

**AN ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS  
AN INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' DECISIONS  
TO ENTER TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

By

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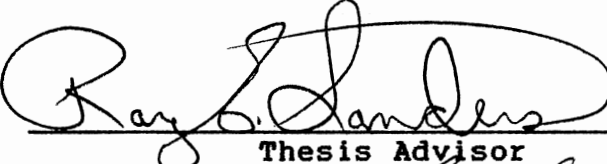
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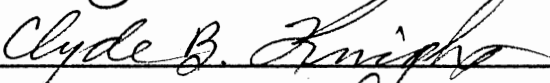
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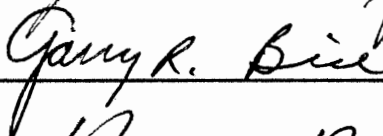
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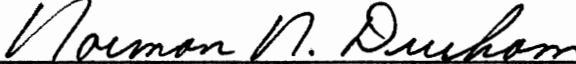
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Technician preparation programs are constantly trying to keep pace with the growing and rapidly changing technologies in our world. With the decreasing number of students and greater competition between colleges to increase enrollment, change within the school's programs is demanded. Arns (1980), editor of the New Directions for Community Colleges stated:

Today's occupational student is not a low achieving high school graduate who cannot make it in the baccalaureate curriculums, rather, the majority are dedicated, goal oriented, no-nonsense individuals who are in occupational courses because they want to be there (p.8).

With many different types of potential students available to the college, there is a need to determine what factors influence students to choose certain programs. With this knowledge, junior colleges could increase their enrollment and give their students a greater competitive edge in the job market.

#### Statement of the Problem

With the rapidly changing technology in society, the need for a more highly educated technician is growing. There



is a lack of information concerning what influences students to choose two-year junior college technical programs; specifically the importance of vocational education as an influencing factor.

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine if vocational education was an influencing factor on students' choice of two-year junior college technical programs.

#### Research Questions

The following research questions were designed for this study:

Question 1. How important will having been enrolled in previous vocational education be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior college program?

Question 2. How important will the type of previous vocational training students were enrolled in be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior technical program?

Question 3. How important will the amount of previous vocational training students received be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Question 4. How important will the type of vocational institution where students received training (at a vo-tech or comprehensive high school) be as an influencing factor to

students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Question 5. How important will the need for more vocational/technical education to increase the student's job marketing status be an as influence to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

#### Assumptions

The following assumptions were included in this study.

1. That the questionnaires were completed by the respondents as an honest expression of their opinions.

2. That the items listed on the questionnaire are representative of most factors which do influence students to choose two-year junior college technical programs.

#### Scope and Limitations

This study was limited by two major components.

1. This study was limited to first year students entering some type of junior college technical program in August/September, 1988.

2. This study was limited to technical programs in two-year junior colleges in AVA region four.

#### Definitions

" Junior college: an institution of higher education which usually offers the first two years of college instruction which grants an associate degree and which does not

grant a bachelors degree (U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1967)."

American Vocational Association Region four: an area that includes the states of Oklahoma, Texas, New Mexico, Arkansas, Mississippi, and Louisiana in the American Vocational Association organization.

Vocational Education: a form of education that is for students 14 years of age or older, who are seeking gainful employment, through training that requires less than a baccalaureate degree with the schools being under public control. The training makes an individual more employable in one group of occupations than in another (Evans and Herr, 1978).

" Technical Education Programs: planned instruction programs that prepare for a variety of occupations requiring skills of a semi-professional nature. Instruction normally involves subjects of a technical nature such as mathematics, the physical and life sciences, and materials and processes related to the specific requirements of the job (Sanders, 1985)."

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature was conducted with the intent to determine what factors influence students to choose technical programs and make career decisions. This chapter reveals several factors that influence students to make career decisions.

#### Factors Influencing Vocational Technical Students'

Sanders and Galbraith (1986) found in a study that was conducted at seven institutions in the southwest, that of first year freshman, the most important factors influencing their decisions were related directly to job opportunities and working conditions. These conditions influenced students no matter what their backgrounds were. They also found that the students' friends enrolled in the program had very little influence on them, with counselors and principles having almost no influence. According to Cobb and Cardozier (1966) the most important influence to students' choices were themselves.

