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Is One Hour Enough? Evaluating Utah's Online Divorce Education Course Based on Course Length Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Divorce education programs for couples with children have become mandatory in many states. State-specific courses vary in terms of delivery method and program length. Using data from 1,690 parents who participated in Utah's online divorce education course, this study examined program effectiveness based on course length satisfaction. Overall, results suggest the program was effective in obtaining its objectives; however, comparisons between groups revealed significant differences between satisfied and dissatisfied participants across all measures. Participants dissatisfied with course length reported greater uncertainty and disagreement that the course increased their knowledge of divorce-related matters. Possibilities for future research on course length satisfaction and program effectiveness are discussed.

KEYWORDS

Course length; divorce;
divorce education; dosage;
participant satisfaction

Currently, nearly every state offers some form of divorce education (Mulroy, Riffe, Brandon, Lo, & Vaidyanath, 2013; Pollet & Lombreglia, 2008). In many states, divorce education is mandatory for couples with dependent children (Cronin, Becher, McCann, McGuire, & Powell, 2017). Several states are beginning to adopt online formats for educational requirements to make participation more convenient and streamlined (Bowers, Ogolsky, Hughes, & Kanter, 2014). The curricula for divorce education programs predominantly focus on the effects that divorce might have on children and the development of cooperative coparenting skills (Bauserman, 2012; Braver, Salem, Pearson, & DeLusé, 1996; Geasler & Blaisure, 1999; Schramm & Calix, 2011).

In general, divorce education programs have shown positive outcomes in promoting effective coparenting skills and increasing parental knowledge on the impact of divorce on child development and family relationships (Becher et al., 2015; Choi, Hatton-Bowers, Brand, Poppe, & Foged, 2017; Schramm & McCaulley, 2012). For example, multiple studies suggest that after participating in divorce education programs, parents were less likely to expose their children to corrosive interparental conflict, resulting in a more positive environment (Kelly & Emery, 2003; Vélez, Wolchik, Tein, & Sandler, 2011). There is also evidence to suggest that divorce education programs

can help families navigate through the difficult transitions associated with the divorce process, such as legal details (Amato, Kane, & James, 2011) and making arrangements for cost sharing and child support (Collins & Fetsch, 2009; McKenzie & Bacon, 2009).

Considering the aforementioned benefits of program participation, one of the challenges in evaluating the effectiveness of divorce education programs is the lack of standardization between states (Bowers et al., 2014). Although similarities can be found in the material that is presented, there are differing approaches and views on how divorce education should be implemented. One topic of debate is that of program dosage, especially in terms of course length, and how much time is required to sufficiently deliver an effective and meaningful divorce education program (Becher et al., 2015; Brandon, 2006; Fackrell, Hawkins, & Kay, 2011; Salem, Sandler, & Wolchik, 2013). Despite the existence of various programs of differing lengths, the impact of dosage satisfaction (i.e., how satisfied participants are with the length of the program or course) on program effectiveness is a topic that has received little attention, and thus warrants further exploration.

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the overall results of Utah's online divorce education program and to test the associations between course length satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) and program effectiveness. This study makes an important contribution to the divorce education literature by focusing on whether participant satisfaction with course length is related to course outcomes. The data for this study come from Utah's 1 hour online divorce education course, which is now mandated by the courts in Utah for couples with dependent children who are seeking a divorce.

Online Divorce Education Programs

Several states have created online course options for their divorce education programs. Providing an online option is intended to make participation more convenient and less time consuming (Bowers et al., 2014), especially for parents who might be facing specific geographic or financial hardships (Dennis & Ebata, 2005; Schramm & McCaulley, 2012). With more states allowing the implementation of online options, researchers have noted the importance of evaluating the effectiveness of online divorce education courses (Becher et al., 2015; Bowers et al., 2014). Examples of some of these evaluations are discussed next.

