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Increasing Participation in Continuing Education:  
The Relationship of Specific Obstacles and Supports to  
Likelihood of Participation

By


Victor Wayne Oake

B.A. Indiana University, 1981

THESIS

Submitted to the Department of Psychology  
in partial fulfilment of the requirements  
for the Master of Arts degree  
Wilfrid Laurier University  
1985

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## ABSTRACT

The study investigated the relationship between reported likelihood of participation in a continuing education course and the importance of obstacles and supports to participation as perceived by 238 adults. The research instrument, a questionnaire developed by the author, was mailed to 1,000 residences in the county of Waterloo, Ontario.

Previous research and theoretical positions on obstacles to participation in continuing education were examined. It was hypothesized that obstacles and supports related to concern with academic ability would be significantly correlated with Likelihood of participation. The Pearson Product-Moment statistic was utilized to test the hypothesis. No significant correlations between the dependent variable, likelihood of participation, and the obstacles and supports related to concern with academic ability were found. A regression analysis which included all of the obstacle, support and socio-demographic variables yielded a model with little predictive value. A post-hoc analysis was performed utilizing level of

education as a moderating variable. The analysis revealed a significant correlation between one hypothesized obstacle, "Having been away from school too long", and the dependent variable among respondents with less than a grade twelve education.

The "theory of reasoned action" (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980) was considered as a possible explanation for the lack of significant findings. The exact nature of the interaction between the decision to participate in continuing education and obstacles and supports to participation remains unclear. However, the research did provide some data which may be of value to continuing education providers seeking ways to increase participation in continuing education.

## Acknowledgements

As I reflect back on this thesis I realize that were it not for the support and encouragement of many people I would never have completed it.

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Second, my parents, Victor Oake and Margaret Oake, who among the many ways they have given of themselves over the years, taught me by example, how to persevere when a goal seems out of reach.

Finally, and most importantly, there is Pam, her unwavering confidence in me and her enthusiasm for our future have made this not only possible but all the more worthwhile.

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## INTRODUCTION

Education has long been considered a cornerstone of democracy. The contribution education is capable of making to the development of an informed citizenry and the democratic process which stems from it has been well documented by Friere (1970). In the North American context, Bell (1973), Kawun (1978) and Georgiades, Ovando and Weaver (1978) have addressed the importance of continuing education to insuring participatory democracy in the face of rapid social and technological change. At the local level, involvement in community organizations has been positively correlated with involvement in continuing education (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Carp, Peterson & Roelfs, 1974; Richmond, 1977).

Participation in continuing education has also been cited as a significant tool for individual empowerment. London, Wenkert and Hagstrom (1963), Anderson and Niemi (1969) and Armstrong (1971) have noted the increase in self-confidence and sense of competence associated with participation in continuing education. Kawun (1978) and Boone, Shearon and White (1980) have noted the value of continuing education in assisting adults with adjusting to rapid change. The role of continuing education in securing employment and vocational advancement has been documented by Nolfi (1976) and Thomas, Holland and MacCleod (1979).

Given the importance of continuing education it is not surprising that adult educators and social researchers have long been interested in the factors related to participation in organized learning activities.

Socio-demographic studies have shown that participation levels are highest among middle aged adults from the middle to upper class of North American society. Access to continuing education, reflected in participation rates, has consistently been shown to be limited for those outside of the socio-cultural mainstream. However, it is important to note that participation rates among the population at large range from only 10% to 30%, depending on the definition of participation utilized by a particular researcher (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Waniewicz, 1976). Considering the increasing importance of education to a knowledge-based society; it is the opinion of this author that a concerted effort must be made to make continuing education more accessible to all adults.

A second line of research explores the psychological and motivational variables which distinguish non-participants in continuing education from participants. These studies will be reviewed in the following section. In general, this line of research is of limited value to the continuing education programmer in search of practical information to increase participation.

A third line of research involves asking adults about the subjects they are most interested in pursuing and the obstacles they perceive to their personal involvement in continuing education. Survey research of this nature has perhaps the greatest potential for improving accessibility to continuing education because it can provide practical information for application to program development.

Analysis of interactions between data on obstacles with socio-demographic data and data on subject preference can suggest approaches to making a program more accessible to various segments of the adult population.

The purpose of the thesis research conducted here was to make a contribution to the research literature on obstacles to and supports for participation in continuing education. Continuing education being broadly defined as credit or non-credit coursework taken on a part-time basis in either a formal, academic or informal, non-academic setting. The contribution to the research literature made by the thesis research was two-fold. First, the survey instrument refines the general question asked about obstacles in previous studies. The current research concerns the degree to which a potential obstacle influences the respondent's decision to participate in a particular subject area (the respondent having previously chosen the subject area as the one he/she is most interested in pursuing). Previous research has not framed

the obstacle question in terms of a specific subject of interest to the respondent, rather the question has been asked with respect to continuing education participation in general. Also, previous research has asked only whether or not the respondent experienced the potential obstacle as an obstacle. The current research is concerned with the extent to which the obstacle influences the respondent's decision.

The second contribution to the research literature resulted from asking respondents to indicate the extent to which specific programmatic supports would be helpful to them when considering participation in their preferred subject area. A review of the literature indicated that questions of this nature have not been included in previous studies.

## LITERATURE REVIEW: PARTICIPATION IN CONTINUING EDUCATION

The importance of continuing education is becoming apparent to an increasing number of North Americans. In the United States this is evidenced by an increase in participation of 62.9% between 1969 and 1981. Over this 12 year period the number of non-full time students engaged in a formal learning activity increased from 10.8% to 12.8% of the U.S. adult population. (National Center for Educational Statistics, 1972, 1982).

A similar pattern is in evidence in Canada, where Belanger, Lynd and Moulhi (1982) found that the number of people attending university or college on a part-time basis increased by 88.4% between 1969 and 1979. In Ontario, Waniewicz (1976) found that 9% of the adult population had been enrolled part-time in a formal educational institution in the previous 12 months. An additional 17% had participated in a continuing education course through work, a community or cultural organization, club, or through radio or television.

## Socio-Demographic Correlates of Participation

In a nation-wide survey of continuing education, undertaken in the United States by Johnstone and Rivera (1965), large differences were noted in participation rates across many socio-demographic variables. Johnstone and Rivera defined involvement in formal classes as well as self-directed learning projects and on the job training as participation in continuing education. They found that 25% of people between the age of 20 and 39 were participants; while participation rates among the age group 40 to 59 was 18%; and for people age 60 to 69 participation fell to 10%. Among whites the participation rate was 20%, whereas among blacks the participation rate was 14.7%. Among people with family incomes below \$5,000 per year, a participation rate of 13.6% was recorded; while among people with an annual family income between \$5,000 and \$10,000 the participation rate was 22.8%. Participation among people with less than a high school education was 6.8%; those with some high school had a 15% participation rate; and those with 12 years of schooling a 23% participation rate. A participation rate of over 38% was found among people with some post-secondary education. The overall participation rate was 21% for males and 19% for females.

The most comprehensive study of participation in continuing education to date has been the triennial study conducted by the United States Bureau of Census for the National Center for Educational Statistics. A review of the studies conducted between 1969 and 1981 indicates that the socio-demographic profiles for non-participants in continuing education noted by Johnstone and Rivera have not changed significantly. Participation rates among blacks in the United States fell between 1969 and 1981 from 8.5% to 7.8%. While participation of blacks was decreasing, the rate of participation among the population as a whole rose from 10.9% to 12.8%. A pattern of greater participation among people with higher levels of formal education was also noted. Among people with less than a high school education participation was 3.4% in 1969 and 4% in 1981; among people with four years of high school participation was 11.3% in 1969 and 11% in 1981. People with some college had a participation rate of 16.5% and 19.6% in 1969 and 1981 respectively; while people with four or more years of college participated at rates of 16% in 1969 and 28% in 1981. It should be noted that the definition of participation in continuing education used by the National Center for Educational Statistics excluded individuals involved in learning outside of formal courses.



