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ABSTRACT OF APPLIED PROJECT

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1977

CAREER EXPECTATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
IN TWO SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS

ABSTRACT OF APPLIED PROJECT

An applied project submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree of Education Specialist  
at Morehead State University.

by

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ABSTRACT OF APPLIED PROJECT  
CAREER EXPECTATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS  
IN TWO SELECTED HIGH SCHOOLS

Director of Applied Project: Dr. Lawrence Griesinger

Purpose of the Project:

The purpose of this investigation was to determine if there were any significant differences in career plans between twelfth grade females in an Appalachian area school and those of the same grade level in a selected non-mountain school, and between males in the same two schools, as revealed through a questionnaire study.

Hypothesis:

There is no significant differences in career plans between male high school seniors in the two schools, and between female high school seniors in the same two schools.

Assumptions:

It was assumed that administering of the questionnaire by school personnel at the respective schools would not significantly affect the outcome of this study.

It was assumed that student absences on the day the questionnaire was administered would be of equal importance in each school.

It was assumed that students would know what their career expectations were and would answer the questionnaire realistically.

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Limitations:

Specific career education programs, or lack of them, in the two schools were not considered.

Socio-economic factors of students and/or schools were not included.

Methods of Procedure:

The primary method to determine career aspirations was the use of a student questionnaire. Administrative personnel in the two schools conducted the questionnaire and returned them to the investigator.

Data collected were analyzed for similarities and/or differences between the two groups of respondents. Percentage finding was important as comparisons were made between the two schools for like and unlike responses. The polygon and histogram were used to give a ready understanding of the collected data. The chi-square test of significance was used to determine the extent of difference in the career choices of the two schools.

Findings:

There were twenty-two different careers chosen by the forty-two males at Salyersville High School and thirty-four males at Paint Valley selected nineteen different careers. More males from Salyersville expected to become auto mechanics while a military career was most often selected by the Paint Valley males.

There were fourteen different careers chosen by the twenty-nine females from Salyersville and seventeen careers selected by the thirty-two females from Paint Valley. The career chosen most often by females

from Salyersville was cosmetology, while the career selected most frequent by the Paint Valley females was teaching.

All the males in the study planned to have some kind of formal employment, either at present or in the future. However, there were four females who planned to become full time housewives rather than seek any type of gainful employment.

At Salyersville the same number of males chose vocational school as selected college whereby they may prepare for a vocation. The largest group of males from Paint Valley planned to pursue college training while the second largest number planned to immediately enter the job market.

More females from Salyersville planned to attend vocational school to prepare for a career, while the greater number of females from Paint Valley chose to attend college before entering the permanent work force.

Making comparisons of the career expectations between the two schools is made difficult due to the many careers selected by only one person. There were a total of seventy-two different careers chosen by the students in the study and twenty-four of them were selected by only one respondent.

There were several instances of students choosing identical careers but not planning to meet requirements for the actual employment in the same way. For instance, some females expected to prepare for

cosmetology at vocational school while others looked to college to prepare for the same vocation.

Conclusions:

To determine the extent of difference in career aspirations between students in the two schools the chi-square test of significance was applied to the collected data. According to this test there was a significant difference in the career plans of the males in the study, but no significance in the future plans of the females. The chi-square results are based on the .05 level of significance.

Based upon the above findings the original hypothesis was valid for the females in the study group, but invalid for the males.

Accepted by:

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APPLIED PROJECT

Charlotte Watkins Gillum, M.A. in Education

Graduate School

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APPLIED PROJECT

An Applied Project Presented to  
Faculty Committee of the School of Education

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Dr. Lawrence Griesinger, Chairman

In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
Education Specialist

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Charlotte Watkins Gillum

May 1977.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Upon leaving high school adolescents may follow any one of a number of career possibilities. Among the many choices are military service, the labor force, vocational training, or higher education. The importance of a wise career decision needs to be stressed in light of the fact that for the average American some one-half of his working hours will be spent in gainful employment.

Former United States Commissioner of Education, Sterling M. McMurrin, stressed very emphatically the importance of the Puritan work ethic to our way of life when he wrote:

I think that notwithstanding the incredible possibilities of our technology, our movement toward a welfare state, or the current breakdown of many of our traditional values, it is unthinkable that in any foreseeable future we can sustain our economy without a large part of the population engaged in some kind of productive work.<sup>1</sup>

Regarding career choice there have been differences of opinion as to the career aspirations of mountain youth as opposed to non-mountain young people. This paper was concerned with the vocational expectations of twelfth graders in two selected senior high schools. The two schools chosen are Salyersville High School in mountainous

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<sup>1</sup> Larry McClure and Carolyn Buan (ed.), Essays on Career Education. (Portland, Oregon: Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory, 1973), p. 21.

eastern Kentucky and Paint Valley Local Senior High School in rural southern Ohio.

Salyersville High School is a senior high school for grades nine through twelve located in Magoffin County, Kentucky. It is the only high school in the county and had a 1975-1976 enrollment of 725, 86 of which were seniors. There were 30 faculty members during the school year for a teacher/student ratio of one to twenty-four.

The Salyersville school is an outgrowth of the old Magoffin Baptist Institute which sold its facilities to the county in the nineteen thirties. In 1952 Royalton High School was merged with the Salyersville institution at which time the latter became the only high school in the county.

In 1969 and again in 1970 there were major fires which totally destroyed two academic/physical education facilities at the Salyersville school and severely limited classroom space. Since the fires approximately fifty per-cent of the classes have been held in mobile units.

The Paint Valley Local school, located in Bainbridge, Ohio, was built in 1958 and was a consolidation of three local townships in Ross County, Ohio. The three townships combined to form the school are: Paint; Paxton and Twin. There are seven other high schools in Ross County which includes populous Chillicothe. While there are a number of industrial areas in the county, Paint Valley Local, with its relatively modern physical plant, is located in one of the most rural areas of the county.

During the 1975-1976 school year there were approximately 356

students in grades nine through twelve, which comprises Paint Valley Local Senior High School. Of that total number of students 78 were seniors. There were 20 teachers for a teacher/student ratio of one to eighteen.

Salyersville High School permits students to complete requirements for graduation before eight full semesters. At the end of the fall semester of the school year covered in this study there were some thirty "early graduates" who did not figure in this study. Paint Valley Local High School does not permit early completion of requirements for graduation.

Students at Paint Valley Local High School have a nearby vocational school where they may take career development courses as part of their regular class requirements.

The two schools being studied are located in areas that are similiar in the fact that both are heavily agricultural. The Ohio area has a large concentration of truck farms while in Magoffin County there are many small farms which raise tobacco as a primary cash crop.

While the standard of living may vary somewhat from one section of the country to another, wherever one lives his choice of career will undoubtedly have an effect on the quality of life he and his family will experience. Therefore, the career aspirations of the young people in this study should be revealing as to the quality of life each may expect to enjoy.



## THE PROBLEM

### Statement of the Problem

It was the purpose of this investigation to determine if there were any significant differences in career plans between twelfth grade females in an Appalachian Mountain area school and those of the same grade level in a selected non-mountain school, and between males in the same two schools.

### Rationale

For more than three hundred years work has been of great importance to the basic growth and development of both colonial America and of the United States. Just to what extent two defined groups of young people expect to contribute to the labor market will be an important aspect of this investigation.

### Hypothesis

There is no significant differences in career plans between male high school seniors in the two schools, and between female high school seniors in the same two schools.

### Definition of Terms

Career education - structured guidance to help people realize the job opportunities that are open to them.

Career expectations - that gainful employment one hopes to engage in upon entering the labor market.

Guidance counselor - that person in a given school system whose primary responsibility it is to help young people make educational and occupational decisions.

Vocation, occupation, career, job, work - these terms will be used synonymously to refer to that position which one fills while gainfully employed.

### Assumptions

It was assumed that administration of the questionnaire by school personnel at the respective schools would not significantly affect the responses of the students.

It was assumed that student absences on the day the questionnaire was administered would be of equal importance in each school.

It was assumed that students would have formed opinions regarding their career expectations and would answer the questionnaire realistically.

### Limitations

Specific career education programs, or lack of them, in each school were not included.