In a related study by Brooks (1973) conducted in 1972, of 1,053 students in 12 technologies in 52 programs in Oklahoma during the fall semester found that the factors that

they deemed most important related to the occupation itself, some of these factors were "job opportunities, rate of pay, working conditions, and advancement and upward mobility. He also found that the student himself was a major influence in making the decisions with relatives, friends, and vocational teachers following respectively in importance. Sanders (1985) found similar results of entering freshman in seven mechanical power technology programs in Oklahoma.

For the most part, the greatest influence to students' was job related with what the students' believed themselves as the most influential factor for them. Harrison and Kotrlik (1987), in a study of high school seniors in vocational agriculture, found similar results when compared to the previous studies. They found that working conditions and salary were major factors, but they also found that an interest in the work and personal satisfaction were leading factors in their choice. They also discovered that the length of time spent in the program had little, if any effect on the student's choice. Also, that the vocational teacher had more influence on them than the counselors and principles further indicating that they have little or no influence on the students' career choice.

Digby (1986), in a study conducted in the spring of 1986 at the Fayetteville Technical Institute, identified five reasons which triggered or influenced enrollment. The study showed that "encouragement from the spouse or parents ranked first, job dissatisfaction was second, financial aid

available and information on programs available tied at third, and a large number of military and their dependents enrolled because of moving into the community caused the enrollment to increase." Some characteristics of the institution that influenced them were "courses available, low cost, location, financial assistance available, and the quality of instruction." The study also indicated that most students ranked getting a better job and earning more money as the top one and two influences for continuing their education. Some other factors they believed influenced them were gaining a better education, learning things of interest, and contributing more to society. The study listed open admission as an additional influence in choosing the institution. It was also found that job placement services and self centered instruction were low factors of influence to students when choosing an institution.

Arrington, Cheek, Beeman, and Waltz (1984), in a study conducted at the University of Florida between July, 1981 and August, 1984, found that the strongest influence upon student's choice was the need for the training offered by the school, the desire for a specific type of job, and their personal goal to provide a better standard of living for themselves or their families than an of the other factors listed in the previous studies. Although, these two factors are almost identical to what other students enrolling in vocational/technical programs feel are important in making a career decision.

### Other factors of Influence

Rowe (1980) found in a study conducted in 1980 at Brigham Young University, that a variety of factors influence students to choose certain colleges and programs. In the study, things like important information, information not received, most effective presentation, most used information, most influential person, and the best time of the year to send material out were questions asked in his study. The top five factors listed by the study were; the institution's academic programs, financial aid, housing, the campus atmosphere, admissions, and other campus programs. Some other factors listed by the study conducted by Rowe (1980) were; cost, major requirements, housing, extracurricular activities, and part-time employment. In a similar study conducted by Campbell (1983) at Montgomery college in the Washington metropolitan area, four economic variables; cost of tuition, unemployment rate, consumer price indexes, and the availability of financial aid to the student were tested. Of these factors, only the availability of financial aid showed any amount of importance to the student influencing their decision to enroll at the college. As the two studies showed, financial aid was a very important factor to students choosing a college.

In May of 1971, at the University of Illinois, Menacker (1971) surveyed 2,850 beginning freshman. In the study, the students were asked questions ranging from " Why did you

enroll?", to "Which of the following resources do you feel distorted your perception?", and "Which gave you correct impressions?" The results of the study showed that the major reason for selecting this institution was to live at home and save money. This was followed by the school's reputation and the desire to remain with their family. Other reasons found by the study were; the desire to keep a part-time job, and at their parents insistence. Only a small percentage of the students had any serious doubt about their admissibility. The students also noted that the most accurate sources of pre-admission information, in their opinion, were talking to enrolled students and campus visits. Stordahl (1970) found similar results in a study conducted at Northern Michigan University in 1970. A study by Cobb and Cardozier (1966) at the University of Maryland also found similar findings.

Noeth, Engen, and Noeth (1980) found in a study conducted during the Washington Pre-College test in the spring of students junior year, that the students rated interesting high school classes and their families as the most important helpful factor. When the parents were an important factor, it was noted that the mother influenced their decision much more than did the father. They also listed friends and high school grades as very important. As shown in the previous studies, teachers were ranked very high, but the influence of counselors was disappointingly low. "Nearly half of the students believed that the counselors were of no help in making career decisions."



Similar findings were reported by Hanson, Stahmann, and Whittlesey (1971), in a study conducted in a medium size Iowa community. Chapman (1981), in a study, developed a model of student college choice. The model found that the background and current characteristics of the student and the students family were ranked first. Second was a series of external influences such as the fixed characteristics of the college and the institution's own efforts to communicate with probable students. He also found that printed materials such as catalogs, pamphlets, and recruitment materials were a factor, but did not influence the students' decision as much as the college admissions officers would have liked. Similar results were found by Erdmann (1983), in a study conducted in 1980.

