

A SURVEY OF THE OCCUPATIONAL STATUS OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION  
GRADUATES OF KANSAS STATE COLLEGE

by

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## INTRODUCTION

### Purpose

The purpose of this study was to provide some concrete data concerning physical education as a vocation and to determine whether or not physical education training is applicable to success in other vocations.

It is hoped that this information can be used as material for vocational guidance to those students interested in majoring in physical education at Kansas State College.

### Review of Literature

No previous literature has been written concerning this particular subject because of it being limited to graduates of Kansas State College. A thorough review of all available indexes and references failed to disclose any subject matter closely enough related to this study to be worthy of mention.

### MATERIALS AND METHODS

Data was obtained on 175 physical education graduates of Kansas State College. The first students to obtain a degree with a major in physical education from the above-named college graduated in 1929. During the past 20 years, 183 have graduated and of these, 175 are still living. Documentary data and information on these subjects was extracted from the files of the Kansas State Alumni Office, the Registrar's Office, the Office of the

Dean of Arts & Sciences, and from the files of the Department of Physical Education.

The survey method in questionnaire form was used to gather additional information, Appendix. Over 90 percent of the questionnaires were sent to graduates who have been graduated at least five years or more. The results of the questionnaire polling were:

Questionnaires mailed	128
Questionnaires returned unclaimed	10
Possible questionnaire returns	118
Actual questionnaire returns	80
Percentage of returns	68

Of the 80 questionnaires returned, the individuals answering ranged from one to 20 years occupational experience since graduation. The total number of man-years of experience on which this study is based is 777, or an average of 9.7 years per individual. These figures represent time since graduation, including work in or out of the profession.

All questions were constructed so that they could be answered briefly and complete. Every precaution was made to make every question of such nature that the individual would not evade or answer contrary to his best belief.

Sixty percent of the graduates who answered the questionnaire are still in the coaching and physical education field. Forty percent are presently engaged in other professions.

Seventy-one percent of these same graduates served in the Armed Forces during the recent war. This factor must be con-

sidered in weighing any conclusions of this study.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Reasons Given for Choosing Physical Education as a Major

In drawing conclusions as to why graduates leave a particular profession after four years of preparation, all factors relating to the problem must be considered, including reasons why this profession was selected.

A man may enter the carpentry profession because he likes to work with his hands; the artist may enter the painting profession because of his interest in drawing; and the musician may play because of his love of music. Why then, does a student choose to major in physical education? Is it his love for physical activities; his desire to become a teacher; or some other particular reason?

In an attempt to determine the various reasons why the curriculum was chosen by the student upon entering college, this question was included in the questionnaire and the following results obtained:

Table 1. Reasons why physical education was chosen as a major as stated by 80 graduates of this field.

Reason stated	Frequency	Percentage of individuals listing these reasons
Interest in athletics	38	47.5
Desire to become a coach	26	32.5
Likes to work with youth	22	27.5
Major field of interest	16	20
Thought best adapted for this field	9	11
Influenced by high school coach	8	10
Looked like an open field	6	7
Less expensive than other courses	5	6
Had no vocational guidance	4	5
Wanted to teach physical education	4	5
Thought it would be an enjoyable profession	3	4
Excelled in high school athletics	2	3
Saw need for physical education	2	3

It is interesting to note in Table 1 that four answers to this question appeared more frequently than any of the other reasons. Interest in athletics was stated as a reason for majoring in physical education by nearly one-half of the graduates. One out of every three enrolled in the curriculum because of their desire to become a coach. Twenty-two gave the reason of wanting to work with youth and the fourth major reason given by 16 of the 80 graduates stated they considered physical education their major field of interest. Nine thought they were best adapted for this field; eight were influenced by their coach; six thought it looked like an open field; and five elected it because the curriculum was less expensive than other courses. Others stated they enrolled in physical education because: they had no vocational guidance; they wanted to teach physical edu-

cation; they thought it would be an enjoyable profession; they had excelled in high school athletics; or, they had seen the need for physical education in the school systems.

