An Analysis of Factors Related to College Students' Choice of Office Administration Curricula.

Myrtle Marie Servat

Louisiana State University and Agricultural & Mechanical College

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AN ANALYSIS OF FACTORS RELATED TO COLLEGE STUDENTS' CHOICE OF OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA

A Dissertation

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the Louisiana State University and Agricultural and Mechanical College in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in

The Department of Education

by

Myrtle Marie Servat
B.S., University of Southwestern Louisiana, 1941
M.S., Indiana University, 1966
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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant differences among students enrolled in three Office Administration curricula with reference to certain selected factors associated with occupational choice making. Those factors were treated in this study to find out whether they affected students' educational decisions. The factors were: achievement, English score, age, marital status, race, major source of funds for education, number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects, previous work experience, future plans, size of graduating class, parents' educational level, parents' occupational level, and students' status at the end of the first semester.

Data used in this study were obtained by means of a questionnaire and permanent school records. The questionnaire was administered to all first-semester, first-time freshmen students who were enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, during the fall school term 1974-75. Forty students had selected The Secretary, One-Year Program, Certificate; forty-six had selected The Secretary, Two-Year Program, Associate Degree; twenty-eight had selected The Executive Secretary, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

The t test was used for determining the significance of difference between means of the three groups on achievement and English scores. The chi-square procedure was used for testing the significance of difference among the three groups in analyzing the other variables.
Significant differences were found between the groups for the following factors: achievement, age, race, major source of funds for education, and future plans based on job aspiration.

The results of the study seem to support the following conclusions:

1. The curricula in which the students enrolled were generally compatible with their job aspirations. The longer the program, the higher the percentage of the students aspiring to the highest secretarial position.

2. There was a significant inverse relationship between the curriculum chosen and achievement. The students of higher achievement were enrolled in the shorter programs which heretofore have been considered the easier programs. The lower achieving students were inclined to choose the longer and more difficult curriculum.

3. The older and more mature girl tended to choose the One- or Two-Year Program. The majority of the families of the students in the two shorter programs were financing their children's education. Students appeared to choose the length of program proportionate with the family's ability to finance it. This did not hold true for the students in the Four-Year Program. The parents of less than one-half of the students in the Four-Year Program were financing their children's education. The lack of family resources did not prevent the 46 percent who marked "Other" as the main source of finances from enrolling in the program of their choice. All indicated they were receiving assistance from government funds.
4. The race of the student was a significant factor in the choice of a curriculum. From the results of the study where the white students selected the One- and Two-Year Programs the inference may be made that the white students were more concerned with immediate employment and were less career-oriented than the minority students who chose the Four-Year Program.
Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

American society is highly dependent on the vocational competence of its people. The economy based on industrial production has created more jobs which demand workers with higher levels of education and skill development and fewer jobs which require less education. To meet individual and national manpower needs the educational system, especially at the college level, has the responsibility of providing opportunities for learning and training to a larger portion of the population than ever before.

Young people are faced with early occupational and educational decisions. The kind and level of educational choices that the adolescent makes in preparing for work have a real influence on later occupational choice and adjustment (Venn, 1964:36). Early realistic educational determinations are important to both the individual and society in preventing a waste of time and resources in unnecessary floundering (Super, 1960:10).

Following World War II the rate of change in American society began to accelerate, and has continued to increase each year. The economic, social, and political changes have had a great impact upon all of education, general and/or vocational, for more and better education.

The expansion of technology into agriculture, business, industry, and service occupations has brought about a need for greater
efficiency and economy on the part of workers. The demand is for employees who are more flexible, adaptable, creative, desirous of self-improvement through continuing education, and who also have higher-level skills (Wall, 1975:150). "The contemporary technological economy has little to offer the untrained, under-educated would-be worker. There is no room at the bottom" (Venn, 1964:9).

Large numbers of minority groups formerly engaged in agriculture or related fields have left the farm and have sought a better life in industry in the large cities. Many have failed to become absorbed into the labor force because of their failure to achieve the rudiments of education. It is important that education rise to the challenge of those displaced persons and unused resources by developing programs tailored to their special needs (Ginzberg, 1965:27).

The importance of women in the labor market has been firmly fixed as their proportion of representation has increased in practically every area of business. Women continue to return to work after fifteen or twenty years out of the labor force. This trend suggests a need for special programs of education related to these patterns of employment (Barlow, 1965:281).

The technological obsolescence of many jobs and the creation of others have emphasized the need for continuous educational opportunity whereby programs are set up to upgrade and retrain workers swiftly and efficiently (Fisk, 1966:206).

Responding to manpower needs in many sectors of business and industry, the federal government passed a number of vocational acts
during the sixties, one of the most notable being the Vocational Education Act of 1963 (77:Stat.:403) and Amendments in 1968 (82:Stat.:1064). It was a comprehensive act, designed to provide vocational education for all persons and all occupations, except the professions or those needing the baccalaureate degree. The schools were given sufficient latitude to experiment and be creative in setting up programs to meet the needs and abilities of all (Tonne, 1970:49 and Mobley, 1965:199).

The commitment of society to provide advance schooling not only to the talented but to the entire population implies the necessity for differentiated curricula. Prior to curriculum planning and basic to it is the knowledge of the type of student for whom the curriculum is planned. "The emphasis should always be upon building the curriculum to meet the identifiable needs of students in relation to established goals" (Nolan, 1967:68). Curriculum development is a continuing process which is not complete until the worth of the results has been evaluated (Walsh, 1965:91).

In order to help the adolescent make more realistic educational and occupational decisions, parents, educators, and youths need an understanding of the factors within the student and in his environment which influence his educational and occupational objectives. A knowledge of the selected factors which relate to choice of curriculum could serve as a basis for curriculum evaluation. The identification of the type of student who enrolled in each of the three curricula was the purpose for undertaking this study.
PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this investigation was to study whether there were significant differences among students enrolled in three Office Administration curricula with reference to each of the selected factors listed below.

Questions to be Answered

This study was concerned with the following questions:

1. Were there significant differences among first-semester, first-time freshmen students enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula (One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Programs) at the University of Southwestern Louisiana during the fall term, 1974-75, as related to each of these selected factors:

   a. achievement score—composite from American College Test Score card

   b. English score from American College Test Score card

   c. age

   d. marital status

   e. race

   f. major source of funds for education

   g. number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects

   h. previous work experience

   i. future plans

   j. size of graduating class
k. parents' educational level

1. parents' occupational level

2. Were there significant differences among the three groups at the end of the first-semester as related to the students' status?

