

THE RANKING OF OCCUPATIONS
ON THE BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

One need not be trained or experienced in the area of Vocational Guidance to recognize that social prestige has been attached to various occupations and that this intangible, subtle factor influences to a degree vocational choices and satisfaction or dissatisfaction therein. Adults and adolescents, male and female, individually have established hierarchies of occupations according to social status. Vocational counselors particularly are aware that such a motive does exist in the determination of occupational goals and that such motivation may prevent a more rational measurement of qualifications against requirements.

Many studies have been conducted to classify occupations as to intelligence, financial remuneration, nature of the work, training requirements, employment possibilities, hazards, and security, but only slight or general consideration has been given to the fact that social status can be a basis for classification.

I. THE PROBLEM

It was the purpose of this study (1) to establish from rankings by teachers' college students a hierarchy of twenty-six of the more common occupations arranged according to

their social prestige; (2) to compare the results obtained therein with a similar study in which the subjects were not teachers' college students; (3) to secure information regarding the social status of the teaching profession; and (4) to focus attention on an aspect of a vocational guidance problem which may have been recognized but not seriously considered.

In comparing this study with a similar one by Deeg and Paterson,¹ the writer attempted to determine whether representatives of teachers' college student personnel viewed differently the social status of the same occupations--whether the fact that the subjects were students in a teachers' college and possibly were potential teachers would affect the rankings to a marked degree.

In view of the generally recognized fact that, at the time of this study, there was a considerable shortage of teachers, the writer included for ranking three occupations in this category, namely, the elementary school teacher, the high school teacher, and the superintendent of schools, to determine whether their relative prestige rankings might suggest a cause for the shortage. Particularly was the writer interested in comparing the rank assigned to the elementary

¹ Maethel E. Deeg and Donald G. Paterson, "Changes in Social Status of Occupations," Occupations, 25:205-208, January, 1947.

school teacher with that assigned to the high school teacher, since there existed a greater shortage of the former.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

The terms "social prestige" and "social status" are used frequently in this study. "Prestige" refers to influence, authority, power, or weight exercised by reason of reputation. "Social" qualifies the "prestige" as to that wielded by society. "Social status" refers to a state, condition, or relation determined by society.

III. THE PROCEDURE

Five hundred students of Indiana State Teachers College were supplied with a list of twenty-six of the more common occupations and asked to rank these occupations on the basis of social prestige. Accompanying the list were the following instructions:

"In most communities certain occupations are accorded a higher rating than others. There is a tendency for us to 'look up to' persons engaged in some occupations and 'down on' those engaged in others. We may even be ashamed or proud of our relatives because of their occupations.

"In the following list are twenty-six occupations for you to arrange in the order of their social standing. After that occupation which is most 'looked up to' place the number

'1'; after that which occupies second place in this respect, the number '2'; and so on, until finally you place the number '26' after that occupation which receives the lowest social rating. Your rankings should be based NOT UPON WHAT OUGHT TO BE, BUT UPON WHAT THE PRESENT SITUATION ACTUALLY IS AS TO THE SOCIAL STATUS OF OCCUPATIONS. You will avoid mistakes if, before marking your rankings in the column below, you will arrange the accompanying tabs (each signifying one of the twenty-six occupations) in the order which you think indicates their respective social ranking. After you have arrived at a final ranking, record your rankings in the column below."

The twenty-six occupations were listed alphabetically, double spaced, with space provided for recording the rank to be assigned each of the occupations. After each occupation listed was a brief descriptive term to aid the student in an interpretation of the occupation and to insure as near as possible a like interpretation by all subjects. To aid in ranking and to eliminate errors, a group of detachable tabs, each containing the name of one of the occupations listed, accompanied each ranking sheet.

Other information requested from the subjects included their grade classification, sex, and major field of study. An attempt was made to secure returns from students in a variety of major fields, but no attempt was made to classify

the findings on that basis. Returns were to be classified on the bases of sex and grade levels.

The study was conducted by the group interview method in various departments of the college to obtain a majority of returns needed. To complete the desired number, five hundred, and to secure an even distribution over the five grade levels, freshmen through graduate students, individual interviews were held to obtain rankings.

When the collection of data was completed, there was the following distribution of ranking sheets: fifty males and fifty females for each of the grade levels, namely, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, graduate, totaling five hundred ranking sheets.

The statistical method, median rank, was used to determine a median rank order of occupations for each group of subjects and for the total number of subjects. Correlations between the rankings of the groups were determined by the Spearman rank-difference coefficient of correlation (ρ) method. The final consolidated rank order was compared by the rank-difference method with the rank order established in the Deeg and Paterson² study to determine the extent of relationship between the two.

