

THE INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT
AND RELATED FACTORS ON THE CHOICE OF
MAJORS BY COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE
STUDENTS AT OKLAHOMA STATE
UNIVERSITY DURING 1967-68
ACADEMIC YEAR.

by

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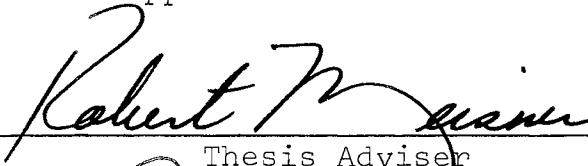
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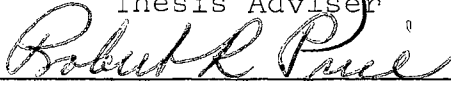
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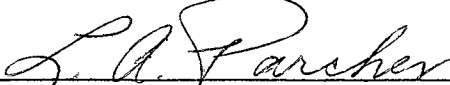
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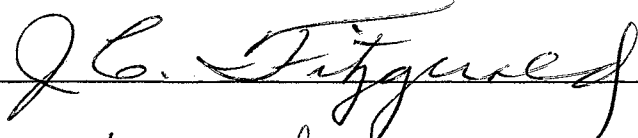
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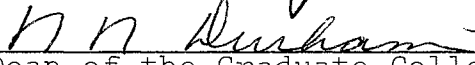


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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

In modern society practically every individual, surely every male and an increasing number of females, must choose an occupation. In fact, most individuals confront the problem at least twice: once for themselves, and again as parents, for their children.

There have been, and may still be in very remote areas, societies in which there is no occupational choice. This restriction may be especially true of a primitive society in which the division of labor is based solely on sex and status in the political and religious organization is determined by inheritance or age. In more advanced societies, a stable caste system may develop and remain predominate for varying periods of time. Within a caste system, not only religious but social sanctions may compel sons to follow in the footsteps of their fathers. In the Middle Ages serfs had little freedom of occupational choice, but they did have some; a few were able to enter the church, become soldiers, or run away to the developing towns.

One of the outstanding characteristics of a pluralistic culture is that with the beginning of modern capital-

ism freedom has emerged in terms of the right of the individual to choose his work. This is in direct contrast to totalitarian societies in which the state either tells the individual what to do or manipulates economic and social systems so that in effect he has very little latitude in terms of occupational choice.

Another outstanding characteristic of modern pluralistic societies is the high degree of specialization which develops. However, this specialization is paralleled by a high degree of individual freedom of choice. There are two aspects to this freedom of occupational choice. One dimension of choice relates to the individual's finding his place within the range of opportunities which confront him; the other relates to society. Because of the latter, certain occupations and professions must be staffed in order that the health and welfare of the group social system can be maintained and safeguarded.

Occupational choice, as a result, affects both the individual and society. For the individual, every decision involves a multiplicity of concerns for many other people. This is particularly true for the college student who is organizing manifold impressions about himself and his external environment so that he may begin to choose intelligently among several alternatives. Primarily, this decision involves the students's parents who are aware of their children's problems but question whether they should interfere, and if so, in what manner.

Likewise, it involves those in education who by direction or indirection present materials and make judgments about various occupations and the manner in which students can be adequately preprepared to choose an occupation. Friends and advisers, though to somewhat lesser extent, also influence the decision making of the young citizen. In constructing curricula, the educational leaders of the school system decide whether the subjects offered will materially and directly assist the child to prepare for his adult role, including his role as a worker.

Various other groups may also be concerned. Government, local, state, and federal groups and agencies must determine how much of the total taxable resources of the community to devote to the support of education in order to provide young people with the best training for developing their latent capacities. Benefactors of the arts and sciences must decide the extent to which their funds should be made available to aid promising young men and women.

Notwithstanding, individuals and groups have been concerned with these questions for a long time but have had to deal with them without a real understanding of how individuals do in fact choose a career. Most parents may try both directly and indirectly to provide their children with a scale of values; in effect they may try to teach them about various goals of life, about the prestige which attaches to different occupations, and about the import-

ance of disciplined work. American society at large has, for its part, tended to emphasize the importance of a broad educational system to which rich and poor have access and has supported maintenance of a wide range of educational opportunities to facilitate individual preparation for adult responsibilities. Certainly the actions of parents and of educators influence tremendously the way in which individuals choose their occupation.

It must be remembered that the college student confronted with the necessity of making such a choice is still developing, both intellectually and emotionally. Unfortunately, he must make his decision at a time when he may not be fully and adequately equipped to do so. First, young people do not understand the complex nature of society, and second, they are going through deep-seated emotional experiences which may tend to suppress basic needs and desires. The stresses and strains of being a student and a young citizen are many and confusing. Therefore, an investigator in this area must recognize that many of the difficulties connected with occupational choices arise from the emotional turmoil which accompanies general maturation.

At present, there is no valid theory to explain and predict exactly what occupation a person will enter; there may never be. But, even a small increase in the explanatory and predictive power of the knowledge about the occupational selections of major fields of college

students may be useful. The present study attempts to add to the available information. It does this by attempting to determine when College of Agriculture students at Oklahoma State University select their major field of study, as well as to identify related factors that may affect such selection. The investigation also attempts to determine student occupational aspiration and the degree of commitment to a particular occupation. It was assumed that this study could provide a better picture of the problems faced by College of Agriculture students in choosing life's occupation, and, to an extent, isolate the attitudes these students have towards such problems. Also, it was hoped that the information gained through the study might provide for a better understanding of how these problems could be approached in terms of developing more adequate counseling services for students at both the high school and college levels.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

What Determines One's Choice of Career?

The probable factors most appealing to a majority of tenth- and eleventh-year high school students are reported in a survey conducted by Westervelt (46). Fifty-seven varieties of careers were chosen, based upon good pay, steady job, friendly employees, challenging opportunities to be of services, and action and excitement. Westervelt found that the majority of students, in fact twice as many, were undecided about a career. In contrast, Westervelt reported also that many who had planned to be secretaries had even decided on which field they would specialize, such as legal or medical. The same study revealed that three times as many wanted to go on to college as those who planned to go to work directly upon completing high school. Even those who chose such careers as nursing or farming wanted a college education first.

The careers attracting the greatest number of students, Westervelt found, were engineering, secretarial, teaching, nursing, and business. Next attractiveness were medicine, drafting, science, mechanics, electronics, aeronautics,

and forestry. Those choices mentioned less frequently represented a wide range of interests such as an accountant, psychologist, tool and dyemaker, floral designer, athletic coach, conservationist, model, social worker, labor relation expert, airline stewardess, architect, home economist, pharmacist, beautician, and receptionist.

Westervelt (46) also found that high school students are aware of the growing importance and high status of professional, technical, and managerial positions.

A nationwide survey of high school students conducted by Flanagan (16), Project Talent Office at the University of Pittsburg substantiated Westervelt's findings. The survey reported that 62 percent of the boys and 52 percent of the girls who were seniors hoped to enter a professional or technical career. This study revealed that more boys aspired to enter engineering than any other single field (18 percent). In the same study, only 6 percent preferred to become skilled workers; whereas, 7 percent expected to enter such occupations. Approximately 5 percent indicated a preference for school teaching, while about 6 percent expected to become school teachers. Five percent preferred to become officers in the armed forces, and about 4 percent planned to do so. Among the girls, 30 percent expected to become secretaries, office clerks, or typists. Nursing, elementary school teaching, and book-keeping were other occupations attractive to high school senior girls (23 percent).

The same study revealed that among seniors who were planning to go to college, the most popular major field of study for boys was engineering (23 percent), while business and commerce was second with 14 percent. The most popular fields among the girls was education (20 percent), business and commerce (17 percent), and health profession (16 percent).

Flanagan's (16) findings suggested that many high school students not only aspired to more elite occupations, but equated higher education with the seemingly "royal road" to such occupations. He also found that among high school seniors more than half of the boys (53 percent) and slightly less than half of the girls (46 percent) were planning to go to college immediately after graduation from high school. This information compared favorably with information concerning "educational aspirations" held by parents of high school seniors. The study showed fifty-six percent of the boys' parents and 49 percent of the girls' parents had plans that included college.