#### Minor Combinations with a Major in Physical Education

Every undergraduate majoring in physical education should be given guidance concerning what minors will help him in securing a position and also combine best with his coaching duties. If the student has a keen interest in a particular subject that is taught in the school systems, then he should minor in this subject. However, the majority of undergraduates in physical education are more anxious to obtain minors that will give them reasonable assurance of finding a job and minors that combine satisfactorily with the long hours of coaching.

Data given by 80 physical education graduates show what minors were chosen with their major in physical education. These same graduates were then asked to name the minors they would select if they were to choose again. The assumption being that the reselected minors would be the more desirous and useful for the coach.

Table 2 lists the minors that were chosen and the minors that would be chosen again if the graduate were given another opportunity to reselect. Industrial arts and mathematics are by far the most desired minors, with social sciences and business rating third and fourth. Business does not rank with the first seven choices of minors obtained, but is rated fourth if gradu-

Table 2. Minors obtained and minors desired by 80 Kansas State College graduates with majors in physical education.<sup>1</sup>

Minor obtained	: Frequency	:	Minor desired	: Frequency
Social Science	20	:	Industrial Arts	24
Industrial Arts	20	:	Mathematics	21
Mathematics	18	:	Social Science	10
Military Science	14	:	Business	10
History	13	:	Physical Science	8
Physical Science	9	:	History	6
Psychology	8	:	Psychology	6
		:		
Other minors selected by three or less were: Business, English, Political Science, Agriculture, and Economics.		:	Other desired minors mentioned by three or less were: Journalism, Political Science, English, Philosophy, Agriculture, Guidance and Administration, Speech, and Art.	

<sup>1</sup> Does not include the minors that are automatically a part of the Physical Education major such as Biological Science and Education.

ates were to choose again. This indicates the graduates have felt a need for business training, probably because of operating a business or because they anticipate changing to the business profession or perhaps to be able to analyze business problems that arise in their own profession.

The Military Science minor has very little significance in this study because of the influence of the recent war, but physical education majors should realize that a minor in Military Science results in a commission in the Armed Services. If their military grades are near the top, it is possible to be given a Regular Army Officer's Commission which rates a high income and good security.

In comparing minors obtained and minors desired, history, physical science and psychology ranked relatively in the same position.

Possible reasons for industrial arts being the popular minor for coaches are that it is an interesting laboratory subject which does not call for elaborate preparations or an abundance of papers to grade. The coach is too fatigued after strenuous practice sessions on the athletic field to engage in long hours of lesson preparation and paper grading for academic classes.

Mathematics combines well with coaching because it requires less preparation and rarely changes in comparison with other subjects.

#### Status of Master's Degrees among Kansas State Physical Education Graduates

Table 3 has been prepared to illustrate the status concerning Master's degrees among 80 Kansas State physical education graduates.

Table 3. Master degree status on 80 physical education graduates of Kansas State College.

Educational status	: Number :	Percentage
Have Master's degrees	12	15
Working on Master's degrees	25	31
Plan to work toward a Master's degree	16	20
Do not plan starting on a Master's degree	27	34

The combinations shown in Table 4 were selected as major and minor subjects by 20 graduates either having or working on Master's degrees.

Table 4. Master degree combinations.

Major	:	Minor	:Number
Educational Administration		Physical Education	6
Physical Education		Educational Administration	5
Physical Education		Health	4
Physical Education		Sports Broadcasting	2
Educational Administration		Zoology	1
Educational Administration		Industrial Arts	1
Biological Science		Physical Education	1
		Total	20

#### Occupational Data Concerning Physical Education Majors

The purpose of the occupational study was to determine how many graduates were still in the coaching and physical education field and to find out whether or not physical education might have carry-over values in other particular vocations. And, if so, which vocations.

The results of this study showed 56 percent of the graduates doing coaching and physical education work. Adding to this the members of the physical therapy profession and graduates working on advanced degrees, there is a total of 64 percent who are still in the field.

The professions are broken down as shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Present occupations of 156 Kansas State physical education graduates.