In one study, which was an evaluation of Missouri's Focus on Kids course, researchers compared the outcomes of a shorter, online course with its 2.5-hr face-to-face equivalent (Schramm & McCaulley, 2012). Minimal differences were found between the two delivery methods and both groups of participants (online and face-to-face) found the course to be worthwhile and effective in conveying the importance of developing positive coparenting skills (Schramm & McCaulley, 2012). In their evaluation of Parents Forever, an online course developed in

Minnesota, Becher et al. (2015) found that the eight-hour online option was effective in promoting well-being and positive behavioral change for parents. Some examples of positive behavioral change included parents reporting greater confidence in their ability to cope with the divorce and a decreased amount of conflict with the other parent (Becher et al., 2015). Another online divorce education course, Nebraska's Successful Kids, was successful in increasing participant knowledge of cooperative coparenting and instilling greater confidence in participants' ability to apply cooperative coparenting skills, as evidenced in changes from pretest to posttest scores (Choi et al., 2017). Some of the most important benefits of participating in this program were the enhanced communication skills that participants gained and their reported willingness to try to develop parenting programs (Choi et al., 2017).

The evaluations of these online programs provide compelling evidence of the effectiveness of online divorce education programs in promoting coparenting skills. These course evaluations, and others, also reported increases in participant knowledge of topics related to the divorce process, including how children are affected by divorce (Choi et al., 2017) and financial matters (Bowers et al., 2014). Although these courses provide examples of the utility of online divorce education programs, the evaluations of program effectiveness did not include participant feedback on satisfaction with course length. Such a void provides an opportunity to evaluate the relationship between course length satisfaction and the effectiveness of online divorce education, which is the chief goal of this study.

Views on Program Dosage and Course Length for Divorce Education Programs

In their review of divorce education programs, Blaisure and Geasler (2000) developed a divorce education intervention model in which divorce education programs are categorized based on their dosage levels, teaching methods, goals and objectives, and overall content. In this model, divorce education programs are categorized into three major groups or levels: (a) Level 1 programs, which are shorter in length and require more passive involvement from participants; (b) Level 2 programs, which are longer in length (possibly requiring multiple sessions) and more intensive in terms of skill-building activities; and (c) Level 3 programs, which are characterized as being more targeted toward families that are viewed as having special needs or being more at risk for chronic parental or familial conflict (Blaisure & Geasler, 2000).

In a nationwide survey of state extension services, Mulroy et al. (2013) discovered that 48 states had some level of involvement in divorce education programs. One of their most compelling findings centered around the fact that there was substantial variation, not only in content emphases and fee structures, but also in course length for divorce education programs, with courses ranging from one hour

to five hours or more, depending on the state where the program was being implemented (Mulroy et al., 2013).

In light of the categories established by the divorce education intervention model (Blaisure & Geasler, 2000) and the variations noted by Mulroy et al. (2013), questions remain regarding the most appropriate dosage levels in terms of course length for divorce education programs (Becher et al., 2015; Brandon, 2006; Fackrell et al., 2011; Salem et al., 2013). Low-dosage divorce education programs are more likely to be court mandated and typically last less than four hours (Fackrell et al., 2011). Those who have evaluated briefer, low-dosage divorce education programs point to the benefits of these programs in terms of alleviating the demands on parents who are already feeling the strain of the divorce process (Becher et al., 2015; Blaisure & Geasler, 2000). However, it should be noted that multiple studies have shown that mandated divorce education programs have received more critical reviews from participants when compared to participants from nonmandated programs, especially in terms of perceived program quality and the overall benefits of participation (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1996; Brotherson, White, & Masich, 2010). This is possibly due, in part, to the resentment expressed by some individuals who are mandated to participate in these programs to move forward with the divorce process (Brandon, 2006; Schramm & Calix, 2011).

Evaluators of divorce education programs that require greater dosage levels argue that such programs can offer richer content, which low-dosage programs might not be able to address due to time constraints (Becher et al., 2015). Consequently, advocates of high-dosage programs have voiced concerns over the ability of lower dosage programs to equip parents with the necessary skills to assist their children in their adjustment to the divorce process (Salem et al., 2013). Some research suggests that participants of lower dosage programs have expressed dissatisfaction with course length (Brandon, 2006). However, there is also evidence suggesting that low-dosage divorce education programs might provide similar outcomes when compared to programs with higher dosage levels (Fackrell et al., 2011).

