

**A STUDY OF FACTORS WHICH  
INFLUENCE TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL  
STUDENTS IN THE SELECTION  
OF A VOCATION**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

The study is concerned with determining factors common to school situations which can be more effectively utilized in influencing students in choosing a vocation, to study the different factors involved and evaluate them in terms of possible guidance media.

Need for the Study: The writer's observations and more than fifteen years experience as a vocational teacher and supervisor has revealed that students often make unwise vocational choices. They sometimes enter a trade class for which they have little interest or aptitude due to some particular outside influence. This kind of a situation results in a waste of time for both the student and the teacher. It also deprives other deserving students of an opportunity to pursue a vocational objective. Many times unwise choices could be avoided if the teacher or guidance counselor had at his disposal a reliable list of the most common factors which influence students in making a vocational choice.

Scope of the Study: The study includes a survey of 1,104 high school juniors and seniors, by questionnaire method, who are presently enrolled in reimbursed Trade and Industrial Education programs. Students were selected from various trades and types of programs, representative of Trade and Industrial Education in Oklahoma. Samplings were taken from

different sized high schools, ranging from those operating a single trade program to those systems where a great number of programs are in operation.

The Purpose of the Study: The purpose of this study is to identify and evaluate the various factors, which have a bearing in causing students to make certain occupational choices. To determine what are the most potent and effective factors and what factors can be considered relatively insignificant. It is the belief of the writer that the proper utilization of the findings of this study can help to influence students in a wiser choice of an occupation and reduce the number of misfits in Trade and Industrial progress.

The ultimate purpose is to help eliminate indiscriminate assignment of students to trade classes and the unwise selection of vocations by students.

Methods of Procedure: The above mentioned questionnaire was compiled by the writer, assisted by Mr. Glenn Smith, Teacher Trainer for Trade and Industrial Education in Oklahoma, and by Mr. H. T. Archibald, Acting State Supervisor for Trade and Industrial Education in Oklahoma. In order to insure that the questionnaire included questions pertinent to the study, a meeting composed of Vocational Teachers was held during the 1957 summer session at Oklahoma State University. All members present agreed that the study was worthwhile and that they would fully cooperate to make the survey as valid as possible. The questionnaire was then compiled and submitted to Trade and Industrial Education students in Oklahoma to be administered under close supervision of the Vocational Teacher. The questionnaire and letter of instructions to the Vocational Teacher is a part of this report and will be referred to as Appendix "A".

One thousand one hundred four questionnaires were distributed and the same number were completed, a percentage return of 100 per cent. After the questionnaires were returned, the data was tabulated and summarized. The data will be examined in this study.

Definitions of Terms Used:

1. Trade and Industrial Education:

That phase of Public Education, which has as its objective training for useful employment in a trade or industrial pursuit.

2. Factors:

Elements that contribute to produce a result.

3. Vocation:

Regular employment through which one earns a living.

4. Reimbursed Trade and Industrial Education Programs:

Trade Programs carried on in the Public Schools in cooperation with the State Board for Vocational Education as provided for under the Federal Vocational Acts.



## CHAPTER II

In this chapter all factors included in the questionnaire will be considered separately. The questionnaires for the most part were circulated by assistant state supervisors of Trade and Industrial Education. This method of conducting the survey resulted in a 100 per cent return by respondents. Instructions for completing the questionnaire and the importance of a truthful conscientious checking of factors was explained by the supervisors to each group sampled. In practically all cases, students indicated that more than one factor influenced them in making their vocational choices. The writer is of the opinion that the data gathered by the above stated method is much more reliable than had it been conducted by mail, since the procedure for respondents to follow was explained in person by qualified personnel.

Samplings were taken from all sections of Oklahoma ranging from Alva in the Northwest to Hugo in the Southeast, and from Miami in the Northeast to Chickasha in the Southwest. In all, a total of 24 schools were during this period surveyed with a total student participation of 1,104. Forty-eight day trade programs, representing seventeen vocations and nine diversified occupations programs were included. The classification of students was limited to juniors and seniors. No attempt is made to determine the number in each classification.