#### Articulation as a Factor

The ease of articulation from high school to the junior college setting is becoming an increasingly important factor to students wanting to further their education. According to Kruska (1980) articulation is defined as:

The process which permits the smooth transfer and progression of students moving from one educational level, institution, program, or activity to the next higher level; and which provides for a coordinated and interrelated curriculum for students enrolled in programs, courses, or activities which exist at any one educational level (pp.53-54).

Today it appears that junior and senior high school students are constantly seeking the shortest way possible to receive their high school diplomas. Many schools now offer a

wide variety of electives to help them achieve this goal. Many junior colleges are lowering their standards for admission allowing students an easier access into the school.

According to Menacker (1975 p.44) "the single greatest influence on school and college relations is the college admission policy." Some of these policies are: 1. admitting students to college early, 2. granting advanced placement to students who earn college credit by successfully completing examinations, and 3. awarding college credit to students who participate in accelerated high school courses (Menacker 1975). Many junior colleges are offering programs that allow high school juniors and seniors to take some courses while still in high school enabling the students to start earlier on their college career and make the transition to the school much easier. Colleges also allow students to test out of college courses and give credit for courses taken at the high school level to help reduce the time spent in taking repetitious classes.

Wilcox and Pautler (1983 p.178) found in a study that prior to establishing articulated vocational education programs several factors should be considered: "1. admissions policies and procedures, 2. curriculum development, 3. student personnel services, 4. faculty sharing and development, 5. facilities and equipment sharing, 6. research and planning, and 7. advisory councils." They concluded that as competition for students increases, and as the availability of students loans diminishes, articulated programs must be

made available to students desiring to continue their education. Most important is the initiation of viable ways to avoid needless repetition and to provide students with the most economical means for continuing their education.

Kraska (1980 p.59) listed five benefits of an articulated curriculum. The study stated:

1. The obvious advantage to an articulated curriculum is that it permits students to transfer and progress through an educational program with minimum cost, repetition, and time with maximum efficiency.
2. Articulation can serve as the impetus for overall instructional program improvement.
3. At the same time, an articulated curriculum would encourage program distinctiveness to reduce uncertainty about who is to teach whom, at what age, in which schools, and in which programs.
4. An articulated curriculum should stimulate more indepth research into employment needs. And
5. vocational and technical educators can better serve individuals of various life stages, particularly those who need and deserve recognition for previous educational and life experiences.

#### Summary

The literature does suggest that students are influenced by many factors when making career decisions. It was suggested that students entering vocational and technical programs were influenced more by the things directly related to the occupation itself. Some of the factors; such as the rate of pay, chance of finding a job, working conditions, and their own personal liking of the job, influenced them the most. It was also suggested that the schools' choice of programs was a major influence to them; this was also found to be true of the students not entering occupational programs.

Some of the most important factors to students choosing

the college were; the programs offered, the availability of financial aid, access to part-time jobs, the cost and the reputation. The literature also showed that even though printed material sent to prospective students is important to them, it does not carry the amount of influence that college admission officials would have liked. The literature also showed that articulation is becoming a growing factor to students. To meet this influence many high schools and junior colleges are working together to make it easier for students wanting to acquire a higher education by easing their admission standards and allowing students to take courses while still in high school.

Many people had a large effect on what the students decided to do, with their parents having the most influence on them, particularly their mother. Teachers and friends also had a great deal of influence over their decisions. It was very interesting to note that the schools' counselors and principles were perceived as having little or no influence on the students when making their career decisions.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to determine if vocational education was an influencing factor on students' choice of two-year junior college technical programs.

#### The Population

The area from which the sample was selected was the AVA's region four. The region consists of Texas, Oklahoma, Arkansas, Mississippi, New Mexico, and Louisiana. The sample (N=300) for the study was randomly selected in clusters. One institution (cluster) from each state was randomly selected. Fifty students (N=50) were then selected at random from each institution. Fifty students were chosen from each school to give an equal distribution for each state. The subjects selected were first year freshman, because the factors that influenced them would not have been contaminated by the internal forces or influences of the college (e.g. new friends, relationships with instructors, a feeling of belonging at the school). The entire sample (N=300) was used for demographic description, only the popul-ation (N=89) that answered yes as to having been enrolled in pervious vocational education were used to answer the research questions. The department

heads were telephoned in advance to seek permission for the study and to inform them of this study. The questionnaires were distributed in January/February 1989 by the department heads. The completed questionnaires were then returned to the researcher by mail in a self addressed, stamped envelope. A copy of the questionnaire is in appendix A, and a copy of the cover letter is in appendix B.

