THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSED SERIES OF CARTOONS
AIMED AT CHANGING THE PERCEPTIONS HELD
TOWARD THE KANSAS COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of the study was to provide a possible means of influencing perceptions held toward the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service. The means proposed as a possible perception influence is a series of cartoon strips.

Cartoon strips were selected for study due to the wide readership they apparently have among the American public. Readership surveys conducted by newspapers, research organizations, and universities have indicated an almost universal audience for comic strips.¹

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. Due to the unique adult teaching system of the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service and the multiplicity of people served, some areas of misunderstanding are bound to occur. To be effective the function and capabilities of any institution must be known and understood. Since the teaching program of the Kansas Extension Service is shaped by the public, any means that increases public understanding of the program will be of benefit to teacher and pupils alike.

II. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Historical background. Cooperative Extension at K. S. U. is that portion of the university charged with the dissemination of educational

findings through a system of county agricultural, home economics, and county club agents.

The extension program at Kansas State University can be traced back to the Farmers' Institutes which were first held in 1868. In 1899 the state legislature appropriated $2,000 to support this program. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the Federal Government became a partner in the extension education program. County financial support was assured in 1915 with the passage of the "Farm Bureau Law" by the Kansas State Legislature. This law, as amended in 1919, required county commissioners to appropriate county funds in support of county agent work in counties in which a Farm Bureau was organized. This law was changed in 1951, at which time the Farm Bureau and the Extension Service were separated. County support of extension work was continued, but the local organization was through a framework of township representatives and a county-wide extension council. The council, being elected from the township representatives, serves as an executive body in selecting agents, setting salaries, and determining program content.

Related studies. Other states have gone through similar organizational growth. Since each state has slightly different enabling legislature and organizational structure, no two states are exactly alike. Gradual growth over a period of years, changes and amendments in legislation, and a highly mobile population have compounded the problem of having an informed electorate. This problem is not unique to Kansas, but applies to other states as well.

Differences of opinion as to what Extension is or should be doing can cause problems, whether the differences stem from a lack of understanding or

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from inadequate information. Most related studies deal with the perceptions held by various groups of Extension clientele or by members of state legislative bodies.

It would seem that extension workers and administrators have assumed that people know far more about the Extension Service than they actually do:

Studies of program planning committee members in Montana, formula feed operators in Kansas, selected agricultural business concerns in Wisconsin, and commercial fertilizer manufacturers and distributor representatives in Arizona, show great diversity and considerable misinformation among respondents concerning Extension's organizational affiliation. . . .

Kyd found the Missouri legislators had a rather poor understanding of the entire field of adult education. They tended to view it as night classes concerned primarily with hobbies.2

Among members of the public, having some knowledge of what the Extension Service is, there is a lack of agreement as to whom Extension is responsible:

Reaction to Extension's responsibility to urban groups has been extremely varied. On one hand, there is feeling that Extension discharges its responsibility to the general public through service to agriculture alone. Another group interprets the Smith-Lever Act to imply that we should serve all people regardless of their place of residence.3

Within the parent institution Extension's image leaves something to be desired. Knowledge of Extension organization and teaching methods are often misunderstood or disparaged as not being academic. That there is a need for Extension to identify more closely with the total University is emphasized


3Blalock, Greenwood, and Abraham, op. cit., p. 54.
by the lack of understanding of Extension functions by educators and the general public. This is especially necessary with the continued growth and complexity of all land-grant universities. This growth, together with our increasingly urban society, has resulted in less intimate contact with or knowledge of Extension.¹

The role of mass media. The process of adoption is described as having five stages: awareness, interest, evaluation, trial, and adoption.

The role played by information sources in adoption processes is described by rural sociologist, Herbert F. Lionberger, as:

Mass media inform people and create interest. Mass media (i.e., radio, newspapers, farm magazines, and television) taken collectively rank very high as a means of making people aware of new farm practices and in providing additional information at the interest stage. However, they do not rate high at the evaluation and trial states.²

This line of thought is furthered by Bond L. Bible, Extension Specialist in Rural Sociology, Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, who observes:

Research in the diffusion process has shown that mass media are most effective in the awareness and interest stage of the process. More people become aware of new ideas from mass communication media than from other sources.³

That people are made aware and informed through mass media is not a new concept to the advertising industry. The success of the campaigns and public relations work undertaken by these agencies is measured in dollars of income by the businessmen for whom they work.

The continued growth of advertising agencies and the continued success of their clients' business would seem to indicate confidence in

¹Ibid.


the use of mass media. Since businesses undergo changes, new products are introduced, new competitors appear, and markets for products change, businessmen are well aware that continued interest and awareness is necessary for their presence on the business scene.

An example of the approach used by an advertising agency in overcoming apathy and ignorance about a client's product is found in the words of Holton C. Rush, president of Greenshaw and Rush Incorporated:

Imagine a product you can't see, that no one really wants to buy, that offers no fun, no pride of ownership, that the public knows little about, (and most of what they 'know' isn't so.)¹

He was speaking of a commercial termite treatment product. Continued study of the problem revealed:

Termite and pest control had a bad image in the public mind. Most advertising in this field was viewed with distaste, for the simple reason that it was for the most part distasteful—devoted primarily to extreme examples of termite damage or stomach-churning pictures of insects and rodents. Readership was low; the public had, in self defense, built up an immunity.²

The solution of the problem by the agency is of particular interest to this study:

...light-touch cartoon approach, supported by calm, factual copy that would strike a delicate balance of tasteful dignity, good humor and intriguing readability. . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . . it fathered a popular series and broke new ground in the industry, but, more important, it helped produce sales increases.³

In this instance cartoons were used humorously to build acceptance of

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²Ibid.
³Ibid.
a product that had poor appeal at best, and which had not produced increased sales following conventional advertising methods.

Printers Ink, a weekly magazine, which is widely read by advertising agency personnel, advertisers, editors, and publishers, has a regular feature called "Which Ad Pulled Best?" In it, similar advertisements are compared by means of Starch ratings and response to offers for further informative literature. Several advertisements featuring cartoons have been compared in this feature. One ad, using photographs, was compared to a similar ad, using drawings, which were presented in cartoon format. Both ads ran as black and white, full page insertions in the same magazine, with eighteen months interval between insertions. The cartoon ad (ad B) followed the photographic ad (ad A). The cartoon ad was noted by fourteen more readers, seen and associated by twelve more readers, and read most by fifteen more readers than was the photographic ad. In the words of the advertising manager, "Believe-it-or-not type treatment [used in ad 'B'] did the best job of shaking the readers out of their 'ho-hum' attitude about nickel alloys."