In completing the questionnaire students were instructed to check the factors in order of their importance listing the most influential factor as number one, the second most influential as number two and etc.

At least one factor was checked by all students. In practically all instances, students indicated that more than one factor influenced them in making their vocational choice. Some checked as many as eight, however, the majority listed only four. Only four are tabulated.

The following tables show the complete tabulation of responses to the various factors as ranked from 1 to 4 by each of the 1,104 students surveyed. X

**TABLE I**  
**FACTORS LISTED ACCORDING TO FIRST RANKING INFLUENCE**

FACTORS	STUDENTS
1. Parents or guardians	185
2. Chance of getting a job in the trade	122
3. Others	106
4. Relatives such as uncles, brothers, sisters, and grandparents	96
5. Seeing other people at work in the trade	82
6. Previous work experience in the trade	79
7. Other trade students	74
8. Vocational teacher	71
9. Friends and neighbors	49
10. Advice of tradesman	45
11. Former trade students who have graduated	39
12. Desirable working conditions in the trade	30
13. Rate of pay in the trade	29
14. Could not take training in the trade desired	29
15. School principal	23
16. Guidance counselor	16
17. Result of test scores	15
18. Security and possible retirement	8
19. Academic teachers	5
Total	1104

**TABLE II**  
**FACTORS LISTED ACCORDING TO SECOND RANKING INFLUENCE**

FACTORS	STUDENTS
1. Chance of getting a job in the trade	140
2. Seeing other people at work in the trade	124
3. Parents or guardians	118
4. Other trade students	100
5. Rate of pay in the trade	97
6. Relatives such as uncles, brothers, sisters and grandparents	71
7. Former trade students who have graduated	65
8. Desirable working conditions in the trade	50
9. Others	49
10. Advice of tradesman	49
11. Vocational teacher	47
12. Friends or neighbors	47
13. Previous work experience in the trade	45
14. Result of test scores	17
15. Could not take training in trade desired	16
16. Security and possible retirement	16
17. School principal	15
18. Guidance counselor	12
19. Academic teachers	4
<b>Total</b>	<b>1082</b>

TABLE III

FACTORS LISTED ACCORDING TO THIRD RANKING INFLUENCE

FACTORS	STUDENTS
1. Chance of getting a job in the trade	120
2. Rate of pay in the trade	107
3. Seeing other people at work in the trade	101
4. Desirable working conditions in the trade	80
5. Friends and neighbors	73
6. Parents or guardians	66
7. Other trade students	66
8. Former trade students who have graduated	62
9. Others	47
10. Relatives such as brothers, sisters, uncles and grandparents	42
11. Vocational teacher	40
12. Advise of tradesman	39
13. Previous work experience in the trade	36
14. Security and possible retirement	15
15. Guidance counselor	13
16. Could not take training in the trade desired	11
17. Academic teacher	8
18. Result of test scores	7
19. School principal	6
Total	939

TABLE IV  
FACTORS LISTED ACCORDING TO FOURTH RANKING INFLUENCE

FACTORS	STUDENTS
1. Chance of getting a job in the trade	93
2. Seeing people at work in the trade	75
3. Desirable working conditions in the trade	75
4. Other trade students	71
5. Rate of pay in the trade	61
6. Others	59
7. Parents or guardians	36
8. Friends or neighbors	32
9. Former trade students who have graduated	30
10. Vocational teacher	28
11. Security and possible retirement	28
12. Previous work experience in the trade	27
13. Relatives such as brothers, sisters, uncles and grandparents	26
14. School principal	17
15. Advise of tradesman	15
16. Results of test scores	11
17. Could not take training in trade desired	9
18. Guidance counselor	6
19. Academic teacher	2
Total	701

In dealing with the different factors, they appear in the order of the highest first-ranking influence as determined by data obtained from the survey and not in the order listed on the questionnaire.

### FACTOR NUMBER 1

#### PARENTS OR GUARDIANS

It was surprising to find that the advice or influence of parents or guardians was the highest ranking factor of the nineteen listed. Of the 1,104 students who completed questionnaires, 185 listed this factor as being the first or prime influence in their selection. This gives a percentage of 16.7% or approximately seventeen students out of every hundred who felt their parents or guardians were to a greater extent, responsible for their occupational choice than any other factors considered as having an influence on them. One hundred eighteen, or 10 per cent, felt this factor was the second ranking influence, sixty-six rated it number three and thirty-six said it was number four.

