

A SURVEY OF VALUES RELATED TO  
MAKING A VOCATIONAL CHOICE

by

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## INTRODUCTION

The problem of the values that are related to making a vocational choice is one that has been of much concern to counselors. What are the criteria that should be used when counseling youth about vocations? What factors should be given preference? Is there any one factor that dominates the selection of vocational goals? To what extent should counselors aid youth in their selection of an occupation? These and many other questions arise each time a counselee asks for assistance in making a vocational choice. It was the intent of the author to determine some of the more important aspects of vocational choice.

The consistency of vocational choice was also considered. Is there any reason to believe that if a student makes a choice he will abide by that choice until he has trained himself sufficiently well to enter the vocation and succeed in it? If so, what factors are prevalent in this decision?

To what extent are these vocational choices realistic? How does one determine realism of vocational choice?

This study was intended to answer these and other questions relative to the making of vocational choices.

## PROCEDURE

A review was made of published materials related to the values that are considered by youth in their selection of a vocation.

A survey was also made of the vocational choices of

members of the senior class of 1960 of Junction City, Kansas. Factors that were considered were the relationship of consistency of choice to intelligence, general consistency, relation of boys vocational choice to the occupation of the father, and realism of vocational goals.

#### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A great amount of research has been conducted by psychologists, educators, and personnel specialists in the field of youth's occupational choice. Generalizations that have been derived from them tend to be consistent as far as the pattern is concerned. According to Stephenson (22), these generalizations may be summed up in the following conclusions: 1) a large percentage of all pre-work age youth have made no occupational or vocational choice; 2) for these youth of the pre-work age who do make an occupational choice, there is a tendency to choose from a narrow range of occupational titles; 3) these occupational and vocational choices are usually in the upper range of the occupational hierarchy, with the majority of the choices coming in the professions; 4) the distribution of occupational choices has very little correspondence either to the national or local distribution of job opportunities or to the father's occupation. Porter (16), however, concluded that mental ability and the occupation of the father are both significantly related to the vocational plans of high school boys, with the father's occupation having the greater strength of relationship.

In their study, Carper and Becker (2) found that three

sets of group expectations influence the development of an individual's social-psychological identification with an occupation: 1) generalized cultural expectations current in the society, 2) specific expectations of the family, and 3) expectations of the occupational group. Cultural expectations direct men in our society to have an occupation, to have one at an appropriate age, and to achieve success in this chosen field. Families elaborate these generalized expectations, setting specific criteria for satisfactory achievement. As the individual becomes involved in and identified with an occupation, he becomes responsive to the particular expectations of his occupational group.

The family's authority over a child, or the lack of it, has an affect upon the child's choice of an occupation. Parents with specific notions start grooming their children at an early age, pointing out successful friends, relative, or prominent personages in the particular profession. However, if the family lacks authority to enforce its decisions on the child, the approach will be ineffective.

Among the first influences that come to mind when we think of factors affecting the choice of vocation are intellectual level and personality traits. In order to be attracted to something, one must have some sort of understanding of it, and in order to have understanding, one must have a certain amount of mental ability. Strong (23) has shown that there is a positive relationship between being of superior intelligence and having interests like those of successful scientists.

The role of intelligence in vocational choice is not so simple that it can be summed up in what has already been said. According to Super (26) there is another aspect of the question, related to the fact that mental ability increases throughout childhood and adolescence. This means that things which challenge at one stage of development may not challenge at another.

Changes in personality accompany the changes in mental power which take place with maturation. Methods have been developed by Strong (23) for measuring the maturity of a person's interests and for comparing the maturity levels which characterize people in various occupations. Some occupations are characterized by relatively low levels of interest maturity. Other occupations characteristically have higher levels of interest maturity. This fits in with observations that one makes every day; the number of high school boys that want to enter scientific or technical occupations is far greater than the number who want to enter social work or teaching.

