

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE
COMPETENCIES OF COUNTY EXTENSION
DIRECTORS IN THE OKLAHOMA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION
SERVICE

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Cooperative Extension Service was established in 1914 by the passage of the Smith Lever Act (Simons 22). The initial intent of the organization was to disseminate information to the public, primarily in the areas of Agriculture and Home Economics. The information source would be the Land Grant Institution in each state. Some 70+ years later, the initial function is intact, and has been broadened to include the areas of Rural Development and 4-H and youth work. The information delivery system is a network of highly trained, subject matter experts. Those individuals work in county, area, district and state levels. An administrative structure is in place at all levels to insure program continuity.

Administration is a term that can be defined in many ways. The definition by Newman (14, p. 1) was expressed as "The guidance, leadership and control of efforts of a group of individuals toward some common goal". He also stated that a good administrator can accomplish group objectives with minimal interference with other worthwhile objectives.

Lepawsky (13, p. 3) determined that "Administrative techniques are as significant a part of the end result as the actual programs to be carried out."

Ralston (3) felt that the administration of the Cooperative Extension is unique. The cooperative effort by the county-state-federal governments made the structure, inputs, operation, outputs and the resulting consequences very different from the administration of other organizations.

Plafcan's study (21) indicated that in most states the organizational structure of the Cooperative Extension Service comprises three levels of administration: County, District (Regional or Area), and State. Only in recent years have administrative duties been assigned to county positions. This change in organizational structure in the late 1950's and early 1960's was brought by changing economic structure rapid increase in technology, social mobility, changes in basic values, and proper regard for the area of human relations which required increased competence and specialization of the county staff member.

In Oklahoma, vacant county positions are filled according to program area. A determination is then made to assign administrative responsibilities when all program positions are filled. This procedure was outlined in a direct letter to all Extension field staff by the Associate Director of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension, July 1, 1984 (19). All candidates for employment in the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service must possess a Masters degree as indicated in a May 29, 1985, letter from the Assistant to the Dean for Personnel.

Statement of the Problem

The County Extension Director's nature and purpose is to provide administrative leadership to the development, implementation and evaluation of

the Oklahoma State University program in the county. The program, including Agriculture, Home Economics, 4-H and Youth, and Rural Development, is designed to meet the needs of people and comply with the policies and objectives of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service (20).

In Oklahoma, the major responsibility of any agent is program related. The vacant positions in a county are staffed with the applicant most competent in the open program area. When a complete staff has been assigned to each program area, the County Extension Director's responsibility is assigned to the individual determined to be the most competent administrator (16).

The title of an agent denotes the major program responsibility; for example: Extension Agriculture Agent, Extension Home Economist, and Extension 4-H Agent. The individual who will carry the administrative role is termed the County Extension Director. The individual with the program responsibility for agriculture and the administrative function would be titled Extension Agriculture Agent/County Extension Director. Extension agents are initially hired to fill a program responsibility. Thus, minimal consideration is given to administrative competency. Administrative skills are largely developed through actual work experience and, to a limited degree, some specific training in a related area.

The major administrative responsibilities of the County Extension Director have been identified as Program Planning, Program Implementation, Program Evaluation, Administrative Management, and Personnel Management. In Oklahoma, a County Extension Director may be required to allocate from 10 to

45 percent of his/her time to administrative responsibilities, according to county staff size (15).

Agents who have been assigned the administrative responsibility may perceive the importance of the administrative duties differently. Some may perceive them at a high level, while others may perceive them at a low level. Total years of experience, years as a County Director, educational background, size of county staff and administrative district may contribute to these differences.

If the perceived level of importance that County Extension Directors place on their administrative responsibilities and the level at which they perceive their competence in performing the responsibilities could be identified, then perhaps specific training and evaluation tools could be developed.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the levels of importance and competence that Oklahoma County Extension Director perceived themselves to possess in performing selected administrative responsibilities.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Determine the perceived level of importance which County Extension Directors place on selected administrative responsibilities.
2. Determine the perceived level of competence that County Extension Directors possess in performing the selected administrative responsibilities.

3. Determine if relationships exist among the perceived levels of importance and competence and total Extension experience, years as a County Director, degrees earned, size of staff and administrative district.

Rationale for the Study

In the search for a study topic pertaining to Administration and the Cooperative Extension Service, no study was found to assess the administrative competencies of the County Extension Director in Oklahoma. A similar study of Plafcan (20) conducted in Arkansas, provided the broad framework of what would be needed to conduct an analysis in Oklahoma.

During the past few decades, there have been several factors affecting how the County Directors have been selected. The usual procedure in the 60's and early 70's was that male agents with the Agriculture responsibility would generally be assigned the administrative responsibility on a routine basis. These Agriculture agents had generally performed for five or more years as an assistant agent in a county. The larger staffed counties were generally staffed by individuals who had many years of County Director experience, usually in several county assignments.

In 1974, the first Home Economist was selected as a County Director. As of this writing, no individual with 4-H responsibility has been designated County Director.

If, in fact, Lepawsky's (13, p. 3) assertion that the techniques of Administration are as important as the actual program, then it behooves the

Extension profession to determine the importance and competence of their individual administrative responsibilities.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in regard to the study:

1. That the items listed on the questionnaire could be administratively categorized in five areas.
2. That the County Extension Directors understood the inquiries of the questionnaire and indicated their honest perceptions of each item.
3. The responses to the questionnaire were given in the manner in which the researcher had intended.

Scope of the Study

The population of the study included the 77 counties of Oklahoma. Only the County Extension Directors responded to the questionnaire. The respondents were restricted to the selected items on the questionnaire and, therefore, the study was restricted to the scope of the questionnaire.

Definition of Terms

For better understanding of facts presented in this study, the following terms were defined:

1. Cooperative Extension Service: Refers to the organization created by the Smith Lever Act in 1914. The organization is charged with the responsibility

of disseminating research-based information to the public. The United States Department of Agriculture, the Land Grant University in each state and the county government cooperate in providing support. The term "Cooperative Extension", "Extension", "Extension Service" and the letters "C.E.S." will refer to this term.

2. County Extension Director: The title of the individual who has been assigned the responsibility of administering the county Extension program. Other terms, such as "County Director" and "Director" will be synonymous with defined term. The letters "C.E.D." will also be used to designate the term.

3. County Extension Agriculture Agent: The title of the individual who provides leadership, planning, implementing, and evaluating education in all areas of agriculture among adults and youths of the county or area where assigned.

4. County Extension Home Economist: The title of the individual who provides leadership in planning, implementing and evaluating educational programs in all areas of Home Economics among adults and youth of the county or area where assigned.

5. County Extension 4-H Agent: The title of the individual who provides leadership in planning, implementing, and evaluating educational programs in all areas of the 4-H and youth development.

6. District Director: The title of the individual who provides administrative leadership to extension staff in a specific geographical location. In Oklahoma, denotes Southwest, Northwest, Southeast or Northeast.

7. Program Planning: Refers to the administrative function of the C.E.D. of planning a county plan of work according to advisory needs.

8. Program Implementation: Refers to the administrative function of the C.E.D. that entails the actual activities that carry out the identified objectives.

9. Program Evaluation: Refers to the administrative function of the C.E.D. that involves the activities that are used to determine the effectiveness of a specified objective or program.

10. Administrative Management: Refers to the administrative functions of the C.E.D. that involve fiscal and associated tasks.

11. Personnel Management: Refers to the administrative function of the C.E.D. that involves staff relationships.

12. Administrative District: Refers to one of the four geographical areas (Southwest, Northeast, Southeast, or Northwest) delineated by administrative responsibility.

13. Plan of Work: Refers to a document that contains a number of specific objectives that an individual extension worker has planned to complete during a time period. The letters "P.O.W." will refer to this term.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In this chapter, a selection of relevant literature addressing the administrative responsibilities of County Extension Directors was reviewed. Reference information was gleaned from a number of sources: research studies, books, professional journals, and reports.

It is not implied that the search for relevant material was all inclusive, but the intent was to present a meaningful representation of the literature concerning the assessment of administrative competencies of County Extension Directors.

To provide a lucid response to the literature, the following sub-headings have been identified:

1. Organizational Structure
2. The Concept of Administration
3. The Role of the County Extension Director
4. Staff Competence
5. Related Research

Organizational Structure

According to Simons (21 p. 3) the Smith Lever Act of 1914 provided for the Cooperative Extension Service. The Act was "to provide for cooperative Agricultural Extension work between the Agricultural College of the time and the United States Department of Agriculture". Thus a partnership was formed, and an Extension division in each Land Grant University desiring to cooperate was established.

The provision of the Smith Lever Act was to "aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects relating to Agriculture and Home Economics and to encourage the application of the same".

Peck (4) elaborated on the trends that have an effect on the Extension Service. The giant strides in technology have had a dramatic affect on the primary audience of the Extension Service, namely the agricultural producer and his or her family.

Economic, social, political and educational trends have had a great effect on the initial extension audience, as have the new audiences that have been developed. Constant adjustment of the organization structure are in order.

Clark and Evans (6, pp. 75-80) identified six factors that affect organizational structure.

1. Increase in the size of a staff
2. Changes in personnel
3. Changes in clientele

4. Changes in the predominant bases of organization
5. Changes in objectives of the organization
6. Changes in bases of authority available to members of the organization

Clark and Evans (6, pp. 80-82) also identified six guidelines to administrative organization.

1. The members of the organization are arranged in a determinate sub-ordinate superordinate hierarchy of line positions, sometimes referred to as the "scaler process" wherein lines of positional authority and responsibility run upward and downward through several levels with a broadbase at the bottom and single head at the top to preserve the "Unity of Command".
2. Effective administration will occur when the authority allocated to an individual or group of individuals, and the extent and type of the responsibility are clearly defined and understood by all persons in the organization.
3. The authority assigned to an individual or a group of individuals in the organization is commensurate with the responsibility assigned to them.
4. In general, the span of control is such as to permit as much decentralization of decision making as is needed to attain that quality of decision which will result in increased effectiveness and efficiency of attaining the organization objectives.
5. Two-way channels of communication both vertically and horizontally are maintained.
6. The particular form of organization structure is treated as a flexible modifiable subject to continuous adaptations as conditions warrant.

