

CHARACTERISTICS AND FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS'  
CHOICE OF VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN AREA  
VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS  
IN OKLAHOMA

By

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

The Vocational Education Act of 1963 was an important event in the development of vocational education in the United States. The specific purpose of the Act was to make vocational education available to a wider range of students. Mobely and Barlow (1) state that it is the purpose of the Act to maintain, extend, and improve the existing vocational education programs and develop new programs so that persons of all ages in every community can have access to vocational training or retraining. Training should be realistic in regard to employment and suited to the needs, interests, and ability of the persons concerned.

In most respects, the 1963 law incorporated changes in vocational education. It permitted instruction in all occupational fields and levels for high school students and for those preparing to enter the labor market who had completed or discontinued their formal education. The act provided federal funds to strengthen and improve the quality of vocational education and to expand the vocational education opportunities across the nation to meet the needs of individuals as well as the needs of society. Vocational education programs were authorized through a wide variety of public institutions. One of these institutions was the area vocational-technical school (2). Thus, the concept of the area vocational-technical schools (or centers) became a reality with the enactment of the Vocational Act of 1963. These schools and centers have

been established all over the United States to provide training for people and equip them with marketable skills. The general objectives of the area vocational-technical schools are:

1. To provide students with a wide choice of training programs.
2. To provide a better means of coordinating the training programs offered.
3. To provide a more practical and economical means of offering such training.
4. To attract new industry to the area where a student is located and expand present industry (3).

In 1965, the Oklahoma State Board of Vocational and Technical Education designated the first five area vocational-technical centers at Tulsa, Oklahoma City, Ardmore, Duncan, and Enid.

An amendment to the state constitution was voted by the people of Oklahoma in May, 1966, that provided for the formation of area vocational-technical school districts. This amendment made it possible for several school districts to join together to form an area vocational-technical school district thus providing a larger choice of vocational course offerings than would otherwise be possible within a single community school district. Each district elects a board of education and votes for a levy for operational purposes, shared with state and federal funds (3, 4).

Area vocational-technical schools and centers in Oklahoma have been established within commuting distance of groups of high schools to provide occupational training for high school students during the day and for adult students during the day and/or at night. Credits earned by students attending the area vocational-technical schools apply toward

high school graduation and may apply toward college entrance requirements (4).

The area vocational-technical school concept maintains that the school can provide training in any trade below the professional level for which a need exists, within commuting distance of almost every resident of the State of Oklahoma. The training in this type of school is designed to provide the people to be served with the necessary skills needed by business, industry, and agriculture (3).

#### Need for the Study

Area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma are responsible for vocational education at the secondary level. These schools assume the responsibility of serving students and communities by offering quality vocational training in various areas of proven demand (5).

High-school students and adults are given a choice as to which program they enroll in. They have a variety of vocational programs to choose from. With the great variety of programs, the question arises as to why students choose one program over the others. Knowledge of the reasons that students enroll in a specific area is of vital importance to planners and counselors. Planning for better vocational education programs should begin with careful consideration of the students to be served. Allen (6) states that:

Planners must take into account the occupational interests of students when measuring program standards. The specific learning goals for each student should be based upon an understanding of the wide differences in personalities, interests, backgrounds and abilities (p. 127).

One of the major responsibilities of vocational educators is to determine how best to help high school students make realistic

occupational educational decisions. Vocational counselors, instructors, and administrators are concerned with providing students with the type of training that meets their needs and that will help them in their future careers. As the variety of jobs continues to increase and as the training requirements change according to technological advances, the problem of helping students make realistic educational and occupational choices becomes more critical (7).

Because there is no empirical evidence as to what factors have the greatest influence on vocational choices of students, it seems reasonable to assume that planning an effective system of vocational education in the area vocational-technical schools (AVTS) in Oklahoma requires the provision of accurate information about students to be served. It is also the conviction of the writer that this information is useful to administrators, teachers, parents, and counselors in directing students into areas consistent with their occupational aspirations. Noeth and Jespen (8) state that:

Expressed vocational choices have promise for both counseling and research activities. As a part of counseling, a student's choice seems to indicate both a general direction and an implied prediction that exceed chance. Predictability is obviously enhanced for youth who are more certain about their choices. It would seem, then, that counselors' client time could be well spent in devising career exploration and planning strategies (p. 25).

#### Statement of the Problem

Information and its analysis with regard to the characteristics of vocational students and the major factors that impact on their choices of a program at the area vocational-technical school is not available.

### Purpose of the Study

The major purpose of the study was to identify factors that influenced students enrolled in Oklahoma AVTS to choose the programs in which they enrolled. A secondary purpose was to identify and report selected demographic characteristics of students in their respective programs.

### Objectives and Research Questions

The following objectives and questions were formulated to assist in the accomplishment of the purpose of this study.

#### Objective I

The first objective was to determine the general characteristics of students in Oklahoma AVTS.

Questions. What are the demographic characteristics (sex and race) of students enrolled in vocational programs in AVTS? What other attributes (scholastic aptitude, socio-economic background, future aspirations) characterize vocational students?

#### Objective II

The second objective is to determine the type of relationships that exist between students' choices and selected characteristics.

Questions. Is there a significant relationship between the sex and race of students and the type of program in which they are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the level of educational attainment of parents and the type of program in which the students are enrolled?

Is there a relationship between the occupational classification of the fathers of students and the type of training the students obtain? Is there a relationship between the students' GPA in high school and the type of vocational program in which the students are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the students' aspirations and the type of program in which they are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the types of work experiences of the students and the type of vocational programs in which they are enrolled?

### Objective III

The third objective was to identify and rank, according to importance, factors that influenced students to select the vocational programs in which they are enrolled.

Questions. What are the factors affecting students' choice of their major area of vocational training? What are the most influential factors affecting students' choice of vocation? Who are the most influential persons in affecting the students' choice?

### Objective IV

The fourth objective was to determine the most popular areas in vocational education in the AVTS.

Question. What are the most populated programs in the AVTS?

### Assumptions

For the purpose of this study the following assumptions were made:

1. Vocational education is an essential part of the curriculum at the high school level.

2. The sample involved in the study was representative of all area vocational-technical school students in Oklahoma.
3. The students' attitude toward vocational programs remain constant over several years ahead.
4. That all respondents understood the purpose of the study and responded accordingly.
5. The responses of the students regarding vocational choice were honest expressions of their opinions, and correct to the best of their ability.

It was also assumed that there were no significant differences among students in area vocational-technical schools due to geographic location. It is felt that the students in all geographic locations within the state were adequately represented by the sample.

#### Definitions of Terms

The following definitions of terms are furnished to provide, as nearly as possible, clear and concise meanings of the terms as used in this study.

1. Area Vocational-Technical Schools (AVTS): A vocational school established in a specific geographic district to provide training programs in vocational and technical education for those students of participating high schools within that district (3).
2. Vocational Education: Vocational education "is that part of education which makes an individual more employable in one group of occupations than in another" (18, p. 3).



3. Vocational Programs: Educational programs, other than academic programs, that deal with both vocational and technical skills designed primarily to prepare the student for an entry-level job.
4. Adults: Are those students enrolled in a vocational program in the area of vocational-technical school but not attending a high school.
5. Students: Are those attending high schools and enrolled in selected vocational and technical education programs at the secondary level in an area vocational-technical school.
6. Characteristic: A trait, quality, or property that distinguishes an individual or group of individuals.

#### Scope of the Study

This study was limited to students enrolled in selected vocational education program in the AVTS within the state of Oklahoma. These programs were selected from the list of programs offered in the AVTS according to popularity and availability in almost all area vocational-technical schools.

Programs selected for this study were: air conditioning/ refrigeration, auto body, automechanics, business and office education, carpentry, health service careers, masonry, and welding.

#### Limitations of the Study

1. The personal characteristics of students included in this study cannot be considered a complete profile of vocational students in Oklahoma.

2. Implications of this study may not be applicable to other vocational programs.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

According to Thompson (2), in a democratic society free choice of an occupation is assumed to be preferred to coercion. Free choice of occupation in such a society assumes that there are alternative courses of action, and that one has the freedom to choose from these alternatives. Thompson (2) states that:

Crystallization of a vocational preference is a developmental task typically encountered during the 14 to 18-year old period. During this developmental task the teenager is expected to begin to formulate ideas as to fields and levels of work that are appropriate for him. He is also expected to formulate concepts about self and occupation that will enable him to commit himself to a type of education or training that will lead him to partially specified occupations (p. 246).

The primary purpose of this study was to identify the characteristics and factors that had impact on the students' choice of selected vocational programs in the area vocational-technical schools (AVTS) in Oklahoma. As was indicated in the previous chapter, no studies have been conducted to fulfill this purpose. A limited number of studies, however, have been conducted to investigate the effect of specific factors on the students' choice of certain programs either at the secondary or at the post-secondary level in a selected school or college. Other investigations were only concerned about identifying characteristics of post-secondary students at certain four-year technical colleges. Stemming from the purpose of this study a review of literature has been

made to form a theoretical basis for the study as well as to throw light on the major features of vocational students at the secondary level.

In the review of literature, the investigator attempted to collect information relevant to the study. Theoretical background as well as similar studies were reviewed to help in identifying the variables associated or inherent with vocational interest, occupational choice, career development, and vocational guidance. The investigator was under the impression that literature would form a strong base for the study, and help in identifying factors that affect vocational choice as well as pointing out the general characteristics of vocational and technical students. It was, therefore, deemed appropriate to divide this chapter into the following sections: (1) theoretical perspectives on occupational choice; (2) factors affecting vocational training choice; (3) characteristics of vocational/technical students; and (4) related studies.

#### Theoretical Perspective on Occupational Choice

Because this study was primarily concerned with identifying the factors affecting vocational choice, it was felt that a review of theories concerning how individuals arrive at those choices would be beneficial. The review of literature indicates that there has been a considerable interest in the phenomenon of vocational or occupational choice. The concern is important because one's choice of a specific occupation determines his working life. Cribbon was quoted by O'Reilly (9) as saying that:

When one appreciates the fact that the average person is likely to work for approximately 40 hours a week, 50 weeks a year, 45 years of his life--a total of some 90,000 hours--the matter of vocational choice is crucial, indeed (p. 207).

The decision about an occupation is one of the most important and may be the most difficult made by young people. Regarding vocational behavior, it is generally assumed that people possess an array of choices about their careers. They are, therefore, required to actively consider those vocational alternatives and to implement what they deem the most desirable. The availability of choices provides opportunities for the satisfaction of interests through vocational choice. Thus, job satisfaction can be seen as a result of entry into an occupation close to one's set of interests (10).

Once an individual has identified his field of interest it is safe to say that training necessary for the desired occupation becomes possible. Vocational development includes a comprehensive set of areas and questions pertinent to why vocational behavior is different among individuals, how it comes to be that way, and the importance of such behavior in the lives of people. Evans (18) describes the term vocational development as a synonym for career development that is strongly associated with occupational choice. The selection of a specific occupation determines the type of training that leads to the acquisition of the skills needed for that occupation. For further consideration of vocational development the following major theories are briefly reviewed.

#### Ginzberg's Theory

This, then, is our general theory. First occupational choice is a process which takes place over a minimum of six or seven years, and more typically, over 10 years or more. Secondly, since each decision during adolescence is related to one's experience up to that point, and in turn has an influence on the future, the future of decision-making is basically irreversible. Finally, since occupational choice involves the balancing of a series of subjective elements with the opportunities and limitations of reality, the crystallization of occupational choice inevitable has the quality of a compromise (11, p. 186).

Osipo (10) describes this theory when he states that Ginzberg and his associates propose that vocational development occurs most intensively during adolescence (during the teens and early twenties). Before age 11 many activities occur that tend to ready the individual to deal with issues of vocational concern raised during adolescence. At about the age of 11 the adolescent fixes his attention on some aspects of vocational development. First, the adolescent begins to focus on his likes (interests) and dislikes. Second, he becomes concerned about his abilities, skills, and performance capability. And third, he forms a relationship between his knowledge of his capacity and interest and his values.

At this stage, a transition occurs that directs the individual's attention to the need for realistic crystallization of a vocational preference. This later stage moves the individual either into specific training or into the job market. Osipo (10) further states that:

More recently, Ginzberg has suggested that perhaps vocational development is not restricted to the adolescent age range he originally proposed, and also that more flexibility in modifying choices may exist than he thought at first. Overall, however, Ginzberg sees the process as occurring primarily during the teen years and early twenties, focusing largely on the individual's efforts in collecting data about himself and the world of work and forging this information into some kind of entry level choice (p. 11).

### Super's Theory

Super hypothesized that, when making an occupational choice, the individual is attempting to match his attributes with an occupation that will allow him to be the kind of person he believes himself to be. This implies that the individual, to achieve a satisfactory level, must have a complete and accurate understanding of himself, and have

accurate information about the occupational alternatives and their requirements (12, 10).