Although as detailed a data set does not exist for continuing education in Canada, Waniewicz (1976) has conducted a survey representative of the Ontario population which reveals socio-demographic patterns similar to the Johnstone and Rivera and National Center for Educational Statistics studies. Waniewicz defined "learners" as respondents that had undertaken a self-directed learning project or a course in either a non-academic setting (e.g., church, community centre) or an educational institution on a part-time basis. Waniewicz's data indicate that, in 1976, 51% of Ontario adults with family incomes above \$20,000 per year were learners, whereas the comparable figure for Ontario adults with annual family incomes below \$20,000 per year was 25%. Age differences among participants were also noted. Among respondents aged 21 to 40, 38% were learners; among respondents aged 40 to 69, 19% were learners. Level of formal education was also strongly related to participation. Among respondents with grade school or less 8% were learners; 28% of respondents with some high school were learners; while respondents having completed high school had a participation rate of 36%. Respondents with some post-secondary education and post-secondary degrees had participation rates of 44% and 59% respectively. Thirty-two percent of male and 28% of female respondents were categorized as learners.

Anderson and Darkenwald (1979) subjected the data obtained by the National Center for Educational Statistics (1975) to a regression analysis. They found that level of educational attainment accounted for more of the variance between participants and non-participants than did race, age or income level. The second most powerful predictor was age. Moreover, when variance in participation took these two variables into account neither family income nor racial status were associated with an individual's decision to participate in continuing education. Socio-demographic variables accounted for 10% of the variance between participants and non-participants in the regression analysis.

#### Psychological and Motivational Correlates of Participation

Research into differences between the personality profiles of participants and non-participants in continuing education has received the attention of researchers in the field. Boshier (1973) constructed a interview instrument based on Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory and found that non-participants were more often characterized by deficiency needs while participants were more growth oriented. Armstrong (1971) found that high activity learners were less conforming and exhibited a greater internal locus of control than did low activity

learners. Research into the learning orientations of participants and non-participants by Dickenson and Clark (1975) indicated that non-participants in continuing education have more passive learning styles than participants. Research by Scharles (1966) included a personality inventory that revealed lower scores on trust and affiliation indexes for non-participants. In a study of aspiration levels, Buttendahl (1974) found that non-participants did not aspire to as high a socio-economic strata as did participants. In a study designed to determine the demographic variables associated with non-learners and active learners, Shipp and McKenzie (1981) defined non-learners as adults that had not engaged in any systematic learning efforts over the 12 months prior to the study. "Systematic learning" was defined as taking a course, asking someone to teach them something or borrowing a book in order to learn something. They noted that based on a study of the relationship between demographic and psychographic variables by Kohn (1977), "the psychographic variables associated with the non-learner demographic profile are:

1) time orientation primarily to the past and present rather than the future, 2) thought patterns and lifestyle conditioned by a relatively short time perspective, 3) more emphasis on emotional rather than rational responses, 4) marginal sense of freedom and choice, 5) less willing to take risks, 6) more concrete in thought, 7) more reliance on family and friends for advice, 8) action oriented" (p. 195).

Obstacles to Participation

As part of a larger study conducted in Oakland, California; London, Wenkert and Hagstrom (1963) interviewed 183 male adults who were not enrolled in continuing education courses. Interviewees were presented with a card that listed nine "reasons people have given for not taking courses." The table below presents the percentage of interviewees that said the reason applied to them.

Reasons for not taking courses	Percentage
Too busy.....	61%
Too tired.....	40%
Not the "bookish" type.....	31%
Too old to go back to school.....	26%
Couldn't afford it.....	25%
Don't need classes to learn.....	19%
Not interested in courses I've heard about.	17%
Feel childish going out to classes.....	9%
Family would object to time spent.....	5%

The data were analyzed based on age (20-39, 40-59) and type of employment (white collar or manual/service). White collar workers in the 20 to 29 year old range were most likely (71%) to mention being too busy as a reason for non-participation followed by 40-59 year old white collar workers (63%), 20-39 year old manual/service workers (51%) and 40-59 year old manual/service workers (44%). Older men mentioned being too tired to participate more often than did younger men. A greater percentage of manual/service workers gave not being the "bookish" type as a reason than did white collar workers. Twenty-nine percent of manual/service workers age 40-59 said they were too old compared to 15% among white collar workers of the same age.

Johnstone and Rivera (1965) included a question on obstacles to participation in their interviews with 1800 non-participants in continuing education. Interviewees were presented with a list of 10 "reasons for not participating in continuing education" and asked which of the reasons applied to them. The percentage of the respondents that listed each of the reasons is presented in the following table.

Reasons for not participating	Percent
Can not afford.....	48%
Too busy.....	48%
Too tired.....	45%
Hard to get out of the house.....	35%
Don't know of available courses.....	35%
Not the "studying type".....	34%
Feel too old to learn.....	23%
Courses don't sound interesting.....	18%
Would feel childish.....	12%
Don't need classes.....	12%

Johnstone and Rivera reported the data in terms of the socio-demographic characteristics of respondents. They found that respondents from lower socio-economic stratas were more likely to give "don't know of available courses" and "course not interesting enough" as reasons for not participating. Respondents from higher socio-economic stratas were more inclined to give "too busy" as a reason. Among younger respondents "couldn't afford it" was mentioned more frequently. Females were more likely to give "hard to get out of the house at night" as a reason for not participating.

Carp, Peterson and Roelfs (1972) survey of 2,000 U.S. adults included the following statement, "Many things stop people from taking a course or learning a new skill.

Circle all those listed below that you feel are important in keeping you from learning what you want to learn."

The 10 major barriers among people who said there was something they were interested in learning are presented in the following table.

Barriers to learning	Percent
Costs.....	53%
Not enough time.....	46%
Don't want to go to school full time.....	35%
Home responsibilities.....	32%
Job responsibilities.....	28%
Amount of time required to complete the program..	21%
Too old to begin.....	17%
Unsuitable scheduling.....	16%
No information about learning facilities.....	16%
Strict attendance requirements.....	15%

Waniewicz (1976) also included questions concerning obstacles to participation in his interviews with 1,541 Ontario adults. Waniewicz developed three categories to describe the sample: learners, would-be learners and non-learners. Learners were currently, or had in the past 12 months been, engaged in a continuing education course. Would-be-learners had not taken a course in the last 12 months but were interested in taking a course in the next year or two. Non-learners had not been engaged in a course in the past 12 months and did not intend to engage in a learning activity during the following year or two. Learners were asked, "Which problem(s) on this card best describe the obstacles which at the moment prevent you

from undertaking courses which you would like to take but currently are not taking. Would-be-learners were asked a very similar question concerning a subject they were interested in learning about. Non-learners were asked "Which of the reasons listed on this card best describes why you would not be interested in some kind of learning in the future?". The table below presents the percentage of respondents in each category that listed each of the 13 potential obstacles.