Table 1 on page 12 depicts the administrative structure of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

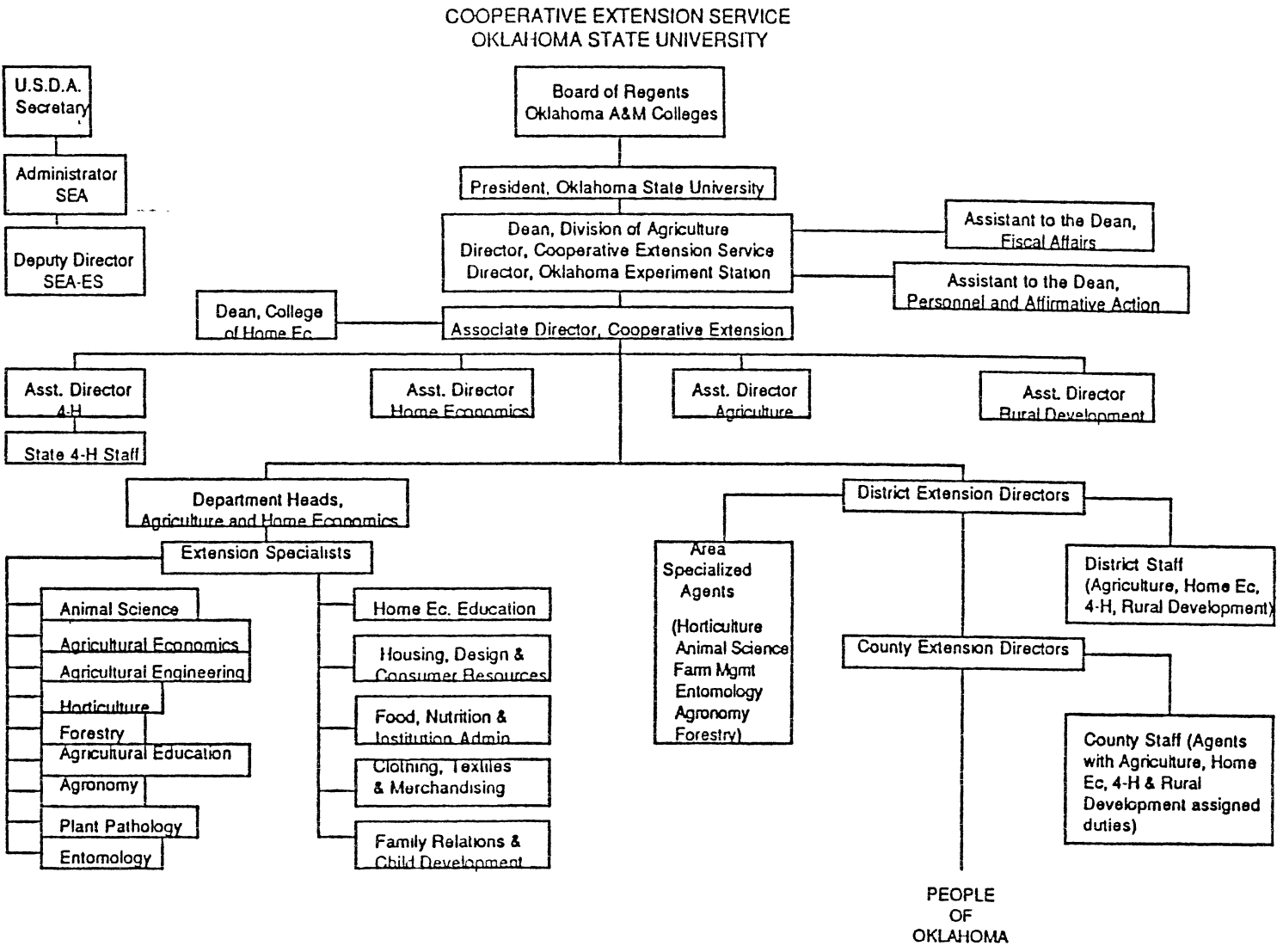


TABLE I
ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE OF THE OKLAHOMA
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Concept of Administration

Clark and Evans (6 p. 74) inferred that, "the specific administrative organization of any State Cooperative Extension Service, as well as the Federal Extension Service, depends largely on two major determinates".

The first determinant is the knowledge of administration that can be developed by administrators. The second major determinate is the skill possessed by those administrators who are concerned with applying this knowledge in the particular organization of which they are a member and a leader.

Gurlick and Urwich (11, p. 13) popularized the acronym POSDCORB. It is made up of the initials and stands for the following activities:

Planning: the things that need to be done and the methods for doing them

Organizing: the formal structure through which work is arranged and coordinated

Staffing: bringing in and training staff and maintaining favorable conditions

Directing: making decisions and giving orders and serving as leader

Coordinating: interrelating the various parts of work

Reporting: keeping the administrative chain informed

Budgeting: fiscal planning, accounting and control

The primary control of the administrator is to provide leadership for the group of people he/she supervises. Johnson (4) felt that the administrator must develop the necessary motivational elements relative to his staff, as well as

advise his/her superiors about the environment and design of his unit and of the total organization. Certain competencies are required in this administrative role. A careful review of information, including both theory and practice, suggests the following competencies to be appropriate:

1. Coordination
2. Communication³
3. Fact-finding, investigation, or research
4. Evaluation or appraisal (people and programs)
5. Education
6. Negotiation

How do agents generally feel about their administrative ability? Cook (7) found that in a study of agents in Texas, a majority of agents had not had course work as an undergraduate in Extension education, agricultural education or psychology. Seventy percent of the agents included in the study said they would like advanced training in these fields and 88 percent of the state staff would like for agents to take training in the fields.

The Role of the County Extension Director

The role of the County Extension Director in Oklahoma is elaborated here to provide the reader insight to the central character involved in the research effort.

The major responsibilities of the C.E.D. are delineated into the five headings as follows:

Program Planning

To develop and maintain a thorough knowledge of the social, economical, political and cultural characteristics of assigned county; maintain effective liaison with local leaders.

Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of County Advisory Committees in agriculture, home economics, 4-H and youth, and rural development.

Coordinate the joint efforts of all county staff in developing annual and long-range Plans of Work Plan with staff, for the use of resource people necessary for implementation of annual Plan of Work.

Assist staff in coordinating requests for area and state Extension specialists.

Program Implementation

Carry out individual Plan of Work in order to reach objectives.

Assist other county staff members in implementing their phase of the county Plan of Work.

Cooperate with other federal, state and local programs in carrying out Extension's educational responsibilities.

Develop a public awareness program to insure the public has opportunities to be informed of Extension programs.

Maintain liaison with local information media, elected county officials, civic and other interest groups.

Give progressive leadership to and coordinate county efforts to comply with provisions of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and all previous and subsequent legislation regarding nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs and Equal Employment Opportunity. Assures that all county staff understand how these provisos relate to the individual's assigned responsibility as a member of the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Staff.

Program Evaluation

Cooperate with county and district staffs to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county Extension program and in making appropriate reports.

Supervise and assist county staff members in evaluating work for which they are responsible.

Assist the District Extension Director in the evaluation of the County Extension program.

Use client feedback to help determine the impact of programs on economic factors and quality of life.

Use program evaluation information to modify the goals of long-term programs.

Administrative Management

Responsible for all administrative aspects of the county program operations.

Plan and coordinate the budgetary and fiscal operations by preparing annual budgets; supervising fiscal operations and expenditures; and submitting required financial reports.

Communicate with and keep all county staff informed on policies and other relevant information which affects them.

Supervise development and implementation of County Extension annual Plan of Work.

Responsible for the timely preparation and submission of required reports.

Personnel Management

Coordinate the work of all county staff members; hold weekly staff conferences; keep county staff informed on official Extension communications.

Assist staff in determining their training needs and provide opportunities for professional improvement activities to meet these needs.

Counsel with staff on program matters and professional development; communicate with district staff regarding assignment and performance of staff members.

Provide leadership in the development and implementation of an Equal Employment Plan for assigned county Extension office; prepare and submit reports required by the Equal Employment Opportunity program plan of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

Establish and maintain positive personnel relationships and effective office management procedures.

Responsible for input to District Extension Director regarding annual performance appraisal of all county

The County Extension Director is administratively accountable (20) to the District Extension Director in whose district he/she is assigned, and is administratively accountable for county professionals, para-professionals and Extension secretarial staff in the county.

The qualifications for a C.E.D. are as follows:

1. Has a Bachelor's degree in Agriculture or Home Economics and, preferably, a Master's degree in the aforementioned or related field of study (19).
2. Individuals without Master's degree must be eligible for unconditional admission to the Oklahoma State University Graduate College.
3. Previous experience in Extension or closely related work is preferred.
4. Willing to pursue additional training and professional improvement through participation in formal course work, in-service training, etc.

In the event that a C.E.D. position is vacant in a county, the District Director will name an Acting C.E.D. until a permanent selection is made (18).

Staff Competence

Hyatt (12, pp. 135-143) developed a list of certain competencies that an Extension employee should possess. He found that Extension workers need

1. to understand the Cooperative Extension Service, its objectives, organization and relationship to the Land-Grant institution.
2. to know and understand technical subject matter appropriate to their needs and the needs of people with whom they work.

3. to know and understand the principles and processes of programming and to have a high degree of proficiency in applying these concepts.
4. to know and understand the principles of learning and teaching and to have a high degree of proficiency in applying these principles.
5. to understand and to have a high degree of proficiency in the communication process.
6. knowledge about and understanding of the structure and dynamics of human society.
7. to understand human development processes and to maintain a high degree of skill in human relations.
8. to understand the principles of management and to attain a high degree of proficiency in applying these principles.
9. to be informed about current issues and problems confronting the people and proficient in discussing them in an objective and informal manner with groups.
10. to know and understand the principles of administration and supervision.
11. to know, understand, and be proficient in applying the principles and techniques of evaluation.

He also developed several conclusions pertinent to administrative staff.

They are as follows:

1. There exists a recognized degree of competence general to all Cooperative Extension employees. These competencies may be needed in greater depth by some staff members than by others, but they provide a framework around which we can organize our personnel selection, our in-service training, and our graduate education for all personnel.
2. The program objectives of the Cooperative Extension Service of each state must be clearly set forth and understood by members of the staff. Supervisors and administrators who have a responsibility for selecting staff members need to keep these objectives in mind as they search for personnel.

3. County Extension agents need to increase their formal academic training to the Master's level if they are to be effective members of the Cooperative Extension Service team. The nature of this graduate training will depend upon the direction they intend to move within the organization. For effectiveness at the county level, attention needs to be given to education, psychology, and sociology, as well as to further training in the technical subject-matter fields.
4. Extension personnel at all levels need to be more knowledgeable about research in the field of adult education.
5. State Extension organizations need to identify the supervisory and administrative personnel to be needed in the next four or five years and provide opportunity for these candidates to receive training in supervision and administration prior to assuming new roles in the organization.

Related Research

The amount of material devoted to the subject of administrative responsibilities of the County Extension Director was very limited. However, some pertinent studies were uncovered by a computer-aided search of ERIC, AGRICOLA and Dissertations Abstracts International. A hand search of the card catalog in the Oklahoma State University Library revealed the following information.

A study by Clark and Abdullah (5) compiled information from three different research studies conducted in California (1), Michigan (2), and Puerto Rico (9). Each of the studies mentioned used a similar instrument developed by Caul (2). The analysis by Clark and Abdullah determined the consensus functions of the County Extension Director in the following order of decreasing importance.