The common elements of interest for this study of the two examples of cartoon uses were public apathy and lack of accurate information. In these two instances the cartoon was effective in surmounting these obstacles. The mass medium used in both instances was a national magazine. The audience, or reading public to which the termite treatment and nickel alloy advertisements were addressed were adults.

Advertisements directed to a youthful audience, which compared a fictional cartoon strip as opposed to a factual photographic sales message, (ads compared ran in Boy's Life) revealed that:

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ad A's copy might appeal to an expert but not to the ordinary boy reader. The comic strip approach [ad 'B'] gives the reader an exciting action adventure to follow and offers him an opportunity to identify with the hero.¹

The elements that bear on this study are that the probable readers must be considered, that the cartoon reader "identifies" in varying degrees with the characters, and that cartoons were a successful solution to this advertiser's problem.

Conceived originally as a "humor" feature designed to build newspaper circulation among the many immigrants to this country following the Civil War, comics have grown to have an impact on the language and some have outlived their creators.

The term "Gerrymander" was coined by cartoonist Elkanah Tisdale. He was referring to setting of district boundaries to the advantage of one political party by Governor Gerry. This cartoon was published in the Boston Weekly Messenger in 1812.² The term has survived to the present time and has been referred to frequently during present redistricting of state legislatures.

Readership of comic strips in the United States is best illustrated by the sales figures of comic strip paperback books. Mad magazine, described by its own editors as "a sickening collection of humor, satire, and garbage," reaches 1,700,000 copies per issue. Eight issues per year are published. "Peanuts," a daily strip featuring children with adult viewpoints and vocabularies, appears each morning in over 800 papers in forty countries and is published in nine languages—including Finnish and Afrikaans. Sales of paperback books featuring characters of this strip have exceeded 3,000,000 copies. When one stops to consider that these figures reflect only the

²White and Abel, op. cit., p. 89.
original purchaser's readership, and that most of the paperbacks are read and passed on to others, the true volume of readership can be appreciated.

Our penchant, as a nation, for reading comics has been noted and commented on by a British anthropologist, Geoffrey Gorer:

As one travels about the country one may be unable to learn what is happening in Congress or at the United Nation's meetings; but there is no excuse for ignorance of the latest adventures of Li'l Abner, Joe Palooka, Skeezix Wallet, and numerous other protagonists of these synthetic fantasies. . .

III. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

Production of the test vehicle (the series of proposed cartoons) which is to be published in a county newspaper was the major objective of this study. The material to be presented in cartoon form was developed in cooperation with the Programs and Training and County Operations sections of the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service.

Possible uses of cartoon strip technique, if the test vehicle proved successful, would be in working with low income groups and with youth programs.

In urban areas where a lack of understanding of what Extension is and how it works constitutes a real stumbling block; the use of cartoons developed for this study might prove to be a useful tool for gaining cooperation.

The use of comics as a teaching method. The comic strip format has been made use of by the armed forces for presentation of instructional material since 1940. Animated cartoons are used for teaching such diverse subjects as preventive medication and weapons' functioning. A digest-sized booklet called P.S., The Preventive Service Magazine is published and 110,000 copies are

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1White and Abel, op. cit., p. 2.
distributed monthly. Army Information Digest made this reference to the services of the little magazine:

The maintenance message is wrapped up in a colorful, compact package designed to attract and hold the attention of the soldier . . . What he sees is an attention-arousing combination of cartoons, color, and familiar contour, linked together by paragraphs of prose so informal in presentation as to appear almost an afterthought. But whether he is aware of it or not, what he is actually reading is a series of hard-core technical articles overlaid with a thin veneer of deliberate and studied spontaneity.1

IV. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

In order to clarify what is meant by certain terms used throughout this study a more exact meaning must be established. The following terms, when used in this study, will be used in the sense of the limitations herein set up.

Perception. The definition of perception expressed by Ernest R. Hilgard best meets the needs of this study:

Perception is the process of becoming aware of objects, qualities or relations by way of the sense organs. While sensory content is always present in perception, what is perceived is . . . , the result of complex patterns of stimulation plus past experience and present attitude.2

Perception, then, is a compound made up of the elements of sensory stimulation, past experiences and present attitude or set.

Extension. The definition of Extension referred to in this study is the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service as the institution is presently organized


at Kansas State University and throughout the counties in the state of Kansas.

**Cartoon strip.** The term cartoon strip, as used in this study, refers to a sequence of drawings arranged in strip form. Action and situations are suggested by the characters drawn within the individual panels and the dialogue lettered in the balloons. Humor may or may not be an element in the dialogue and situations. The terms funnies, comics, comic strips, and cartoon panel are understood to be synonymous with cartoon strip.

V. **SCOPE AND PROCEDURE**

The production of the artwork for the cartoon strips which describe the organization, function, and relationships of the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service is the objective of this study. The ultimate use to be made of the study is to attempt to test the impact of the cartoons upon a selected audience.

No attempt to utilize the proposed test vehicle is planned, since a project of this size is beyond the scope of this study from the viewpoint of time and financial considerations.

Even though actual use is not contemplated, certain assumptions must be made. To establish the size of the artwork and techniques to be employed, publication in an average size county newspaper must be assumed.

The assumption of a weekly newspaper establishes the number of complete sequences to be produced. Fifty-two sequences of from three to five individual panels represent a year's supply of artwork for a weekly newspaper. Selection of a weekly newspaper as mass-media means of presenting the cartoon test
vehicle was from the viewpoint of probable readership, ease of obtaining newspaper space, and engraving cost.

The outline of the proposed comic strip sequences was developed from a seminar. Dr. Wilbur E. Ringler, Assistant Director of Extension, Dr. Oscar W. Norby, State Leader, Field Operations, and Dr. Curtis Trent, Coordinator of Extension Personnel Training participated in the discussion. The desired perception or image of the Cooperative Extension was developed in this discussion. This outline of desired perceptions served as a guide for the author in designing the proposed cartoon series.

Problems peculiar to this type of study were discussed, and suggestions for the guidance of further investigation along this line of inquiry were set forth.

The findings of the proposed study will be valid only for these proposed cartoon strips in the selected county in which it is tested.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The broad purpose of this study is to determine if cartoons may be used effectively in changing or influencing attitudes held toward the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service. This study will attempt to set the stage for a later study of the possible attitude influence of a cartoon series. The development of this cartoon series is the principal objective of this study.

