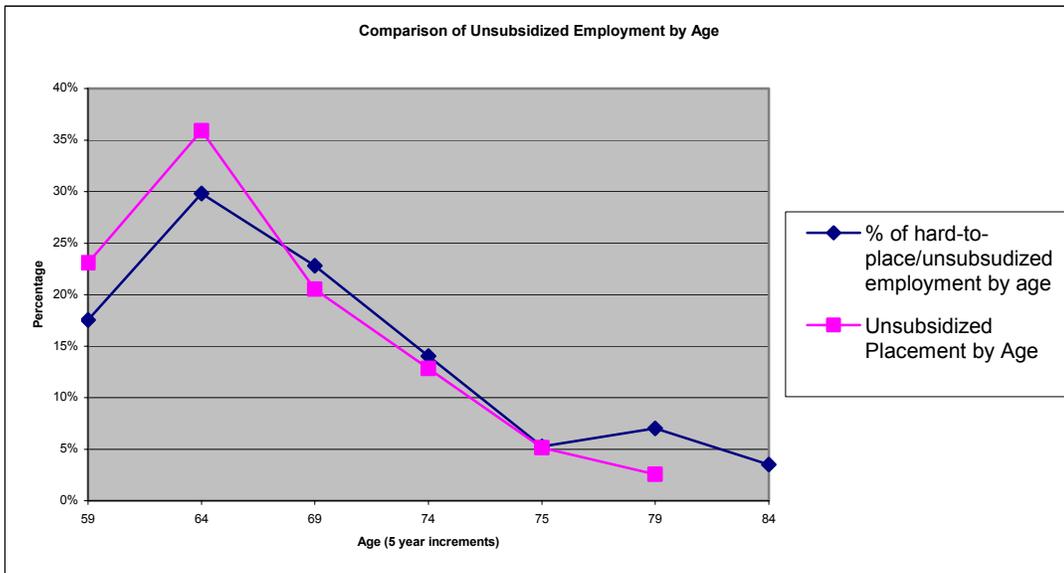
Limitations of the study's quantitative analysis:

There were three limitations with respect to the quantitative analysis. First, the small population made it difficult to make meaningful inferences to generalize to a larger population. Second, the chosen variables may not yield the best information. The third is the presence of outliers due to the inclusion of 52% of clients under study (outliers were not excluded from the analysis).

Summary of Quantitative Analysis

H₁: Age of client affects unsubsidized employment. The statistical analysis mildly supports this hypothesis (Table 0). At a 0.01 alpha level there is significant correlation between the age of the client and unsubsidized employment. Focus group data also mimic's this assertion. SCSEP clients agreed that younger people often obtain employment sooner than someone of their age (Figure 2).

Figure 2 Comparison of Unsubsidized Employment by Age



The mean age of clients who successfully obtained unsubsidized employment is 64 years of age. By contrast, those clients who are defined as hard to place have a mean age of 71 years of age. The data seems to suggest that older clients find it more difficult to get unsubsidized employment. Bureau of Labor Statistics (1998a) maintains that only one-third of surveyed organizations seek to recruit or retain older workers. Furthermore, Bureau of Labor Statistics (1998b) reported that older workers who lose their jobs have the hardest time finding new ones.

Figure 3 Comparisons of Means by Gender, Race Educational Level

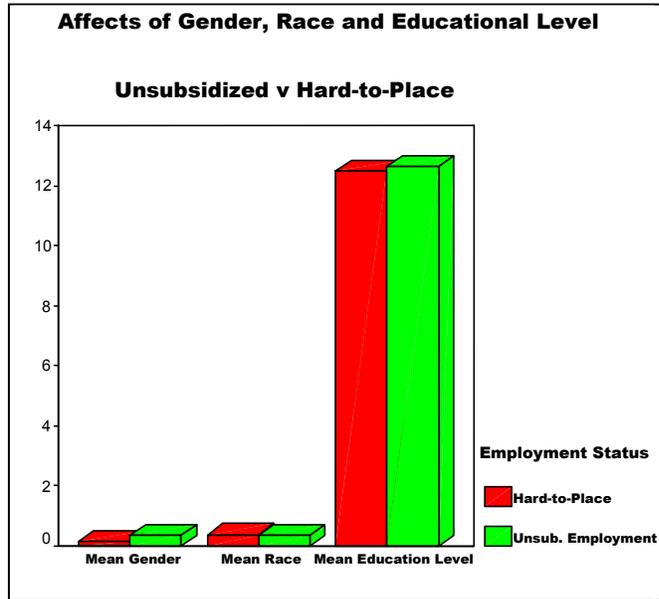
H₂: The gender of the client affects unsubsidized employment.