General Null Hypotheses

1. There were no significant differences among first-semester, first-time freshmen enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula (One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year programs) at the University of Southwestern Louisiana during the fall term 1974-75 as related to the selected factors in the study.

2. There were no significant differences among first-semester, first-time freshmen enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula as related to their status at the end of the first-semester.

Specific Null Hypotheses

There were no significant differences among first-semester, first-time freshmen enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula when comparing the number of each group on the basis of:

a. achievement
b. English score
c. age
d. marital status
e. race
f. major source of funds for education
g. number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects
h. previous work experience
i. future plans
j. size of graduating class
k. father's educational level
l. mother's educational level
m. father's occupation
n. mother's occupation
o. student's status at end of first-semester

Delimitation of the Study

The study was limited to all first-semester, first-time freshmen who were enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, during the fall term 1974-75: The Secretary--One-Year Program, Certificate; The Secretary--Two-Year Program, Associate Degree; and the Executive Secretary--Bachelor of Science in Business Administration.

Importance of the Study

The study is considered to be important because the results will:

1. provide a basis for evaluating the curricula with implications for modification and change;
2. indicate to faculty more appropriate teaching methods;
3. supply administrators with information for projecting and allocating personnel, space, and resources;
4. furnish useful information for admissions counselors and recruiters; and

5. be a basis for further study in the area of Office Administration for researchers and other personnel.

DEFINITION OF TERMS

1. Bachelor of Science in Business Administration: a curriculum that prepares the student to work among professional men and women in the capacity of stenographer, bookkeeper, typist, and correspondent.

2. Two-Year Program, Associate Degree: a curriculum combining the basic secretarial skills with some of the business and general education courses.

3. One-Year Program, Certificate: a curriculum limited to basic job preparation in Office Administration.

4. Army General Classification Test, First Civilian Edition is also called AGCT. See page 19.

SOURCES OF DATA

Data used in this study were obtained by means of a questionnaire submitted to all first-semest, first-time freshmen enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula during the fall term 1974-75 which had previously been administered to a pilot group for checking the clarity of instructions, items, completion time, and/or other factors. Data for determining status at the end of the first-semester were collected from records of the Registrar.
ORGANIZATION OF THE STUDY

Chapter 1 provides a background for the problem, the statement of the problem, the importance of the study, the delimitation of the study, definition of terms used, sources of data, and organization of the study. In Chapter 2 there is included a review of related studies pertinent to vocational and educational plans of students. The research methodology is presented in Chapter 3. There is a discussion and analysis of the data in Chapter 4. Chapter 5 contains the summary, findings, and conclusions.
Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Work has always played a significant role in man's life and will, no doubt, continue to do so. To a great extent work determines the quality of the individual's life. Havighurst (1950:44) states, "In American society, lifework is the most important single thing about a man." The level of his occupation and performance in it measures to a great extent his worth to society. The selection and preparation for a vocation, therefore, are of critical concern for students who will enter the world of work.

Since the turn of the century the way individuals have chosen their occupations and developed in them has been the concern of parents, teachers, psychologists, sociologists, economists, and others. As American society moves rapidly into extended utilization of technology and work becomes of even greater significance to both the individual and the nation, the psychology of occupations has attracted the interests of the behavioral scientists (Ginzberg, 1951:5-9). Favorable legislation in the field of vocational education, career education, and counseling has given further impetus to study and research in the field of career development and choice (Nolan, 1967: 428).
THEORIES OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT

Early attempts to understand and explain how occupational decisions were made were limited and less sophisticated. As research techniques have become more refined, increased knowledge was gained which has replaced more traditional approaches to occupational choice and has provided data for improved and broader theories of career choice to evolve.

Perhaps the oldest psychologically-oriented theory of vocational choice was the trait-factor analysis (Osipow, 1973:9). Parsons (1909), Kitson (1925), and Hull (1928) worked on the assumption that an individual's problem of vocational choice should be accomplished by matching his unique traits and capacities to the available occupational opportunities. Later, Kuder (1948), Strong (1943), and others labored within the framework of this theory and facilitated the vocational decision-making process by the development of aptitude tests and interests inventories which have been used in assessing the individual's attributes and matching them to employment opportunities.

Roe (1957), Hoppock (1963), Forer (1953), Schaffer (1953), and others have felt that in order to understand the role of the occupation in the life of the individual, there must first be an understanding of the individual and his needs.

Zaccaria (1970:31) explained needs as a motivation or a drive which impelled man to seek those objects, persons, or activities which satisfied specific needs. The motivations were conscious or unconscious,
expressed directly or indirectly, and caused biologically, culturally, or situationally. Needs determined behavior, and the activity was goal-oriented.

Roe's (1957) theory of occupational choice assumed that an individual inherited certain abilities and interests which were developed and influenced by the direction in which the psychic energy happened to be expended involuntarily. Along with the expenditure of the psychic energy, there was developing a pattern of need primacies brought about by patterns of early satisfactions and frustrations.

Roe (1956:25) incorporated Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of basic needs into one theory:

1. physiological needs
2. safety needs
3. need for belongingness and love
4. need for importance, respect, self-esteem, independence
5. need for information
6. need for understanding
7. need for beauty
8. need for self-actualization.

Maslow's hierarchy was arranged in an ascending order of need commensurate with the evolutionary development of man. "The chief dynamic principle animating this organization is the emergence of less potent needs upon gratification of the more potent ones" (Maslow, 1954: 107).

The degree of motivation toward the attainment of the individual's vocational goal was dependent on the intensity and
arrangement of one's need structure. One significant aspect of Roe's (1957) theory was parental attitude toward the child in shaping his needs and patterns for satisfying them and ultimately in the selection of an occupation which was person or non-person-oriented.

Based on his experience with counseling individuals and noting the differences among them, Hoppock (1963) examined and compared selected theories to develop a composite plan for explaining human behavior in selecting a vocation. The emphasis was on the satisfaction of needs. Hoppock (1963) also included values, participation in an occupation, educational experiences, economic, sociological, and other factors which influence vocational choice. Hoppock (1963:114) developed a composite theory as a series of speculations drawn from established theories:

1. Occupations are chosen to meet needs.

2. The occupation that we choose is the one that we believe will best meet the needs that most concerns us.

3. Needs may be intellectually perceived, or they may be only vaguely felt as attractions which draw us in certain directions. In either case, they may influence choices.

4. Vocational development begins when we first become aware that an occupation can help to meet our needs.

5. Vocational development progresses and occupational choice improves as we become better able to anticipate how well a prospective occupation will meet our needs. Our capacity thus to anticipate depends upon our knowledge of occupations and our ability to think clearly.