#### SUMMARY

##### 1. Parents or Guardians

Rated number 1 by 185 students

Rated number 2 by 118 students

Rated number 3 by 66 students

Rated number 4 by 36 students

Total 405

This would indicate 405 students felt their parents had a definite part in their vocational selection.

### FACTOR NUMBER 2

#### CHANCE OF GETTING A JOB IN THE TRADE

This factor probably should not have been included in the questionnaire since it could be associated with or apply to any trade or vocation. It is recognized by the writer as being more abstract or psychological and is difficult to compare with the more concrete and tangible influences included in the questionnaire. It does, however, reveal one important fact, namely that a large number of students enrolled in trade training are looking farther ahead than just learning the skills. They are looking forward to the day when they will enter into a vocation whereby they may earn a living and they are naturally concerned about the possibility of being able to secure employment in the trade for which they are trained. It is reasonable to assume that students who listed this factor as an influence feel that they are enrolled in a trade which offers good placement opportunities.

#### SUMMARY

##### 2. Chance of getting a job in the trade

Rated number 1 by 122 students
Rated number 2 by 140 students
Rated number 3 by 120 students
Rated number 4 by 93 students
<b>Total 475</b>

This reveals that 475 students felt that the chance of getting a job in the trade upon completion of their training was a strong motivating factor in the selection of the training program.

#### FACTOR NUMBER 3

##### OTHERS

The factor designated on the questionnaire as "others" was included so that students might write in any other factor which they felt had had



a part in their decision to enroll in a particular trade. No correlation was evident between the number of first, second, third, and fourth ranking influences listed in any particular vocation.

The majority of the factors listed in this category were either of a monetary nature, personal interest or hobby. The following ones are typical.

- (a) I enrolled in baking to make more money so I could go to school next fall.
- (b) I figured sign painting was different and interesting. Doing something different every day.
- (c) I enrolled in D. O. to pay out my car.
- (d) To study electricity for pre-college training.
- (e) Self-interest (woodwork)
- (f) It is the only thing I do well (commercial art)
- (g) I was most interested in the trade
- (h) Interested in auto mechanics
- (i) Learning to do different things. To be able to do a number of things (printing).
- (j) I like doing this type of work (drafting)
- (k) Want job in technical field (drafting)
- (l) Wanted to learn how to print and how they print newspapers.
- (m) I like to sew for a hobby. Tailoring increases my knowledge of sewing.
- (n) I wanted to try something new (upholstery)
- (o) I like woodwork better than any other subject.
- (p) I like to work with my hands (woodwork)

- (q) I figured that no matter what occupation I chose after I graduated that knowing how to sew would be helpful.
- (r) Just wanted to see what the class was like
- (s) I like the challenge of electronics
- (t) I saw a show where people didn't have any clothes so I decided to take tailoring so I could make clothes for needy people.

#### SUMMARY

#### 3. Others

Rated number 1 by 106 students

Rated number 2 by 49 students

Rated number 3 by 47 students

Rated number 4 by 59 students

#### FACTOR NUMBER 4

#### RELATIVES SUCH AS BROTHERS, SISTERS, UNCLES, AND GRANDPARENTS

Two hundred thirty five students indicated that relatives, other than parents were either first, second, third, or fourth ranking influences. When we consider this number plus the 405 who indicated parental influence in factor number one, we find 640 of the 1,104 sampled or 58 per cent indicated that relatives had an important part or were a definite influence in their selections. This finding might give rise to speculation. Are parents or relatives qualified to advise students? Do they advise due to their personal knowledge, trade background and understanding, or is the student influenced or advised to train for a particular trade because of some personal bias or concept. Is consideration given to students interests and abilities? Since 58 per cent of all the students sampled checked parents and relatives as a definite factor which influenced

their vocational choice, it may well be determined that parents and relatives are a dominating factor which influence students of high school age in their trade selection.