Super (13, 14) feels that there are some definite limitations to the Ginzberg theory; not only did it fail to build adequately on previous work, but also it used an inadequate definition of the word "choice" and its different meanings at different ages, and the theory failed to describe its compromise process. Super's (13, 14) work was thus stimulated by the work of Ginzberg. He tried to correct some of Ginzberg's limitations and set forth his comprehensive theory in a series of ten propositions:

1. People differ in their abilities, interests, and personalities.
2. People are qualified, by virtue of these characteristics, each for a number of occupations.
3. Each of these occupations requires a characteristic pattern of abilities, interests, and personality traits, with tolerances wide enough, however, to allow both some variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation.
4. Vocational preferences and competencies, the situations in which people live and work, and hence their self concepts, change with time and experience (although self concepts are generally fairly stable from late adolescence (until later maturity), making choice and adjustment a continuous process.
5. This process may be summed up in a series of life stages characterized as those of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into (a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic

phases of the exploratory stage, and (b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage.

6. The nature of the career pattern (that is, the occupational level attained and the sequence, frequency, and duration of trial and stable jobs) is determined by the individual's parental socioeconomic level, mental ability, and personality characteristics, and by the opportunities to which he is exposed.
7. Development through the life stages can be guided partly by facilitating the process of maturation of abilities and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and in the development of the self concept.
8. The process of vocational development is essentially that of developing and implementing a self concept. It is a compromise process in which the self concept is a product of the interaction of inherited aptitudes, neutral, and endocrine make-up, opportunity to play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and fellows.
9. The process and compromise between individual and social factors, between self concept and reality, is one of role playing; whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counseling interview, or in real life activities such as school classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry-level jobs.
10. Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend on the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for his abilities, interests, personality traits, and values; they



depend upon his establishment in a type of work, a work situation, and a way of life in which he can play the kind of role that his growth and exploratory experiences have led him to consider congenial and appropriate (13).

It seems apparent that Super's theory is more explicit and detailed, though it contains two of the three elements of Ginzberg's theory. Perhaps the major advantage of Super's theory lies in the fact that he has cited experimental evidence from which he has built an inductive theory.

### Roe's Theory

Roe (15) developed her theory of vocational choice based on a study of research scientists. She considered experiences the child had in childhood and early adolescence as the major variable in occupational choice. The theory is composed of three major constructs: (1) that early childhood experiences influence vocational choice; (2) that individuals have needs which they seek to satisfy through occupations; and (3) that an individual's genetic make-up influences both his occupation choice and the need hierarchy, or values orientation he develops. Osipow (10) states that:

In her theory Roe took the position that career choice ultimately reflects the impact of personality and personality development. Most crucial periods in personality development according to Roe are those that occur in early childhood. As a consequence, Roe describes a series of parent-child interactions, occurring in the context of various genetic differences, which influence the development of need hierarchies resulting in two basic interpersonal orientations: either toward or not toward people. These two basic orientations in turn lend themselves differentially to careers. Those careers which grow out of an orientation toward people include those in the fields of service, business contact, organizations, art and entertainment, and general cultural

areas. Those occupational fields which tend to be the result of orientations 'not toward people' include scientific, technological, and outdoor careers (p. 11).

### Holland's Theory

Holland (17) classified all personalities and work environments into six categories: realistic, intellectual, social, conventional, enterprising, and artistic. His theory is almost exclusively concerned with the phenomenon of occupational choice. At some point in time, the individual develops an orientation toward one of the categories and this orientation has a direct effect upon his choice. Holland viewed the matching of personality and environment type as the main factor in the occupational choice process. Occupational choice is best facilitated when one orientation is clearly dominant. The individual then attempts to match his personality orientation with a work environment of the same category through his occupational choice. Holland (17) reports that vocational choice is one of many expressions of personality. And the way of life associated with a particular occupational class can be regarded as a human environment of which the obvious work activities are only a small part. He asserts that "people search for environments and vocations that will permit them to exercise their skills and abilities, to express their attitudes and values, to take an agreeable problems and roles, and to avoid disagreeable ones" (p. 11).

Holland (17) states the following assumptions which underlie his theory:

1. The choice of vocation is an expression of personality.
2. Vocational stereotypes have reliable and important psychological and sociological meanings.
3. The members of a vocation have similar personalities and similar histories of personal development.

4. Because people in a vocational group have similar personalities, they will respond to many situations and problems in similar ways, and they will create characteristics--interpersonal environments.
5. Vocational satisfaction, stability, and achievement depend on the congruency between one's personality and the environment in which one works.
6. Our knowledge of vocational life is disorganized and often isolated from the main body of psychological and sociological knowledge (pp. 2-6).

This theory further assumes that:

At the time a person chooses a vocation he is the product of his heredity and a variety of environmental forces including peers, social class, American culture, and the physical environment . . . The person making a vocational choice in a sense 'searches' for those environments which are congruent with his personal orientations (17, p. 1).

It, thus, seems apparent that a person's first and subsequent decisions may be explained, according to Holland's theory, in terms of personality pattern and environmental model.

#### Trait-and-Factor Theory

As described by Evans (18), this theory focuses on the identification and description of the factors by which people differ and the degree to which these factors are important in learning or in job performance. According to this theory individuals may be perceived as being comprised of a cluster of traits, such as aptitudes, interests, values, psychomotor abilities, and energy levels that can be observed and measured. These patterns of personal traits are assumed to be more or less unique to each individual. Evans reports that:

. . . trait-and-factor approaches assume that occupational choice is primarily a function of matching the person's profile of characteristics with that set of occupational or educational requirements most closely related to it. The prediction is that the closer the congruency between the individual characteristics and the requirements of

occupational or educational options available, the more likely it is that adjustment and success will result (p. 152).

### The Decision Theory

In this theory the assumption is made that one chooses an occupational goal that will maximize one's gain and minimize one's chance of loss. The gain or loss can be anything of value to a particular person. A given occupation may be considered as a means of achieving many different possibilities--among them greater prestige, security, social mobility, leisure time--when compared to another course of action (18). Evans (18) describes the decision theory:

1. The specific notion of a decision approach is that an individual has several 'alternatives' or courses of action among which to choose.
2. The expectation in decision theory is that individuals can be helped to choose more rationally by predicting the outcomes of each alternative available . . .
3. The decision theory approaches stress the importance of personal values in choice . . . (pp. 153-154).

From the foregoing theories it seems clear that there are some disagreements among theories regarding the factors that affect occupational choice. Most theorists, however, agree on the following points:

1. Occupational choice is not a sudden, once-in-a-lifetime phenomenon. Occupational choice is a gradual process that occupies most of the first half of one's life.
2. Occupational choice is difficult to separate from aspiration and attainment. Since aspiration is not always fulfilled, attainment must be regarded as a separate aspect.
3. Occupational choice is a portion of the basic life process of growing. Realistically looking at one's potentialities and accepting personal limitations, a student is able to develop a clearer recognizable image of himself--self concept (16, p. 21).

Senesh was quoted by Borow (19):

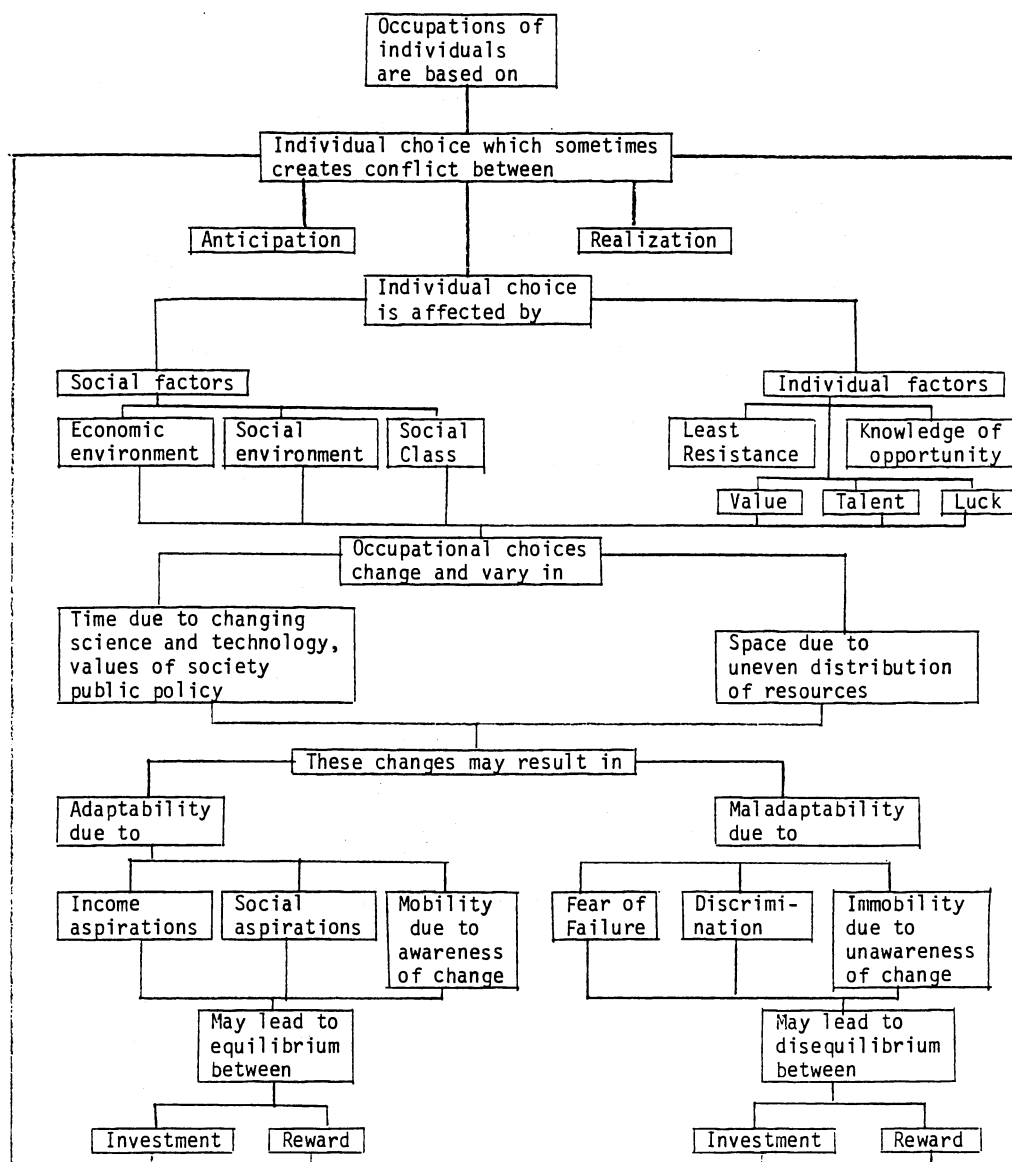
When students can study the nature and causes of the conflict between human aspirations and the occupational role, they will be better equipped to cope with this problem when they enter the working world (p. 212).

Senesh has produced a model of career development by which he identifies the central problem to be studied as that of how the social system can be made to insure a match between occupational roles and human aspirations that will lead to maximum individual fulfillment. The study of Senesh's model gives a clear idea about the individual choice and the factors which may affect this choice whether social or individual. The model also explains how occupational choices change and vary in space and time (due to maldistribution of resources, and changing science and technology and values of society) and the implications of these changes. Figure 1 presents a scheme of the fundamental ideas of Senesh's Model of Career Development.

#### Factors Affecting Vocational Training Choice

The literature indicates that students' choices of vocational training programs are affected by several factors. A student may decide on a specific training program because he has interest in that type of training or he has already chosen his future occupation. Another student might make his choice based upon previous experience of knowledge about the content of the program.

The literature points out many factors which may have influence on the occupational choice of students. Borow (20) has identified some social factors which relate to occupational choice. These factors include socioeconomic status, occupational prestige, level of aspiration, differences among rural-urban groups, cultural deprivation, work



Source: Borow, H. Career Guidance for a New Age. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1973.

Figure 1. Model of Career Development

experience, and social trends. Lipsett (21) has observed that social class, home influences, school climate, community values, pressure groups, and role perceptions interact directly with vocational development.

Research has revealed disagreement among investigators as to what factors have the most influence on vocational choice.

Turner (22) reported 20 reasons given by high school seniors for making their occupational choices. Of the students, 66.7 percent indicated that admiration of successful people in an occupation was the major reason for their choice of vocational training leading to that occupation. Heath was quoted by Swingle (23):

1. Interests are one of the major influences determining vocational choice. Interest serves as the motivating force behind the exploratory period of preadolescence . . . . It is not until interest patterns become stabilized that any permanence of choice is realized. Therefore we may conclude that interests may take many forms during the developmental period, and, regardless of form taken, the motivational force created by interest patterns may be the catalytic agent that directs the individual toward a vocational choice . . . .
2. The home situation is the most influential factor determining vocational choice . . . . It can be said that the child takes his home with him to school, to play, and to work.
3. Peer group activities are an important influence on vocational choice.
4. The school situation influences the choice process in that it provides areas of exploration which enable the individual to develop a wide range of interests and the opportunity to develop his potential capacities. The nature of the school curriculum has the tendency to direct students toward fields of occupations. The school only sets the stage for developing patterns of vocational choice; it does not determine what the choice will be (pp. 11-12).