The scope of this research did not include socio-economic factors of students and/or schools involved.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The process of choosing a vocation has been studied by researchers in education, sociology and psychology. These studies have revealed a number of theories suggesting factors which bring the young person to his initial choice of career. Psychological theories tend to stress personality factors while the sociological and educational theories emphasize the social environment.

One psychological theory was formulated by Eli Ginsberg and associates in 1951.<sup>2</sup> In effect, this theory espouses the idea that career choice is a compromise between what one wants to do and the opportunities available in his environment.

The sociological and educational theories tend to stress the social environment while not denying the importance of personality factors. The theoretical frame within which the sociologist works was illustrated by Slocum when he wrote:

The adolescent's decisions may be influenced by acceptance of particular persons as role models, and by overt recognition of his achievements and potential by his parents, teachers, or other persons who are significant to him. In addition, the aspirations of a student may be influenced by his self-concept. Finally, educational and occupational aspirations may be influenced by perception of social circumstances, such as

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<sup>2</sup>Eli Ginsberg and others, Occupational Choice, An Approach to a General Theory. (New York: Columbia University Press, 1951).

the occupational opportunity structure and the availability of financial support for education.<sup>3</sup>

The sociologist also gives attention to social class in studying vocational choice of young people. A number of studies have focused on social class background as well as the social class future of the young person. The importance of this aspect was summarized by Baldock who wrote, "The vocational aspirations of the adolescent have important consequences for his rank in the system of stratification."<sup>4</sup>

Professor John Holland attempted to explain some factors which were responsible for vocational aspirations of adolescents.<sup>5</sup> In this study Holland assumed that the individual faced with a variety of environmental factors tended to develop a "hierarchy of orientations" which were congruent with his personality. Also, Holland concluded that the manner in which one fulfills that certain level of orientation is dependent upon what one knows about occupations.

There are several features of the school which influence the vocational opportunities of its students. Some of these features are the curriculum, school facilities, quality and qualifications of staff members as well as the socio-economic composition of the pupils.

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<sup>3</sup>W.L. Slocum, "The Influence of Reference Group Values on Educational Aspirations of Rural High School Students," Rural Sociology, 32:207-277, 1967.

<sup>4</sup>C.V. Baldock, Vocational Choice and Opportunity. (Christchurch, New Zealand: University of Canterbury, 1971).

<sup>5</sup>J.L. Holland, "Some Explanations of a Theory of Vocational Choice," Psychological Monographs, 76:545, 1962.

A number of researchers have conducted surveys on the social class composition of schools. One of particular interest was done in 1959 by Wilson who studied residential segregation in San Francisco as it affected vocational plans of high school boys.<sup>6</sup> Wilson concluded from his research that the dominant class climate of each school had an influence on the vocational aspirations of all students, whatever their own background.

Analysis of research by Baldock also suggested that students at private schools, who come from upperclass families are most likely to have high aspirations.<sup>7</sup> Baldock's research revealed that some two-thirds of the upper class boys at private schools want high-ranking jobs, as compared to about one-half of the boys from their same socio-economic level who attend public schools. Baldock concluded that, "In fact, students from all strata are affected by attendance at private schools."<sup>8</sup>

The population of the community in which young people live is an important factor in choosing a vocation which has been studied frequently. In an often cited research project in 1961 Burchinal reported in Rural Sociology that farm residency had a negative relationship to occupational aspirations, at least aspirations to high prestige occupations.<sup>9</sup> Burchinal

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<sup>6</sup>W.B. Wilson, "Residential Segregation of Social Classes and Aspirations of High School Boys," American Sociological Review, 24:836-845, 1959.

<sup>7</sup>Baldock, op. cit., pp. 116-117.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid.

<sup>9</sup>L.G. Burchinal, "Differences in Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Farm, Small Town and City Boys," Rural Sociology, 26:107-121, 1961.

studied the educational and occupational aspirations of farm, small-town (population 4,800) and city (population 260,000) boys. The farm subjects, whether they intended to pursue a career in farming or not, sought the lower level occupations and had lower educational plans.

It was suggested by several authors, including Burchinal, that low aspirations of rural and small-town young people were due to factors such as limited opportunity for specialized training as well as the class structure of the community. Whyte wrote in 1967 that rural and small-town residents are more likely to come from a low socio-economic background and have parents with educational levels lower than the average urban parent.<sup>10</sup> Furthermore, Whyte concluded that urban youth are likely to receive more encouragement and support for careers that require higher education from their parents than are rural and small-town youth.

Young people who are reared in a working-class family but have high vocational aspirations are usually those who have extensive contacts with persons from middle-class backgrounds. This conclusion was reached by Jackson and Marsden in a 1966 study in which they also suggested that rural and small town youth are handicapped in that they have little chance to select friends with high socio-economic status because of the general absence of institutions with middle-class values.<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>10</sup>D.R. Whyte, "Social Determinants of Inter-Community Mobility: An Inventory of Findings," Canadian Review of Sociology and Anthropology, 4:1-24, 1967.

<sup>11</sup>B. Jackson and D. Marsden, Education and the Working Class. (Harmondsworth: Penquin Books, 1966).

Powell and Bloom studied vocational plans in grades 10 through 12 in an attempt to discover what forces influenced career choices.<sup>12</sup> Some interesting results of their study were: (1) Some 65% of the boys and 70% of the girls expressed an interest in entering professional occupations and 63% of the combined group "expected" to enter the occupation they preferred. (2) Both groups said special interest in the particular field was the primary reason for their choice, but for the boys the second most important reason for their choice was financial security while for the girls it was service to others. (3) 40% of both boys and girls said no one had influenced their career choice. For those who felt they had been influenced boys most often gave their father as the influential person while girls more frequently gave a relative other than parents as their primary influencing agent.

The Powell and Bloom study gave some factors that were influential in making career choices. However, area of residence, which is of major importance to this particular project, was not considered.

In 1967 Stevic and Uhlig dealt with geographic area rather than size or type of community.<sup>13</sup> Their study was concerned with career plans of Appalachian youth in five homeroom classes (total number of students

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<sup>12</sup>M. Powell and V. Bloom, "Development of and Reasons for Vocational Choice of Adolescents through the High School Years," Journal of Educational Research, 56:126-133, 1962.

<sup>13</sup>R. Stevic and G. Uhlig, "Occupational Aspirations of Selected Appalachian Youth," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 45:435-439, 1967.

not given) in a small school in southeastern Kentucky. These homeroom students were given the Occupational Aspiration Scale and data collected from these classes were compared with students in Ohio - both native and immigrant Ohioans. On this particular scale it was found that the Kentucky students had significantly lower aspirations than did Ohio natives or Ohio immigrants.

The above authors examined the careers most and least desired by the Kentuckians. In five of eight cases the students chose jobs which were lower in prestige over the higher ranking jobs. Two examples given were of students preferring to be a filling station attendant over a supreme court judge and choosing to be a farm hand over a county judge. One would need to be cautious in drawing conclusions from this study. Whether this is proof of Appalachian students in general having lower aspirations, or even in this specific study, is of course a matter of interpretation. The authors concluded from their research that Appalachian youth may have restricted information about career options which accounts for their lower aspirations.

In a dissertation research project in 1970 Mr. D.W. Bogie studied the career aspirations of 1,835 high school seniors from three rural areas of Kentucky.<sup>14</sup> The study population consisted of a low

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<sup>14</sup>D.W. Bogie, "Sociocultural Differences Among Three Areas in Kentucky as Determinants of Educational and Occupational Aspirations and Expectations of Rural Youth," (Doctoral dissertation, University of Kentucky, 1970):



income agricultural region in the eastern portion of the state, a prosperous agricultural region of central Kentucky and a semi-rural area in western Kentucky. Mr. Bogie contradicted the Stevic and Uhlig findings with his conclusions, one of which was that the area did not appear to affect the vocational choices/expectations of the study group. Rather, Dr. Bogie asserted that family socioeconomic status and measured intelligence level of the students had a significant bearing on career plans of the students.

Mr. Bogie's findings were almost identical to a study conducted in 1956 which dealt with high school seniors in Michigan.<sup>15</sup> In the latter research Youmans declared that for his subjects social status was a more important variable in career planning than was the type of community, the school, work experience, allowance, or sibling position.