### The Questionnaire

The questionnaire was developed in two parts: (1) an inventory of student personal data needed to answer the research questions, and (2) a list of factors to be rated by the students according to the amount of importance they had in influencing the students to enroll in two-year junior college technical programs. The questions on the student data portion (part one) of the questionnaire were formulated by the investigator and by modifying questions from a related study (Brooks 1973).

The questions on part one of the questionnaire were designed to provide the personal data needed to further define the demographics of the students participating in the survey. The sample was divided into the following categories: (1) different age groups, (2) males and females, (3) different ethnic groups, (4) married and unmarried, (5) students who served in the military and those who have not, (6) students receiving financial aid and those who are not, (7) employment status, and (8) the size of the community. The second part

of the questionnaire consisted of a list of factors for the students to rate according to the amount of influence they had on students choosing a specific technical program. This list was composed of items found to be pertinent by the investigator and his committee. The Likert scale with a five point continuum was used to indicate how influential each factor was to the student when choosing a technical program. A weight of five was given to the most important position on the scale and the least important was given a weight of one. The student was then asked to mark the column that best describes the amount of influence the question had on their decision to enter or choose a technical program. The instrument was field tested for face validity by a group of students from Northern Oklahoma College, no reliability or validity coefficients were determined.

#### Statistical Method

This study used descriptive statistics in gathering the information necessary to answer the research question listed in chapter one.

" Descriptive statistics are used to obtain information concerning the current status of the phenomena. The purpose of these methods are to describe what exists with respect to variables or conditions in a situation. These methods range from the survey which describes the status quo, the correlation study which investigates the relationship between variables, to developmental studies which seek to determine changes over time (Key 1988)."

Once the data were gathered, research questions one through five were answered by using simple percentage

formula. A computer program (SPSS-X) was used to analyze the data on the mainframe computer system at Oklahoma State University.



## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE STUDY

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine if vocational education was an influencing factor on students' choice of two-year junior college technical programs. Results of the analysis of data are presented in this chapter. Chapter V is devoted to the summary, conclusions, and recommendations based on this chapter.

The sample for the study consisted of 300 students who were enrolled in a technical education program at a two-year junior college during the spring semester of 1989. Of this total population, there were 38 questionnaires improperly completed. This left 242, or 81 percent, of the sample for which a completed response was obtained. Because of roundings-off, some of the tabulations in this chapter did not add up to 100 percent.

#### Presentations of Findings

Table I shows how the population was divided into groups according to age, sex, ethnic classification, marital status, military service, receiving financial aid, presently employed, community size, enrolled in previous vocational

education, type of program enrolled in, length of time in program, type of school where training was received, and whether or not they were enrolled to improve their job marketing status.

The research showed that 110 students (45.5 percent) were 18-22 years of age, 122 students (50.4 percent) were female, 151 students (62.4 percent) were caucasian, 167 students (69 percent) were not married, 204 students (84.3 percent) had not served in the military, 130 students (53.7 percent) were not receiving any financial aid, 123 students (50.8 percent) were presently employed, 89 students (36.8 percent) were from a community 2,500 to 50,000 in size, and that 182 students (75.2 percent) were enrolled to improve the job marketing status.

The remaining questions or groups reflected the responses of those students who answered yes as to having been enrolled in vocational education previously, it is important to note that for the entire population 152 students (62.8 percent) answered no to having any previous vocational training.

The following findings were used to show the demographics of the students who had been enrolled in vocational education previously. All students were asked these questions, only those students answering yes to previous training results are shown; this accounts for the low percentage rates listed since the percentage rates were determined from the entire population. The research showed that 89 students (37.2

percent) had been enrolled previously in vocational education 56 students (23.1 percent) had been enrolled in trade and industrial type fields, 43 students (17.8 percent) had spent less than one year in the program, and 75 students (31 percent) received their training at an area votech school.

The remainder of this chapter is devoted to determining whether vocational education was an influence on students choosing a two-year junior college technical program. A summary and general description of the results were presented at the end of this chapter.