In so far as choices are concerned, such an attitude is probably made clearest in hobbies and leisure-time activities, even though in these there is the external pressure of the social group to do what it does. It is because of the gang that high school students associate themselves with club activities in which they seem to have no real interest; the club or organization is a means of achieving status with the crowd. If the crowd's interest shifts, or if the gang with which one wants to be identified changes, the interest in the activity may

disappear.

In some cases the interest and participation of the individual continue even after those of the group have shifted, and in others they first show themselves without the presence of the group.

Super (26) states that interest can be aroused when the potentiality exists, and it can be developed if achieving success in the activity gives satisfaction. It cannot be created if the ability to participate with understanding is lacking, or if some active need is not being met.

Matteson (15), in his study of interest-experience changes, found that gains in interest will be related in the kind of, and amount of, the new experiences a student encounters. Large gains in interest are more likely to be found in areas of low initial experience and associated low initial interest.

In a study by Singer and Stefflre (19) it was found that job values and desires do vary with age. Money, interest, and fame appear to over-shadow other motives in the value structure of youth as compared with adults. The development of the adolescent boy is characterized by needs for recognition from peers and adults. This need may explain the over-selection of fame as a job value. In contrast to the adolescent, the adult group emphasizes the value of independence. It is reasonable to assume that by the time an adult becomes stabilized in an occupation, he has come to realize that his chance of becoming wealthy or famous are slight. The adults preoccupation with the value of independence in a job might be indicative of the fact that

after working for other people for a number of years the chance to be self-employed appears to be highly desirable.

While anywhere from 25 to 35 per cent of youth apparently are unready to state an occupational choice, this does not necessarily preclude that they will be unable to make a future occupational adjustment. Sticking fast to a choice at an early age or even during the first two years of college may cause the youth to make an inappropriate occupational choice in terms of the individual's needs and the demands of society.

A procedure that has long been practiced in our schools requires that a student's expressed vocational choice be used as a partial basis for planning his high school program. Though the student's choice among courses in high schools is somewhat limited by requirements, many choices among electives are possible. High school students may elect some courses randomly or they may elect from a defined, clear-cut group of offerings pointed toward entry into training for particular or related groups of occupations. Generally the practice of long range planning is recommended to students beginning high school by guidance workers, advisement arrangements, orientation programs, or student handbooks.

Selection of electives based on vocational goals assumes that students will be relatively consistent in the vocational choices they express during high school. If there is great variability in choices, it follows that long range planning based on them is not likely to be effective. Long range planning assumes, also, that there is a positive relationship between the

vocational choices of students while in school and the occupations they enter after graduation. If students do not follow through on vocational choices by entry into, or preparation for chosen occupations, planning is again unlikely to be effective.

Super (30), in his article "Education And The Nature Of Occupations And Careers", discussed the nature of careers and occupations, particularly at the semiskilled level, in order to provide a basis for examining the work of the secondary school. It was pointed out that the concept of the secondary school as an educational stepping stone leading to the upper and middle levels of the occupational scale presented a true picture in reality but that it was an inadequate ideal. The secondary school should be thought of as a means to achieving a role and a way of life. Education for the roles and the ways of life which characterized the semiskilled and unskilled occupations have been overlooked and attention needs to be given this area. Careers of the semiskilled and unskilled workers tend to be unstable and variable, motivated more by the need to earn a living and the desire for satisfying human needs than by an interest in the occupation or work itself. In contrast, the curricula of the secondary schools and the values of the teachers reflect the middle class concept of a career as a stable lifetime work to which the individual has some personal attachment and which he pursues consistently throughout his working life.

Thomas (32) proposes two major problems concerning the occupational structure: 1) How to promote a more equitable and efficient distribution of labor according to ability and interest.

The present distribution reflects artificial shortages and inadequate opportunities. The persistence of this problem means injustices and deprivations to individuals and costly waste to the economy. A key to the solution is the upgrading of large proportions of the labor force. 2) How to improve the value and attractiveness of most occupations, especially those with adequate or generous labor supplies in additional ways besides income. This problem is especially acute in a democracy devoted primarily to the growth of all its citizens, because individual workers spend a large share of their time in, and derive a major meaning of their lives from, their occupations. The most promising solution has been termed the "professionalizing" of all occupations.

