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A Study of the Responses Given by Drop-Outs to the Drop-Out Questionnaire, and the Scale Question Form Used in the Project "Operation Second String High School Drop-Outs in Mattoon, Illinois"

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A STUDY OF THE RESPONSES GIVEN BY
DROP-OUTS TO THE DROP-OUT QUESTIONNAIRE,

AND THE SCALE QUESTION FORM USED IN THE
PROJECT "OPERATION SECOND STRING

(TITLE)

HIGH SCHOOL DROP-OUTS IN MATTOON, ILLINOIS"

BY

Alan D. Adamson
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INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this study is to determine certain characteristics of drop-outs in the Mattoon School system in Mattoon, Illinois, and how these characteristics compare with drop-outs from other areas. This is to be a descriptive study of the planning and procedure of "Operation Second String," a study conducted by Dr. William Crane and Dr. Curtis Garner in conjunction with Eastern Illinois University.

The school population of Mattoon High School comes from Mattoon and rural territory. Mattoon, population 20,000, is located in East Central Illinois. The group to be considered is from the Mattoon Community High School. In selecting those drop-outs to be contacted, research was completed back to the year 1958-1959. Only those students who were known to drop out and not transfer schools were contacted.

This project was carried out as a team effort with Eastern Illinois University graduate and undergraduate students taking part in its completion.

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Sources of Data

To have some grounds for comparison between the responses from the Mattoon drop-outs and drop-outs from other school systems, related research was summarized. The material available was obtained from Booth Library at Eastern Illinois University.

School Records

During the school year a progressive record is kept of the persons who leave the Mattoon school system. The records on these individuals are filed in the vault of the main office at Mattoon High School. A record is kept as to when the students dropped out and to any reason apparent for this drop-out.

In researching these records, Dr. William Crane, Mr. Joseph Rotter and the writer went to Mattoon High School and searched through these files for the information to be used in this and related studies.

In the beginning, there were one hundred and four students who could be termed drop-outs and were to be included in the report. After a check of address, it was found that eighty-five former students would be included in the study. The others were unable to be contacted because of changes in address, changes of name, leaving town, entering service, and apparent disappearance.

Questionnaire

The questionnaires were constructed by Dr. William Crane. Dr. Crane is a member of the Department of Education at Eastern Illinois University.

The questionnaires to be used were a Drop-Out Questionnaire, Scale Questions for Drop-Outs, Drop-Out Interview form, Employer Interview form, and a Teacher Interview form; an example of each has been included in the Appendix.

The phase covered by this study is concerned with the Drop-Out Questionnaire and Scale Question for drop-outs. Forty-six of these questionnaires were returned for a total of 54.1 per cent return.

Procedures for Administering the Questionnaire

Questionnaires were sent to individuals who had dropped out of high school in the last five years. A list was made up from school records.

Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter and a list of scale questions to be answered by the drop-out. The questionnaire lists possible reasons for leaving school. The scale questions are devised to be an analysis of certain personality characteristics of the drop-outs. A return, stamped envelope was included with the above material.

TREATMENT OF DATA

Research Material

The studies and reports were used to develop a basis for comparison between Mattoon and other area drop-outs.

School Records

The school records were used to obtain information and addresses of the drop-outs contacted by this study.

Questionnaire

The results of the questionnaire were tabulated and

are presented in Tables 2 and 3.

Definition of Terms

The term "Operation Second String" will refer to this study as it is presented in this paper. The term "related research" will pertain to the research material gathered as a means of comparison. The term "drop-out" will mean those students prematurely withdrawn from school for a reason or reasons other than graduation or transfer to another school system. The term "respondents" will apply to those drop-outs who returned the completed questionnaires.

Delimitations

Forty-six or 54.1 per cent of the questionnaires were answered and returned. The questionnaires were designed to be returned unsigned. This had its disadvantages in that non-respondents could not be checked and re-polled, but a follow up was made of all drop-outs not identifying themselves.

The answers received will have to be assumed valid. They may or may not be. It is assumed that the respond-

ents answered in an honest and straight-forward manner.

On the drop-out questionnaire, questions twenty-two, twenty-three, and twenty-six, have gone untabulated because of failure to respond to these questions.

It is to be understood that the chapter containing summary, conclusions and recommendations is based on this study, and one should take into consideration the limitations of this study during the interpretation of these facts.

Significance of the Problem

The National Citizens Commission for the Public Schools once expressed the educational belief characteristic of Americans in these words: "The goal of our public schools should be to make the best in education available to every American child on completely equal terms."[1]

The belief of this group is that all young people, whatever their capabilities, are educable in some manner

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[1]John F. Delaney, "That Vacant High School Seat," American School Board Journal, CXXI, November, 1950.

even into high school age, and that it is a public duty to provide that education in such a manner as to do as much as possible for pupils of the most diverse capabilities and interests.