The actual realization of parental aspirations for higher education are reflected in the rapidly rising enrollment in institutions of higher learning. More than

Making A Career Choice

To choose the right career is the earnest desire of an increasing number of students. This concern is often

an increasing number of students. This concern is often dramatically influenced by pressure from parents who want to make sure that their financial investment in their son's or daughter's education will result in their getting a good job and making enough money to adequately support themselves. Unfortunately, few students and parents realize that these objectives recognized as desirable, are highly dependent on a stable economic and social condition. Too, it is recognized that the student must possess qualifications that insure successful educational as well as occupational competition.

Westervelt (46) reported that making rational career choices which will result in future job success or satisfaction, depend largely upon the following:

1. One's ability being discovered as well in the level being determined.
2. A program of training which will develop one's skills, later to be placed on the market in career competition.
3. The actual marketing or employment of these skills.

In summary, students tend to choose a field of work in which success and satisfaction have been obtained by men and women who possess abilities, interests, ambitions, and personality traits seen as similar to those of the student. The mere belief that one has the necessary ability does not appear as sufficient reason for choosing a career.

Stumbling Blocks in Choosing A Career

In attempting to select a suitable career, most students commit certain errors of thinking which prevent a wise choice. Westervelt (46) suggested that there are certain identifiable fallacies in thinking which may cause unwise choices. These include the attractiveness of the remote, the glorification of the unusual, the white collar illusion, the fallacy of the perfect niche, misreading the signs, fear of the closed mind, the sparkless mortar, the fallacy of the occupational label, the fallacy of the added cubit, the fallacy of the equal ability, the fallacy of the perfectability, the phenological fallacy, and the fallacy of sequential training.

Determinants of Occupational Aspiration and Decisions

In another study, Jordan (21) found that interest may develop through actual work experience, emulation of role model, reading, watching television or movies, and other ways which are very important in generating occupational aspirations. Jordan found that values transmitted to a person by his reference groups, including his family and age peers, and through the education process may serve as determinants. These determinants together with unique personal experiences were cited as important in guiding and capitalizing occupational preferences. The specific mixture of these factors, according to Jordan, differs for

individuals from different socioeconomic strata. There is also clear evidence of substantial differences between the sexes, as such.

Jordan (21) suggested that economic, psychological, and sociological factors affect occupational aspirations and choices, and in some cases one or another of these factors may be dominant. In nearly every case multiple influences are involved. Jordan concluded that it is important to recognize the significance of the interaction among background and situational factors as well as self-assessment.

Personal Variables

In a related study, Stubbin (42) reported that the significance of many personal variables was obvious. For example, occupational choices by adolescents were relevant at the age when educational preparation for a specialized occupation must begin or when they are ready to enter the labor force. Age was important later in connection with time tables for entry into or promotion within a certain career line and in connection with retirement.

Physical characteristics are important only for a few occupational roles such as "professional" athletes, law enforcement officers, and manual labor; good general health on the other hand is a prerequisite for most full-time occupational roles.

The sex of the individual is important because clearly

defined occupational sex roles exist; most employed women work in occupations defined as "woman's work," occupations that are normally followed by few if any men. Also, the importance of marriage and family life to women has great occupational significance.

Leona E. Tyler (45) reported that girls are less able, or perhaps less willing than boys, to think about choosing a career without reference to others. A girl may see that it is more important to be acceptable to the kinds of people who matter to her, so the kind of man she wants to marry will be likely to propose to her, than to find just the occupation that best fits her talents and aptitudes.

Vocational Life Stages

Because the career choice process is tied so closely to the general maturation of the personality, consideration must be given to the sequential changes--physical, intellectual, emotional, and social--that occur during the students' crucial years. In addition, attention must be given to the fact that although there is a general relation between age and maturation, there are large individual variations in relation to the word maturity.

Ginsberg (19) found that the process of career decision-making can be divided into five distinct stages.

1. Growth Stage (Birth-14)

Self-concept develops through identification with key figures in family and in school; needs

and fantasy are dominant early in this stage; interest and capacity become more important in this stage with increasing social participation and reality-testing. Substages of the growth stage are as follows:

- a. Fantasy (4-10). Needs are dominant; role-playing in fantasy is important.
- b. Interest (11-12). Likes are the major determinant of aspirations and activities.
- c. Capacity (13-14). Abilities are given more weight, and job requirements (including training) are considered.

2. Exploration Stage (Age 15-24)

Self-examination, role tryouts, and occupational exploration take place in school, leisure activities, and part-time work. Substages of the exploration stage are as follows:

- a. Tentative (15-17). Needs, interests, capacities, values, and opportunities are all considered. Tentative choices are made and tried out in fantasy, discussion, courses, work, etc.
- b. Transition (18-21). Reality considerations are given more weight as the youth enters the labor market or professional training and attempts to

implement a self-concept.

- c. Trial (22-24). A seemingly appropriate field is located, a beginning job in it is found, and is tried out as a life work.

3. Establishment Stage (Age 25-44)

Having found an appropriate field, the individual puts forth effort to make a permanent place in it. There may be some trial early in this stage, with consequent shifting, but establishment may begin without trial, especially in the professions. Substages of the establishment stage are as follows:

- a. Trial (25-30). The field of work presumed to be suitable may prove unsatisfactory, resulting in one or two changes before the life work is found or before it becomes clear that the life work will be a succession of unrelated jobs.
- b. Stabilization (31-44). As the career pattern becomes clear, effort is put forth to stabilize, to make a secure place, in the world of work. For most persons these are the creative years.

4. Maintenance Stage (Age 45-64)

After making a place in the world of work, the individual's concern is now to hold it. Little

new ground is broken, but there is continuation along established lines.

5. Decline Stage (Age 65 on)

As physical and mental powers decline, work activity changes and in due course ceases. New roles must be developed, first that of selective participant and then that of observer than participant. Substages of this stage are as follows:

- a. Deceleration (65-70). Sometimes at the time of official retirement, sometimes late in the maintenance stage, the pace of work slackens, duties are shifted, or the nature of the work is changed to suit declining capacities. Many men find part-time jobs to replace their full-time occupations.
- b. Retirement (71 on). As with all the specified age limits, there are great variations from person to person. But, complete cessation of occupation comes for all in due course, to some easily and pleasantly, to others with difficulty and disappointment, and to some only with death.

Choice of Career of College Undergraduates

As one might expect, nearly all college students aspire to high-status occupations. A nationwide study, conducted by Davis (11), of the educational and occupational aspirations and expectations of 33,982 June 1961 graduates of 135 colleges and universities revealed that eight out of ten (77 percent) expected to enter a professional or scientific occupation. The largest single field, attracting almost one-third of the seniors, was primary and secondary education. An additional 12 percent anticipated future employment by a college, university, or junior college. The findings indicate that between 40 and 45 percent of the seniors expected to be employed in education.

Physical and biological sciences were named by 7.5 percent and engineering attracted 8.3 percent. The social sciences attracted 4 percent, and the humanities 6.5 percent. Medicine was named by 2.8 percent, and other health professions were chosen by an additional 4 percent. Law was chosen by 3.9 percent, and business and administration of various types were reported by 18.2 percent. Only 15 percent chose agriculture or a related field.

Davis also reported on the future educational plans of these college seniors. Perhaps the biggest compliment the graduate seniors paid to higher education was that they wanted more of it--only one-fourth had no plans to go to graduate school at anytime, while almost one-third were

planning to attend the next fall. Based on Davis' findings, one can conclude that a college graduate is more likely to go on to a graduate school than a high school graduate is to go on to college.

Although 83 percent of the 1961 college seniors were favorable toward graduate study, and 77 percent expected to enter graduate school, only 20 percent of them had been accepted for graduate study in the fall of 1961 at the time the study was made in June. The remainder expected to enter graduate school at some time later. Other studies confirmed that many of those who do go on to graduate school do not enter immediately after college graduation.