Holland (8) assumes that at the time of vocational choice the person is the product of the interaction of his particular heredity with a variety of cultural and personal forces including peers, parents and significant adults, his social class, American culture, and the physical environment. Out of this experience the person develops a hierarchy of habitual or preferred methods for dealing with tasks that surround him. The person making a vocational choice in a sense "searches" for situations which satisfy his orientations.

In developing a vocational choice the person directs himself toward the major occupational class for which his development has directed him by selecting the occupational class at the top of his particular choice of classes. This dimension of choice is designated as the range of choice, on the variety of

relatively different major choices.

Within a major class of occupations, the person's selection of an occupation is a function of his self-evaluation and his ability to perform adequately in his chosen environment.

Both of the above processes are related by a series of personal factors including self-knowledge and evaluation, knowledge of occupational classes, the orderliness of the developmental hierarchy, and a series of environmental factors including the range of potential environments, social pressures from family and peers, and limitations imposed by socio-economic resources and the physical environment. Stewart (24) is of the opinion that the interests of the more able students are more highly specific. They tend to focus attention on one occupation in an interest group and follow through with it. This idea is held by others, including Holland (8).

Super (27) states that "people differ in their abilities, interests, and personalities." He thinks that they are qualified, by virtue of their differences in abilities, interests, and personalities for a number of occupations. Each occupation requires a certain pattern of abilities, personality traits, and interests with enough leeway to allow both a variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation. Vocational competencies and preferences, which are the situations in which people live and work, change with time and experience, making choices and adjustment a continuous process. This process may be summed up in a series of life stages characterized as those of growth, exploration,

establishment, maintenance, and decline, and these stages may in turn be subdivided into a) the fantasy, tentative, and realistic phases of the exploratory stage; and b) the trial and stable phases of the establishment stage.

In their study of the influence of occupational information on occupational goals, Speer and Jasker (20) state that the choice of an occupational goal is a complex process which results from the influence of a variety of background factors. One factor which should be a part of this choice is knowledge of the physical requirements, sources of training, income to be expected, employment opportunities, and stability of employment. This information may be obtained from reading materials, from friends, relatives, and others engaged in the occupation; from personal work experience; or from general education. What an individual knows about an occupation, and in many cases, what an individual does not know about an occupation, may be of considerable significance to him in arriving at a choice of occupations.

Dragaw (6) has observed that no single factor can be attributed as the one that determines vocational choices, but rather it is a combination of many factors that lead the individual to make a choice.

The nature of the career pattern is determined by the individual's parental socio-economic level, mental ability, and personality characteristics, and by the opportunities to which he is exposed. Development through the life stages can be guided, partly by speeding up the process of maturation of abilities

and interests and partly by aiding in reality testing and the development of the self-concept.

The process of vocational development is essentially that of developing and putting into practice a self-concept. It is a process in which the self-concept is a result of the interaction of the youth's inherited aptitudes, physiological make up, opportunity to play various roles, and evaluations of the extent to which the results of role playing meet with the approval of superiors and peers.

The process of compromise between individual and social factors, between self-concept and reality, is one of role playing whether the role is played in fantasy, in the counseling interview, or in real life activities such as school classes, clubs, part-time work, and entry jobs. Work satisfactions and life satisfactions depend upon the extent to which the individual finds adequate outlets for his abilities, interests, personality traits, and values. These satisfactions also depend upon the person's establishment in a type of work, work situation, and a way of life in which the person can play the kind of role which his growth and exploratory experiences have led him to consider appropriate.

Roe (17) emphasized the importance of making youth more aware of the sort of emotional reactions that are going to affect job satisfaction. Many young people are completely unprepared to meet personal frustration in job situations because it has never occurred to them that this might happen.