6. Information about ourselves affects occupational choice by helping us to recognize what we want and by helping us to anticipate whether or not we will be successful in collecting what the contemplated occupation offers to us.
7. Information about occupations affects occupational choice by helping us to discover the occupations that may meet our needs and by helping us to anticipate how well satisfied we may hope to be in our occupation as compared with another.

8. Job satisfaction depends upon the extent to which the job that we hold meets the needs that we feel it should meet. The degree of satisfaction is determined by the ratio between what we have and what we want.

9. Satisfaction can result from a job which meets our needs today or from a job which promises to meet them in the future.

10. Occupational choice is always subject to change when we believe that a change will better meet our needs.

Ginzberg, Ginzberg, Axelrad, and Herma (1951:26-38) viewed occupational choice from a developmental point of view. Vocational development was an additional facet of the individual's development. Ginzberg and associates (1951:60) interpreted vocational choice as a series of decisions made over a period of years extending from preadolescence until the late teens or early twenties when the individual made a vocational commitment. As a result of the study, Ginzberg and associates (1951) found that occupational choice occurred over a fifteen-year span, divided into three periods: fantasy, tentative, and realistic choices.

In the fantasy stage, the child without assessing his capabilities or opportunities or limitations of reality expressed what he wished to be. As the individual moved into the tentative stage during preadolescence or early adolescence, he developed the realization that certain factors influenced his occupational choice, and at the same time was gaining more insight about himself, his interests, capacities, and values. "The young person is learning more about himself and reality, and part of the maturing process is his increasing
ability to consider simultaneously his desires and reality" (Ginzberg, 1951:73).

Ginzberg and associates (1951:95) organized the final period of realistic choices into three stages: exploratory, crystallization, and specification. During the exploratory period, the individual attempted to acquire the experience which he needed to resolve his occupational choice. The crystallization stage

... is the process whereby the individual is finally able to synthesize the many forces, internal and external, that have relevance for his decision... It is a commitment, and the individual recognizes this by his willingness to bring his explorations to a close and by his ability to make definite plans for the future subject to change in details (Ginzberg, 1951:107).

The final stage, specification, represented a process of closure, the selection of the specifics of an occupational choice after a generalized choice had been made (Ginzberg, 1951:113).

Ginzberg and associates (1951:186) summarized their theory of occupational choice as "... a process; the process is largely irreversible; compromise is an essential aspect of every choice."

Based on findings of recent research Ginzberg (1972:169) modified his theory. As the theory has been reformulated the decision-making period is no longer limited to a fifteen-year span. It may extend over an entire working life.

Ginzberg (1972:171) changed views on irreversibility for several reasons. The length of educational preparation has increased. Over eighty percent of the adolescents in society have graduated from high school and approximately one-half of these have graduated from
college. For forty percent of the students, the determinations made while in high school have not been significant as they have furthered their education and have continued to reevaluate their decisions. Opportunities for specialized training and skill in the military, governmental, and industrial services have permitted the individual not going to college the advantage of continuously reassessing his career objectives.

Concerning compromise as an essential aspect of every choice, Ginzberg (1972:171) has found

... that a more relevant formulation would be optimization. Men and women seek to find the best occupational fit between their changing desires and their changing circumstances. Their search is a continuing one.

Influenced by Ginzberg and his associates, Super's (1957b:6-11) theory of career development evolved along the lines of human development. He broadened it by synthesizing appropriate existing information about educational and vocational development and by adding new formulations.

Super (1957b:40-41) identified five stages through which an individual's career progressed. The five stages of growth, exploration, establishment, maintenance, and decline conformed with the life stages of human development and led to his career patterns concept. Career development paralleled general patterns of growth and development. The career pattern concept suggested that there were developmental tasks or patterns of behavior characteristic of each stage of life. Although all individuals proceeded through the same general developmental stages, how each person proceeded from one life stage to
the next was determined by the effect of psychological, physical, situational, and societal factors.

Within the life stages developmental framework, Super (1957a:191) established the self-concept theory. Super (1957a:191) perceived that as an individual engaged in the vocational developmental tasks, the person implemented and developed his self-concept. "Work, like social life and intellectual activity, is one specific medium through which the total personality can manifest itself" (Super, 1957a:185).

The trait theory assumed that each individual was different in abilities and interests and was likely to enter into and be satisfied in an occupation consistent with his capacities. Super (1957a:169) recognized the contribution of the trait theory to vocational psychology and incorporated it into his theory.

Closely tied to occupational choice was education. Havighurst (1950:43) and Super (1957a:27) agreed that movement up or down the social scale was dependent on the individual's occupation. The individual who hoped to rise above his father's social position had to either work his way up or prepare for it in a special school, college, or professional school. When social status brought about change in one's occupation, education generally opened the way to both occupational and social mobility.

Education influenced occupational choice according to Hoppock (1963:116). Education afforded the student the opportunity to learn about unknown occupations. The student learned through many school tryout experiences to determine whether or not he had the ability to succeed in certain activities.
Ginzberg and his associates (1951:216) held that "... in order to achieve a certain social and economic status one must have achieved a certain level of education." They felt that how an individual used his educational opportunities directly influenced the type of work in which he would engage. Speaking of the future American worker, Ginzberg (1966:234) wrote, "How far a man can go in our society will increasingly be determined by his education and training."

Sharp (1970:97) supported the views of Ginzberg and associates (1951) and stated "... the overwhelming majority of college graduates found that their undergraduate degrees opened the door to occupations and careers which would not have been accessible had they not gone to college." She maintained that a college education continued to be regarded, especially by those who hold to the belief of personal achievement and success, as the key to obtaining the most desirable jobs.

Miller and Form (1951:727) viewed education as a selective process. Education excluded those individuals who were unable to perform or profit from its offering or who lacked financial support to attend.

Caplow (1954:218) shared Miller and Form's (1951) beliefs and stated, "In general, the earlier a boy leaves school the greater the number of occupations from which he will be barred." Early withdrawal disqualified the individual not only for the learned trades but from many bureaucratic jobs and tied him to a lifetime of manual work.
Super (1957b:45-53), Ginzberg and associates (1951:11), Roe (1956:43-132), Hoppock (1963:103-112), and others agreed that role factors, personal factors, and situational factors operate in the choice process. The purpose of this study is to examine a number of those possible determinants of vocational selection.

FACTORS RELATED TO EDUCATIONAL AND OCCUPATIONAL CHOICE

Personal Factors

Of the personal factors, intelligence seemed to play an important role in determining the occupation aspired to as well as the performance in the job.