Stevic and Uhlig concluded that Appalachian youth may have less information about occupations that account for their lower aspirations, and Burchinal found that farm families were not as actively helpful in the vocational decision-making of their children as were urban parents. From these two studies one would be inclined to look for answers as to why lower occupational aspirations are found in a given area and what is involved in certain socio-economic classes that fosters higher career plans, as was found in Mr. Bogie's work.

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<sup>15</sup>E.G. Youmans, "Occupational Expectations of Twelfth Grade Michigan Boys," Journal of Experimental Education, 24:259-271, 1956.

Smelser conducted a longitudinal study of family socio-economic status in order to determine the importance of factors such as intellectual development on occupational choice.<sup>16</sup> This study covered a twelve year period. Smelser found that sons from "high status upwardly mobile" homes chose careers with the highest status and seldom varied in their choices,, while sons from "low status upwardly mobile" families ranked third in terms of prestige of jobs selected - but had greater variations in their choices than any group studied. Sons in "downwardly mobile" homes chose occupations with the lowest status. Also, this latter group varied least in their choices from their fathers occupations. It was also interesting that this group changed jobs significantly fewer times than sons from low status families.

Smelser's findings were based on data collected when the sons were eighteen and again at age thirty. Five categories of social mobility were found: (1) High status upwardly mobile, (2) Low status upwardly mobile, (3) High status stationary, (4) Low status stationary, and (5) Downwardly mobile.

Several studies have been conducted which found a relationship between intelligence (perceived and/or real) and career choice. In one of those studies Droege investigated young adults two years after high

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<sup>16</sup>W.T. Smelser, "Adolescent and Adult Occupational Choice as a Function of Family Socioeconomic History," Sociometry, 26:393-409, 1962.

school graduation and found job performance did correlate significantly with earlier intelligence scores.<sup>17</sup>

In 1966 Dauw tested the relationship between creativity and vocational choice.<sup>18</sup> He administered the Minnesota Tests of Creativity to seven hundred twelve senior boys and girls who were asked to indicate the career that they planned to enter. His results indicated that the highly creative boys chose careers in the service, organization, and general culture groups, while the boys with low creativity scores chose technological types of jobs. On the other hand, creative girls more frequently chose general culture and arts and entertainment types of jobs, but a significantly greater proportion of girls in the low creativity group chose organization types of jobs.

As early as 1948 Moser was using mental ability as a criteria to determine realism of career choice. Moser asked five hundred fifty California students to choose three careers that were of interest to them. The mental ability of the students was determined. By using average scores listed in the Examiners Manual for the Army Classification Tests the average intelligence scores for each of the occupations selected by the students were then computed. The rank order correlation was +0.81. Moser concluded:

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<sup>17</sup>R.C. Droege, "GATB Longitudinal Validation Study," Journal of Counseling Psychology, 15:41-47, 1968.

<sup>18</sup>D.C. Dauw, "Career Choices of High and Low Creative Thinkers," Vocational Guidance Quarterly, 15:135-139, 1966.

From the results obtained it is apparent that vocational interests and selections on the part of high school students do follow a general pattern; that is, vocations which require advanced professional training are generally selected by the students with high mental abilities, while occupations which require little or no academic training are selected<sup>19</sup> by students who have relatively lower mental abilities.

Moser believed that students do tend to make realistic career choices when mental ability is used as the criterion.

Nichols investigated career decisions of National Merit Scholarship Semi-Finalists from 1956-1963.<sup>20</sup> He collected data directly from forms filled out by the students. He found that in the six year period there was a decline in the number of male semi-finalists planning to enter engineering, the ministry, medicine and scientific research. However, there was an increase in the number of males planning to enter architecture, business, denistry, law, the military, proprietary occupations, public school teaching and college teaching. For males the largest areas of decline were engineering and scientific research, while the greatest increases were in college teaching and proprietary occupations. Female semi-finalists had decreases in business, engineering, medical technology, nursing, social work and public school teaching. An increased number of girls planned to enter homemaking, law, office work and college teaching.

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<sup>19</sup>W.E. Moser, "Vocational Preference as Related to Mental Ability," Occupations, 27:460-461, 1948-1949.

<sup>20</sup>R.C. Nichols, "Career Decisions of Very Able Students," Science, 144:1314-1319, 1964.

A more localized study of occupational preference of gifted students in Wisconsin was published in 1966.<sup>21</sup> The four year longitudinal study was undertaken primarily to determine the relationship between the preferences of gifted students and those of fathers, and thereby try to determine trends which might be apparent over a period of years. They found that more than two-thirds of the intellectually gifted students preferred professional occupations, and that there were no real differences in occupational choice between the sexes. They concluded that the fathers' occupation was not a factor in the students' choices since they tended toward the professional occupations regardless of family employment.

Interest is undoubtedly an important factor in vocational planning. However, Smith and Kingsley compared the inventories interests, using the Strong Vocational Interest Blank and expressed interests of sixty eleventh and twelfth graders and concluded that the relationship between the two types of interests is minimal.<sup>22</sup> These researchers concluded that the students in their study had many interests of which they were unaware. How to expose adolescents to vocations in which they have an unknown inclination is primarily a function of the career

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<sup>21</sup>R. Mowesian and others, "Superior Students' Occupational Preferences and Their Fathers' Occupation," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 45:238-242, 1966.

<sup>22</sup>L.M. Smith and W.M. Kingsley, "Some Observations on the Vocational Interests of Gifted Adolescents in an Intensive Summer Academic Experience," Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42:15-20, 1963.

development programs, which are usually under the direction of the guidance counselor, within a given school.

Work experience probably is a factor in career expectations of adolescents. However, Bateman found no difference in the interest patterns as measured by the Kuder-Preference Record between working and non-working students.<sup>23</sup> But, he did conclude that students who work have interests patterns that are more nearly associated with their vocational choices.

Peer group is another factor which has long been recognized as an important influence in almost all aspects of life during the adolescent years. Haller and Butterworth investigated the influence of peers upon occupational aspirations.<sup>24</sup> Interestingly, they concluded in their summary that the influence of interaction with peers upon career plans was inconclusive.

From the various studies cited it is clear that there is still much unknown about the process of vocational choice. One would surmise that there are probably many factors which contribute to the actual choosing of a vocation at all levels. It is probable that each

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<sup>23</sup> R.M. Bateman, "The Effect of Work Experience on High School Students' Vocational Choice," Occupations, 49:453-456, 1948.

<sup>24</sup> A.O. Haller and C.E. Butterworth, "Peer Influences on Levels of Occupational and Educational Aspiration," Social Forces, 38:295, 1960.

factor such as family background, intelligence, geographical location, interest and school attended, influences in varying degrees the choices of different individuals.

In conclusion, one may say that career choice is a result of what was possible within ones own abilities, interests and opportunities.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE AND FINDINGS

#### Procedure

The primary method used to determine career aspirations was the use of a student questionnaire (See Appendix A). The questionnaire was administered by James Donovan, Career Education Director at the Ohio school and by the senior homeroom teachers, under the supervision of principal Jack Allen, at the Kentucky school.

Questionnaires were mailed to Mr. Donovan in Ohio and were returned by mail while those used at Salyersville, Kentucky were hand delivered to and from Mr. Allen. Once the decision was made to conduct this investigation the two administrators mentioned above were approached concerning the possibility of using their students as the two study groups. Each man willingly gave his consent and was responsible for conducting the actual questionnaire.

The list of occupations for the investigation came from Occupational Outlook Handbook<sup>25</sup> which is commonly used by vocational counselors.

To insure against unforeseen problems with the questionnaire a "dry run" was conducted on February 18, 1976 when the identical questionnaire was administered to forty, eleventh graders at University

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<sup>25</sup>Occupational Outlook Handbook, United States Department of Labor, Bureau of Statistics, (Washington D.C.: United States Government Printing Office, 1973).



Breckinridge School in Morehead, Kentucky. The students in this survey had no apparent difficulty in answering the questions.

Administrative personnel in the two schools answered questions concerning specific enrollments and the development of the respective schools.