With the continued implementation of online divorce education there are concerns over program effectiveness and appropriate dosage levels. As with any adult education program, establishing credibility is the key to success for online divorce education programs (Hughes, Bowers, Mitchell, Curtiss, & Ebata, 2012). A chief concern among practitioners as it relates to establishing credibility for any kind of online education, especially for asynchronous online courses, which involve participant-centered teachings that are not limited to the constraints of place and time (Wu, Bieber, & Hiltz, 2008), is focused on the accountability and active engagement of participants. In their evaluation of best practices for establishing asynchronous online divorce education courses, Ferraro, Oehme, Bruker, Arpan, and Opel (2018) argued that a lack of a physical instructor or course facilitator might lead to less

active participation and low attention levels from participants that in turn could produce less than desirable learning outcomes. There is also concern that decreases in synchronous formats, in which participants engage in learning educational material at the same time (Oztok, Zingaro, Brett, & Hewitt, 2013), and face-to-face formats might detract from the overall experience of divorce education programs in the sense that parents might have fewer opportunities to interact and engage in discussion with family life practitioners and other parents about the finer details of their divorce situation (Schramm & McCaulley, 2012).

Although research is limited, a further topic of concern is related to establishing appropriate dosage levels for online divorce education programs, online relationship education programs, and online adult education programs in general. Zucca (2014) advocated for online education programs that were more flexible in length and tailored to the schedules of working professionals based on the argument that shorter online courses can equip participants with the same skills and knowledge as longer online courses. The ongoing concern and debate over appropriate dosage levels in terms of course length presents an opportunity to statistically explore the association between participant satisfaction with course length and program effectiveness for online divorce education programs.

Utah's Online Divorce Education Course

Divorce education in Utah is mandatory for divorcing couples with minor children. It was put into law to educate and sensitize divorcing couples to their children's needs both during and after the divorce process. The law allows for divorce education to be provided through live instruction or an online provider. As a prerequisite to receiving a divorce decree, both parties are required to attend either the online or live course after filing a complaint for divorce and receiving a docket number. Participants are also required to pay a \$35 fee to participate in the course (Utah State Legislature, 2018).

The online divorce education course was developed in 2016 by Extension Specialists at Utah State University through a contract with the Utah Administrative Office of the Courts. The course developed and administered by Utah State University is the only approved online option. The online course is one hour in length and consists of narrated Microsoft PowerPoint slides, videos, vignettes, and checkpoint questions to ensure active participation and learning. Failure to respond to the checkpoint questions within 60 seconds triggers the software to restart at the last completed section. Participants can complete the entire course in one sitting or they can start and resume later. The course is available on demand through a learning software linked from the courts' Web site. The course is optimized for major Web browsers, smart phones, and tablets. Once all sections and checkpoints are completed, participants have the option to

take a survey related to the course, which assesses their level of agreement on whether participation in the course improved their understanding of divorce-related matters, their future plans related to coparenting, and their relationships with their children. Following the survey, the software generates a certificate of completion, which participants submit to the court.

For the comparable live course, the Administrative Office of the Courts issues contracts with various counselors and educators around the state who are not employed by Utah State University. The main difference between the online and live courses is the modality. All providers (online and live) are required to comply with the education requirements legislated in Utah Code Section 30-3-11.3, which includes covering the impact of divorce on child well-being and family relationships, financial responsibilities, domestic violence, coparenting skills, and ways to decrease child exposure to harmful interparental conflict (Utah State Legislature, 2018).

The Current Study

The purpose of this study is to evaluate the overall results of Utah's online divorce education program and to test the association between participant satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with course length and program effectiveness. In this study, we analyzed postprogram data that examined the differences between participants who believed Utah's online divorce education course was either too lengthy or not long enough with those who indicated that they were satisfied with the length of the course.

The major research question of this study focuses on determining if there is a relation between course length satisfaction and program effectiveness. Our attempt to answer this question is twofold. First, we aim to better understand the association between course length satisfaction and short-term course outcomes, especially as they pertain to increasing participant knowledge of divorce-related topics. Our second objective is to increase awareness of how course length satisfaction is related to the participants' future plans in terms of coparenting efforts and maintaining healthy relationships with their children as they move through the divorce process.

Method

Participants and Procedures

Utah's online divorce education course was launched in the spring of 2017 and is available on demand to divorcing parents. In this study, we accessed data collected from 1,694 participants surveyed between May and December of 2017. During this period 3,570 individuals participated in the course. Participants were not required to complete the survey to receive a certificate of completion. The overall survey

completion rate for the participants included in this study was 47.4%. Per the approved postcourse survey, all responses were anonymous and demographic data were not gathered.