#### Research Question Number One

How important will having been enrolled in previous vocational education be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Question item number one on the questionnaire asked the student to rank, having been enrolled in vocational education previously, according to its importance to them in choosing a technical program. The data showed that 26 students (29.2 percent) felt that it was of "least importance", eight students (nine percent) believed it was of "little importance", 19 students (21.3 percent) believed it was "important", 24 students (27 percent) believed it was "more important", and 12 students (13.5 percent) believed it was "most important" to them when choosing a technical program. The data suggest that the highest single percent of students (N=26, 29%) believed it was of "least importance" to them

TABLE I  
DEMOGRAPHICS OF THE STUDENTS SURVEYED

Question Number	Response	Frequency (N)	Percentages
1. Age	18-22 years	110	45.5
	23-27 years	52	21.5
	28-32 years	31	12.8
	33-37 years	18	7.4
	38-42 years	13	5.4
	over 43 years	18	7.4
2. Sex	Male	119	49.2
	Female	122	50.4
3. Ethnic Class	Black	11	4.5
	American Indian	10	4.1
	Caucasian	151	62.4
	Asian	4	1.7
	Mexican American	32	13.2
	Other	31	12.8
	Missing	3	1.3
4. Marital Status	Yes	73	30.4
	No	167	69.0
	Missing	2	0.8
5. Military Service	Yes	38	15.7
	No	209	84.3
6. Financial Aid	Yes	112	46.3
	No	130	53.7
7. Presently Employed	Yes	123	50.8
	No	119	49.2
8. Community	Rural	29	12.0
	Less than 2,500	32	13.2
	2,500 to 50,000	89	36.8
	Greater than 50,000	88	36.4
	Missing	4	1.7
9. Previous Vocational Training	Yes	89	37.2
	No	152	62.8

TABLE I  
(Continued)

Question Number	Response	Frequency	Percentages
10. Type of Program	Agriculture	1	0.4
	Health Programs	19	7.9
	Trade and Industrial	56	23.1
	Business and Office	19	7.9
	Industrial Arts	1	0.4
	Missing	146	60.3
11. Time in Program	Less than 1 year	43	17.8
	1 year	32	13.2
	2 years	29	12.0
	Missing	138	57.0
12. Type of School	Area Votech	75	31.0
	Comprehensive High School	44	18.2
	Missing	123	50.8
13. Job Marketing Status	Yes	182	75.2
	No	35	14.5
	Missing	25	10.3
N=242			

when choosing a program, but the majority of the students (N=55, 62%) believed it was "important" to "most important" to them when choosing a program. Table II shows the total rankings for this question.

TABLE II  
AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE HAVING BEEN ENROLLED IN  
PREVIOUS VOCATIONAL EDUCATION WAS AS AN  
INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO  
ENROLL IN TECHNICAL PROGRAMS.

Student Responses	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Most important	12	13.5
More important	24	27.0
Important	19	21.3
Little important	8	9.0
Least important	26	29.2

N=89

#### Research Question Number Two

How important will the type of previous vocational training students were enrolled in be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two year junior college technical program?

Item number two on the questionnaire asked the student to rank, the importance of the type of previous training in which they were enrolled according to its importance to them in choosing a technical program. The data indicated that 28 students (31.8 percent) believed that it was of "least impor-

tance", nine students (10.2 percent) believed it was of "little importance", 18 students (20.5 percent) believed it was "important", 17 students (19.3 percent) believed it was "more important", and that 16 students (18.2 percent) believed it was "most important" to them in choosing a technical program. The data suggest that the highest single percent of the students (N=28, 31.8%) did feel that it was of "least importance" to them, but the majority of the students (N=51, 57%) believed it was "important" to "most important" to them when choosing a technical program. Table III shows the total rankings for this question.

TABLE III

AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THE TYPE OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAM STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED IN AS AN INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' DECISION TO ENROLL IN TECHNICAL PROGRAMS

Student Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Most important	16	18.2
More important	17	19.3
Important	18	20.5
Little important	9	10.2
Least important	28	31.8

N=89

### Research Question Number Three

How important will the amount of previous vocational training students received be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Item number three on the questionnaire asked the student to rank, the amount of previous vocational training students received, according to its importance to them in choosing a technical program. The data showed that 25 students (28.4 percent) believed it was "important", 14 students (15.9 percent) believed it was "more important", 14 students (15.9 percent) believed it was most "important", 23 students (26.1 percent) believed it was "least important", and 12 students (13.6 percent) believed it was of "little importance" to them. The majority of the students (N=53,60%) believed that it was "important" to "most important" to them when choosing a technical program. Thirty six students or (40 percent) believed it was "little" or of "least importance" to them in choosing a technical program. Table IV shows the total rankings for this question.