² Ibid.

IV. ORGANIZATION OF REMAINDER OF THESIS

The remainder of this report has been devoted (1) to a review of literature pertaining to occupational prestige studies; (2) to a presentation and analysis of the data collected relating to the problem of developing a ranking of occupations on the basis of social status by teachers' college students; and (3) to a summary of the data and conclusions and recommendations derived therefrom.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The first serious attempt to obtain a quantitative ranking of occupations according to opinions of social status appears to have been made by Counts¹ in 1925. Counts' study was based on the rankings of forty-five occupations by 372 subjects, school teachers, college freshmen, and seniors in trade and academic high schools, representing communities in Minnesota, Wisconsin, and Connecticut. There were weaknesses in that study pointed out by Counts himself. There were too many occupations to rank, and the subjects needed to keep the existing situation in mind, rather than ranking as to the "ideal" situation. The findings revealed high rankings assigned to occupations of the professional level.

Closely following the Counts study, Davis,² in 1927, conducted an investigation in Russia, where education was carried on under avowed Communistic auspices, to discover whether the socialistic training had any particular effect.

¹ George S. Counts, "The Social Status of Occupations: A Problem in Vocational Guidance," The School Review, 23:16-27, January, 1925.

² Jerome Davis, "Testing the Social Attitudes of Children in the Government Schools of Russia," The American Journal of Sociology, 32:947-952, May, 1927.

His subjects included nineteen textile workers and ninety-three students between the ages of 12 and 19 years. The results obtained disclosed considerable difference between the Russian and the American rankings,³ particularly as to rankings assigned the occupations of banker, peasant, prosperous business man, and minister. Davis' study and those that followed indicated that social prestige values assigned to occupations were a reflection of the economic as well as the social disposition dominating a country.

Anderson⁴ made two studies involving occupational social prestige. The first study, in 1926, involved the ranking of twenty-five occupations by 609 North Carolina College male students. Anderson reported that the results indicated "that these college students had acquired from the rural and small town environment in which they lived very definite mental sets toward the occupational world and that these 'sets' remained fairly fixed through their college career."

Anderson's second study, made in 1929, with 673 other college men in the same institution, was expanded in scope to include, in addition to the social prestige facet, a

³ Counts, loc. cit.

⁴ W. A. Anderson, "The Occupational Attitudes of College Men," The Journal of Social Psychology, 5:435-466, November, 1934.

social rating on the basis of contribution to society and on the basis of economic return. The results of the two reports indicated the professions ranking highest.

In the book entitled Psychology and Life, Rush⁵ discussed social approval of occupations as being a factor in vocational choice and called attention to two studies, made in 1929 and 1939, which employed college students to rank twenty-five occupations as to social approval. The school teacher changed from eleventh place in 1929 to twelfth place in 1939, while the professor moved up from fifth place in 1929 to second place in 1939. In both sets of rankings the banker, physician, clergyman, lawyer, and professor occupied the first five places.

One of the most extensive studies of the social status of occupations, extensive as to the number of subjects used, was that of Lehman and Witty,⁶ in which 26,878 school children, ranging in ages from 8.5 to 18.5 years, participated. The technique used in this study was different from that used in previously mentioned studies. The subjects were supplied with a comprehensive list of two hundred occupations, from which they were to choose those in

⁵ Floyd L. Ruch, Psychology and Life (New York: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1941), pp. 533-534.

⁶ Harvey C. Lehman and Paul A. Witty, "Further Study of the Social Status of Occupations," The Journal of Educational Sociology, 5:101-112, October, 1931.

which they would be willing to engage as life work. The subjects also were to indicate the three occupations they would like best to follow, the one occupation they most likely would follow, the three occupations having the greatest financial return, and the three occupations most respected.

The findings of the Lehman and Witty study indicated that the physician was more highly respected than either the college professor or the banker. The various teaching professions were given high ranks, the college professor ranking second, the superintendent of schools seventh, the high school teacher tenth, the elementary school teacher thirteenth, and the rural school teacher nineteenth.

In 1932, Menger⁷ developed a study of the social status of occupations for women. She pointed out that "although the social status of occupations may not be an important factor in seeking employment, especially in times of depression or much unemployment, it undoubtedly is a very important factor underlying the choice of and preparation for an occupation." Menger's study included thirty-five occupations in which women were most likely to engage, with the subjects numbering 704, men and women, juniors and adults, workers and students, from a wide geographical area in this country.