Super (25) observed that since most jobs are obtained

through direct application and through contacts, most beginning workers are limited to jobs at their parental socio-economic level. This is one reason why fathers and sons tend to have jobs which place them at the same level. The job getting resources of the son are limited to the father, relatives, and neighbors, all of whom tend to be of about the same occupational level. The vocational plans and first jobs of American high school seniors resemble the occupations of the fathers more closely than they do the occupations appropriate to the boys' intelligence. This is responsible for the fact that many beginning jobs prove to be unsuitable, and that turnover is high, when placement is based more on present availability than on the aptitudes and interests of youth.

Crowley (4), in his study of the differences in goals, obstacles, and helps in relation to I.Q. and socio-economic level found that the goals selected by the subjects were directly related to their immediate future. The high I.Q. levels indicated college and graduate school as immediate goals. The lower I.Q. levels indicated termination of education, entry into the armed forces or into the labor force as immediate goals. Those who would be considered to be less bright chose financial goals more frequently. The brighter students were relatively more concerned with lack of confidence, competition, how hard they work, their selfishness, and their lack of time. Less bright students were more concerned with being drafted, having a poor education, lack of ability, failing grades, and difficult

qualifying examinations. With respect to Crowley's (11) "helps" item, the more able subjects indicated a relatively greater dependence upon their own ability, help from school or parents, and a faith in their own good sense and education. The less able students indicated a relatively greater dependence on perseverance, earning their own way, work experience, seeking help and guidance, recognition as a good worker, good armed services training, reliance in other people, and their efforts to please mankind. The lowest ability group was relatively less concerned with previous hard work and study as an aid to goal achievement.

Because of the relationship between I.Q. and socio-economic level, Crowley expected that the results of the two classifications would show some similarity. Almost half of the items which showed differences between the socio-economic levels were found among the items which showed differences between the I.Q. levels.

With respect to goals, the higher socio-economic levels tended to select the same goals as the brighter subjects and the lower socio-economic levels tended to select the same goals of the less bright subjects.

Lockwood (13) states that intelligence seems to influence the level of a student's realism of vocational preference. He concluded that realism appears to be an individual rather than a group related thing. Realism appears to be a pure chance phenomenon which probably has its explanation in the student's developmental history and present personality functioning. Studies with high school students regarding realism and

maldistribution of vocational choices have shown that though wise vocational choices are frequently made at higher grade levels, pupils are generally aiming too high in their choices. Chances for social and economic advancement are determining job choices of future men and women with little thought being given to individual fitness, in terms of ability, for the vocations selected.

Pupils of high mental ability sometimes select vocations offering limited opportunities, and pupils of low mental ability sometimes select occupations for which they are not intellectually fitted. It was also pointed out by Lockwood (13) that vocational choices tend to fall in the upper and middle categories of the occupational scale. The lower occupational levels have little appeal for boys and girls in a society with our traditions of self-advancement.

Horst (11) feels that perhaps the most serious problem that faces the person working with youth who are trying to choose a vocation is not the person who has misjudged his relative strengths and weaknesses for various kinds of vocational objects, but rather the one who should be very careful in his selection of advanced educational or vocational activities. These are the people who never go to college, or once having started should not try to finish, but should rather find some other useful activity wherein they can make a contribution.

In Gruens (7) study of perceptions by socio-economic class he found that those youth from the lowest socio-economic class

saw less difference between business and professional people and those from the highest group made less distinction between the various manual and mechanical jobs. These class differences in perception then lead to class differences in vocational desires.

Many students have a dream goal different from their stated action goal. Some students, especially in the lower socioeconomic class, seem to avoid formation of any real action goal. When forced to make a decision they do not aim so high as do students in the upper class.

Beilin (1) concluded that an individual does not choose an occupation or a job, but rather the occupation or job selects the individual. Kitterson (12) suggested that longitudinal studies of occupational choice might show that the most important factors leading a person to enter a certain occupation are not "physical" at all, but such common things as the nature of the jobs available in the community.