The subject matter of the cartoons is the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service. Some understanding of the organization and teaching philosophy of Extension as it presently exists was necessary to create the cartoon series. To that end the materials on Extension were assembled.

An examination of the anatomy of perception was needed to determine what perceptions are, how they are formed, and what effect they have on learning.

Cartoons have had a decided impact upon the spoken language in this country. The impact has not always been a desirable one from the viewpoint of a grammatician. If an instrument can produce this effect on our society accidentally, what might be the result if applied purposefully? To produce such a purposeful tool is the primary objective of this study.

I. EXTENSION

Development of Extension in the United States. Though many countries

have attempted to organize Extension Services using the American system as a model; these countries have been less successful. One reason may be that they lack the democratic climate that characterizes the United States. Certainly the freedoms of speech, assembly, and press contributed to the organization of the early agricultural societies which took the lead in extending information about farming.\(^1\)

**Early organization for adult education.** The Philadelphia Society organized in 1785 was one of the earliest efforts toward organization on a local level for adult educational work. This movement is considered to have led to the establishment of land-grant colleges, farmers' institutes, experiment stations and finally the Cooperative Extension Service.\(^2\)

**Land-grant colleges.** The concept of extending the opportunity of higher education to the great mass of the people rather than restricting it to the privileged few was considered quite radical. President Buchanan questioned the cost and constitutionality of the first land-grant college bill passed in 1859. His pocket veto of the bill delayed further action until President Lincoln's administration. On July 2, 1862 the second measure was signed into law by Lincoln. This law, known as the Morrill-Turner Act, provided that the educational institutions proposed for mass higher learning be financed by proceeds from the sale of public lands.\(^3\)

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\(^2\) Ibid.

\(^3\) U. S. Congress, Public Law No. 503, 37th Congress, 2nd Session, approved July 2, 1862.
Kansas' land-grant school. The first of the land-grant colleges to be established under the provisions of the Morrill Act was Kansas State University. Established at Manhattan, Kansas in 1863 by act of the Kansas Legislature the school was then known as Kansas State Agricultural College. In 1959 the institution was redesignated Kansas State University.

The Experiment Stations. The Agricultural Experiment Stations were established as a result of the Hatch Act passed by Congress in 1887. To better make use of the research conducted by Experiment Stations led to the establishment of the third branch of the land-grant college—the cooperative extension service.

The Cooperative Extension Service. The establishment of a cooperative extension service completed the educational spectrum offered by the land-grant college; resident instruction, research, and extension. Cooperative extension was authorized by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914. As stated in the language of the act Extension's purpose 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. 

Farmers' Institutes in Kansas. Actual extension work at Kansas State University can be traced back to the Farmers' Institutes. The first of these

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1 General Statutes of Kansas, No. 76-401, approved February 16, 1863.

2 U. S. Congress, Public Law No. 314, 49th Congress, 2nd Session, approved March 2, 1887.

3 Sub-committee on Scope and Responsibility, Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, American Association of Land Grant Colleges and State Universities, The Cooperative Extension Service Today—A Statement on Scope and Responsibility, 1958, p. 3.
institutes was held November 14, 1868.¹ These early institutes were volunteer efforts by faculty members to extend the university beyond the confines of the campus.

**Teaching by demonstration.** A pioneer extension worker, Dr. Seaman A. Knapp, developed teaching methods and organizational techniques basic to extension work and they are still used. With the success of his first demonstration at Terrell, Texas in 1903, Dr. Knapp worked to consolidate his educational gains.² At first men were assigned to establish demonstrations in districts numbering 10-20 counties and so were known as district agents. The first county agent, W. C. Stallings, was appointed in Smith County, Texas in 1906.³ Dr. Knapp had realized that a few widely scattered demonstrations would not have the effect necessary to overcome established practices. In 1908 he stated:

> There must be at least five or six demonstration farms and quite a number of cooperators in each township so that we reach every neighborhood, arouse interest and competition everywhere, and arouse the whole community. To do this requires at least one agent in each county.⁴

**First Kansas county agent.** Mr. P. H. Ross was employed as Leavenworth county agent August 1, 1912. The Progressive Agricultural Club of Leavenworth

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²Extension Service, Kansas State University, Miscellaneous Folder No. 68, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

³Ibid.

⁴Ibid.
was his employer. His employment was financed in part by funds subscribed from local farmers and business men.\(^1\)

**Organization of youth.** Though the Farmers' Institute idea spread to forty states the interest they first aroused gradually lagged. To renew interest, Mr. Will B. Otwell of Macoupin County, Illinois, organized a corn growing contest for boys.\(^2\) This organization not only aroused the interest of the farmers but also motivated the youth, the businessmen and caught the attention of the press. This corn club movement spread to other states and was the forerunner of the 4-H club.

**Home Economics Extension.** The impetus for home economics work appears to have come from the demands from the southern states for girls clubs similar to the boys corn clubs. This work gradually expanded from the first girls' tomato clubs until it covered many phases of home life. The term "home demonstration work" was suggested by Miss Mary E. Cresswell, the first woman to serve on the U. S. D. A. staff in Washington.\(^3\)

**The Kansas Farm Bureau Law.** The Smith-Lever Law provided that its funds should be distributed to "each state which shall, by action of its legislature assent to the provisions of this act." Accordingly the Kansas Legislature passed the Kansas Farm Bureau Law in 1915.\(^4\) The Kansas Law stated

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\(^1\)Ibid.
\(^2\)Ibid.
\(^3\)Ibid.

that federal and state funds would be provided toward the salary of a county agricultural agent when there was organized in the county a Farm Bureau having a membership of twenty-five per cent of the bonafide farms of the county or as many as 250 farmers.

**County Agricultural Extension Council Law.** County extension programs became the cooperative responsibility of a county extension council and Kansas State University with the adoption of the County Agricultural Extension Council Law. This law, passed by the Kansas Legislature in 1951, replaced the Farm Bureau Law of 1915. The sole purpose of the county agricultural extension council is:

The giving of instruction and practical demonstrations in agriculture, home economics and 4-H club work to all persons in the county and imparting to such persons of information on said subjects through field demonstrations, publications, or otherwise and to plan the extension-educational programs of the county.\(^1\)

By eliminating the requirement for membership in the Farm Bureau the 1951 law officially separated the Extension Service from the Farm Bureau. The participation by the Farm Bureau in the insurance business was continued and expanded. Both institutions continue to exist and cooperate but the relationship is not as direct as it was formerly.