Obstacle to learning	learner	would-be-learner	non-learner
Too busy.....	31%	37%	48%
Cannot afford.....	15%	28%	12%
Courses located too far away.....	12%	18%	6%
Uncertain about value of course....	8%	8%	6%
Course of interest not available...	7%	3%	5%
Hard to get out of house.....	7%	13%	12%
Too tired.....	7%	7%	14%
Dislike schedules and exams.....	6%	8%	9%
Do not know what courses available.	3%	14%	5%
Lack of prior education.....	3%	9%	7%
Unsure of ability to handle course.	2%	8%	3%
Not interested in further learning.	1%	1%	23%
Other.....	9%	12%	17%
None of these.....	30%	12%	6%



Waniewicz also analyzed the data in terms of the interviewees' socio-demographic characteristics. Among learners and would-be-learners being too busy is most often mentioned by older interviewees, males, and interviewees with higher levels of education. Among non-learners, younger males with higher levels of education mention being too busy most frequently.

Financial obstacles were mentioned more often by females among learners and would-be-learners, and among younger people in all three learning categories. Finding it hard to get out of the house was mentioned less often by learners, somewhat more often by 25-44 year olds and much more often by females than males across all learning categories. Non-learners were much more likely to state that they were not interested in further learning. Among non-learners, males and older people were somewhat more likely to express disinterest in further learning.

Survey research has consistently indicated that situational obstacles (eg. "not enough time", "too tired") and institutional obstacles (e.g., "can not afford it", "unsuitable course scheduling") are most frequently cited by "would be learners". However, many continuing education researchers and planners consider dispositional barriers

(e.g., "been away from school too long", "uncertain of ability to handle coursework") as important, if not primary obstacles to participation. Mezirow, Darkenwald and Knox (1975) and Hawkins (1977) indicate that large numbers of non-participants are uncertain of their ability to be successful within the continuing education system. In a study of adult educational needs within an Ontario school district, Hawkins found that the greatest fear of mature students contemplating involvement in continuing education was their fear of failure. Mezirow et.al. note that lack of self-confidence in academic ability and feeling alienated from the school environment are predominant obstacles to participation in adult basic education classes. Boshier (1973) concludes that many of the adults that do not participate or drop out of continuing education experience value incongruence with the instructor and the academic setting. Anderson and Niemi (1969) conducted a comprehensive review of the literature concerning disadvantaged adults and adult education. They concluded that a lack of self-confidence and fear of failure on the part of these adults is commonly expressed in negative attitudes, not toward learning, but toward the school setting. Research by Carp (1974) and Mezirow, Darkenwald and Knox (1975) suggests that providing continuing education classes outside of the school setting would encourage increased participation.

In a survey of continuing education participants across the United States, Carp noted that, older participants used unconventional settings more frequently than younger participants. Mezirow et. al. found that programs located outside of schools are generally more successful in attracting the "hard to reach" to participate in adult basic education classes.

An explanation for the discrepancy between the importance placed on dispositional obstacles by some researchers and educational planners and the data on dispositional obstacles from continuing education surveys has been advanced by Boshier (1976) and Cross (1978). They suggest that continuing education surveys on obstacles to participation have not produced reliable data on the extent to which dispositional obstacles influence the non-participant's decision. Both researchers note that the stigma attached to revealing feelings of fear or inability often leads interviewees to provide more socially acceptable answers. Thus, rather than reporting fear of failure or uncertainty of their ability to handle coursework as obstacles to participation the interviewee indicates, for example, that a lack of time and or money is the primary obstacle.

## OVERVIEW OF PRESENT RESEARCH

### Conceptual Framework

Research into participation in continuing education can be placed under three general headings: 1) socio-demographic profiles, 2) psychological/motivational attributes of participants and non-participants, and 3) obstacles to participation. The present research focused on the obstacles to participation in continuing education perceived by adults and potential programmatic supports that may encourage increased participation. The current researcher suggests that this line of research holds the most potential for providing program planners in the field of continuing education with practical information.

Some researchers have advanced the notion that many non-participants are uncertain of their ability and that fear of failure is a major obstacle to participation in continuing education. However, numerous surveys have asked non-participants about the reasons they do not participate without finding data to support this notion. When asked in personal interviews about obstacles to general participation in continuing education, non-participants frequently cite obstacles such as being "too busy", "too tired" or "unable to afford it".

It was the opinion of the present researcher that the survey findings have been strongly influenced by the setting and the way in which the questions have been asked. Boshier (1976) and Cross (1978) have noted that rather than providing responses with a stigma attached to them, interviewees are inclined to provide socially acceptable responses. Previous research has consisted of face to face interviews which may have accentuated the stigma attached to admitting that concern with ones academic ability is an obstacle to participation. The potential for encouraging socially acceptable responses may also have been increased by the fact that interviewees were faced with responding to the obstacle questions with either a "yes" or "no".

The present research took a different approach to the obstacle questions in an attempt to overcome these potential biases. The research was conducted through a mailed survey rather than face to face interviews. The anonymity provided by this method was thought to have potential for limiting the effect of setting on concern with ones academic ability. Additionally, rather than asking the respondent to provide a "yes" or "no" answer to questions concerning potential obstacles, the present research asked the respondent to consider the degree of impact a potential obstacle has on their likelihood of

participation. A four-point scale was used to measure the degree of importance of the obstacle.

Cross (1979) reviewed 30 separate state-sponsored needs assessments for continuing education that included questions on obstacles to participation. She concluded that only asking obstacle questions of adults that were not currently participating but indicated an interest in taking courses was a serious limitation in all the studies. Cross noted that any differences in the perception of obstacles that existed between would-be-learners and other adults would be valuable information for program planners. The present research asked respondents to consider the likelihood of their participating in a continuing education course in which they indicated an interest. Respondents indicated the degree of their likelihood of participation on a four-point scale, from very likely to very unlikely. All respondents were asked questions about obstacles to participation. This allowed for an analysis of the type of obstacle that may distinguish between levels of likelihood of participation.

The dependent variable for the study was respondents' initial assessment of their likelihood of enrolling (in the next twelve months) in a course in which they have indicated an interest. The first set of independent variables were the potential obstacles to participation.

Based on the conceptual framework presented, it was hypothesized that obstacles related to uncertainty of academic ability would be significantly correlated with likelihood of participation.

In addition to questions on obstacles to participation, the current research included questions about the importance potential supports may have in encouraging participation. As a review of the literature indicates that questions of this nature have not been included in previous studies their inclusion in the present study is somewhat exploratory. The potential supports included in the present study were designed to parallel the potential obstacles included in the study. Consequently, the supports can be seen as a second set of independent variables. It was hypothesized that the supports which serve to lessen the respondents' concern with academic ability and negative feelings toward the school setting would be significantly correlated with the dependent variable, likelihood of participation.

## Research Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1. Placing importance on the following obstacles, "Not being able to handle the coursework", "Not having enough education", and "Been away from school too long" indicates concern with one's academic ability. Therefore, placing importance on these obstacles will be inversely correlated with respondents self-reported likelihood of participation. As likelihood of participation increases importance placed on these specific obstacles will decrease.

Hypothesis 2. Placing importance on the following supports, "Offering the course at a pace you can set", "Having the help of a volunteer tutor", and "Offering the course at a place other than a school" are associated with concern with one's academic ability. Therefore, placing importance on these supports will be inversely correlated with respondents self-reported likelihood of participation. As likelihood of participation increases importance placed on these specific supports will decrease.



## METHOD

### Procedure

The author constructed a written questionnaire containing the hypothesized obstacles and supports for participation in continuing education as well as additional obstacles and supports based on previous research reviewed above. In addition to the obstacle and support questions, and in conjunction with Mr. Robert Pullin, Principal of Continuing Education for the Waterloo County Board of Education, the author included a number of other questions designed to provide useful information for future program planning (see Appendix A).