Elizabeth et al. (12) found out that interest and ability in the occupational area were the most influential factors encouraging women

to enter the training programs. Over 80 percent of both students and educational personnel considered this a very important motive; over 96 percent of the students considered it either important or very important. Both low-income and minority women considered earnings a more important factor in their choice of vocational training programs than did more affluent or white women. Vocational education teachers were found to be influential factors. Parents were supporting and encouraging students rather than assisting them in their career decision-making (12). Mager (24) reports that:

A person's native abilities influence the kinds of activities he will engage in and the kinds of objects and events he will tend to approach. But though he may be partial toward those activities at which he is particularly adept, tendencies are influenced primarily by events in the world around him. They are shaped mostly by the attitudes of the people he encounters, by objects and experiences, and by the consequences of his own actions (p. 32).

Mager further states that people influence people; instructors and other factors, such as peers, parents, relatives, and the mass media, have influence on students' behavior. Falk (25) states that:

An individual's occupational choice, at any point in time, will be the result of an interactive rather than linear process. The individual will not make an occupational choice in a vacuum but through interaction with others and his environment in general (p. 71).

Haller (26) states five factors that have influence on youth's occupational choice. These factors are:

1. The youth's occupational decisions and concerns, including interests in the future, level of occupational aspiration, and particularly occupational choices;
2. Changes in occupations themselves;
3. The immediate situation of the youth including his physical facilities, namely the accessibility and quality of schools and his financial resources, and also the expectations of others, like his parents, teachers,



counselors and the dominant culture which influence his own self-conceptions and sometimes affect his actual job changes;

4. Other life decisions including education, marriage, and preferred residence; and
5. The youth's conception of his ability, his occupational self-conceptions, and his conceptions of behavior appropriate to his sex (pp. 4-5).

Krumboltz (27) believes that counselors are important sources of influence on students. The student may seek help from the counselor when he feels confused about occupational decisions to direct him toward the most appropriate occupational choice. Krumboltz reports:

When a person feels he cannot make a wise vocational decision by himself, he may seek help from a counselor. The client may have a fairly clear goal, but wonders how to get there. Or he may wonder which of two or more alternative occupations is best. Or he may have virtually no idea which occupations might prove appropriate for him. He frequently expects the counselor to give him specific advice (p. 238).

Asking students to report their opinion of the most important factors influencing vocational choices, Peters (28) found out that parents, other relatives, and friends ranked first. From this he concluded that the family is the greatest agency affecting vocational choice of youth.

Youmans (29) investigated the effect of social factors on vocational choice; he concluded that social satisfaction is more important in the formulation of youth's occupational choices than are the type of community, the school, work experience, or certain factors in the home situation.

Other research studies by Foley (30), Cobb (32), and Vetter (31) revealed the importance of parents, counselors, friends, teachers, and previous work experiences as factors influencing students' choices of vocational training. Research has also shown that the occupational and

educational achievements of parents and the socio-economic background of the students have influence on their vocational choice. Youmans (29) concluded that fathers' occupations, fathers' education, place of residence, and work experience had a great influence on students' vocational choices. It was also seen that the higher the formal educational level of the father, the higher the son's occupational aspirations. Baird (33) reported that students whose major educational goal was to secure vocational training tended to come from lower income families. Stewart (34) reported that more students in vocational courses come from low status backgrounds than do students in other courses or four-year institutions.

It therefore appears clearly that factors affecting students' vocational choices are abundant. Some of these factors are social or environmental, others are personal, and all have certain influence on vocational choice. Yet, vocational choice may take place by chance without being affected by these factors. Margolin (35) points out that chance may be an important factor in one's vocational choice. Vocational choice might also take place under the pressure of certain characteristics, and thus students will have no alternatives to choose from. Falk (25) reports that some factors such as race, sex, and physical handicaps have an added constraining effect in the occupational choice process. Diamond (36, p. 229) states, "A review of research on sex differences in the educational and occupational orientation of adolescents revealed that the occupational choices of the two sexes are still highly sex stereotyped."

The next section will, therefore, be devoted to the characteristics of vocational-technical students as revealed by research studies in an

attempt to complete the picture, and to throw some light on this phenomenon.

#### Characteristics of Vocational- Technical Students

Despite the growing interest in vocational and technical education at the secondary level, data are not available on the characteristics of students enrolled in each training program of vocational education. Lacking this desirable information, one must look at the known characteristics of vocational students as a group (18).

According to Evans (18), research studies indicated that 60 percent of vocational education students were female, 85 percent of whom were enrolled in commercial or business curricula. Female students showed higher academic ability than males. Male students in vocational education programs include minority groups (16.6 percent blacks, 6.1 percent Spanish surname, 1.0 percent Orientals, 8 percent American Indians, and 75 percent all others). Using father occupations as a measure of socio-economic status, Evans reports that vocational students come from lower socio-economic status families. More than 50 percent of students' fathers work as laborers and craftsmen, and have lower income and have less education than do fathers of college bound students. It has also been reported that vocational education status is low in the eyes of secondary school students. On the average, the earnings of vocational education graduates were found to be higher, on a yearly basis, than earnings of other curricula graduates.

In studying the background characteristics of students who reported plans for entrance into vocational-technical programs, Fenske (as quoted by Granberry (37)) stated:

The profile of the 'typical' vocational-technical senior remained indistinct; rank on scholastic ability was nearly as likely to be in the highest 30 percent as in the lowest 30 percent. There was no strong identity with a particular level of parental educational attainment or with the status of father's occupation. The vocational-technical senior remained amorphous when measured by the variables in describing other types of seniors (p. 25).

A study by Bolick (38) of credit students in the North Carolina Community College System, described the typical vocational student as being male, single, Caucasian, between the ages of 18-22 years, having both parents with less than 12 years of formal education. Debord (39) reported that 19 percent of vocational students' fathers and 29 percent of their mothers were high school graduates, 69 percent of the students expected further education. Phillips (40) quoted Van Hall:

The technical student is work oriented, pragmatic, has an unquenchable sense of curiosity and comes to school with clearly established career goals. The technical student will show a strong aptitude in the mathematical, scientific and mechanical areas, but will show little interest in English and social studies. The technical student's scores on standardized intelligence tests may not be a good indication of his true potential as a student, since these tests are largely verbal based. Finally the technical student does not possess a deep social consciousness concerning what some students consider the great issues of the day. Club activities which are directly related to the technical student's curriculum are the only ones in which he is likely to show an interest (p. 23).

Research has indicated relationships between vocational students and employees in parallel occupations. Compton (41) found out that the characteristics of students enrolled in clothing and textile programs were similar to those characteristics of people employed in clothing and textile occupations. Compton's findings indicate that there may be a positive correlation between the characteristics of students in vocational programs and the characteristics of those working in occupations related to these programs.

### Related Studies

The investigator was unable to find a previous study that has been made in the field of the problem. There were very few studies, however, similar in nature and that could be considered, in some aspects, relevant to this study. Fisher (42) conducted a study to identify factors which influence enrollments in selected post-secondary education programs. He found out that the parent was the most important influence on the students' choices of post-secondary industrial programs. Personal interests were also reported to be influential factors.

A study by Haskit (43) of agriculture students revealed that the influence of parents or relatives on the students' choice of agricultural training ranks lower than the influence of the vocational agriculture instructor. Hartsfield (44) confirmed the findings of Haskit and found that vocational agriculture instructors were the most influential group in recruiting students to enroll in vocational agriculture occupational training.

Another study by Kusel (45) revealed that students' choice of vocational training was influenced most by programs related to their needs and desires and not by other persons. He also concluded that students who are less active participants in school activities have low overall grade point averages, have no plans to attend college, and are more likely to enter the area vocational-technical school programs.

Hallum (46) concluded that the most influential factor determining the student's choice of vocational agriculture was their interest in future careers in agriculture. A moderate influence from friends and/or relatives was also reported.

McDowell (47) states that in an area vocational school in Kentucky the counselors of the area school and the home high schools are highly influential in students' choice of vocational courses at the AVTS.

In a study of students of the Midwest City-Del City school district, Jones (48) reported that parents were most influential in student choice of vocational-technical courses. Students' friends had a very significant influence on their curriculum choices and a large group made their own selection unassisted. School people who were in a position to advise students were credited with very little influence on students' decisions to attend the vocational-technical center.

A study conducted by Katz (51) on junior high school students showed that parents and relatives were of more influence than counselors and teachers in helping students make class choices.

Another study by Lungstrum (49) of 366 high school seniors in Wichita vocational educational programs yielded the following enrollment factors:

1. Decisiveness of occupational choice for both sexes was linked with their satisfaction with the school in general and with the value of school work in eventual employment.
2. Teachers were consistently seen by both sexes as most influential to occupational preferences and choices.
3. Fathers' occupations were related to the son's occupational choices, but mother occupations did not seem related to the daughters' choices.
4. More male decisions were made earlier and twice as many males had always wanted their current choice.
5. Male students were more independent of friends' influence

regarding their occupational preferences and choices than were females.

In other study of agriculture students in the Guthrie High School, Holt (50) revealed that the family income and the parents' occupational level had a slight effect on their children occupational aspiration level.

It seems safe to say that students' occupational choice is subject to certain influential factors. The review of literature has indicated that the influencing factors are diversified and varied. In some cases parents were most influential. Other studies showed high influence from peers, mass media, or previous experience. Due to the confusion as to how the student decides to choose a career and enroll in a specific vocational training program, and what characteristics are associated with vocational-oriented individuals, this study was conducted to secure accurate information regarding the general characteristics and factors that influence students' choice of training programs in the AVTS. It is hoped that the findings of this study will be of value to both the AVTS system in Oklahoma and the administrators, instructors and counselors in vocational education.

#### Summary

In an effort to provide support for the general procedure under which this study was conducted, and to establish a theoretical background of the study, a review of literature was undertaken.

Pertinent literature was reviewed in the following categories-- theories of occupation choice, factors affecting vocational choice, characteristics of vocational students, and related studies.

Based on the review of literature it seems clear that vocational development is composed of factors in the individual's environment that convey values and/or encouragement about the various occupational options a person might consider. The factors that might have influence on the person's choice of an occupation and hence on the selection of the related vocational training program are diversified and inconsistent. Demographic and social characteristics might, also, have influence on the individual's decision of his future career.

Research has indicated that generally vocational students tend to come from different cultural, economic, and social backgrounds. They vary in ability and learning capacity and are motivated by diverse purposes and objectives. Vocational students may be native or foreign-born, male or female, black, white, young or old, married or single. Their parents usually work at jobs in the lower occupational classification, have lower income, and have less formal education. As a group, vocational students tend to be academically less able than college or university-bound students.

Because of the uncertainty of the most influential factors on students' vocational choice, this study was felt needed.



## CHAPTER III

### METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The major purpose of this study was to investigate characteristics and factors that influence students enrolled in Oklahoma area vocational-technical schools to choose the programs in which they enrolled. Thus, the purpose has provided guidance for a design of the investigation to enable the researcher to answer the research questions.

A review of the literature revealed little information concerning the characteristics of students served by vocational education programs at the secondary level and the factors influencing their choices of training programs. From the review of literature, a number of students' characteristics and factors were identified and thought to be important for this study.

This chapter is devoted to the description of the methods and procedures to be used for the accomplishment of the purpose of the study. It is divided into the following sections: (1) research design, (2) selection of sample, (3) collection of data, and (4) treatment and analysis of data.

#### Research Design

The design of this research is considered to be of the descriptive type. The purpose of the survey was to collect data from students

enrolled in selected vocational programs in the area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma with the intent of obtaining evidence of the reasons behind students' selections of their fields of training, and using the data to make future plans for improving or modifying the existing situations. To obtain the needed data for this study, it was believed that a large sample of students enrolled in various selected programs in the area vocational-technical schools would be appropriate. Students were asked to fill out a survey questionnaire that included items of demographic and social characteristics and factors that might have an influence on one's vocational choice. The development of the instrument was based on research and the literature. Questionnaires that were used in similar studies were also utilized. The intent was to develop questions that identify (1) demographic characteristics of students, (2) social characteristics of students, (3) factors that influenced students to choose their fields of training and (4) the degree of importance these factors have in the decision-making process of vocational choice. The items referring to characteristics were of the item-checking type in a restricted form (or closed type of questionnaire). The items referring to factors were based on an ordinal scale, that is, every question had several choices of answers, and had given specific points developed on a Likert-type scale with four response categories for each item, ranging from (3) "great influence" to (0) "no influence". A sample of the questionnaire form is found in Appendix A.