⁷ Clara Menger, "The Social Status of Occupations for Women," Teachers College Record, 33:696-704, May, 1932.

In the midst of a difficult economic era, 1935, Nietz⁸ engaged in a study to determine whether the depression had had any effect on the social status rankings of occupations. He employed 1,622 high school seniors for his subjects, and in summarizing his findings, he concluded, among other things, that apparently the depression had not affected the social status of occupations as much as might have been expected.

Recognizing the high place the medical profession occupied in the vocational hierarchy of contemporary American society, Hartman⁹ conducted an investigation to obtain a social prestige ranking of occupations within the medical family. Hartman raised the question, "Does this 'halo' [surrounding the medical profession] result from a recognition of the important social service performed by highly selected and competent medical workers, or is it simply a consequence of greater familiarity with their occupational designations and functions?"

A report was made to the Social Psychological Section of the American Psychological Association at its annual

⁸ John A. Nietz, "The Depression and the Social Status of Occupations," The Elementary School Journal, 35:454-461, February, 1935.

⁹ George W. Hartman, "The Relative Social Prestige of Representative Medical Specialties," The Journal of Applied Psychology, 20:659, December, 1936.

meeting in 1938 by Hall¹⁰ on his study of social prestige values of a selected group of occupations. The procedure followed was to distribute a set of 252 cards to each of two hundred adults. Each card contained the name of an occupation, and each person was asked to sort the cards into eleven piles according to the social prestige which the individual attributed to the respective occupations. (The writer was unable to learn the results of Hall's study as it was not published in full.)

Stevens¹¹ developed a study of occupational prestige which differed from the previously mentioned ones in that his subjects consisted of women only. One hundred fifty college students, freshmen through seniors, ranked women's occupations according to contribution to society, financial return, and social prestige. According to social prestige, the physician ranked first, with the lawyer and teacher following in order. The teacher ranked second in contribution to society and tenth in financial return. When the subjects were asked to select from the list of occupations five which would be their own preference, assuming that they had the

¹⁰ C. W. Hall, "Social Prestige Values of a Selected Group of Occupations," Psychological Bulletin, 35:696, November, 1938.

¹¹ Raymond B. Stevens, "The Attitudes of College Women toward Women's Occupations," The Journal of Applied Psychology, 24:615-627, October, 1940.

necessary qualifications and training, the factor of social prestige seemed to be most closely related to vocational preferences, with contribution to society seeming to be an insignificant influence.

Another investigation was one by Osgood and Stagner,¹² in 1941, in which fifteen occupations were analyzed by a gradient technique by one hundred Dartmouth College students. According to Osgood and Stagner, "prestige is imputed to occupations per se on the basis of such characteristics as hopefulness, being noticed, financial return, brains, excitingness and pleasantness."

In a study of the prestige status of occupations Smith¹³ suggested the development of an empirical scale on which at various points all occupations may be located, laying a foundation for a scale contributed to by ratings made in different parts of the country.

Among fifty combat infantrymen impatiently awaiting their return to the United States during World War II, Byers¹⁴ conducted an investigation to determine whether

¹² C. E. Osgood and Ross Stagner, "Analysis of a Prestige Frame of Reference by a Gradient Technique," The Journal of Applied Psychology, 25:275-290, June, 1941.

¹³ Mapheus Smith, "An Empirical Scale of Prestige Status of Occupations," American Sociological Review, 8: 185-192, April, 1943.

¹⁴ Burton H. Byers, "How the G. I. Rates the Job," The Nation's Schools, 37:51, January, 1946.

military experience had affected the prestige connected with twenty-five particular occupations. The findings, compared with the Ruch 1939 study, indicated there were three occupations towards which the attitude of the soldier apparently had undergone a definite change. The engineer rose from seventh place to second; the man of leisure moved from ninth place to fifteenth; and the soldier moved from nineteenth place to twenty-fifth.

The study in changes in social status of occupations with which the writer compared the present study was conducted by Deeg and Paterson¹⁵ to determine whether there had been any substantial change in the social status rankings of occupations since the time Counts¹⁶ had announced his findings. The Deeg and Paterson study was conducted in 1946, twenty-one years after the Counts study, during which time an economic depression and World War II could have been responsible for effecting a change in the prestige and social status of some occupations. There was a remarkable correlation between the results of the two studies, indicating that social, economical, and psychological factors determining relative occupational prestige had continued to operate consistently.

¹⁵ Deeg and Paterson, loc. cit.

¹⁶ Counts, loc. cit.