One youth out of fourteen attended high school in 1890.[2] Today, due to compulsory attendance, all youths enter the ninth grade and about 80 per cent are found in some one of grades nine through twelve. However, only about three out of every five pupils who enter high school today remain long enough to graduate.[3] This would indicate that less than two thirds of our youth are receiving a complete high school education.

> On the average, the less competent a pupil has shown himself to be in meeting school tasks, the more quickly he is released to face adult problems. Those who will be least able to acquire socially useful habits, information, and points of view without formal instruction are those to whom the school has given least attention.[4]

Schools in the United States need the support of the public

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[2]Ibid.

[3]Ibid.

[4]Eckert and Marshall, When Youth Leave School, pp. 67-68.

in solving the problem of school drop-outs--"the great American tragedy of our times."[5]

Robert C. Taber, of the division of pupil personnel and counseling, School District of Philadelphia, predicted that 7,500,000 boys and girls will drop out of school during the next decade.[6] Thirty per cent of these 2,250,000, will have completed less than eight grades. "We are in error if we think the schools can solve this problem alone," Taber said.

Many school systems offer technical-vocational training for students who are not interested in going to college, Taber pointed out, but such courses generally require a minimum of eight or nine grades.[7] In the meantime, jobs are being upgraded to levels requiring higher skills.

Too many of these students drop out of our educational system and grow into adulthood unprepared for the roles

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[5]Science Digest, 52:32, July, 1962.

[6]American School Board Journal.

[7]Ibid.

they must play in civic affairs, in occupational endeavors, in family life, in recreational programs, and so on. They are, in other words, living evidence that we need to improve our program of public education if we are to improve our society.

CHAPTER II

RELATED RESEARCH

In order to gain insight into the characteristics of drop-outs related research was carried out. Presented below are characteristics to be compared with the Mattoon drop-outs.

As long ago as 1870, educators were writing about "the early school leaver." Even today, however, they are still not absolutely certain who is the typical drop-out. One recent study in Illinois described him in this way, "He is found to be consistently of low social status, below average intelligence, an academic failure, frequently absent from school, and often retarded."[8]

However, a major United States Department of Labor study reported that two-thirds of all drop-outs have I.Q.s in the normal intelligence range, and about one out of ten of all college potential students leave high school early.[9] These are drop-outs, not insignificant in number, who come from what one United States Office

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[8]Good Housekeeping, Vol. 154, March, 1962, p. 143.

[9]Ibid., p. 144.

of Education official calls "privileged" families.

Regardless of who he is, the drop-out, in general, faces a bleak job future compared to that of the high school graduate. A 1960 report by the Bureau of Labor Statistics stated,

> It takes longer for drop-outs to get their first jobs. The jobs they get initially aren't nearly as good, especially for girls, either in level of skill and earnings. This disparity increases over a comparatively short span of years. The amount of unemployment is much greater, and the rate of unemployment, at a given time, is unquestionably higher.[10]

From the book The Drop-Outs[11] come these facts:

1. Forty per cent of all children in the United States fail to complete high school; they are drop-outs.

2. It is not easy for these students to leave because family, school and community exert considerable pressure on children to complete their education and have mobilized an imposing array of facts to support their arguments.

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[10]U. S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, "From School to Work," The Early Employment Experiences of Youth in Seven Communities, March, 1960.

[11]The Drop-Outs, The Free Press of Glencoe, 1962, pp. 2, 3.

Ample evidence has been compiled to show that students who drop out harm themselves both culturally and economically.

3. Rarely do children who are successful in school leave prior to graduation.

4. The high school drop-out is usually a child who has failed in his general school adjustment. This failure is not necessarily a matter of a specific learning disability but rather a broader "educational" disability.

5. In most statistical studies somewhat more than half of the drop-outs have at least average intelligence. This half without question has the mental capacity to master a high school curriculum. Factors other than intelligence must certainly account for premature school-leaving among such adolescents.

In 1950 a summary of the Chicago area drop-outs was presented by the American School Board Journal.[12]

1. Of the drop-outs interviewed, only 19 per cent had a fair record of scholarship at the time of leaving; the others were failing in many or all subjects.

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[12]American School Board Journal.

Repeated absence from school is a common symptom of school leaving.

Schools in underprivileged areas reported 73 per cent of the drop-outs were frequently absent or truant prior to leaving school.

2. Few of the drop-outs participated in extra-curricular activities.

3. The number reporting employment as a reason for school leaving was so small that it is considered negligible.

4. The majority of the drop-outs were not aware of the real causes of their dissatisfaction.

5. Fewer than half of the drop-outs interviewed had promises of jobs prior to leaving school.[13]

The Bureau of Labor Statistics reports that the major single reason for leaving was "adverse school experiences." Low reading ability to the degree of not being able to master the required work was also listed.

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[13]The Early Employment Experience of Youth in Seven Communities.