#### Selection of Sample

Previous research has not been conducted in Oklahoma to identify factors influencing students' choices of vocational programs in area

vocational-technical schools. Therefore, a survey was made of students enrolled in vocational programs in the Oklahoma area vocational-technical schools to determine the factors having the greatest influence on students' decisions about their training and to identify the associated characteristics of those students.

Because the number of area vocational-technical schools was high at the time of conducting the study (33 schools located throughout the state), and the number of students involved in the training programs was so large, it was deemed necessary to choose a sample from the schools for conducting the study. A description of the sample selection process follows.

#### Sample Schools

The list of Oklahoma area vocational-technical schools (as of 1980-81) was obtained from the Oklahoma State Department of Vocational and Technical Education (see Appendix B). The decision was made to draw a sample of the schools on the list to participate in the study. It was assumed that five of the 33 schools would be representative and practical, given the funds and time available to the researcher. Table I, reproduced from documents obtained from the State Department of Vocational and Technical Education, gives identifying data concerning the 33 area vocational schools. This was the information used as the basis for the sample selection.

Based on the assumption that the schools' characteristics do not vary according to geographic region, a random sampling approach was employed. Kerlinger (52) states that:

TABLE I

## AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS IN OKLAHOMA BY SITES AND ENROLLMENT

Serial Number	Name of the School	Site	Enrollment
1	Northeast Oklahoma AVTS	Afton	447
2	Oklahoma Northwest AVTS	Fairview	113
3	Oklahoma Northwest AVTS	Alva	148
4	Southern Oklahoma AVTS	Ardmore	545
5	Tri-County AVTS	Bartlesville	767
6	Western Oklahoma AVTS	Burns Flat	447
7	Canadian Valley	El Reno	699
8	Canadian Valley	Chickasha	214
9	Central Oklahoma AVTS	Drumright	1107
10	Red River AVTS	Duncan	515
11	O. T. Autry	Enid	939
12	Caddo-Kiowa AVTS	Fort Cobb	506
13	Kiamichi AVTS	Hugo	263
14	Kiamichi AVTS	Idabel	257
15	Kiamichi AVTS	McAlester	434
16	Kiamichi AVTS	Poteau	336
17	Kiamichi AVTS	Talihina	160
18	Great Plains AVTS	Lawton	1252
19	Mid-Del AVTS	Midwest City	878
20	Indian Capital AVTS	Muskogee	740
21	Indian Capital AVTS	Sallisaw	224
22	Moore-Norman AVTS	Norman	942
23	Belle Isle AVTS	Oklahoma City	137
24	Foster Estes AVTS	Oklahoma City	823
25	Pioneer AVTS	Ponca City	461
26	Gordon Cooper AVTS	Shawnee	764
27	Indian Meridian AVTS	Stillwater	710
28	Tulsa County AVTS	Memorial Drive	1481
29	Tulsa County AVTS	Peoria Avenue	845
30	Mid-America AVTS	Wayne	685
31	Northeast Oklahoma AVTS	Pryor	419
32	Central Oklahoma AVTS	Sapulpa	385
33	Indian Capital AVTS	Stillwell	137

Source: State Department of Vocational and Technical Education (3).

In research a representative sample means that the sample has approximately the characteristics of the population . . . random samples are more likely to include the characteristics typical of the population if the characteristics are frequent in the population (p. 120).

The first step was to select ten schools for participation in the study. Each school in the list (Table I) was assigned a number, then according to Van Dalen (53) the corresponding numbers were placed on slips of paper. Then the slips were placed in a container and mixed thoroughly. A slip was drawn from the container and the number was recorded. Then the slip was returned to the container and the process of drawing and returning the slip in the container continued until ten schools were selected. Listed in Table II are the ten schools randomly selected in the above described manner.

TABLE II  
TEN SAMPLE SCHOOLS BY BASIC IDENTIFYING DATA

Serial Number	Name of AVT School	Site	Enrollment
1	Central Oklahoma	Drumright	1107
2	Tulsa-Memorial	Tulsa	1480
3	O. T. Autry	Enid	939
4	N. E. Oklahoma	Afton	447
5	Gordon Cooper	Shawnee	764
6	Indian Capital	Stilwell	710
7	Canadian Valley	El Reno	699
8	Red River	Duncan	515
9	Pioneer AVTS	Ponca City	461
10	Caddo-Kiowa	Fort Cobb	506

The sample included three schools with a student population of more than 800; two schools with a student population of more than 700 and less than 800; and four schools with a student population ranging from 400-699. In addition to varying in size the sample included schools from the major geographic regions of the state. This distribution may be considered a vital factor in considering the sample representative of the 33 schools.

#### Selection of Schools for the Study

It was thought reasonable to draw a purposive sample of the ten schools in Table II to participate in the study. The purposive selection of the sample schools was undertaken to secure a representative sample of almost all area schools in the state. Kerlinger (52, p. 129) states that, "Purposive sampling, which is characterized by the use of judgment and a deliberate effort to obtain representative samples by including presumably typical areas of groups in the sample." It was decided to consider the following elements as effective factors of the general characteristics of schools:

1. the geographic location of the school,
2. the nature of the area served by the school (whether rural or urban),
3. the population size of the school, and
4. the diversity of training programs offered by schools.

To cover these factors, five schools offering almost all the selected programs were chosen to form the sample for the study. These schools are shown in Table III.

The sample includes one small school (student population 461), two medium-size schools (student population 500-800), and two large

schools (student population over 900). The sample not only varies in size but includes schools from the major geographic areas and from both the rural and urban areas. The distribution of the sample, in the manner described, makes it a representative sample of the whole population. (See Kerlinger's definition of purposive sample under Sample Schools.)

TABLE III  
THE SAMPLE SCHOOLS FOR THE STUDY BY BASIC IDENTIFYING DATA

Serial Number	Name of School	Site	Geographic Location	Area Served	Enrollment
1	O. T. Autry	Enid	NW	Urban/Rural	939
2	Tulsa-Memorial	Tulsa	NE	Urban	1480
3	Gordon Cooper	Shawnee	Central	Urban/Rural	764
4	Caddo-Kiowa	Ft. Cobb	SW	Rural	506
5	Pioneer AVTS	Ponca City	NC	Rural	461

✓The officials of the five schools in the sample were contacted through the State Department of Vocational Education, informed about the nature and purpose of the study, and requested to participate.

✓Arrangements for conducting the study in the individual schools were made and scheduled with the superintendents of the schools (see Appendix C).

### Sample Students

The general principle underlying the selection of the sample of students in the five schools for responses to the questionnaire, was to ensure a representation of all those involved in the training programs in the area schools. The student sample included all of the students enrolled in the following vocational programs: air conditioning/refrigeration, auto body, auto mechanics, welding, business and office education, health services, carpentry, and masonry. These programs were selected from the list of programs offered in the AVTS according to program regularity and availability in almost all area schools (see Appendix B). All students enrolled in the selected programs at the five schools were eligible to be included in the study.

### Instrument and Collection of Data

Since the characteristics treated and the factors sought could only be determined from information that the students could supply, a questionnaire was developed to gather the relevant data. In an attempt to make the items of the questionnaire responsive to the purpose of the study and to make sure that the statements and/or items included were educationally correct and valid the researcher sought assistance from professors in the School of Occupational and Adult Education at Oklahoma State University and other faculty members in the College of Education. The questionnaire was also discussed with some graduate students before it was evaluated by faculty members.

The questionnaire was tested on a group of vocational students at Stillwater High School for further validation. Necessary changes were made. An initial contact was made with the director of AVTS at the



State Department of Vocational-Technical Education for necessary arrangements. Letters were sent by the researcher to the superintendents of the sample schools requesting their assistance in the conduct of the study. Questionnaires were administered at the schools with the assistance of each school's officials. Data collection was completed during the first half of April, 1982.

#### Treatment and Analysis of Data

The data were entered into and the statistical tests run by computer. The data were then analyzed to answer the research questions. Certain research questions were analyzed by descriptive statistical techniques: frequency counts and percentages. To examine the relationships among characteristics of students and their fields of choice Chi Square was used. The results of the data pertaining to the factors influencing students' choices were presented in numbers, percentages, means, and a t-test indicating the significance of the perception of students as to the factors that influence their choice of vocational programs. Because the mean of the ratings of the scale used to indicate the extent of influence of each factor should be significantly greater than 1.5, the one-tailed t-test was used. Bartz (54) states that:

It should be noted that a one-tailed t has more power than a two-tailed t; that is, with the one-tailed t-test, the null hypothesis is more likely to be rejected if it should be rejected. This is true if the direction of the difference is predicted in advance of collection of the data (p. 258).

The null hypothesis was stated  $\mu_0 = 1.5$ , and the alternative hypothesis was stated that  $\mu_\alpha > \mu_0$  (that is, the mean of the students' ratings of a specific factor would be greater than 1.5). The .05 level

of significance was used as the alpha level of statistical significance.

The formula used for the calculation of the t-statistic is (54):

$$t = \frac{\bar{X} - 1.5}{S/\sqrt{n}}$$

where  $\bar{X}$  = the mean value of the response,

S = the standard deviation, and

n = the sample size.

The formula for the calculation of the Chi Square is (54):

$$\chi^2 = \sum \frac{(O - E)^2}{E}$$

where O = the observed frequency in a given category, and

E = the expected frequency in the category.

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to identify characteristics and factors that influenced students in area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma to choose the training programs in which they enrolled. From the review of literature, a number of students' demographic and educational characteristics and factors were identified and thought to be important for this study. In order to accomplish the purpose of this study the following objectives and research questions were formulated.

#### Objective I

The first objective was to determine the general characteristics of students in Oklahoma area vocational-technical schools.

Questions. What are the demographic characteristics (sex and race) of students enrolled in vocational programs in the area vocational-technical schools? What other attributes (scholastic aptitude, socio-economic background, future aspirations) characterize vocational students?

#### Objective II

The second objective was to determine the type of relationships that exist between students' choices and selected characteristics.

Questions. Is there a significant relationship between the sex and race of students and the type of program in which they are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the level of educational attainment of parents and the type of program in which the students are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the occupational classification of the fathers of students and the type of training the students obtain? Is there a relationship between the students' GPA in high school and the type of vocational program in which the students are enrolled? Is there a relationship between the students' aspirations and the type of program that they are enrolled in? Is there a relationship between the types of work experiences of the students and the type of vocational programs in which they are enrolled?

#### Objective III

Objective III was to identify and rank, according to importance, factors that influenced students to select the vocational programs in which they are enrolled.

Questions. What are the factors affecting students' choice of their major area of training? What are the most influential factors affecting students' choice? Who are the most influential persons in the students' choice?

#### Objective IV

The fourth objective was to determine the most popular areas in vocational education in the AVTS.

Question. What are the most populated programs in the area schools?

Findings of the study relative to the objectives of this study are presented in this chapter. Data were collected by means of a structured questionnaire administered to all the students enrolled in auto-mechanics, air-conditioning, auto body, carpentry, masonry, welding, business, and health education programs in five area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma. The survey questionnaire was divided into two sections; one to identify the demographic and educational characteristics of the students, and the other to identify the factors that influenced their choice of their particular area of training.

The student sample consisted of 568 students from the eight selected areas of specialization in the five selected schools. A total of 537 students (94 percent) completed the questionnaire. Of these, 16 percent were enrolled in auto mechanics, 6 percent in air-conditioning, 11 percent in auto-body, 12 percent in carpentry, 6 percent in masonry, 15 percent in welding, 21 percent in business education, and 13 percent in health services.

The number of respondents by type of program and school, is shown in Table IV. By school, distribution of the students in the eight selected areas was: 110 at the Caddo-Kiowa AVTS, 105 at Pioneer AVTS, 124 at the Gordon Cooper AVTS, 92 at the O. T. Autry AVTS, and 106 at the Tulsa Memorial AVTS. Data presented in Table V reveal the distribution of students by type of training program. The data are expressed in numbers, percentages, and rank, and indicate that some programs in the area vocational-technical schools are more in demand than others. As the data in the table shows, the most popular areas of the eight programs included in the study, in order of importance, are: (1) business education, (2) auto-mechanics, (3) welding, and (4) health services.