Regarding intelligence, Super (1957a:207) concluded: "... that people tend to gravitate toward occupational levels and toward jobs appropriate to the level of their intellectual ability."

Roe (1956:121) claimed: "There is a relation between scholastic achievement and vocational choice but only a very general sort. On the whole, those with higher grades tend to wind up in occupations of higher levels."

Astin and Myint (1971) studied 5,000 women over a five-year period following high school. The investigators found that girls who made higher aptitude scores while in high school, especially in mathematics, were more likely to aspire to careers in the sciences, professions, and teaching five years later. Those of lower academic ability tended to plan to become housewives or office workers.
Astin (1968) examined over 800 ninth-grade girls to identify the personal characteristics which predicted their vocational choices at the twelfth-grade level. Astin (1968) found that mathematical aptitude and mechanical information were significant in differentiating those girls going into the sciences and professions from those who were expecting to become office workers.

Milliken (1961) studied postgraduate plans of 5,349 senior girls as related to their scholastic aptitude. His study revealed that the students interested in the professions, all requiring higher educational training, achieved the highest Army General Classification Test, civilian edition (AGCT) scores.

In a similar analysis Moser (1948) disclosed that when undirected high school students chose career occupations commensurate with their abilities. Those vocations which required advanced professional training were chosen by the students with high abilities. The occupations which required little or no academic training were selected by individuals with relatively low mental abilities.

Wallace and Leonards (1971) discovered a significant relationship between the level of educational and occupational aspirations and expectations of high school girls and their self-estimated academic average. As the educational and occupational aspirations and expectations of the girls increased, their self-estimated academic average increased also.

In an investigation to identify factors that influenced vocational choice, Hanchey (1969) found significant differences existing between the educational plans of students with varying high
school academic records. The higher the academic achievement, the higher were their educational plans.

Eaddy's (1968) study revealed a similar finding when the influence of certain factors on the vocational choices of vocational agriculture students in Louisiana were examined. The high school achievement record was an indication of the status to which the student aspired and his expected educational choices.

In order to predict the level of occupational choice of high school junior and senior girls, Fortner (1970) studied the following factors: girl's I.Q., social class with which the girl identified herself, and the occupation of the family wage-earner. The average of the three variables was compared with the level of the occupational choice indicated by each girl. Each variable, singly or in combination, showed a relationship to the occupational preference beyond the .01 level of significance. On further investigation, the highest percent of correct predictions was found on the combination of the three variables (41 percent). The next highest (40 percent) was obtained by the I.Q. factor. Fortner (1970) suggested, that with such a slight difference in percentages, intelligence test scores alone could be used to predict occupational preference of girls effectively. The study, however, was not designed to reveal whether or not the occupational preference expressed by the girl was at the level of the ability of the girl to perform the tasks involved in the occupation chosen.

Epstein and Bronzaft's (1974) inquiry was designed to study the following: the careers to which women aspire, the comparison
between men and women's educational and occupational aspirations, and the difference between open admission students (high school average 79.9 percent or below) and traditional students (80.0 percent or above) in their educational and occupational aspirations. No significant differences in educational and occupational aspirations were found between traditional and open admission students. Significant sex differences existed in educational aspirations with females desiring fewer years of higher education. Females also tended to aspire to careers traditionally acceptable for women.

Red, McCary, and Johnson (1962) tested the influence of students' aspirations on academic achievement and found that there was a small degree of relationship between the two factors.

Most generally accepted theories of occupational choice are developmental. Writers have experimented with age as a factor affecting educational choice.

Kaplan (1946:131) studied age as a factor related to vocational choice. He asked a large number of former students to name the age when they became interested in the occupation of their choice. Kaplan (1946:133) found that there was a steady increase in the number of cases at each level beyond the age of nine, reaching a peak at age eighteen after which there was a decline. On the basis of his finding, Kaplan (1946:133) was of the opinion "... that the development of vocational interests is due to the interaction of cultural and biological factors rather than to either alone." He believed that although certain vocational interests were inherently determined, these interests need not necessarily wait for the onset of adolescence.
Age was significant in Willmarth's (1969) analysis of 196 women of different age groups enrolled in the clerical and secretarial areas in a vocational-technical institute. He stated that age modified the effect of the various factors: interest; health; previous work experience; influence of parents, counselors, teachers, case workers, and friends; and socio-economic status influencing the occupational choice-making of women.

Brazziel (1961) found that Negro teacher education students who chose teaching as a career made this decision most frequently at the twelfth grade and freshman year in college. Brazziel (1961), like Kaplan (1946), found the students seemed to make decisions at various developmental levels in the high school career—at the end of the elementary program, at the end of high school, and at the end of freshmen studies.

School Factors

Bateman (1949) investigated over 500 junior and senior high school students in three high schools to determine (1) the extent to which working and non-working high school students selected vocations which agreed with their interests as measured by the Kuder Preference Record and (2) the extent to which working and non-working students agreed as to interest in nine vocational areas as measured by the Kuder Preference Record. Bateman's (1949:456) findings revealed that students who had not worked previously tended to select occupations which were more consistent with their interests than those who had worked. "Non-working girls in particular appear to be reliably more
consistent than working girls" (Bateman, 1949:456). He found that working and non-working students did not differ greatly in their interest patterns.

Gribbon and Lohnes (1966) examined the relationship between educational aspirations and the type of curriculum pursued. The results of their analysis disclosed that most of the college preparatory students were going to college and that few students in other curricula were planning a college education.

Johnson and Johnson's (1972) study of the relationship of curriculum to the field of employment which students entered after graduation showed more than half were in jobs related to their curriculum. "This was particularly true with the employed females—where a majority worked in clerical-sales occupations" (Johnson and Johnson, 1972:290).

Hoyt (1959:571) studied the relationship of the size of the high school to students' performance in college. The results of his study showed that high school rank was as indicative of academic performance in college for students from small high schools as for students from large high schools.

Slocum (1958) examined the size of the high school as a factor in post high school plans of seniors in the State of Washington. His findings were that graduates of the larger schools were more likely to plan to enter college immediately after graduation than those from the small schools.

Astin (1968:539) analyzed a number of high school factors which might affect the career choice of ninth-grade girls three years later.
She found the size of the high school to be the only significant factor. "Girls who attended the larger high schools were more likely to plan careers in professions and sciences, whereas, the girls who attended smaller high schools were more likely to aspire to teaching or office work."

**Home Factors**

Caplow (1954), Hollingshead (1949), Miller and Form (1951), Ginzberg (1951), and others concurred in finding that the socioeconomic class into which an individual was born was a significant determinant of attitudes toward education and work.