In an attempt to develop a collection of factors upon which youth based their occupational choices, Edmiston and Starr¹⁷ conducted a survey among 1,018 high school students. Twenty-seven factors were included for consideration, and they were grouped to provide nine general factors. The general factor "prestige" was composed of: (1) name of position (or its reception of social approval); (2) type of work; and (3) demands for responsibility. The findings of the study revealed, among other things, that the general factor "prestige" was rated by the entire group as being of less-than-average importance in determining vocational choices.

The most recent investigation into social status of occupations that came to the writer's attention was that of Baudler and Paterson.¹⁸ The subjects in the study, numbering 763 and including high school seniors and college students, ranked twenty-nine occupations usually engaged in by women. The findings of the study revealed that those occupations which require long periods of training and/or experience ranked high, while those which require relatively short periods of training and/or experience ranked low.

¹⁷ R. W. Edmiston and C. H. Starr, "Youth's Attitudes toward Occupations," Occupations, 26:213-220, January, 1948.

¹⁸ Lucille Baudler and Donald G. Paterson, "Social Status of Women's Occupations," Occupations, 26:421-424, April, 1948.

Examination of the various rankings of occupational prestige referred to seemed to reveal evidence that group values were involved in determining prestige of occupational groups within the culture; it appeared that the rankings obtained were a reflection of the evaluation of function.

CHAPTER III

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

By tabulating the rankings assigned to the twenty-six occupations on the basis of social status by five hundred teachers' college students, it was possible, by deriving medians, to secure a single rank for each occupation which represented the combined judgments of the subjects. The median ranks were arranged into a descending median rank order. Since the rank of "1" indicated the highest social status, a low rank indicated a high rating. For the median ranks and the median rank order assigned to the twenty-six occupations by the five hundred subjects, see Table I, page 18.

The data were grouped on the basis of sex, and the median rank was determined for each occupation as rated by two hundred fifty males and two hundred fifty females. Median rank orders were arrived at for both sexes. See Table II, page 19.

To determine the degree of relationship existing between the male and the female median rank orders of the twenty-six occupations, the Spearman rank-difference coefficient of correlation (ρ) formula was used. The correlation coefficient existing between the male and the female median rank orders was found to be a positive $.98752 \pm .003$.

TABLE I

RANKING OF TWENTY-SIX OCCUPATIONS
ON BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS BY
FIVE HUNDRED TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS

Number	Occupation	Median Rank	Median Rank Order
1	Physician	1.38	1
2	Banker	2.78	2
3	Lawyer	3.03	3
4	Superintendent of Schools	4.27	4
5	Civil Engineer	4.45	5
6	High School Teacher	6.91	6
7	Foreign Missionary	7.58	7
8	Elementary School Teacher	8.03	8
9	Army Captain	8.38	9
10	Insurance Agent	12.04	10
11	Farmer	12.61	11
12	Grocer	12.68	12
13	Machinist	12.88	13
14	Electrician	13.05	14
15	Traveling Salesman	13.98	15
16	Mail Carrier	15.36	16
17	Carpenter	15.89	17
18	Plumber	15.94	18
19	Barber	18.94	19
20	Soldier	19.96	20
21	Motorman	21.11	21
22	Truck Driver	22.00	22
23	Coal Miner	22.29	23
24	Janitor	23.88	24
25	Hod Carrier	24.56	25
26	Ditch Digger	25.76	26

TABLE II

RANKING OF TWENTY-SIX OCCUPATIONS ON BASIS OF
SOCIAL STATUS BY 250 MALE AND 250 FEMALE
TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS

Occupation	Male Median Rank	Male Median Rank Order	Female Median Rank	Female Median Rank Order
Physician	1.43	1	1.34	1
Banker	2.74	2	2.82	2
Lawyer	3.04	3	3.03	3
Superintendent of Schools	4.15	4	4.44	5
Civil Engineer	4.56	5	4.43	4
High School Teacher	6.78	6	7.01	6
Foreign Missionary	7.09	7	8.17	9
Elementary School Teacher	8.13	8	7.96	8
Army Captain	8.83	9	7.50	7
Insurance Agent	11.72	10	12.35	11
Grocer	12.50	11	12.81	12
Electrician	12.87	12.5	13.27	14
Machinist	12.87	12.5	12.89	13
Farmer	13.15	14	11.90	10
Traveling Salesman	13.72	15	14.30	15
Mail Carrier	15.45	16	15.23	16
Plumber	15.84	17	16.03	18
Carpenter	16.01	18	15.74	17
Barber	18.72	19	19.26	20
Soldier	20.30	20	19.11	19
Motorman	21.14	21	21.12	21
Coal Miner	21.81	22	22.79	23
Truck Driver	22.03	23	21.99	22
Janitor	24.01	24	23.76	24
Hod Carrier	24.43	25	24.67	25
Ditch Digger	25.77	26	25.70	26

rho = .98752 \pm .003

The data were regrouped on the basis of grade levels, namely, freshman, sophomore, junior, senior, and graduate. At each grade level the median rank was determined for each occupation, and the occupations were arranged in a descending median rank order. See Table III, pages 21 and 22.