The data were analyzed for similarities and/or differences between the two groups of respondents. Percentage finding was extremely important to this investigation as comparisons were made between the two schools for like and unlike responses. Each item selected by both groups was analyzed and assigned a percentage value. (In each case percents were rounded off to the nearest whole number with .5 and above being assigned the next whole number. Below .5 was not counted in the lower whole number.)

The chi-square test of significance was applied to the collected data. The findings were analyzed separately for males and females.

The polygon and histogram were also used to give the reader a ready understanding of how two groups of respondents expect to engage in a particular career. Other types of figures and charts were included where it was felt they might contribute to the overall clarification of the study.

### Findings

There were twenty-two different careers chosen by the forty-two males at Salyersville High School (hereafter referred to as SHS) while the thirty-four males at Paint Valley Local High School (hereafter referred to as PVL) selected nineteen careers. More SHS males (24%) chose auto mechanic as their future career. Four of the thirty-four males from

PVL (12%) expected to be automobile mechanics. On the other hand, a military career was most often selected by the PVL males (24%), but was not expected to be the career of a single SHS male respondent.

There were fourteen different careers chosen by the twenty-nine females from SHS and seventeen careers selected by the thirty-two females from PVL. Seven of the twenty-nine females (24%) from SHS expected to enter the field of cosmetology while three of the thirty-two (9%) females from PVL expected to enter this field. The career chosen most often by the thirty-two PVL females was teaching (four females, 13%). Only one of the twenty-nine SHS females (3%) planned to enter the teaching profession.

Tables 1 and 2 give each career chosen and the number of respondents marking the given career. There is a separate table for male and female responses. While some of the careers are related in nature the responses are listed as given by the seniors.

Table 1. Specific Career Expectations of Males in the Study

Careers	Number Selected	
	SHS	PVL
Accountant	1	0
Air traffic controller	0	1
Any job available	0	2
Artist	1	0
Auto repairman/mechanic	10	4
Auto salesman	1	0
Barber	0	1
Biochemist	1	1
Business administration	2	0
Carpenter	3	1
Chiropractor	1	0
Clergyman	1	0
Construction worker	2	0
Draftsman	4	0
Economist	1	0
Electronics	1	0
Engineer	2	2
FBI agent	2	0
Forest ranger	0	1
Interior decorator	0	2
Ironworker	0	1
Lawyer	1	1
Military services	0	8
Musician	1	0
Pharmacist	0	1
Physician	2	1
Policeman	0	1
Politics	2	0
Radio broadcasting	0	1
Secretary	1	0
Teacher	0	2
Telephone repairman	0	1
Truck driver	1	0
Welder	1	2

Total careers - 22  
 Respondents - 42

Total careers - 19  
 Respondents - 34

Table 2. Specific Career Expectations of Females in the Study

Careers	Number Selected	
	SHS	PVL
"Anything"	0	1
Bookkeeper	0	1
Business administration	0	1
Business education	1	0
Cosmetology	7	3
Dental assistant	0	2
Fashion designer	1	0
Interior decorator	1	0
Journalism	1	0
Lawyer	1	0
Marry (housewife)	1	3
Medical assistant	0	3
Nurse	3	3
Physical therapist	3	0
Physician	1	1
Psychologist	0	2
Secretary	5	3
Social worker	0	1
Special education	2	0
Stenographer	0	1
Teacher	1	4
Television broadcasting	0	1
Typist	1	1
Waitress	0	1
Total careers - 14		Total careers - 17
Respondents - 29		Respondents - 32

All the males in the study planned to have some kind of formal employment, either at present or in the future. However, there were four females (one from SHS and three from PVL) who plan to become full time housewives rather than seek any type of gainful employment.

At SHS the same number of males chose vocational school (40%) as selected college whereby they may prepare for a vocation. The largest group (29%) of males from PVL plan to pursue college training while the second largest number (26%) plan to immediately enter the job market.

A rather large number of females from SHS (59%) plan to attend vocational school to prepare for a career while the second largest number of their female classmates (38%) plan to attend college. A plurality of the PVL females (44%) have chosen to attend college before entering a career. The second choice of this last group (28%) expect to begin an occupation immediately.

Tables 3 and 4, on the following page, show the immediate plans of the graduates in each school. Only 11% of the SHS graduates (an average of both sexes) intend to enter the labor market immediately - all of them male. However, when the responses for both sexes at PVL are averaged the result shows some 27% planning on seeking immediate employment. This figure is even more significant when one considers the number of males from PVL (24%) who plan to enter the military are not included in that 27%.

Table 3. Male Respondents Planning on Attending College, Vocational Training, Immediate Work Force or Military.

	College #	(%)	Vocational #	(%)	Work #	(%)	Military #	(%)	Total #
SHS:	17	(40)	17	(40)	8	(19)	0		42
PVL:	10	(29)	7	(21)	9	(26)	8	(24)	34

Table 4. Female Respondents Planning on Attending College, Vocational Training, Immediate Work Force or Military.

	College #	(%)	Vocational #	(%)	Work #	(%)	Marry (housewife) #	(%)	Total #
SHS:	11	(38)	17	(59)	0		1	(3)	29
PVL:	14	(44)	6	(19)	9	(28)	3	(9)	32

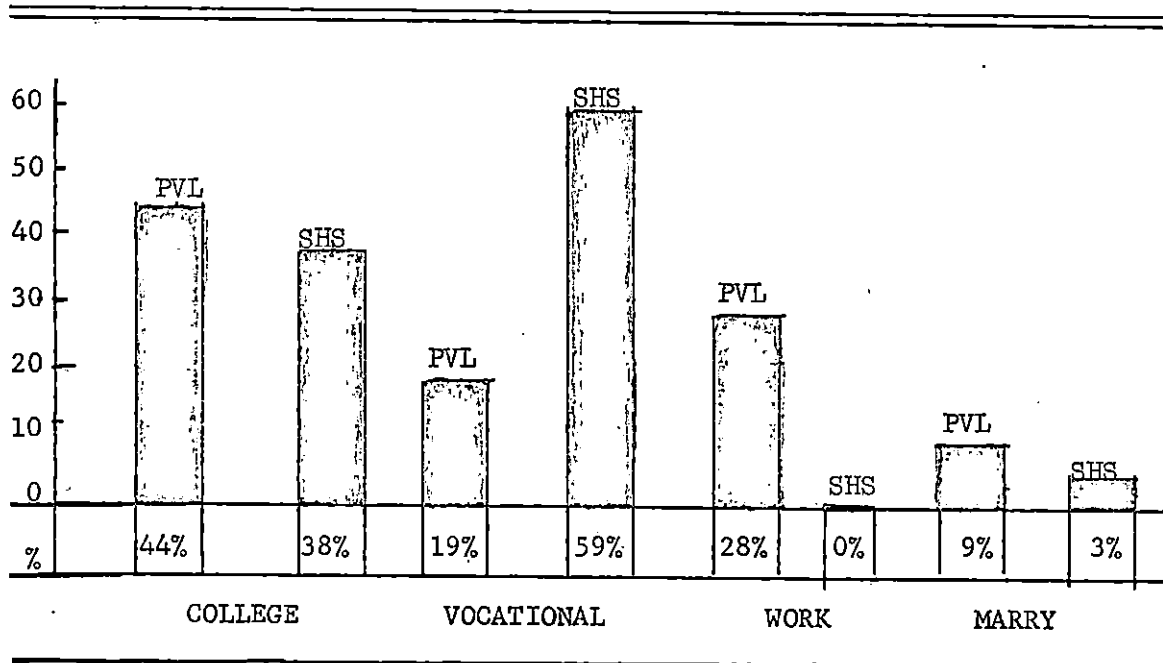


Figure 1. Comparative percentage findings regarding immediate plans of females in the two study groups