1. Educational Leadership-Developing and executing an educational program in the director's subject matter area and providing leadership in the areas of other advisors.

2. Planning and Programming-Determining and analyzing needs, inventorying resources, establishing objectives and developing short- and long-term programs whereby these objectives might be achieved.
3. Organization and Policy-Assembling the human and physical resources, and interpreting and implementing Extension policies.
4. Direction and Coordination-Instructing staff members in order to maintain an overall integrated and coordinated Extension program.
5. Personnel Management-Recruiting, selecting, placing, training and promoting the continuous professional development of the county staff.
6. Supervision-Supervising other county staffs, reviewing reports, appraising the individual's work, evaluating educational accomplishments and recommending necessary changes.
7. Administrative Relations-Achieving understanding and acceptance from the public, maintaining good rapport, and briefing non-Extension personnel about program purposes, operations, and accomplishments.
8. Business Management and Finance-Securing funds and reporting financial plans to county officials and the state Extension staff.

VanMeter (23), in a study of the administrative functions of the C.E.D. in Kansas, revealed a rank order of importance as:

1. Organizing
2. Planning
3. Assembling resources
4. Directing
5. Controlling

The variables positions, education, tenure in present position and years on the executive board seemed to have little relationship with the rank order or the

level of perceived importance.

In the area of Business Management and Finance, the Clark and Abdullah study provided that the following statements outranked all others in that category:

1. Preparing an annual county Extension budget.
2. Being prepared to justify all county Extension expenditures to the county board of supervisors.
3. Spending funds allocated by the county government to Extension.

In the Oklahoma study of first-year in-service training needs of C.E.D.'s by George (10), the following needs were ranked as the three top priorities.

1. Working knowledge of how the county general fund is developed at the county level.
2. Ability to develop and justify annual county estimate of needs.
3. Communications with county commissioners, excise board, and key elected officials.

In what was one of the few studies dealing with the C.E.D.'s in Oklahoma, George (10) also discovered the following:

1. Tenure was not a factor in the highest perceived need.
2. However, C.E.D.'s with zero to three years consistently assigned higher importance to topics when compared to the more experienced group.
3. Staff size was not a factor in the category of budget procurement.
4. Four staff size and more placed more importance on personnel management and office equipment.

Summary

In the studies reviewed, it was apparent that the areas of administration are similar from state to state and that tenure and staff size and other factors have little effect on administrative skill levels.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND CONDUCT OF THE STUDY

The purpose of this chapter was to determine the procedure in which data were collected and analyzed. To accomplish that, it was necessary to complete the following tasks:

1. Determine the population for the study
2. Develop the instrument for data collection
3. Develop the procedure for the data collection
4. Select the methods for data analysis

Population for the Study

The population of this study was comprised of all County Extension Directors in Oklahoma. Originally, the total population was the 77 County Extension Directors or those individuals assigned the administrative function. However, at the time of this study, one county position was vacant and was not included. Therefore, the total population of this study was the 76 Directors currently in service.

Development of the Instrument

Erdos (8, pp. 37-38) was referred to for questionnaire construction. The

following were the main considerations:

1. The questionnaire must include questions on all subjects which are essential to the project; it should contain all the important questions on these subjects, but none which are not purposeful.
2. The questionnaire should appear brief and "easy to complete". Reading it should not destroy this first impression.
3. The reader must be made to feel that he is participating in an important and interesting project.
4. The form should not contain any questions which could bias the answers.
5. It must be designed to elicit clear and precise answers to questions.
6. Phrasing, structure, and layout must be designed with problems of tabulating in mind. The saving of time and money in processing should be one of the considerations.

A preliminary questionnaire consisting of 45 items was reviewed by county, district, and state administrators to help determine the viability of the response items. In consideration of an instrument, the Plafcan study (21) was reviewed. In addition, a determination was made to use the Oklahoma C.E.D. position description (20) as the basis for the response items. The instrument by Caul (2) was consulted and a determination was made to provide space on the questionnaire for additional items that may be perceived as important by the respondents.

Two five-point Likert-type scales were employed as response modes for each item. The respondents were asked to circle a choice of "one" to "five" with

"one" being of no importance and "five" being highly important with reference to their assessment of the importance of each item. A similar scale indicating competence perception was utilized.

Data Collection

The questionnaire was handed by the researcher in the Southwest District and by District Rural Development staff in their assigned district to each of the 76 County Extension Directors in a series of meetings by district March 18 through March 21, 1986 (Appendix A). Each Director was given a packet that included a self-addressed, stamped envelope and two transmittal letters. The first letter (Appendix B) was from the author explaining briefly the nature of the study; the letter was written in a manner to represent an individual or personalized fashion. The second transmittal letter (Appendix B) was from the Associate Director of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service; it encouraged the County Extension Directors to cooperate in the study by completing the questionnaire results which would be useful in determining future areas of concentrated training that might assist them in the administrative portion of their job. The first mailing netted 42 questionnaires sent in the first week, or a 54.5 percent return rate.

A follow-up letter (Appendix B) was sent to all County Directors on April 4, as a reminder to complete the questionnaire and to assure that all County Directors still had a copy. This letter resulted in 22 additional questionnaires being returned, for a total return percentage of 84 percent for the first two week period. A third letter (Appendix B) was sent to the remaining County Directors

who had not responded on April 16, 1986. From this mailing, an additional eight surveys were returned.

Finally, personal phone calls were made during the last week of April to elicit the remaining questionnaires and to clarify item responses. This resulted in three more questionnaires being turned in by May 1. One County Director declined to participate in the study due to personal reasons and was not included in the study. In conclusion 75 of 76 possible questionnaires were completed and returned.

Analysis of Data

After consultation with the researcher's committee, the determination was made that the use of descriptive statistical calculations were needed to determine mean, frequency count and percentages. The standard deviation was calculated for each item to determine the degree of variation from the mean.

Numerical values were assigned and real limits were established for mean response interpretation as follows:

Response Categories		Numerical Value	Range of Real Limits
<u>Importance</u>	<u>Competence</u>		
Highly Important	Highly Competent	5	4.50-5.00
Important	Competent	4	3.50-4.49
Fairly Important	Fairly Competent	3	2.50-3.49
Minimally Important	Minimally Competent	2	1.50-2.49
Not Important	Not Competent	1	1.00-1.49

To make a determination of which items should be considered as areas of emphasis for administrative training, the grand means were calculated for Importance (4.21) and Competence (4.10). The standard deviation was also calculated for Importance (.33), and for Competence (.24). After consultation with the Advisory Committee, a decision was made to establish the criteria for training. The Competence mean was deducted from the Importance mean, revealing a mean difference. Those scores which exceeded a negative .24 were considered areas for training emphasis.

Calculations of a similar nature were made from population characteristics to determine if differences in responses could be attributed to tenure, years of County Director experience, courses taken in behavioral and social sciences, size of staff, and administrative district.

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the level of perceived importance that Oklahoma County Extension Directors placed on selected county administrative responsibilities, and the level of perceived competence they possessed for performing the responsibilities. Possible areas for concentrated administrative training were to be identified. In this chapter, an analysis of data was compiled from the individual responses of Oklahoma County Extension Directors. The Directors were asked to complete a questionnaire and to respond by circling one of the five-points on a "Likert" scale for perceived "Importance" for each administrative responsibility and on a similar scale for perceived "Competence" in that administrative responsibility.

For purposes of presentation and interpretation, the following terms were designated for the numerical points on the scale:

Descriptions of Level of Importance

5-Highly Important: A responsibility which should receive a great deal of attention and top priority of time

4-Important: A responsibility which seldom can be neglected, but might be postponed for top priority work

3-Fairly Important: A Responsibility which should be done, but might be postponed for more urgent work

2-Minimally Important: A responsibility which might be done, but only if the person finds time

1-Not Important: A responsibility on which no time ought to be spent

Descriptions of Levels of Competence

5-Highly Competent: Does a very good job in performing the responsibility

4-Competent: Does a good job in performing the responsibility

3-Fairly Competent: Does a fair job in performing the responsibility

2-Minimally Competent: Does a minimal job in performing the responsibility

1-Not Competent: Cannot perform the responsibility

Calculations of the means for "Importance" and "Competence" were made for each of the items. The standard deviation for "Importance" and "Competence" was calculated. The lower the standard deviation score, the less the scores deviated from the calculated mean. This was an indication of general consensus on an item by the respondents. A high standard deviation score indicated that the scores were spread more over the scale, indicating less group consensus. Frequencies of response and percentage of the population were also calculated. Means were rounded to the nearest tenths.

Population of the Study

The population of this study included 76 County Extension Directors as of March 1, 1986, in Oklahoma. Of the 77 counties in Oklahoma, only two counties were not included in the study; one position was vacant at the time and one County Director did not wish to participate due to personal reasons. Therefore, the questionnaires were completed and returned, representing a 98.6 percent response.

Selected Characteristics of the Respondents

In Table I, the summarized data reveal the total number of years the respondents were employed in the Cooperative Extension Service. The number of years of employment was not restricted to only service in Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service, but could include years in other states as well. In the category of 0-5 years of service, there were nine respondents, accounting for 12 percent of the population. The next group of respondents in the 6-10 category, comprised the largest group with 17 or 22.7 percent of the total. The next largest contingent was the 11-15 section. This group of 16 accounted for 21.3 percent of the total. Ten Directors in the 16-20 grouping made up for 13.3 percent. Tying with the 0-5 group for the smallest number, 9, was the 21-25 year tenure group. Those agents who had completed 26 or more years of total employment had a sum total of 14 in their ranks. This was 18.7 percent of the population. Almost one-third of the population had less than ten years of employment in the Extension Service. One feature of note was that over half, 56

percent, of the Directors had served less than 15 years, while 44 percent had been employed over 15 years. An interesting finding was that 34 or 45 percent were categorized as being in the 6 to 15 year bracket, as compared to 19 or 25.3 percent in the 16 to 25 year range. Also it was noted that 69.3 percent of the total population had less than 20 years of employment and 18.7 percent had 26 years or more.

TABLE I
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY TOTAL YEARS OF EMPLOYMENT
IN THE COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Years of Employment	N	%
0-5	9	12.0
6-10	17	22.7
11-15	16	21.3
16-20	10	13.3
21-25	9	12.0
26+	<u>14</u>	<u>18.7</u>
Total	75	100.0

For an analysis and presentation of data for the respondents' number of years experience as a County Extension Director, Table II has been enumerated

and summarized. Sixteen Directors (21.3 percent) had only one year of experience. The 2-5 year group accounted for 24 percent of the total with 18 respondents. The largest contingent was the 6-10 year cluster containing 19 Directors (25.3 percent). The next bracket of 11-15 tallied 13 for 17.3 percent of the population. The numbers began to decline, as the 16-20 span totaled only seven respondents (9.3 percent). The group with the least number was the group that accounts for the greater amount of total experience. The 20+ group had two (2.7 percent). Several interesting observations that were noteworthy were revealed. 70.6 percent of the total population of County Extension Directors had 10 or less years of experience in that position. Eighty seven percent had 15 years or less, and only 13 percent could be accounted for as having 16 years or more.