It is interesting to note, however, that only a small per cent of the students questioned in this survey are enrolled in the same trade as that which the father or mother are ordinarily employed. It was discovered that only 40 of 1,104 respondents chose the same occupation as their parents or guardians.

#### SUMMARY

##### 4. Relatives, such as brothers, sisters, uncles, grandparents

Rated number 1 by 96 students

Rated number 2 by 71 students

Rated number 3 by 42 students

Rated number 4 by 26 students

Total 235

This total indicates that 235 students of the 1,104 studied were influenced by close relatives other than parents.

#### FACTOR NUMBER 5

##### SEEKING PEOPLE AT WORK IN THE TRADE

It is the belief of the writer that a rich source of guidance is being overlooked by vocational personnel by failing to recognize the potential of this factor as a means of interest and influence to encourage students in industrial pursuits which will fit their interests and abilities. Field trips should be arranged for interested students so that they may better understand the various types of industrial jobs, working conditions, and what industry expects. This should be done both before the student has

selected a vocation and also at well spaced intervals during the training period.

#### SUMMARY

##### 5. Seeing other people at work at the trade

Rated number 1 by 82 students

Rated number 2 by 124 students

Rated number 3 by 101 students

Rated number 4 by 75 students

Total 382

#### FACTOR NUMBER 6

##### PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE IN THE TRADE

Work experience has always been considered as one of the surer ways of discovering fitness for a job even though it is often an expensive and sometimes a time wasting method. The effectiveness of this approach was emphasized in Vocational Education In A Democracy, by Prosser & Quigley.

"Undoubtedly a special tryout on the job under inspection is the surest way to discover a man's efficiency and fitness and the best to use with small numbers and infrequent hiring and firing."<sup>1</sup>

What the youth has been doing indicates to some extent what he likes to do. From the writers experience, he is convinced that working at an occupation further motivates a desire to pursue the occupation further unless he develops a dislike for it due to his lack of aptitude or other circumstances. The following summary indicates that previous work experience is an important factor or influence.

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1. Prosser, Charles A., and Quigley, Thomas H. Vocational Education In A Democracy, Chicago: American Technical Society, 1949, p. 151.

**SUMMARY****6. Previous work experience in the trade**

Rated number 1 by 79 students

Rated number 2 by 45 students

Rated number 3 by 36 students

Rated number 4 by 27 students

Total 187

**FACTOR NUMBER 7****OTHER TRADE STUDENTS**

"Other trade students", ranked seventh as determined by 71 students who indicated this factor was the first or most important influence in their selection of the trade for which they are now being trained. The writer, during his tenure for many years as a trade teacher and later as the Department Head of a Vocational Trade School, has observed the various ways in which prospective students may be influenced by students already enrolled in the trade. It often happens that a close friendship exists between trade students and prospective trade students. It may be that the enrollment in a particular trade is small and the instructor encourages additional enrollment by having a trade student sell the program to other students. It may be because of social prestige enjoyed by outstanding boys in the trade, or it might be because of an accomplishment or recognition received by a trade student.

Regardless of the way in which it is accomplished, other students must definitely be recognized as a factor which influences vocational choice. Many times this factor causes a student to enter a vocation for which they have little or no interest and ability. Consequently, a poor

choice is made and the student is a victim of circumstances.

#### SUMMARY

##### 7. Other trade students

Rated number 1 by 74 students

Rated number 2 by 100 students

Rated number 3 by 66 students

Rated number 4 by 71 students

Total 311

#### FACTOR NUMBER 3

##### VOCATIONAL TEACHER OR COORDINATOR

The vocational teacher has since the advent of vocational education in the public school, been considered an individual who exercised more influence on students than other teachers. Because of his occupational knowledge and experience, his advise and opinions are considered by both students and teachers. In the capacity of advisor he has an opportunity to explain the vocational program. The degree to which he is able to sell his particular program and cause students to want to learn the trade depends of course upon his trade personality and his ability to express himself. This fact was revealed by the survey. In some schools the vocational teacher had little or no influence upon the student's choice, while in other schools he influenced a large number in their selection. The greatest number influenced by the vocational instructor in a program was eight out of a class of eleven. The eight listed the vocational instructor as the first or most important influence in their decision for the trade. In practically all the vocational programs surveyed, the instructor had some influence; however, in one instance the teacher had no influence whatever. One hundred eighty-six of the students surveyed

felt that the vocational instructor to some degree had influenced them in the choice of an occupation. The results of the survey indicated that vocations in small schools had more influence on students than did the teachers in large schools.