Hollingshead's (1949:441) research supported the hypothesis "... that the behavior of the adolescents is related significantly to class in every major phase of social behavior--the school, the church, the job, recreation, the clique, dating, and sex." Hoppock (1963:108) also found that the family and the social class helped determine the occupation which its members enter, and stated that, "... even the person who rebels against his family is influenced by it."

Ginzberg and associates (1951:234) contended that the family exercised a great influence over the vocational choice of the young. The child first learned of different jobs from the family. The family gave the child his first experience with work. The attitudes and values held by the family influenced the child in choosing one occupation over another.

Baldock (1971:145) studied the occupational aspirations of New Zealand boys and their parents' aspirations for these adolescents.
She established that parental rank, scholastic ability, and educational choice had the most crucial effect on the occupational aspirations of the boys and their parents with parental social rank being the most important single variable. She concluded that social rank affected vocational choice directly by affording children the opportunities and changes of the social stratum to which they belonged as well as the benefits of the values and ambitions held by their parents. Indirectly, social rank influenced the children's scholastic ability which in turn affected their educational and vocational aspirations.

The research of Dynes, Clarke, and Dinitz (1956:213)

. . . supports the relationship between unsatisfactory interpersonal relations in the family orientation and high aspirational levels. The 'high' aspirers stated that they had experienced feelings of rejection more frequently than did those in the 'lower' group.

Gysbers, Johnston, and Gust (1968:546) investigated a possible link between social class level and membership in the homemaker or career-oriented groups among women. They compared the work patterns of the two groups of women and found commitment to work to be primary with career-oriented women. With the homemaker group, work was secondary. Gysbers and others (1968:546) suggested "... that primary commitment--characteristic of career women--may be related with family background where higher education for both parents was the rule rather than the exception."

Almquist and Angrist's (1970) experiment with career-oriented girls who chose male-dominated occupations indicated that atypical choice of occupation was significantly associated with mother's employment. A larger percent of the mothers of the career-oriented
women had had higher education. Another significant factor associated with atypical choice of occupation by career-oriented women was the number of part-time and summer jobs and the number of different jobs held by the girl during the college years.

In examining certain socio-economic variables that might be connected with career choice, Aldredge (1968), Bueto (1969), and Sewall, Haller, and Strauss (1957) found occupational aspirations significantly related to the level of the father's occupation. Findings by Eaddy (1968), Endicott (1931), and Peters (1941) revealed that the parents had been most influential in helping student choose a career.

A survey by Dixon and associates (1972) of 2431 Hawaiian high school students designed to predict post-high school destination choice revealed that financial need was significantly related to less college-oriented, post-high destinations. Hanchey (1969:93) found that lack of finances limited the attainment of educational aspirations. On the other hand, Eaddy (1968:118) claimed lack of financial aid for continued education and occupational entry was not a serious deterrent to the attainment of career objectives.
Chapter 3

DESIGN OF THE STUDY

SUBJECTS

During the fall school term of 1974-75, 228 freshmen students enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, referred to as the One-Year Program, Certificate; Two-Year Program, Associate Degree; and Four-Year Program, Bachelor of Science in Business Administration. The subjects selected for the study were first-time, first-semester freshmen who had not been enrolled at that University or any other university previously. Those students who did not meet the criteria as established in the delimitations were not included in this study. Certain other questionnaires were not used because the student in each case had been enrolled previously either during summer school or had been enrolled in a curriculum other than Office Administration at the University of Southwestern Louisiana or some other university. A total of 114 full-time and part-time students participated in the study. Forty students were enrolled in the One-Year Program; forty-six were enrolled in the Two-Year Program; and twenty-eight students were enrolled in the Four-Year Program.
DEVELOPMENT OF THE INSTRUMENT

The writer with the assistance of members of the doctoral committee at Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, Louisiana, developed the questionnaire used in this study. The instrument was designed to elicit general information about the student and information pertaining to selected factors which might possibly influence the choice of curriculum. The questionnaire consisted of fourteen items. Twelve items served as the independent variables and one item served as the dependent variable. In two of the items the subject was asked to state the father and mother's occupation or the nature of it. Occupational titles were later classified according to 1970 Bureau of Census categories.

Sixty-seven students who were enrolled in similar programs at McNeese State University, Lake Charles, Louisiana, completed the questionnaire prior to administering the instrument to the selected group. The pretesting pointed out several items that were not clear. The items questioned were rewritten for the final questionnaire.

COLLECTION OF THE DATA

The questionnaire was administered to the students enrolled in the typewriting classes two weeks after the semester had begun. The reason for this procedure was that typewriting was common to the three curricula for the first semester. The remainder of the eligible students who had not completed the questionnaire were located in other classes. All one hundred fourteen eligible students answered the questionnaire.
The data for computing the general achievement and English scores were obtained from the American College Test (ACT) card. These data were obtained from each student's academic file. Missing data on these two variables were located in the Freshman Division Office.

The information needed to determine the status of the students enrolled in the program who were in good standing or on probation was secured from each student's grade sheet sent from the office of the Registrar. The writer secured from the Freshman Division and the Registrar's Office information pertaining to the location of those students who had dropped out of school and/or who had transferred to other curricula. Thus, information on all students was secured.

ORGANIZATION FOR DATA ANALYSIS

The data from each questionnaire and supplemental sheets were coded on IBM sheets. These data were key punched in the data processing center at the University of Southwestern Louisiana. The punched cards were later sent to the computer center at the University of Southwestern Louisiana for data analysis.

STATISTICAL TREATMENT

The following procedures were used in analyzing the data:

1. In order to test the significance of difference between means of the three groups on achievement and English scores a t-test was applied. The following formula was used.
\[ \sigma_D = \sqrt{\frac{\sigma_1^2}{N_1} + \frac{\sigma_2^2}{N_2}} \]

\[ CR = \frac{(M_1 - M_2)}{\sigma_D} \]

2. To test the significance of differences among the three groups in analyzing the other variables the chi-square procedure was used. The basic formula for chi-square used in this study was:

\[ X^2 = \sum \left[ \frac{(f_o - f_e)^2}{f_e} \right] \]

\( X^2 \) = symbol for chi-square
\( \sum \) = summation of
\( f_o \) = observed frequency
\( f_e \) = expected frequency

Data used in this study were obtained by means of a questionnaire and permanent school records. One hundred fourteen first-semester, first-time freshmen students enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, during the fall term 1974-75 provided the data.
Chapter 4

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF DATA

The study was concerned with whether there were significant differences among one hundred fourteen students enrolled in three Office Administration curricula at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, during the fall term 1974-75 with reference to:

1. achievement score—the composite score from the American College Test (ACT) Score card

2. English score from the American College Test (ACT) Score card

3. age

4. marital status

5. race

6. major source of funds for education

7. number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects

8. previous work experience

9. future plans

10. size of graduating class

11. parents' educational level

12. parents' occupational level

13. students' status at end of the first semester

Data for items one and two above were secured from each student's grade sheet from the office of the Registrar.
Hypotheses based on the above factors were developed for this study. The hypotheses concerned the effect of the independent variables upon the dependent variables. The dependent variable was the choice of the curriculum.