### Research Question Number Four

How important will the type of vocational institution where students received training (at a vo-tech or comprehensive high school) be as an influencing factor to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Item number four on the questionnaire asked the student to rank the type of institution where they received their training, according to its importance to them in choosing a technical program. The data showed that 24 students (27 percent) believed it was "least important", ten students



(11.2 percent) believed it was of "little importance", 22 students (24.7 percent) believed it was "important", 22 stu-

**TABLE IV**  
**AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THE AMOUNT OF PREVIOUS**  
**VOCATIONAL TRAINING STUDENTS' RECIEVED**  
**AS AN INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS'**  
**DECISIONS TO ENROLL IN**  
**TECHNICAL PROGRAMS.**

Student Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Most important	14	15.9
More important	14	15.9
Important	25	28.4
Little important	12	13.6
Least important	23	26.1
N=89		

dents (24.7 percent) believed it was "more important", and 11 students (12.4 percent) believed it was the "most important" to them when choosing a technical program. The data suggest the highest single percent (N=24, 27%) believed it was the "least important" to them, but the majority of the students (N=55, 62%) believed it was "important" to "most important" when choosing a technical program. Table V shows the total rankings for this question.

Research Question Number Five

How important will the need for more vocational/  
 technical education to increase the student's

job marketing status be as an influence to students choosing a two-year junior college technical program?

Item number five on the questionnaire asked the student to rank, the need for more vocational/technical training to

TABLE V

AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THE TYPE OF SCHOOL WHERE STUDENTS' RECEIVED TRAINING AS AN INFLUENCE ON DECISION TO ENROLL IN TECHNICAL PROGRAMS.

Student Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Most important	11	12.4
More important	22	24.7
Important	22	24.7
Little important	10	11.2
Least important	24	27.0

N=89

improve their job marketing status, according to its importance to them in choosing a technical program. The data showed 53 students (59.6 percent) believed it was "most important". 14 students (15.7 percent) believed it was "more important", 11 students (12.4 percent) believed it was "important", two students (two point two percent) believed it was of "little importance" and nine students (10.1 percent) believed it was of "least importance" to them when choosing a technical program. This data suggest that the majority of

the students (N=78, 88%) believed it was "important" to "most important", with the single largest percentage of students (N=53, 59.6%) believing it was the "most important" to them when choosing a technical program. Only 11 students (12 percent) believed it was of "little" to "least importance" when choosing a technical program. Table VI shows the total rankings for this question.

**TABLE VI**  
**AMOUNT OF INFLUENCE THE NEED FOR MORE VOCATIONAL**  
**TRAINING TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' JOB MARKETING**  
**STATUS WAS AS AN INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS'**  
**DECISIONS TO ENROLL IN TECHNICAL**  
**PROGRAMS.**

Student Response	Frequency (N)	Percentage
Most important	53	59.6
More important	14	15.7
Important	11	12.4
Little important	2	2.2
Least important	9	10.1
N=89		

### Summary

In this chapter, analysis of the students responses to research questions one through five and the degree of agreement for question six were presented. The data were treated statistically to determine their influence and

agreement. The data indicated that the majority of the students' surveyed did believe that being enrolled in vocational education previously was "important" to them when choosing a technical program, they also believed that the type of program, length of time enrolled in the program, and where they were enrolled were "important" influences upon their decision when choosing a technical program. The data indicated that the most important influence on students decisions to enroll in a technical program at a two-year junior college was the need for more training to improve their job marketing status. The conclusions presented in Chapter V were drawn by analyzing the data pertaining to the five research questions.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary

This study analyzed the influence of vocational education upon students decisions to enter two-year junior college technical programs in AVA region four. The study consisted of 300 students enrolled in six junior colleges in this region. The students completed a questionnaire containing two parts: (1) an inventory of student personal data, and (2) a list of five factors concerning vocational education that the students were to rank according to its importance to their decision to enter a technical program.

On part one of the questionnaire, the students were asked to indicate their age, sex, ethnic classification, marital status, prior military service, receiving financial aid, presently employed, community size, previous vocational training, type of program, length of enrollment, type of school, and enrolled to improve job marketing status. On part two of the questionnaire the students were to rate the importance each individual factor had on their decision to enter technical programs. A five point continuum scale was used to indicate how influential each factor was to the student. The most influential position was given a weight of

five and the least influential position was given a weight of one.