The Spearman rank-difference coefficient of correlation (ρ) formula was used to determine the relationship existing between the median rank orders assigned to the twenty-six occupations by one hundred subjects in each of the five grade levels. The correlation coefficients ranged from .97538 to .99573, with an average of .98628. See Figure 1, page 23, for the correlation coefficients existing between the various grade levels.

The median rank order of occupations as established by five hundred teachers' college students was compared with the median rank order of the same occupations established in the Deeg and Paterson¹ study. Since the occupation of high school teacher was not included in the Deeg and Paterson study, it was removed from the rank order of the present study and the succeeding occupations were elevated one rank to make possible a comparison between the two rank orders. The correlation coefficient between the two rank orders was revealed by the Spearman rank-difference (ρ) formula to be a positive .98346 \pm .004. See Table IV, page 24.

¹ Deeg and Paterson, loc. cit.

TABLE III

RANKING OF TWENTY-SIX OCCUPATIONS ON BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS BY
ONE HUNDRED TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS IN EACH OF THE FIVE GRADE LEVELS

Occupation	Fresh. Median Rank	Fresh. Median Rank Order	Soph. Median Rank	Soph. Median Rank Order	Junior Median Rank	Junior Median Rank Order	Senior Median Rank	Senior Median Rank Order	Grad. Median Rank	Grad. Median Rank Order
Physician	1.29	1	1.35	1	1.35	1	1.54	1	1.43	1
Lawyer	3.13	2	3.00	3	2.87	2	3.12	3	3.05	3
Banker	3.14	3	2.91	2	3.02	3	2.31	2	2.31	2
Supt. of Schools	4.18	4	4.65	5	4.33	4.5	4.33	4	3.88	4
Civil Engineer	4.82	5	4.33	4	4.33	4.5	4.43	5	4.38	5
High School Teacher	6.80	6	7.02	6	7.13	6	6.50	6	6.95	6
Foreign Missionary	7.30	7	7.33	7	7.28	7	8.04	7	7.75	7
Elem. School Teacher	7.50	8	8.59	9	8.02	8	8.05	8	7.88	8
Army Captain	8.69	9	7.94	8	8.81	9	8.09	9	7.94	9
Electrician	11.88	10	12.83	12	13.12	15	14.20	16	13.21	14
Insurance Agent	12.33	11	11.21	10	12.25	10	11.97	10	12.50	12
Grocer	12.40	12	13.41	14	12.86	12	12.23	11	12.17	11
Machinist	12.77	13	12.29	11	13.00	14	13.19	14	13.17	13
Farmer	12.90	14	12.88	13	12.68	11	13.17	13	11.83	10
Carpenter	15.34	15	16.22	17	16.38	18	16.03	17	15.29	17
Traveling Salesman	15.68	16	13.73	15	12.90	13	12.97	12	15.21	16
Plumber	15.77	17	16.50	18	15.67	17	16.41	18	15.83	18
Mail Carrier	15.81	18	16.17	16	15.30	16	14.04	15	14.79	15
Barber	19.21	19	18.50	19	18.72	19	18.79	19	19.31	19
Soldier	19.32	20	19.91	20	19.64	20	19.88	20	19.88	20

TABLE III (continued)

RANKING OF TWENTY-SIX OCCUPATIONS ON BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS BY
ONE HUNDRED TEACHERS' COLLEGE STUDENTS IN EACH OF THE FIVE GRADE LEVELS

Occupation	Fresh. Median Rank	Fresh. Median Rank Order	Soph. Median Rank	Soph. Median Rank Order	Junior Median Rank	Junior Median Rank Order	Senior Median Rank	Senior Median Rank Order	Grad. Median Rank	Grad. Median Rank Order
Motorman	20.94	21	21.13	21	21.15	21	21.30	21	21.13	21
Truck Driver	21.91	22	21.89	22	22.20	22	22.17	22	22.07	22
Coal Miner	22.60	23	22.50	23	22.39	23	22.20	23	22.75	23
Janitor	23.82	24	23.82	24	23.91	24	23.93	24	23.84	24
Hod Carrier	24.55	25	24.59	25	24.38	25	24.55	25	24.68	25
Ditch Digger	25.70	26	25.78	26	25.67	26	25.71	26	25.80	26