Chervenik (3) listed several factors which might limit a student's ability to choose his vocation. Early commitment to a definite educational plan, admission to the school offering the training, changing occupational opportunities, native aptitudes and certain self-imposed requirements are but a few.

#### VOCATIONAL CHOICES IN THE JUNCTION CITY HIGH SCHOOL

A study of the class of 1960 at the Junction City High School, Junction City, Kansas, was performed by the author to determine the consistency of vocational choice, the relationship of I.Q. to consistency, the relationship of the boys occupational

choice to the occupation of their fathers, and the realism of the students vocational goals.

The community of Junction City, Kansas could not be considered a typical community. The predominance of military personnel and the lack of any major industry precludes the possibilities of students observing or becoming familiar with any large number of occupations. The lack of the representation of these occupations is overcome, in part, by two factors; one being the fact that the students have done a great deal of traveling, the other being the availability of a course in occupations in the freshmen year. These factors, combined with the guidance and counseling program in the Junction City school system, tend to acquaint the students with as many varied occupational groups as possible.

The information for the study was compiled from: 1) A personal data sheet completed by each student at the first of his freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior years. A reproduction of the form is shown as Form 1 (see page 29 in Appendix). 2) An I.Q. score obtained by administering the Henman-Nelson Test of Mental Ability in January, 1960. 3) Results of the Differential Aptitude Test battery administered to the class in 1957. 4) A personal interview with each student. 5) Scholastic achievement in the classroom as indicated by course grades. 6) Personal observations of the students' involved in the study.

As the population of Junction City, Kansas, is quite transient, information was obtainable on only 92 students of a

class of 134. There were 39 boys and 53 girls involved in the study.

Table 1 shows that 29 of the 92 students, or 31.5 per cent, had the same vocational choice throughout the four years of the study. However, 17 of the 92, or 18.4 per cent of the students

Table 1. Counseling of vocational choice through last four years of high school.

Variation of choice	Number	Per cent
Same choice all 4 years	29	32.0
Same choice last 3 years	9	9.7
Same choice last 2 years, different choice first 2 years	7	7.6
Same choice last 2 years, same choice first 2 years	4	4.3
Different choice last year, same choice first 3 years	11	11.9
Different choice last year, same choice two previous years	3	3.2
No choice the same	17	18.4
No choice last year, same choice first 3 years	2	2.1
No choice	3	3.2
Choice last year, no choice before	<u>7</u>	<u>7.6</u>
TOTAL	92	100

had not chosen the same vocation twice. Table 2 combines the group into broader areas. When viewed from this perspective, the consistency is more apparent. Of the 92 students studied,

49, or 53.2 per cent indicated the same vocational choice for the last two or more years.

Table 2. Consistency of vocational choices through last four years of high school.

	Number	Per cent
Same choice last two or more years	49	53.2
Different choice last year	22	23.9
No choice the same	17	18.4
No choice	4	4.3

Table 3 indicates the relationship between I.Q. and consistency of choice. In this study it was apparent that students obtaining a high score on their I.Q. test were more consistent in their vocational choices. The item that indicates a change to no choices the last year in school with the same choice for the first three years could be misleading. The item involved only two students, both girls. Their change was from a vocation to that of a homemaker. Both have since married.

Table 4 would show a reversal of the studies made by Porter (16) and Super (25). This, however, would be explained, as mentioned before, by the predominance of military personnel and the sons unwillingness to follow his father's lead in this occupation. As indicated, there was only one boy in the study that had not made a choice of an occupation.

The realism of the students vocational goals was a subjective evaluation. This evaluation was made by combining all

Table 3. Average I.Q. (Henman-Nelson - 1960) compared to consistency of vocational choice.

	Average I.Q.	I.Q. range	Number
Same choices all 4 years	118.1	141/100	29
Same choices last 3 years	122	137/98	9
Same choice last 2 years, different choice first 2 years	109	123/94	7
Same choice last 2 years, same choice first 2 years	110	119/99	4
Different choice last year, same choice first 3 years	101	111/91	11
Different choice last year, same choice 2 previous years	109	118/103	3
No choice the same	105	128/86	17
No choice last year, same choice first 3 years	111	116/106	2
No choice	96	108/81	3
Choice last year, no choice before	107	116/97	7

Table 4. Relationship of boys occupational choice to occupation of father.