TABLE IV  
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY SCHOOL AND PROGRAM

	Auto Mechanics	Air Cond./ Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Business Education	Health Education	Total
Caddo-Kiowa AVTS/ Ft. Cobb	18	6	13	5	4	14	41	9	110
Pioneer AVTS/ Ponca City	16	0	24	13	9	16	11	16	105
Gordon Cooper AVTS/ Shawnee	17	11	0	19	18	18	26	15	124
O. T. Autry AVTS/ Enid	21	6	10	10	0	8	23	14	92
Tulsa-Memorial AVTS/ Tulsa	<u>15</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>11</u>	<u>18</u>	<u>106</u>
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	72	537
Percentage	16	6	11	12	6	15	21	13	100

TABLE V  
DISTRIBUTION OF STUDENTS BY TRAINING PROGRAM

Training Program	Number of Students	Percent of Total	Number of Schools Offered	Rank of Population
Auto Mechanics	87	16	5	2
Air Conditioning	34	6	4	7
Auto Body	59	11	4	6
Carpentry	64	12	5	5
Masonry	31	6	3	7
Welding	78	15	5	3
Business Education	122	21	5	1
Health Services	72	13	5	4
Total	537	100		

The findings of this study will be presented in three sections relevant to the objectives and questions of the study and congruent with the two parts of the survey instrument. First, data concerning the demographic and personal characteristics of the students, and second, data concerning the relationships among characteristics and students' choice of training programs, and third, data concerning the factors that influenced students' choice of the area of training.

Data treated were of such a nature that analyses by both parametric and non-parametric statistical tests was deemed appropriate. Statistical tests used were the chi-square and the one-tailed t-test. Frequency counts and percentages on the selected characteristics of vocational-technical students are presented in various constructed tables.

Characteristics of the Students Enrolled in  
Vocational-Technical Programs

Sex and Race of the Students

Data concerning the distributions of sex and race of students by type of programs are presented in Table VI. The majority (71 percent) of the students included in this study were males. By program, percentages of males were: auto mechanics, 99 percent; air conditioning, 94 percent; auto body, 97 percent; carpentry, 98 percent; masonry, 100 percent; welding, 100 percent; business education, 26 percent; and health services, 4 percent. Only 29 percent of the students were females. The majority (96 percent) of the female students included in this study were enrolled in health services. The next highest percentage (74 percent) of female students were in business education.

The data also indicated that the majority of students enrolled in vocational programs were white. By program, percentages of whites were: auto mechanics, 86 percent; air conditioning, 91 percent; auto body, 97 percent; carpentry, 87 percent; masonry, 65 percent; welding, 84 percent; business education, 97 percent; and health services, 91 percent. Only 16 percent of the students enrolled in vocational programs were other races: blacks (5 percent), American Indians (9 percent), and other (2 percent). Of the eight programs, masonry program comprised the highest percentage (29 percent) of the black students. In general, these data tended to indicate that area schools in Oklahoma served a high percentage of white students.



TABLE VI  
SEX AND RACE OF STUDENTS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGE

	Type of Program								Total	
	Auto Mech. n=87 %	Air Cond. n=34 %	Auto Body n=59 %	Carpen- try n=64 %	Masonry n=31 %	Welding n=78 %	Bus. Ed. n=112 %	Health Ed. n=72 %	<u>537</u> n	%
<u>Sex</u>										
Male	99	94	97	98	100	100	26	4	397	71
Female	1	6	3	2	0	0	74	96	158	29
<u>Race</u>										
White	86	91	97	87	65	84	79	81	452	84
Black	2	6	0	5	29	3	3	11	29	5
American Indian	10	3	3	8	6	10	16	7	49	9
Other	2	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	7	2

### Level of Education of Parents

Presented in Table VII are data concerning the level of education of parents of the students included in the study.

Eighteen percent of fathers and 15 percent of mothers had college degrees. Seven percent of fathers and 6 percent of mothers attended college but did not graduate. Six percent of fathers and 6 percent of mothers had graduated from vocational-technical schools. The majority of the students' parents (41 percent of fathers and 47 percent of mothers) graduated from high school whereas 22 percent of fathers and 21 percent of mothers had only some high school education. Five percent of fathers and 3 percent of mothers had only elementary education. Only 1 percent of the fathers and of the mothers did not have any formal education.

The data indicate that most of the students enrolled in vocational programs come from families whose education level is high school. The data also indicates that the fathers have achieved a slightly higher formal education than the mothers. A further observation of the data is that only 6 percent of the parents of the students enrolled in vocational programs graduated from vocational-technical schools. Percentages of students' responses regarding their parents' level of education by type of program are presented in Table VII.

### Father's Occupation

Data relating to the occupational classification of fathers of students enrolled in the selected vocational programs are presented in Table VIII. For the purpose of data analysis the occupations of fathers were grouped and classified according to the occupational

TABLE VII  
LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF PARENTS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGES

Educational Level	Type of Program																Total n/%	
	Auto Mech. n=87		Air Cond./ Refrig. n=34		Auto Body n=59		Carpentry n=64		Masonry n=31		Welding n=78		Bus. Ed. n=112		Health Ed. n=72			
	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M	F	M		
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%		
College Graduate	20	9	6	21	22	14	30	31	13	23	13	13	16	10	18	11	96/18	79/15
Attended College but did not Graduate	6	3.5	3	2	7	8	8	8	13	0	9	8	6	4	10	14	40/7	34/6
Vo-Tech School Graduate	3	3.5	15	9	5	2	5	3	13	6	4	6	8	7	4	11	33/5	32/6
High School Graduate	48	61	32	50	4	49	42	43	39	42	47	53	37	47	33	29	218/41	255/47
Some High School	16	20	24	2	20	22	15	13	10	26	22	19	27	27	29	32	118/22	115/21
Elementary School	5	2	18	16	5	5	0	2	3	3	4	0	6	5	4	0	27/5	18/3
No formal Education	2	1	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2	3	5/1	4/1

Note: F = father; M = mother.

TABLE VIII

## OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION OF FATHERS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGES

Occupational Classification	Type of Program							Total	
	Auto Mech. n=87 %	Air Cond./ Refrig. n=34 %	Auto Body n=59 %	Carpentry n=64 %	Masonry n=31 %	Welding n=78 %	Bus. Ed. n=112 %	Health Ed. n=72 %	n 537 %
Professional	3	3	5	5	3	4	5.4	7	25 5
Proprietor or Business	17	15	19	14	13	15.5	23	15	93 17
Administrative	13	20	8	11	10	10	8	11	58 11
Technician	0	0	15	0	10	1	7.1	4	24 4
Skilled Worker	0	18	19	19	23	17	14.3	17	77 14
Machine Operator or Semi-Skilled Worker	14	15	2	9	6	4	7.1	4	40 7
Unskilled Worker	36	21	22	25	23	33	25	28	148 28
Other	17	8	10	17	12	15.5	10	14	72 14

scale of the Hollingshead index of social position. By type of occupation, the percentages of respondents were: professional (5 percent); proprietor or business (17 percent); administrative (11 percent); technician (4 percent); skilled worker (14 percent); machine operator or semi-skilled worker (7 percent); and unskilled worker (28 percent). The percent of students whose responses fall in the other category was 14 percent.

The data indicated that the majority (28 percent) of the vocational students' fathers were unskilled workers, whereas only 14 percent of the students' fathers were skilled workers. The next highest figure indicated that only 17 percent of students' fathers were farmers or owners of small businesses. The low percentage (5 percent) of fathers engaged in professional occupations may be indication of the unwillingness of the professionals' children to seek vocational training.

#### Academic Achievement

An analysis of responses of students regarding the grades they received in academic subjects before they entered the area vocational-technical school is presented in Table IX. The majority (95 percent) of students reported that their GPA was within the B or C grade level: 45 percent received B grades and 40 percent received C grades. Only 11 percent of the students reported that their GPA was within the A level, and 4 percent were D students in the academic subjects.

The data indicated that vocational students have a considerable ability in academic subjects and their choice of vocational training cannot, therefore, be attributed to disability or low achievement in academic subjects.

TABLE IX  
GRADE POINT AVERAGES OF STUDENTS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGE

Student's GPA	Type of Program								Total	
	Auto Mech. n=87 %	Air Cond./ Refrig. n=34 %	Auto Body n=59 %	Carpentry n=64 %	Masonry n=31 %	Welding n=78 %	Bus. Ed. n=112 %	Health Ed. n=72 %	n	537 %
90-100 A	8	9	9	11	0	6	19	15	59	11
80-89 B	36	53	49	31	29	49	53	52	241	45
70-79 C	53	32	39	52	68	39	27	32	217	40
60-69 D	3	6	3	6	3	6	1	1	20	4

### Future Plans

Responses of students to the query about their future plans after completing training are presented in Table X. Data indicate that students differ in their future plans. The majority (41 percent) reported that they plan to go directly to work. Twenty-nine percent were undecided about their future plans. Seventeen percent reported that they plan to go to college, 9 percent reported their desire to seek advanced vocational-technical training, and 4 percent stated that they would join the military services.

The data indicate that only a small percentage (9 percent) of the students planned to seek further vocational training. The relatively high percentage (41 percent) of the students who reported their intention to go directly to work after completion of training indicates that students enroll in vocational programs in the area vocational-technical school in order to prepare themselves for employment.

Twenty-nine percent of the students in all programs had no future plan in mind or were not sufficiently sure to decide what to do after completion of training. This result may be attributed to the failure to provide information to students regarding the labor market in connection with their area of training. Guidance services bear the responsibility for enlightening the students about career preparation routes.

### Work Experience

The various types of work experiences of students are presented in Table XI. The responses in this table did not total 537 (the number of students studied) because students checked different numbers of

TABLE X

## FUTURE PLANS OF STUDENTS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGE

Future Plans	Type of Program								Total	
	Auto Mech. n=87 %	Air Cond./ Refrig. n=34 %	Auto Body n=59 %	Carpentry n=64 %	Masonry n=31 %	Welding n=78 %	Busi. Ed. n=112 %	Health Ed. n=72 %	n	%
Go to College	7	9	14	17	10	4	20	47	90	17
Seek Advanced Vo-Tech Training	12	21	10	6	6	10	6	10	51	9
Go Directly to Work	33	35	46	47	39	52	47	19	218	41
Join Military Service	3	3	8	5	10	8	1	0	22	4
Undecided	45	32	22	25	35	26	26	24	156	29



TABLE XI

TYPE OF WORK EXPERIENCE OF STUDENTS FOR THREE MONTHS OR LONGER BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN PERCENTAGE

Work Experience	Type of Program								Total	
	Auto Mech. n=87	Air Cond./ Refrig. n=34	Auto Body n=59	Carpentry n=64	Masonry n=31	Welding n=78	Busi. Ed. n=112	Health Ed. n=72	537	
	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	%	n	%
Farm/Farm Machinery	61	59	63	58	94	77	29	11	276	51
Grocery/ Salesworker	43	38	24	38	29	44	37	26	192	35
Restaurant/ Dishwasher	54	88	46	50	74	42	59	65	314	58
Construction	28	47	22	44	29	54	4	1	117	22
Auto Mechanic	33	12	29	9	19	13	1	0	73	14
Heavy Equip.	8	3	10	5	3	9	1	0	26	5
Truck Driver	5	9	7	9	6	13	2	1	32	6
Gardener	14	18	5	11	26	14	7	1	56	10
Laundry Worker	1	3	2	0	3	5	6	3	17	3
Baby Sitter	5	3	2	5	3	5	51	64	117	22
Welder	8	18	5	3	3	28	0	0	41	8
Car Cleaning	10	9	12	5	6	4	1	2	30	6
Other	23	38	14	22	3	22	35	38	139	26
None	1	0	6	3	3	3	4	7	19	4

responses regarding the types of employment each student had experienced for three months or more during his/her enrollment in high school. As a result of the free checking of the items the responses of the students totalled 1449. Fifty-eight percent indicated that they had worked in restaurants. Fifty-one percent reported that they had worked on farms or ranches. Thirty-five percent indicated that they had worked in groceries as sales workers. The rest of the job experiences had been experienced by small proportions of students as shown by the data presented in Table XI. Only 4 percent of the students indicated that they had no work experience.

#### Relationships Among Students' Characteristics and Vocational Choice

Table XII shows the distribution of students by sex and type of program. The chi-square value of 391.79 with seven degrees of freedom was found highly significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the sex of students and the type of program in which they were enrolled. Table XIII presents the distribution of students by race and type of program.

The chi-square value of 61.75 with 21 degrees of freedom was found significant at the .05 level. Therefore, a significant relationship exists between the race of students and the type of program in which they were enrolled.

Table XIV shows the level of educational attainment of the fathers of students enrolled in the different vocational programs. The chi-square test yielded a value of 53.83 that, with 42 degrees of freedom, was not significant at the .05 level. This indicates no relationship

TABLE XII

SEX BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED \*

Sex	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
Male	86	32	57	63	31	78	29	379
Female	1	2	2	1	0	0	83	158
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 391.79;  $\chi^2$  at .05 level (df = 7) = 14.07.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

TABLE XIII

RACE BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED \*

Race	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
White	75	31	57	56	20	66	89	452
Black	2	2	0	3	9	2	3	29
American Indian	8	1	2	5	2	8	18	49
Other	2	0	0	0	0	2	2	7
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 61.75;  $X^2$  at .05 level (df = 21) = 32.67.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

TABLE XIV

LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FATHERS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED\*

Educational Level	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
College Graduate	17	2	13	19	4	10	18	96
Attended College but did not Graduate	5	1	4	5	4	7	7	40
Vo-Tech School Graduate	3	5	3	3	4	3	9	33
High School Graduate	42	11	24	27	12	37	41	218
Some High School	14	8	12	10	6	17	30	118
Elementary School	4	6	3	0	1	3	7	27
No Formal Education	2	1	0	0	0	1	0	5
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 53.83;  $X^2$  at .05 level (df = 42) = 58.05.