Using a table of random numbers, a mailing list of residential addresses was constructed from the Kitchener-Waterloo street guide. The randomly selected residences were mailed a cover letter (see Appendix B), questionnaire (see Appendix A) and a postage paid, return envelope. The cover letter emphasized the importance of the involvement of an adult member of the household and assured confidentiality. To further increase

the response rate a follow up letter (see Appendix C) was sent to households that had not returned the questionnaire within three weeks of receiving it. The cover letter and follow up letter were written on Waterloo County Board of Education letterhead by Mr. Robert Pullin, Principal of Continuing Education for the Waterloo County Board of Education.

Upon receipt of completed surveys, the data was numerically coded for computer analysis. Analysis proceeded approximately six weeks following the initial mailing of the survey.

#### Sample

Ninety-five percent (95%) of the 1000 questionnaires mailed to Kitchener-Waterloo residents were delivered. Fifty-two of the questionnaires could not be delivered as a result of the resident having moved or the address being incomplete or incorrect. Two hundred and thirty eight residents responded to the questionnaire. Thus a response rate of 25% was achieved.

One hundred and eighteen (50%) of the respondents were between the ages of 18 and 44, while 119 (50%) of the respondents were 45 years of age or older. Ninety (38%) of the respondents were male, 147 (62%) were female. The

percent of respondents with various levels of education is presented in Figure 1. The level of education for the sample is quite high relative to the adult population of Kitchener-Waterloo. The educational and employment status of respondents is presented in Figure 2.

Figure -1

Respondents' Level of Education

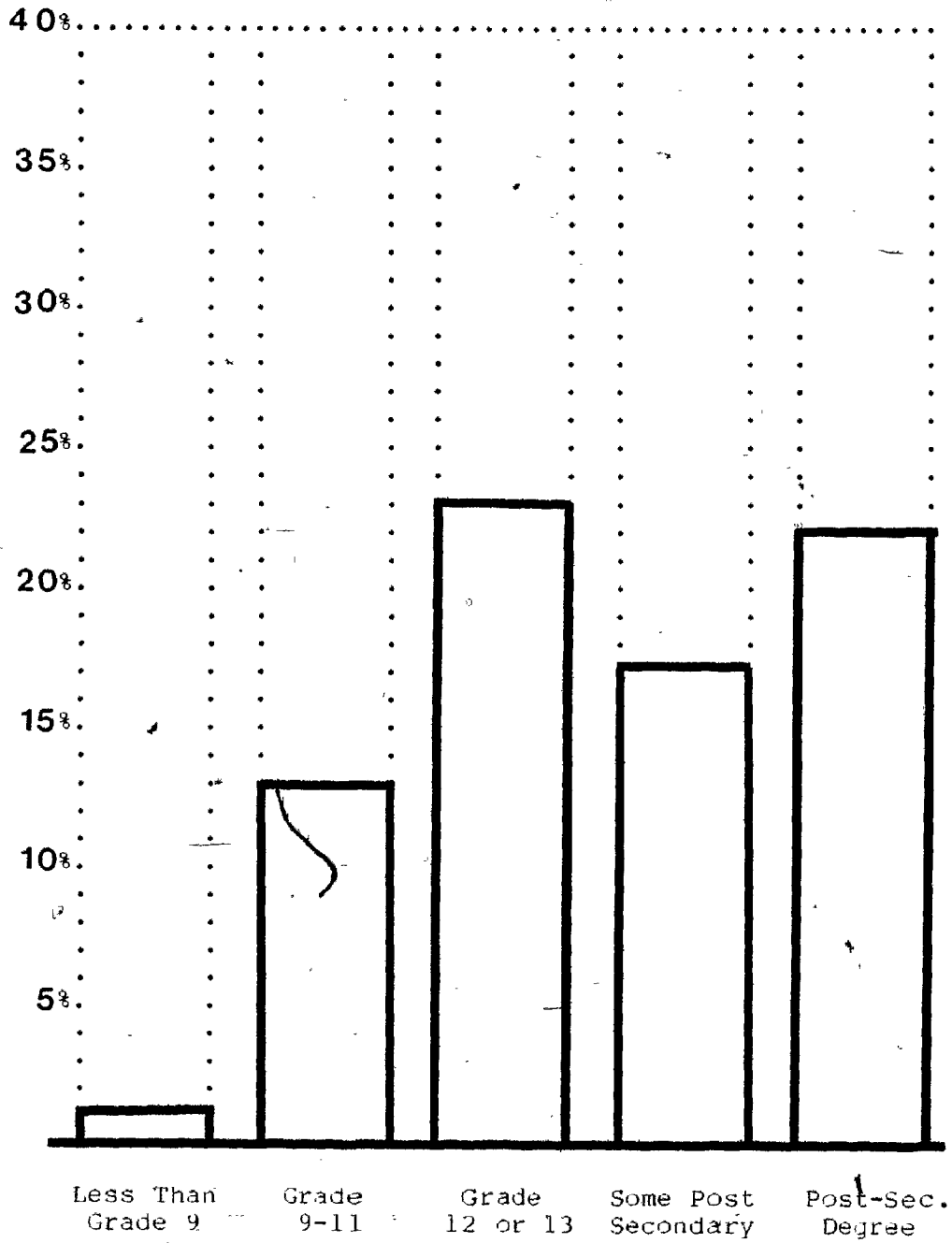
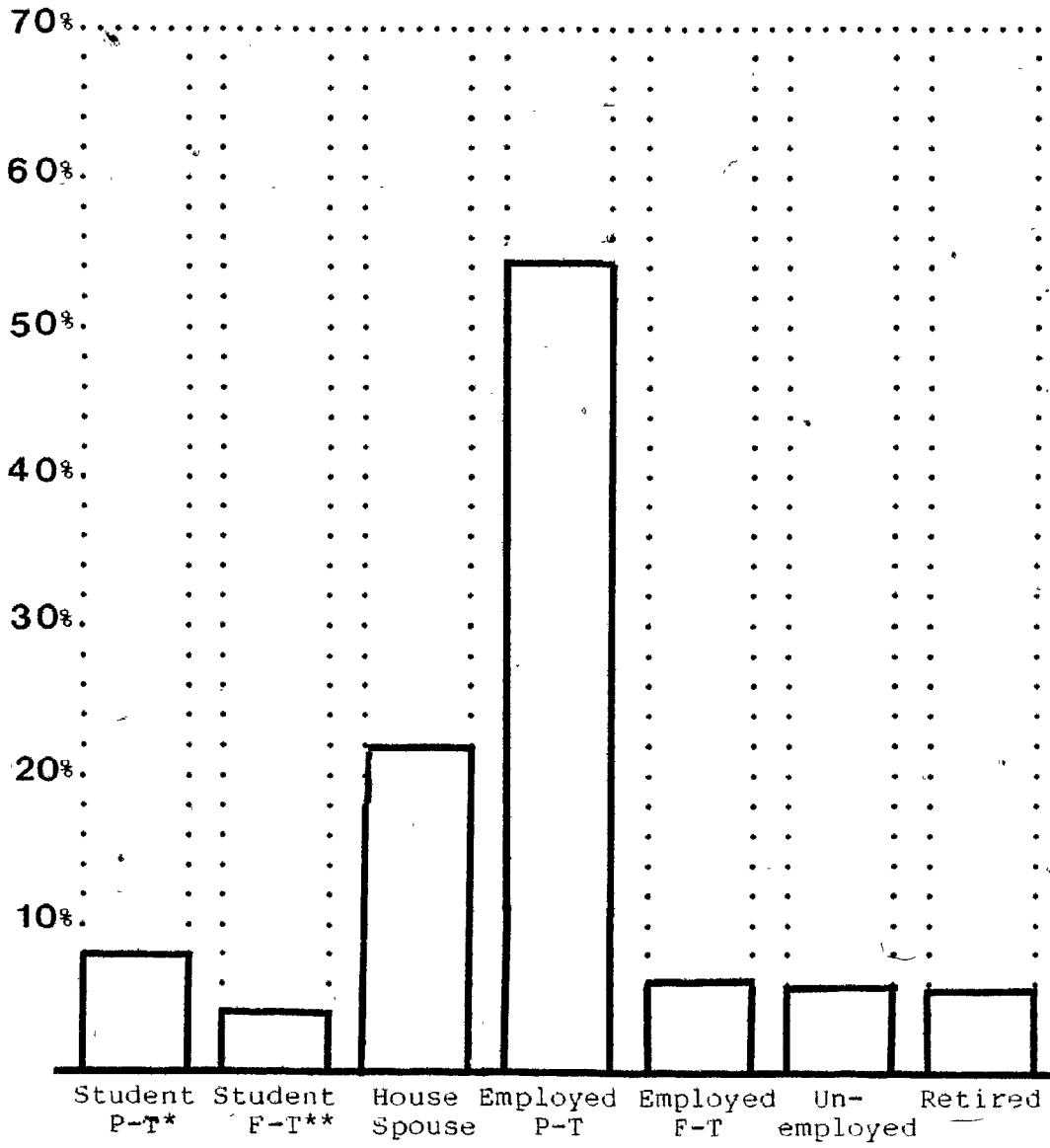