H₃: The race of the client affects unsubsidized employment.

H₄: Clients level of education affects unsubsidized employment.

Analysis of the data did not reveal any significant correlations or comparisons for these three hypotheses. Therefore

they are rejected. The clients that attain unsubsidized employment and long-term SCSEP clients appear to be very similar with respect to gender, race and educational level. A larger more diverse sample would need to be taken before meaningful conclusions are drawn. These variables are however reflective of the population that SCSEP serves.



H₅: Presence of a disability affects unsubsidized employment.

The findings on the affect physical limitations have on placement success and the ability to obtain unsubsidized employment reveals a weak relationship between the two. Severity of disability may have been a more useful indicator of the effect of physical limitation. While little research was conducted on this particular aspect, legislation at all levels of government suggest that a person with disabilities maybe at a disadvantage in the workplace. Clients indicate whether or not they have a

disability with the option of describing it. For example, a few of the clients indicated that obesity was their disability.

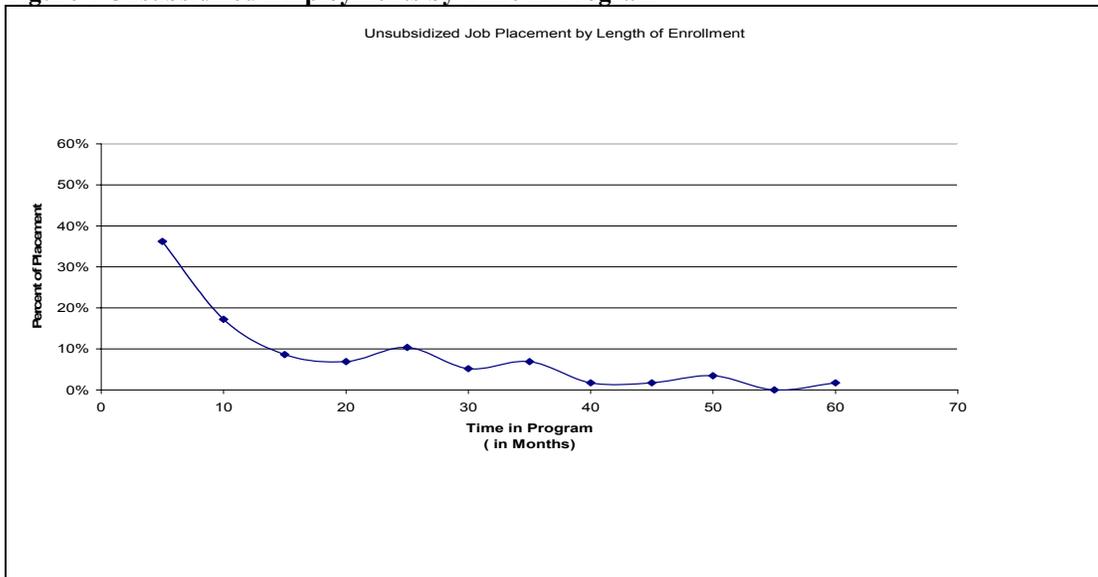
H₆: Presence of psychosocial issues affect unsubsidized placement.

As with H₂- H₄, the presence of psychosocial issues and its affect on unsubsidized employment does not appear statistically significant. Better evidence may be found if weights to the psychosocial barriers clients identify during the intake process were developed. On the intake form clients can identify at least six psychosocial barriers. Those that can tie in to one of the other demographic barriers above might pose a more considerable barrier than if listed separately. For example, a client indicates that they have poor literacy skills and in need have a GED, or displaced homemaker and a woman.

H₇: Length of time in program affects unsubsidized employment.

The length of time a person is in the program has a statistically significant effect on the ability to be successfully placed. Similar research conducted by a SCSEP in Riverside, CA, showed that close to 50% of their most recent placements were made in the first 4 months of enrollment. After the 4 months there is a drop in the rate of placement with a significant drop noted at the 24-month interval (VOC, 2002). A similar relationship is seen with the local SCSEP (Figure 4)

Figure 4 Unsubsidized Employments by Time in Program



As to the research question “what demographic characteristics are predictors of success at obtaining unsubsidized employment?” the results are mixed.