\*Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

between the level of educational attainment of the fathers of students and the type of training program in which the students were enrolled.

Shown in Table XV is the level of educational attainment of the mothers of students enrolled in vocational programs. The chi-square value of 89.26 with 42 degrees of freedom was found significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the level of educational attainment of students' mothers and the type of training program in which the students were enrolled.

It can be seen that the educational level of the mothers was related to the vocational choice of students whereas the educational level of fathers was not. This phenomenon may be attributed to the effect of the directions of mothers to their children during early adolescence when the children were passing through the exploration stage of occupational choice.

Data relating to the occupational classification of fathers of students and its relationship with the students' choice of vocational programs are presented in Table XVI.

The chi-square value of 76.54 with 49 degrees of freedom was found significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the occupational classification of fathers and the type of training program in which the students were enrolled.

Data pertaining to the grade point average (GPA) of students in the academic subjects and its relationship with the distribution of students in vocational programs are presented in Table XVII.

The chi-square value of 46.03 with 21 degrees of freedom was found significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the academic ability of students and the type of

TABLE XV

LEVEL OF EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF MOTHERS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED\*

Educational Level	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
College Graduate	8	7	8	20	7	10	11	79
Attended College but did not Graduate	3	1	5	5	0	6	4	34
Vo-Tech School Graduate	3	3	1	2	2	5	8	32
High School Graduate	53	17	29	28	13	41	53	255
Some High School	17	1	13	8	8	15	30	115
Elementary School	2	5	3	1	1	0	6	18
No Formal Education	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	4
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 89.26;  $X^2$  at .05 level (df = 42) = 58.05.

\*Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

TABLE XVI

FATHERS' OCCUPATIONAL CLASSIFICATION BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED \*

Occupational Classification	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./ Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
Professional	3	1	3	3	1	3	6	25
Proprietor or Business	15	5	11	9	4	12	26	93
Administrative	11	7	5	7	3	8	9	58
Technician	0	0	9	0	3	1	8	24
Skilled Worker	0	6	11	12	7	13	16	77
Machine Operator or Semi-Skilled Worker	12	5	1	6	2	3	8	40
Unskilled Worker	31	7	13	16	7	26	28	148
Other	15	3	6	11	4	12	11	72
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 76.54;  $X^2$  at .05 level (df = 49) = 66.33.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.



TABLE XVII  
GRADE POINT AVERAGE BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED\*

GPA	Type of Program							Total	
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./ Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.		Health Ed.
90-100 A	7	3	5	7	0	5	21	11	59
80-89 B	31	18	29	20	9	38	59	37	241
70-79 C	46	11	23	33	21	30	30	23	217
60-69 D	3	2	2	4	1	5	2	1	20
Total	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	72	537

Note: Chi-Square = 46.03;  $X^2$  at .05 level (df = 21) = 32.67.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

vocational program in which they were enrolled. It can be seen that the majority of the students enrolled in the different vocational programs were B and C students in the academic subjects.

Data presented in Table XVIII show the distribution of students according to their future plans and areas of training. The chi-square value of 101.65 with 28 degrees of freedom was found highly significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the students' aspirations and the type of programs in which they were enrolled.

Table XIX shows the responses of students pertaining to their work experiences according to the different types of vocational programs. The chi-square of 503.01 with 98 degrees of freedom was found highly significant at the .05 level. This result indicates a significant relationship between the work experiences of students and the type of training program in which they were enrolled.

#### Factors Influencing Students' Choice

The results of the data pertaining to the factors influencing students' choice are presented in numbers, percentages, means, and a t-test that indicate the significance of the perception of students as to the factors that had influence on their decision to enroll in a specific vocational program. Since the mean of the ratings of the scale used to indicate the amount of influence is 1.5, the mean of the responses as for the degree of influence of each factor should be significantly greater than 1.5. The one-tailed t-test was therefore used. The null hypothesis was assumed  $\mu_0 = 1.5$ , and the alternate hypothesis would therefore be  $\mu_a > 1.5$  (that is the mean of the students'

TABLE XVIII

FUTURE PLANS BY TYPE OF PROGRAM IN WHICH STUDENTS WERE ENROLLED\*

Plans	Type of Program							Total
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
Go to College	6	3	8	11	3	3	22	90
Seek Advanced Vo-Tech Training	10	7	6	4	2	8	7	51
Go Directly to Work	29	12	27	30	12	41	51	218
Join Military Service	3	1	5	3	3	6	1	22
Undecided	39	11	13	16	11	20	29	156
Totals	87	34	59	64	31	78	112	537

Note: Chi-Square = 101.65;  $\chi^2$  at .05 level (df = 28) = 41.34.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

TABLE XIX  
WORK EXPERIENCES BY TYPE OF PROGRAM\*

Work Experience	Type of Program							Health Ed.
	Auto Mech.	Air Cond./Refrig.	Auto Body	Carpentry	Masonry	Welding	Bus. Ed.	
Farm/Farm Machinery	53	20	37	37	29	60	32	8
Grocery/Salesworker	37	13	14	24	9	34	41	19
Restaurant/Dishwasher	47	30	27	32	23	42	66	47
Construction	24	16	13	28	9	21	5	1
Auto Mechanic	29	4	17	6	6	10	1	0
Heavy Equip.	7	1	6	3	1	7	1	0
Truck Driver	4	3	4	6	2	10	2	1
Gardener	12	6	3	7	8	11	8	1
Laundry Worker	1	1	1	0	1	4	7	2
Baby Sitter	4	1	1	3	1	4	57	46
Welder	7	6	3	2	1	22	0	0
Car Cleaning	9	3	7	3	2	3	1	2
Other	20	13	8	14	1	17	39	27
None	1	0	3	7	1	2	5	5

Note: Chi-square = 503.01;  $\chi^2$  at .05 level (df = 98) = 122.1.

\* Numbers within table indicate frequency of response.

ratings of a specific factor will be greater than 1.5). The tabled value of  $t$  at the .05 level with 536 degrees of freedom was found 1.64.

In analyzing the data it was deemed appropriate to group the factors under three major categories: general factors, social factors, and experiences affecting students' choice.

#### Results of Analysis Pertaining to General Factors

The data pertaining to general factors as sources of influence on students' decision to enroll in a specific program is presented in Table XX. The data pertaining to "interest in the area" as an influencing factor reveal that students rated this factor as having influenced them the most to enroll in their respective fields of training. Fifty-eight percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 33 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the rest (9 percent) rated it "little or none." The  $t$ -test yielded a value of 31.03 that was found highly significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "ability in the area" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that 22 percent of students rated this factor as having "great" influence, 47 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," and 31 percent indicated that their ability in the area had "little or no" influence. The  $t$ -test yielded a value of 7.73 which was found significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "low grades in mathematics and English" as an influencing factor revealed that students rated this factor as having no influence on their choice. Seven percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 35 percent indicated the extent of

TABLE XX  
GENERAL FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' CHOICE

General Factors as Source of Influence		Amount of Influence				$\bar{X}$	t-value	Decision
		Great	Moderate	Little	None			
		3	2	1	0			
1. Have had interest in the area.	n	312	176	37	12	2.47	31.03	S.
	%	58	33	7	2			
2. Have had some abilities in the area.	n	119	252	107	59	1.8	7.73	S.
	%	22	47	20	11			
3. Low grades in Math and English.	n	40	190	126	181	1.17	-7.89	N.S.
	%	7	35	24	34			
4. Good work conditions on the job.	n	190	230	73	44	1.99	12.34	S.
	%	35	43	14	8			
5. To earn a high income.	n	238	201	51	47	2.17	16.82	S.
	%	44	37	10	9			
6. Previous work experience in the field.	n	84	139	129	185	1.23	-5.82	N.S.
	%	16	26	24	34			
7. Available jobs in this type of training.	n	228	197	71	41	2.14	16.13	S.
	%	42	37	13	8			

Note: The t-value of df = 536 and  $\alpha = .05$  is 1.64; S. = Significant; and N.S. = Not Significant.

influence as "moderate," whereas 58 percent ranked this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -7.89 which was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "good work conditions on the job" as an influencing factor revealed that students rated this factor as having influenced them to enroll in their areas of training. Thirty-five percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 43 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the minority (22 percent) rated this factor as of "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of 12.34 that was found significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "high income" as an influencing factor reveal that students rated this factor as an influential factor. Forty-four percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 37 percent rated this factor as having "moderate" influence, whereas the minority (19 percent) rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of 16.82 that was found significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "previous work experience in the field" as a source of influence seems to indicate that this factor was not influential. Sixteen percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 26 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas 58 percent rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -5.82 which was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "available jobs with this type of training" as an influencing factor reveal that students rated this factor to be

influential. Forty-two percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 37 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the minority (21 percent) rated this factor as of "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of 16.13 which was found significant at the .05 level.

#### Results of Data Pertaining to Social Factors

Responses of students to the query concerning who influenced them in their choice of programs are presented in Table XXI. Data presented in the table do not indicate persons as an influential factor.

Data pertaining to the "guidance counselor" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Eleven percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 21 percent rated this factor as having "moderate" influence, whereas the majority (68 percent) of students rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -11.41 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to the "parents" as an influencing factor seems to indicate that only 19 percent of the students rated their parents as having "great" influence, 26 percent rated their parents as having "moderate" influence, whereas 55 percent rated their parents as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -3.39 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "brother or sister" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Seven percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 12 percent



TABLE XXI  
PERSONS INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' CHOICE

People as Source of Influence		Amount of Influence				$\bar{X}$	t-value	Decision
		Great 3	Moderate 2	Little 1	None 0			
8. Advice of guidance counselor	n	58	115	125	239	0.99	-11.41	N.S.
	%	11	21	23	45			
9. Direction of parents	n	100	137	132	168	1.31	-3.39	N.S.
	%	19	26	24	31			
10. Brother or sister advice	n	38	64	119	316	0.67	-20.39	N.S.
	%	7	12	22	59			
11. Glassmate's advice	n	42	98	125	272	0.81	-15.66	N.S.
	%	8	18	23	51			
12. Teacher's advice	n	65	104	86	282	0.91	-12.48	N.S.
	%	12	19	16	52			
13. Other relatives' advice	n	54	97	102	284	0.85	-14.35	N.S.
	%	10	18	19	53			
14. Friends of same age advice	n	59	109	126	243	0.97	-11.73	N.S.
	%	11	20	24	45			
15. People working in the occupation related to the field	n	105	145	123	164	1.36	-3.01	N.S.
	%	20	27	23	30			
16. Neighbor in the occupation	n	44	80	80	333	0.69	-18.67	N.S.
	%	8	15	15	62			
17. Father or mother in the occupation	n	41	48	54	394	0.51	-24.38	N.S.
	%	8	9	10	73			

Note: The t-value at df = 536 and  $\alpha = .05$  is 1.64; S. = Significant; and N.S. = Not Significant.

indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (81 percent) of the students rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -20.39 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "classmates advice" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Eight percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 18 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (74 percent) of the students rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -15.66 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "teacher's advice" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Twelve percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 19 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (68 percent) of the students rated this factor as having "little or none" influence. The t-test yielded a value of -12.48 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "relatives' advice" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Ten percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 18 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (72 percent) of the students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -14.35 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "friends of same age advice" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Eleven

percent of the students rated the influence of this factor as "great," 20 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (69 percent) of the students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -11.73 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "people working in the occupations related to the field" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Twenty percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 27 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas 53 percent of the students indicated that this factor had "little or none" influence. The combined percentages of 20 and 27 resulted in a percentage of 47 percent who rated this factor to have great or moderate influence on their choice. The t-test yielded a value of -3.01 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "neighbors in the occupation" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Eight percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 15 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (78 percent) of the students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -18.67 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "father or mother in the occupation" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Only 8 percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 10 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (83 percent) of the students indicated the extent

of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -24.38 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Results of Data Pertaining  
to Experiences

Responses of students to the query concerning what experiences influenced them in their choice to undertake their training programs are presented in Table XXII. Data pertaining to "TV programs on career occupations" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor had no effect on the students' choice. Only 5 percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 12 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (83 percent) of the students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -22.22 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "career-exploratory program" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor had no effect. Eight percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 21 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (71 percent) of the students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -13.59 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "viewed films of facilities associated with the field of training" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor had no influence. Eleven percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 27 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas the majority (62 percent) of the

TABLE XXII  
WORK EXPERIENCES INFLUENCE ON STUDENTS' CHOICE

Media Factors as Sources of Influence		Amount of Influence				$\bar{X}$	t-value	Decision
		Great 3	Moderate 2	Little 1	None 0			
18. TV programs on career occupations	n	30	65	122	320	0.64	-22.22	N.S.
	%	5	12	23	60			
19. Career-Exploratory Program (such as industrial arts and previous shop courses)	n	45	114	126	252	0.91	-13.59	N.S.
	%	8	21	24	47			
20. Viewed films of facilities associated with the field of training	n	57	146	135	199	1.11	-8.71	N.S.
	%	11	27	25	37			
21. Read newspapers or magazine articles about occupations related to the training program	n	75	145	128	189	1.2	-6.56	N.S.
	%	14	27	24	35			

Note: The t-value of df = 536 and  $\alpha = .05$  is 1.64; N.S. = Not Significant.

students indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -8.71 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

Data pertaining to "read newspaper or magazine articles about occupations related to the training program" as an influencing factor seem to indicate that this factor was not influential. Fourteen percent of the students indicated the extent of influence as "great," 27 percent indicated the extent of influence as "moderate," whereas 59 percent indicated the extent of influence of this factor as "little or none." The t-test yielded a value of -6.56 that was found not significant at the .05 level.