Statistical measures used in determining the relationship between the independent and dependent variables were the $t$ test and the chi-square. The $t$ test was used to test the significance of difference between means of the three groups on the American College Test (ACT) composite achievement score and the English score from the ACT score card. The chi-square procedure was used to test the significance of differences among the students in the different curricula based on the remaining independent variables in the study.

A summary of respondents according to curriculum is presented in Table 1.

Table 1
Summary of Participating Respondents by Curriculum, Number, and Percent

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curriculum</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-Year</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2-Year</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-Year</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Data were analyzed and discussed for each of the hypotheses considered in the study. Findings were presented in the order in which the hypotheses were stated in Chapter 1.

Hypothesis 1: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF ACHIEVEMENT.

Data in Table 2 indicated neither a statistically significant difference in achievement between the One-Year and Two-Year groups nor between the One-Year and Four-Year groups. There was a statistically significant difference between students' achievement in the Two-Year Program and the Four-Year Program. The mean score for the students enrolled in the Two-Year Program was 15.48. For the Four-Year group the mean score was 13.22. When the critical ratio was applied, the difference between the means was significant at the .05 level.

Table 2
Comparison of Mean Achievement by Pairs of Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricula</th>
<th>Mean Achievement</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Year</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td>1.34</td>
<td>1.43 NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year</td>
<td>13.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>2.26</td>
<td>2.35**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year</td>
<td>13.22</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>15.48</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>1.01 NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Year</td>
<td>14.56</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NS--Not significant at .05 level
**--Significant at .05 level
Hypothesis 2: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF ENGLISH SCORE.

An analysis of the data in Table 3 revealed that the mean difference between any two groups was not statistically significant; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.

Table 3
Comparison of Mean English Scores by Pairs of Groups

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Curricula</th>
<th>Mean English Scores</th>
<th>Difference of Means</th>
<th>T</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>One-Year</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.58 NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>16.54</td>
<td>1.35</td>
<td>1.38 NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four-Year</td>
<td>15.19</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Two-Year</td>
<td>16.54</td>
<td>.80</td>
<td>.86 NS*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>One-Year</td>
<td>15.74</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*NS—Not significant at .05 level

Hypothesis 3: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF AGE.

Data in Table 4 indicated that when curriculum groups were compared on the basis of age, there were statistically significant differences among students. Eighty percent of the students who selected the Two-Year Program were 19 years or over. The students in the 19 years and above category choosing the One-Year Program dropped to 60 percent. This same age group choosing the Four-Year Program dropped to 46 percent. The more mature student tended to select the
Two-Year Program. The chi-square of 9.49 with two degrees of freedom was statistically significant at the .05 level \((P < .01)\); therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19 and above</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 9.49; \, df = 2; \] Significant at the .05 level
 \[ \text{Significant at the .01 level} \]

Hypothesis 4: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF MARITAL STATUS.

The data in Table 5 do not disclose any clear differences in students in their choice of curriculum when comparing the groups on the basis of marital status. As the chi-square of 4.55 with two degrees of freedom is not statistically significant at the .05 level of probability, the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 5

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Marital Status

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Marital Status</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Never Married</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Married</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 4.55; \ df = 2; \text{ Not significant at .05 level}$

Hypothesis 5: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF RACE.

Data in Table 6 indicated that students enrolled in different curricula differed significantly when race was considered. Ninety-eight percent of the students enrolled in the One-Year Program and 82 percent enrolled in the Two-Year Program were white. The white enrollment in the Four-Year Program dropped to 39 percent. The chi-square of 32.9893 with two degrees of freedom is statistically significant at the .05 level ($P < .01$). As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected.
### Table 6

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Race

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/Afro-American</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 32.98; \text{ df } = 2; \text{ Significant at .05 level} \]
\[ \text{Significant at .01 level} \]

**Hypothesis 6:** THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF MAJOR SOURCE OF FUNDS FOR EDUCATION.

An analysis of the data in Table 7 indicated significant differences among students in the choice of a curriculum when the groups were compared on the basis of major source of finances for education. Parents of 70 percent of the students in the One-Year Program and of 63 percent in the Two-Year Program were financing the students' education. Only 43 percent of the parents of students who had chosen the Four-Year Program were financing the education of their children. Forty-six percent of the students enrolled in the Four-Year Program who checked "Other" were not prevented from enrolling in the curriculum of their choice because of lack of family resources. All indicated they were financing their education through government programs. The findings seemed to indicate that students chose a curriculum in terms of the length of study their family could finance. A chi-square of 13.8482 with six degrees of freedom was statistically
significant at .05 level (P < .01); therefore, the hypothesis was rejected.

Table 7

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Major Source of Finances for Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source of Finances</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Parents</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowing</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 13.8482; \text{ df = 6}; \text{ Significant at .05 level} \]

Hypothesis 7: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF NUMBER OF UNITS ACQUIRED IN HIGH SCHOOL BUSINESS AND OFFICE ADMINISTRATION SUBJECTS.

Data in Table 8 did not show any clear pattern of differentiating among students when the three groups were compared on the basis of number of high school Business and Office Administration units acquired by the students. Because the chi-square of 3.41 with six degrees of freedom did not reach the .05 level of significance, the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 8

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Number of High School Units Acquired in Business and Office Administration Subjects

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No. Business Units Acquired</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 1 ½</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 - 3 ½</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 - 5 ½</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6 and above</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

X² = 3.41; df = 6; Not significant at the .05 level

Hypothesis 8: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE.

An analysis of the data in Table 9 does not show that there was a statistically significant difference among students enrolled in the three curricula when the groups were compared on the basis of previous work experience. As the chi-square of 13.955 with eight degrees of freedom did not reach the .05 level of probability, the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 9
Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Previous Work Experience

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Previous Work Experience</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summers only</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Only part-time during school</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summer employment and part-time during school</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full-time work</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ \chi^2 = 13.955; \ df = 8; \] Not significant at .05 level

Hypothesis 9: **THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF FUTURE PLANS.**

Data in Table 10 did not reveal any statistically significant differences among students when the groups were compared in terms of future plans. There seemed to be no sharp differences among the students regarding the fact that they would be working five years after finishing their program. The same consistency existed among the students of three groups in that the students had planned to combine marriage and work five years later. Being a full-time housewife did not appear to be a serious consideration with any of the groups. Three
percent of the students in the One-Year Program planned to be a full-time homemaker.