College students' career choices are generally "forced" into tentative decisions because they are often required to declare a major field of study not later than the beginning of their junior year in college. Slocum (34) found that in some cases at the beginning of the student's freshman year students are required to select their major field of study. The fact that most are required to select their major field of study not later than the beginning of their junior year may satisfy the college but does not necessarily satisfy all students. In a study at what was then called the State College of Washington, Slocum found that 40 percent of the 1953 seniors were not certain that they had chosen the most suitable major.

How firm are these choices, particularly when a college freshman selects his major field of study? In one

study by Rosenberg (31), designed to answer this question, he found that 60 percent of the college students who wanted to enter a particular occupation in 1950 had changed their minds two years later. His data provided striking confirmation of the fluidity of career decision-making even for college students who may be presumed to be the most stable category among career aspirants.

Clearly, the young adult of 18 or 19 is not forced to commit himself vocally about his future work. He is under real pressure, however, to select the broad path which is intended to follow--but he can safely leave refinements until later. At the end of the freshman or sophomore year in college, a student previously uncertain, will probably be able to decide whether to prepare for medicine or to follow his somewhat stronger urge to become a physicist. If he decides upon the latter, he can postpone until the end of college, and possibly later, the question as to seek industrial employment. The major decision that he must make while in college is whether to prepare for medicine or physics; a host of detailed decisions can be postponed.

Vocation Choice in A Vacuum

Unfortunately, college students do not give as much careful thought to this important problem as they should. Many are content to live in a "fool's paradise" while they are in school, unwilling to face the realities of vocational life. Many drift through school and graduate without making any vocational decision. They may enter

life without a vocation of any kind by which they can make a living. Too, students who have no definite choice as to vocation tend to drop out of school early. An example was a study of college of students made in New York, by reporting that 70 percent were planning to enter three of the most over-crowded professions.

Various studies by Caudill, Archilles, and Dyer (8, 1, 13) indicated that from 53 to 70 percent of the college students had decided upon a vocation before entering college. Archilles reported that of those who had made a decision before going to college, one-third selected the particular college because of the occupational choice. Most of those who were undecided when they entered college had made a choice by their junior year.

Whether or not such choices are actually carried out is another matter. Dyer's work has contributed much on this point. In 1924 he interviewed 101 students at the University of Kansas to determine the time and circumstances under which they had chosen a vocation. His list included first, second, third, and fourth choices. He also asked them how they would revise their choice if they suddenly acquired \$100,000. He continued to follow this group for five years and again five years after that. Five years later, 82 of the 101 boys had entered their first choices, and 79 were still employed in those occupations; 10 had started in their second choices and 9 were still engaged in it.

For entering freshman, Sisson (37) noted considerable differences in vocational choice according to whether the student came from a city, town, or farm. Fewer students from farms had made a choice by then, and after one year 26 percent of the farm group had changed their plans. The percentages were 19 for the city group and 20 for the town group. His data did not show how great their shifts actually were.

Sisson has pointed out that the number of entering college students planning to go into professions is, as is true for high school and elementary students, higher than the number of openings. At Wesleyan, during their junior year, 28 percent of the students planned to enter medicine, law, or teaching; only 17 percent of them have actually done so. In previous classes about 34 percent went into business even though only 11 percent were planning to do so.

Fichett's (17) study of occupational preferences and opportunities of Negro college students would indicate that the situation is very similar for Negro high school students in vocational restriction. Studies by Williamson and Achilles (47, 1) reported that college students who have already chosen a vocation make higher grades than those who have not. Some of the results, however, have been conflicting.

Several studies of veterans by Wilson, Kohn, and Stubbin (49, 25, 42) indicated that for presumably mat-

urer groups over-selection of professions also occurs. Stubbin (42) found no relationship between appropriate or unrealistic choices of age, father's occupational level, number of older brothers, marital status, or work experience. There was some indication that those with more education made more appropriate choices and that veterans receiving disability pensions were relatively more realistic than the non-disabled.

Major Factors Affecting College Undergraduates Selecting Their Major Field of Study

In order to understand, evaluate, and predict development of vocational behavior, it is necessary to identify the major factors that affect college undergraduates in selecting their major field of study.

The Concepts of Roles and Self

Occupations may be viewed as organizations of social roles. As Sarbin (32) defines them, they are, positions, systems of rights and duties and sets of expectations. These definitions are sometimes specified in the job descriptions of civil service or of business and industrial concerns. These job specifications, according to Sarbin, describe the actions expected of the worker and the actions which he may expect from others with whom he is working. In other words, positions and occupations are organizations of role expectations. The role, as Sarbin goes on to say, is what the person does; it is patterned sequence of

learned actions or deeds performed by a person in an interaction situation. Vocational development may therefore be partly understood in terms of the ways in which a person meets the expectations of his occupational role.

The self may be viewed as what the person is, just as the role is what the person does. The self, however, is always conceived by someone. Thus, Sarbin (32) defines the self as a phenomenal experience of identity. The self-concept is what the person under consideration conceives himself to be, the self-as-inferred-by-self. The self is the result of interaction between growth processes and personal-social development. It is the interaction of the person with others around him. As the individual takes roles in daily living and plays other roles in fantasy or play, as he identifies with role models and strives to emulate idealized persons, some of these roles and associated traits are internalized as self-concepts.

The self-concept is not only in part a product of social roles, but also seems to be a major determinant occupational choice Super (43). Bordin (7) developed a theory of vocational interests based on a self-concept theory. He hypothesized that an individual responds to items in an interest inventory in terms of his concept of self and in terms of his concept of his preferred occupation. Strong (41) and Super, on the other hand, viewed responses to the items in an interest inventory as self-percepts which, when scored, yield a description of the individual's

self-concept in occupational terms. Super (44) has stated that the occupational stereotype does not ordinarily contribute to the individual's mental set. Therefore, he defines vocational choice as the "implementation of a self-concept."

Three types of factors appear to play a major part in vocational behavior and development. They are role factors, personal factors, and situational factors (or factors which are external to the individual and which do not necessarily involve role expectations). Economic conditions and accidents are illustrations of situational factors. Role factors have already been considered; therefore, personal and situational factors will now be considered.

Personal Factors

Intelligence is one of the factors which has great influence on individual vocational behavior. Pintner (27) reported that intelligence is related to educational success, and therefore, indirectly to job opportunities and job levels. According to Super, intelligence is related to some degree to success on the job and also to the appropriateness of the individual's vocational objectives. Grace (20) and Sparling (33) indicated that the more intelligent individuals tend to select occupational goals more wisely. Studies by Proctor (28) and Stewart (39) have indicated that there is a relationship between intelligence and job satisfaction. Anderson (2) and Pruette (29) have reported

that not only will satisfaction be felt when an individual attempts to handle a job beyond his capabilities, thus putting himself under constant stress, but also when ability is in excess of that demanded by the job, thus leading to frustration and loss of interest. These studies all indicate that intelligence directly and indirectly in several ways affects the vocational choice of the individual.

Special aptitudes, such as spatial visualization, perceptual speed and accuracy, and manual dexterity of various types, may greatly affect his career, not only his occupational choice but his occupational attainment. Possession or lack of these aptitudes affects the variety of occupations which the individual will be able to handle successfully and also determines to some extent the degree of success which he may attain in them.

The interest has been shown to be of importance in vocational choice. One might assume that an individual would enter the occupation which held the most interest for him; but because other factors also act as determinants of vocational choice, the role of interest in vocational development is one of synthesis or compromise. Jordan (21) reported that one may make a choice in the field of his greatest interest, but ability and opportunity may determine the occupational level within the field. In some instances the values of a subculture outweigh individual interests even in the selection of the vocational field. Interest also functions in determining the occupational level. Factor

analysis of the strong vocational interest also plays a part. Bael (3) showed that the interests of engineers, physicists, and mathematicians are more like each other than those of mathematicians, scientists, and industrial arts teachers. His studies indicated that interests are grouped to some degree by level. Therefore, interest is related both to the field and level of occupational choice.