	Number	Per cent
Same occupation	5	12.8
Same area	11	28.2
Different area	22	56.4
No choice	<u>1</u>	<u>2.6</u>
TOTAL	39	100.0

the sources of information, including the personal observations of the students as shown in Table 5. The author concluded that 63 per cent of the students involved in the study had made realistic goals for themselves. This would be in harmony with the findings of Lockwood (10). There were 17 of the 92, or 18 per cent, who chose goals beyond their abilities. This could be due to pressure from the peer group, pressure from society, or parental pressure and wishes.

Table 5. Realism of vocational goals.

	High intelli- gency (120 and over)		Average (96-119)		Low intelli- gence (95 and below)	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Students with realistic goals	18	75	35	63.6	7	53.8
Students aiming too high			12	21.8	5	38.5
Students aiming too low	6	35	5	9.1		
No choice			3	5.5	1	7.7
TOTAL	24	100	55	100	13	100

Conclusions as to the realism of the students vocational goals relate favorably to the studies conducted by Strong (23), Stewart (24), and Thomas (32).

As Super (31) pointed out, reality appraisal in vocational counseling consists of several elements. These elements are 1) data about the client, 2) inferences from the specific data which help to develop a picture of the client, 3) hypotheses derived from these inferences, and 4) predictions which arise from these

hypotheses and which describe predicted future behavior. The client data needed in vocational appraisal may be classified as socio-economic, physical, educational, occupational, and psychological. These are basic data of appraisal and about some there is considerable validity information such as the significance of intelligence test scores for success in professional training as demonstrated by Strong (33). For others there is relatively little validity information.

Data concerning parental occupation, place of residence, education, and social affiliations lead to inferences concerning financial resources, contacts and parental attitudes which may influence choice. Data concerning intelligence test scores, grades, attitudes while taking tests, and reported attitudes toward schooling, lead to inferences concerning the youths level of operating intelligence. As the data is reviewed as a whole, many facts are organized into a few inferences. As these inferences are examined they begin to fall into patterns. Hypotheses are made from these inferences such as an intelligent son of middle class parents expresses a vocational choice which is supported by his parents and warranted by his strong desire to succeed. Having such a picture of the youth, a prediction can be made as to what he will do and how he will behave.

Mathewson (14) also states that the counselor will not only have to appraise individual characteristics, behavior, performance, and achievement, but he will also have to interpret the facts of the appraisal effectively to the individual and to help the individual evaluate his vocational objectives.

Thomas (32) presented five points regarding realism which counselors must be aware of. They are: 1) Are youth aware of the prevailing standards and awards in our culture? In order for youth to be able to realistically appraise their vocational choice they must be aware of these factors. 2) Are youth adjusting their desires to current placement possibilities? As our culture advances, certain occupations become outmoded while others come into being. 3) Are youth adjusting their vocational desires to their capacities? Some youth over estimate their potential while others are content to under achieve. 4) Are there characteristic family aspirations regardless of talent? Is their son going to be a doctor because all the other members of the family are doctors? 5) Are youth aware of different kinds of job satisfactions? Why are they choosing one particular occupation? Can the same satisfactions be derived from a more appropriate occupational choice?

#### CONCLUSIONS

It was observed that most authors covering the subject of vocational choices were fairly consistent in their findings as to the criteria youth use in making their choice. The majority felt that intelligence was the primary consideration to be dealt with when youth are making vocational plans. Each person is capable of finding some occupation due to the fact that different occupations require a multitude of different types of interest and personality traits. Youth are, however,

required to have tolerance enough to fit into a variety of occupations. Opportunities change along with the demand for certain skills.