**Organization of the County Agricultural Extension Council.** The County Agricultural Extension Council is composed of three members from each township and each city not part of a township (first and second class cities). Of the three elected members from each township or city, one represents agriculture, one home economics, and one 4-H Club work. At the annual meeting

of the council these representatives elect from their members an executive board. The executive board consists of a chairman, a secretary, a treasurer, and six other members. Not more than one member of the executive board shall be elected from any one township or city unless the county has less than nine townships or cities not part of a township. The township representatives are members of the advisory committees provided in the law. All elected agricultural representatives make up the agricultural advisory committee, the home economics representatives and 4-H club representatives form their respective advisory committees. Each advisory committee meets annually or at such other times as the executive board may designate. The purpose of these meetings is to elect a chairman and develop the educational program for their respective area.¹

II. PERCEPTION

Perceptual definitions. As stated in the definition of terms the definition of perception used in this study is:

...the process of becoming aware of objects, qualities or relations by way of the sense organs. While sensory content is always present in perception, what is perceived is... , the result of complex patterns of stimulation plus past experience and present attitude.²

By definition perception is the result of complex patterns of stimulation. Because of this complexity the views of various investigators were included in this study.

¹Extension Service, Kansas State University, Handbook for County Agricultural Extension Councils, op. cit., p. 6.
²Hilgard, loc. cit.
Definitions of the phenomena of perception while containing common elements vary in exactness and viewpoint. The definition given in Webster's New International Dictionary illustrates this point:

Perception is an immediate or intuitive cognition or judgment; an insight analogous to sense perception in respect to immediacy and the feeling of certainty accompanying it, and often implying nice observation or subtle discrimination.¹

This definition does little more than define perception as an immediate process while implying that visual senses are involved with judgment and insight. Lawrence Schlesinger's definition, "Learned dispositions to think, feel, and act in certain ways toward things and people we encounter,"² adds the elements of learning and acting to the process of perception. This simple definition does not specifically mention visual stimuli but it does suggest that perception is a learned process.

Psychologists perceptual definitions. Psychologists have developed many of the theories and definitions about perception. Lawrence E. Cole points out that perception is not a static process since the perception of the same stimulus at two different intervals of time may be quite different to an individual. He accounts for this by changes in attitude that occur as a result of continued accumulation of experiences.³

Another psychologist, Gardner Murphy hypothesizes that:

1. Perceptual structure changes in such fashion as to give emphasis to that which is pleasant, in contrast to that which is unpleasant or affectively neutral.


²Lawrence Schlesinger, "Why Do We Feel As We Do", Adult Leadership, 5:242, February, 1957.

2. Many changes are cumulative. . . that which is most frustrating is most likely to be observed. . . The perceptual field comes to take on a structure.¹

Both Murphy and Cole have noted that perceptions are not static but continually changing as experiences are accumulated.

J. W. Getzels feels that the real significance of an attitude is that, "it predisposes us to react to the present event in terms of past experiences and beliefs."² Getzels goes on to point out that:

By the time we are ready to react to an object we are ready to react in a particular way. We have an "attitude" or "set" toward the object. These attitudes or sets determine:

- What we will see,
- What we will hear,
- What we will remember or forget,
- What we will think and say, and
- What we will do.³

Getzels adds the terms "attitude" or "set" to the elements of seeing, hearing, remembering, forgetting, thinking, saying and doing. He implies that attitude may be a learned reaction but he does not include learning in his definition.

Jerome S. Bruner feels that sequences enter into the process of perception. Because the organism has come to associate certain patterns of stimuli as occurring in sequences Bruner says, "We hear the approaching whistle of a train and are readied to see the train."⁴ Perception may then involve a sequential expectation.

³Ibid.
Thomas C. Blalock in writing of perception has summarized:

1. Perception is an individual matter, thus there are as many perceptions as there are individuals.
2. Perception must be considered and dealt with in terms of what the organism actually experiences and not necessarily what the physical world contains or is made up of.
3. Perception involves not only receiving stimuli but interpreting and describing those stimuli in terms that are meaningful to the individual.
4. Various internal and external factors may profoundly influence both the interpretation of the stimulus and the response it is likely to provoke.
5. Perception is a dynamic, cumulative phenomenon that may be continually changing within the organism.¹

Perception, then involves awareness of objects, qualities, or relationships by means of the sensory organs. This awareness may be influenced by attitudes, sets, experiences, beliefs, and by external factors. Perception is not static but changes with learning experiences. Through our perceptions we are predisposed to see, hear, remember, forget, think, say or perform an act in light of current interpretation of these perceptions. Perceptions are not necessarily standardized but are very individual matters in terms of the response to a given stimulus. The perceptions an individual has may not necessarily correspond to what the physical world contains. What he thinks or expects the world to contain may be his perception.

The terms image, attitude, and perception have much in common and have been used almost interchangeably by the researchers in the field of social psychology.

III. PERCEPTION AND EXTENSION

Perception and value judgments. The significance of the image or perception of an institution is apparent when a value decision must be made of the institution. Wilmer V. Bell points out that in regard to legislation and financing adult education:

Tax supported institutions are constantly involved in competition for the tax dollar. Success in this competition depends upon the public image of the institution and its program as well as the image held by members of the legislative bodies.\(^1\)

This institutional image can be significant at the direct participation level as well. Many persons will vote for a bond issue or support a fund drive who will not take sufficient interest to involve themselves personally in discussion of the issues or in offering their services. Many more parents are members of the Parent Teachers Association than ever are present at meetings or serve on committees. This same observation can be made of other organizations as well.

