

RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN SELECTED TEACHER AND  
JOB SETTING VARIABLES AND MORALE OF  
VOCATIONAL AGRICULTURE TEACHERS IN MISSISSIPPI\*

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Vocational agriculture teachers in the State of Mississippi have the responsibility of providing instruction to prepare youth for employment and up-grading the job competencies of adults employed in the agricultural industry. In 1976, instruction was provided to 15,543 youth and 6,748 adults by 256 vocational agriculture teachers. The training that is being provided should have a major impact on agricultural industry in the State. The ways the teachers view their work, their enthusiasm for teaching, and their loyalty to the profession of teaching are certain to influence the quality of the training they provide.

Little is known about the morale of vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi. Morale is the "professional interest and enthusiasm that a person displays toward the achievement of individual or group goals in a given job situation" (Bentley and Rempel, 1970). No studies have been made to determine the significance of teacher and job setting characteristics and how they relate to the morale of vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi. As a result, educational administrators, state supervisory personnel, teacher educators, and other persons responsible for the conduct of vocational agriculture programs need more insight into the conditions which effect teacher morale. It follows that at present teacher educators and school administrators must base decisions on informal observations rather than systematically derived data concerning the morale of Mississippi vocational agriculture teachers.

*Statement of the Problem*

There has been a lack of information about selected teacher and job setting characteristics relative to the morale of vocational agriculture teachers in the State of Mississippi. Stated

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\*Based on research reported in the author's Master of Science thesis entitled *A Study of Relationships Between Selected Teacher and Job Setting Variables and Morale of Vocational Agriculture Teachers in Mississippi*, Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, Mississippi State University, 1977.

another way, the problem was to determine the relationship, if any, of selected teacher and job setting characteristics that affect the morale of vocational agriculture teachers in the State of Mississippi.

### *Objectives of the Study*

The major objective of this study was to determine the relationship between selected variables and the morale of vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi. Other objectives were:

1. To determine the relationship between teacher characteristic variables and morale, and
2. To determine the relationship between job setting variables and morale.

### *Procedure*

The population was comprised of all vocational agriculture teachers in the secondary schools in the State of Mississippi in the 1976-1977 school year. A random sample of 150 teachers (58.56 percent of the total number of teachers) was selected for inclusion in this study from a list of teachers prepared by the Division of Vocational and Technical Education of the State Department of Education. The procedure in selection involved using a table of random numbers. Of this sample of 150 teachers, 105 (70 percent) responded to the study.

Two instruments were used in the study as methods of securing information. The *Purdue Teacher Opinionnaire* was used in assessing teacher morale. This instrument allows individual teachers to establish their own morale level or score by expressing their feeling about the environment in which they work and the people with whom they work. The test-retest reliability of this instrument is .87. The second instrument used was developed to obtain information about basic teacher and job setting characteristics. From careful review of literature, counsel with professional educators, and personal observations of the researcher, sixteen characteristics or variables were identified and placed in question format on the instrument. These sixteen variables were in two general categories:

1. Those related to personal characteristics of the teacher, and
2. Those related to the job settings in which the teacher worked.

The sixteen characteristics were:

1. Age
2. Race
3. Years of teaching experience
4. Years of teaching in the school where presently employed
5. Annual salary
6. Career plans
7. Educational level of teachers
8. Time devoted to teaching occupational orientation
9. Class enrollment
10. Ethnic composition of students
11. School under court order
12. Budget for vocational agriculture
13. Type of school district
14. Administration of the vocational agriculture department
15. Emphasis on FFA
16. Advisory council

The first seven items comprised the part of the instrument which related to the personal characteristics of the teachers. Items 8-16 comprised the part of the instrument which related to the job settings in which the teachers worked.

In determining if there were any significant relationships between the scores on the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* and the sixteen teacher and job setting characteristic variables, the data were analyzed by the difference in means for total morale of the subjects as related to within and between the groups of selected teacher information variables. This comparison was calculated through the use of an analysis of variance program (SPSS-ONEWAY) producing the number (N), mean ( $\bar{X}$ ), standard deviation (S.D.), and F score. The F scores derived in these analyses indicated whether or not a statistically significant difference existed between group means for each variable. When a significant difference at the .05 level existed, the Duncan's New Multiple Range Test was employed as a post-hoc test to determine where the significant differences existed among the means.

For additional analysis, the sixteen individual variables were assigned to two categories, teacher characteristics and job setting variables. The multiple regression procedure (SPSS-REGRESSION) was employed to study the relationship of the scores on the *Purdue Teacher Opinionaire* to the two groups of teacher and job setting characteristic variables. The selected level of significance was .05. This procedure was selected because (1) it analyzed the overall relationship of the predictor variables (teacher and job setting characteristics) to the de-

pendent variable (morale) and produced the Multiple R statistic, which expresses the relationships; and (2) it explained the approximate percentage of variance in the dependent variable of morale for each of the predictor variables in the set of teacher and job setting characteristic variables ( $R^2$ ).

### *Summary of Findings*

The findings of this study were:

1. Three of the selected teacher and job setting characteristic variables (*career plans, emphasis on the FFA, and the extent of use of an advisory council*) were found to have a statistically significant relationship to morale, each having F score values that were significant at the .05 level.
2. The thirteen remaining teacher and job setting characteristic variables were not found to have a statistically significant relationship to morale at the previously described .05 level.
3. The selected individual variables that were collectively identified as *teacher characteristics* were not found to have a statistically significant relationship to morale at the .05 level of significance.
4. The selected individual variables that were collectively identified as *job setting characteristics* were found to have a statistically significant relationship to morale at the .05 level of significance.

### *Conclusions*

From this study it was concluded that:

1. The vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi who are planning to stay in the teaching profession as teachers of vocational agriculture have higher morale than those not planning to remain.
2. The vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi who have advisory councils and make moderate use of them have higher morale than those who do not have an advisory council.
3. The vocational agriculture teachers in Mississippi who place considerable and moderate emphasis on the FFA have higher morale than those who make little use of the FFA.

4. The job settings in which teachers conduct programs of vocational agriculture have a relationship to morale.

### Reference Cited

Bentley, Ralph R. and Rempel, Averno M. *Manual for the Purdue Teacher Opinionaire*. West Lafayette, Indiana: Purdue Research Foundation, 1970.

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