There appears to be some evidence that time in program, age, and physical limitations have an effect on successful placement into unsubsidized employment. In terms of significance, length of the time in program was shown to carry more weight as to whether or not a participant would successfully attain unsubsidized employment looking at both the chi square and t test analysis ($p = -0.697$ and 0.000 at α -level of 0.01 respectively). The negative correlation suggests that as time in program increases the possibility of attaining unsubsidized employment decreases.

In comparison to time in program, the other two variables that had some significance are age and physical limitations were weak. Although there is some evidence that age affects placement into jobs with respect to similar programs. The age of JTPA

trainees was also statistically significant at a 0.01 α -level as well (-3.01) (Anderson, 1993).

Recommendations

As this study is exploratory a caveat is made with respect to recommendations. Further analysis is necessary before concrete changes are made to the current program. A major portion of this research is devoted to a one-sided analysis of a program. A through analysis should include an audit of established performance measurements, development of measures to test the effectiveness of the seminars, along with a cross-sectional view of clients in relation to the activities they use. For example, how well did a client, considered hard-to-place, perform in the computer classes, does their current training site accurately reflect their goals, and if other barriers were expressed, how well did the program do in eliminating the barriers.

Recommendations are limited to the training the clients receive, specifically the computer training and seminars, and the Job Club. Although clients expressed concern about their training sites it is difficult to determine if the issues are program or client related. With a growing number of individuals who will fall into that hard-to-place category these two areas can play a major role in their success.

1) Revise the Computer/Training

According to the literature training must be sensitive to the needs of an aging population. Medical research has shown that as people age their ability to process

information changes. What once took a day or two to learn may now take a week or two before clients grasp the concept they are trying to learn. Clients overwhelmingly expressed a desire for increased computer training along with the opportunity to learn skills beyond the basics.

One model is the Franklin County Home Care Corporation, Turner Falls, MA collaborated with another program designed to serve low-income individuals to provide their clients with 425 hours of computer instruction and classroom instruction, and in addition they give individuals the opportunity to attend a three-week typing course. Their computer training provides basic computer training but has included an advanced component allowing clients to enhance skills, increasing their chances for attaining employment. The classroom instruction provides training in other areas deemed crucial to job success.

2) Proactive Seminars/Workshops

Clients stated that the seminars offered did not provide them with information they could use. The Center for Training and Employment (CET) believes that training should be closely tied to work. It structures its programs and activities to maximize the time a client spends in the program. Based on the focus group data, clients expressed an interest in investment opportunities, basic office etiquette and job search skills.

3) Development of a comprehensive Job Club

The final recommendation relates to the job club. As this is a new program, now provides an excellent opportunity to develop performance measures to determine the impact job club has on a client's ability to attain unsubsidized employment.

Currently this program lack focus and direction. Those clients who are enrolled did not seem to be aware of what is its function. Clients stated they come to the Senior Citizen's Center to attend a meeting but all they do is talk to each other. There are three components to a job club: the classroom, the phone room and the active job search. This is where the literature places emphasis on making the job search like a job. An effective job club combines a number of factors essential to increased placement success.

- Make the goal of a job search finding a job
 - Combine classroom instruction with actual job search
 - Have a well-equipped phone room
 - Use hands-on approach to teach practical job search skills
 - Motivate clients to make numerous job contacts
 - Treat the job club like a job
 - Help clients learn from each other and from their experiences
 - Hire an engaging instructor
 - Celebrate success (Brown, 1997)
-

Conclusion

Aging baby boomers and low-income older workers are two groups identified as stakeholders with a vested interest in the future of empowerment and training programs. Economic changes beginning after WWII and continuing today will alter the way baby boomers address the later half of their lives and the way in which policy may need to respond (Seefeldt, 1998).