Marriage was also a major reason given by this report.[14]

In August, 1962, the Journal of Educational Research published a study on drop-outs. Here are a few of the results.

1. The I.Q. scores of the students in the investigation had a marked relationship to success in school.

2. If the socio-economic background of the student in the study lacked "educational tradition" this factor would limit, to some extent, the motivation to succeed in school.

3. By their answers on the questionnaire, many of the boys and girls in the investigation revealed emotional difficulties that might be factors affecting their success in school.

4. Interest was by far the most important factor in determining whether the students liked or disliked a subject or a grade; the difficulty of the work, marks received, usefulness of the information, and personal aptitude seemed subordinate factors in the opinions of these students. The fun they had in school and the kind

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of teachers they had were the two other factors mentioned
most often by the students.

5. Factors affecting lack of success in school today
are very much the same as they were twenty years ago, in
spite of economic prosperity, modifications in school
curriculum, and increased school population. Further
educational research is indicated with greater emphasis
on why these are factors, rather than what the factors
are.[15]

From a study by Charles Morrison on the character-
istics of pupil drop-outs come these facts.[16]

> The potential drop-out is usually one who
> long before he has dropped out of school
> physically, has dropped out in spirit.
> He usually is not a juvenile delinquent,
> even though humiliation often makes him
> sullen or disobedient. In many cases he
> is retarded in reading and therefore has
> difficulty in learning from books or using
> words to express ideas. Teachers have left
> him alone rather than hold the entire class
> back. The boy's apathy toward education
> ends in truancy and low grades. By age
> sixteen he has dropped one to two years
> behind his classmates.

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[15]The Journal of Educational Research, Vol. 55,
#10, August, 1962.

[16]Charles W. Morrison, A Study of the Characteristics
of Pupil Drop-Out, July 14, 1961.

He is humiliated by the inability to keep
up and is usually larger and older than
the others in his class. Graduation for
him seems beyond reach. He finds reasons
to quit---"school's no good," or "I don't
like my teachers," or the real reason, "I'm
too far behind." At this age, a job, no
matter how unimportant, is a sudden badge
of manhood. The money it brings in will
buy importance.

In many cases there is little help at home.
Many parents praise "good money" and scorn
"book learning." Others do not care, and
frequently are not able to help. Many homes
are crippled by divorce, separation, sickness,
and poverty. The clear and unmistakable need
is to catch drop-outs early before the damage
is beyond repair.[17]

[17]Ibid.

DATA FROM QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONDENTS

Responses to the Drop-out Questionnaire

The questionnaires for the purpose of obtaining desired information from drop-outs were mailed to the 85 drop-outs for whom there was a mailing address. Table 1 represents the number and tabulation of the responses. Forty-six or 54.1 per cent of the total questionnaires were returned answered.

On these particular questionnaires there was no place to show sex, race, age or occupation of father and mother. This puts some limitation on the results that might have been useful for comparison. The questionnaire lists possible reasons for leaving school.

TABLE 1

Returned and Answered	46	54.1 per cent
Returned, wrong address	1	1.2 per cent
No response	38	44.7 per cent

Reasons for Leaving School

Most of the respondents indicated more than one

reason for leaving school. This study obtained a total
of 20 reasons for leaving. There were 211 responses to
these 20 reasons. Table 2 shows the reasons; the total
46, the number of questionnaires tabulated, is repre-
sentative of 100 per cent.

"I got married" was the most frequent response.
Fifteen or 32 per cent of the respondents indicated this
as their reason for dropping out.

"I didn't like school" was second with 13 responses
or 28 per cent.

"I wasn't learning anything" was third with 12
responses or 26 per cent of the total checked.

"School wasn't helping me" and "I wanted to earn
money for myself" were fourth in popularity with 10
responses or 21 per cent of the total number reached.

Nine people checked "I wanted to be on my own" as
the reason for dropping out. This accounts for 19 per
cent of the respondents.

Eight individuals indicated "I left to go to work",
"There were several teachers I didn't like," "I didn't
like the things I had to study," and "I wanted to get
away from home" as their reasons for leaving. Each of

these responses accounts for 17 per cent of those polled.

"I didn't like one teacher," "I had a job waiting for me," "There was too much English," "Most of school was a waste of time," "I wanted to learn a trade," "I went into the armed forces," and "I wanted to take some other kind of training" each received 6 responses or 15 per cent apiece.

"I didn't like the people in school," and "Everybody was doing better than I was" got 5 indications each for a total of 10 per cent.

"I left to look for a job," "I was pregnant," "I had to help at home," and "I wanted to start a family" each received 4 indications as the reason for leaving. This is 8 per cent.

Those reasons receiving 3 responses each were "One of my parents was sick," "I was sick," "School doesn't help you get a job," "Several of my friends left school," "I was just waiting to turn 16," "I was too old for the rest of the class I was in," and "I wanted to buy a car." These account for 6 per cent each.