Some other personal factors which affect vocational behavior and development are values, attitudes, personality, age, maturation, sex, and ambition.

Situational Factors

There are economic conditions and other external factors that affect vocational behavior and development. Miller and Form (26) and Davidson and Anderson (10) have reported that parental socioeconomic status affect vocational development. Similar findings were reported by Bell (5). Centers (9) found that the higher the socioeconomic status of parent, the more the attitudes of the adolescent tended to favor individualism as opposed to collectivism.

Factors which have so far been little systematic study but which appear to affect vocational behavior and development are religious background, atmosphere of home, parental attitudes toward the individual, and parental attitudes toward schooling.

In a number of studies it was found that both economic and non-economic factors tended to be involved in the

choice of careers. Those who came from families that were better able to provide financial assistance were more certain about their career plans (7 and 31).

Other situational factors which may affect the individual include the general economic situation, such as depression or prosperity, and the international situation.

In short, there are three types of factors that affect vocational behavior and development. They are role factors, role expectations; those imposed by society, personal factors, those originating within or internalized by the individual, and situational factors, economic and social factors which are external to the individual and over which he has no direct control.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

The purposes of this study were sixfold: (1) to determine a sample profile of personal data of College of Agriculture students, (2) to determine when College of Agriculture students choose their major field of study at Oklahoma State University, (3) to determine some of the factors affecting College of Agriculture students' choices of major fields of study, (4) to determine the degree of commitment of College of Agriculture students to a major field of study, (5) to determine the occupational aspiration of College of Agriculture students, and (6) to determine the differences in career selection of out-of-state students and in-state students in the College of Agriculture.

To accomplish these purposes, an experimental design consisting of an eight-way classification was employed. The population of this study included approximately sixteen hundred College of Agriculture students. The samples were randomly selected, using a stratified random sample approach (See Table I). The samples for this study included twenty in-state and twenty out-of-state students from each of the freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior

classes. Data were collected from the one-hundred sixty students by means of a questionnaire.

Instrument Used

The questionnaire, designed specifically for use in this study, included three major sections. This investigation relied on an adaptation of an instrument, "My Choice of A Life's Occupation," developed at Michigan State University by Haller and Miller (22). This instrument was developed from The National Opinion Research Center's (NORC) Prestige Ratings (See Appendix A). The first section of the questionnaire was designed to obtain personal data, designed as independent variables. The second section was designed to obtain data relating to the time students chose their major fields and the degree of commitment to their major fields of study. Adaptations from Haller and Miller (22) were also relied upon in developing section three, designed to identify those factors considered most critical to choice of a major field.

The questionnaire was administered by mail with a self-addressed envelope enclosed for prompt return. (See Appendix B).

TABLE I

IDENTIFICATION OF STUDENT POPULATION USED
IN THIS STUDY

Classification	Out of State	In State
Freshman	20	20
Sophomore	20	20
Junior	20	20
Senior	20	20

Hypotheses

In order to analyze and order the empirical findings, the following null hypotheses have been developed:

1. There is no significant difference between the percentage of College of Agriculture freshman and sophomore students who have not decided on their majors and those junior students who have decided.
2. There is no significant difference with respect to occupational commitment between College of Agriculture freshman and sophomore students and juniors and senior students.
3. There is no significant difference in the degree of occupational commitment between out-of-state and in-state students enrolled in the College of Agriculture.
4. There is no relationship between the occupational aspiration level of College of Agriculture students and their self perceptions of potential academic performance.

5. There is no significant difference between the occupational aspiration level of College of Agriculture students with an urban orientation and those with a rural orientation.

Definition of Terms

Major field of study - Designation a principal subject of study, chosen by a student, in which he is required to take a certain number of courses or hours in order to obtain a degree.

Freshman - A student during his or her first year as a college student.

Sophomore - A student in the second year of a four-year college program.

Junior - One in the third year of a four-year college.

Senior - An undergraduate in his final year of college.

Career - A profession or other calling demanding special preparation and undertaken as a life work.

Counseling - Advise, especially that given as the result of consultation.

Undergraduates - A student in a university or college who has not taken a degree.

Vocational guidance - Guidance in the choice or training for the pursuit of a vocation; also concerned with or skilled in such guidance or training.

Occupation - A category in the social structuring of work

or work as seen from the socioeconomic or an economic point of view. An occupation is a specific activity with a market value which an individual normally pursues for the purpose of obtaining a steady flow of income. It may also be viewed as a group of similar jobs in several establishments or as a group of similar positions in one establishment, or as a position a group of tasks performed by one person.

Vocational adjustment - The degree of efficiency, relative to his peer group, with which a person has utilized his capacities in coping with and completing the vocational developmental tasks of life stage, as indicated by his satisfaction with his vocation.

Vocational behavior - Any interaction between an individual and his environment which is significantly related to preparation for, participation in, or retirement from work. More particularly, these interactions are stimulated by the demands of the vocational development tasks.

Vocational development - The process of growth and learning which subsumes all instances of vocational behavior. Vocational development is the progressive increase and modification of a person's capacities and dispositions for particular kinds of vocational behavior. In this sense, vocational development encompasses all aspects of development which can be

identified with or related to work.

Vocational life stage - One of the periods, roughly corresponding to certain age spans, into which vocational development is divided. All individuals in the same life stage meet generally comparable vocational developmental tasks and manifest relatively similar kinds of vocational behavior.

Limitation of the Study

The study was limited to one-hundred sixty freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students of the College of Agriculture initially enrolled for the 1968 Spring Semester at Oklahoma State University. The scope of the study was limited due to a lack of available time.

Statistical Analysis (38)

Various data were categorized and tabulated using percentages. Other data were treated by an analysis of variance using a least significant differences of the means (LSD). In certain parts of the study, simple correlation coefficient were computed (See Appendix C).

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Data pertaining to the three phases of the study were tabulated in total percentages and percentiles established, while data pertaining to phases two and three were analyzed statistically by the analysis of variance method in order (1) to show percentages of eight classifications of agricultural students declaring majors, time of declaring majors, factors affecting the selection of majors, intention of changing majors, the intention of students of changing majors if offered a ten thousand dollar a year job, and the degree of commitment to their majors and (2) to compare the various occupational choices of students comprising each classification of the study. Presentation of results include, for each of the eight classification, the total response of twenty agricultural students, separately tabulated.

Phase I

Time of Declaring Major

This phase of the study was directed toward discovering when agricultural students select their major field of study. Some investigators reported finding that most

students declare their majors either at the freshman or sophomore levels, but at the junior level, the students are forced to declare a major. This requirement may have the net effect of being far more satisfying to advisors and administrators of academic affairs than to the individual student.

Results of the investigation in terms of the time of definite commitment to a major field of study are shown in Table II.

Ninety-five percent of the in-state freshman students reported making a commitment to a major during the first year of study and 5 percent reporting non-commitment, as contrasted to 100 percent of the out-of-state freshman students who reported committing to a major during the first year. Ninety percent of the in-state sophomore students were found committed to a major in the first year and 10 percent committed in the second year, as contrasted to 85 percent of the out-of-state sophomore student reporting commitment in the first year and 15 percent in the second year. Eighty percent of the in-state junior students were reported as committed to a major the first year, 15 percent committed the second year, and 5 percent the third year. Again, this was contrasted to 90 percent of the out-of-state junior students reporting commitment to a major the first year, 10 percent the third year. With regard to the in-state senior students, 60 percent reported they were committed the first year, 5 percent the second year, 25

TABLE II

TIME AND PERCENTAGE OF AGRICULTURAL
STUDENTS COMMITTED TO A MAJOR¹

Student Classification	Committed				Not Committed
	1st Year	2nd Year	3rd Year	4th Year	
Freshman					
In-state	95	-	-	-	5
Out-of-state	100	-	-	-	-
Sophomore					
In-state	90	10	-	-	-
Out-of-state	85	15	-	-	-
Junior					
In-state	80	15	5	-	-
Out-of-state	90	-	10	-	-
Senior					
In-state	60	5	25	10	-
Out-of-state	60	10	30	-	-

¹Data represent 20 students in each classification.

percent the third year, and 10 percent the fourth year. It should be readily recognized that the 25 percent third year, and the 10 percent fourth year reported changes and results of changes of majors at that particular year. Sixty percent of the out-of-state senior students reported commitment to a major the first year, 10 percent the second year, and 30 percent the third year. Here, also, the 30 percent represents changes of majors at the junior year level.