The Michigan Township Extension Experiment. Since perception is a learned process it presumably may be changed by additional learning experiences. This observation has been borne out by an experiment involving the Cooperative Extension Service in Michigan. The Michigan Township Extension Experiment was conducted by James Neilson and William Crosswhite who found:

Analysis of the relationship between knowledge of the program and participation in it indicated that farmers who were best informed about the program activities participated the most. The relationship between the knowledge of the program organization and participation was even stronger (with those best informed participating most) . . . Apparently when farmers understand how the program is

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organized and feel that they have a voice in how it is run, they participate more enthusiastically.\footnote{James Neilson and William Crosswhite, The Michigan Township Extension Experiment, Tech. Bulletin No. 266 (East Lansing, Michigan: Agricultural Experiment Station, Michigan State University, February, 1958), p. 24.}

Extension workers and administrators have tended to assume that people know far more about Extension organization and programs than is the case.\footnote{Blalock, Greenwood, and Abraham, loc. cit.} Even among extension workers and members of county extension councils there is not complete agreement as to the rank order of functions as they should be performed by county agents. Specialists, District Agricultural Agents, and Club Agents ranked "Planning annual and long-time programs" considerably lower than did other groups. District Agents ranked this function thirteenth, as compared with fifth by County Agricultural Agents, and fourth by extension council members.\footnote{Gene C. Whaples, "Major Duties and Responsibilities of County Agricultural Agents in Kansas, (Extension Education Graduate Student Report, Kansas State University, Manhattan, April 14, 1965), pp. 6-7. (multigraphed)}

If there is difference of perception among persons associated this closely with the extension program possibly there is even greater difference in the perception held by persons having less contact with the institution.

IV. CARTOONS

Characteristics of early cartoon strips. The earliest comic strips were notable only for their intention to be comic. They were conceived as circulation builders and were limited to the Sunday editions. These "funny sheet" sections were replete with slapstick and sadism. It was this element that caused the first wave of concern on the part of upper-class gentility toward
this boisterous vulgar reading matter. These early comic strips gradually responded to the changes in an expanding, urban, industrial America. The development of Bud Fisher's Mutt, of the strip *Mutt and Jeff*, into a harassed suburban husband—after his origin as a sportsman-hustler—is a classic example of this evolutionary process.¹

**Swanson readership study.** A study of newspaper readership was conducted by Dr. Charles Swanson over a twelve year period (1939 to 1950). During this period 50,000 adults were interviewed regarding what they read in their respective newspapers. The category that ranked the highest was "the comics." The average male readership of this feature was 58.3 per cent and the average female readership was 56.6 per cent.² The next highest category was "war" with an average readership of 34.6 per cent. Since this study was conducted during World War II it is significant to note that the readership of war news was about one half the readership of the comics.

**The Robinson–White survey.** In a 1962 survey conducted by Edward J. Robinson and David Manning White an attempt was made to answer the questions:

How many people in the United States read the funnies? How does this readership break down as to age, education, occupation, and sex differences? What do Americans think of this activity called comic strip reading? How they would feel if they could not read them? What occupational groups read comics the most?³

**Number of comic readers.** Assuming that Robinson and White's data are representative, more than 100 million Americans, from very young to very old,

¹White and Abel, op. cit., pp. 8-9.
³White and Abel, op. cit., p. 183.
read one or more comic strips in their Sunday newspapers. The daily readership is assumed to be only slightly smaller.

For regular Sunday comic readers Robinson and White found the peak reading years to be between the ages of thirty and thirty-nine, followed by a slow decline thereafter. Lowest readership was in the "over seventy" category.

**Educational level of readers.** The survey brought out that as it progressed from grade school students to those attending college, the percentage of regular readers increased by a factor of almost two.\(^1\) College graduates and persons having completed some graduate work apparently read comics more than those with eighth-grade education or less. More than fifty per cent of the respondents regarded comic strip reading in positive pleasure terms, e.g., "enjoyable," "fun," "relaxing." In free association responses only one in twenty respondents voiced any negative association.

**Perception of comics readers.** In Robinson and White's sample universe the negative responses varied from four to ten per cent. This proportion was found to parallel the number of nonreaders in the sampling. The adult response to a question, "How would you feel if you could not read the comics?" seemed to be: they could get along without them and switch to some other activity until comics were again available. Approximately one out of five responded in terms of disappointment. Seemingly people enjoy comics, seek them out but are willing to postpone the pleasure of reading them if necessary. The individual reader perceived his own reading of comics in positive pleasure terms.

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\(^1\)White and Abels, *op. cit.*, p. 184
Though the readers viewed the activity as pleasurable, seventy-five per cent of the adult respondents expressed feelings of shame, guilt, or fear that their intellectual and/or social status would be lowered if they openly admitted readership of comics. This feeling of ambivalence toward comics reading may be partially explained by the responses to a question: "What occupational group reads comics the most?" Fifty-four per cent of the occupational categories cited were from the lowest end of the occupational continuum. Robinson and White felt that the reader who was not of these occupational categories was reluctant to identify with his perception of the readership group and tended to rationalize his readership as exceptional.

Among the 1,100 Massachusetts school children interviewed by Robinson and White comics reading was a popular activity. They found that ninety-nine per cent of the boys and ninety-seven per cent of the girls regularly read one or more strips daily and Sunday. Their favorites were non-narrative and humorous consistently. These data would seem at variance with the theory of critics of the medium who posit that children seek violence and sensationalism from the comics. The children felt no social stigma was attached to reading comics. They used the comics extensively as a form of socializing. The survey also pointed out that the main ingredients savored by 100,000,000 Americans of all ages, occupations and educational levels was humor, adventure, and domestic situation drama.¹

The Bogart survey. In a study conducted of Leo Bogart of 121 male workers of low social status from the Lennox Hill slum area the following conclusions were reached:

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¹White and Abel, op. cit., p. 189.
people who show the greatest interest in comics are those who in general are most responsive to mass media. ... Foreign-born persons show the least interest in the comics. ... comics belong to their American-born children, and are often identified as "childish" things. ... Persons with the least education show the least interest in comics. ... comic strip readers take roles as they read.¹

Bogart also concluded from other surveys that comics readership declines with age and that readership is highest in the lower-middle educational and socio-economic range. This view is in disagreement with Robinson and White as to the educational level of the readers. Bogart's sample universe was considerably smaller than was Robinson and White's sampling. The geographical area sampled by Bogart was also narrower. These variations may account in part for the disagreement between the two studies.

The Arnold M. Rose research. A questionnaire study using the entire sophomore classes of three Minneapolis, Minnesota high schools had some implication on changing perceptions through the use of comic strips.² Rose felt that with the wide range of comics readership this medium might be especially advantageous for "getting messages across." He also raised the question of resistance or resentment on the part of the readers to propaganda in their entertainment medium.