Two people indicated that "I looked for a while

TABLE 2

DROP-OUT QUESTIONNAIRE

Question Number	Number of Responses	Per Cent of Respondents
1	13	28
2	6	15
3	8	17
4	8	17
5	4	8
6	6	15
7	2	4
8	15	32
9	4	8
10	4	8
11	2	4
12	3	6
13	2	4
14	3	6
15	5	10
16	8	17
17	5	10
18	1	2
19	3	6
20	6	15
21	1	2
22	0	0
23	0	0
24	10	21
25	1	2
26	0	0
27	3	6
28	12	26
29	3	6
30	6	15
31	6	15
32	10	21
33	3	6
34	9	19
35	8	17
36	4	8
37	3	6
38	6	15
39	6	15

before I found a job," "One of my parents left home,"
and "One of my parents died," as their reason for leaving
school. Two responses is equivalent to 4 per cent.

One individual checked "School was too easy;" one
checked "We were moving;" and one checked "There was
too much math." These account for 2 per cent.

As stated before, it can only be assumed that these
responses are honest, valid answers. The fact that the
drop-outs were not required to sign their names to the
questionnaires was meant to raise the validity of the
answers.

Scale Questions for Drop-Outs

The scale questions are devised to be an analysis
of certain personality characteristics of the drop-outs.
Each question is taken separately, and the responses
as given by the drop-outs are indicated.

1. Do you like to work by yourself or with other
people?

Of those who responded, 11 or 23 per cent indicated
they preferred to work by themselves. Thirty-five or
77 per cent indicated that they would rather work with

others. These answers may not be an accurate indication in that many other studies have pictured drop-outs as being somewhat more withdrawn and anti-social.[18]

2. Are you hot tempered, average, or quiet?

The responses to this question were: 9 or 19 per cent indicated they were hot tempered; 26 or 38 per cent selected the average response; and 9 or 19 per cent indicated they were quiet. Again one can take issue with this response. In no way can the drop-out group be considered an average group of students. Some problem has presented itself to these students, and they have chosen to leave school.

3. Do you get along with people well or not so well?

Forty-five or 97 per cent indicated they got along well with others. One or 3 per cent indicated he did not get along so well. This was a direct contradiction to statements made later in this form and in the previous drop-out questionnaire. Some indicated the reason for leaving school was because of some difficulty with a teacher. Some have also indicated, as in question 28 of

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[18]Ibid.

the questionnaire that they dislike more people than they like. One would be hesitant to say that this response is typical of drop-outs.

4. Is it hard for you to go on with your work if no one tells you you are doing a good job?

Eleven, or 23 per cent, of the respondents stated that it was hard for them to go on with their work. Thirty-five, or 77 per cent, indicated that it was not hard for them to continue work. It is generally accepted that people work better when some amount of praise is in evidence. Experiments with control groups point out that a group receiving praise for their work is more inclined to produce better work than a group that is left completely alone, or one that is given constant adverse criticism.[19] It is probable that this question was not answered objectively but rather as the respondent felt it should be answered.

5. Do you have trouble telling your friends when they do something you don't like?

The answers to this question were, for the most part,

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[19]Ibid.

rather equal. Twenty-six or 56 per cent answered yes and 20 or 44 per cent answered no. There was not enough difference to be significant, considering the size of the sample.

6. Is it hard for you to admit that you are wrong?

In response to this question 17 or 37 per cent indicated yes; 27 or 61 per cent indicated no. This may be quite true because several of the respondents wrote some sort of letter and sent it in with the questionnaires. With very few exceptions, they admitted they were wrong in dropping out of school.

7. Do you feel uncomfortable when you are alone with important people?

Twenty-eight or 63 per cent indicated yes; 16 or 34 per cent indicated no. This response seems true to form. Many of the drop-outs are from a low socio-economic status. This factor might tend to bring about feelings of inadequacy or lack of confidence and thereby induce a person to feel uncomfortable around figures that represent position or authority. A feeling of rebellion against authority might also enter here. Knowing that disciplinary action of some sort may be taken would tend to

make a person feel uncomfortable.

8. Do you feel discouraged when people do not appreciate you?

Twenty-nine or 63 per cent answered yes, and 17 or 37 per cent answered no. It is a rare individual who doesn't feel somewhat discouraged if he or his work is not appreciated. The majority of answers to this question should be yes if it were asked of any sampling of a population.

9. Do you day dream much?

The respondents were equally divided on this question. Twenty-three or 50 per cent said yes, and 23 or 50 per cent said no. From this response not much can be said concerning the Mattoon drop-out with reference to day dreaming.

10. Are there times when you just feel bad?

This response was rather heavily weighted in one direction. Thirty-nine or 84 per cent indicated that there were times when they just felt bad. Only 7 or 16 per cent indicated that they never did. The former would probably be a characteristic of a person who might tend to leave school, or any adolescent.