Therefore, it is evident that a high percentage of agriculture students declare majors in the freshman year; and that a few of them change their majors during the next year, a larger number of students change their field at the junior year level. Perhaps at this time the students have considered all the factors and are hoping to make a wise choice of a lifetime occupation.

Factors Influencing the Selection of Major

It has been reported that various factors influence the selection of a major or occupation. The primary ones selected in this study are as listed: (1) parental influence; (2) friends, counselors, advisers, and other high school and university teachers and personnel; (3) past experience; (4) employment opportunities; and (5) economic factors and other rewards. The respondents were asked to assign a number from one to five to these factors, one indicating the highest and five indicating the least in-

fluent factor in selecting their major. The ranking results, based on respondents' recognition of these influential factors, are shown in Table III.

Freshman Students

In-state freshman student responses indicate that past experience was the number one factor influencing their selection of a major (35 percent). The in-state freshman ranked friends, counselors, et cetera equal with employment opportunities (20 percent each). Parental influence ranked third (15 percent) and economic factors and other rewards was fourth (10 percent).

Most out-of-state freshman students indicated past experience as the one factor influencing their selection of major (25 percent). Parental influence, employment opportunities, and economic factor and other rewards were all ranked equal (20 percent each), while friends, counselors, et cetera, was the least influential (15 percent).

Sophomore Students

In-state sophomore students ranked past experience as the number one most influential factor in their selection of a major (80 percent). Parental influence; friends, counselors, et cetera; employment opportunities; and economic factors and other rewards were all ranked equal (5 percent each).

Out-of-state sophomore students rated past experience as the single most important factor influencing their

TABLE III

EFFECTS OF PARENTAL INFLUENCE; FRIENDS, COUNSELORS, ETC.; PAST EXPERIENCE;
EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES; ECONOMIC FACTORS, AND OTHER REWARDS ON
SELECTION OF MAJOR OF AGRICULTURAL STUDENTS, AS SHOWN IN PERCENT^{1,2}

Student Classification	Parental Influence	Friends Counselors, etc.	Past Experience	Employment Opportunities	Economic Factors and other Rewards
Freshman					
In-state	15	20	35	20	10
Out-of-state	20	15	25	25	20
Sophomore					
In-state	5	5	80	5	5
Out-of-state	10	15	50	15	10
Junior					
In-state	5	15	70	5	5
Out-of-state	0	10	70	10	10
Senior					
In-state	5	15	50	10	20
Out-of-state	10	5	70	5	10

¹Data represent an average of 20 students

²Five replications in each classification

selection of a major (50 percent). Friends, counselors, et cetera, and employment opportunities were second (15 percent each). Parental influence and economic factors and other rewards ranked third (10 percent each).

Junior Students

In-state junior students also indicated past experience as the one factor most influential on their selection of a major (70 percent). Friends, counselors et cetera, were next (15 percent); parental influence, employment opportunities, and economic factors and other rewards ranked third (5 percent each).

Seventy percent of the out-of-state junior students ranked past experience as the chief factor in choosing their major. Friends, counselors, et cetera; employment opportunities; and economic factors and other rewards were ranked equally (10 percent each). None of the respondents ranked parental influence first.

Senior Students

Most senior in-state students indicated that past experience was the chief factor in their choice of major (50 percent). Economic factors and other rewards came next (20 percent), followed by friends, counselors, et cetera (15 percent). Fewer students ranked employment opportunities and parental influence (10 percent and 5 percent, respectively).

Like in-state students, most out-of-state senior students ranked past experience as the single factor (70 percent) most important in their choice of a major. Parental influence and economic factors and other rewards were next (10 percent each) while friends, counselors, et cetera, and employment opportunities ranked third (5 percent each).

All Classes

Past experience as indicated by the responses of all classifications was the one factor most credited with having influenced their selection of a major. Friends, counselors, advisers, and other high school and university personnel ranked next with employment opportunities, economic factors and other rewards, and parental influence ranked in descending order.

Since most agricultural students come from farms, those responses suggest that a relationship between their decision of a major--based on past experience--and their farm background might exist.

Changing of Major

It was reported in the methodology of this study that the questionnaire administered asked students three questions about their intention of changing majors. The three questions were as follows.

1. Do you plan to change your major? _____ Yes,
No.
2. If you were suddenly offered a \$10,000 a year job that required you to change your major, would you change? _____ Yes, _____ No.
3. Please indicate how committed you are to your major _____
(1 to 10)

These questions were designed to measure the student's degree of commitment to his major. Responses to these questions are presented in Table IV.

Plans to Change by Classes

Data in Table IV reveals that 70 percent of the in-state freshman students did not plan to change their majors while 30 percent did plan to change their majors. This compares with 75 percent of the out-of-state freshman students who did not plan to change majors.

Data in Table IV reveals that 90 percent of the in-state sophomore students did not plan to change majors while 10 percent did plan to change. A greater percentage of out-of-state sophomore students, 95 percent, were not planning to change their majors, with only 5 percent planning to change.

One hundred percent of the in-state junior students were not planning to change majors compared to 90 percent of the out-of-state junior students who were not planning to change.

In the senior class neither the in-state nor the out-of-state students planned to change their majors.

TABLE IV

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO PLAN AND DO NOT
PLAN TO CHANGE MAJORS, AS SHOWN FOR
EACH CLASSIFICATION¹

Student Classification	Do Not Plan to Change	Do Plan to Change
Freshman		
In-state	70	30
Out-of-state	75	25
Sophomore		
In-state	90	10
Out-of-state	95	5
Junior		
In-state	100	-
Out-of-state	90	10
Senior		
In-state	100	-
Out-of-state	100	-

¹Data represent an average of five replications with
20 studies in each.

One can see from the data that there is a definite trend among a great number of freshman students toward planning to change their majors. This fact may be attributed to the freedom these students still have to search for a suitable major in accordance with their perceived abilities, interests, and/or occupational objectives. Freshman students most likely could not benefit from the past experience of other factors influencing them to choose agriculture. Consequently, this period could actually be viewed as an exploratory phases for the students, that is a time to weigh all the factors and then make a choice. In the sophomore class there still appears to be factors that students may consider and perhaps the students could make use of these factors in a much more realistic manner. Some students will, in all likelihood, change their majors during this stage. This is in contrast to junior and senior students, who may feel that they have less freedom to move from one department major to another. These students, in some cases, may fear losing credits more than they would at the freshman and sophomore levels. Junior and senior students, it seems, would be more committed to their major courses than general or basic courses.

Plan to Change Because of Unanticipated Job Offer

The second question asked all students if they would change majors provided they were suddenly offered a ten-thousand-dollar-a-year job. The results of this question

are shown in Table V.

Fifty-five percent of the in-state freshman students indicated they would not change if offered a ten thousand dollar a year job while 45 percent indicated they would change. This compares to 75 percent of the out-of-state freshman students indicating they would not change and 25 percent indicating they would.

As discussed previously, a greater percentage of students change majors at the freshman year and the lesser percentage change at the senior year. During the interval, obviously some students do change. This is supported by the fact that sophomore students indicated they would change majors if made such an offer. Also, 15 percent of the out-of-state seniors would change their majors if such an offer were made.

Commitment of Major by Classes

In the third question the students were asked to indicate how committed they were to their major. Students responded by assigning a number from 1 through 10 on a commitment continuum. One represented strongly committed, while 10 represented on this commitment continuum the least committed. The results are shown in Table VI.