The foregoing data pertaining to the selected factor of influence reveal that, of 21 factors, students rated only five factors as having influenced them the most to enroll in their respective fields of training. Table XXIII presents these five factors ranked in order according to their extent of influence. The combined percentages of students who rated these factors as having great or moderate influence are by factor: interest in the area, 91 percent; to earn high income, 81 percent; availability of jobs, 79 percent; good working conditions, 78 percent; and ability in the area, 69 percent.

The data seem to indicate that students were influenced only by their interests and desires to secure a job with good working conditions and a high income. They were slightly influenced by other social and educational factors but not to the extent of overlooking their real needs of having an occupation that ensures a good social and financial standing.

TABLE XXIII  
FACTORS INFLUENCING STUDENTS' CHOICE

Factor		Amount of Influence				Rank
		Great 3	Moderate 2	Little 1	None 0	
Interest in the Area	N	312	176	37	12	1
	%	58	33	7	2	
For High Income	N	238	201	51	47	2
	%	44	37	10	9	
Availability of Jobs	N	228	197	71	41	3
	%	42	37	13	8	
Good Work Conditions	N	190	230	73	44	4
	%	35	43	14	8	
Ability in the Area	N	119	252	107	59	5
	%	22	47	20	11	

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to identify factors that influenced students in area vocational-technical schools in Oklahoma to choose the programs in which they enrolled. A secondary purpose was to identify some demographic and educational characteristics of students in their respective programs. The research sought to answer some basic questions related to four objectives, which were formulated to provide direction to the attainment of the purpose of the study. The four main objectives were:

1. To determine the general characteristics (demographic and educational) of vocational students in the AVTS in Oklahoma.
2. To determine the type of relationships that exist between students' choices and their characteristics.
3. To identify and rank according to importance the factors that influenced students to select the vocational programs in which they are enrolled.
4. To determine the most popular areas in vocational education in the area vocational-technical schools.

Five area vocational-technical schools were selected for this study from all of the area vocational-technical schools in the state of Oklahoma according to the following criteria: (1) the geographic location of the school, (2) the nature of the area served by the school,



whether rural or urban, (3) the population size of the school, and (4) the diversity of training programs offered by schools. Eight programs were selected according to their popularity and availability in schools.

The study sample consisted of a total of 537 students enrolled in the eight vocational programs selected for the study. The student sample was composed of 87 students enrolled in auto mechanics, 34 students enrolled in air-conditioning, 59 students enrolled in auto body, 64 students enrolled in carpentry, 31 students enrolled in masonry, 78 — students enrolled in business and office education, and 72 students enrolled in health services. The instrument used to collect the data was a structured questionnaire composed of two parts relating to general characteristics and sources of influence on the students' decision to enroll in a specific vocational program.

Data collection was completed during the first two weeks of the 1982 spring semester. The questionnaire was administered to and collected from students by the researcher. All data were collected in group settings with the assistance of the administrators and instructors at the five area vocational-technical schools. The data were then punched into cards and the statistical tests were analyzed by machine.

#### Summary of Findings

The analyzed data revealed that 71 percent of vocational students in the area schools were males, and 29 percent of them were females. Ninety-six percent of the female students were enrolled in health services and 74 percent were enrolled in business education. The data

also revealed that 84 percent of the students were whites whereas 16 percent were blacks, American Indians, or others.

Data concerning the educational level of parents of vocational students included in the study revealed that the majority of parents (41 percent of the fathers and 47 percent of mothers) were high school graduates. About 21 percent of the parents had only some high school education. Six percent of the parents had graduated from vocational-technical schools.

Data pertaining to the occupational classification of fathers of students revealed that 28 percent of the fathers of vocational students were unskilled workers, 14 percent were skilled workers, and 17 percent were farmers or owners of small businesses. A low percentage of the fathers was engaged in other occupations.

Data pertaining to the academic achievement of vocational students revealed that 95 percent of the students had B or C grade point average in the academic subjects in the high school.

Data pertaining to the future plans of vocational students revealed that students differ in their aspirations. Forty-one percent indicated that they would go directly to work after graduation, 29 percent were undecided, 17 percent indicated a desire to go to college, 9 percent would seek advanced vocational-technical training, and 4 percent stated that they would join military services. Data also revealed that 96 percent of vocational students had work experience of some type.

In regard to the type of relationships that exist between the students' characteristics and vocational choice, data revealed that there is a significant relationship between sex, race, educational level of mothers, occupational classification of fathers, grade point

average of students, future plans of students, work experiences of students, and the type of training program in which they were enrolled. It was found that there was no significant relationship between the educational level of fathers of students and their vocational choice.

Data pertaining to the students' perceptions of the factors that influenced their choice of the field of training revealed that only five factors had significant influence on their decisions to enroll in a specific program. These factors, ranked in order according to their extent of influence, are: students' interest, high income, availability of job in the area of training, good working conditions, and ability in the area of training. Data seem to indicate no significant influence exerted by social factors or other experiences on their vocational choice. The data indicated that no single person had a significant influence on the students' choice. Data indicated, however, that parents and people working in occupations related to the field of training had some slight influence on the students' choice but not to a significant extent. The most striking feature of the data was that parents in occupation, classmates, teachers, and counselors had the smallest amount of influence on students' vocational choice. The data tend to pose the following questions: How could the students come to realize the value of the above influencing factors as being important in their decisions? What was the role of vocational guidance in developing awareness of these factors?

Findings of this study also revealed that business education, auto mechanics, welding, and health services programs were the programs with the highest enrollments. Data indicated that these four programs were the areas of training in the most demand at the time of conducting this

study. Those programs ranked as the top four programs among the offerings of the area schools. Sixty-five percent of the total number of vocational students were enrolled in these programs.

### Conclusions

Based upon the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Vocational education programs at the area vocational-technical schools serve students having different characteristics such as sex, race, academic ability, educational level of parents, occupational classification of fathers, future aspirations, and work experiences. Data from this study show, however, that most students enrolled in Oklahoma area vocational-technical school programs are male, white students.
2. More female than male students desire to enter business/office education and health services programs.
3. Some vocational education students tend to express undefined future aspirations. Only 41 percent of students indicated that they would go directly to work after completion of training. Fifty-nine percent of the students were either undecided about their future plans or expressed their desire to seek further education or join the military service. Some of these desires are not congruent with the objectives of training in the area vocational-technical schools, which are established to primarily prepare individuals for work.
4. Vocational education students have an average academic ability. Ninety-five percent of students indicated that their GPA in the academic subjects was within the B or C grade level.

5. Vocational students have had various types of work experience that is significantly related to their occupational choice. Data indicated that job experience of students enrolled in vocational programs were similar.
6. The father's occupation has no influence on students' interest in a like occupational area.
7. There is a significant relationship between the sex, race, academic ability, mother's educational level, occupational classification of father, future aspirations, and work experience of students and their vocational choice. Data from this study revealed no significant relationship of the educational level of the father and the student's vocational choice.
8. Among the vocational programs offered by the AVTS in Oklahoma, auto mechanics, business education, welding, and health services are the areas of greatest demand.
9. Students' choice of a specific vocational program is influenced most by personal interest, earning high income, availability of jobs, good working conditions, and personal ability in the area. Data indicated that neither the family nor "significant others" in the life of the students have a significant influence on their choice of a vocational program. In general, no social factors or experiences have significant influence on the students' decision to select a specific vocational program. The findings of this study seem to contradict the findings of similar studies that revealed that parents, counselors, and other social factors have the greatest influence on the students' vocational choice.

### Recommendations

The results of the data analysis and the conclusions drawn from the data provide the basis for the following recommendations:

1. A major effort should be directed toward greater emphasis in the counseling of students, in the high schools--pertaining to vocations and occupational choice. High schools, as a source of manpower, should provide students with adequate information and full awareness of occupational employment potential available in the area via the guidance and counseling system. Students should receive assistance in learning how to make occupational choices.
2. In all planning efforts to attract students to vocational training programs, attention should be given to significant factors that influence occupational choice: students' interest, high income, the availability of jobs in the different types of training areas, good work conditions and the ability in the field of specialization.
3. Area vocational-technical schools should make periodic surveys of students' occupational interests and align the schools' offerings with these interests, giving sufficient consideration to the demands of the local labor market.
4. Parents should be informed of the amount of influence they have on students, and be encouraged to assist their children to make their vocational decision based on valid and up-to-date information about individual needs and the most demanded skills by society.

5. Because of the large number of vocational programs available, students need special help in identifying an appropriate vocational program. The counseling system in public schools should help students learn vocational decision-making skills and how to use information to understand themselves and what options match with their needs.
6. Research is needed to determine the extent to which vocational guidance personnel use the five most influential factors as identified in this study in helping students select a vocation.
7. A study should be made to determine the factors influencing students' choice of occupational programs as perceived by vocational teachers, counselors, and area school administrators.
8. A comparative study should be conducted to determine the factors influencing students' choice of vocational programs in both the rural and urban areas. This type of research could provide some information on the role of the rural or urban environment in the perceptions of students of the factors influencing their decision as to their vocational choice.

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## APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

- A. Instructions: The purpose of this section is to identify the characteristics associated with students enrolled in the vocational and technical programs offered by the Oklahoma area vocational-technical schools. Please read each statement or question and select the answer which is true for you. Please answer each question as honestly and accurately as possible. The information which you supply will be kept strictly confidential.

1. Sex: ☐ Male ☐ Female
2. What is the name of the training program in which you are enrolled?
3. Indicate your race: ☐ White ☐ Black ☐ American Indian ☐ Asian  
☐ Mexican-American ☐ Other (Specify)
4. Indicate the educational level attained by each of your parents:
 

	Father	Mother
College graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Attended college but did not graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Vo-tech school graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
High school graduate	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Some high school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Elementary school	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
No formal education	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
5. Please state your father's job title (such as farmer, welder, lawyer, school teacher, etc.)
6. What grades have you received in the academic subjects before you joined the area vocational-technical school? (Please circle one):
 

90 - 100	80 - 89	70 - 79	60 - 69
A	B	C	D
7. After completing your training, what are your plans?
  - ☐ Go to college
  - ☐ Seek advanced vocational or technical training
  - ☐ Go directly to work
  - ☐ Join Military service
  - ☐ Undecided
  - ☐ Other
8. Please check all types of employment you have ever had for three months or more, either full or part-time, from the time you entered high school until present time.
 

<input type="checkbox"/> Farm or ranch work	<input type="checkbox"/> Laundry worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Grocery worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Dish washer
<input type="checkbox"/> Restaurant	<input type="checkbox"/> Baby sitter
<input type="checkbox"/> Construction worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Sales worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Automechanics worker	<input type="checkbox"/> Welder
<input type="checkbox"/> Farm machinery operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Brick factor worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Heavy equipment operator	<input type="checkbox"/> Car cleaning worker
<input type="checkbox"/> Truck driver	<input type="checkbox"/> Others
<input type="checkbox"/> Gardner	

(Please Specify)

- B. Instructions: Listed below are possible factors which may have influenced your choice of the vocational program you are enrolled in. Please rank each as to its importance in your choice.