11. Do you sometimes feel alone when you are with people?

Thirty or 66 per cent indicated yes. Sixteen or 34 per cent indicated no. Other studies have shown that drop-outs, as a group, tend to be more withdrawn and occasionally hostile.[20] Being behind in reading ability and class work separates a person from his peers. Not having enough funds to participate in all school activities also widens the gap. Potential drop-outs can sometimes be identified if they are the quiet, withdrawn, sullen or "lone wolf" type of individual.

12. Do you get into trouble when it is not your fault?

The majority, though a slim one, gave a negative response to this question. Twenty or 43 per cent responded to the yes selection, and 26 or 57 per cent responded to the no choice. As a rule, drop-outs in the Mattoon area, as indicated by a study by Mr. Joseph Rotter in another phase of Operation Second String, were classified by over 100 teachers out of the 144 he contacted as trouble-

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[20] Ibid.

makers. It is entirely possible that drop-outs realize they don't get into trouble unless they bring it onto themselves. It is to be understood that not all drop-outs are troublemakers. Many feel that the school is not fulfilling their needs. However, when using a group as a general classification, the majority must be respected.

13. Did you feel bad about your grades in school?

Twenty-nine or 63 per cent of the respondents indicated that they felt bad about their grades. Seventeen or 37 per cent indicated that they did not feel bad. One respondent wrote in the margin that he was an honor student. The number that did feel bad, however, could have by now seen the value of a high school diploma in securing a good job. They may have been expressing regret that they didn't do better when they had the chance.

14. Do you think other people are happier than you?

This group was almost evenly divided. Twenty-one or 45 per cent said yes, and 25 or 55 per cent said no. It cannot be said, on the basis of this response, that the drop-outs are an unhappy group.

15. Are your feelings easily hurt?

As in the above question, the group is again almost

equal. Twenty-five or 55 per cent said yes, and 21 or
45 per cent said no. By a slim majority it might be said
the drop-outs tend to be somewhat more sensitive than
those who don't leave school. It could also be that not
being able to accept criticism or to construct proper
defense mechanisms against the opinions of others might
account for this response.

16. Do you worry a lot?

Twenty-nine or 63 per cent expressed a yes response
to this question. Seventeen or 37 per cent returned a no
to this response. This proportion would indicate that
the drop-outs worry a good deal and probably that they
should with the problems brought on in our complex society
by not finishing a high school degree.

17. Do you get upset when people criticize you?

Twenty-one or 45 per cent said yes. Twenty-five or
55 per cent said no. This question is related to question
15, "Are your feelings easily hurt?" The response to
that question was a direct opposite to this one. One
premise is that if your feelings are hurt easily, one of
the times a person would be most susceptable to hurt
feelings would be during a period of criticism.

18. Do you have trouble getting to sleep?

Twelve or 26 per cent said yes. Thirty-four or 74 per cent said no. Sleep does not seem to be a factor in the drop-out problem. One explanation might be that the jobs these people acquire demand hard work and long hours. After a hard day's work, very few people have trouble getting to sleep.

19. Do you have trouble telling people what to do?

Nineteen or 41 per cent said yes. Twenty-seven or 59 per cent said no. By the responses it can be assumed that these drop-outs can give orders if necessary. This seems contradictory to the usual conception of drop-outs.

20. Do you have a chance to show what you really can do?

Though the response to this was about even, 25 or 55 per cent indicated yes, and 21 or 45 per cent indicated no. The majority stated that they had a chance to show what they can do. This could mean that jobs which they now hold are satisfactory.

21. Do people come to you for advice?

Twenty-nine or 63 per cent responded with a yes.

Seventeen, or 37 per cent, responded with a no. Apparently other people respect their opinion to some degree. The very fact that they did drop out could possibly make them subject to questions from other students who are thinking about dropping out.

22. Do you have to do what other people decide most of the time?

Eighteen or 39 per cent said yes. Twenty-eight or 61 per cent said no. This seems to be slanted. Very few of the drop-outs own their own business or are in a position to tell others what to do. This could mean that they rebel to what friends, and parents tell them. They may be unwilling to accept advice or criticism from others. It would seem that this might be wishful thinking. The validity of this response is in doubt.

23. Do you have trouble saying what you feel?

Those who chose yes numbered 20 or 43 per cent. Those who chose no numbered 26 or 57 per cent. The group was about evenly divided on this question.

24. Do you have the chance to go out as much as you like?

Twenty-nine of the 63 per cent said yes while 17 or

37 per cent said no. It would seem that there was plenty

of opportunity for the drop-outs to have some form of

recreation. The majority of the respondents indicated

this to be true.

25. Do you feel that your responsibilities keep you

tied down?

The majority answer to this question would indicate

that the drop-outs are free and mobile. Only 10 or 21

per cent indicated yes while 36 or 79 per cent indicated

no. Apparently they are the masters of their time or have

no responsibility.