Figure 2

Current Educational and Employment Status of Respondents



\*Part-Time  
\*\*Full-Time

## Statistical Analyses

The obstacles to participation and the supports to encourage participation (see Appendix A, questions #7 a-g and #8 a-h, respectively) form two separate sets of independent variables. The dependent variable (see Appendix A, question #2) is comprised of four levels of likelihood of participation (very likely, somewhat likely, somewhat unlikely and very unlikely). In line with the theoretical framework previously presented, the Pearson Product-Moment statistic was utilized to analyze the data. The researcher's interest in the strength of the correlation between likelihood of participation and each of the independent variables led to the choice of the Pearson Product-Moment as the most appropriate statistical test. To provide added information, the sample was divided into four sub-groups, based on level of education and correlations between obstacles and likelihood of participation and supports and likelihood of participation were computed for the four sub-groups. Finally, in an effort to develop a predictive model, the dependent variable, likelihood of participation, was regressed on the obstacle, support and socio-demographic variables in a forward stepwise multiple regression.

## RESULTS

Data on the area of study in which participants were most interested revealed that 79 percent of the sample was most interested in a subject of an academic nature, 17 percent in an arts or crafts oriented class and 4 percent in a physical fitness class.

Three obstacles to participation, "Not having enough education", "Having been away from school too long" and "Being able to handle the coursework", were hypothesized to be significantly correlated with likelihood of participation in continuing education. The three hypothesized variables were developed to measure concern with academic ability, a construct which was hypothesized to be a major factor in discouraging participation.

Analysis of the data revealed strong intercorrelations of the three hypothesized obstacles ("Not having enough education"/ "Having been away from school too long"  $r(230) = .60$ ; "Having been away from school too long"/ "Being able to handle the coursework"  $r(230) = .32$ ; "Not having enough education"/ "Being able to handle the coursework"  $r(231) = .56$ ). A strong positive intercorrelation of these variables would be expected if they were measuring an overarching concept such as concern with academic ability.

The Pearson Product-Moment statistic ( $r$ ) was utilized to test the strength of the relationship between respondents' likelihood of participation and the three

hypothesized obstacles as well as four additional obstacles. None of the three hypothesized obstacle variables were significantly correlated with likelihood of participation ("Not having enough education"  $r(231) = .01$ ,  $p = .32$ ; "Having been away from school too long"  $r(230) = -.10$ ,  $p = .07$ ; and "Being able to handle the coursework"  $r(231) = .09$ ,  $p = .09$ ). The four additional obstacle variables were also found to be not significant. Table 1 presents the correlation statistic ( $r$ ), and the level of confidence ( $p$ ) for each of the obstacle variables.

Table 1

Obstacles Correlated with Level of Participation:  
All Respondents

Obstacle	Correlation ( $r$ )	Level of Confidence ( $p$ )
Not having information about the course	.02	.38
Not having enough education	.01	.42
Finding the energy to take the course	.03	.32
Having been away from school too long	-.10	.07
Being able to handle the coursework	.09	.09
Not being the studying type	.004	.48
Finding it hard to get out of the house	-.01	.43



Prior research has shown that continuing education attracts fewer participants among adults with less than average levels of education and greater numbers of participants among adults with higher levels of education (Johnstone & Rivera, 1965; Waniewicz, 1976; Anderson & Darkenwald, 1979). In an effort to better understand the role of specific obstacles to participation, the sample was subdivided into four groups, based on level of education. The Pearson Product-Moment statistic was conducted separately on each of the four groups. The use of level of education as a moderator variable revealed statistically significant correlations between likelihood of participation and specific obstacles within each of the four groups.

The first group was composed of 56 respondents with less than a grade 12 education. The obstacles "Not having enough information about the course"  $r(53) = .34, p = .01$  and "Having been away from school too long"  $r(54) = -.32, p = .01$  were found to be significant for this group. Table 2 presents the correlation statistic ( $r$ ), and the level of confidence ( $p$ ) for each of the obstacle variables for respondents with less than a grade 12 education.

Table 2

Obstacles Correlated with Level of Participation:  
 Respondents with less than a Grade 12 Education

Obstacle	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Not having information about the course	.34	.01*
Not having enough education	.10	.22
Finding the energy to take the course	.08	.29
Having been away from school too long	-.32	.01*
Being able to handle the coursework	.01	.46
Not being the studying type	-.05	.36
Finding it hard to get out of the house	.10	.24

\*  $p < .05$

A second group of 63 adults was formed among respondents having had completed grade 12 or 13. This group exhibited a significant correlation between likelihood of participation and the obstacle "Being able to handle the coursework"  $r(61) = .26, p = .02$ . The correlation statistic (r), and the level of confidence (p) for each of the obstacle variables for respondents having completed grade 12 or 13 is presented in Table 3.

Table 3

Obstacles Correlated with Level of Participation:  
 Respondents a Grade 12 or Grade 13 Education

Obstacle	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Not having information about the course	.12	.18
Not having enough education	.06	.32
Finding the energy to take the course	.02	.43
Having been away from school too long	-.10	.22
Being able to handle the coursework	.26	.02*
Not being the studying type	.04	.37
Finding it hard to get out of the house	.03	.42

\*  $p < .05$

The third group of 48 respondents all had some post-secondary education. Among this group one obstacle, "Finding it hard to get out of the house" was significant  $r(46) = -.28, p = .03$ . In Table 4 each of the obstacle variables for this group with its correlation to likelihood of participation (r) and level of confidence (p) is presented.