It is not unusual for vocational preferences to change. Because of this, adjustment is a continuous process. The form of adjustment may be summed up as that of exploring the occupational field for a suitable vocation, finding one that suits the individuals interests, abilities and personality, and maintaining ones competency in his chosen field.

Youth are made aware of the wishes of their peer group, interested persons, family, and opportunities available in their community. These factors undoubtedly have an effect on their vocational choice. There is little relationship between the choice of a vocation and that of their parent's however. Because of the emphasis placed on the importance of the socio-economic aspect of the future, more youth are choosing occupations in the professional areas. In the study made of the senior class at Junction City the goals set by the majority of the students were quite realistic. More adequate counseling and a better understanding of their own limitations and abilities would have enabled a larger percentage to have made more realistic vocational choices.

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## APPENDIX

## Personal Data Sheet

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_ Fr. \_\_\_\_\_ So. \_\_\_\_\_ Jr. \_\_\_\_\_ Se. \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Fathers Name \_\_\_\_\_

Fathers Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Mothers Name \_\_\_\_\_

Mothers Occupation \_\_\_\_\_

Number of Years School

Father	0-8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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Mother	0-8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18
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Number of Brothers \_\_\_\_\_ and Sisters \_\_\_\_\_

Subjects Liked Most \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Subjects Liked Least \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What are your vocational plans? \_\_\_\_\_

Do your parents agree? \_\_\_\_\_

Do you plan to go to college? \_\_\_\_\_

Will you need financial assistance? \_\_\_\_\_

What college or school do you plan to attend? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

A SURVEY OF VALUES RELATED TO  
MAKING A VOCATIONAL CHOICE

by

HORACE STEPHEN PROUTY JR.

B. S., Kansas State University, 1957

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S REPORT

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Education

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
OF AGRICULTURE AND APPLIED SCIENCE

1960

It was the purpose of this report to survey and consolidate the criteria that educators, counselors, psychologists, and others considered to be most important in making vocational choices. An effort was also made to determine how much consistency there is in vocational choices of pupils in one high school. Factors related to choices and choice changes were considered.

When a youth makes a vocational choice he is making the choice as the result of his inherited abilities and his reaction to several cultural and personal forces including peers, parents, his socio-economic status, and his physical environment. Intelligence has been shown to have an effect on the type of vocational goals and the realism of vocational choice. In order to be attracted to something, one must have some sort of an understanding of it. Since mental ability increases throughout childhood and adolescence, things which were a challenge at one stage of development may not be a challenge at another.

Pupils of high mental ability sometime select vocations which offer limited opportunities, and pupils of low mental ability sometime select occupations for which they are not intellectually fitted. Vocational choices tend to fall in the upper and middle categories of the occupational scale. The lower occupational levels do not have any appeal for youth in a society such as ours with its traditions of self-advancement.

A big problem facing those people that work with students who are trying to find a vocation is not the person who has misjudged his relative strengths and weaknesses for various

kinds of vocational objectives, but rather the one who should not attempt any advanced educational or vocational activities.

Intelligence seems to influence the level of a student's realism of vocational preference. Realism appears to be a pure chance item which probably has its explanation in the student's developmental history and present personality functioning.

Youth are qualified, because of their differences in abilities, interests, and personalities for various occupations. Each occupation requires a certain pattern of abilities, personality traits, and interests with enough "give" to allow both a variety of occupations for each individual and some variety of individuals in each occupation. Vocational competencies and preferences which are the situations in which people live and work, change with time and experience, making choices and adjustment a continuous process. It is better to have a goal and change than to have no goal at all.

Of all the factors that enter into the situation of vocational choice, basic ability or intelligence appears to be the most important fact. But intelligence by itself is not enough. Personality factors, socio-economic status, environment and exposure to various fields of occupations are but a few of the necessary factors which must be taken into consideration.

Because of the variability of ability, personality traits, and socio-economic status of youth, there is an occupation that is suited for each person and a person suited for each occupation. Flexibility on the part of both the youth and the occupation is necessary for successful adjustment.