Measures

The survey instrument used for this study was administered immediately following the completion of the online divorce education course. The survey assessed participant satisfaction with course length, perceived improvements in the understanding of divorce-related topics, and participants' future plans related to coparenting and relationships with their children. To measure course length satisfaction, participants were asked if they believed the course was "too long," "just right," or "too short." For the survey items related to the perceived improvements in the understanding of divorce-related topics and future plans related to coparenting and parent-child relationships, responses ranged on a Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

The first set of survey items were tied to the mandated topics that focused on whether the course improved participant understanding of divorce-related topics. Specifically, participants were asked to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: (a) This course helped improve my understanding of how divorce can impact children, (b) This course helped improve my understanding of how divorce can impact family relationships, (c) This course helped improve my understanding of the financial responsibilities of divorcing parents for their children, (d) This course helped improve my understanding of the benefits to children of positive coparenting, and (e) This course helped improve my understanding of domestic violence and the harmful effect on children and family relationships.

The second set of survey items were related to future plans for coparenting and relationships with children. These survey items asked participants to rate their level of agreement with the following statements: (a) Now that I have completed this course, I plan to avoid arguing/fighting with my spouse in front of the children, (b) Now that I have completed this course, I plan to avoid saying negative things about my spouse in front of the children, (c) Now that I have completed this course, I plan to avoid questioning my children about their other parent, and (c) Now that I have completed this course, I plan to make efforts to positively coparent.

Results

Overall Program Evaluation

A total of 1,694 participants completed the survey at the conclusion of the online divorce education course, but because this study focused on the relations between participant satisfaction with course length and program effectiveness, those who

did not offer their opinion on the length of the course ($n = 4$) were eliminated from the overall program evaluation, bringing the total number of participants for this part of the analysis to 1,690. Results indicated that 90% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the course helped to improve their understanding of how divorce can affect children. Eighty-nine percent of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the course improved their understanding of how divorce can affect family relationships. Additional results indicated that 86% either agreed or strongly agreed that the course helped improve their understanding of financial responsibilities of divorcing parents for children, and 90% of participants agreed that the course helped improve their understanding of the benefits children received from positive coparenting. Finally, 88% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that the course helped improve their understanding of the negative effects of domestic violence on children and family relationships.

In terms of future coparenting plans, after completing the course, 96% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they were going to avoid arguing or fighting with their spouse in front of their children. Further, results indicated that 95% of participants either agreed or strongly agreed that they were going to avoid saying negative things about their spouse in front of their children, and 95% of participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were going to avoid questioning their children about the other parent. Finally, 95% of participants reported that they planned to make an effort to positively coparent.

Evaluating Course Effectiveness by Course Length Satisfaction

To evaluate course effectiveness by course length satisfaction, participants were grouped into two categories: dissatisfied and satisfied. Individuals classified as dissatisfied with the length of the course were those who reported that the one-hour course length was too long ($n = 325$). Conversely, those who were classified as satisfied were those individuals who reported that the length of the course was “just right” ($n = 1,352$). As noted earlier, four participants failed to respond when surveyed on their opinion of course length, and thus were excluded from the analysis. In addition to these four participants, a low number of participants ($n = 13$) whose responses indicated the course was too short in length were also excluded from the analyses that evaluated course effectiveness by course length satisfaction, bringing the total number of cases for this analysis to 1,677.

Once the two groups were established, a series of independent samples t -tests were conducted to determine whether differences existed in mean scores between satisfied and dissatisfied participants for the five items related to the improved understanding of divorce-related matters and the four items that focused on future coparenting plans. An examination of these nine items revealed that missing data were minimal, as less than 1% of data were missing for all items. Based on the low amounts of missing data, each item was analyzed individually without any adjustments.

Table 1. Summary of Differences in the Outcomes of Divorce-Related Matters Between Satisfied and Dissatisfied Participants

Outcome variables	Satisfied with course length			Dissatisfied with course length				Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	
This course helped improve my understanding of:								
1. How divorce can impact children	4.22	.91	1,352	3.80	.99	324	-7.42***	.44
2. How divorce can impact family relationships	4.19	.91	1,350	3.79	.97	324	-6.90***	.42
3. The financial responsibilities of divorcing parents for their children	4.14	.94	1,351	3.77	.93	324	-6.47***	.39
4. The benefits to children of positive coparenting	4.26	.91	1,350	3.87	.97	324	-6.83***	.41
5. Domestic violence and the harmful effect on children and family relationships	4.20	.92	1,346	3.83	.99	324	-6.44***	.39

*** $p < .001$.

For the five items pertaining to the improved understanding of divorce-related matters, significant differences were found for all items ($p < .001$). The most significant difference occurred for the item related to how the course improved participants' understanding of how divorce can affect children, with those satisfied with course length recording a mean score of 4.22 (substantially above midpoint) versus 3.80 (around midpoint) for dissatisfied participants. The means and standard deviations for each of the five questions that focused on the improved understanding of divorce-related matters for both satisfied and dissatisfied participants are presented in Table 1.