The data shows a rather high percentage of classifications being strongly committed to their major. An exception, and rather unexplainable, is that none of the out-of-state sophomore students indicated that they were

TABLE V

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO WOULD CHANGE
THEIR MAJOR IF SUDDENLY OFFERED
A \$10,000 A YEAR JOB¹

Student Classification	Do Not Plan to Change	Do Plan to Change
Freshman		
In-state	70	30
Out-of-state	75	25
Sophomore		
In-state	90	10
Out-of-state	95	5
Junior		
In-state	100	-
Out-of-state	90	10
Senior		
In-state	100	-
Out-of-state	100	-

¹Data represent an average of five replications with
20 students in each.

TABLE VI

DEGREE OF COMMITMENT OF AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
STUDENTS TO THEIR MAJOR AS MEASURED FROM
1 TO 10, STRONGLY COMMITTED AND LEAST
COMMITTED, RESPECTIVELY (PERCENTAGE)¹

Student Classification	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Freshman										
In-state	15	25	20	5	10	5	10	10	-	-
Out-of-state	25	25	10	5	-	5	15	10	-	-
Sophomore										
In-state	20	15	25	10	25	-	-	-	-	5
Out-of-state	0	10	25	30	15	5	-	15	-	-
Junior										
In-state	25	15	30	-	15	-	-	10	-	-
Out-of-state	30	30	5	10	5	-	-	10	5	5
Senior										
In-state	20	37	10	5	5	10	5	10	-	5
Out-of-state	25	15	25	5	15	-	5	5	5	-

¹Data represent an average of 5 replications with 20 students in each.

strongly committed. The remaining choices are distributed along the 1 through 10 commitment continuum.

Phase II.

Choice of Life Occupation

The investigator assumes that the choice of the right career is the earnest desire of an increasing number of students. Students see the basis for choosing a field of work to be success and satisfaction as reflected in men and women who are seen as possessing certain abilities, interests, ambitions, and personality traits.

To determine if any changes in students' aspiration level had occurred during the four years of college, data were analyzed by an analysis of variance. Least significant mean differences were determined by classification based on the agricultural occupations aspiration scale. The data and analysis are shown in Table VII.

No significant difference was found between the mean of agricultural occupation aspiration level between in-state and out-of-state freshmen, in and out-of-state sophomores, in and out-of-state juniors, and in and out-of-state senior students.

However, the investigator found a highly significant mean difference between the agricultural occupation aspiration level among in-state and out-of-state students when differences were based on rank in school, that is freshman,

TABLE VII

MEAN DIFFERENCES FOR THE AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONAL
ASPIRATION LEVEL FOR EIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS
OF COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS¹

Student Classification	Mean
Freshman	
In-state	4.10
Out-of-state	4.00
Sophomore	
In-state	7.50
Out-of-state	7.30
Junior	
In-state	8.01
Out-of-state	9.30
Senior	
In-state	9.02
Out-of-state	8.76
LSD at 0.05 level	2.48
LSD at 0.01 level	3.10

¹Data represent an average of four replications,
20 students in each.

sophomore, junior, and senior students. This difference indicates that freshman students have a lower agricultural occupation aspiration level than the other three classes. One might posit that freshman have more tentatively learned about the various values and other factors related to a given agricultural occupation.

The investigator found that the agricultural occupation aspiration level was not significantly different between the sophomore and junior students; however, it was significantly different between sophomore and senior students. The study shows that there is definitely a change in the agricultural occupation aspiration level during the four years of college.

Students were also asked to list four potential occupations, assuming they were absolutely free to go into any kind of work, and to list the type of work they envisioned ten years from now or when they were thirty years old.

Response indicated that a high proportion of the students listed their first choices of majors among the potential occupations they listed. (See Table VIII).

Scores on Self Perception of Occupational Abilities

To determine student' self perception of their projected abilities, students were asked to rate their ability to perform in their chosen fields. Student ability ratings were based on their responses to occupations they had

TABLE VIII

STUDENTS CHOICE OF OCCUPATION TEN YEARS FROM
NOW OR WHEN THEY ARE THIRTY YEARS OLD

Classification	First Choice	Second Choice	Third Choice	Fourth Choice
Freshman				
In-state	95	5		
Out-of-state	90	5	5	
Sophomore				
In-state	100			
Out-of-state	100			
Junior				
In-state	100			
Out-of-state	100			
Senior				
In-state	100			
Out-of-state	100			

chosen on the basis of the following: (See Table IX).

- 1 = Very much above average
- 2 = Somewhat above average
- 3 = Just average
- 4 = Somewhat below average
- 5 = Very much below average
- 6 = I do not know because I have not yet made a choice

Thirty percent of the in-state and 20 percent of the out-of-state freshmen perceived their abilities for the occupations they had chosen as somewhat above average. The other students' perceptions of their occupational abilities showed that 50 percent of the in-state and 45 percent of the out-of-state sophomores, 65 percent of the in-state and 62 percent of the out-of-state juniors, and 80 percent of the in-state and 90 percent of the out-of-state seniors rated themselves as somewhat above average.

Correlation Between Variables

In order to determine the significance of relationships hypothesized by the investigator, appropriate independent and dependent variables were correlated using a simple correlation coefficient technique. Raw scores were compared in the computation. The correlation coefficients for occupational aspiration level and self perceived occupational ability are presented in Tables X and XI.

Occupational Aspiration Level-Size of Community Relationship

The occupational aspiration level of all students living in larger communities was significantly higher than

TABLE IX

PERCENTAGES OF STUDENTS WHO UNDERLINED THEIR ABILITIES
FOR THE OCCUPATION THEY HAD CHOSEN¹

Student Ability	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State
Very much above average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somewhat above average	30	20	50	45	65	62	80	90
Just average	50	60	30	25	15	30	10	5
Somewhat below average	20	20	20	30	20	8	10	5
Very much below average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
I do not know because I have not made a choice.	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

¹Data represented an average of five replications with 20 students in each.

TABLE X

SIMPLE CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS COMPARING THE COMMUNITY IN WHICH THE STUDENT HAD LIVED AND THE LEVEL OF AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION

Community	Coefficients							
	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State	In-State	Out-of-State
On a farm	.20	.25	.30	.22	.10	.15	.22	.16
In the open country but on a farm	.15	.22	.23	.18	.22	.18	.21	.20
In a village under 2,500-10,000	.38*	.35*	.41*	.45*	.35*	.30*	.45*	.35*
In a city over 10,000	.56*	.60*	.50*	.65*	.30*	.50*	.55*	.50*

*Significant at the 1 percent level

TABLE XI

SIMPLE CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS COMPARING THE STUDENT'S
ABILITY AND LEVEL OF AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION

Student Ability	Coefficient							
	Freshman		Sophomore		Junior		Senior	
	In- State	Out-of State	In- State	Out-of State	In- State	Out-of State	In- State	Out-of State
Very much above average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Somewhat above average	.19*	.17*	.48*	.45*	.65*	.59*	.71*	.68*
Just average	.41*	.40*	.14	.10	.16	.13	.30	.20
Somewhat below average	.13	.10	.09	.17	.15	.13	.70	.80
Very much below average	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

*significant at 1 percent level

that of those living in smaller communities.

Fifty percent of the in-state and 60 percent of the out-of-state freshman students perceived their occupational abilities to be average. The percentages of the other students rating their abilities as average were as follows: 30 percent of the in-state and 25 percent of the out-of-state sophomore students, 15 percent of the in-state and 30 percent of the out-of-state junior students, and 10 percent of the in-state and 5 percent of the out-of-state senior students.

Twenty percent of the in-state and 30 percent of the out-of-state freshmen and 20 percent of the in-state and 30 percent of the out-of-state sophomores indicated that they perceived their occupational abilities to be somewhat below average. The ability ratings of the other students showed that 20 percent of the in-state and 8 percent of the out-of-state juniors and 10 percent of the in-state and 5 percent of the out-of-state seniors thought their abilities were somewhat below average.

The data show that a higher percentage of sophomore, junior, and senior students in the College of Agriculture have had an opportunity to accumulate more knowledge about the world of work and experience and could make choices of occupations than the freshman students.