TABLE II
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY YEARS OF EXPERIENCE
AS COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTOR

Years of Experience	N	%
1	16	21.3
2-5	18	24.0
6-10	19	25.3
11-15	13	17.3
16-20	7	9.3
20+	<u>2</u>	<u>2.7</u>
Total	75	100.0

Data in Table III depict the earned degrees of the population. There were 29 Directors who possessed only a Bachelor's degree. This group comprised 30.7 percent of the total. The largest group was the group of 43 (57.3 percent) County Extension Directors who had earned a Master's degree. Three Directors have Doctor's degrees, and these account for four percent of the respondent population. Those possessing the minimum of a Master's degree were found to be 47 of the 75 respondents or 61.3 percent of the population.

TABLE III
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY
DEGREE ATTAINMENT

Degree	N	%
Bachelor's Degree	29	38.7
Master's Degree	43	57.3
Doctor's Degree	<u>3</u>	<u>4.0</u>
Total	75	100.0

The distribution of respondents by the numbers of hours taken in "social or behavioral" sciences beyond the Bachelor's degree, has been tabulated in Table IV. The data reveal that 10 directors (13.3 percent) had not taken any course work in the "social or behavioral sciences". The greatest number of respondents 18 (24 percent) had taken from one to six hours. Sixteen Directors (21.3 percent) had completed seven to 12 hours. The group that had earned 13 to 18 hours totaled nine (12 percent). A number of Directors 14 (18.7 percent) had taken work totaling from 19 to 29 hours. The eight Directors who had earned over 25+ hours of course work in the social and behavioral sciences were only 10.7 percent of all respondents tabulated. The data reveal that at least 86.7 percent of all the respondents had some course work in the social and behavioral sciences. However, only 41.4 percent had taken over 12 hours in

this field. Some 34 Directors representing 45.3 percent of the total had enrolled in from one to 12 hours of graduate courses.

TABLE IV
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY THE NUMBER OF HOURS
IN "SOCIAL AND BEHAVIORAL SCIENCES" BEYOND THE
BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Number of Hours	N	%
None	10	13.3
1-6	18	24.0
7-12	16	21.3
13-18	9	12.0
19-24	14	18.7
25+	<u>8</u>	<u>10.7</u>
Total	75	100.0

For an analysis and presentation of data for the number of staff, Table V was developed. This category included the total staff of the respondents' county, including the filled and unfilled professional, paraprofessional and clerical positions. The data reveal an equal number of 26 (34.7 percent) in the first group (staffs up to two people), as well as the second group, which was staffs of

three to four. Fifty-two Directors or 69.4 percent of the population reported for staffs size of four or less. There were 17 (22.6 percent) Directors who had five to 10 staff members. Only six or eight percent of the respondents reported 11 or more staff.

TABLE V
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY SIZE OF STAFF

Number of Staff Members	N	%
0-2	26	34.7
3-4	26	34.7
5-10	17	22.6
11+	<u>6</u>	<u>8.0</u>
Total	75	100.0

The number of respondents by Administrative District was presented in Table VI. The Southeast District had the largest representation with twenty Directors (26.7 percent). The Southeast and Northeast had an equal number, which was 19 (25.3 percent). The district having the fewest number of Directors was the Northwest, which had 17 (22.7 percent).

TABLE VI
DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY DISTRICT

Administrative District	N	%
Southwest	20	26.7
Northwest	17	22.7
Southeast	19	25.3
Northeast	<u>19</u>	<u>25.3</u>
Total	75	100.0

Perceptions of Importance and Competence

Relative to Administrative Responsibilities

The remainder of this chapter is concerned with the presentation and analysis of data relating to the levels of importance and levels of competence the County Extension Directors in Oklahoma perceived themselves having for the selected administrative responsibilities. The findings of this study in this chapter are discussed under five major headings which are the areas that were identified as groups of administrative responsibilities. Comparisons of the perceptions according to selected demographic variables were also presented.

Data have been tabulated and summarized on the tables that follow. The frequency distribution of the respondents for "importance" and the corresponding percentage of the population represented by that number were

calculated. Similar information utilizing the same calculations were determined for "Competence" of each responsibility listed on the questionnaire. Listings of the mean responses for "Importance" and "Competence" were included in the preparation of the tables. A mean difference was calculated by deducting the competence mean from the importance mean. The mean differences that were greater than the overall standard deviation for competence (-.24) were considered indicators for training at a high level of priority.

Program Planning

Table VII was designed to summarize the distribution of responses for importance and competence concerning the administrative responsibilities in the area of program planning. There were eight items for consideration under this major area. The Directors perceived "Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of County Advisory Committees in Agriculture" as the responsibility obtaining the highest mean importance (4.52). The importance of the other program areas in descending degree of perceived importance were "Leadership to Advisory Committees on 4-H and Youth" (4.39), "Leadership to Advisory Committees on Home Economics"(4.19), and "Leadership to Advisory Committees on Rural Development" (3.99). "Development of Long Range Plan of Work", "Plan Resource People", and "Coordinate Specialists" had competence mean scores higher than the importance means.

The standard deviations for Importance in Table VII ranged from .70 for "Coordinate staff development of Annual Plan of Work", to 1.07 for "Assist staff in

coordinating area and state specialists". Competence in "Development of Annual Plan of Work" had the least deviation, .59, and "Provide leadership to Rural Development county advisory committee", had the greatest deviation of 1.04.

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN
THE AREA OF PROGRAM PLANNING

Responsibility	<u>Importance</u> Mean	<u>Competence</u> Mean	<u>Difference</u> in Means
Leadership to Agriculture Committee	4.52	4.09	-.43
Leadership to Home Economics Committee	4.19	3.77	-.42
Leadership to 4-H Committee	4.39	4.13	-.26
Leadership to Rural Development Committee	3.99	3.87	-.12
Development Annual Plan of Work	4.27	4.15	-.12
Development Long Range Plan of Work	3.93	3.97	+.04
Plan Resource People	3.99	4.07	+.08
Coordinate Specialists	3.48	3.83	+.35

Program Implementation

Table VIII provides an overview of the distribution of responses for perceived importance and performance of the administrative responsibilities in the area of program implementation. Eight items were considered under this major area. The Directors perceived "Maintaining liaison with elected county officials" as the responsibility having the highest importance with a mean of 4.79 in this administrative category, while "Maintaining liaison with local information media" recorded the next highest importance mean. (4.72). These two items also had the highest mean competency ratings, 4.51 on the former and 4.37 on the latter.

A noteworthy observation is that although respondents voted themselves "Highly Competent" and "Competent" respectively on the two above-cited responsibilities, "Liaison with elected officials" received the highest perceived importance and competence mean. The mean difference of $-.28$ was greatest for that item indicating importance ratings were higher than competence.

The item "Maintain liaison with local information media", yielded a $.41$ standard deviation for importance. "Coordinate county civil rights compliance", had the most response difference with a standard deviation of 1.00 . For competence, "Maintain liaison with elected county officials" recorded a $.62$ deviation response, while "Assure staff's understanding of civil rights", tallied a standard deviation of $.82$.

TABLE VIII

COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN
THE AREA OF PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

Responsibility	<u>Importance</u> Mean	<u>Competence</u> Mean	<u>Difference</u> in Means
Staff Plan of Work	3.91	3.85	-.06
Cooperate Other Agencies	4.19	4.29	+.10
Liaison Local Media	4.72	4.37	-.43
Liaison Elected Officials	4.79	4.51	-.28
Liaison Civic Groups	4.00	4.11	+.11
Liaison Other Groups	3.83	3.95	+.12
Civil Rights Compliance	4.01	4.01	0
Understanding/Civil Rights	4.12	4.10	-.02

Program Evaluation

Data in Table IX were representative of the responses of county chairmen for the perceived importance and competence of the six administrative responsibilities in the area of program evaluation.

On examination of the data contained in the Table, it was found that all items received mean responses which placed them in the "Important" category. However, the item, "Use client feedback to help determine the impact of

programs on economic factors and quality of life", with a mean of 4.41, was the highest rated item in this area. Mean responses ranged downward from this to the 4.03 for "Program evaluation/goals", providing a relatively narrow range of mean importance differences. Respondents perceived themselves to be "Competent" on the average for all six items in this area. The 4.11 mean response indicated they felt most competent with "District Director/county evaluation", which was followed closely by "Client/feedback/program" with a 4.03. The remainder, in order, were "Assist staff evaluation", "District staff evaluation", "Evaluate overall program", and "Program evaluation/goals". It is noteworthy that the respective mean responses for the latter four were 3.92, 3.91, 3.83, and 3.81, another rather narrow spread.

The "Client feedback/program" item had a mean importance/competence difference of $-.36$, indicating the next to the highest need for training. The largest mean difference, $-.37$, for the item, "Cooperate with county staff to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county plan" was indication of the highest emphasis area for additional training. Due to the negative mean differences for all these items, further training was indicated.

The variance of scores was relatively small for Program Evaluation area. The Low Importance standard deviation was $.68$ for "Use client feedback to determine program impact", compared to a high of $.87$ for "Assist district director with county evaluation". The competence rating ranged from $.69$ for "Use program evaluation to modify county goals", to $.79$ for "Use client feedback to determine program impact" described above.

TABLE IX
COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN
THE AREA OF PROGRAM EVALUATION

Responsibility	<u>Importance</u> Mean	<u>Competence</u> Mean	<u>Difference</u> in Means
Evaluate Overall Program	4.20	3.83	-.37
District Staff Evaluation	4.04	3.91	-.13
Assist Staff Evaluation	4.12	3.92	-.20
District Director/County Evaluation	4.12	4.11	-.01
Client Feedback/Program	4.41	4.05	-.36
Program Evaluation/Goals	4.03	3.81	-.22

Administrative Management

Table X was formulated to summarize responses from the County Directors regarding their perceived levels of importance and performance for six responsibilities in the area of professional management.

The data in the table revealed that the county chairmen perceived the level of importance for this group of six skills to range from a mean of 4.71, Highly Important, for "Coordinate the budgetary and fiscal operations and expenditures", to a mean of 4.36 for, Important, "Responsible for the timely

preparation and submission of required reports". The former had a mean difference of $-.26$ which indicated that it would be rated first for training emphasis.

"Communicate with and keep all county staff informed on policies and other relevant information which affects them", was an item that Directors perceived to have a high Importance mean score. However, it was noteworthy that they perceived their competence level to be the highest for that item with a mean score of 4.67. "Submission of reports" then recorded the lowest competence mean of 4.31.