#### SUMMARY

##### 8. Vocational teacher or coordinator

Rated number 1 by 71 students

Rated number 2 by 47 students

Rated number 3 by 40 students

Rated number 4 by 28 students

Total 186

#### FACTOR NUMBER 9

##### FRIENDS AND NEIGHBORS

Friends and neighbors ranked ninth as determined by the number of first rated influences. Forty-nine students gave first choice preference to this factor. Forty-seven felt it rated number two. Seventy-three checked it number three and thirty-two rated it number four. Two hundred one indicated that to some degree, either as first, second, third, or fourth ranking influence their friends or neighbors affected them in making their decision to enter the vocation.

#### SUMMARY

##### 9. Friends and neighbors

Rated number 1 by 49 students

Rated number 2 by 47 students

Rated number 3 by 73 students

Rated number 4 by 32 students

Total 201

**FACTOR NUMBER 10****ADVICE OF A TRADESMAN**

Advice of a tradesman rated tenth as determined by the survey. The rating of this factor by students indicates that vocational students have very little contact with people engaged in the trade. The writer feels that this is not good since he believes that qualified tradesmen are the best sources of information regarding the requirements of the trade. Many students could no doubt make their vocational training more profitable, if before making a final occupational choice, they would seek out competent tradesmen and talk with them about the various aspects of the trade. The tradesmen might even advise them to select other vocations in view of their personal qualifications. People in advisory positions should do more to encourage students to contact sympathetic tradesmen and talk with them in regard to the personal requirements and the advantages and disadvantages of the trade.

**SUMMARY****10. Advice of a tradesman**

Rated number 1 by 45 students

Rated number 2 by 49 students

Rated number 3 by 39 students

Rated number 4 by 15 students

Total 148

**FACTOR NUMBER 11****FORMER TRADE STUDENTS WHO HAVE GRADUATED**

Former trade students who have graduated was checked thirty-nine times by students who thought this factor was the primary influence affecting their trade choice. Former students who have graduated and are



employed in the trade are certain to be a factor which will influence high school youth in their selection of a trade. Usually a graduate of a trade is expected to succeed and to earn good wages. He is also expected to be dependable. In general he is expected to be a good citizen. If the graduate is successful in his trade, younger students who are about to select a vocation know this and may try to pattern somewhat or follow the course of the graduate.

Graduates affect younger students many times without realizing they have done so. It is not often that younger students are influenced by idle talk, but if they can see evidence of success in a former student such as good clothes, or a good car it may cause a vocational choice to be made for the same or a similar vocation. Thirty-nine considered this the number one factor. Sixty-five felt this second in importance. Sixty-two thought it the third most important factor and thirty listed it as number four.

#### SUMMARY

##### 11. Former trade students who have graduated

Rated number 1 by 39 students

Rated number 2 by 65 students

Rated number 3 by 62 students

Rated number 4 by 30 students

Total 196

#### FACTOR NUMBER 12

##### DESIRABLE WORKING CONDITIONS IN THE TRADE

Desirable working conditions in the trade rated twelfth of the nineteen factors listed. It was listed as a factor that might possibly influence students in view of the fact that some trades have working

conditions that are much more desirable than do others, and because modern day tradesmen are demanding more and more that desirable working conditions exist within the trade.

The Dictionary of Occupational Titles lists some 22,000 different jobs. It can be readily understood that in many areas of work there exist many desirable conditions which would be classified as such by the majority of the people working at the particular trade. The same may be true of the undesirable conditions. Then there are those conditions which exist that might be classified as desirable by some and as undesirable by others. For instance the condition might exist which required an employee to work in a room where the temperature is maintained at 70 degrees. To one employee it might be a desirable condition, to another it might be highly undesirable. Another situation might require a worker to work outside both winter and summer. The man who likes outdoor life perhaps would think the condition ideal while the man who likes to be sheltered from the elements might think it undesirable.