The data was analyzed by using only those students that answered yes to having been enrolled previously in vocational education. The portion of the sample that answered the question yes was 89 students. Each factor was then sorted and a percentage was given for each of the five weights on the continuum scale for each factor.

An analysis of the data revealed that the majority of the students did believe that the factors listed were at least important to them when choosing a technical program. The factor that was the most important for the greatest number of students was the need to improve their job marketing status. The other factors were ranked very similarly with the majority of the students rating them important to most important when choosing a technical program.

### Conclusions

The information presented in this study should be useful to persons involved in student recruitment at junior colleges and placement by persons at the vocational school level. It is the investigator's belief that this information could broaden the marketing strategies of junior college recruitment officials if it is properly utilized.

One conclusion of this study was that being enrolled previously in vocational education was important to most important to vocational students' when choosing a technical

program. Being enrolled previously in vocational education was an influence to vocational students' when choosing a technical program.

Another conclusion of this study was related to the type of program that vocational students' were enrolled in which was considered important to most important to vocational students' when choosing a technical program. The type of program that vocational students' were enrolled in previously was an influence to vocational students' choosing a technical program, with the greatest influence coming in the Trade and Industrial programs. This seems logical because technician education programs are more like Trade and Industrial programs and would most likely attract Trade and Industrial graduates.

The next conclusion of this study relates to the amount of vocational training which was considered important to most important to vocational students' when choosing a technical program. The amount of time that vocational students' spent in the program was an influence to vocational students' choosing a technical program with the majority of the vocational students' spending one year in the program. It may be concluded that vocational students' who spend one year or more in the program have a perceived need for more education in their specific training area.

Another conclusion of this study related to the finding that the school where vocational training was received which was considered important to most important to vocational stu-

dents' when choosing a technical program. The type of school in which the vocational student was enrolled when vocational training was received was an influence to vocational students choosing a technical program with the majority being enrolled at an area vocational school.

A further conclusion of this study was that the need for more vocational training to improve job marketing status was an "important" factor to vocational students' when choosing a technical program. The need for more technical training to improve the vocational students' job marketing status was an influence to vocational students' choosing a technical program. A possible explanation of this may be due to the vocational students' perceived need for more training for an improved job marketing status.

#### Recommendations

Persons who are involved in junior college recruitment and placement at vocational schools should become familiar with the findings of this study to help broaden their influence on students choosing a two-year junior college technical program.

In order to improve the recruitment and placement of vocational students, it is recommended that:

1. Articulation between technical and vocational schools should be emphasized to help increase the recruitment and placement efforts of both types of schools. This is particularly important between Trade and Industrial programs



and Technical programs because of the number of Trade and Industrial students entering Technical programs.

2. Recruitment by technical schools be encouraged at the vocational school level.

3. Placement of vocational students at technical schools for further training be encouraged by vocational school officials.

4. Vocational students' be treated similarly with regard to articulation, recruitment, and placement.

5. Technical schools should design programs to improve the vocational students' job marketing status.

6. Special emphasis should be placed on Trade and Industrial programs for recruitment by technical schools.

Further research is recommended in the following areas:

1. Further study should be conducted to determine the effect of being enrolled in vocational education previously upon two-year junior college technical program enrollment.

2. Further study should be conducted to determine the effect of the type of program students were enrolled in previously upon the enrollment of two-year junior college technical programs.

3. Further study should be conducted to determine the effect of the amount of previous vocational training upon two-year junior college technical program enrollment.

4. Additional study should be conducted to further determine the effect of the type of school where students received training upon the enrollment of two-year junior

college technical program enrollment.

5. Continuing study should be conducted to further determine the need for more vocational training to improve the students job marketing status upon two-year junior college technical program enrollment.

6. Studies should be conducted to determine each specific area of study that graduates of vocational programs enter, whether in general education or technical education in junior colleges, universities, or technical schools.