26. Have you often thought that you would have been

better off in some other family?

This is a searching question. To turn your back on

your family may be the result of extreme abuse. Thirteen

or 28 per cent said yes. Thirty-three or 72 per cent

said no. Even though there were problems of a magnitude

to induce school leaving, the majority of the respondents

indicated they were satisfied to belong to their respective

family groups.

27. Do you belong to some organization: Are you an

officer?

Of the 10 or 21 per cent of those respondents who were in an organisation, 2 or 4 per cent were officers. Thirty-six or 79 per cent were not in any organization. Numerous other studies have pointed out the fact that drop-outs, for the most part, were engaged in few extra-curricular activities or organizations. This response would aid in validating that premise.

28. Do you dislike more people than you like?

Eight or 17 per cent of the respondents indicated yes for their answer. Thirty-eight or 83 per cent indicated no. This would lead us to believe the Mattoon drop-outs were tolerant of their peers and others. To compare this response with question 3 is to find similar results. From their reaction, the drop-outs appear to have been socially well-adjusted. This doesn't follow the usual image of the high school drop-out.

29. Do you take a nap whenever you can?

Sixteen or 34 per cent replied yes. Thirty or 66 per cent replied no. It would appear that sleep was not an escape mechanism to the group. Having answered negatively to question 18, "Do you have trouble getting

to sleep," this would have been the expected response.

30. Would you rather not go to parties?

Again the responses seem to indicate that the respondents are quite social. Ten or 21 per cent said they would rather not go to a party. Thirty-six or 79 per cent stated they would rather go to parties.

31. Should people break the law if it is unfair?

Six or 15 per cent said yes. Forty or 85 per cent said no. The sense of justice this group has seems to be weighted. One might expect the drop-out to feel threatened by the school or higher authority and to answer in a negative way to this question. They seem to have a distinct faith in law and justice.

32. Is it necessary to be friendly to new neighbors?

The trend to sociability is apparent in this question also. Thirty-eight or 83 per cent said yes it is necessary while only 8 or 17 per cent said no it is not necessary. The author wonders again if some of the responses are as the drop-outs felt they should be and not as they actually are.

33. Does finding something give a person the right to keep it or sell it?

This question is related somewhat to question 31. It probes the moral character, the sense of right and wrong. The responses indicate that the respondents have a definite sense of what is right and what is wrong. Six or 15 per cent said yes, it is all right to keep it or sell it. Forty or 85 per cent said no.

34. Do you tell people off when they need it?

Twenty-seven or 59 per cent said yes. Nineteen or 41 per cent said no. The majority would tend to be rather verbal. This could also be a sign of agression or of being on the defensive. The responses to other questions regarding communicating with others have also shown that, as a group, the respondents can verbalize with others without any apparent problem.

35. Do you feel that if you are too dependable people do not appreciate it?

The results were evenly divided on this question. Twenty-three or 50 per cent said yes, and 23 or 50 per cent said no.

36. Do you give money to charities?

Twenty-eight or 60 per cent said yes. Eighteen or

40 per cent said no. The group is still consistent on moral and social standards. They seem to hold no ill feelings toward society.

37. Do you have to get mad sometimes in order to get what is coming to you?

Twenty-one or 45 per cent said yes while the small majority 25 or 55 per cent said no.

38. Do you think the government runs things too much?

Nineteen or 41 per cent said yes. Twenty-seven or 59 per cent said no. Though it is not indicated whether the government is state, local, or national, the majority is not concerned about the way things are being run.

39. Have you been in a fight recently?

Only 4 or 8 per cent said yes. Forty-two or 92 per cent said no. From the social responses the group has been giving, it would be expected that they should not be in situations where they might become engaged in a fight. Only in extreme cases does one seek violence as a way to solve a problem.

40. Are you doing the kind of work you like?

The number of drop-outs who are employed in the

Mattoon area is unusual. Twenty-six or 56 per cent stated they liked the kind of work they were doing. Eighteen or 42 per cent stated that they did not. Only 2 or 4 per cent are unemployed, and both are married females. This response is contradictory to a popular belief that most drop-outs have no job or a job that they do not enjoy.

41. Could you improve your working conditions?

Although satisfied with the jobs they hold, the majority of the respondents stated that they could improve their working conditions. Thirty or 66 per cent stated they could. Fourteen or 32 per cent said they could not, and two as stated above, were not working. This would seem to indicate that the majority are striving to better themselves by improving their working conditions.

42. Do you often have neighbors in to talk?

For the first time sociability is lacking in this response. Until now when a social situation was presented, the response was positive. The majority, though small, indicated a negative reaction to this question. Twenty-two or 47 per cent said yes while 24 or 53 per cent said no.