FIGURE 1

CORRELATION COEFFICIENTS (WITH PROBABLE
 ERRORS) BETWEEN RANKINGS BY THE FIVE GRADE LEVELS

Grade:	Graduate	Senior	Junior	Sophomore	Freshman
Freshman	.98291	.97538	.97949	.98974	---
Sophomore	.98838	.98302	.98752	---	.003
Junior	.99231	.99573	---	.003	.004
Senior	.98838	---	.001	.004	.006
Graduate	---	.003	.002	.003	.004

NOTE: The upper left figures indicate coefficients of correlation. The lower right figures indicate probable errors.

TABLE IV

COMPARISON OF MEDIAN RANK ORDER ASSIGNED TO
 TWENTY-FIVE* OCCUPATIONS ON BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS
 IN THE PRESENT STUDY WITH THAT ESTABLISHED IN THE
 DEEG AND PATERSON STUDY

Number	Occupation	Median Rank Orders	
		Present Study	Deeg and Paterson Study
1	Physician	1	1
2	Banker	2	2.5
3	Lawyer	3	2.5
4	Superintendent of Schools	4	4
5	Civil Engineer	5	5
6	Foreign Missionary	6	7
7	Elementary School Teacher	7	8
8	Army Captain	8	6
9	Insurance Agent	9	10
10	Farmer	10	12
11	Grocer	11	13
12	Machinist	12	9
13	Electrician	13	11
14	Traveling Salesman	14	16
15	Mail Carrier	15	14
16	Carpenter	16	15
17	Plumber	17	17
18	Barber	18	20
19	Soldier	19	19
20	Motorman	20	18
21	Truck Driver	21	21.5
22	Coal Miner	22	21.5
23	Janitor	23	23
24	Hod Carrier	24	24
25	Ditch Digger	25	25

*Occupation of "High School Teacher" was omitted in this comparison since it was not included in the Deeg and Paterson study.

$$\rho = .98346 \pm .004$$

Table V is a composite grouping of the median rank orders established by one hundred subjects in each of the five grade levels and by the five hundred subjects as a whole. See Table V, page 26.

TABLE V

COMPOSITE GROUPING OF MEDIAN RANK ORDERS ASSIGNED
TO TWENTY-SIX OCCUPATIONS ON BASIS OF SOCIAL STATUS
BY FIVE GRADE LEVELS AND BY TOTAL SUBJECTS

Occupation	Fresh.	Soph.	Jr.	Sr.	Grad.	Total
Physician	1	1	1	1	1	1
Banker	3	2	3	2	2	2
Lawyer	2	3	2	3	3	3
Supt. of Schools	4	5	4.5	4	4	4
Civil Engineer	5	4	4.5	5	5	5
High School Teacher	6	6	6	6	6	6
Foreign Missionary	7	7	7	7	7	7
Elem. School Teacher	8	9	8	8	8	8
Army Captain	9	8	9	9	9	9
Insurance Agent	11	10	10	10	12	10
Farmer	14	13	11	13	10	11
Grocer	12	14	12	11	11	12
Machinist	13	11	14	14	13	13
Electrician	10	12	15	16	14	14
Traveling Salesman	16	15	13	12	16	15
Mail Carrier	18	16	16	15	15	16
Carpenter	15	17	18	17	17	17
Plumber	17	18	17	18	18	18
Barber	19	19	19	19	19	19
Soldier	20	20	20	20	20	20
Motorman	21	21	21	21	21	21
Truck Driver	22	22	22	22	22	22
Coal Miner	23	23	23	23	23	23
Janitor	24	24	24	24	24	24
Hod Carrier	25	25	25	25	25	25
Ditch Digger	26	26	26	26	26	26

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

I. SUMMARY

The analysis of the attitudes of five hundred Indiana State Teachers College students toward twenty-six selected occupations made use of the ranking method to discover the relative social status assigned to these occupations. The subjects ranked the occupations from a highest position of "1" to a lowest of "26", on the basis of social prestige. The rankings were tabulated by sex, grade levels, and the total group, with median ranks and median rank orders computed for each group.