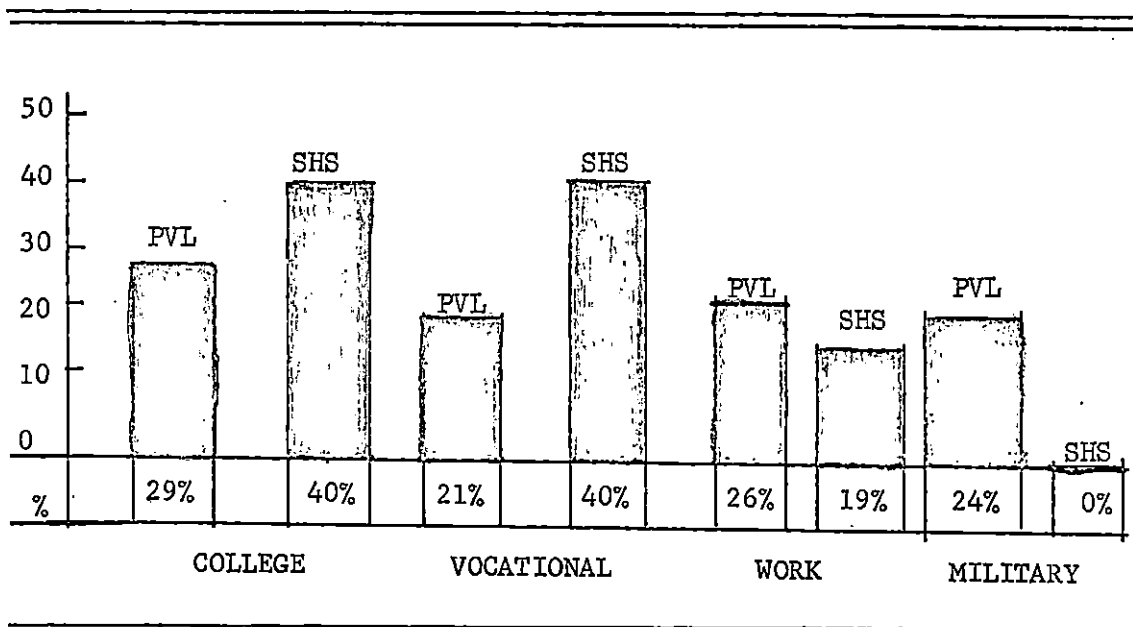


Figure 2. Comparative percentage findings regarding immediate plans of males in the study

Making comparisons of the career expectations between the two schools was difficult due to the many careers selected by only one student. There were a total of seventy-two different careers chosen by the students in the study and twenty-four of them (or, just over one-third) were selected by only one respondent. When the four separate groups of the investigation are taken alone and checked for careers receiving only one selection we find thirteen careers of the twenty-two voted on by the SHS males obtained only one vote. This was not the exception, but rather the rule. In fact, single selections outnumbered careers receiving multiple choices in each of the four categories.

The top selection in one group had little bearing on the top choices of the other categories. Figures 3,4,5 and 6 will clearly depict this. These Figures are polygon charts which enable one to quickly determine favorite careers in one group and to what extent, if any, they were chosen by another group of like sex.

For the PVL males the polygon listed the top seven selections of this category which are all the vocations receiving more than one choice. The top eight choices for the SHS males will be used for the same reason. In the two female categories there are five choices shown on the polygon for the SHS females and eight for the PVL females which are likewise all the multiple selection careers for the females.



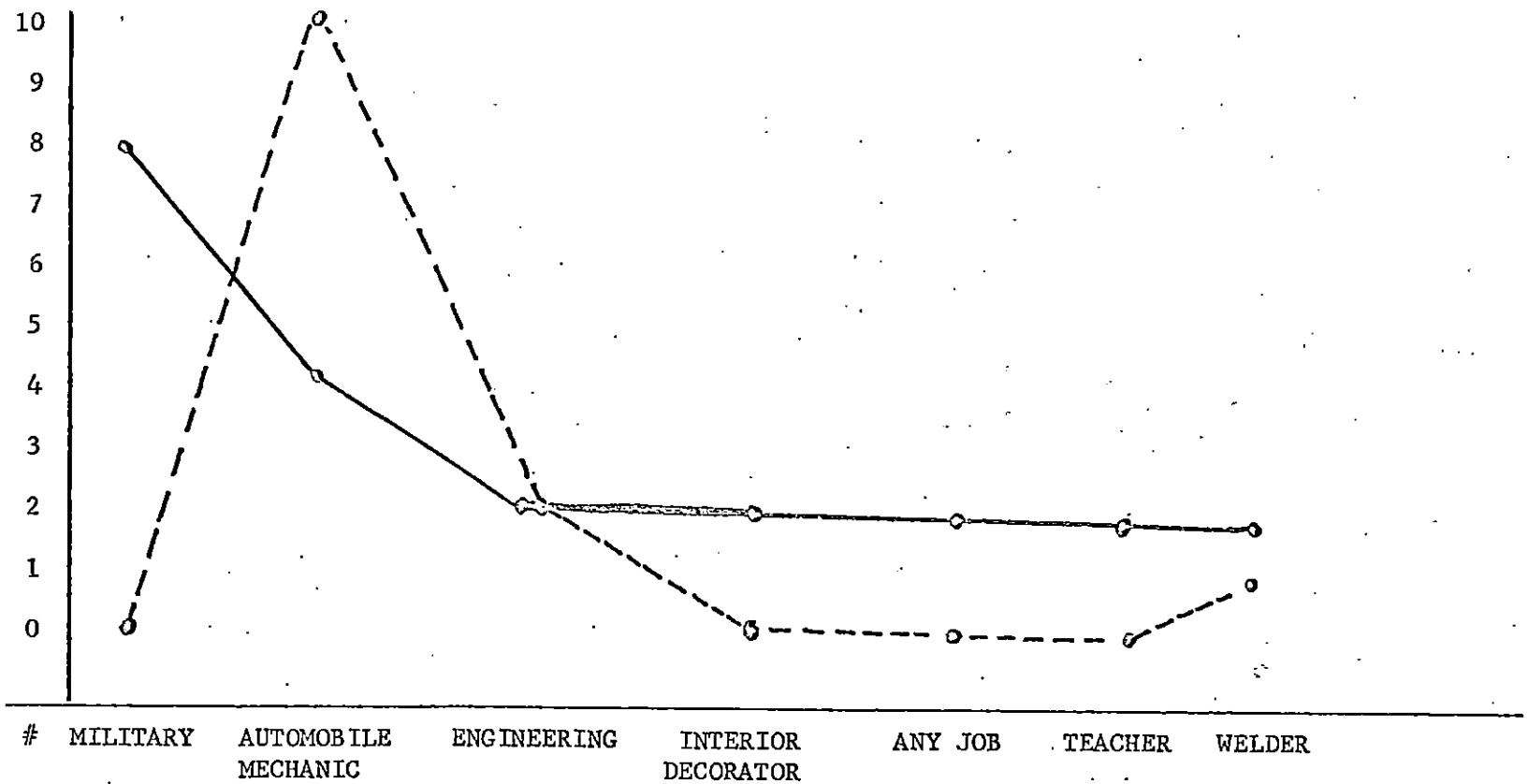


Figure 3. The top seven choices of the PVL boys are compared with how the SHS boys chose, or failed to choose, the same careers (This Figure shows number of choices, not percents. There were 34 young men in the PVL category and 42 from SHS)