TABLE 3

SCALE QUESTIONS FOR DROP OUTS

Question Number	Yes	%	No	%
1	11	23	35	77
2	9	19	9	19
3	45	97	1	3
4	11	23	35	77
5	26	56	20	44
6	18	39	28	61
7	29	63	17	37
8	29	63	17	37
9	23	50	23	50
10	39	84	7	16
11	30	66	16	34
12	20	43	26	57
13	29	63	17	37
14	21	45	25	55
15	25	55	21	45
16	29	63	17	37
17	21	45	25	55
18	12	26	34	74
19	19	41	27	59
20	25	55	21	45
21	29	63	17	37
22	18	39	28	61
23	20	43	26	57
24	29	63	17	37
25	10	21	36	79
26	13	28	33	72
27	10	21	36	79
28	8	17	38	83
29	16	34	30	66
30	10	21	36	79
31	6	15	40	85
32	38	83	8	17
33	6	15	40	85
34	27	59	19	41
35	23	50	23	50
36	28	60	18	40
37	21	45	25	55
38	19	41	27	59
39	4	8	42	92
40	26	56	18	44
41	30	66	14	34
42	22	47	24	53
43	19	41	27	59

43. Would you rather have some other kind of job?

With relation to question 40 and 41, this question further validates the response that the drop-out group is satisfied with their occupations. Nineteen or 41 per cent said yes to the question while 25 or 55 per cent said no. Two as before mentioned are unemployed.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

Summary

The Problem

The purpose of this study was to determine certain characteristics of drop-outs in the Mattoon, Illinois, community and to compare the results with drop-out results from other areas.

The sample was taken from students as far back as 1958.

The sources of data to be considered were related research, a drop-out questionnaire, and a scale question form.

Certain delimitations have been outlined in Chapter I. Chapter II pointed up characteristics of drop-outs in other areas. This data is used as a basis for comparison in the conclusion. Chapter III is a tabulation and explanation of the data used in the study: the drop-out questionnaire and the scale question form.

Fifty-four per cent of the questionnaires were answered and returned. Forty-six per cent were not returned.

The largest factor affecting the drop out of students at Mattoon was "I got married". This would compare with one of the three major reasons given in any area:

1. adverse school experience

2. marriage

3. employment

The four next most important reasons were "I didn't like school," "I wasn't learning anything," "School wasn't helping me," and "I wanted to earn money for myself". These reasons do not mention reasons prevalent in other areas such as, failure of courses, truancy, bad home situation and absenteeism.

The personality characteristics are the surprising things in this study. The main areas concerned were how drop-outs relate to others, how they relate to themselves, and how they relate to their occupations.

In all areas, for the most part, the responses were those of "an average red blooded American youth".

It has been proved and accepted in numerous other studies that this ordinarily is not so. If one looks in Chapter II at the related research, it is clearly shown in

many other studies, including those cited in Chapter II,
that the drop-out has characteristics that are anything
but "average and red blooded". Granted, there are a few
students who are actually bored with school because it
does not meet their needs, but the average drop-out is
not this type of individual.

The results of the "Scale Question for Drop-Outs"
form were that the majority of the drop-outs were socially
well-adjusted, seemingly satisfied with themselves as a
person, and happy with their occupation. In the delimi-
tations it is stated that it was assumed the answers
would be honest and valid. Since we have no proof that
the opposite might be true, it is still assumed that the
questions were answered in an honest and sincere manner.
This being the case, the situation in the Mattoon area
is an unusual one indeed. When one looks at the related
research in Chapter II and compares the results, it can
be clearly observed that there are vast differences in
the concept of drop-outs, as there indicated, and the
image projected by this study. This might stem from the
fact that the responses we received were from well-

adjusted students who felt the school had nothing to
offer them and those who did not reply are the ones who
have the problems. These results might also mean that
the "Scale Question" form did not do the job for which
it was constructed and that a follow up letter and/or a
revised form of some sort should be used to question the
drop-outs again.

Conclusions

After having compared the data gathered from Mattoon
with the related research in Chapter II, the following
conclusions appear to be reasonable.

1. The drop-out questionnaire was answered with a
reasonable degree of accuracy and the reasons for school
leaving were similar to those in other areas. Those
reasons in order were:

    a. marriage

    b. lack of interest in school

    c. opportunity of employment

These compare positively to those reasons given by drop-
outs from other school districts as found in the related
research.

2. The "scale questions for drop-outs" form gave the surprising result that the drop-outs who responded to it were well-adjusted individuals. The answers received from the drop-outs indicated that they thought they had no personality problems, in regard to how they related to themselves, to others, and to their occupation.

3. This might be because the respondents who did return the "scale questions for drop-outs" form are well-adjusted and those who failed to respond are those students with the problems.

Dear Friend:

As a former student at Mattoon High School, we are asking for your help.

Since no school system is perfect, it seems reasonable to look at ours once in a while and try to make it better. There are a number of ways we can look at our school and one of them is to contact people like yourself.

