

Qualitative Study to Determine Quality of Nutrition and Health Science

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Abstract

Limitations that need to be addressed related to this study include credibility and interpretation of the success stories. The credibility and value of the success stories are based on the assumption that participants and staff submitted stories that are honest about participant progress. EFNEP staff is required to write one success story each month. There is a possibility that staff will fabricate the growth and improvement of their participants to positively reflect their job performance in order to please their superiors or provide increased job security. Another issue is that staff may assume participants are making changes since the participants were provided with adequate information and education. In actuality, participants may have made no significant modification to their lifestyle. The same concerns can be expressed about participant success stories. The researcher must assume participants are truthful about their progress. Unfortunately, participants may feel obligated to state positive change when in fact change was minimal or nonexistent.

Keywords: Home Science, Major, Change, Limitation, Minimal, Success, Participant, Significant

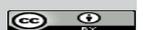
The main major limitation is the large percentage of success stories contributed from Nebraska in comparison to the other eight states included in the study. As stated in the methods section, 892 of the 1,057 success stories were from Nebraska. Each state was asked to submit all success stories since the year 2004, therefore, the research included all available success stories from each state and did not have control over the number contributed from one state or another.

The another limitation is the interpretation of the success stories. With qualitative research, the data is subjected to personal interpretation by the researcher. If another researcher looked at these same success stories, they may identify different codes and themes. This is a common concern in

qualitative research and can be addressed through various validation procedures. This research utilizes consensual validation as described in the methods section. The credibility and value of the success stories are based on the assumption that participants and staff submitted stories that are honest about participant progress. EFNEP staff is required to write one success story each month. There is a possibility that staff will fabricate the growth and improvement of their participants to positively reflect their job performance in order to please their superiors or provide increased job security,

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Objectives of this research were

1. To develop an understanding of how adult participants describe their experiences with EFNEP by generating themes from the participant success stories.
2. To analyze the themes produced from the success stories and establish five questions that could be validated as a way for EFNEP to start documenting its effect on participant quality of life

DISCUSSION

The analysis identified seven major themes that describe what quality of life is for adults who have participated in the EFNEP program: increased knowledge, improved health, enjoyment and desire to learn, support and confidence, impact on family, a new perspective on health, and positive change. The first two themes act as the foundation in which the final five themes build upon. The results of this study indicate that participants have more knowledge to make better decisions and have utilized that knowledge to improve their overall health. Participants experienced enjoyment from participating in the classes and have shown an increased desire to learn. Participants have received support from other participants and EFNEP instructors and have more confidence in their abilities. The study signifies that family is a top priority for EFNEP participants and often a motivator for change. Participants have a new perspective on health and this new perspective has taught them to take control and be responsible for their health. Finally, all of the themes show that participants have made positive changes for a healthier life. A quality of life evaluation tool was created from the seven themes as a way to start documenting EFNEP's effect on participant quality of life. The second objective was to establish five questions that could be asked to participants. The evaluation included five statements, rather than questions, that would be rated by participants based on the Likert Scale. The evaluation tool could be administered at program entry and exit to npare participant responses. The four statements address

the themes of enjoyment and desire to learn, support and confidence, impact on family, and new perspective on health. The first two themes are important to participant quality of life, but are not addressed in the questions because it can be determined from current EFNEP evaluation procedures. The final theme of positive change is also not specifically addressed because it can be determined by how to the participants complete the evaluation.

Please circle the number that best represents how you feel about the following statements:

- ♦ I am excited and interested in learning about ways to improve my nutrition and health
Strongly Disagree 1---2—3---4---5---6---7
Strongly Agree
- ♦ I am self-confident about my health, appearance, and ability to buy and prepare food.
Strongly Disagree 1-----2-----3-4---5-----6---7
Strongly Agree
- ♦ I have people that help me make positive changes to my health and well-being.
Strongly Disagree 1-----2-----3---4---5---6-----7
Strongly Agree
- ♦ My knowledge about nutrition and health has a positive impact on my family.
Strongly Disagree 1-----2---3---4---5-----6---7
Strongly Agree
- ♦ I feel I am in control of my health.
Strongly Disagree 1---2---3---4---5---6---7
Strongly Agree

In summary, seven themes were identified from the success stories to best describe what quality of life is to EFNEP participants. From those themes, an evaluation tool was created that could be used to determine and document EFNEP's effect on participant quality of life.

CONCLUSION

There is a possibility that staff will fabricate the growth and improvement of their participants to positively reflect their job performance in order to please their superiors or provide increased job security. Another issue is that staff may assume participants are making changes since the participants were provided with adequate

information and education. The limitation is the interpretation of the success stories. With qualitative research, the data is subjected to personal interpretation by the researcher. If another researcher looked at these same success stories, they may identify different codes and themes. This is a common concern in qualitative research and can be addressed through various validation procedures.

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