The PVL boys are depicted by the \_\_\_\_\_

The SHS boys are depicted by the -----

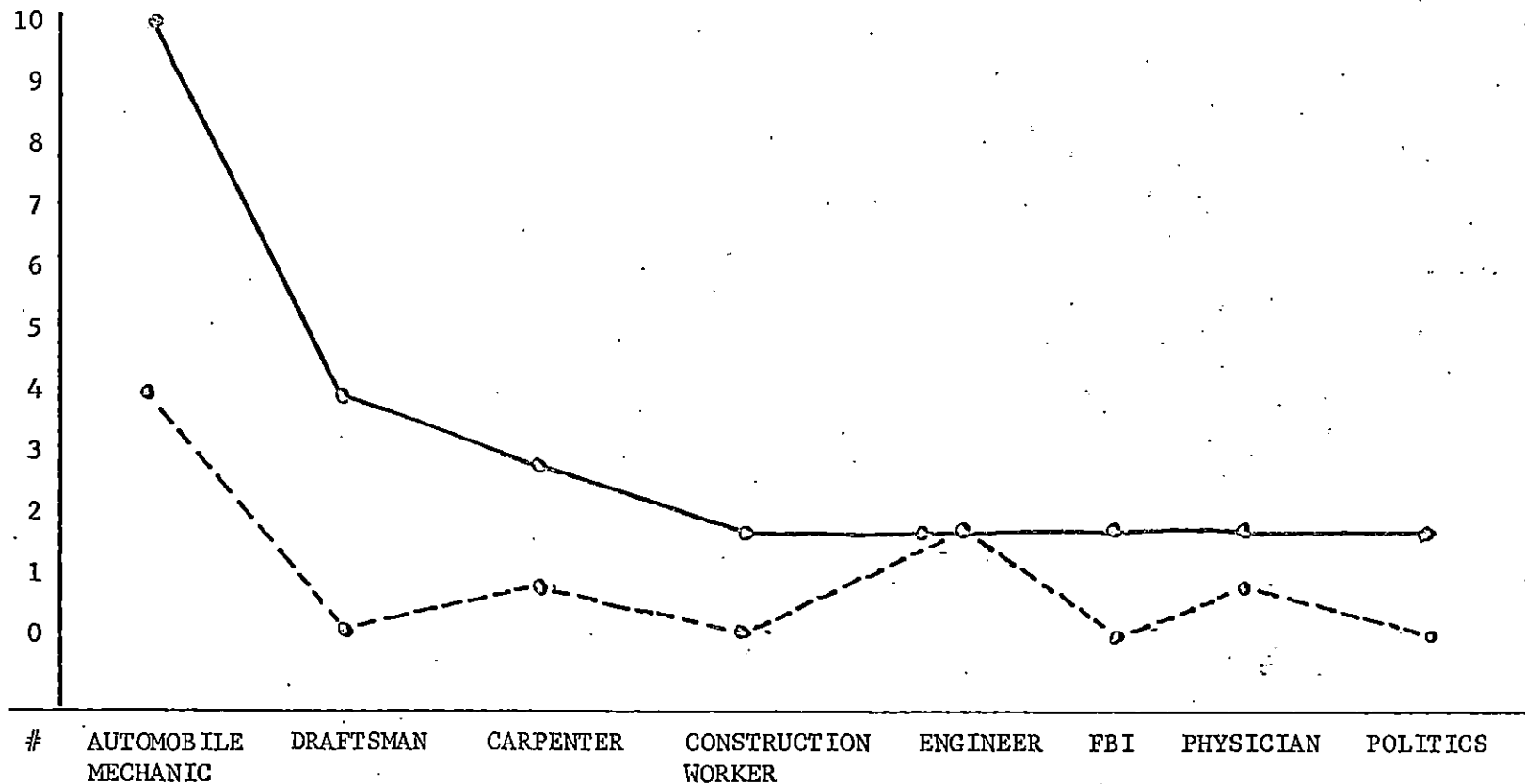


Figure 4. The top eight choices of the SHS males are compared with how the PVL boys chose, or failed to choose, the same careers (This Figure represents number of choices, not percents. There were 42 male respondents from SHS and 34 from PVL)

The SHS boys are depicted by the \_\_\_\_\_

The PVL boys are depicted by the -----

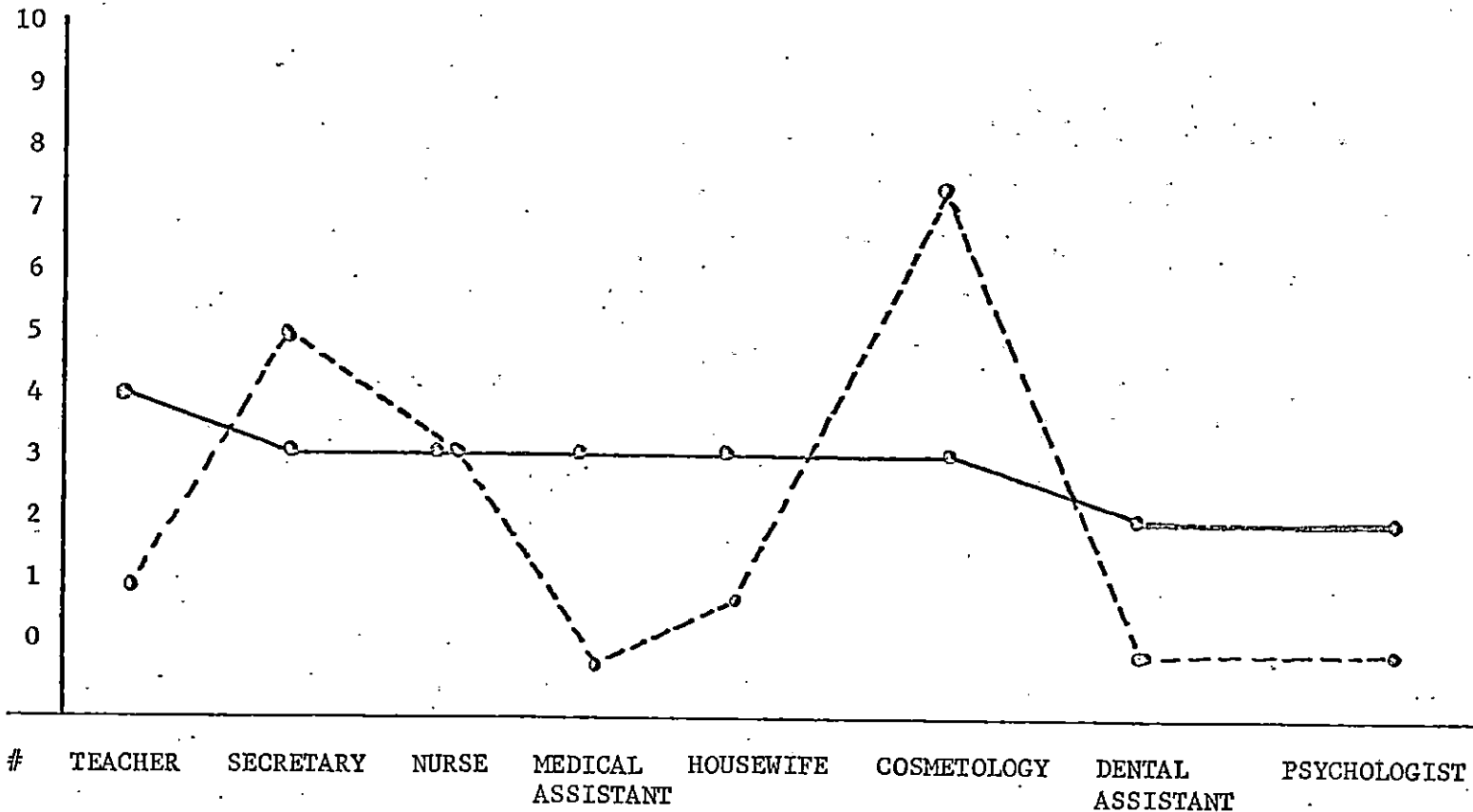


Figure 5. The top eight choices of the PVL girls are compared with how the SHS girls chose, or failed to choose, the same careers (This Figure represents number of choices, not percents. There were 32 female respondents from PVL and 29 from SHS)