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**APPENDIXES**

**APPENDIX A**

**QUESTIONNAIRE**

STUDENT DATA SHEET

1. What is your age?        \_\_\_ 18-22 \_\_\_ 23-27 \_\_\_ 28-32  
                                      \_\_\_ 33-37 \_\_\_ 38-42 \_\_\_ over 42
2. What is your sex?        \_\_\_ Male \_\_\_ Female
3. What is your ethnic classification?  
                                  \_\_\_ Black \_\_\_ American Indian  
                                  \_\_\_ Caucasian \_\_\_ Asian  
                                  \_\_\_ Mexican American \_\_\_ Other
4. Are you married        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
5. Have you ever been in the military        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
6. Are you receiving financial aid        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
7. Are you presently employed        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
8. What was the size of your communities population in which you spent most of your life  
    \_\_\_ Rural  
    \_\_\_ Less than 2,500  
    \_\_\_ 2,500 to 50,000  
    \_\_\_ Greater than 50,000
9. Have you ever been enrolled in any previous vocational training        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no
10. What type of program were you enrolled in  
    \_\_\_\_\_
11. How long were you enrolled in the program  
    \_\_\_ less than 1 year  
    \_\_\_ 1 year  
    \_\_\_ 2 years
12. In what type of school did you receive training  
    \_\_\_ Area Vocational/  
    Technical school  
                                  \_\_\_ Comprehensive  
                                  high school
13. Are you enrolled to help improve your job marketing status        \_\_\_ yes \_\_\_ no



How much influence did the Following Factors have  
on your decision to enroll in the technical  
program that you are now enrolled in?

Please Respond to all 5 of the factors

Place an X in the Appropriate section to  
indicate the degree of influence to you

-----

	Most important			Least important	
	5	4	3	2	1
1. Was being enrolled in a previous vocational education program an influence on your decision to enroll in this program?	_____	/_____	/_____	/_____	/_____
2. Was the type of vocational program you were enrolled in an influence on your decision to enroll in this program?	_____	/_____	/_____	/_____	/_____
3. Was the amount of previous vocational training an influence on your decision to enroll in this program?	_____	/_____	/_____	/_____	/_____
4. Was the type of school where you received your training (vo-tech or comprehensive high school) an influence on your decision to enroll in this program?	_____	/_____	/_____	/_____	/_____
5. Was the need for more vocational training to improve your job marketing status an influence on your decision to enroll in this program?	_____	/_____	/_____	/_____	/_____

**APPENDIX B**

**COVER LETTER TO DEPARTMENT HEADS**

Roger E. Miller  
730 N. Village Ave. #2A  
Broken Arrow, Ok. 74012  
Phone 918-251-0060  
Work 918-258-8696

Dr. Bill Wells  
Chairman Technical Education  
Tulsa Junior College  
6111 E. Skelly Dr.  
Tulsa, Ok. 74135

Dr. Bill Wells,

As an educator, one of the major problems I have recognized is the amount of influence we have on our students when they are choosing a college. I have chosen to research this problem for my Masters Thesis at Oklahoma State University specifically looking at the influence of Vocational Education as an influence upon entering freshmen. The purpose of this study is to determine the significance of vocational education as an influence to students choosing a two year college.

I would greatly appreciate your distributing the enclosed questionnaires to fifty randomly selected first year freshmen enrolled in a technical or occupational type program. The questionnaire is two pages in length consisting of two parts: (1) information about the student and (2) a list of factors the student is to rank in order of their importance as an influence to them in choosing a college. Completing the questionnaires will require only a few minutes. Please return the completed questionnaires in the enclosed self-addressed, stamped envelope by March 31, 1989.

The information obtained by this project will be of interest and help to all of us. I will furnish you with a copy of the results as soon as they are available. Thank you for your participation and cooperation in this study.

Sincerely,

Roger E. Miller

Enclosures  
REM

**VITA**

**Roger Earl Miller**

**Candidate for the Degree of**

**Master of Science**

**Thesis: AN ANALYSIS OF VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AS AN INFLUENCE  
ON STUDENTS' DECISIONS TO ENTER TECHNICAL EDUCATION**

**Major Field: Trade and Industrial Education**

**Biographical:**

**Personal Data:** Born in Blackwell, Oklahoma, October 31, 1962, the son of Earl J. and Eva Miller. Married to Debra Koch May 21, 1981.

**Education:** Graduated from Braman High School, Braman, Oklahoma in May, 1980; received Associate of Science in Industrial Arts in December, 1983; received Bachelor of Science in Industrial Arts Education in May, 1988; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in December, 1989.

**Professional Experience:** Teacher of Industrial Arts at North Intermediate High School, Broken Arrow, Oklahoma, from August, 1988 to May, 1989.

**Professional Organizations:** Member American Vocational Association, International Technology Education Association, Iota Lambda Sigma, National Gold Key Honor Society, Society of Manufacturing Engineers.