For the four items related to participants' future coparenting plans, significant differences were found for all items ($p < .05$), especially with respect to the item that asked participants whether they planned to avoid questioning their children about their other parent. Participants satisfied with course length ($M = 4.53$) displayed higher levels of agreement with this statement

Table 2. Summary of Differences in Comparisons of Future Plans Related to Coparenting and Relationships With Children Between Satisfied and Dissatisfied Participants

Outcome variables	Satisfied with course length			Dissatisfied with course length				Cohen's <i>d</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>t</i>	
Now that I have completed the course, I plan to:								
1. Avoid arguing/fighting with my spouse in front of the children	4.54	.82	1,352	4.42	.67	323	-2.33*	.16
2. Avoid saying negative things about my spouse in front of the children	4.55	.82	1,351	4.41	.71	322	-2.84**	.18
3. Avoid questioning my children about their other parent	4.53	.82	1,349	4.37	.74	323	-3.09**	.20
4. Make efforts to positively coparent	4.55	.83	1,348	4.41	.72	321	-2.62**	.18

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

than participants who were dissatisfied with course length ($M = 4.37$). The means and standard deviations for each of the four questions related to future coparenting plans for both satisfied and dissatisfied participants are presented in [Table 2](#).

Discussion

The debate over appropriate course length for divorce education programs has been ongoing (Becher et al., 2015; Fackrell et al., 2011; Salem et al., 2013). To date, there has been limited research that tests the relations between course length and program effectiveness. Gaining more knowledge on this issue could be useful to the field, especially considering that past studies (e.g., Becher et al., 2015; Schramm & McCaulley, 2012) have demonstrated that course length can be substantially reduced with the implementation of an online program. The purpose of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of Utah's one-hour online divorce education course based on participant satisfaction with course length.

Results indicate that satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with course length was a significant predictor of program effectiveness, as participants who were satisfied with the length of the course were more likely to agree that the course improved their understanding of divorce-related matters. Satisfied participants were also more likely to agree that they would apply what they had learned in future efforts to positively coparent and maintain healthy relationships with their children. These findings suggest that the course was effective in meeting program objectives, particularly for those participants who indicated that they were satisfied with course length.

In light of these results, this study provides one of the first examples of how participant satisfaction with course length might affect short-term program outcomes as they relate to divorce education. Based on the findings that satisfaction with course length was associated with more positive outcomes for this sample, we first focus our attention on the relation between dissatisfaction with course length and course outcomes. Dissatisfaction, for purposes of this study, was measured by participant opinion on course length, as those who were dissatisfied with the length of the course expressed concerns that the one-hour course was too long.

One possibility for the less positive outcomes for participants who believed the course was too long might be the accumulation of stressors with which these individuals were already dealing. Indeed, the divorce process can be arduous and adding more responsibility to one's schedule could result in resentment or a lack of focus during an education program, which could affect how receptive individuals are to changes in their behavior (Becher et al., 2015; Rowe, Zimmer-Gembeck, & Hood, 2016). Additionally, the fact that these participants were mandated by the courts and required to pay a fee to participate in this course could increase the

likelihood of participants becoming disgruntled with the divorce education process. Certainly, past research comparing the outcomes of participants who were mandated by the courts to attend a divorce education course versus those who were not has found support for this argument, with nonmandated participants showing less resentment and rating divorce education programs as more worthwhile and of higher quality than those who were mandated to participate (Arbuthnot & Gordon, 1996; Brotherson et al., 2010; Schramm & Calix, 2011).