Occupational Aspiration Level - Self Perception of Occupational Ability Relationship

A simple correlation coefficient comparing the students perceived occupational abilities and level of

agricultural occupational aspiration was computed. Results are presented in Table X.

The investigator found a significant correlation between agricultural occupational aspiration level and the perceived occupational ability in all classes in which the perceived occupational abilities were rated somewhat above average. In other words, the higher the ability, the higher the agricultural occupational aspiration level tended to be. Conversely, the lower the ability, the lower the agricultural occupational aspiration level tended to be.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Purposes of the Study

As previously stated, the main purpose of this study were sixfold: to determine a sample profile of personal data of College of Agriculture students, to determine when College of Agriculture students choose their major field of study at Oklahoma State University, to determine some of the factors affecting the choice of College of Agriculture students for a major field of study, to determine the degree of commitment of College of Agriculture students to a major field of study, to determine occupational aspiration of College of Agriculture students, and to determine differences in career selection of our-of-state students and in-state students in the College of Agriculture.

Another related purpose of the study was to determine if the level of agricultural occupational aspiration was related to the perceived occupational abilities of students and to the size of the communities from which they came.

Methodology of the Study

An experimental design involving a eight-way classification which consisted of freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior groups with two levels of each classification variables of in-state and out-of-state students was employed. One-hundred and sixty students in four classes of the College of Agriculture were included in this study. The included students were randomly selected for each of the classification variables.

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire. The questionnaire was comprised of three major phases and was designed for use in this study. The first phase was designed to obtain personal variables, which are said to be independent variables. The second phase was designed to obtain data concerning the time they choose their major field, the degree of commitment to their major, and to determine some of the factors that affected their choice of major. The third phase was to determine the level of agricultural occupational aspiration of College of Agriculture students.

Instruments used were administered in a questionnaire form to College of Agriculture students during the 1967-68 academic year.

Summary of the Findings

Findings showed that most students of the College of Agriculture declared their major while in the freshman

year or in some cases while in the sophomore year of college.

It was found that most College of Agriculture students rated past experience as the number one factor that influenced their selection of major. This finding applied to freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students.

A greater proportion of freshman students planned to change their major than did sophomore, junior, and senior students. Also, a greater proportion of the freshman students indicated they would change their major if they were offered a ten-thousand-dollar-a-year job, than did sophomore, junior, and senior students. Sophomore, junior, and senior students indicated a higher degree of commitment to their major than did freshman students.

It was found that students who attended schools located in towns with a population of two to ten thousand had significantly higher occupational aspiration levels than students who attended schools located in somewhat smaller towns with populations of 500 or less.

A positive correlation was found between perceived occupational ability and level of occupational aspiration. Students who perceived their occupational ability to be above average tended to have higher occupational aspiration. More junior and senior students rated their occupational ability level higher than did freshman and sophomore students. Also, the investigator found that the majority of students tended to select the first as a future occupation--ten years hence--those occupations they were preparing for in terms of a major field.

Conclusions and Implications of the Study

Based on the analysis of the data that this investigation provided, the writer has come to certain conclusions which include to five somewhat related hypotheses. The conclusions along with a restatement of the hypotheses follows:

1. The study revealed that there was a higher percentage of junior-senior (upper division) than freshman-sophomore (lower division) students who had decided on their agricultural major. The percentage difference was of such magnitude that Hypothesis 2, "there is no difference of percentage between College of Agriculture freshman and sophomore students who have decided on their majors and those junior students who have decided," was rejected.
2. The writer found significant difference in the occupational commitment of College of Agriculture students at all four grade levels; freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. This difference supports the rejection of Hypothesis 3: "there is no significant difference with respect to occupational commitment between College of Agriculture freshman and sophomore students and junior and senior students."
3. The difference in the occupational commitment of out-of-state and in-state College of Agriculture students, the investigator found was not significant. This finding supports the acceptance of

Hypothesis 4: "there is no significant difference in the degree of occupational commitment between out-of-state and in-state students enrolled in the College of Agriculture."

4. The study revealed a positive relationship between the occupational aspiration level of College of Agriculture students and their self perceptions of potential academic performance. This relationship supports the rejection of Hypothesis 5: "there is no relationship between the occupational aspiration level of College of Agriculture students and their self perceptions of potential academic performance."
5. A positive relationship between the occupational aspirations level of College of Agriculture students with an urban orientation as opposed to those considered to have a rural orientation. This supported the rejection of Hypothesis 5: "there is no significant difference between the occupational aspiration level of College of Agriculture students with an urban orientation and those with a rural orientation."

Perhaps this study would have met with more success if it had been administered in a classroom "small groups" situation with opportunity provided for answering questions the writer recognizes, the findings would have been more realistic from an experimental design standpoint, had the researcher included a control group or some type of treat-

ment. This situation has lead this researcher to believe that similar studies should be carried out to further support these findings which are considered largely preliminary. It seems this procedure might provide more basic information relevant to developing counseling techniques better designed to overcome the many problems facing College of Agriculture students; from selecting a major to an ultimate life's occupation, as well as those associated with career development.

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APPENDIX A

LETTER WITH QUESTIONNAIRE

APPENDIX A

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Agricultural Education Department

Dear Agricultural Student:

Please fill the enclosed questionnaire and send it to us in the self-addressed envelope.

This is one of the series of research study presently conducted by this department to study the occupational commitment and related factors of occupational aspiration. Hopefully, this information will be a great value in developing counseling programs for students. We will appreciate your prompt attention.

Sincerely yours,

Gul M. Telwar
Graduate Student

Robert G. Meisner
Associate Professor

Approved by:

Dr. Robert R. Price, Professor and Head
Agricultural Education Department

Randall J. Jones, Dean of Resident Instruction
College of Agriculture

PART I. PERSONAL DATA

A. About Myself

1. My age (to nearest birthday) is _____.
2. My sex is _____ male, _____ female.
3. I am a _____ Freshman, _____ Sophomore,
_____ Junior, _____ Senior.
4. I make my regular home with:
 - _____ My own parents
 - _____ A parent and a step-parent
 - _____ One parent only
 - _____ My grandparents
 - _____ An Uncle or Aunt
 - _____ Other (Specify)
5. I live
 - _____ On a farm
 - _____ In the open country, but not on a farm
 - _____ In a village under 2,500 - 10,000
 - _____ In a city over 10,000
6. My father's occupation is _____.
7. My mother's occupation is _____.
8. My parents _____ own, _____ rent a house.

B. About My Previous Education (High School)

1. The number of years I have attended high school is _____ years.
2. Size of my high school was _____.
number of students
3. Size of my graduating class was _____.
no. of students

C. About My Family

1. My parents are
 - _____ Both living
 - _____ Both deceased
 - _____ Father is deceased
 - _____ Mother is deceased
 - _____ Divorced
 - _____ Separated
2. Size of my family is _____.
total number
3. The number of older brothers I have is _____.
4. The number of younger brothers I have is _____.
5. The number of older sisters I have is _____.
6. The number of younger sisters I have is _____.

D. About My Family Education

1. My father's education consisted of
_____ Less than 8 grades

- _____ 8 grades
 - _____ 9-11 grades
 - _____ 12 grades
 - _____ Some college
 - _____ College degree
 - _____ Other
2. My mother's education consisted of
 - _____ Less than 8 grades
 - _____ 8 grades
 - _____ 9-11 grades
 - _____ 12 grades
 - _____ Some college
 - _____ College degree
 - _____ Other
 3. The number of my older brothers and sisters that graduated from high school is _____.
 4. The number that quit school before graduating from high school is _____.
 5. The number that have attended or are attending college is _____.

PART II. DATA ABOUT MAJOR

A. Time of Declaring Major

1. Have you declared your major? Yes _____, No _____.
2. When have you declared your major? 1st year _____, 2nd year _____, 3rd year _____, 4th year _____.