Table 4

Obstacles Correlated with Level of Participation:  
 Respondents with some Post-Secondary Education

Obstacle	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Not having information about the course	-.18	.11
Not having enough education	-.06	.35
Finding the energy to take the course	.07	.32
Having been away from school too long	.09	.28
Being able to handle the coursework	-.07	.32
Not being the studying type	-.17	.13
Finding it hard to get out of the house	-.28	.03*

\*  $p < .05$

The final group of respondents included 63 adults with post-secondary degrees. The obstacle "Not being the studying type" was significant for this group,  $r(61) = .23$ ,  $p = .03$ . Table 5 presents the relevant statistics for this group.

Table 5

Obstacles Correlated with Level of Participation:  
 Respondents with a Post-Secondary Degree

Obstacle	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Not having information about the course	-.06	.33
Not having enough education	.13	.15
Finding the energy to take the course	.03	.42
Having been away from school too long	.14	.13
Being able to handle the coursework	.12	.17
Not being the studying type	.23	.03*
Finding it hard to get out of the house	.10	.22

\* p < .05

The second facet of the research considered potential supports that might increase likelihood of participation among adults concerned with their academic ability. The survey included eight potential supports; three of which were developed to mitigate concern with academic ability. It was hypothesized that, "Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set", "Having the help of a volunteer tutor" and "Offering the course in a place other than a school" would be significantly correlated with likelihood of participation.

Analysis of the data revealed moderately strong intercorrelations between "Offering the course at a pace that you can set"/ "Having the help of a volunteer tutor",  $r(227) = .37$ ; a somewhat less strong correlation between "Offering the course at a pace that you can set"/ Offering the course in a place other than a school",  $r(229) = .33$  and inconclusive data on "Having the help of a volunteer tutor"/ Offering the course in a place other than a school",  $r(229) = .28$ .

The Pearson Product-Moment statistic ( $r$ ) was utilized to test the strength of the relationship between respondent likelihood of participation in continuing education and potential supports for participation. None of the three hypothesized support variables were significantly correlated with likelihood of participation (see Table 6).

Among the five additional supports included in the survey only one, "Offering the course at the time of day you checked as best for you" was significantly correlated with likelihood of participation,  $r(234) = .14$ ,  $p = .02$ . Table 6 presents the correlation statistic ( $r$ ) and the level of confidence ( $p$ ) for each of the support variables.

Table 6

Supports Correlated with Level of Participation:  
All Respondents

Support	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Offering the course at the time of day best for you	.14	.02*
Offering the course on the day of the week best for you	.08	.11
Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set	.04	.28
Having the help of a volunteer tutor	.08	.12
Offering more information on the course	-.03	.35
Offering the course close to your home	-.01	.46
Offering the course at a place other than a school	-.06	.20
Basing the course fees on your income level	.004	.47

\*p < .05

As with the obstacle variables, the relationship of the support variables to likelihood of participation was also tested with level of education as a moderator variable. The Pearson Product-Moment test of correlation (r) was conducted for respondents with less than a grade 12 education. None of the support variables were significantly correlated with likelihood of participation.

Table 7 presents the correlation statistic (r) and the level of confidence (p) for each of the support variables for this group.

Table 7

Supports Correlated with Level of Participation:  
 Respondents with less than a Grade 12 Education

Support	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Offering the course at the time of day best for you	.13	.17
Offering the course on the day of the week best for you	.17	.10
Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set	.19	.09
Having the help of a volunteer tutor	.12	.19
Offering more information on the course	.03	.42
Offering the course close to your home	.13	.17
Offering the course at a place other than a school	.06	.33
Basing the course fees on your income level	.07	.31



The test revealed one significant support for respondents with a grade 12 or 13 education, "Offering the course at the time of day you checked as best for you"  $r(63) = .23$ ,  $p = .04$ . The correlation statistic ( $r$ ), and the level of confidence ( $p$ ) for each of the obstacle variables for respondents having completed grade 12 or 13 is presented in Table 8.

Table 8

Supports Correlated, with Level of Participation:  
Respondents with a Grade 12 or 13 Education

Support	Correlation ( $r$ )	Level of Confidence ( $p$ )
Offering the course at the time of day best for you	.23	.04*
Offering the course on the day of the week best for you	.19	.07
Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set	.13	.16
Having the help of a volunteer tutor	.08	.26
Offering more information on the course	.16	.10
Offering the course close to your home	.05	.33
Offering the course at a place other than a school	.04	.39
Basing the course fees on your income level	.12	.17

\* $p < .05$

Among respondents with some post-secondary education two support variables were significant, "Having the help of a volunteer tutor",  $r(46) = .27$ ,  $p = .03$  and Offering the course in a place other than a school",  $r(46) = .27$ ,  $p = .03$ . In Table 9 each of the obstacle variables for this group with its correlation to likelihood of participation ( $r$ ) and level of confidence ( $p$ ) is presented.

Table 9

Supports Correlated with Level of Participation:  
Respondents some Post-Secondary Education

Support	Correlation ( $r$ )	Level of Confidence ( $p$ )
Offering the course at the time of day best for you	.08	.30
Offering the course on the day of the week best for you	-.02	.44
Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set	.07	.32
Having the help of a volunteer tutor	.27	.03*
Offering more information on the course	-.18	.11
Offering the course close to your home	-.15	.16
Offering the course at a place other than a school	-.27	.03*
Basing the course fees on your income level	-.08	.30

\* $p < .05$

None of the support variables were significantly correlated with likelihood of participation for respondents with a post-secondary degree. Table 10 presents the relevant statistics for this group.

Table 10

Supports Correlated with Level of Participation:  
Respondents a Post-Secondary Degree

Support	Correlation (r)	Level of Confidence (p)
Offering the course at the time of day best for you	.07	.28
Offering the course on the day of the week best for you	-.002	.49
Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set	-.08	.27
Having the help of a volunteer tutor	-.03	.42
Offering more information on the course	-.08	.28
Offering the course close to your home	-.08	.25
Offering the course at a place other than a school	.07	.29
Basing the course fees on your income level	.08	.25

The dependent variable, likelihood of participation, was regressed upon all the obstacle, support and socio-demographic variables (see Appendix A, questions 7a-i, 8a-h and 10-13, respectively) in one comprehensive, forward stepwise multiple regression analysis. The regression produced a final model that included two independent variables; a support variable, "Offering the course at the time of day you checked as best for you" and an obstacle variable "Having been away from school too long". The final model was significantly correlated with the dependent variable, likelihood of participation,  $F(2,210) = 3.37$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $R^2 = .03$ . Thus, the equation for the final model ( $Y' = 2.78 - .178X + .120X$ ) accounted for approximately three percent of the variance in likelihood of participation. Due to the small increase in variance accounted for by subsequent variables to enter the regression analysis they were not included in the final model.

A forward stepwise regression forces the variable that accounts for the greatest amount of variance in the dependent variable into the regression equation first. Subsequent variables enter the equation based on the amount of the remaining variance in the dependent variable for which they account. The F statistic for each separate independent variable indicates the importance of that variable in predicting the dependent variable. The

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variable, "Offering the course at the time of day you checked as best for you" was not significantly correlated with likelihood of participation,  $F(1,211) = 3.78$ ,  $p > .05$ . The F statistic for the variable "Having been away from school too long", also was not significantly correlated with likelihood of participation,  $F(1,211) = 3.14$ ,  $p > .05$ .