The strip chosen for the test vehicle was Rex Morgan, M. D., written by Dr. N. P. Dallis a psychiatrist, which highlights the daily experiences of a general physician. The situation chosen for the study dealt with the onset and cure of a mild case of paranoid psychosis. The episode provided an opportunity to study the attitudes of the youngsters toward mental health

¹Ibid., pp. 238-245.

and mental disease and ascertain the effect on them of a piece of popular literature, written for youngsters and offered to them for voluntary reading in a medium they tend to select themselves. Rose reached the following conclusions:

1. Mental health material did not so provoke anxieties as to reduce readership of that material.
2. Recognition of the educational nature of the strip did not reduce readership.
3. It [the strip] seems to have influenced a small but significant number of readers to have more "favorable" attitudes toward mental health problems. It had this effect only on the attitudes directly associated with the strip, there was no carry-over to encourage other "good" attitudes.
4. There is some evidence that the comic strip episode helped sharpen and clarify perceptions and definitions of mental problems.
5. Factual information is learned from a comic strip by a small proportion of the readers.¹

If the emotionally charged subject of mental illness can be thus dealt with some apparent success, possibly the same technique may be of use for extension purposes.

Use of cartoons in classroom teaching. In an opinion poll conducted by the Textbook Clinic of the American Institute of Graphic Arts 299 teachers expressed their views on cartoons as teaching aids.² More than sixty-five per cent of the teachers were favorable though some felt that the art was crude. Replies from teachers in urban areas indicated that eighty-five per cent of those teachers favored the use of cartoons. More than a third of the teachers pointed out that cartoons date rapidly. Students must learn to "read" the stereotypes used in cartoons and that young students often miss the point.

¹Rose, op. cit., pp. 41-42.
because of this. In Los Angeles and New York City, cartoons were regarded as particularly effective teaching tools for slow learners.

Comics may be useful "toys". Heinz Politzer, Professor of German at the University of California, states:

For a century we have looked to the schools to develop a national unity in our heterogeneous population by inculcating children, as they grow up, with common concepts, doctrines, attitudes, sentiments. But the comics, claiming to be no more than toys, have been doing just that, reaching continuously more than the schools, more than the newspapers.¹

The preceding observations and examples would seem to lend credence to the thought that through the use of cartoons and mass media awareness might be created, interest aroused, information imparted, and possibly attitudes could be modified.

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White and Abel, op. cit., p. 8.
CHAPTER III

THE PROPOSED CARTOON SERIES

The main objective of this study was the production of proposed art work to be used in a future study. The determination of the attitude influence of a cartoon series depicting daily events in a county agricultural agent's life will be the objective of a future study.

The presentation method. The presentation method used in the development of the cartoon series was the domestic situation-adventure type. According to previous studies of audience preference and as indicated by the fifteen most popular comic strips this type of presentation would seem to interest most readers.  

The seminar on the desired perception of Cooperative Extension in which Dr. Ringler, Dr. Norby and Dr. Trent participated determined that the proposed cartoon series should:

1. Be told from the viewpoint of a county resident.
2. Briefly outline the present organizational structure.
3. Describe the agents as educators, organizers, and coordinators.
4. Illustrate the major educational programs in which Extension is presently engaged.
5. Picture the Extension teaching methods.
6. Mention Extension's contributions to our present society.
7. Present the multiple relationships of Extension on a national, state, and county level.
8. Project the flexible nature of the Extension Service's educational program.
9. Identify the agents as instructors of Kansas State University.
10. Delineate the clients of Extension as any individual or group residing in the state of Kansas who expresses a desire for educational help.

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1White and Abel, op. cit., p. 189.
The sequence of presentation was based on the present yearly schedule of all county offices. District Agents, County Agents, Home Economics Agents, Club Agents, Administrators, and Extension Council members were consulted to verify the situations illustrated.

Some literary license was exercised in naming the county and the characters in the strip. Other material presented was factual or based on factual events.

The artwork was drawn larger than actual size and reduced photographically. In Figures 1 - 52 on pages 32 - 83 are reproductions of the proposed cartoon series. The series should start with the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of October. The series would conclude with the last weekly edition in the following September.
Figure 1. The introductory cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of October.
Figure 2. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of October.
Figure 3. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of October.
Figure 4. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of October.
Figure 5. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of November.
Figure 6. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of November.
Figure 7. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of November.
Figure 8. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of November.
Figure 9. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of December.
Figure 10. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of December.
**Figure 11.** The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of December.
Figure 12. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of December.
A day with your County Agent

Figure 13. The cartoon strip to be published in the fifth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of December.
COUNTY AGENT JIM FISCH HAS STopped AT BILL SCHUMANN'S TO IDENTIFY A FEED PROBLEM AND MAKE RECOMMENDATIONS AS HE PLANS A FEED HANDLING TOUR...

I THINK IT'S JUST AN EXCUSE FOR YOU TO SCARE ME TO DEATH WITH YOUR JEEP, BILL, BUT LET'S GO!

THOSE DARN WEEDS ARE MESSING THE LIGHTELAY OVER THE ROAD BY THE TIME I NOTICE THEM THEY'VE SPREAD OUT ALL OVER. WE CAN TAKE THE JEEP AND CUT OVER THE HILLS TO THE BOOSE PATCH.

THE NEW HIGHWAY WILL MAKE IT A LOT EASIER TO GET UP HERE, JIM.

THAT ROAD SHOULD RUN PRETTY CLOSE TO YOUR WATER WAY, ISN'T THAT RIGHT BILL?

Figure 14. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of January.
Figure 15. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of January.
Figure 16. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of January.
Figure 17. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of January.
Figure 18. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of February.
A day with your
COUNTY
AGENT
by
ECK

Jim completes the arrangements for
the feed handling tour at
Herb Umschelos Farm....

I called Herb Foster
and he explained some
of the details of the
six-mile-a-hour safety
project. Since the kids
have grown up and
moved away, I’d
forgotten how much
up kids can get!

They’re a bunch of kids. It’s
all their own idea!

There’s been some bad accidents
and a lot of near accidents on
that corner. The brush grows so fast
I’ve let it get ahead of me.

Figure 19. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly
edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of February.
Figure 20. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of February.
Figure 21. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of February.
Figure 22. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of March.
Figure 23. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of March.
Figure 24. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of March.
Figure 25. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of March.
Figure 26. The cartoon strip to be published in the fifth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of March.
COUNTY AGENT JIM FICHER CONTINUES HIS ILLUSTRATION OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION WORK TO MARY JENSEN AND HER MOTHER AS HE VISITS WITH THEM AT THE HOME.

COUNTY AGENT: It's very interesting, Jim. I wish there was a similar program for city people.