The PVL girls are depicted by the \_\_\_\_\_

The SHS girls are depicted by the -----

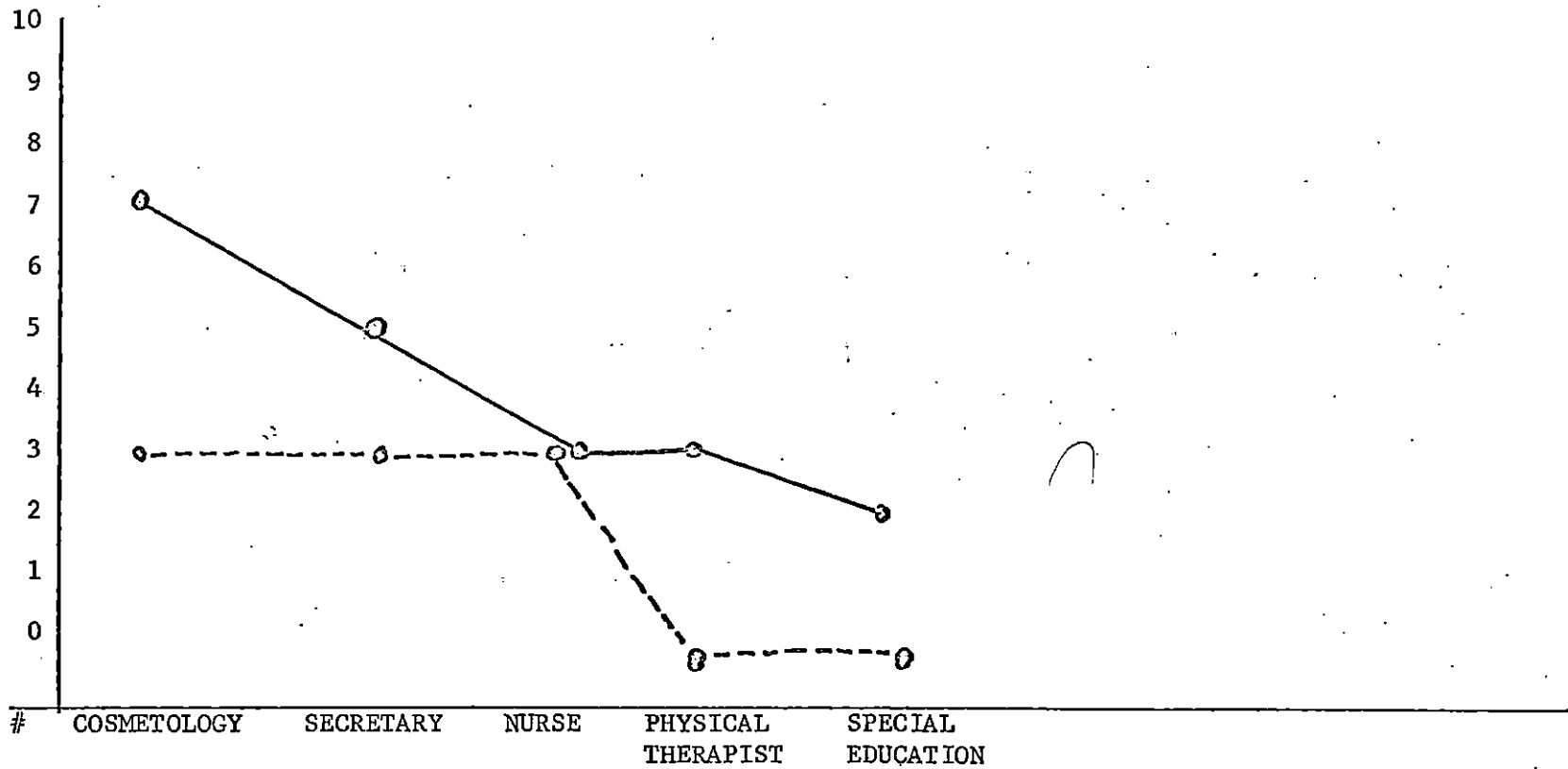


Figure 6. The top five choices of the SHS girls are compared with how the PVL girls chose, or failed to choose, the same careers (This Figure represents number of choices, not percents. There were 29 female respondents from SHS and 32 from PVL)

The SHS girls are depicted by the \_\_\_\_\_

The PVL girls are depicted by the -----

It was the hypothesis of this study that there would be no significant difference in career aspirations between males in the two schools, and between females in the same two schools. To determine the extent of difference the chi-square test of significance was applied to the collected data. Table 5 shows that at the .05 level of significance there was not a significant difference in career expectations of the females in this investigation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is accepted for the females. However, Table 6 shows that at the .05 level of significance there was a significant difference in career expectations of the males in this investigation. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected for the males.

Table 5. Chi-Square Test for Significant Difference of Career Aspirations of Females in this Study

Career Choice	SHS	PVL	Total Frequencies	$E_f$		$\frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f^{**}}$	$\frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f^{**}}$
				SHS	PVL		
Any Job	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Bookkeeper	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Business Administration	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Business Education	1	0	1	.48	.52	.56	.52
Cosmetology	7	3	10	4.75	5.25	1.07	.96
Dental Assist.	0	2	2	.95	1.05	.95	.86
Fashion Designer	1	0	1	.48	.52	.56	.52
Interior Decorator	1	0	1	.48	.52	.56	.52
Journalism	1	0	1	.48	.52	.56	.52
Lawyer	1	0	1	.48	.52	.56	.52
Marry	1	3	4	1.90	2.10	.43	.39
Medical Assist.	0	3	3	1.43	1.57	1.43	1.30
Nurse	3	3	6	2.85	3.15	.01	.01
Physical Therapist	3	0	3	1.43	1.57	1.72	1.57
Physician	1	1	2	.95	1.05	.00	.00
Psychologist	0	2	2	.95	1.05	.95	.86
Secretary	5	3	8	3.80	4.20	.38	.34
Social Worker	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Special Education	2	0	2	.95	1.05	1.16	1.05
Stenographer	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Teacher	1	4	5	2.38	2.62	.80	.73
Television Broadcasting	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Typist	1	1	2	.95	1.05	.00	.00
Waitress	0	1	1	.48	.52	.48	.44
Total	29	32	61	29.05	31.95	15.06	13.75

$$N_s=29 \quad N_p=32 \quad T_f=61 \quad E_f = \frac{N}{T_f} (\sum O_f)$$

$$X_{23}^2 = \sum \frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f} = 15.06 +$$

$$13.75 = 28.81$$

\*  $E_f$  for SHS

\*\*  $E_f$  for PVL

$$X^2 = 28.81$$

$$P > .05$$

Table 6. Chi-Square Test of Significant Difference of Career Aspirations of Males in this Study

Career Choice	SHS	PVL	Total Frequencies	$E_f$		$\frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f^*}$	$\frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f^{**}}$
				SHS	PVL		
Accountant	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Air Traffic Controller	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Any job	0	2	2	1.11	.89	1.11	1.38
Artist	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Auto Mechanic	10	4	14	7.74	6.26	.66	.82
Auto Salesman	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Barber	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Biochemist	1	1	2	1.11	.89	.01	.01
Business Administration	2	0	2	1.11	.89	.71	.89
Carpenter	3	1	4	2.21	1.79	.28	.35
Chiropractor	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Clergyman	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Construction Worker	2	0	2	1.11	.89	.71	.89
Draftsman	4	0	4	2.21	1.79	1.45	1.79
Economics	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Electronics	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Engineer	2	2	4	2.21	1.79	.02	.02
FBI	2	0	2	1.11	.89	.71	.89
Forest Ranger	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Interior Decorator	0	2	2	1.11	.89	1.11	1.38
Iron Worker	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Lawyer	1	1	2	1.11	.89	.01	.01
Military	0	8	8	4.42	3.58	4.42	5.46
Musician	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Pharmacist	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Physician	2	1	3	1.66	1.34	.07	.09
Policeman	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Politician	2	0	2	1.11	.89	.71	.89
Radio	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Secretary	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Teacher	0	2	2	1.11	.89	1.11	1.38
Telephone Operator	0	1	1	.55	.45	.55	.67
Truck Driver	1	0	1	.55	.45	.37	.45
Welding	1	2	3	1.66	1.34	.26	.33
Total	$N_s=42$	$N_p=34$	$T_f=76$	42	34	21.45	26.44

\*  $E_f$  for SHS  
 \*\*  $E_f$  for PVL

$$E_f = \frac{N}{T_f} (\leq O_f)$$

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O_f - E_f)^2}{E_f} = 21.45 + \frac{26.44}{26.44} = 47.89$$

$$X^2 = 47.89$$

$$p < .05$$

The last analysis of the data was investigation of how different students expected to prepare for an identical career. There were a number of young people who expected to attend college in order to prepare for a job that other students felt would need no more than vocational training - or no further training at all.

The males had several of the inconsistencies mentioned above. For example, three SHS and two PVL males expected to begin work as auto mechanics as soon as they had finished high school and at the same time seven SHS and two PVL male respondents planned to train in vocational school before beginning work as an auto mechanic. Also, two males from SHS expected to learn engineering in vocational school while one of the two males from PVL who planned to become engineers expected to learn the trade in college, while the other one didn't expect to need any post high school training. Welding was another area of lack of uniformity of choices. There was one male from SHS who planned to begin work as a welder after high school graduation, but the two males from PVL who chose welding expected to attend vocational school for training in the trade.