## DISCUSSION

### Sample

Comparison of the socio-demographic characteristics of the sample with statistics gathered by Statistics Canada for the Waterloo Regional Municipality reveal some differences common to surveys of this nature. The percentage of female respondents (62%) is high compared to the general population (51%). The sample also has a high level of education relative to the general population. Statistics Canada (1981) reports that 19% of the population has less than a grade 9 education, compared to 6% of the survey sample. Statistics Canada (1981) reports that only 8% of the population has a university degree, compared to 27% of the survey sample. The sample is also somewhat younger than that of the population. Statistics Canada reports that of the total population between 20 and 70 years of age, 65% are between the age of 20 and 44 and 35% are 44 to 70 years of age. The percentage of survey respondents between the age of 18 and 44 was 50%, while respondents 45 years of age or older comprised 50% of the sample.

After a comprehensive review of studies using volunteers in research, Rosenthal and Rosnow (1975) concluded that samples composed of volunteers can be expected to include greater numbers of well educated, female and young participants relative to the population. The present research sample bears witness to the findings of Rosenthal and Rosnow. As a result of the differences between the sample and the general population of Kitchener-Waterloo, caution should be exercised in extrapolating the findings from the sample to the general population.

#### Obstacles to Participation

The data obtained did not support the hypothesis that concern with academic ability, as measured by the hypothesized obstacles, was a major factor in discouraging participation in continuing education. The degree of importance placed upon the hypothesized variables, "Not having enough education", "Having been away from school too long" and "Being able to handle the coursework" was not significantly correlated with the stated level of likelihood of participation of the sample. However, one of the hypothesized obstacles, "Having been away from school too long" did exhibit a strong correlation with likelihood of participation (see Table 1) for the overall sample.

Moreover, this variable was significantly correlated with likelihood of participation for respondents with less than a grade 12 education. The results of the regression analysis, which entered "Having been away from school too long" into the equation second among all obstacle, support and socio-demographic variables reinforces the significance of this variable. It is important to note that "Having been away from school too long" is a perception, the actual length of time that respondents who considered it important have been away from school may be quite varied. Thus, the significance of this perception suggests that it may be of value to continuing education program planners when developing strategies to encourage participation among some adults.

As likelihood of participation increased importance placed upon "Not having enough education" and "Being able to handle the coursework" also increased for all of the sub-groups except respondents with some post-secondary education. The strength of the correlation is negligible for "Not having enough education" and likelihood of participation and may best be attributed to sampling error. However, in the case of "Being able to handle the coursework" the correlation almost reaches statistical significance (see Table 1). The direction of the correlation of the two hypothesized variables with likelihood of participation suggests a problem with



questionnaire design. The data indicates that those respondents most likely to participate were also likely to choose a course that would challenge their ability to handle the coursework. The researcher had intended this variable as an obstacle to participation, but it appears to have been perceived as a welcomed challenge by those respondents who were most likely to participate.

The four additional obstacle variables were chosen for inclusion in the present research based on the high percentage of respondents in previous research that indicated these were obstacles to their participation. As such, it was surprising that none of these variables proved to be significantly correlated with likelihood of participation. The emergence of significant obstacle variables when level of education is used as a moderator variable suggests that heterogeneity of the overall sample submerged obstacles relevant to smaller groups within it. The potential for some correlations to occur through chance should also be noted. A total of 60 correlations were conducted among the four sub-groups; with a confidence level of .05, one in every 20 correlations may appear significant through chance alone.

In addition to "Having been away from school too long" the variable "Not having information about the course" was significant for respondents with less than a grade 12 education (see Table 2). The direction of the correlation

indicates that within this group, respondents who were most likely to participate were also most likely to place importance on this obstacle. This suggests that finding ways of informing these adults about courses available to them may be effective in increasing their participation.

Among respondents with grade 12 or 13 likelihood of participation increased as importance placed upon "Being able to handle the coursework" increased (see Table 3). As previously noted for the sample, as a whole, the direction of this correlation suggests that this variable was apparently perceived as a challenge to be met by this group.

Further research is warranted to better understand the reasons why respondents with some post-secondary education indicated "Finding it hard to get out of the house" was a significant obstacle (see Table 4). Perhaps child care or transportation is more of an issue for this group.

The final group, respondents with post-secondary degrees, exhibited a significant correlation between likelihood of participation and the obstacle "Not being the studying type" (see Table 5). The direction of the correlation indicates that those respondents most likely to participate were also most likely to place importance on this obstacle. This unlikely finding may best be attributed to sampling error (the sample may not be representative of the population) or, as previously noted,

the statistical significance of this correlation may have resulted through chance.

### Supports for Participation

Three supports were hypothesized as being helpful for individuals concerned with their academic ability. It was anticipated that "Offering the coursework at a pace that you can set", "Having the help of a volunteer tutor" and "Offering the course in a place other than a school" would be significantly correlated with likelihood of participation. The Pearson Product-Moment statistic revealed that none of the three supports were significantly associated with likelihood of participation.

The results indicate that the hypothesized supports do not differentiate respondents who are likely to participate from those who are not likely to participate. The correlations for "Offering the course at a pace you can set" and "Having the help of a volunteer tutor" were in the opposite direction of the hypothesis. Respondents more likely to participate were more inclined to see these supports as important than were respondents that were less likely to participate. A potential explanation may be that respondents that were more likely to participate were also more likely to have participated in the past and in so

doing knew that these supports would be helpful.

A significant correlation between likelihood of participation and "Offering the course at a place other than a school" was recorded for respondents with some post-secondary education (see Table 9). It is, however, difficult to attribute too much importance to this finding in light of the fact that the correlation did not approach significance for any of the other three groups (see Tables 7, 8 and 10).

Among the five additional support variables, "Offering the course at the time of day best for you" was the only variable significantly correlated with likelihood of participation for the overall sample. The direction of the correlation indicates that as likelihood of participation increased importance placed on this support also increased (see Table 6). The most plausible explanation for the direction of the correlation would seem to be that only those respondents seriously considering participation were likely to consider the time the course was to be held as "fairly" or "very important". This variable as well as the variable "Offering the course on the day of the week best for you" was significant for respondents with a grade 12 or 13 education. When asked the time of day that was best for them 71% of all respondents indicated between 6PM and 10PM. When asked which day of the week was best for them 91% of all respondents indicated Monday, Tuesday or

Wednesday. Given the importance placed on time of day and day of week, coupled with the overwhelming percentage of respondents indicating that evening hours during the early week are preferable; it would appear that continuing education providers would do well to plan the majority of their course offerings accordingly.

No significant correlations were registered for any of the support variables among respondent groups with less than a grade 12 education or a post-secondary degree.

#### Multiple Regression Analysis

In an effort to construct a viable model and explain the greatest amount of variance within the dependent variable, likelihood of participation, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed. The regression included all of the obstacle and support variables as well as socio-demographic variables.

The final model included two variables, "Offering the course at the time of day best for you" and "Having been away from school too long." The model accounted for only three percent of the variance associated with likelihood of participation. Hence the analysis does not permit the development of a predictive model.

The "theory of reasoned action" developed by Ajzen and Fishbein (1980) may shed some light on the inability of the research data to provide a predictive model for likelihood of participation in continuing education. According to this theory, a person's behavioral intentions are a function of their attitude toward the behavior and their perception of the social pressures placed on them to engage or not engage in the behavior. The theory posits that the individuals attitude toward the behavior is determined by his/her "behavioral" and "normative" beliefs. A favorable attitude results from the belief that a positive outcome will result from engaging in the behavior (behavioral belief) and the belief that important others approve of the behavior (normative belief). Ajzen and Fishbein place other factors such as socialization, personality characteristics and demographic characteristics in the category of "external variable". The extent to which an external variable influences behavior is a direct result of the degree to which it influences behavioral or normative beliefs.