B. Factors Influenced Your Choice of Major

1. If you have declared your major, please number the following factors, which have influenced your decision from A to E. (A is the highest)
 - a. Parental influence _____
 - b. Friends, counselor, advisors and other high school and university teacher and personnel or other (please specify) _____
 - c. Past experience _____
 - d. Employment opportunities _____
 - e. Economic factor and other rewards (please specify) _____

C. Changing Your Major

1. Do you plan to change your major? Yes _____, No _____.

2. If you were suddenly offered \$10,000 a year job that required you to change your major, would you change? Yes _____, No _____.
3. Please indicate how committed you are to your major _____
(1 to 10)

1 = Strongly committed
10 = Least committed

PART III. ABOUT YOUR CHOICE OF A LIFE'S OCCUPATION

- A. The occupations which I have thought about going into are:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

- B. The occupation that I plan to follow is:

_____ (Indicate particular job)

- C. In regard to my choice of an occupation

_____ I have given the matter a great deal of thought.
_____ I have given the matter some thought.
_____ I have given the matter little thought.

- D. In regard to my choice of occupation

_____ I feel sure that my mind is made up.
_____ I'm not too sure, but I think my mind is made up.
_____ I'm not sure that my mind is made up.

- E. As to my knowledge of the work I intend to enter

_____ I have good knowledge because I have worked at it.
_____ I have good knowledge because I have relatives or friends who work at it.
_____ I have a general knowledge, but don't know much about the details of it.
_____ I do not know much about it yet, but will find out when I go on to school.
_____ I do not know much about it yet, but will find out by experience on the job.
_____ I do not know because I have not yet made my choice.

F. For the occupation I have chosen, I think my ability is

- _____ Very much above average
- _____ Somewhat above average
- _____ Just average
- _____ Somewhat below average
- _____ Very much below average
- _____ I do not know because I have not yet made a choice.

G. If I were absolutely free to go into any kind of work I wanted, my choice would be _____.

H. The type of work I would like to be doing when I am 30 years old is _____.

APPENDIX B

"MY CHOICE OF A LIFE'S OCCUPATION"

PART I. MY CHOICE OF A LIFE'S OCCUPATION

A. The occupations which I have thought about going into are:

1. _____ 2. _____
3. _____ 4. _____

B. The occupation that I plan to follow is:

_____ (Indicate particular job)

C. In regard to my choice of an occupation

_____ I have given the matter a great deal of thought.

_____ I have given the matter some thought.

_____ I have given the matter little thought.

D. In regard to my choice of my occupation

_____ I feel sure that my mind is made up.

_____ I'm not too sure, but I think my mind is made up.

_____ I'm not sure that my mind is made up.

E. As to my knowledge of the work I intend to enter

_____ I have good knowledge because I have worked at it.

_____ I have good knowledge because I have relatives or friends who work at it.

_____ I have a general knowledge, but don't know much about the details of it.

_____ I do not know much about it yet, but will find out when I go on to school.

_____ I do not know much about it yet, but will find out by experience on the job.

_____ I do not know because I have not yet made a choice.

F. For the occupation I have chosen, I think my ability is

_____ Very much above average.

_____ Somewhat above average.

_____ Just below average

_____ Somewhat below average

_____ Very much below average.

_____ I do not know because I have not yet made a choice.

- G. If I were absolutely free to go into any kind of work I wanted, my choice would be _____.
- H. The type of work I would like to be doing when I am 30 years old is _____.

APPENDIX C

STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR THE AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATION
LEVEL FOR EIGHT CLASSIFICATIONS OF COLLEGE
OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS

Source of Variation (total)	df	ss	MS
Freshman			
In-state	19	1025	539.47
Out-of-state	19	1000	526.32
Sophomore			
In-state	19	1875	986.84
Out-of-state	19	1825	960.50
Junior			
In-state	19	2002	105.68
Out-of-state	19	2325	122.68
Senior			
In-state	19	2255	118.84
Out-of-state	19	2190	115.26

$$\text{LSD} = \sqrt{2 s\bar{x}} = 2.48 \text{ at } 0.005 \text{ level}$$

$$\text{LSD} = \sqrt{2 s\bar{x}} = 3.10 \text{ at } 0.005 \text{ level}$$

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF AGRICULTURAL
OCCUPATIONS ASPIRATION LEVEL BY
LOCATION OF RESIDENT

Source of Variation	df	ss	MS
Total	159	41,942.86	2637.92
Classification	7	214.24	30.61
Within classification	152	41,728.62	2745.30

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE OF AGRICULTURAL
OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATION LEVEL BY
THE STUDENT'S ABILITY

Source of Variation	df	ss	MS
Total	159	31,942.8	2008.98
Classification	7	721.00	103.00
Within classification	152	31,221.00	2054.01

APPENDIX D

AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATION CONTINUUM

AGRICULTURAL OCCUPATIONS CONTINUUM

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Score</u>
Secretary of Agriculture	9
President of an Agricultural University	
Dean of a College of Agriculture	
Director of Federal Agricultural Extension Service	
President of a large implement company	
Director of the Federal Land Bank	
President, State Board of Agriculture	
Agricultural Attache	
Agricultural Economics Professor	8
Agricultural Chemist	
Veterinarian	
Agricultural Engineer	
Plant Pathologist	
Agricultural Entomologist	
Rural Sociologist	
Agricultural Journalist	
Animal Science Specialist	7
Poultry Science Specialist	
Agronomy Specialist	
Forestry Specialist	
Horticulture Specialist	
County Agricultural Agent	
Soil Conservationist	
Bank Farm Representative	
Purebred Beef Cattle Herdsman	6
Manager of Aerial Crop Dusting Company	
Milk Sanitarian or Inspector	
Commercial Farm Manager	
Florist	
Hatchery Manager	
Livestock Buyer or Commission Man	
Poultry and Egg Buyer	
Dairy Plant Manager	5
Farm Machinery Fieldman	
Grain Elevator Manager	
Farm Co-op Store Manager	
Feed Mill Manager	
Farm Auctioneer	
Farm Machinery Service Center Foreman	
Farm Insurance Agent	

<u>Occupation</u>	<u>Score</u>
Meat Inspector	4
Egg Inspector	
Fruit and Vegetable Inspector	
Veterinarian Assistant	
Soil Conservation Aid	
Soils Laboratory Technician	
Dairy Herd Supervisor	
Artificial Inseminator (breeding technician)	
Farm Buildings Carpenter	3
Farm Machinery Mechanic	
Farm Tire Service Operator	
Game Management Employee	
National Forest Employee	
State Park Employee	
Egg Grader	
Custom Farm Machine Operator	
Garden Center Employee	2
Farm Co-op Service Store Employee	
Grounds Maintenance Employee	
Golf Course Grounds Employee	
Nursery Employee	
Bulk Tank Milk Truck Driver	
Rural Gasoline and Oil Distributor Truck Driver	
Farm Machinery Dealer's Clerk	1
Feedstore Clerk	
Country Store Clerk	
Blacksmith	
Livestock Auction Clerk	
Farm Machinery Mechanic's Helper	
Lumberjack	
Animal Groom	
Dairy Plant Laborer	0
Livestock Auction Laborer	
Nursery Laborer	
Greenhouse Laborer	
Sawmill Laborer	
Stockyards Laborer	
Cannery Laborer	
Slaughter House Laborer	

VITA

Gul Mohammed Telwar

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: THE INFLUENCE OF OCCUPATIONAL COMMITMENT AND RELATED FACTORS ON THE CHOICE OF MAJORS BY COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE STUDENTS AT OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY DURING 1967-68 ACADEMIC YEAR

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Kabul, Afghanistan, January 1, 1935, the son of Baram and Amro Telwar.

Education: Graduated from Kabul High School, Kabul, Afghanistan in 1956; received the Bachelor of Science degree with a major in General Agriculture from Kabul University, Kabul, Afghanistan in August, 1960. Attended Graduate College at the University of Wyoming, Laramie, Wyoming, and received the degree of Master of Science in Botany in August, 1961. Completed the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Education from Oklahoma State University in July, 1968.

Professional Experience: Associate Professor, Assistant Dean, Director of Experimental Station, 1961-1963 in the College of Agriculture at Kabul University, Afghanistan.

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