Table 10

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Future Plans</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A housewife</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working and housewife</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>79</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>113</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 8.019; \text{ df } = 4; \text{ Not significant at the .05 level } \]

Data in Table 11 indicated that students enrolled in the different curricula differed about the future when the job aspired to was a factor. Over 50 percent of the students in all three groups aspired to the highest secretarial position, Executive Secretary. These students were realistic to the extent that they chose this position less frequently in the shorter programs. Students' occupational goals seemed to be more consistent with their educational decisions. One hundred percent of the students in the Four-Year Program hoped to be an Executive Secretary; 69 percent in the Two-Year Program and 55 percent in the One-Year Program had such aspirations. The chi-square of 21.4813 with four degrees of freedom was significant at the .05 level; thus, the hypothesis was rejected when future plans were tested on the basis of job aspiration.
Table 11

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Job Aspiration

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Job Aspired to</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typist</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stenographer</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Secretary</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 21.4813; \ df = 4; \text{ Significant at .05 level}$

Hypothesis 10: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF SIZE OF GRADUATING CLASS.

An analysis of the data in Table 12 did not reveal any statistically significant differences among the students in the different curricula when size of graduating class was a factor. The chi-square of 4.626 with six degrees of freedom did not reach the .05 level of significance, and the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 12  
Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Size of Graduating Class

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Size Graduating Class</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0 - 49</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>50 - 99</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>100 - 499</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>53</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>500 - 999</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 4.626; \ df = 6; \ Not \ significant \ at .05 \ level$

Hypothesis 11: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF FATHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL.

The data in Table 13 indicated clearly that students enrolled in the different curricula did not differ significantly on the basis of father's educational level. The chi-square of 6.616 with 10 degrees of freedom was not significant at the .05 level. The null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 13
Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Father's Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Educational Level</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 years or less</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years or more but less than high school diploma</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational, technical, some college</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate)</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 6.616; \text{ df } = 10; \text{ Not significant at .05 level} \]

Hypothesis 12: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF MOTHER'S EDUCATIONAL LEVEL.

The data in Table 14 revealed that their mother's educational level failed to differentiate among the students in their choice of curriculum. The results showed that, regardless of the mother's level of education, the students' choices of curricula were not affected. The chi-square of 2.929 with 10 degrees of freedom was not significant at the .05 level; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 14
Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Mother's Education

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother's Educational Level</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8 years or less</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9 years or more but less than high school diploma</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High school diploma</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocational, technical, some college</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>College degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not sure</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 2.929; \ df = 10; \text{ Not significant at } .05 \text{ level}$

Hypothesis 13: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF FATHER'S OCCUPATION.

The data presented in Table 15 did not indicate that the students enrolled in the different curricula differed significantly when father's occupation was a factor. The chi-square of 16.7662 with 10 degrees of freedom did not reach the .05 level of probability; therefore, the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 15

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Father's Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Father's Occupation</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Collar</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Collar</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Farmer</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>40</strong></td>
<td><strong>46</strong></td>
<td><strong>28</strong></td>
<td><strong>114</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

$X^2 = 16.7662; \ df = 10; \ Not \ significant \ at \ .05 \ level$

Hypothesis 14: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF MOTHER'S OCCUPATION.

Data in Table 16 revealed that when the different curriculum groups were compared on the basis of mother's occupation, the students did not differ significantly. The chi-square of 9.2128 with 10 degrees of freedom did not reach the .05 level of significance, and the null hypothesis was accepted.
Table 16
Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Mother's Occupation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mother's Occupation</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White Collar</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blue Collar</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laborer</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Housewife</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ X^2 = 9.2128; \text{ df} = 10; \text{ Not significant at .05 level} \]

Hypothesis 15: THERE WERE NO SIGNIFICANT DIFFERENCES AMONG FIRST-SEMESTER, FIRST-TIME FRESHMEN ENROLLED IN THE THREE OFFICE ADMINISTRATION CURRICULA WHEN COMPARING THE NUMBER OF EACH GROUP ON THE BASIS OF STUDENTS' STATUS AT THE END OF THE FIRST SEMESTER.

The null hypothesis was accepted on the basis of the data presented in Table 17 which indicated that the differences among the students enrolled in the three Office Administration curricula on the basis of students' status at the end of the first semester were not significant. A chi-square of 11.70 with six degrees of freedom was not significant at the .05 level.
Table 17

Chi-Square Test of Choice of One-Year, Two-Year, and Four-Year Curricula on Basis of Students' Status at End of First Semester

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>End of First Semester Status</th>
<th>1-Year</th>
<th>2-Year</th>
<th>4-Year</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Dropped</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>On probation</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transferred</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Still in program in good standing</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

\[ x^2 = 11.70; \quad df = 6; \quad \text{Not significant at .05 level} \]

The results of the study indicated that significant differences existed between the groups for the following factors: achievement, age, race, major source of funds for education, and future plans based on job aspiration.

The factors which did not indicate any significant differences among the students enrolled in the three curricula were: English scores, marital status, number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects, previous work experience, future plans, size of graduating class, mother and father's educational level, mother and father's occupational level, and the status of the students at the end of the first semester.
Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to determine whether there were significant differences among students enrolled in three Office Administration curricula with reference to the specified factors in Chapter 1 associated with occupational choice making. Those factors were treated in this study to find out whether they affected students' educational decisions.

Data used in this study were collected from 114 first-semester, first-time students who were enrolled at the University of Southwestern Louisiana, Lafayette, Louisiana, during the fall school term 1974-75. All were enrolled in one of three Office Administration curricula which they had selected. Forty students had selected the One-Year Program; forty-six had selected the Two-Year Program; twenty-eight had selected the Four-Year Program. A questionnaire and permanent school records were used for collecting the data.

The factors examined were: (1) achievement score, (2) English score, (3) age, (4) marital status, (5) race, (6) major source of funds for education, (7) number of units acquired in high school Business and Office Administration subjects, (8) previous work experience, (9) future plans, (10) size of graduating class, (11) parents' educational level, (12) parents' occupational level, and (13) students' status at end of first semester.
The test was used for determining the significance of difference between means of the three groups and the chi-square procedure for testing the significance of differences among three groups.