Occupation	: Number	: Percentage
Coaching and Physical Education	88	56
United States Armed Forces	14	9
Salesmen	10	6.5
Physical and Corrective Therapy	7	4.5
Operation of a business	6	4
Students working on advanced degrees	5	3.2
School Administration	4	2.5
Professional sports (basketball & baseball)	4	2.5
Farming	2	1.3
American Red Cross representatives	2	1.3
Other occupations named		
Construction foreman	Radio announcer	
Osteopathy student	Y.M.C.A. director	
Dentistry student	Elevator operator (grain)	
U. S. Postoffice employee	Florist	
Secretary of Chamber of Commerce	Veterans Administration	
Filling station operator	Veterinarian	
Pullman conductor	Head college trainer	
National Foundation of Infantile Paralysis representative		

The types of occupations are varied over many professions. Of the professions engaged in by those who have left the field, the Armed Services, selling, and physical and corrective therapy lead the list. The curriculum of physical education is definitely the type of background the army desires in its members because of the leadership qualities developed. Many physical education graduates enter the selling field because of their ability to meet and associate with the public. This social quality is one that has expanded as a result of taking physical education. A prerequisite for physical therapy is a background of physical

education training.

Of the professions listed in Table 1, all with the exception of farming and those who are students, are dependent upon the individual meeting and working with people. It might be considered indicative that the experience of coaching and physical education has a carryover value to professions which deal with meeting, working with, and directing people. Taking out the influence of the last war, selling would lead the list. The characteristics necessary for a successful salesman evidently must be developed sometime during the training and experiences of the physical education graduate.

Of the 32 graduates answering the questionnaire who have left the field, 28 or 80 percent of them thought physical education training had been valuable and applicable to success in their present profession. Only four thought it was of no value to their present success.

Thirteen of the 32 who have left the profession would still major again in physical education were they to choose again.

Of the 88 men engaged in coaching and teaching physical education, seven out of every 10 are employed at the high school level. Approximately one out of every five still in the field have reached the college level. Table 6 gives the distribution.

Table 6. Eighty-eight graduates in coaching and physical education and school levels in which they are employed.

School level	Number	Percentage
Senior High School	62	70
College	16	18
Junior College	5	6
Junior High School	5	6

The Advantages and Disadvantages of the Coaching and Physical Education Field

In making a decision when selecting a college curriculum that leads to a professional field, the individual should weigh the advantages and disadvantages of that particular profession. Especially is this true when the future is as insecure as that of the coaching profession.

To provide some information that might assist in helping prospective physical education students understand the total situation of the profession, rather than just the glamorous phase, a compilation of the advantages as well as the disadvantages were made. The advantages and disadvantages listed in Tables 7 and 8 are the opinions expressed by the 80 graduates covered by the questionnaire survey. Several of these graduates have been in the field for as many as 20 years, thus qualifying them to give reliable data on advantages and disadvantages.

Advantages. The advantage most frequently mentioned was that coaching and teaching physical education was enjoyable, interesting, and stimulating work. To support this advantage is the fact that students are doing something which they enjoy, con-

sequently their interest and efforts are put forth in a whole-hearted manner. The situations provided by athletics and physical education are pleasant to the participants.

The opportunity of meeting people, making friends and the associations of working with the pupils, as well as the public, was listed as the second chief advantage.

Table 7. Advantages of the coaching and physical education profession ranked by frequency of which they were named by 80 physical education graduates.

Advantage	:Frequency :of which :advantage :was named
Enjoyable, interesting, and stimulating work	35
Good social relationships (making friends, meeting people, etc.)	20
Healthful occupation (physically active, outdoors, keeps you young)	20
Opportunity to contribute to society by helping develop youth	19
Satisfactions derived from pupil progress both mental and physical	15
Community interest, publicity, and prestige	13
Opportunity for active sports participation	9
Freedom from monotony	6
Good means of livelihood	6
Better pay than other teachers	6
Long vacations	3
Pleasant environment	3
Opportunity to exercise initiative	3
Keeps an individual informed on sports	2
Need for physical education in the educational field	2
Opportunity to build posture and health	2
Qualified to enter several fields	2

According to statements made by 20 graduates in the field, coaching and teaching physical education provide the opportunity for the individual to stay physically active, lead an outdoor

type of life, and engage in a healthful occupation.