Both public and private non-profit agencies in the community “benefit from the valuable experience, skills, work ethic and productivity that SCSEP clients bring to the work environment” (Kramer, 2001) In terms of cost effectiveness: “As currently structured the SCSEP is cost effective, returning approximately \$1.50 for every dollar invested by empowering individuals to become self-sufficient, productive, taxpaying members of their communities. About 50 cents of every dollar is expended on client wages and fringe benefits; less than 15 cents of every dollar is expended on administration, one of the lowest rates among federal programs. The balance is expended on client training, counseling, and related expenses.” (Poulos, 1997))

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Appendix 1

Federal Poverty Guidelines: 2004 HHS Poverty Guidelines

Size of Family Unit	48 Contiguous States and D.C.	125%	Alaska	125%	Hawaii	125%
1	\$9,310.00	\$11,637.50	\$11,630.00	\$14,537.50	\$10,700.00	\$13,375.00
2	\$12,490.00	\$15,612.50	\$15,610.00	\$19,512.00	\$14,360.00	\$17,950.00
3	\$15,670.00	\$19,586.50	\$19,590.00	\$24,487.50	\$18,020.00	\$22,525.00
4	\$18,850.00	\$23,562.50	\$23,570.00	\$29,462.50	\$21,680.00	\$27,100.00
5	\$22,030.00	\$27,537.50	\$27,550.00	\$34,437.50	\$25,340.00	\$31,675.00
6	\$25,210.00	\$31,512.50	\$31,530.00	\$39,412.50	\$29,000.00	\$36,250.00
7	\$28,390.00	\$35,487.50	\$35,510.00	\$44,387.50	\$32,660.00	\$40,825.00
8	\$31,570.00	\$39,462.50	\$39,490.00	\$49,362.50	\$36,320.00	\$45,400.00
For each additional person, add	\$3,180.00	\$3,975.00	\$3,980.00	\$4,975.00	\$3,660.00	\$4,575.00

Appendix 2

Definitions:

1. *Hard-to-place-* individuals who have been in the program 18 months or longer without successfully obtaining unsubsidized employment
2. *Low-income-* individuals at or below the federal guidelines for poverty
3. *Under/uneducated-* individuals who have not attained a high school diploma/GED before enrollment
4. *Subsidized-* training stipend received through program for community service
5. *Unsubsidized-* income from work/services performed for another agency/employer

Appendix 3a

Date:

Dear Former SCSEP Client:

Thank you for agreeing to participate in a focus group that I am conducting as part of my capstone project for the University of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Administration.

As I explained in our earlier phone call, the Director of the Urban League Senior Community Service Employment Program, Lexington Kentucky is seeking to ways to better serve program clients looking to make the transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment.

My research is designed to address the barriers to unsubsidized employment and seek recommendations as to changes that can be made in order to improve clients' opportunities for unsubsidized employment. In order to accomplish this, I will be conducting a series of focus groups. During the focus groups, we will discuss activities that you have participated in, barriers you may have encountered during your job search, your expectations of the program and your recommendations to improve the program.

In order to ensure that I accurately capture the information the sessions will be taped and a written record kept. All information obtained during the session will remain confidential. The director will not have access to your specific responses. However, the director and the professors at the University of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Administration will have access to the final report generated from your participation.

The focus group session will be held at the Senior Citizen's Center on (date). It will last approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours. Please be prompt as we have a lot of material to cover. A light lunch will be provided.

Your participation is greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or are unable to attend at the time scheduled you can contact me at (859) 266-7250. If no answer, please leave a message.

A written copy of the final report will be made available upon request.

Sincerely,

Kelly S. Woodall

Appendix 3b

Date:

Dear SCSEP Client:

My name is Kelly S Woodall; I am a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Administration. I am currently working on a capstone project for graduation and would like to request your assistance.

The Director of the Urban League Senior Community Service Employment Program, Lexington Kentucky is seeking to ways to better serve program clients looking to make the transition from subsidized to unsubsidized employment.

My research is designed to address the barriers to unsubsidized employment and seek recommendations as to changes that can be made in order to improve clients' opportunities for unsubsidized employment. In order to accomplish this, I will be conducting a series of focus groups. During the focus groups, we will discuss activities that you have participated in, barriers you may have encountered during your job search, your expectations of the program and your recommendations to improve the program.

In order to ensure that I accurately capture the information the sessions will be taped and a written record kept. All information obtained during the session will remain confidential. The director will not have access to your specific responses. However, the director and the professors at the University of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Administration will have access to the final report generated from your participation.

The focus group session will be held at the Senior Citizen Center on (date). It will last approximately 1 ½ to 2 hours. Please be prompt as we have a lot of material to cover. You may bring your lunch. Beverages will be provided.