JIM FICHER: I've noticed long enough. I don't often have an audience that can't excuse if their ears get tired.

JIM: I certainly didn't realize that, Jim. You mean my husband could get agricultural information from your office or the girls could join a 4-H club?

COUNTY AGENT: Yes, many urban people rely on extension agents and unbiased consumer information, yard or garden tips, and bulletins on many phases of modern homemaking to mention only a few of the areas that we offer educational services.

COUNTY AGENT: It's called "cooperative" because it is a joint federal-state and county organization grounded locally. Yes, you could join a 4-H or the girls a 4-H club.

COUNTY AGENT: I'd still like to see you in the morning, but for a different reason now that I've thanked you for helping me.

MRS. JENSEN: Fine, Mrs. Jensen. I'll see you at the office.

TO BE CONTINUED

Figure 27. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of April.
Figure 28. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of April.
Figure 29. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of April.
Figure 30. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of April.
A day with your County Agent

Figure 31. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of May.
Figure 32. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of May.
Figure 33. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of May.
Figure 34. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of May.
Figure 35. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of June.
Figure 36. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of June.
AT THE ANNUAL MEETING IN NOVEMBER, NORMAN STETTINH Reports on the past year's 4-H club activities and indicates trends....

JIM FYSCH ILLUSTRATES THE AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS AND THE INCREASED VALUES AS A RESULT OF EXTENSION'S EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

BETTY HOLE EXPLAINS THE HOME ECONOMICS EDUCATIONAL PROGRAM AND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

Figure 37. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of June.
Figure 38. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of June.
Figure 39. The cartoon strip to be published in the fifth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of June.
Figure 40. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of July.
THE DELEGATES TO THE ANNUAL 4-H ROUND-UP ARE SELECTED BY THE TRIPS AND AWARDS COMMITTEE DURING APRIL. ABOUT THE FIRST OF JUNE THEY MEET AT THE COURTHOUSE TO BEGIN....

THE CAR TRIP TO THE KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY CAMPUS IN MANHATTAN...

THERE THEY REGISTER IN AT K-STATE'S STUDENT UNION, ARE ASSIGNED TO DORMS AND SHOWN WHERE MEALS WILL BE SERVED.

TO BE CONTINUED

Figure 41. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of July.
Figure 42. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of July.
Figure 43. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of July.
Figure 44. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of August.
Figure 45. The cartoon strip to be published in the second weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of August.
Figure 46. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of August.
Scott Woodson, editor, has just noticed that his wife's cake has won a prize...

So—why couldn't I judge the cakes?

That's for folks with under a 38 inch waist—AND NEITHER OF US QUALIFY.

What's going on here, Jim? I didn't know we had any races scheduled.

We don't have this is the teen age road-ec and braking demonstration sponsored by the Farm Bureau Safety Department.

Is it true that you must be a Farm Bureau member to get extension benefits?

No, Woody, the Farm Bureau no longer has any direct connection with extension and hasn't had since the 1951 Extension Council law was passed.

Figure 47. The cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of August.
Figure 48. The cartoon strip to be published in the fifth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of August.
Figure 49. The cartoon strip to be published in the first weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of September.
Davis County Agent, Jim Fysch, and editor Scott Woodson have taken the County Entries to the State Fair at Hutchinson...
Figure 51. The cartoon strip to be published in the third weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of September.
Mrs. Jensen has just told Jim Fysch that Mary, her daughter, is enrolling at Kansas State University. She learns that Jim is planning to work on a Master's degree...

In this case, Norm Stethen will fill in for me— and try to keep both 4-H Club work caught up. I'll be working so some days.

I'll run along, Jim. Here I am wondering about losing our Agent— only a year ago I knew almost nothing of Extension until that horrible accident.

Full Circle, Woodie. Here's the Township Election Notice!

Notice of Township Election for ... On October ... !

I think I know more about it this year, Jim. I won't have to ask so many questions.

Figure 52. The final cartoon strip to be published in the fourth weekly edition of the cooperating newspaper during the month of September.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

In Chapter I of this study the evolution of cooperative extension work was outlined. The various phases which the institution passed through and the problems created by virtue of this passage were cited. The changing character of the audience served was discussed. Terms essential to the study were defined.

The second chapter reviewed in more detail some of the existing literature on Extension, perception, and comics. The various phases through which the institution of cooperative extension passed, were traced. Through this evolutionary process the author hoped to demonstrate how confusion and misinformation could occur through a lack of information on any one phase in the developmental process. An attempt was made to describe the effect of perception on an institution. The use of comics as a perceptual influence was described.

The proposed cartoon series made up the majority of the third chapter. Through the series the organization's function, and relationships of the institution of cooperative extension were visually presented.

II. RECOMMENDATIONS

To produce a means for effecting a change in attitude has been stated as the purpose of this study. To this end the proposed cartoon strips in Chapter III were created. These cartoons are but half a tool alone. To become a whole, meaningful tool they must be combined with a method of determining
the audience attitude. To determine if a change in attitude has occurred
the audience's present attitude must be ascertained. A means of obtaining an
indication of audience attitude must be devised. This same means could serve
as both a pretest and post-test instrument. This instrument might be a
questionnaire, an interview schedule, or a combination of the two methods.

Construction of questionnaire or interview schedule. The construction
and administration of any test involving groups of people will determine to
some extent how representative the test results are. If the wording of the
question is ambiguous, vague, or involved the results of the test will be
affected. If the interview method is used the emphasis given certain words
by the interviewer can damage the meaning of the question. The pitfalls of
constructing questions are outlined in Stanley L. Payne's The Art of Asking
Questions. The problem of words with more than one meaning or pronunciation;
assuming knowledge on the part of the audience; use of technical jargon;
loaded questions; pretesting and brevity are all discussed. A list of 1000
words with problem words indicated is included. This check list of question
criteria could be useful in determining how a proposed questionnaire measures
up in terms of readability and clarity. To illustrate the danger of taking
information for granted Payne suggests that persons constructing questionnaires
attempt to answer all of these questions:

What color is the complement of blue?
How do you spell Mabel?
What is the cube of 2?
Name the capital of Missouri.
Name our five largest cities.
Name a defeated vice-presidential candidate in the most
recent national election.
Who are the U. S. senators from this state?
What date is Columbus Day?
Without counting them, how many keys are on your key ring?
Again without counting, how many teeth do you have?¹

Though this is simple information that everyone "knows" few people can answer all these questions correctly. Payne suggests that questionnaires and questions be as brief as is consistent with the purpose. He feels that no one type of question is a cure-all and that there is a place for true-false, completion, and free association questions in almost any area of research. Robinson and White concurred with Payne on questionnaire brevity:

... we ascertained that the shorter, indirect projective techniques provided us with stable, consistent data. ... When compared with the findings of the more conventional open-end interview, the data were remarkably similar.²

Payne pointed out that errors in sampling could occur by mentioning the 1936 Literary Digest poll and the Gallup Poll on the 1948 presidential election.³ Though he doesn't mention the intended audience specifically, Payne implies that they should be considered when the questionnaire is being constructed.