Thirty students checked this factor as being the main or first ranking influence in their selection of a trade. The majority of these thirty students are presently enrolled in auto-mechanics and machine shop practices. Fifty rated it the number two influence, eighty rated it number three and seventy-five rated it number four. A total of two hundred thirty-five felt it influenced to some degree their selection of the trade in which they are presently enrolled.

#### SUMMARY

12. Desirable working conditions in the trade
- Rated number 1 by 30 students
- Rated number 2 by 50 students

Rated number 3 by 80 students

Rated number 4 by 75 students

Total 235

### FACTOR NUMBER 13

#### RATE OF PAY IN THE TRADE

The wage scale varies greatly in the different trades. A brick mason earns three dollars an hour, while the printer may receive only two dollars an hour. The experienced welder may even make four dollars an hour for his services. Other trades might even set their scale below two dollars an hour.

Many factors determine the scale to be paid. The trade may be strongly unionized and therefore be in a position to demand a high rate of pay for its members. It may be that the duties in a trade are such that they constitute a health hazard and are detrimental to the health of the tradesmen. This naturally tends to cause higher wages and also to cause fewer people to be interested in selecting the trade as a vocation. Interested people will evaluate the various factors and more often than not will select a trade, not necessarily because of the rate of pay, but rather because it seems to match their interests, energies, and abilities. This is proved by the fact that relatively few students interviewed rated the pay factor as an influence in the selection of a vocation. Only twenty-one of the 1,104 thought this the first ranking influence. Ninety-seven said it affected their choice, but to a lesser degree. One hundred seven indicated it rated number three and sixty-one rated it number four.

#### SUMMARY

##### 13. Rate of pay in the trade

Rated number 1 by 29 students

Rated number 2 by 97 students

Rated number 3 by 107 students

Rated number 4 by 61 students

Total 294

This total indicates that 294 students were influenced to some degree by this factor.

#### FACTOR NUMBER 14

##### COULD NOT TAKE TRAINING IN THE TRADE DESIRED

A large percent of the schools included in the survey offer training in several vocations. Other schools surveyed offer training in only one vocation. Obviously students in a large school have a more extensive choice of an occupation suitable to their particular interests, aptitudes, and abilities in which training may be received.

The survey revealed however, that students in the larger schools where several trades are taught found it harder to find the trade desired than did those students in the smaller schools where only one trade is taught. The writer feels that this situation is due in a large measure to the prevalence of the cooperative part-time programs in small towns.

Sixty-five students thought this factor affected their trade choice. With the exception of two all sixty-five were enrolled in schools that offer training in six or more vocations. Twenty-nine thought the factor rated number one. Sixteen rated it number two. Eleven rated it number three and nine rated it number four.

#### SUMMARY

##### 14. Could not take training in the trade desired

Rated number 1 by 29 students

Rated number 2 by 16 students

Rated number 3 by 11 students

Rated number 4 by 9 students

Total 65

#### FACTOR NUMBER 15

##### SCHOOL PRINCIPAL

Since the responsibility for proper enrollment of all students usually comes under the duties of the school principal, it has been felt that he exercised considerable influence upon the student's choice of a vocational program. This belief was not, however, substantiated by the findings of the surveys since only sixty-one of the total number of students polled indicated that the school principal actually encouraged them to choose or enter a particular vocation, and of this number only twenty-three rated this factor of primary importance. This would seem to indicate that although the principal is in a position to encourage the students to enroll in either vocational or academic subjects, he does not wield this power to the extent that is usually believed.

The writer feels that the principal may inadvertently influence a student's preference, many times without this awareness, by arranging class schedules to avoid crowded or undesirable conditions. Another factor to consider is that the guidance functions may be delegated to counselors and others.