The statistical findings of this study are summarized below:

1. The difference in the level of achievement of the Two- and Four-Year students was statistically significant in an inverse order; that is, the Two-Year students were higher achievers than were the Four-Year students.

2. The English score was not a significant variable in differentiating among the students in their selection of a curriculum.

3. Age was a significant factor in the students' choice of a curriculum in that the older and more mature girl tended to choose the One- or Two-Year Program.

4. Marital status was not significant in distinguishing which students chose a particular curriculum.

5. There were significant differences among groups in the choice of curriculum when race was compared.

6. The source of financing as a variable did differentiate the groups significantly in students' choice of curriculum.

7. A comparison of the three groups on the basis of number of high school units of Business and Office Administration subjects did not result in any significant differences.

8. The previous work experience factor did not yield any significant differences among the three groups.
9. When comparing the three groups in terms of future plans, there were no significant differences. There were significant differences among the groups when job aspiration was tested.

10. The size of graduating class variable did not result in any significant differences among the groups in students' choice of a curriculum.

11. There were no significant differences among the students enrolled in the three curricula when the groups were tested on the basis of father's education.

12. The level of education of the students' mother was not a significant factor in the choice of a curriculum by any one of the three groups.

13. There were no significant differences among students in the three Office Administration curricula on the basis of father's occupation.

14. The occupation of the student's mother did not figure significantly in distinguishing among the students in their choice of a curriculum.

15. The students' status at the end of the first semester did not differentiate among the groups in their choice of a curriculum.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study seem to support the following conclusions:
1. The curricula in which the students enrolled were generally compatible with their job aspirations. The longer the program, the higher the percentage of the students aspiring to the highest secretarial position.

2. There was a significant inverse relationship between curriculum choice and achievement. The students of higher achievement were enrolled in the shorter programs which heretofore have been generally considered the easier programs. The lower achieving students tended to enroll in the longer and more difficult curriculum.

3. Age was a factor that exerted influence in the choice of a curriculum. The older and more mature girl tended to choose the One- or Two-Year Program. The majority of the families of the students in the two shorter programs were financing their children's education. The interaction of age and family influence may account for the students being more work-oriented with short educational goals.

4. There were significant differences among the groups in the choice of a curriculum on the basis of race. A majority of the respondents in the One-Year Program and Two-Year Program were white, whereas, members of a minority race made up over 50 percent of the students in the Four-Year Program.

5. There was a significant difference among the students when the groups were compared on the basis of main source of financing education. The majority of parents were financing the education of students enrolled in the One- and Two-Year Programs. The students seemed to have selected the curriculum commensurate with the length of
time the family had proposed to finance the education of the student. The lack of family resources did not seem to deter 46 percent of the students enrolled in the Four-Year Program. These students were financing their education through assistance from government programs.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of this study the following recommendations are proposed:

1. That vocational and educational counseling be available to students at the high school level in order to provide them with a realistic understanding of their abilities and limitations and to help them make vocational and educational plans in accordance with their capabilities.

2. That public high schools be provided better means of informing the students about job opportunities and the education required for the chosen occupation.

3. That a follow-up study of this research be conducted to determine whether the students' educational decisions were realistic.

4. That research studies similar to this one be developed to determine other environmental and behavioral factors which may influence occupational and educational decisions to add to the body of knowledge on the vocational decision-making process.

5. That there be continuous evaluation, development, and construction of the curricula to keep them effective in meeting the purposes of the students and the business community for which they have been established.
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY


Hoyt, Donald P. "Size of High School and College Grades," Personnel and Guidance, XXXVII (April, 1959), 569-573.


APPENDIX A

NAME: ___________________________ STUDENT NUMBER: ___________________________

Please answer all questions to the best of your ability. Fill in the blank where there are no choices. In the multiple choice items, check the one that best fits your situation. The results of this study will be used in improving the Office Administration curricula at U.S.L.

Are you a first-time freshman, this semester? __________

1. Date of birth: __________________________

2. Father's occupation: (What does he do?) __________________________

3. Mother's occupation: (What does she do?) __________________________

4. How many units of credit did you earn in high school Business and Office Administration subjects?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Credits</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Typing I</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Typing II</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shorthand</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bookkeeping/Accounting</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Office/Clerical Practice</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Machines</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Data Processing</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business English</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C.O.E.</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Math</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>General Business</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Economics</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Law</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (Specify)</td>
<td>_______</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL _______

5. Curriculum in which enrolled in college?
   □ 1-year program □ 2-year program □ 4-year program

6. Size of your high school graduating class:
   □ 0-49 □ 50-99 □ 100-499 □ 500-999 □ More than 1000

7. Marital status:
   □ Never married □ Married □ Separated □ Divorced
   □ Widowed

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8. Race:
   □ White/Caucasian □ Black/Afro-American Negro
   □ Other (Specify) __________________________

9. Previous work experience:
   □ None □ Summers only □ Only part-time during school
   □ Summer employment and part-time work during the school year □ Full-time work

10. Future plans: Five years after I finish my course I hope I will be
    □ Working □ A housewife □ Working and a housewife

11. Of the three following jobs, which would you most like to have? (Check one only)
    □ Typist □ Stenographer □ Executive Secretary

12. To the best of your knowledge, the education of your father was:
    □ 8 years or less □ 9 or more but less than high school diploma
    □ High school diploma □ Vocational, technical, some college
    □ College degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) □ Not sure

13. To the best of your knowledge, the education of your mother was:
    □ 8 years or less □ 9 or more but less than high school diploma
    □ High school diploma □ Vocational, technical, some college
    □ College degree (Bachelor's, Master's, Doctorate) □ Not sure

14. The main source of money for financing my college education is from
    □ Parents □ Borrowing □ Working
    □ Other (Specify) __________________________
VITA

Myrtle Marie Servat, the daughter of Ovide and Agnes Miguez Servat, was born in Rayne, Louisiana, August 15, 1920. She completed her elementary and secondary education in that city and was graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree from the University of Southwestern Louisiana in 1941. She received a Master's of Science from Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana, in 1966.

Her professional experiences include seven years as a secondary teacher, seventeen years as an Executive Secretary, and nine years as a college teacher. In 1967 she joined the University of Southwestern Louisiana faculty where she is presently employed as an Assistant Professor in the College of Commerce.
EXAMINATION AND THESIS REPORT

Candidate: Myrtle Marie Servat

Major Field: Education

Title of Thesis: An Analysis of Factors Related to College Students' Choice of Office Administration Curricula

Approved:

[Signatures of Major Professor and Dean of the Graduate School]

EXAMINING COMMITTEE:

[Signatures of Committee Members]

Date of Examination: July 15, 1975