Your participation will be greatly appreciated. If you have any questions or are unable to attend at the time scheduled you can contact me at (859) 266-7250. If no answer, please leave a message.

A written copy of the final report will be made available upon request.

Sincerely,

Kelly S. Woodall

Appendix 4

Questions to be used during focus groups:

Opening Question: participants get acquainted and feel connected

1. Good afternoon, my name is Kelly Woodall. I am a graduate student at the University of Kentucky, Martin School of Public Administration working toward a master's degree. I would like to thank each and every one of you for coming out this afternoon to help me get the A, I so richly deserve. Before we get started, tell me your name and in a few words something about yourself you think is important for someone to know about you. (make sure every one answers this question)

Introduction Question: begins discussion of topic

2. What brought you to the program?
 - a. How did you hear about the program?

Transition Question: moves smoothly and seamlessly into key questions

3. What activities, offered by the program, have you participated in (used)
4. Were these useful to you
 - a. How were they useful

Key Questions: obtains insight on areas of central concern in the study

5. What activities of the program work (worked) best for you?
6. What activities of the program are not (did not) work for you?
7. How could the activities be improved?
8. What activities are missing?

9. What do (did) you hope to gain from your participation in the program?
10. What is the difference between volunteer works versus paid employment?
 - a. How are they alike
 - b. How are they different
11. What, if any problems have you had in obtaining employment?

Ending Questions: Helps researchers determine where to place emphasis and brings closure to the discussion

12. If the director were here, what is the one thing you would want to say

Appendix 5 Participant intake form



SCSEP APPLICANT/PARTICIPANT DATA FORM

SOCIAL SECURITY #		PARTICIPANT NAME (LAST, FIRST, MIDDLE)			APPLICATION DATE	ENROLLMENT DATE
STREET ADDRESS/MAILING ADDRESS				CITY	STATE	ZIP CODE
COUNTY		TELEPHONE #		CELLPHONE#/E-MAIL ADDRESS		
BIRTHDATE		CURRENT AGE	FAMILY SIZE	HOMELESS <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		LOCATION <input type="checkbox"/> URBAN <input type="checkbox"/> RURAL
FAMILY RECEIVING PUBLIC ASSISTANCE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	<input type="checkbox"/> SSI	<input type="checkbox"/> SSDI	<input type="checkbox"/> FOOD STAMPS	<input type="checkbox"/> SUBSIDIZED HOUSING	<input type="checkbox"/> STATE/LOCAL WELFARE	<input type="checkbox"/> TANF
EMPLOYED IN QUARTER PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> YES, BUT WITH NOTICE OF TERMINATION		TOTAL WAGES EARNED IN QUARTER PRIOR TO PARTICIPATION		INCLUDABLE FAMILY INCOME FOR LAST 6 MONTHS ANNUALIZED		FAMILY INCOME AT/BELOW POVERTY LEVEL <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO
ELIGIBLE <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO DATE OF ELIGIBILITY DETERMINATION _____ _____ PLACED ON WAIT LIST <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	IF INELIGIBLE, REASON: <input type="checkbox"/> AGE <input type="checkbox"/> INCOME <input type="checkbox"/> RESIDENCE OUT OF STATE, INDICATE STATE _____ <input type="checkbox"/> FAILED TO COMPLETE APPLICATION/PROVIDE DOCUMENTATION <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____			IF INELIGIBLE, ACTION TAKEN: REFERRED TO: <input type="checkbox"/> ONE STOP <input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL SERVICES <input type="checkbox"/> ANOTHER PROJECT <input type="checkbox"/> PLACED IN UNSUBSIDIZED EMPLOYMENT <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____		
GENDER: <input type="checkbox"/> MALE <input type="checkbox"/> FEMALE <input type="checkbox"/> NOT REPORTED	EDUCATION (YEARS) (SEE LIST ON BACK)	RACE: <input type="checkbox"/> BLACK <input type="checkbox"/> WHITE <input type="checkbox"/> ASIAN <input type="checkbox"/> PACIFIC ISLANDER/NATIVE HAWAIIAN <input type="checkbox"/> AMERICAN INDIAN/ ALASKAN NATIVE <input type="checkbox"/> DID NOT VOUNTARILY REPORT			ETHNICITY: HISPANIC/LATINO <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
CITIZEN: <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	WORK PERMIT NUMBER & EXPIRATION DATE			FORMERLY A PARTICIPANT ON SCSEP? <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO DATE OF RECENT RECERTIFICATION _____ TRANSFERRED FROM ANOTHER TITLE V PROJECT (NAME) _____		
PHYSICAL/WAIVER DATE _____ _____ <input type="checkbox"/> PHYSICAL	SOCIAL/CULTURAL GEOGRAPHIC ISOLATION <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	LIMITED ENGLISH PROFICIENCY <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO IF YES - PRIMARY LANGUAGE _____ (SEE LIST ON BACK)	DISABLED <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO <input type="checkbox"/> DID NOT REPORT	VETERAN <input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN, 180 DAYS OR LESS <input type="checkbox"/> VETERAN, MORE THAN 180 DAYS <input type="checkbox"/> SPOUSE OF VETERAN <input type="checkbox"/> NONE OF THE ABOVE		DISPLACED HOMEMAKER <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO

WAIVER					
OTHER SOCIAL BARRIERS <input type="checkbox"/> YES (SPECIFY) _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NO		LITERACY SKILLS DEFICIENT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO		POOR EMPLOYMENT HISTORY OR PROSPECT <input type="checkbox"/> YES <input type="checkbox"/> NO	
CO-ENROLLMENTS: (CHECK ALL THAT APPLY)					
<input type="checkbox"/> WIA <input type="checkbox"/> EMPLOYMENT SERVICE <input type="checkbox"/> ADULT EDUCATION <input type="checkbox"/> COLLEGE/COMMUNITY COLLEGE <input type="checkbox"/> SECTION 502(E) WITH THIS PROJECT <input type="checkbox"/> SECTION 502(E) WITH ANOTHER PROJECT, SPECIFY: _____ <input type="checkbox"/> OTHER _____ <input type="checkbox"/> NONE					
The information provided is true to the best of my knowledge. I understand that if I intentionally provide inaccurate information, I may be terminated from the SCSEP Program and may be subject to legal penalties.					
SIGNATURE OF APPLICANT: _____					
INTERVIEWER (SIGNATURE): _____ (DATE) _____					
PROJECT DIRECTOR/DESIGNEE SIGNATURE: _____ (DATE) _____					

LANGUAGES

10. AMHARIC 11. ARABIC 12. ARMENIAN 13. BOSNIAN 14. CANTONESE (YUE) 15. FRENCH (CREOLE) 16. FRENCH (PARISIAN) 17. GERMAN 18. GREEK 19. GUJARATHI 20. HEBREW	21. HINDI (INDIA) 22. MIAOHMONG 23. ITALIAN 24. HUNGARIAN 25. ILOCANO 26. JAPANESE 27. KOREAN 28. LAOTIAN 29. MANDARIAN 30. MON-KHMER (CAMBODIAN) 31. NAVAJO	32. PERSIAN 33. POLISH 34. PORTUGUESE 35. PUNJABI 36. RUSSIAN 37. SAMOAN 38. SERBO-CROATIAN 39. SOMALI 40. SPANISH 41. TAGALOG	42. THAI 43. URDU 44. VIETNAMESE 45. YIDDISH 46. OTHER _____
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C

EDUCATION

--	--

00	-	NO GRADE	18	MASTER'S DEGREE
01-11		YEARS OF SCHOOL	19	DOCTORAL DEGREE
12		HS DIPLOMA	21	VOCATIONAL/TECHNICAL DEGREE
13-15		YEARS OF COLLEGE COMPLETED	22	ASSOCIATE'S DEGREE
16		BA/BS OR EQUIVALENT	88	GED OR CERTIFICATE OF EQUIVALENCY FOR
17		EDUCATION BEYOND A BACHELOR'S	HS	
		DEGREE	89	COMPLETED 12 YEARS OF SCHOOL/NO
				DIPLOMA

Appendix 6

VARIABLES FOR QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS:

Are there characteristics among the participants of SCSEP that are predictors of success?

The following demographics were analyzed using the administrative data collected from the Participant Intake Form: age, gender, and race, time in program (in months), physical barriers, and psychosocial issues.