Little variation was found in the mean differences of "Administration of county program" ($-.19$), "Supervise fiscal operations" ($-.19$) and "Submit financial reports" ($-.18$). The Directors perceived the items to be "Highly Important" and perceived themselves to be "Competent".

A low standard deviation score for Importance in this category was the $.49$ for "Coordinate budget and fiscal operations". "Responsible for preparation and submission or reports", recorded the greatest deviation in responses of $.75$. The Competence deviation of $.70$ for "Submits required financial reports", was the largest deviation score, while "Coordinate budget and Operations" and "Supervise fiscal operations and expenditures", tied for the low standard deviation of $.62$.

TABLE X
 COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
 COMPETENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN
 THE AREA OF ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT

Responsibility	<u>Importance</u> Mean	<u>Competence</u> Mean	<u>Difference</u> in Means
Administration of County Program	4.52	4.33	-.19
Coordinate Budget & Operations	4.71	4.45	-.26
Supervise Fiscal Operations	4.59	4.40	-.19
Submit Financial Reports	4.59	4.41	-.18
Communicate Policy to Staff	4.64	4.67	+.03
Submission of Reports	4.36	4.31	-.05

Personnel Management

The largest area, due to the number of items of responsibility, was the Personnel Management component. The data in Table XI present the summarized responses from the County Directors.

Data in the table reveal that "Establish positive personnel relationships" was perceived the most important responsibility with a mean of 4.72. "Maintain personnel relationships" (4.61) and "Official Extension communication" (4.55) were also perceived as "Highly Important" responsibilities. "Assist staff in

determining their training needs" was regarded as "Important," but had the lowest overall importance mean rating of 3.63. Also, it received the lowest perceived competency rating of 3.67. "Keep county staff informed on official communication" was the item that Directors perceived themselves to be most competent. All of the means for competence (3.67 to 4.44) fell within the "Competent" bracket, indicating that overall, the Directors feel able to complete the required responsibilities.

The items that were regarded as high priority areas of training were items "Maintain effective office management procedures", with a mean difference of -.36 and "Establish positive personnel relationships" with a mean difference of -.35. Although the Directors indicate competence in responding to the preceding items the mean difference indicates that they perceived the importance of the responsibility to be at a greater level than was their competence.

Items that were responded to in a positive mean difference fashion were "Coordinate the work of all county staff members", "Hold weekly staff conference, "Assist staff in determining their training needs"; and described earlier. This indicates that the Directors perceive the responsibilities to be of less importance than is their competence for performing the responsibilities.

"Maintain effective office personnel relationships", had the least response spread indicated by a standard deviation of .51. The greatest spread by Importance was 1.00, shared by items "Coordinate work of county staff" and "Prepare reports required by the Equal Opportunity Plan". The low score by

competence was a .61 by the item "Establish positive personnel relationships". Item had the greatest score of .89.

TABLE XI

COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCE OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE RESPONSIBILITIES IN
THE AREA OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT

Responsibility	<u>Importance</u> Mean	<u>Competence</u> Mean	<u>Difference</u> in Means
Coordinate County Staff	3.87	4.05	+.18
Weekly Staff Conferences	3.89	4.04	+.15
Official Extension Communication	4.55	4.44	-.11
Determine Training Needs	3.63	3.67	+.04
Provide Professional Improvement	3.87	3.75	-.12
Counsel Staff Program	4.16	4.10	-.06
Communicate District Staff	4.01	3.97	-.04
Leadership Equal Opportunity	3.88	3.85	-.03
Reports Equal Opportunity	3.87	3.96	+.09
Establish Personnel Relationships	4.72	4.37	-.35
Maintain Personnel Relationships	4.61	4.25	-.36
Provide Performance Input	4.48	4.29	-.19

Administrative Responsibilities Derived from Open-Ended Response Items

Upon consultation with the researcher's advisory committee, a decision was made to include an open-ended item under each major category.

Under the category of Program Planning, "List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of Program Planning", this item provided the opportunity for the Directors to write in additional responsibilities not listed. A total of 22 replies were recorded. All the replies were similar to responsibilities listed in the other portions of the questionnaire.

Similar opportunities to solicit Directors' responses were provided under each administrative responsibility. "List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of program implementation", received six replies. "List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of program evaluation" totaled two replies. "List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of administrative management", netted four replies. In the final category, "List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of personnel management", two replies were received.

Replies to the items fit within the broad parameters of one of the selected administrative responsibilities. Due to the fact that the responsibilities were based upon the current position description, this would indicate that the current position description is highly accurate in regards to the County Director's perceived role. No item received more than two "Not Important" responses, indicating a high degree of validity to the position description.

Comparison of Level of Importance and Competence

Level by Population Characteristic

In this section, the discussion involved the comparison of perceived levels of importance and competence by the socio/demographic information the Directors provided. The mean difference in the remainder of the chapter refers to the degree of difference in perceptions of importance and competence for the items. The groups that indicated mean differences greater than $-.24$ were identified as priority groups for concentrated training overall.

Inspection of data in Table XII revealed that Directors with 0-5 years of employment had the highest mean (4.41) for overall importance of the 45 items on the questionnaire, while Directors with 26 plus years of employment had the lowest mean (3.71) for this particular comparison. The 0-5 years of employment group also had the greatest mean difference ($-.26$). This group also had the highest mean (4.15) for perceived competence. The group that perceived the importance of the responsibilities the lowest (3.71) was the group that had the greatest tenure, the 26 plus years of experience bracket. That group also indicated they perceived their competence to be greater than the importance of the responsibilities with a positive mean difference score of $+.28$. The group that perceived themselves to have the greatest overall competence was the group having 21-25 years of experience (4.33). This group also recorded the next to highest importance mean 4.40. Having almost equal self-perception of importance (4.11) and competence (4.10) was the 11-15 years of experience division. The Directors who had the next to the greatest difference in mean were

the 16-20 group which tallied an importance mean of 4.18 and a competence mean of 3.96. The importance mean for the 6-10 years of experience classification was 4.01. Overall, the 75 Directors indicated that the responsibilities were "Important" and that they felt "Competent" in completing them.

TABLE XII
COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE
AND COMPETENCE BY TENURE IN THE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Years of Employment	N	Importance Means	Competence Means	Difference in Means
0-5	9	4.41	4.15	-.26
6-10	17	4.01	3.89	-.12
11-15	16	4.11	4.10	-.01
16-20	10	4.18	3.96	-.22
21-25	9	4.40	4.33	-.07
26+	2	3.71	3.99	+.28

The data in Table XIII summarized the perceived levels of importance and competence by years of experience as a County Director. The Directors who

had 20 or more years recorded the greatest mean for importance (4.39). They also perceived themselves as having the greatest mean competence (4.27). Those Directors having the least amount of position tenure (1 year) had the greatest mean difference (-.28), indicating the highest priority for training. The 2-5 year group followed closely with a mean difference of -.27. The 6-10 year division perceived the administrative responsibilities as the least important with a 4.09 mean. However, it is interesting to note that they responded to the competence responsibilities with a greater mean score, 4.16. All of the 75 Directors perceived the responsibilities to be "Important" and perceived their ability to perform them as "Competent".

TABLE XIII
COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF
IMPORTANCE AND COMPETENCE BY YEARS
EXPERIENCE AS A COUNTY DIRECTOR

Years of Experience	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Difference in Means
1	16	4.35	4.07	-.28
2-5	18	4.16	3.89	-.27
6-10	19	4.09	4.16	+.07
11-15	13	4.26	4.26	0
16-20	7	4.16	4.04	-.12
20+	2	4.39	4.27	-.12

The comparison by degrees and perceived levels of importance and competence were listed in Table XIV. Directors who possess the Doctor's degree perceived the largest importance mean of 4.54, "Highly Important". They also perceived themselves to have the greatest competence in response to the items. Twenty-nine (38.6 percent) Directors possessed only a Bachelor's degree, and they perceived themselves to have the least degree of competence. However, they perceived themselves to be "Competent" (4.04), as did the Directors who had a Master's degree (4.11). The three Directors having Doctor's degrees had a mean difference of -.26, indicating priority training for that group.

TABLE XIV
COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF
IMPORTANCE AND COMPETENCY BY
EARNED DEGREES

Degree	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Difference in Means
Bachelors	29	4.25	4.04	-.21
Masters	43	4.15	4.11	-.04
Doctors	3	4.54	4.28	-.26

For a determination on whether the number of hours taken in "social and behavioral" sciences may have affected the Directors' perception, data in Table XV was prepared. Directors who had taken 25 hours or more accounted for the greatest mean (4.34) for competence. That group also perceived the importance of the responsibilities to have the highest mean of 4.51, just into the "Highly Important" range. No group had a mean difference that exceeded -.24. However, all means were negative, indicating a need for some general training.

TABLE XV

COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCY BY THE NUMBER OF HOURS TAKEN IN "SOCIAL
AND BEHAVIORAL" SCIENCES BEYOND THE
BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Number of Hours	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Difference in Means
None	10	4.16	4.05	-.11
1-6	18	4.20	4.14	-.06
7-12	16	4.18	4.06	-.12
13-18	9	4.32	4.21	-.11
19-24	14	4.04	3.96	-.08
25+	8	4.51	4.34	-.17

The data in Table XVI were summarized and enumerated to distinguish relationships of perceived levels of importance and competence by size of county staff. The means for competence for staff size of four or under, five to ten and 11 or more, were 4.04, 4.17 and 4.25 respectively. The Directors that had 11 or more staff had the highest perceived importance mean of 4.25. The means ranged in descending order for staff sizes of 5-10 which had a mean of 4.17 to the low mean of 4.10 for the group having four or less staff. Fifty-two Directors (69.3 percent) indicated they had staffs of four or less. The group having more than 11 staff had a mean difference of -.30, indicating a priority for concentrated training.

TABLE XVI
COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCE BY SIZE OF COUNTY STAFF

Number of Staff Members	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Difference in Means
0-2	26	4.26	4.04	-.22
3-4	26	4.10	4.04	-.06
5-10	17	4.17	4.17	0
11+	6	4.55	4.25	-.30

The data in Table XVII were tabulated and summarized according to Administrative District. The Southeast and Northeast placed an equal level (4.25) on the importance of the responsibilities. The Southwest had the lowest importance mean, 4.16, for the responsibilities. The Northwest perceived level of competence was 4.1). The lowest perceived competence level was shared by the Southeast and Northeast Districts which was 4.07.

The Southwest District had the lowest overall mean difference of .08, while the Northeast District had the greatest mean difference of -.18. All of the districts were within the "Important" and "Competent" categories. No district had a mean difference great enough to warrant high priority training. However, all the means difference were negative indicating a need for some less concentrated training.