The opportunity to contribute to society by helping develop youth was thought to be an advantage of the profession by 19 different graduates. The satisfactions derived from seeing the pupils progress physically and mentally was included as the fifth ranking advantage. Thirteen graduates pointed out that the coach of athletics is dealing with an activity in which the public is very much interested. Athletics receive more publicity because of their popularity and public interest than any other school activity. Consequently the coach is well known and respected by the students and the community.

Other advantages named were: Opportunity to be active in sports participation; freedom from monotony; good means of livelihood; better pay than other teachers; long vacations; pleasant working environment; opportunity to exercise initiative; keeps an individual informed on sports; need for physical education; opportunity to enter other fields such as physical therapy, recreation work, or school administration.

Disadvantages. The survey revealed that the 80 graduates were of the same opinion regarding five of the primary disadvantages of the coaching and physical education profession. This evidence is shown in Table 8. Nearly 50 percent of the graduates thought the pressure exerted by the public for a winning team and the measurement of the coach's success on number of wins was one of the main disadvantages to contend with. The next most frequently mentioned disadvantage was that of low pay. Although

The standard has been greatly improved in the last few years, graduates still think that for the hours put in, the pay is insufficient in comparison to other professions.

Table 8. Disadvantages of the coaching and physical education profession as ranked by the opinions of 80 physical education graduates of Kansas State College.

Disadvantage	:Frequency :of which :disadvantage :was named
Pressure to win or success measured in winning teams	36
Low pay	31
Long and irregular hours	24
Short tenure, insecure future, poor retirement system	24
Public criticism	14
Lack of proper recognition in field of education	9
Lack of adequate financing and facilities	8
State does not enforce physical education legislation	7
Public does not recognize the true values being obtained	6
Overloaded with other classes	5
Nervous and physical strain	5
Too much moving	3
Training in colleges not uniform	2
Too many extracurricular activities demanded	2
Only a nine-month job	2
Too many in field	2

The long and irregular hours involved, ranks third in disadvantages. Practice sessions after school hours and night athletic contests as often as twice a week along with league meetings, coaches' clinics, and tournament activities eliminate any chance of regular working hours.

The disadvantage of an insecure future, poor retirement system, and short tenure of coaches was listed by 24 graduates as

one of the major weaknesses of the profession.

Several expressed the opinion that coaching and teaching physical education is a young man's work and it is difficult for an older man to be physically active in this profession.

The fifth chief disadvantage stated was that of public criticism. Few people try to tell the mechanic how to fix their car, but they seldom hesitate to express their opinion on how the strategy of an athletic contest should be conducted.

Other disadvantages frequently mentioned were: lack of proper recognition in the educational field; lack of adequate financing and facilities; the State of Kansas does not enforce physical education legislation; the public does not recognize the true values being obtained; the coach is overloaded with classes other than his physical education classes; it is a nervous and physical strain; involves too much moving; the training given to physical education majors in different colleges does not meet the same standards; it is only a nine-month job; and a couple of graduates thought there were too many individuals in the field.

One of the questions asked on the survey and answered by 80 graduates was:

	Number answering	
	Yes	No
If choosing again, would you major in physical education?	46	32

Forty-six graduates or approximately 58 percent stated they would major in physical education if choosing again. Forty per-

cent would not, and 2 percent were undecided.

To determine if number of years since graduation would influence these opinions, a check was made on the answers of 47 graduates who have been graduated over 10 years. Forty-nine percent said they would still major in physical education if choosing again and 47 percent stated they would not major in physical education.

Of the 32 who have left the profession, a surprisingly high percentage, (49 percent) stated they would still major in physical education if choosing again.

Sixty-nine percent of the 48 still in field would repeat taking physical education if choosing again.

The influence of the war period from 1941 to 1946 must be considered. Seventy percent of the graduates answering this question were in the service and no doubt this has influenced their opinions, because of the nature of their duties in the service arousing interests toward other occupations.