	Amount of Influence			None 0
	Great 3	Moderate 2	Little 1	
1. Have had interest in the area				
2. Have had some abilities in the area				
3. Low grades in Math and English				
4. Good work conditions on the job				
5. To earn a high income				
6. Previous work experience in the field				
7. Available jobs with this type of training				
8. Advice of guidance counselor				
9. Direction of parents				
10. Brother or sister advice				
11. Classmate's advice				
12. Teacher's advice				
13. Other relatives advice				
14. Friends of same age advice				
15. People working in the occupations related to the field				
16. Neighbor in the occupation				
17. Father or Mother in the occupation				
18. TV programs on career occupations				
19. Career-Exploratory program (Such as industrial arts and previous shop courses)				
20. Viewed films of facilities associated with the field of training				
21. Read newspaper or magazine articles about occupations related to the training program				



APPENDIX B

OKLAHOMA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS

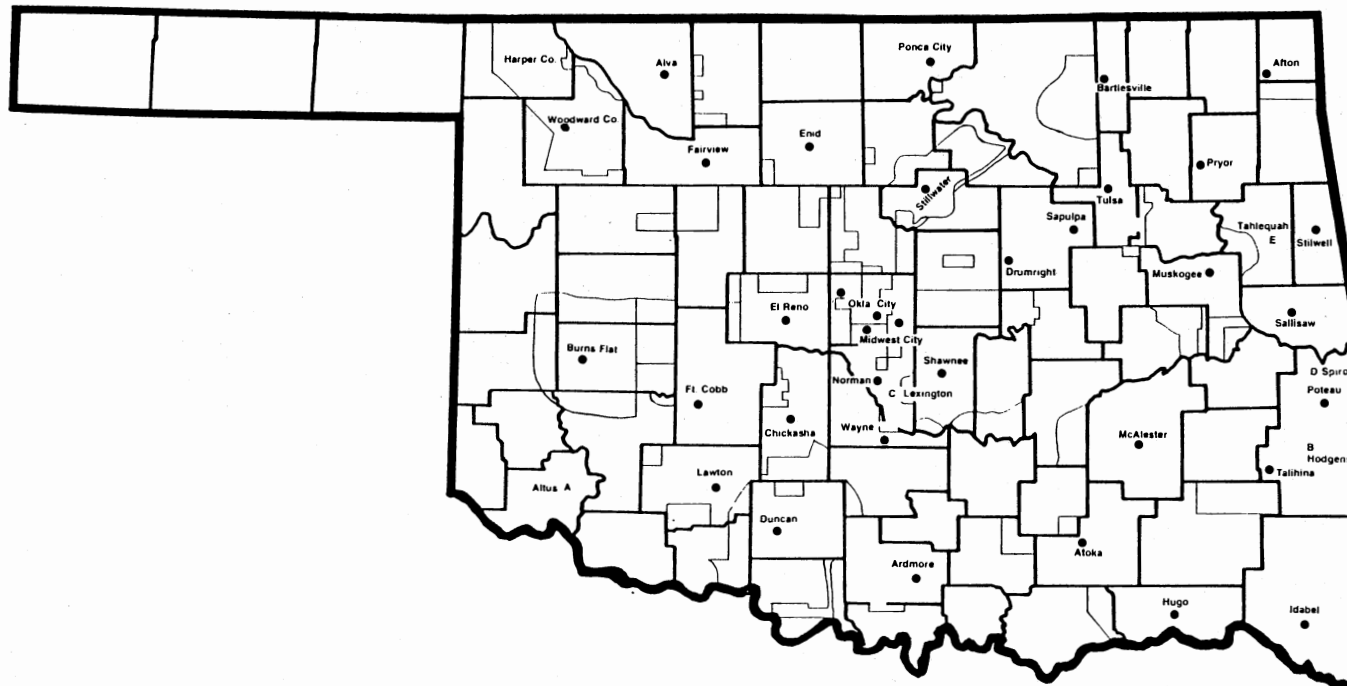
SECONDARY PROGRAMS

1980-81  
OKLAHOMA VO-TECH  
SCHOOLS  
SECONDARY PROGRAMS

1980-81 OKLAHOMA VO-TECH SCHOOLS SECONDARY PROGRAMS		Area Vo-Tech Schools																																		
Career Areas		Alton - Northeast Okla.	Alva - Oklahoma N.W.	Ardmore - Southern Oklahoma	Barlesville - Tri-County	Burns Flat - Western Oklahoma	Chickasha - Canadian Valley	Drumright - Central Oklahoma	Duncan - Red River	El Reno - Canadian Valley	Enid - O.T. Aulry	Fairview - Oklahoma N.W.	Fort Cobb - Caddo-Kiowa	Hugo - Kiamichi	Idabel - Kiamichi	Lawton - Great Plains	McAlester - Kiamichi	Midwest City - Mid-Dei	Muskogee - Indian Capital	Norman - Moore-Norman	Oklahoma City - Belle Isle	Oklahoma City - Foster Estes	Ponca City - Pioneer	Poteau - Kiamichi	Pryor - Northeast Okla.	Sallisaw - Indian Capital	Sapulpa - Central Oklahoma	Shawnee - Gordon Cooper	Stillwater - Indian Meridian	Stilwell - Indian Capital	Tahlnha - Kiamichi	Tulsa Memorial - Tulsa County	Tulsa, Peoria - Tulsa County	Wayne - Mid-America		
Air Conditioning/Refrigeration		X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X		X	X	X	X			X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X			
Aircraft Mechanics										X	X					X	X	X	X			X						X				X		X		
Auto Body		X		X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X		X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X				X				X		X	
Auto Mechanics		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X		
Banking & Savings & Loan Services					X				X	X						X					X								X				X		X	
Business & Office Education		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Business Org. & Management																			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		
Carpentry		X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X	X		X			X	X	X	X	X			X	X	X		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	
Child Care						X								X			X	X		X													X			
Cooperative Vocational Education					X		X			X		X	X								X										X					
Commercial Art								X	X												X											X				
Cosmetology		X		X	X		X					X					X	X				X				X							X		X	
Data Processing				X			X			X	X	X		X							X								X			X		X	X	
Diesel Mechanics		X	X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X		X			X				X					X		X	
Distributive Education					X		X									X		X	X	X				X				X						X		
Drafting & Design				X		X	X	X	X	X						X	X	X	X	X	X			X				X						X		X
Electricity		X		X		X	X	X	X					X		X	X	X	X	X		X			X		X		X	X				X	X	X
Electronics				X	X		X		X	X	X		X			X		X	X	X	X	X	X					X	X				X		X	
Environmental Lab Asst.																																	X			
Farm Machinery Repair										X						X																	X			
Fashion Design & Clothing Prod.			X	X	X	X			X									X											X					X		
Floriculture																					X															
Food Service				X	X				X	X		X		X	X					X		X						X	X				X			
Graphic Arts - Printing		X			X	X		X	X		X	X				X		X	X	X		X							X				X			
Health Service Careers			X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X	X			X	X	X		X		X		X	
Horticulture				X	X															X								X						X		X
Hospitality Careers		X			X														X	X				X										X		X
Ind. Elec. Maint./Instru.																				X																
Machine Shop				X	X		X	X	X	X	X	X	X			X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X		X	X				X		X	
Masonry		X		X			X	X	X			X	X			X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	
Major Appliance Repair																						X												X		
Medical/Dental Office Assistant						X			X	X											X	X	X	X									X			
Medical/Dental Office Secretary																	X																		X	
Parts Dept. Training																X																				
Photography																	X																		X	
Plumbing				X					X									X		X		X												X		
Small Engine & Mtrcycle Mech.							X		X	X						X		X	X			X						X								
Sheet Metal				X																		X					X							X		
Upholstery				X														X	X			X					X									
Welding		X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	

Note: Adults may enroll if classes are not filled.

## OKLAHOMA AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS AND SKILLS CENTERS



## APPENDIX C

### CORRESPONDENCE



# Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406  
(405) 624-6275

March 23, 1982

Mr. Tom Friedman  
Coordinator, AVTS  
State Department of Vocational-  
Technical Education  
1515 West Sixth Avenue  
Stillwater, OK 74074

Dear Mr. Friedman:

One of our doctoral students Mr. Mohammad Abusal is moving into the dissertation stage of his program. He is very interested in the area school concept of vocational education and would like to involve five area schools in his research.

Attached is a two page instrument that Mohammad would like to use to collect data from students enrolled in auto mechanics, masonry, welding, air conditioning, auto body, carpentry, health, and business and office education. The area schools he would like to study are at Ponca City, Tulsa, Shawnee, Fort Cobb, and Enid.

Hopefully, with your approval, we can contact the directors of the schools at the above locations and work out with them the details for the data collection.

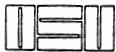
Sincerely,

*Cecil W. Dugger*  
Cecil Dugger  
Associate Professor

Enclosure

lg

Approved, Tom Friedman



## Oklahoma State University

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406  
(405) 624-6275

March 24, 1982

Dr. James Carpenter  
Superintendent  
Pioneer Area Vocational-  
Technical School District No. 13  
2101 North Ash  
Ponca City, Oklahoma 74601

Dear Dr. Carpenter:

I am Mohammad Abusal, graduate student at Oklahoma State University. I am working toward a doctorate degree in Occupational and Adult Education under the supervision of Dr. Cecil Dugger. My dissertation concerns the characteristics and factors affecting students' choice of vocational programs in selected AVTS in Oklahoma. Hopefully, the results of the study will be beneficial for those responsible for career planning and guidance.

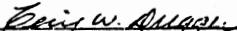
Your school along with four others has been selected to be included in the study provided you have no objections. Tom Friedemann knows of this research and has given his concurrence for me to contact you. Would you allow me to administer a two-page questionnaire at your school? A field test of about 20 students indicated it will take from five to ten minutes of the students' time to complete the questionnaire. Program areas, if available, will include auto mechanics, air conditioning/refrigeration, auto body, carpentry, masonry, welding, business and office education, and health occupations.

This letter, together with a copy of the questionnaire, is being mailed to you after the telephone conversation between you and my advisor, Dr. Dugger. Another telephone call will be made by Dr. Dugger to you to coordinate an appropriate time for administering the questionnaire.

Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

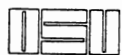
Sincerely,

Mohammad Abusal  
Graduate Assistant

  
Dr. Cecil Dugger  
Associate Professor

Enclosure

lg



*Oklahoma State University*

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406  
(405) 624-6275

April 23, 1982

Dr. James Carpenter  
Superintendent  
Pioneer Area Vocational-  
Technical School District No. 13  
2101 North Ash  
Ponca City, Oklahoma 74601

Dear Dr. Carpenter:

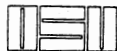
Thank you very much for the assistance and cooperation that was offered to me during my visit to your school. Please accept my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for the help extended to me by your staff. It was a great pleasure to me to have the opportunity to visit your school.

My best regards to you and your staff.

Mohammad Abusal  
Graduate Assistant

cc: Dr. Cecil Dugger

ls



*Oklahoma State University*

SCHOOL OF OCCUPATIONAL AND ADULT EDUCATION

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078  
CLASSROOM BUILDING 406  
(405) 624-6275

April 23, 1982

Mr. J.W. Ridge  
Superintendent  
O.T. Autry Area Vocational-  
Technical School District No. 15  
1201 West Willow  
Enid, OK 73701

Dear Mr. Ridge:

Thank you very much for the assistance and cooperation that was offered to me during my visit to your school on April 15, 1982. Please extend my sincere gratitude and deep appreciation to your assistant, Mr. Lloyd Brownworth, and staff for the many courtesies and help extended to me. Too, I wish to apologize again for being late the morning I arrived at your school. I should like to point out that I have been greatly impressed by the type of administration, organization, and philosophy of the school. The diversification of programs and the sophistication in the workshops reflect the concern of the school administration to translate their philosophy to match the needs of the world of work. I am so glad that I got the opportunity to meet you and study at your school.

With my best regards to you and your staff.

Mohammad Abusal  
Graduate Assistant

cc: Dr. Cecil Dugger

ls



✓

VITA

Mohammad Abdulkarim Abusal

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: CHARACTERISTICS AND FACTORS AFFECTING STUDENTS' CHOICE OF  
VOCATIONAL PROGRAMS IN AREA VOCATIONAL-TECHNICAL SCHOOLS  
IN OKLAHOMA

Major Field: Occupational and Adult Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Iraq-Elmanshieh, Palestine, December 1,  
1939, the son of Mr. and Mrs. A. O. Abusal.

Education: Graduated from Hussain Ben Ali High School, Hebron,  
Jordan, June, 1957; received the Bachelor of Science degree  
from Cairo University, in 1962, with a major in Physics and  
Mathematics; received the Master of Arts degree from  
Michigan State University in 1966, with a major in  
Curriculum; completed requirements for the Doctor of  
Education degree at Oklahoma State University in May, 1983.

Professional Experience: Three years teaching physics and  
mathematics at high schools in Jordan; six years lecturing  
at Riyadh University in Saudia Arabia; Physics Specialist,  
Curriculum Coordinator, and Deputy Director of Education  
Projects at the Ministry of Education in Jordan for nine  
years; co-author of some 26 textbooks and teacher guides  
in physics, general science, and teaching sciences.