TABLE XVII

COMPARISON OF THE PERCEIVED LEVELS OF IMPORTANCE AND
COMPETENCY BY ADMINISTRATIVE DISTRICT IN THE
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Administrative District	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Difference in Means
Southwest	20	4.16	4.08	-.08
Northwest	17	4.25	4.12	-.13
Southeast	19	4.18	4.07	-.11
Northeast	19	4.25	4.07	-.18

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The final chapter was a summary of the study's procedures and major findings in relation to its purpose and objectives. The conclusions and recommendations presented are based upon an analysis of data collected and observations made in conducting the study.

Summary of the Study

Purpose

The overall purpose of this study was to determine the importance and level of competence that Oklahoma County Extension Directors perceived themselves to possess in performing selected administrative responsibilities.

Specific Objectives

The three specific objectives that were established to guide and direct the study were:

1. Determine the perceived level of importance County Extension Directors place on selected administrative responsibilities.
2. Determine the perceived level of competence that County Extension

Directors perceive they possess performing selected administrative responsibilities.

3. Determine if relationships exist between perceived importance and competence, and total extension experience, years as a County Director, degree earned, size of staff, and administrative district.

Rationale

In the bureaucratic system of the Cooperative Extension Service, the administrative position that is nearest the local clientele is the County Extension Director. It has been observed by the author that many County Extension Directors have been placed in these positions with little administrative training or, even worse, none. The author, based on previous experience in varied positions at the county, area, and district levels determined a need for concentrated training in administration for County Extension Directors. Upon a search of the literature, a research study that had been conducted in Arkansas (Plafcan 21) provided the base for a similar study in Oklahoma. The study was developed to identify areas that administrative training would be directed at in the future.

Procedures

The pertinent research and literature were reviewed for the study. The major objectives in designing and conducting the study were delineated: (1) the determination of population of the study; (2) the development of an instrument

for data collection; (3) the determination of a method for data collection; and (4) the determination of a method for analyzing the findings.

The population of the study included 77 County Extension Directors who could have been serving in that position as of March 1, 1986. There were two counties that were not included in the study because one county position was vacant at the time of the study and another did not respond due to personal reasons. A questionnaire was designed to elicit responses. High level Extension administrators reviewed the instrument for validity and clarity. It was pretested by a group of individuals who had previously held the position of County Extension Director in Oklahoma.

The questionnaire consisted of selected administrative responsibilities that were listed in a position description for the County Director position. The respondents were instructed to provide their individual perception of the level of importance they placed on the administrative responsibilities and what level of competence they perceived themselves to possess in the completion of the responsibility. The County Directors were also asked to provide personal information about their years of employment, years of experience as a staff chairman, academic degree held, and county staff size.

The 76 instruments were individually provided to County Directors at a series of district meetings March 18-21, 1986. One county position was vacant at the time of the study, and one Director did not participate, for a return of 75 or 98.6 percent.

Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze data. The areas to be considered for concentrated training were those that had the greatest difference

between the mean for importance and mean for performance of each responsibility. Items with a mean difference of $-.24$ or greater were identified as areas for high training priority. A similar level was set for comparison of the population characteristics. The mean difference of $-.24$ was considered the criteria for concentrated training. A zero or negative mean difference indicated a need for general training.

Findings. The completed questionnaires were analyzed, first as to the personal characteristics, and then as to respondent perceptions of the importance of and their competence in the selected administrative responsibilities. For a more complete analysis, the selected administrative responsibilities were delineated into five areas: program planning, program implementation program evaluation administrative management, and personnel management.

Summary of Findings on Selected Characteristics of the Respondents. In order to provide insights as to the background, preparation, experience and other characteristics of the respondents, selected demographic features were investigated.

In terms of total tenure with extension, it was found that 26 Directors (34.7 percent) had 10 years or less. An equal number of Directors (26) were found to have between 11 and 20 years of total service. The 23 Directors who had 21 or more years of service accounted for 30.7 percent of the total.

From the standpoint of tenure as a C.E.D., there were 53 (70.6 percent) who had 10 or less years in the position. Twenty Directors (26.6 percent) had

totaled 11 to 20 years. Two Directors (2.7 percent) had more than 20 years experience.

The number of respondents indicating only a minimum of a Bachelor's Degree tallied 29, or 38.7 percent, of the total. Forty-six, or 61.3 percent, indicated at least a Master's degree.

Directors who had taken up to 12 hours of coursework in "social and behavioral sciences" totaled 44, or 58.7 percent. The remaining 33 Directors (41.3 percent) had taken over 12 hours.

Fifty-two (69.4 percent) of the Directors had staff sizes of four or less. Thirteen (30.6 percent) indicated they had staff of five or more.

The distribution by administrative district was almost equal. The Southwest had the largest contingent of 20 (26.7 percent). The Southeast and Northeast Districts each had a number of 19, or 25.3 percent. The Northwest District had the least number with 17, or 22.7 percent of the total group.

Summary Comparisons of Overall Perceptions of Respondents Grouped by Demographic Characteristics. Table XVIII was developed to permit a comparison of the perceptions of the respondents as to Importance and Competence across all the items of administrative responsibility. For each set of characteristics, the respondent groups are presented in the order of magnitude of the difference between Competence and Importance means.

When compared on the basis of tenure, it was found that the 0-5 year set expressed a mean difference of -.26. This was followed closely by the -.22

TABLE XVIII
 SUMMARY COMPARISONS OF OVERALL PERCEPTIONS OF
 RESPONDENTS GROUPED BY DEMOGRAPHIC
 CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Group	N	Importance Mean	Competence Mean	Mean Difference
Tenure	0-5	9	4.41	4.15	-.26
	16-20	10	4.18	3.96	-.22
	6-10	17	4.01	3.89	-.12
	21-25	9	4.40	4.33	-.07
	11-15	16	4.11	4.10	-.01
	26+	2	3.71	3.99	+.28
C.E.D. Experience	0-1	16	4.35	4.07	-.28
	2-5	18	4.16	3.89	-.27
	16-20	7	4.16	4.04	-.12
	20+	2	4.39	4.27	-.12
	11-15	13	4.26	4.26	0
	6-10	19	4.09	4.16	+.07
Degree	EdD/PhD	3	4.54	4.28	-.26
	BS	29	4.25	4.04	-.21
	MS	43	4.15	4.11	-.04
Coursework	25+	8	4.51	4.34	-.17
	7-12	16	4.18	4.06	-.12
	0	10	4.16	4.05	-.11
	13-18	9	4.32	4.21	-.11
	19-24	14	4.04	3.96	-.08
	1-6	18	4.28	4.14	-.06
Staff Size	11+	6	4.55	4.25	-.30
	0-2	26	4.26	4.04	-.22
	3-4	26	4.10	4.04	-.06
	5-10	17	4.17	4.17	0
Administrative District	NE	19	4.25	4.07	-.18
	NW	17	4.25	4.12	-.13
	SE	19	4.18	4.07	-.11
	SW	20	4.16	4.08	-.08

expressed by the 16-20 year group. The next greatest negative mean difference was the $-.12$ from the 6-10 year respondents. With a $+.28$ mean difference, those with 26+ years tenure perceived that their level of competence was higher than the importance of the items overall.

From a grouping of respondents according to the amount of their experience as a County Extension Director, it was discovered that those with 2-5 years duration in the post exhibited the largest competence to importance deficiency, $-.27$. The 0-1, 16-20 and 20+ year groups followed in order with respective mean differences of $-.28$, $-.12$ and $-.12$. The 11-25 year C.E.D.'s rated importance of and their competence in the studied administrative responsibilities each at 4.26 for a "0" mean difference. The 6-10 year grouping perceived themselves to be slightly more competent with the items than the items were important as attested by their $+.07$ mean difference.

Assembling the respondents by degree attained provided another basis for comparison. Interestingly, this revealed that those with the highest degree, the doctorate, had the greatest difference in their perceptions of competence in administration in relation to importance of the items. The mean difference calculated for them was $-.26$. Not far below were the B.S. degree people with a $-.21$ competence to importance mean difference. As indicated by the $-.04$ difference expressed by M.S. holding respondents, they perceived little difference between importance and competence for the items included in the survey.

In another arrangement, respondents were put into groups according to the hours of coursework completed in behavioral and social sciences. Those

who had completed the most hours, 25+, rated their competence the greatest amount below importance for the responsibilities included in the research, with a difference of -.26 in mean perceptions.

When classified according to staff size, those having the most staff, 11 or more, indicated the greatest mean difference of -.30. That was followed by the group having the least staff, two or less with a difference of -.22.

A comparison of the respondents by administrative district revealed that the Northeast perceived the greatest difference, -.18, between importance and competence. The Northeast and Southeast trailed with means of -.13 and -.11 respectively. The low mean difference (-.08) was recorded by the Southwest District.

Mean Responses and Rankings for Program Planning Responsibilities.

Table XIX presents a comparison of mean Importance/Competence responses and rankings based on these of the Program Planning administrative area. Also, a training priority rank based upon the mean differences between the former responses is provided. "Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of the agriculture county advisory committee", was rated as "Highly Important", ranking first in terms of perceived importance. The other items were rated as important. "Provide leadership for the Agriculture Advisory Committee" had the top training priority ranking. "Coordinate the joint efforts of all county staff in developing an Annual Plan of Work", was perceived by the Directors as the responsibility they felt most competent. However, all the items were rated competent. "Assist staff in

coordinating requests for area and state specialists", received the lowest rank (8) in Importance, Competence and Training Priority.

TABLE XIX
COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS FOR
PROGRAM PLANNING RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Importance Mean	Rank	Competence Mean	Rank	Mean Difference	Training Priority Rank
Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of the Agriculture County Advisory Committee	Highly Important	1	Competent	3	-.43	1
Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of the Home Economics County Advisory Committee	Important	4	Competent	7	-.42	2
Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of the 4-H and Youth County Advisory Committee	Important	2	Competent	2	-.26	3
Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of the Rural Development County Advisory Committee	Important	5	Competent	6	-.12	4
Coordinate the joint efforts of all county staff in developing an Annual Plan of Work	Important	3	Competent	1	-.12	4
Coordinate the joint efforts of all county staff in developing a Long Range Plan of Work	Important	7	Competent	5	+.04	6
Plan with staff for the use of resource people necessary for implementation of Annual Plan of Work	Important	5	Competent	4	+.08	7
Assist staff in coordinating requests for area and state specialists	Important	8	Competent	8	+.35	8

Mean Responses and Rankings for Program Implementation Responsibilities. The comparison of mean Importance/Competence responses and rankings based on these for Program Implementation are provided in Table XX. Responsibilities are ranked as to training priority based on the mean differences of the Importance/Competence responses. "Maintain liaison with elected county officials", and "Maintain liaison with local information media" were ranked one and two, respectively, in terms of perceived importance and competence. They both were rated as "Highly Important". However, on the former respondents rated themselves as "Highly Competent", while on the latter they rated themselves as "Competent" on the average. The other items were rated as "Important" and "Competent". "Maintain liaison with local information media" and "Maintain liaison with elected county officials" were ranked one and two, respectively in regard to training priority. "Maintain liaison with other interest groups" was ranked last for Importance and Training Priority. "Assist other county staff in implementing their phase of the county Plan of Work", was ranked last in terms of competence.