#### Reasons for Leaving Profession

Opinions have been expressed as to the reasons why trained and experienced men have left the coaching and physical education profession but no concrete evidence is available to prove or disprove these theories. With this in mind, the idea was conceived to gather facts that could be put in print as tangible evidence why the profession is being deserted by approximately 47 percent of those who have graduated in physical education.

Of the 80 graduates responding to the questionnaire, 32 have

left the field. The reasons given by these 32 people are shown in Table 9.

Table 9. Five main reasons why trained and experienced men have left the profession.<sup>1</sup>

	: Named	:
	: frequency	: Percentage
For more pay	27	84
For more security	16	50
For better working hours	6	22
Too difficult to advance	6	22
Permanent location desired	4	11

<sup>1</sup> More than one reason was given by the majority of those giving reasons.

The main reason as shown in the above table is that of low pay. This has been a weakness in the foundation of the American educational system since the days of the old schoolmaster and his hickory stick. Progress has been made toward solving this problem during recent years. Many school systems are now paying a respectable wage to its teachers.

The absence of an acceptable retirement plan and the year-by-year contracts makes the future uncertain in this profession. Fifty percent of those who have left the profession give lack of security as a reason.

The reason ranking third is that of long and irregular working hours. The coach in the majority of high schools spends his day teaching a load almost equal to that of the other teachers and when their day is over, his athletic practice sessions are just beginning. Paper grading, coaching and classroom prepara-

tion, athletic activities, extracurricular activities, and miscellaneous responsibilities will have to be done in the evenings.

The difficulty of advancement rates fourth of the five main reasons for leaving the field. There is no system of advancement in the coaching ranks.

The problem of moving from one place to another ranks fifth. With a house full of furniture and a town full of friends, coaches are hesitant toward moving. But when the only means of advancement are in moving or the public is "win-conscious", moving becomes a necessity.

#### CONCLUSIONS

1. The main reason students enroll in the physical education curriculum at Kansas State College is because of their interest in athletics.

2. Physical education graduates feel that industrial arts, mathematics, or business are the most useful minors to obtain with a major in physical education.

3. The main advantage of coaching and teaching physical education is that of it being enjoyable and stimulating work. The main disadvantage is that of public pressure for winning teams.

4. There is evidence to indicate that physical education training has a carryover value to occupations that are dependent on "meeting the public", such as the salesmanship profession.

5. Approximately 40 percent of all Kansas State College physical education graduates are leaving the coaching and teach-

ing profession to enter other fields.

6. The main reasons why these men are leaving the field are low pay, lack of security, and irregular working hours.

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## APPENDIX

## Survey Questionnaire

No. \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_1. \_\_\_\_\_  
(Last name MI first) Yr. of graduation

2. Please check one, if applicable.

a. \_\_\_ have a Master's degree

b. \_\_\_ am working on a Master's degree

c. \_\_\_ anticipate starting on a Master's degree

3. If 2(a) above was checked, what were your major and minor in your Master's degree?

\_\_\_\_\_  
Major\_\_\_\_\_  
Minor

4. OCCUPATIONAL HISTORY since date of graduation.

Years

Type of work

Title & remarks  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_5. Please list your college minors \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

6. If you were to re-select college minors, which ones would you select? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Reasons why you chose physical education as a major while in college:

a. \_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_

c. \_\_\_\_\_

8. If you were to choose again, would you major in physical education? \_\_\_Yes, \_\_\_No.

9. Answer only if you have been in the coaching and physical education field.

a. In your opinion, what are three primary advantages of the coaching or physical education profession?

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Three primary disadvantages of coaching or physical education profession:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

10. Answer only if you have left the coaching and physical education field.

a. Reasons for leaving profession:

- (1) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (2) \_\_\_\_\_  
 (3) \_\_\_\_\_

b. Do you feel that physical education training has been valuable and applicable to success in your other vocations?  Yes  No.

Please state why \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

c. If answer was yes, in 10 (b), name the particular vocations \_\_\_\_\_

d. Do you feel that your coaching and physical education experience has helped you in your present work?

11. Helpful advice you would suggest to a beginning coach just going out into the field.

1.

2.

3.