#### SUMMARY

##### 15. School principal

Rated number 1 by 23 students

Rated number 2 by 15 students

Rated number 3 by 6 students

Rated number 4 by 17 students

Total        61

### FACTOR NUMBER 16

#### GUIDANCE COUNSELOR

Forty-seven students felt that the Guidance Counselor affected their decision to enroll in a certain phase of vocational training. Perhaps the reason for such a small number is due to the fact that the majority of schools do not employ a counselor who is designated as such, but depend upon teachers and administrative personnel to act as student advisers. In fairness to the Guidance Counselor it should be noted that the questionnaire did not differentiate between schools which employed qualified, full-time counselors and those that did not. A more significant result would have been obtained regarding this particular factor had it been foreseen that most schools in the state secondary school systems do not employ full-time counselors.

#### SUMMARY

##### 16. Guidance Counselor

Rated number 1 by 16 students

Rated number 2 by 12 students

Rated number 3 by 13 students

Rated number 4 by 6 students

Total        47

### FACTOR NUMBER 17

#### RESULT OF TEST SCORES

Fifty students checked this factor as having been responsible for their decision. This very small number would seem to reveal that either

very little testing is done in the public schools to discover interests and aptitudes, or results of the tests are not properly utilized in student advisement, or that the students do not give serious thought to the revelation of test scores.

Of the fifty who indicated their choice was affected by test scores, fifteen thought it the major cause for their decision. Seventeen rated it second, seven rated it third and eleven thought it ranked number four.

#### SUMMARY

##### 17. Result of test scores

Rated number 1 by 15 students

Rated number 2 by 17 students

Rated number 3 by 7 students

Rated number 4 by 11 students

Total 50

#### FACTOR NUMBER 18

##### SECURITY AND POSSIBLE RETIREMENT BENEFITS

Eight of the students sampled thought security and possible retirement benefits was the primary reason for their selection. Sixteen felt it rated number two and fifteen rated it number three. Twenty eight felt it rated fourth. It is the writer's belief that the implication of this factor for this group is too remote to create extensive interest or consideration. Youth are more concerned with the immediate opportunities in a field of work. It is only natural that this item would be rated low by most students.

#### SUMMARY

##### 18. Security and possible retirement benefits

Rated number 1 by 8 students

Rated number 2 by 16 students  
 Rated number 3 by 15 students  
 Rated number 4 by 28 students  
 Total 67

## FACTOR NUMBER 19

### ACADEMIC TEACHERS

Academic teachers rated lower than any of the factors included in the study which might affect students in making an occupational choice. Nineteen respondents of the total number surveyed indicated that academic teachers had no influence whatsoever on their preference of a vocation. Only five said academic teachers were the major cause affecting their choice.

The writer's experience in public school work and his association with academic, as well as vocational teachers, lead him to assume that this is not necessarily indicative of a poor attitude or indifference. It is common knowledge that most academic or general education teachers have not had sufficient trade experience or contacts to qualify them to advise students in this respect, except in a general way.

It is believed by the writer that the lack of ability on the part of academic teachers to properly advise in this area is recognized by students and therefore their advice is seldom sought. He admits that in some cases prejudices exist because of a lack of understanding and appreciation of the advantages and importance of industrial employment.

### SUMMARY

#### 19. Academic Teachers

Rated number 1 by 5 students



Rated number 2 by 4 students

Rated number 3 by 8 students

Rated number 4 by 2 students

## CHAPTER III

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

It was the purpose of this study to discover the most potent factors both within the school system and those outside the school environment which influence students of high school age in selecting a vocation. It was thought that if this were known that certain resources could be better utilized in advising and counseling. It is the writer's belief that a better understanding of these forces or factors could result in a better selection of occupational choices by students and also might prevent unwise selections which are often made.

The results of the survey have proved interesting and enlightening. The response to the survey was very gratifying to the writer. He believes that the sincerity of those who participated have contributed immensely to the validity of the study.

It is interesting to note that the majority of students were influenced more by factors lying outside the school's system than within the school. The influence of parents or guardians ranked highest in importance of the nineteen factors considered with four hundred five students indicating the importance of this factor in making vocational choices. The influence of relatives other than parents or guardians is obvious from the data secured. The writer concludes that this situation emphasizes the importance of close cooperation and understanding between vocational teachers and parents in order that students be counseled wisely.

There is strong indication that students lack intimate contacts and association with industrial people since this factor ranked tenth in importance. The writer believes that this should be one of the most important factors if properly utilized.