TABLE XX
COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS FOR
PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Importance Mean	Rank	Competence Mean	Rank	Mean Difference	Training Priority Rank
Assist other county staff members in implementing their phase of the county Plan of Work	Important	7	Competent	8	-.06	3
Cooperate with other federal, state, and local programs in carrying out Extension's educational responsibilities	Important	3	Competent	3	+.10	6
Maintain liaison with local information media	Highly Important	2	Competent	2	-.43	1
Maintain liaison with elected county officials	Highly Important	1	Highly Competent	1	-.28	2
Maintain liaison with civic groups	Important	6	Competent	4	+.11	7
Maintain liaison with other interest groups	Important	8	Competent	7	+.12	8
Coordinate county efforts to comply with provisions of Titles VI & VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, & all previous & subsequent legislation regarding nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs and Equal Employment Opportunity	Important	5	Competent	6	0	5
Assures that all county staff understand how these provisions relate to the individual's assigned responsibility as a member of the Oklahoma State University Cooperative Extension Staff	Important	4	Competent	5	-.02	4

Mean Responses and Rankings for Program Evaluation Responsibilities.

Data in Table XXI presents the comparison of mean Importance/Competence responses and rankings formulated from these for the administrative area of program evaluation. A ranking of the responsibilities as to training priority is based on the difference in the Importance and Competence means. "Use client feedback to determine program impact", was ranked first in terms of importance. "Assist the District Director in county evaluation", was the item that Directors perceived themselves to be most competent. "Overall county program evaluation", was rated as the top training priority. "Cooperate with district staff in county evaluation" was rated last in importance. "Overall county program evaluation" was ranked last in terms of competence. "Assist the District Director in county evaluation" received the lowest rank for training priority. The items were all perceived as "Important" and "Competent".

TABLE XXI
COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS FOR
PROGRAM EVALUATION RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Importance Mean	Rank	Competence Mean	Rank	Mean Difference	Training Priority Rank
Cooperate with county staff to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county program	Important	2	Competent	6	-.37	1
Cooperate with district staff to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county program	Important	6	Competent	5	-.13	5
Assist county staff members in evaluating work for which they are responsible	Important	3	Competent	4	-.20	4
Assist the District Extension Director in the evaluation of the county program	Important	3	Competent	1	-.01	6
Use client feedback to help determine the impact of programs on economic factors and quality of life	Important	1	Competent	2	-.36	2
Use program evaluation to modify the goals of long-term county programs	Important	5	Competent	3	-.22	3

Mean Responses and Rankings for Administrative Management Responsibilities. Data in Table XXII revealed the comparison of mean Importance/Competence responses and developed in rankings from these for the area of administrative management. Also provided are rankings of training

priorities determined from the mean differences in Importance and Competence. Items rated as "Highly Important" were "Administrative county program operations", "Coordination of budget", "Supervise fiscal operations", "Submit financial reports", and "Communicate policy to staff". "Coordination of budget, was perceived by the respondents to have the top importance rank. "Communicate policy to staff" received a rating of "Highly Competent", and was ranked first in that category. "Coordination of budget" was tabbed as the top training priority. "Submission of required reports", received the low ranking for Importance and Competence. The low rank for training priority was netted by the item "Communicate policy to staff".

TABLE XXII

**COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS FOR
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES**

Responsibility	Importance Mean	Rank	Competence Mean	Rank	Mean Difference	Training Priority Rank
Responsible for all administrative aspects of the county program operations	Highly Important	5	Competent	5	-.19	3
Coordinate the budgetary and fiscal operations and expenditures	Highly Important	1	Competent	2	-.26	1
Supervise fiscal operations and expenditures	Highly Important	3	Competent	4	-.19	3
Submit required financial reports	Highly Important	3	Competent	3	-.18	2
Communicate with and keep all county staff informed on policies and other relevant information which affects them	Highly Important	2	Highly Competent	1	+.03	6
Responsible for timely preparation and submission of required reports	Important	6	Competent	6	-.05	5

Comparison of Mean Responses and Rankings

for Personnel Management Responsibilities

Table XXIII provides a comparison of mean Importance/Competence responses and rankings derived from these for the administrative area of personnel management. A training priority rank was formulated from the Importance and Competence mean difference. Items determined to be "Highly

Important" were "Inform staff of official communications", "Establish positive personnel relationships", and "Maintain office management". "Establish positive personnel relationships" was the top ranked Importance item. The other items were perceived as "Important". "Inform staff of official communication" was the top ranked Competence item. The items were all perceived as "Competent". The top rank for Training Priority was the item, "Maintain office management". "Assist staff in determining their training needs", received the low rank for Importance and Competence. The low ranking for Perceived Training Priority was the item, "Hold weekly staff conferences".

TABLE XXIII
COMPARISON OF MEAN RESPONSES AND RANKINGS FOR
PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

Responsibility	Importance		Competence		Mean Difference	Training Priority Rank
	Mean	Rank	Mean	Rank		
Coordinate the work of all county staff members	Important	10	Competent	5	+.18	12
Hold weekly staff conferences	Important	7	Competent	6	+.15	11
Keep county staff informed on official extension communication	Highly Important	3	Competent	1	-.11	5
Assist staff in determining their training needs	Important	11	Competent	11	+.04	9
Provide opportunities for professional improvement to meet training needs	Important	9	Competent	10	-.12	4
Counsel with staff on program matters	Important	5	Competent	4	-.06	6
Communicate with district staff regarding assignment of staff members	Important	6	Competent	7	-.04	7
Provide leadership in the implementation of an Equal Employment Plan for assigned county extension office	Important	8	Competent	9	-.03	8
Prepare reports required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Program Plan of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service	Important	9	Competent	8	+.09	10
Establish positive personnel relationships	Highly Important	1	Competent	2	-.35	2
Maintain effective office management procedures	Highly Important	2	Competent	7	-.36	1

TABLE XXIII (Continued)

Provide input to District Extension Director regarding annual performance of all county personnel	Important	4	Competent	3	-0.19	3
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Data in Table XXIV reveals the comparison of mean responses by Administrative Area. Administrative management was perceived to have a rating of "Highly Important". The remaining areas, Program Planning, Program Implementation, Program Evaluation, and Personnel Management, were perceived as "Important". The Directors perceived their ability as Competent for all of the administrative areas. No area exceeded the mean difference criteria of -.24 for immediate training. However, the areas of Program Planning and Program Evaluation were near it.

TABLE XXIV
COMPARISON OF MEAN* RESPONSES BY
ADMINISTRATIVE AREA

Administrative Area	Importance Mean*	Competence Mean*	Training Priority
Program Planning	Important 5	Competent 4	1
Program Implementation	Important 2	Competent 2	4
Program Evaluation	Important 3	Competent 5	2
Administrative Management	Highly Important 1	Competent 1	3
Personnel Management	Important 4	Competent 3	4

*Weighted Mean

Conclusions

Based on the scope of this study and of the findings, the following conclusions were made:

1. County Extension Directors in Oklahoma generally regard each of the selected administrative responsibilities as being important for the job, and they also perceive themselves as competent in carrying out those responsibilities. Overall, the Directors perceived the importance of the responsibility slightly higher than their level of competence. This indicates a need for general administrative training. However, on 11 items (24.4 percent), the Director gave responses indicating that they felt more competent than the responsibility was

perceived important. This would indicate a great need to be selective in regard to future administrative training topics.

2. The greatest mean difference between importance and competence was found to be for those County Directors with five years of experience or less in the position of a County Extension Director. This would indicate that administrative training should be concentrated to Directors with the least experience.

3. The area of administrative management was perceived as being highly important. The other areas were all considered important. Administrative management should be a priority training area.

4. Twenty-nine (38.6 percent) of the 75 Oklahoma County Directors possessed only a Bachelors Degree. This fact contrasts with the Arkansas study (21) where only 2.7 percent have a minimum of a Bachelors degree. In Oklahoma since 1985, a minimum of a Masters Degree is required for employment(19). Only internal candidates with a Bachelors degree are considered for Directors' positions which are advertised, Masters preferred. These facts, coupled with the expressed need for continued professional improvement (20) indicate a need for Extension curriculum such as administration, supervision, management, program planning, etc.

5. Most County Directors in Oklahoma have had coursework in the social and behavioral sciences. The overall competency level could be due to this overall training level. It is strongly suggested that such coursework be integrated into an individual professional improvement plan.

6. The majority of County Directors in Oklahoma are administering Extension staff with four positions or less on the county staff. The Directors on either end of the spectrum, those with less than two or greater than 11, indicate there may be specialized training for each group, particularly those with larger staff, as the administrative function becomes more complex.

7. There was no notable difference between the level of perceived importance the level of perceived competence of Oklahoma County Directors by administrative district. This would indicate that any training would be appropriate on a statewide basis.

Recommendations

As a result of analysis of data and major findings of the research, the following recommendations are made:

1. Findings of this study be communicated to appropriate Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service administrators at the district and state levels in order for the information to be utilized to strengthen the in-service training program for developing administrative competency of County Extension Directors in Oklahoma.

2. That specialized training be developed for the County Directors in the smaller counties with four or less staff, and a specialized training for the Directors in the larger counties, with 11 or more staff, where the administrative function is expanded.

3. When an applicant is considered for a County Extension Director position, that consideration should be given to the coursework taken in

behavioral and social sciences. Courses in Extension administration, supervision, personnel management, management, as well as technical competency and experience, should be given consideration in the selection criteria.

4. There should be a emphasis on courses in Extension administrative management and supervision in curricula for students in an Extension career. Also, such coursework should be a part of the Master's of Ag program for Extension professionals.

5. That general administrative training be provided to all Extension staff. These are to be formulated and taught by selected County Directors, District and State staff.

6. That all County Extension Directors in Oklahoma formulate a professional improvement plan coincidental with the plan of work cycle. Within this plan should be appropriate administrative training.

Future Areas of Research

The following recommendations are made by the author in regard to additional research conducted in the future:

1. This research study should be replicated in Oklahoma within a few years.

2. Research of a similar nature be conducted to determine the importance and competence of administrative responsibilities perceived by the District Directors, State Administrators, and other county personnel.

3. Study of the perceived role of the County Extension Director as perceived by Area and State Specialists, other county staff and Extension clientele.

4. Research be conducted on Agents' perceived competencies in technical fields of Agriculture or Home Economics.

5. Research to determine the motivational levels of the County Extension Director.

6. That research be conducted using the Delphi Technique to determine perceived needs for administrative training.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES
OF COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN THE
OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of the Study:

The primary purpose of this study is to determine the competency level that County Extension Directors perceive themselves to possess in performing 45 selected administrative tasks and the relative importance that is assigned to each task. The listing of skills you have been asked to respond to has been developed from relevant literature and other research. The results of the study will determine needs for concentrated training and may provide a data base for staffing considerations.