Parameters for Quantitative Analysis

Dependent Variable: placement in unsubsidized employment

Independent Variables:

Age (at time of intake)

Gender (dummy variable):

Male=1

Female=0

Race/ethnicity (dummy variable):

White=1

Other=0

Educational level: (years of schooling):

1-11 = highest grade completed

12 = HS/GED

13-15 = number of years in college

16 = college graduate

17 = years beyond BA, no advanced degree

18 = MA/MS

19 = PhD. or equivalent

21 = vocational/tech degree

22 = associate degree

89 = 12 years of HS, no diploma

Physical limitation (dummy variable):

No Limitation = 0

Limitation = 1

Psychosocial issues (dummy variable):

No issues = 0

Issues = 1

Time in program (in months)

Appendix 7

Independent Samples Test

T-test for Equality of Means

Independent Variables		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
							Lower	Upper
Age	Equal variances assumed	-3.785	56	0.000	-6.7706	1.7886	-10.3536	-3.1875
	Equal variances not assumed	-3.457	28.717	0.002	-6.7706	1.9586	-10.7782	-2.7630
Gender	Equal variances assumed	1.403	56	0.166	0.1754	0.1251	-0.0751	0.4260
	Equal variances not assumed	1.525	44.554	0.134	0.1754	0.1150	-0.0563	0.4072
Race	Equal variances assumed	-0.259	56	0.796	-0.0351	0.1353	-0.3060	0.2359
	Equal variances not assumed	-0.256	34.614	0.799	-0.0351	0.1370	-0.3134	0.2432
Education Level	Equal variances assumed	0.335	56	0.739	0.1417	0.4229	-0.7055	0.9889
	Equal variances not assumed	0.320	31.912	0.751	0.1417	0.4427	-0.7601	1.0435
Physical Limitations	Equal variances assumed	-2.483	56	0.016	-0.3225	0.1299	-0.5827	-0.0624
	Equal variances not assumed	-2.367	31.745	0.024	-0.3225	0.1362	-0.6001	-0.0449
Psychosocial Issues	Equal variances assumed	-0.627	56	0.533	-0.0499	0.0796	-0.2095	0.1096
	Equal variances not assumed	-0.693	46.427	0.492	-0.0499	0.0721	-0.1949	0.0951
Time in Program (in months)	Equal variances assumed	-7.279	56	0.000	-20.7841	2.8553	-26.5040	-15.0642
	Equal variances not assumed	-6.511	27.441	0.000	-20.7841	3.1922	-27.3290	-14.2391

Appendix 8

Correlations

Variables	Statistics	Unsubsidized Employment	Age	Gender	Race	Education Level	Physical Limitations	Psychosocial Issues	Time in Program (in months)
Unsubsidized Employment	Pearson Correlation	1.000	-0.451	0.184	-0.035	0.045	-0.315	-0.083	-0.697
	Sig. (2-tailed)		0.000	0.166	0.796	0.739	0.016	0.533	0.000
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Age	Pearson Correlation	-0.451	1.000	-0.115	0.149	-0.190	0.217	0.092	0.350
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000		0.390	0.263	0.153	0.102	0.494	0.007
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Gender	Pearson Correlation	0.184	-0.115	1.000	0.201	-0.158	-0.144	-0.085	-0.217
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.166	0.390		0.129	0.235	0.281	0.524	0.102
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Race	Pearson Correlation	-0.035	0.149	0.201	1.000	-0.058	-0.094	-0.165	-0.122
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.796	0.263	0.129		0.665	0.484	0.216	0.361
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Education Level	Pearson Correlation	0.045	-0.190	-0.158	-0.058	1.000	-0.144	0.035	-0.065
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.739	0.153	0.235	0.665		0.282	0.795	0.630
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Physical Limitations	Pearson Correlation	-0.315	0.217	-0.144	-0.094	-0.144	1.000	0.104	0.139
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.016	0.102	0.281	0.484	0.282		0.439	0.297
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Psychosocial Issues	Pearson Correlation	-0.083	0.092	-0.085	-0.165	0.035	0.104	1.000	0.184
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.533	0.494	0.524	0.216	0.795	0.439		0.166
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58
Time in Program (in months)	Pearson Correlation	-0.697	0.350	-0.217	-0.122	-0.065	0.139	0.184	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	0.000	0.007	0.102	0.361	0.630	0.297	0.166	
	N	58	58	58	58	58	58	58	58

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).