The low ranking by students of the influence of school personnel indicates much room for improvement in this area. The daily association of teachers, counselors, and others should provide an excellent opportunity for vocational information and guidance.

In the hands of intelligent well-trained, and understanding teachers and guidance counselors the findings of this study should prove to be significant and helpful. If the influence of the various factors considered be properly channeled it is believed that more successful occupational choices will be made by the students.

The writer suggests that those concerned in the field of guidance give consideration to the findings of this study with view of improving guidance activities. He further suggests that similar studies be made in areas other than trade and industrial programs. He believes that some means of coordinating the various influences effecting students in the selection of a vocation should be established and implemented through education and supervision.

**A SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY**

**Prosser, Charles A., and Quigley, Thomas H. Vocational Education In A Democracy, Chicago: American Technical Society, 1949, p. 151.**

**Appendix A**

January 27, 1958

Dear Fellow Teacher:

This survey study is being made at the suggestion of the State Supervisor and Teacher Trainer for Trade and Industrial Education. The study deals with the factors which influence trade and industrial students in the choice of a vocation as indicated by their junior and senior programs in high school.

It is believed that the results of the study may prove very valuable in the vocational guidance of high school youth and will be of assistance in a better selection of students for trade and industrial classes.

The first question "have you received training in another occupation" should be explained to mean training in another T & I trade class.

Where more than one factor has played a part in influencing the vocational choice, please have students place a figure one (1) in the square by the factor which they feel has been the greatest influence. Place a figure two (2) in the square indicating the second ranking influence, figure three (3) for the third, and figure four (4) for the fourth.

The study cannot be successful without your help. Students must be influenced to fill out the questionnaire conscientiously and as accurately as possible. Only juniors and seniors in T & I programs are to be included. When the forms are completed, please return them in the enclosed self-addressed envelope.

In return for your consideration in having the forms completed and returned, I shall be glad to furnish you with a brief summary of the study when completed. This will call for a few minutes of your class time but will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Leon Lacy  
Chilocco, Oklahoma

LL:alg

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Name of School \_\_\_\_\_ Instructor \_\_\_\_\_

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_ Trade Enrolled in Now \_\_\_\_\_

Age \_\_\_\_\_ Grade Classification \_\_\_\_\_ Parent's Trade or Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Have you received training in another trade? \_\_\_\_\_ If answer is yes,  
how long? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you satisfied with the trade in which you are now enrolled? \_\_\_\_\_

Are you enrolled in a Diversified Occupations (D.O.) Program? \_\_\_\_\_

Please check below, the factors or the combination of factors, which influenced you in the selection of the vocation for which you are now training.

- \_\_\_\_\_ 1. Parents or guardian
- \_\_\_\_\_ 2. Relatives such as brothers, sisters, uncles, grandparents
- \_\_\_\_\_ 3. Friends or neighbors
- \_\_\_\_\_ 4. School principal
- \_\_\_\_\_ 5. Vocational teacher or coordinator
- \_\_\_\_\_ 6. Academic teachers
- \_\_\_\_\_ 7. Other trade students
- \_\_\_\_\_ 8. Former trade students who have graduated
- \_\_\_\_\_ 9. Guidance counselor
- \_\_\_\_\_ 10. Advice of a tradesman
- \_\_\_\_\_ 11. Seeing people at work at the trade
- \_\_\_\_\_ 12. Results of test scores
- \_\_\_\_\_ 13. Previous work experience in the trade
- \_\_\_\_\_ 14. Rate of pay in the trade
- \_\_\_\_\_ 15. Chance of getting a job in the trade

- 16. Could not take training in the trade desired
- 17. Desirable working conditions in the trade
- 18. Security and possible retirement benefits
- 19. Others



VITA

Leon Lacy

Candidate for the Degree of  
Master of Science

**Thesis:** A STUDY OF FACTORS WHICH INFLUENCE TRADE AND INDUSTRIAL STUDENTS  
IN THE SELECTION OF A VOCATION

**Major Field:** Trade and Industrial Education

**Biographical:**

**Personal data:** Born near Hutchens, Texas, November 12, 1906, the  
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