In the context of the present research, obstacles and supports would be considered external variables which may or may not be related to these beliefs. Respondents with favorable attitudes toward participation are likely to be undaunted by commonplace obstacles and in little need of any particular support as a group. Respondents with an

unfavorable attitude do not participate because of their attitude not because of a specific obstacle and regardless of supports that may be offered. This may explain the small amount of variance in likelihood of participation accounted for by the obstacle, support and socio-demographic variables.

The "theory of reasoned action" suggests a more complex model to explain likelihood of participation. The theory suggests that a change in attitude would be necessary if participation in continuing education is to increase. Attitudes are based on beliefs which in turn are formed through experience. Past experience and the attitude it has engendered may be the most significant obstacle to participation in continuing education. The challenge for those who wish to encourage participation may be to find ways to support a change in beliefs of non-participants.

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Appendix A:  
Continuing Education Survey

Waterloo County Board of Education  
Continuing Education Survey  
April 1985

- 1) Listed below are some subjects that an adult might choose to study. Please Place a 1 in front of the course which you would be most likely to study, a 2 in front of the your second choice and a 3 in front of your third choice. If you would be more likely to study a subject that is not listed Please Write it on the line Provided.

<input type="checkbox"/> Arts and crafts	<input type="checkbox"/> Refresher/upgrading course
<input type="checkbox"/> Business management	<input type="checkbox"/> Language other than English
<input type="checkbox"/> Child development	<input type="checkbox"/> Performing arts
<input type="checkbox"/> Community and Public affairs	<input type="checkbox"/> Physical fitness
<input type="checkbox"/> Computer skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Secretarial skills
<input type="checkbox"/> High school diploma course	<input type="checkbox"/> Technical/trade skills
<input type="checkbox"/> Home repair	<input type="checkbox"/> Other _____
	(Please specify)

- 2) During the next 12 months, how likely are you to take the course in which you were most interested? Please Place a check beside the single answer that best fits for you.

<input type="checkbox"/> very likely	<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat unlikely
<input type="checkbox"/> somewhat likely	<input type="checkbox"/> very unlikely

- 3) Please Place a check in front of the type of Place you would Prefer to take the course. Check only one.

<input type="checkbox"/> correspondence school	<input type="checkbox"/> regular high school
<input type="checkbox"/> community college	<input type="checkbox"/> adult high school
<input type="checkbox"/> university	<input type="checkbox"/> other _____
	(Please specify)

- 4) Please Place a check in front of the time of day that would be best for you to take the course in which you are most interested? Check only one.

<input type="checkbox"/> morning (9am - Noon)	<input type="checkbox"/> early evening (6pm - 8pm)
<input type="checkbox"/> early afternoon (Noon-3pm)	<input type="checkbox"/> mid-evening (8pm - 10pm)
<input type="checkbox"/> late afternoon (3pm-6pm)	

- 5) Please Place a check in front of the best day of the week for you to take the course. Check only one.

<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Monday	<input type="checkbox"/> Wednesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Friday
<input type="checkbox"/> Tuesday	<input type="checkbox"/> Thursday	<input type="checkbox"/> Saturday

- 6) Please Place a check in front of the average number of hours you could spend each week studying the subject in which you are most interested. Check only one.

<input type="checkbox"/> less than 2 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 8-10 hours
<input type="checkbox"/> 2-4 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 10-20 hours
<input type="checkbox"/> 4-6 hours	<input type="checkbox"/> 20 hours or more
<input type="checkbox"/> 6-8 hours	

7) Listed below are some things that might make it difficult for someone to take a course. Thinking about the course in which you are most interested, how important are each of the following for you?

- a) Not having information about the course.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- f) Being able to handle the coursework.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- b) Not having enough education.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- g) Not being the studying type.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- c) Finding the time to take the course.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important

- h) Being able to afford the course.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important

- d) Finding the energy to take the course.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- i) Finding it hard to get out of the house.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

- e) Having been away from school too long.
- not at all important
  - not very important
  - fairly important
  - very important

Please write in any other obstacles that are very important on the blank lines below.

j) \_\_\_\_\_ k) \_\_\_\_\_

8) Listed below are some suggestions that may make it more likely for people to take a course in which they are interested. Thinking about the course in which you are most interested, how important are each of the following for you?

a) Offering the course at the time of the day you checked as best for you in question #4.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

e) Offering more information on the course.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

b) Offering the course on the day of the week you checked as best for you in question #5.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

f) Offering the course close to your home.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

c) Offering the coursework at a pace than you can set.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

g) Offering the course in a place other than a school (such as a church, library or place of work).

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

d) Having the help of a volunteer tutor.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

h) Basing course fees on your income level.

not at all important  
 not very important  
 fairly important  
 very important

Please write in any additional suggestions that are very important to you on the blank lines below.

j) \_\_\_\_\_ k) \_\_\_\_\_

9) Suppose all of the suggestions that you checked as very important were acted on. During the next 12 months, how likely would you then be to take the course in which you are most interested?

very likely  
 somewhat likely  
 somewhat unlikely  
 very unlikely

10) Please Place a check in front of your age range.

18-29                       45-54  
 21-24                       55-64  
 25-34                       65 or over

11) Please Place a check in front of your level of schooling.

less than grade 9                       some Post-secondary  
 high school, grade 9-11                       Post-secondary degree  
 high school, grade 12 or 13

12) Please Place a check in front of all of the following that currently apply to you.

Part-time student                       employed part-time  
 full-time student                       employed full-time  
 house spouse                       unemployed

13) Please Place a check in front of your sex.

male  
 female

Thank you for Participating in this continuing education survey.  
The results of the survey will be available in the next six to eight weeks. The address of the researcher is given below, if you are interested, he would be Pleased to Provide you with a copy of the survey results.

Wayne Oake  
100 Bain Ave.  
The Pines, #2  
Toronto, Ontario  
M4K 1E8

APPENDIX B:  
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY: COVER LETTER





The Waterloo County  
Board of Education

Education Centre  
51 Market Street  
Box 10  
Waterloo, Ontario  
N2L 2G5

100-100-100  
100-100-100  
100-100-100

April 8, 1985

Dear Sir or Madam,

The Waterloo County Board of Education is conducting a survey of adult education needs in Kitchener-Waterloo in order to obtain information which will be of assistance in the development of future Continuing Education programs and courses.

The results will also be used by Wayne Oake as part of his master's thesis at Wilfrid Laurier University.

Your name was selected from a random sampling of Kitchener-Waterloo residents and your participation in this survey will be greatly appreciated. Any information which you provide will be treated with strict confidence and you will not be identified in any way. Your participation in this questionnaire is entirely voluntary.

Kindly complete the enclosed questionnaire and return it in the addressed, postage-paid envelope.

Thank you for your assistance.

Yours sincerely,

Robert E. Pullin, Principal  
Continuing Education

de

Encl.

APPENDIX C:  
CONTINUING EDUCATION SURVEY: FOLLOW UP LETTER



The Waterloo County  
Board of Education

Education Centre  
51 Arden Avenue  
Box 62  
Kitchener, Ontario  
N2G 3K9

519-875-1111  
519-875-1112  
519-875-1113

May 31, 1985

A friendly reminder:

Recently you were sent a questionnaire to complete to assist The Waterloo County Board of Education in determining the adult educational needs of residents in the Kitchener-Waterloo area. This letter is a reminder - if you have not yet completed your survey kindly complete it and mail it at your earliest convenience.

Your assistance in this survey is greatly appreciated.

Yours truly,

R. E. Pullin, Principal  
Continuing Education

(If you have returned your survey, please disregard this notice.)