Lack of consistency by the male respondents in the same school was even more apparent by the expectations of the two males who planned to become construction workers. One did not plan on any training after high school while the other one expected to learn his trade in vocational school. This last problem is also revealed by the fact that of the four males from SHS who planned a career in drafting there were three expect-



ing to learn the trade in vocational school, but one planned to go to college.

The situation was the same for the females in the study. All seven of the females from SHS who chose cosmetology and one of the three who selected this field from PVL intended to study first at vocational school. The other two females at PVL who planned a career as a cosmetologist expected to begin immediately after graduation from high school. The females were also split on how they would prepare to become nurses. One SHS female and two of the PVL females planned to learn their profession in college, but two females from SHS and one from PVL said they would train to become a nurse at vocational school. The females also expected to become business administrators by training in vocational school (one from SHS), and by attending college to learn the necessary skills at vocational school (five from SHS and one from PVL). The females who planned to become secretaries expected to learn the necessary skills at vocational school (five from SHS and one from PVL) or felt competent to fill the position of secretary immediately after graduation (two from PVL). There were only two females expecting to become typists. The one from SHS intended to prepare for a job at vocational school and the female from PVL who aspired to become a typist planned to begin work immediately after high school.

The final two careers with inconsistent responses were dental and medical assistants. All the females involved in these two careers were from PVL. Of the two females who planned to work as dental assistants

one looked to college for training and the other one expected vocational school to fill her need. There were three females who aspired to become medical assistants. One of them planned to study at college and the last two were expecting to attend vocational school for their preparation.

## CHAPTER IV

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

#### Summary

The problem of this study was to determine if there were any significant differences in career plans between twelfth grade males in an Appalachian area school and twelfth grade males in a non-mountainous area school, or between females in the same two schools. The two schools selected for the study were Salyersville High School in mountainous eastern Kentucky and Paint Valley Local High School located in rural non-mountainous southern Ohio. The hypothesis of the study was that there would be no major differences in career plans of the seniors at the two schools.

The primary tool used to gather information concerning the job aspirations of the students involved was a questionnaire, which was administered by school personnel at the respective schools.

An important assumption was that students would know their career expectations and would answer the questions realistically.

This investigation was not concerned with specific career education programs in the two schools. However, it was learned in the course of the study that the Ohio school was near a vocational school where the students were able to earn part of the necessary credit for graduation, while students at Salyersville High School did not have access to a separate vocational institution.

Due to the scope of this investigation it was decided not to include

socio-economic factors of students and/or schools involved.

From the review of literature on career aspirations it was apparent that there was only limited agreement among writers on the subject. Most of the authors did conclude that there were several factors which influenced career decision. However, there was considerable lack of agreement on the importance of the many factors.

Data collected for this investigation were analyzed for similarities and/or differences. Various charts were used to help clarify the data.

The questionnaire revealed a total of twenty-two careers chosen by the forty-two males at Salyersville and nineteen vocations selected by the thirty-four Ohio males. There were fourteen careers chosen by the twenty-nine females at Salyersville and seventeen by the thirty-two females from the Ohio school.

There were few careers chosen by more than two of the young people from a given school. However, it was found that there was considerable agreement on the military service by the males at the Ohio school (24%). The same percentage as above of the young men from Salyersville expected to work as auto mechanics. The greatest number of females from Salyersville (also 24%) planned to become cosmetologists, and the greatest number of females from the Ohio school (13%) planned to enter the teaching profession.

All the males in the study expected to have some type of gainful employment. There were a few females, however, who did not plan to work outside the home, but rather expected to be full time housewives.

The largest number of females and males from Paint Valley High School, 44% and 29% respectively, planned to prepare for their career by attending college. In contrast, there were 59% of the females from Salyersville High School expecting to attend vocational school, and the same number of males (40%) expecting to enroll in college as planning to attend vocational school for their career training. It should be noted here that in several instances students choosing identical careers did not plan to meet requirements for the actual employment in the same way. Some young ladies expected to study cosmetology at vocational school, for instance, while others looked to college for training in the same vocation.

It was the hypothesis of this study that there would be no significant difference in career aspirations between males in the two schools, or between females in the two schools. To determine the extent of difference the chi-square test of significance was applied to the collected data. The chi-square test has revealed a significant difference in the career plans of the males in the study, but no significant difference in the plans of the females. According to these results the original hypothesis was valid for the females in the study, but rejected for the males.

### Conclusions

The lack of any significant difference in career expectations of females in the two schools might be explained by the fact that females have tended to choose traditional female roles wherever they lived.

Socially approved careers open to the young woman have been somewhat limited. The two schools in this study are located in rural, conservative areas and the females were likely reared to follow the more socially approved careers for women.

There was a significant difference in career plans of males in the two schools. Possibly the areas where the schools are located influenced male career selection to some extent. The SHS school is in an eastern Kentucky coal region where a great deal of trucking occurs. This might explain the large number of males expecting to become mechanics. The Ohio school is in a rural area with little industry which is perhaps a factor in why several of their males expect to enter the military.

The fact that only three students in the entire study, all from Ohio, were willing to accept "any job available" indicated the extent to which the young people had definite career plans.

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## APPENDIX A

Date \_\_\_\_\_

## QUESTIONNAIRE

Sex \_\_\_\_\_

Directions: You do not need to sign your name. Please check (✓) those blanks that apply to you. Check only one blank per question. Do not discuss your answers with other students. If you feel your answers need clarification do so on the bottom of the questionnaire. Hand in your completed questionnaire to the person administering as soon as you are finished.

1. After graduation from high school do you plan to: enter the labor market (this does not include summer employment and/or working your way through post high school training) \_\_\_\_\_; go to college \_\_\_\_\_; vocational training \_\_\_\_\_; other \_\_\_\_\_ (please explain if you select other) \_\_\_\_\_.
2. From the careers listed below please check the one you expect to enter as a relatively permanent vocation, either immediately or after some post high school preparation.

Air traffic controller _____	Dietitian _____
Appliance serviceman _____	Draftsman _____
Armed forces (military service) _____	Economist _____
Automobile repairman/mechanic _____	Employment counselor _____
Automobile salesman _____	Engineering _____
Bank clerk/teller _____	Environmental science _____
Barber _____	Farm equipment scientist _____
Biochemist _____	FBI agent _____
Bricklayer _____	Federal civilian worker _____
Business administration _____	Fireman _____
Carpenter _____	Forest ranger _____
Chemist _____	Furniture upholsterer _____
Chiropractor _____	Gasoline service station attendant _____
City manager _____	Geologist _____
Clergyman _____	Geophysicist _____
Commercial artist _____	Home economist _____
Construction electrician _____	Hospital administrator _____
Construction foreman _____	Insurance agent/broker _____
Construction laborer _____	Interior decorator _____
Cook/chef _____	Ironworker _____
Cosmetologist _____	Lawyer _____
Custodian _____	Librarian _____
Dentist _____	Meat cutter _____
Dental assistant _____	Medical assistant _____

Model _____	School guidance counselor _____
Musician _____	Secretary _____
Newspaper reporter _____	Sheet metal worker _____
Nurse _____	Social worker _____
Oceanographer _____	Soil conservationist _____
Optometrist _____	Speech therapist _____
Park manager _____	Stenographer _____
Pharmacist _____	Stewardess _____
Photographer _____	Stock broker (securities) _____
Physical therapist _____	Store clerk _____
Physician _____	Taxi driver _____
Pilot, airline _____	Teacher _____
Plumber/pipefitter _____	Telephone operator _____
Police officer _____	Telephone repairman _____
Private domestic worker _____	Television and radio repairman _____
Professional actor/actress _____	Television broadcasting _____
Professional dancer _____	Trial judge _____
Psychologist _____	Typist _____
Radio broadcasting _____	Urban planner _____
Radiologist _____	Veterinarian _____
Receptionist _____	Waiter/waitress _____
Recreation worker _____	

If your expected career is not listed, please state: \_\_\_\_\_

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