General Instructions:

1. There are no "right or wrong" responses. The most important consideration is for you to respond openly and frankly to each item.
2. Please respond to all items on the questionnaire and recheck your responses to make sure that you have not skipped an item.
3. Please **DO NOT SIGN** the questionnaire. ALL INDIVIDUAL QUESTIONNAIRES WILL BE REGARDED AS CONFIDENTIAL.

Background Information

Please provide the appropriate response for each of the following items.

1. As of March 1, 1986, how many years have you been employed with the Cooperative Extension Service? _____
2. As of March 1, 1986, how many years experience have you had as a County Extension Director? _____
3. What is the highest academic degree level you have currently attained?
 - B.S.
Major - _____
 - M.S.
Major - _____
 - Ph.D/Ed.D
Major - _____

4. If you have taken academic courses beyond the Bachelors Degree level, approximately how many hours have you had in the "Social and Behavioral Sciences" (Education, Sociology, Process Skills, Administration, Management, Supervision, etc.)? _____
5. What is the total size of staff in your county? (Count the filled and unfilled professional, paraprofessional and clerical positions, but exclude your position). _____

 Below is a list describing the levels of importance and perceived competence.

Descriptions of Level of Importance:

- 5-Highly Important: A responsibility which should receive a great deal of attention and top priority of time
- 4-Important: A responsibility which seldom can be neglected, but might be postponed for top priority work
- 3-Fairly Important: A responsibility which should be done but might be postponed for more urgent work
- 2-Minimally Important: A responsibility which might be done but only if the person finds time
- 1-Not Important: A responsibility on which no time ought to be spent

Descriptions of Levels of Competence:

- 5-Highly Competent: Does a very good job in performing the responsibility
- 4-Competent: Does a good job in performing the responsibility
- 3-Fairly Competent: Does a fair job in performing the responsibility
- 2-Minimally Competent: Does a minimal job in performing the responsibility
- 1-Not Competent: Can not perform the responsibility

In your position as a County Extension Director, what importance do you place on the following responsibilities and at what level of competence do you feel you perform them?

IMPORTANCE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPETENCE
(Circle One) low high	<u>PROGRAM PLANNING</u>	(Circle One) low high
	Provide leadership in determining the county's program priorities through effective operation of County Advisory Committees in (1-4 below)	
1 2 3 4 5	1. Agriculture	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	2. Home Economics	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	3. 4-H and Youth	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	4. Rural Development	1 2 3 4 5
	Coordinate the joint efforts of all county staff in developing a (see 5-6 below)	
1 2 3 4 5	5. Annual Plan of Work	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	6. Long Range Plan of Work	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	7. Plan with staff for the use of resource people necessary for implementation of annual Plan of Work	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	8. Assist staff in coordinating requests for area and state specialists	1 2 3 4 5
	9. List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of Program Planning	
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
	<u>PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION</u>	
1 2 3 4 5	10. Assist other county staff members in implementing their phase of the county Plan of Work	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	11. Cooperate with other Federal, State, and Local programs in carrying out Extension's educational responsibilities	1 2 3 4 5

In your position as a County Extension Director, what importance do you place on the following responsibilities and at what level of competence do you feel you perform them?

IMPORTANCE		RESPONSIBILITY	COMPETENCE	
(Circle One)		PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION	(Circle One)	
low	high		low	high
		Maintain liason with (see 12-15 below)		
1	2	12. Local information media	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	13. Elected County Officials	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	14. Civic Groups	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	15. Other Interest Groups	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	16. Coordinate county efforts to comply with provisions of Titles VI and VII of the Civil Rights Act of 1964, Title IX, and all previous and subsequent legislation regarding nondiscrimination in federally assisted programs and Equal Employment Opportunity	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	17. Assures that all county staff understand how these provisions relate to the individual's assigned responsibility as a member of the Oklahoma State University Cocperative Extension staff.	1	2 3 4 5
		18. List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of Program Implementation		
1	2 3 4 5	_____	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	_____	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	_____	1	2 3 4 5
		PROGRAM EVALUATION		
1	2 3 4 5	19. Cocperate with county staff to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county program	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	20. Cooperate with District Staff to develop and implement a plan for evaluating the overall county program	1	2 3 4 5
1	2 3 4 5	21. Assist county staff members in evaluating work for which they are responsible	1	2 3 4 5

In your position as a County Extension Director, what importance do you place on the following responsibilities and at what level of competence do you feel you perform them?

IMPORTANCE (Circle One) low high	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPETENCE (Circle One) low high
1 2 3 4 5	PROGRAM EVALUATION	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	22. Assist the District Extension Director in the evaluation of the county program	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	23. Use client feedback to help determine the impact of programs on economic factors and quality of life	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	24. Use program evaluation to modify the goals of long-term county programs	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	25. List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of Program Evaluation	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT		
1 2 3 4 5	26. Responsible for all administrative aspects of the county program operations	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	27. Coordinate the budgetary and fiscal operations and expenditures	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	28. Supervise fiscal operations and expenditures	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	29. Submit required financial reports	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	30. Communicate with and keep all county staff informed on policies and other relevant information which affects them	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	31. Responsible for the timely preparation and submission of required reports	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	32. List and responds to other responsibilities in the area of Administrative Management	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5

In your position as a County Extension Director, what importance do you place on the following responsibilities and at what level of competence do you feel you perform them?

IMPORTANCE	RESPONSIBILITY	COMPETENCE
(Circle One) low high	PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT	(Circle One) low high
1 2 3 4 5	33. Coordinate the work of all county staff members	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	34. Hold weekly staff conferences	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	35. Keep county staff informed on official extension communication	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	36. Assist staff in determining their training needs	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	37. Provide opportunities for professional improvement to meet training needs	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	38. Counsel with staff on program matters	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	39. Communicate with District Staff regarding assignment of staff members	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	40. Provide leadership in the implementation of an Equal Employment Plan for assigned county extension office	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	41. Prepare reports required by the Equal Employment Opportunity Program Plan of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	42. Establish positive personnel relationships	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	43. Maintain effective office management procedures	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	44. Provide input to District Extension Director regarding annual Performance of all county personnel	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	45. List and respond to other responsibilities in the area of Personnel Management	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5
1 2 3 4 5	_____	1 2 3 4 5

APPENDIX B
CORRESPONDENCE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY****DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE**

1408 ~~Center~~
Duncan, Oklahoma
March 10, 1986

TO: All County Directors, OCES

FROM: J. D. McNutt 
Southwest District Rural Development Program Specialist

RE: County Director Questionnaire

The responsibilities that you must perform on a day-to-day basis are vital to your local program and ultimately the state program. In my past experience as a County Extension Director and based on my current contact with County Extension Directors, I feel that an opportunity should be made available for you to give an assessment of how well you feel you perform these responsibilities and their importance. I am asking for your help in providing this data by taking 15 to 20 minutes to complete this questionnaire.

Please mail the completed questionnaire no later than April 1.

Thank you.

JDM:aw



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE • OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
Office of the Dean and Director • 139 Agricultural Hall • (405) 624-5400
Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078

March 12, 1986

CONFIDENTIAL

TO: All County Extension Directors in Oklahoma

The administrative component of your assignment is crucially important to the continued success of the Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service.

To help better determine your special needs as an administrator, J. D. McNutt has developed the enclosed questionnaire. Its intent is for you to assess those administrative responsibilities that you feel are the most important and your perception of how well you feel you perform those responsibilities. The completed responses from the questionnaire will be used to determine future areas of concentrated training to assist you with the administrative portion of your job. ALL INDIVIDUAL RESPONSES WILL BE KEPT CONFIDENTIAL.

I would appreciate your prompt assistance in the completion of this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

T. Roy Bogle
Associate Director
Oklahoma Cooperative
Extension Service

Duncan, Oklahoma
April 4, 1986

TO: All Oklahoma County Directors, OCES

FROM: J. D. McNutt
Southwest District Extension Rural Development
Program Specialist

RE: County Extension Director Administrative Questionnaire


I need your cooperation and assistance in completing this research project.. In case you have lost or misplaced your questionnaire, I have enclosed one for your convenience. If you could take fifteen or twenty minutes to complete and return the questionnaire to me at the Ag Education Department, 459 Ag Hall, by April 11. I would sincerely appreciate it as I am behind schedule.

Your individual responses are confidential and I assure you that this study is only an attempt to more clearly focus on the administrative responsibilities of the County Extension Director from his or her prospective.

JDM:aw
encls.

Duncan, Oklahoma
April 16, 1986

TO: Selected County Directors, OCES

FROM: J. D. McNutt 
Southwest District Extension Rural Development
Program Specialist

RE: County Extension Director Administrative Questionnaire

I need your cooperation and assistance in completing this research project. In case you have lost or misplaced your questionnaire, I have enclosed one for your convenience. If you could take fifteen or twenty minutes to complete and return the questionnaire to me at the Ag Education Department, 459 Ag Hall, by April 21, I would sincerely appreciate it as I am behind schedule.

Your individual responses are confidential and I assure you that this study is only an attempt to more clearly focus on the administrative responsibilities of the County Extension Director from his or her prospective.

JDM:aw
encls.

VITA²

Jimmy Don McNutt

Candidate for the Degree of

Doctor of Education

Thesis: AN ASSESSMENT OF THE ADMINISTRATIVE COMPETENCIES OF COUNTY EXTENSION DIRECTORS IN THE OKLAHOMA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Holdenville, Oklahoma, September 25, 1954, the son of Mr. and Mrs. Joe J. McNutt.

Education: Graduated from Stuart High School, Stuart, Oklahoma, May 1972; received the Associate of Science degree from Eastern Oklahoma State College, Wilburton, Oklahoma, May 1974; received the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, May 1976; received the Master of Education from East Central University, Ada, Oklahoma, July 1978; completed requirements for the Doctor of Education degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1986, with a major in Agricultural Education.

Professional Experience: Teacher, Moss Public Schools from August 1976 to May 1977; Manager, JM&S Livestock Company from June 1977 to August 1978; Teacher, Pauls Valley Public Schools, September 1978 to May 1979; 4-H Agent, Tulsa County, Oklahoma, June 1979 to July 1980; County Extension Director, Love County, Marietta, Oklahoma, September 1980 to July 1982; Area Specialized Agent, Rural Development, for the Southwest District, Duncan, Oklahoma, from August 1982 to July 1985; Extension Rural Development Program Specialist, Southwest District, Duncan, Oklahoma, from July 1985 to present.

Organizations: Oklahoma County Extension Agents Association; National County Extension Agents Association, Oklahoma Association of Extension 4-H Agents; National Association of Extension 4-H Agents; Epsilon Sigma Phi.