The rankings established by all grade level groups and by the total subjects as a whole generally appeared to group the occupations into the conventional classifications of professional, skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled workers. All grade level groups and the total group were alike in assigning ranks to the occupations of physician, high school teacher, foreign missionary, barber, soldier, motor-man, truck driver, coal miner, janitor, hod carrier, and ditch digger. The occupations for which the various groups were not in perfect accord in assigning ranks were: banker, lawyer, superintendent of schools, civil engineer, army

captain, elementary school teacher, and plumber (ranks assigned varied one place); insurance agent (ranks assigned varied two places); grocer, machinist, mail carrier, and carpenter (ranks assigned varied three places); farmer and traveling salesman (ranks assigned varied four places); and electrician (ranks assigned varied six places).

By application of the rank-difference (ρ) formula, coefficient correlations were computed between the various grade level groups. The coefficients ranged from $.97538 \pm .003$ to $.99573 \pm .001$, with an average of $.98628$. The coefficient of correlation between the two extreme grade levels, namely, freshman and graduate, was $.98291 \pm .004$.

A comparison between rankings by males and by females, by application of the rank-difference (ρ) formula, indicated a correlation coefficient of $.98752 \pm .003$. Differences of from .5 to 1.5 ranks occurred in the rankings of the occupations of superintendent of schools, insurance agent, grocer, electrician, machinist, plumber, carpenter, soldier, barber, coal miner, and truck driver. Differences of two ranks occurred in the rankings of the occupations of foreign missionary and army captain, the females assigning seventh place to army captain and ninth place to foreign missionary, while these ratings were reversed by the males. The greatest difference in the male and female rankings was the place assigned the occupation of farmer, the females ranking that

occupation in tenth place, while the males ranked it in fourteenth place.

In the rank order determined by the total number of subjects, the occupations rated in the top third of the twenty-six occupations were, in order: physician, banker, lawyer, superintendent of schools, civil engineer, high school teacher, foreign missionary, elementary school teacher, and army captain. The middle third, in which there was less consistency of opinion among the various grade level groups, included, in order, the occupations of: insurance agent, farmer, grocer, machinist, electrician, traveling salesman, mail carrier, carpenter, and plumber. The bottom third, which was composed of occupations requiring relatively short periods of training and/or experience, included, in order, the occupations of: barber, soldier, motorman, truck driver, coal miner, janitor, hod carrier, and ditch digger.

By application of the rank-difference (ρ) formula, it was revealed that a positive correlation of $.98346 \pm .004$ existed between the rankings established in the present study and those established in the Deeg and Paterson¹ study. The differences occurred in the rankings of the occupations of: banker, lawyer, truck driver, and coal miner (ranks varied .5 place); foreign missionary, elementary school teacher, insurance agent, mail carrier, and carpenter (ranks

¹ Deeg and Paterson, loc. cit.

varied one place); army captain, farmer, grocer, electrician, traveling salesman, and barber (ranks varied two places); and machinist (ranks varied three places). The occupation of machinist which occupied ninth place in the Deeg and Paterson order dropped to twelfth place in the present study. Only twenty-five occupations were listed for comparison due to the fact that the occupation of high school teacher was not included in the Deeg and Paterson study.

II. CONCLUSIONS

Within the limits of the data analyzed, it appeared that the following tentative conclusions might be drawn:

Occupational prestige. According to the attitudes of five hundred teachers' college students, crystallized viewpoints exist toward occupations and clear lines of demarcation are established with regard to occupational social status. Occupations at the professional level were ranked highest, while those at the semi-skilled and unskilled levels were ranked lowest.

Sex as a factor. Difference in sex does not appear to affect the esteem associated with various occupations. There was little variation in the rankings established by males and by females.

Education. Experience, schooling, and passage of time seem to have little influence on attitudes toward occupational

prestige. Freshmen and graduate students ranked the selected occupations in almost identical order.

Attitudes toward teaching. Apparently the social prestige attached to the teaching profession is not a factor contributing to the shortage in the number of teachers. The teaching occupations ranked high, the superintendent of schools ranking fourth, the high school teacher sixth, and the elementary school teacher eighth. The relative rankings of the high school teacher and the elementary school teacher may account in part for the greater shortage in the number of the latter.

Prospective teachers' views. Teachers' college students seem to attach practically the same social status to various occupations as do other students. A high degree of correlation existed between rankings established in the present study and those established by subjects who were not teachers' college personnel. Apparently the fact that the subjects may very likely enter the teaching profession does not affect their attitudes toward occupational prestige to any marked degree.

Vocational guidance problem. Individuals do reward occupations with a particular prestige. This assumption needs to be recognized by vocational counselors as a motive in the selection of occupational goals.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

This investigation revealed definite discriminations concerning the social status of twenty-six of the more common occupations. These discriminations are indicative of social approval or disapproval of the occupations and as such are a powerful force which society wields over the individual and to which the individual will respond, consciously or unconsciously, as he proceeds to make his occupational choice.