In analyzing the data related to participants who were dissatisfied with course length, the results of this study illustrate which topic areas of divorce education courses might be in need of improvement and further development. For example, participants who were dissatisfied with course length expressed greater amounts of uncertainty with topics related to financial responsibilities and how divorce can affect children and family relationships when compared to participants who were satisfied with course length. These same dissatisfied participants were also more likely than satisfied participants to disagree with statements that the program had increased their knowledge of these topics.

It is important to note that although some participants reported dissatisfaction, they still benefited from participation, as their scores were in the middle to slightly positive range on the outcome questions. The overwhelming majority of participants (80%) indicated they were satisfied with the length of the one-hour course. Although programs across the nation vary in their content and length (Mulroy et al., 2013), most participants in our study indicated that one hour was a sufficient amount of time to make a positive influence on their understanding of divorce-related matters and their intentions to make future efforts to positively coparent.

In today's fast-paced world that often places numerous demands on parents' time, the results from our study provide preliminary support for a one-hour online divorce education program that can provide content on the essential areas of divorce education, without overwhelming parents during a potentially stressful time. Our findings are consistent with other studies showing that online divorce education programs have positive outcomes in helping parents gain a better understanding of behaviors that they can implement to promote resilience to the divorce process and ease the stress on themselves and their children (Becher et al., 2015; Choi et al., 2017; Schramm & McCaulley, 2012). Moreover, our study is one of the first to examine the relations between course length satisfaction and program effectiveness and suggests Utah's one-hour online course is associated with targeted outcomes.

Limitations and Future Directions

Although the results of this study were favorable for the examination of the relations between course length satisfaction and program effectiveness, this study had certain limitations. First, this study relied only on posttest

measures collected from a survey that was administered to participants immediately following their completion of the course. The lack of pretest scores makes it a challenge to assess the change in knowledge of divorce-related matters that might have occurred as a result of participating in the program.

Next, this study only examined the outcomes of individuals who participated in Utah's online divorce education program, as the data from courses taught by live providers were not available to the investigators. Although outside the scope of this study, the lack of such a comparison group makes it difficult to determine how satisfaction (or dissatisfaction) with the length of a face-to-face course affects program outcomes. Future research would benefit from the inclusion of a face-to-face comparison group. Such research could be of particular interest to states considering shorter, online formats for the implementation of their divorce education programs.

A further limitation of this study was the lack of demographic data collected due to the restrictions imposed on the implementation of this study's survey instrument. Given the lack of studies that examine the relation between course length satisfaction and program effectiveness, there are a number of possibilities for future research involving demographic indicators and comparisons of certain demographic groups. For example, it would be interesting to know whether views on program dosage in terms of course length vary between men and women. Furthermore, divorce education courses of varying lengths in other states could begin including items related to satisfaction with course length in their evaluations so that comparisons could be made, as was the goal of this study. Additionally, taking into consideration demographic variables, including the number of children involved, participant age, education level, and relationship history (e.g., number of times divorced or remarried), might shed light on how favorably course length is perceived. It might also be informative to understand the reasons behind the divorce (e.g., high levels of hostility) and whether the quality of the relationship contributes to how participants view the program's dosage level in terms of course length, and by extension, its effectiveness. To explore these possibilities, programs like Utah's online divorce course would need to collaborate with their Administrative Office of the Courts to collect participant demographic data.

Finally, another possibility for future research is to examine the qualitative data of participants who were dissatisfied with course length. An in-depth analysis of qualitative data might help tease out some of the reasons for this dissatisfaction. For instance, participants who indicated that the course was too short in length might have felt that the course's one-hour time frame left them feeling uninformed on the best practices for handling divorce-related issues, such as financial responsibilities, legal matters, and coparenting skills. In contrast, those who indicated the course was too long might have felt

overwhelmed with information, and thus less confident in their abilities to make educated decisions on any number of issues that arise with divorce. It is also possible that individuals who indicated that the course was too long might have already had an amicable postdivorce relationship, and therefore did not think that the course offered any additional helpful information. Regardless of how dissatisfaction with course length was classified, an exploration of qualitative data might provide suggestions on how to improve program delivery.

In conclusion, this study provides one of the first examinations of the relationship between participant satisfaction with course length and program effectiveness for a state-specific online divorce education course. Although online divorce education programs might not fully replace traditional face-to-face programs, the online option is becoming more common. As such, it is important to continue to evaluate the effectiveness of online divorce education programs, especially in terms of appropriate course length to ensure optimal outcomes for families and children and to meet legislative objectives.

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