We are asking teachers, employers, and former students for their opinions of the high school and its program. We are especially interested in your opinion because you did not graduate. You had your own reasons for leaving school. We would like to know about them and about your feelings in respect to Mattoon High School, its program, and its people.

In order to add to the information we have, will you please fill out both forms included with this letter? The Questionnaire will give us an idea of why you left school. Just answer the questions that seem to fit your reasons for leaving school. Read over all the statements first and then check those which apply to you. The scale questions are supposed to get at your feelings about the school, about yourself, and about others.

When you have checked answers on both forms, put them in the enclosed envelope and send it to us.

Yours sincerely,

William J. Crane
Survey Director

Enclosures

DROP-OUT QUESTIONNAIRE

Please check the statement which most closely seem to be your reasons for leaving school.

_____ 1. I didn't like school.

_____ 2. I didn't like one teacher.

_____ 3. There were several teachers I didn't like.

_____ 4. I left to go to work.

_____ 5. I left to look for a job.

_____ 6. I had a job waiting for me.

_____ 7. I looked for a while before I found a job.

_____ 8. I got married.

_____ 9. I was pregnant.

_____10. I had to help at home.

_____11. One of my parents left home.

_____12. One of my parents was sick.

_____13. One of my parents died.

_____14. I was sick.

_____15. I didn't like the people in the school.

_____16. I didn't like the things I had to study.

_____17. Everybody was doing better than I was.

_____18. School was too easy.

_____19. School doesn't help you on a job.

_____20. There was too much English.

_____21. There was too much math.

_____22. My parents didn't want me to go to school.

_____23. There was too much history.

_____24. School wasn't helping me any.

_____25. We were moving away.

_____26. There was too much science.

_____27. Several of my friends left school.

_____28. I wasn't learning anything.

_____29. I was just waiting to turn 16.

_____30. Most of school was a waste of time.

_____31. I wanted to learn a trade.

_____32. I wanted to earn money for myself.

_____33. I was too old for the rest of the class I was in.

_____34. I wanted to be on my own.

_____35. I wanted to get away from home.

_____36. I wanted to start a family.

_____37. I wanted to buy a car.

_____38. I went into the Armed Forces.

_____39. I wanted to take some other kind of training.

SCALE QUESTIONS FOR DROP-OUTS

1. Do you like to work by yourself or with other people?

2. Are you hot-tempered,   average,   or quiet?

3. Do you get along with people well   not so well?

4. Is it hard for you to go on with your work if no one tells you you are doing a good job?   Yes   No

5. Do you have trouble telling your friends when they do something you don't like?   Yes   No

6. Is it hard for you to admit that you are wrong?   Yes   No

7. Do you feel uncomfortable when you are alone with important people?
                                                                Yes   No

8. Do you feel discouraged when people do not appreciate you?   Yes   No

9. Do you day-dream very much?   Yes   No

10. Are there times when you just feel bad?   Yes   No

11. Do you sometimes feel alone when you are with people?   Yes   No

12. Do you get into trouble when it is not your fault?   Yes   No

13. Did you feel bad about your grades in school?   Yes   No

14. Do you think other people are happier than you are?   Yes   No

15. Are your feelings easily hurt?   Yes   No

16. Do you worry a lot?   Yes   No

17. Do you get upset when people criticize you?   Yes   No

18. Do you have trouble getting to sleep?   Yes   No

19. Do you have trouble telling people what to do?   Yes   No

20. Do you have a chance to show what you really can do?   Yes   No

21. Do people come to you for advice?   Yes   No

22. Do you have to do what other people decide most of the time?   Yes   No

23. Do you have trouble saying what you feel?   Yes   No

24. Do you have the chance to go out as much as you would like?   Yes   No

25. Do you feel that your responsibilities keep you tied down?   Yes   No

26. Have you often thought that you would have been better off in some other family?   Yes   No

27. Do you belong to some organization?   Yes   No Officer?   Yes   No

28. Do you dislike more people than you like?   Yes   No

29. Do you take a nap whenever you can?   Yes   No

30. Would you rather not go to parties?   Yes   No

31. Should people break the law if it is unfair?   Yes   No

32. Is it necessary to be friendly to new neighbors?   Yes   No

33. Does finding something give a person the right to keep it or sell it?

                                                              Yes   No

34. Do you tell people off when they need it?   Yes   No

35. Do you feel that if you are too dependable people do not appreciate it?   Yes   No

36. Do you give money to charities?   Yes   No

37. Do you have to get mad sometimes in order to get what is coming to you?

                                                              Yes   No

38. Do you think the government runs things too much?   Yes   No

39. Have you been in a fight recently?   Yes   No

40. Are you doing the kind of work you like to do?   Yes   No

41. Could you improve your working conditions?   Yes   No

42. Do you often have neighbors in to talk?   Yes   No

43. Would you rather have some other kind of job?   Yes   No

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