The presence of this motive may interfere with a judicious consideration of aptitudes and opportunities, and, because of this interference, a vocational guidance problem arises. It becomes more than a vocational guidance problem, however, if it is to be solved. It becomes a social problem for all educational agencies and personnel of our society to bring about a change in social attitudes so as to include an appreciation of each and every occupation which makes a contribution necessary to our social and economic existence. School administrators, teachers, and counselors could well be the logical persons to initiate such a movement which would reward all occupations necessary for well-being with a positive social recognition.

The first step for making possible the success of such a movement necessarily would be the development of an appreciation of all worthwhile occupations on the part of the

leaders themselves. Without such understanding on the part of the leaders, the followers could not be expected to acquire appreciative attitudes toward the various types of work and the "dignity of labor."

The second step would involve an in-service training for all classroom teachers, subject specialists, and counselors, elementary through college, for the purpose of breaking down the mental sets they have affixed to various occupations and develop in their place constructive attitudes toward occupations necessary to the promotion of the common good.

The third step in a program for rewarding positive social recognition to all occupations worthy of such reward would provide for functional occupational courses. Such courses would abandon the "spray method of teaching en masse" and proceed individually to bring to each student knowledge of and experience in as many occupations as possible. Occupational information, of course, should be based on facts and should stress the contribution the occupation makes to society.

Such a program to modify social attitudes toward occupations could eliminate the pressure of occupational prestige and thus permit a more rational comparison of aptitudes, interests, and abilities with qualifications, requirements, and opportunities. Only then will the individual be free of the burden of occupational prestige and better able to select

wisely. Only then can society expect a more even distribution of man power to job opportunities. Only then will it be possible for each individual to engage in an occupation which contributes to his fullest development and which is socially acceptable and desirable.

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APPENDIX

THE SOCIAL STATUS OF OCCUPATIONS

In most communities certain occupations are accorded a higher rating than others. There is a tendency for us to "look up to" persons engaged in some occupations and "down on" those engaged in others. We even may be ashamed or proud of our relatives because of their occupations.

In the following list are twenty-six occupations which you are to arrange in the order of their social standing. After that occupation which is most "looked up to" place the number "1"; after that which occupies second place in this respect, the number "2"; and so on, until finally you have placed the number "26" after that occupation which receives the lowest social rating. Your rankings should be based NOT UPON WHAT OUGHT TO BE, BUT UPON WHAT THE PRESENT SITUATION ACTUALLY IS AS TO THE SOCIAL STATUS OF OCCUPATIONS. You will avoid mistakes if, before marking your rankings in the column below, you will arrange the accompanying tabs (each signifying one of the 26 occupation) in the order which you think indicates their respective social ranking. After you have arrived at a final ranking, record your rankings in the column below.

Army captain

Occupation	Rank
Army captain (U. S. Army).....	_____
Banker (part owner and director of bank of medium size).....	_____
Barber (does not own shop in which he works).....	_____
Carpenter (works for building contractor).....	_____
Civil engineer (designs and directs construction of bridges, tunnels, etc.).....	_____
Coal miner (blasts, drills and digs coal in mines).....	_____

Occupation	Rank
Ditch digger (works with pick and shovel).....	_____
Electrician (wires houses for electricity).....	_____
Elementary school teacher (teaches in city system).....	_____
Farmer (owns and works farm of 160 acres).....	_____
Foreign missionary (works in India).....	_____
Grocer (owns grocery store of moderate size).....	_____
High school teacher (teaches in city school).....	_____
Hod carrier (carries brick, mortar and stone in house building).....	_____
Insurance agent (sells life insurance).....	_____
Janitor (looks after private residence).....	_____
Lawyer (practices law in the courts).....	_____
Machinist (highly skilled in making and repairing machines)....	_____
Mail carrier (delivers U. S. Mail).....	_____
Motorman (runs motor on street car).....	_____
Physician (practices medicine).....	_____
Plumber (fits and repairs gas and water pipes, bathroom fixtures, etc.).....	_____
Soldier (private, U. S. Army).....	_____
Superintendent of schools (in a city of 50,000 inhabitants)....	_____
Traveling salesman (represents wholesale drug company).....	_____
Truck driver (drives a truck within the city).....	_____

INDIANA STATE TEACHERS COLLEGE
Terre Haute, Indiana

DATE _____

SEX _____

Circle your classification: Fresh. ___ Soph. ___ Jr. ___ Sr. ___ Grad. _____

YOUR FIRST MAJOR _____