In addition to the problems suggested by Payne the researcher should also recall the findings of Robinson and White concerning guilt feelings among adult comic strip readers. Their research would seem to indicate that respondents would prefer to be anonymous if the response is to be representative.⁴


²White and Abel, op. cit., p. 181.

³Payne, op. cit., p. 4.

⁴White and Abel, op. cit., p. 186.
Methods employed in similar studies. Robinson and White found that in a test of eleven hundred school children in two Massachusetts communities, from third through ninth grades, the sentence completion technique gave as much information about attitudes as all other projective measures combined.¹

Bogart found that because of the mobile nature of his respondents, the open-end field interview best suited his study of adult comic readers from the Lennox Hill slum area.²

Rose used a field experiment using a "panel" of subjects. His questionnaire was administered to the entire sophomore classes during their regular study hall periods. Two graduate students assisted in keeping order and answering questions. The respondents were given verbal instructions and all filled out the questionnaire at the same time. The questions were taken in part from a 1950 mental health study by the National Opinion Research Center. The questions about comics were formulated especially for the comic readership study.³

Suggestions for the proposed study. Seemingly the method used must be the most workable plan available for the group being surveyed, and within the resources of the researcher. The projective questionnaire or interview schedule would seem to hold the most promise for this proposed study. The universe to be studied will undoubtedly be drawn from the mailing list of the cooperating weekly newspaper. As the persons on this list will not normally be assembled in one place the questions will have to be taken to the audience.

¹Ibid, p. 181.
³Rose, op. cit., p. 335.
Individual interviews, though informative, would be quite time consuming for an audience scattered throughout a county area. Many weekly papers include mailings to persons outside the county area and outside the state. The elimination of these persons as respondents could constitute a selective bias. A mailed questionnaire would reach these persons. Questionnaires have the disadvantage of not commanding the attention of a personal interview nor can they clarify a question or expand a response. They are, however, less expensive per contact and do not require interviewer training.

**Possible uses for the proposed study.** The review of literature has suggested that young people read comic strips extensively. Certainly this group would represent a potential audience for teaching material in comic strip form. The data on adult readers from low income areas would seem to indicate that the comic strip approach might not reach this group. The conclusions reached on the study of adults in the low income grouping were based on a small sampling from a single area. Perhaps further study of this aspect of the problem is indicated. Though they hesitate to admit readership, persons with education beyond high school do read comics. A direct approach using comic strip format in teaching material would probably alienate this group. This type of direct approach would seem to many of this group to be a form of "talking down". This same group would probably read general information or safety materials presented by comic strip technique through mass media.

With expanding international exchanges of students and faculty, the possibility of achieving understanding through drawings and schematic diagrams, should not be overlooked. Through proper interpretation and translation many types of instruction could be achieved utilizing comic strip format. This is
not to suggest that comic strips would eliminate classroom instruction. They could supplement and reinforce the conventional teaching methods.

Should the materials developed for this proposed study prove to be effective as a means of imparting information about cooperative extension, with slight modification they could be assembled in booklet format for further distribution.
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THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSED SERIES OF CARTOONS
AIMED AT CHANGING THE PERCEPTIONS HELD
TOWARD THE KANSAS COOPERATIVE
EXTENSION SERVICE

by

ERNEST GEORGE PECK
B.S., Kansas State College, 1958

AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

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requirements for the degree

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PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

The broad purpose of this study is to determine if cartoons may be used effectively in influencing the perceptions held toward the Kansas Cooperative Extension Service. This study is an attempt to set the stage for a future study of the possible attitude influence of a cartoon series. The development of the cartoon series was the principal objective of this study.

PROCEDURE

To establish that there were opportunities for misunderstandings about the function of the Cooperative Extension Service its historical and legal origin was traced. The terms perception, cartoon, and Extension were defined, as they were construed for the purposes of this study. Related studies pertaining to perceptions of Extension, to cartoon readership, and the composition of the cartoon reading audience were reviewed. Administrators, District Agents, Specialists, County Agricultural Agents, Home Economics Agents, County Club Agents, and Extension Council members were consulted to obtain background material for the situations depicted in the comic strips developed for this study. Numerous photographic notes were taken and several meetings held with committee members in developing the continuity of the strip. To establish a size and number of cartoons, publication in a weekly paper having a county wide circulation was assumed. Previous studies of audience preference indicate that the most popular comic strips are of the domestic situation-adventure type. These data are illustrated by the fifteen most popular strips in the United States which are: Blondie, Dick Tracy, Little Orphan Annie, Peanuts, Rex Morgan, M. D., Dennis the Menace, Li’l Abner, Mary Worth, Nancy, Snuffy Smith, Beetle Bailey, Brenda Starr, Bringing Up Father, Steve Canyon.
Prince Valiant. On the basis of these data the presentation of the strip produced by this study was of the domestic situation-adventure type.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Although the actual use of the instrument produced in this study is beyond the scope of the study the author felt that the following recommendations should be made:

1. A suitable pretest and post-test instrument for determining present attitude and attitude following exposure to the comic strip should be constructed.

2. The same instrument would probably be suitable for both uses.

3. Based on observations of similar studies the most practicable technique for this study would be a questionnaire or a combination of questionnaire and interview schedule.

4. Assuming the composition of the Kansas audience to be similar to audiences in previous studies this type of instructional vehicle would be most useful with youthful audiences (age 8 to 14 years) and with audiences with an educational level beyond high school.

5. Since the construction and administration of the test vehicle will to a large extent determine the success or failure of this study sufficient pretesting of the questionnaire or interview schedule should be accomplished to insure their clarity and reliability.

6. Selection of a suitable county and newspaper should be carefully considered. A county with a highly urban population or conversely a county with a low population density could constitute a selective bias. The newspaper chosen to publish the cartoon series should have a circulation large enough to insure that the test universe be of significant size.