

RURAL-URBAN ORIENTATION AND THE PROPENSITY TOWARDS
DROPPING OUT OF SCHOOL IN AN URBAN SETTING

By

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RURAL-URBAN ORIENTATION AND THE PROPENSITY TOWARDS
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PREFACE

Many recent studies have been made concerning the school drop out problem and I am attempting to investigate a particular aspect in this area. My inquiry concerns the rurally oriented student who is in an urban educational situation. Basically, I am seeking to determine if there is a significant relationship between a student's rural orientation and his propensity for dropping out of an urban school.

Indebtedness is acknowledged to Drs. Barry A. Kinsey, James D. Tarver, and Benjamin L. Gorman for their valuable suggestions and guidance; to Dr. Larry Hayes of the Oklahoma City Public School System for his cooperation; and to the faculty and students of Roosevelt Junior High School, Oklahoma City, for their willing participation. Indispensable contributions were made by C. Taylor Ashworth in tabulating data and assisting with the manuscript. Special appreciation is given to Dr. Solomon Sutker for his insightful counsel in every phase of the development of the study. I would also like to express my gratitude to Mrs. Sandra Grimes for an excellent job in the typing of this thesis.

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CHAPTER I

THE NATURE OF THE PROBLEM

Introduction to the Problem

A general change of attitude has taken place in the last decade which undergirds the whole effort to study the "dropout problem." This change of attitude is best represented by the very use of the term "dropout." The most pronounced connotative meaning of the term is the implication that all students should graduate from high school. In the early part of this century, it was the common thing not to finish high school, the uncommon thing to graduate. But our standards have continually risen to the point where we now assume all students should graduate and those who do not are considered "dropouts." The dropout, apparently, has developed into a problem in the context of our times. Paul Woodring makes this observation when he states that

there is nothing new about the fact that many boys and girls leave high school without a diploma--they always have. What is new is the word dropout with its implication that every adolescent ought to remain in school until graduation.¹

It is with this same assumption that this study is executed.

The Problem Area

A 1953 report from the United States Office of Education indicated

¹Paul Woodring, "Dropouts," Saturday Review, XLVI (1963), p. 59.

that 40 per cent of our youth did not graduate from high school during 1948 to 1950.² Even though a noticeable emphasis during the past decade has been placed on the need to graduate, the dropout figure still remains alarmingly high. Daniel Schreiber, director of Project: School Dropouts, reported in 1964 that still more than "one-third of the nation's young people drop out of school before completing senior high school."³ By contrasting projected enrollment figures with the expected dropout percentage, he concluded that "7.5 million youths will drop out of school during the next decade."⁴

This is an acute problem area for many reasons. First, it represents wasted human potential. In a recent dropout study, the authors prefaced their work by emphasizing that these dropouts "represent a tragic waste of the resources of our young people at a time when our country needs their fullest productivity."⁵

Second, it leads to a severe unemployment problem. Young adults without a high school diploma are finding jobs within their skill level increasingly scarce. A publication of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago observes that in previous times, "the teen-age dropout could be absorbed readily into the job market. Today's highly-gearred

²U. S. Office of Education, Department of Health, Education and Welfare, Biennial Survey of Education in the United States 1948-50 (Washington, D. C., 1953), p. 15.

³Daniel Schreiber, in a newsletter from Project: School Dropouts (1964).

⁴Ibid., p. 1.

⁵Solomon O. Lichter et al., The Drop-Outs (New York, 1962), p. v.

space age has made it more difficult for non-graduated youth to obtain and retain employment, especially in the great urban centers."⁶

Third, there is a serious personal aspect to the problem.

Schreiber describes the situation graphically.

Almost one million lost, bewildered, defeated, hopeless young men and women will leave our nation's schools this year before graduating from them. Although ill-prepared and inadequately educated, many will seek to enter the adult world.⁷

There is no doubt that high school dropouts represent a serious problem; there is only speculation as to the extent of its severity.

Purpose of the Study

This study is designed to offer additional information to the presently expanding field of knowledge relating to school dropouts. Specifically, the study is formulated to examine the relationship between the potential dropout and the conflict which may arise when a rurally oriented student attends a school in an urban setting.

Scope of the Study

The study has three dimensions which best identify its scope. First, it includes the student's propensity for dropping out of school. The student is here defined as a junior high school member, grades seventh through ninth. Second, it includes the degree to which a

⁶ Publication of the Board of Education of the City of Chicago, Programs for Potential Dropouts, Study Report Number Three, 1964 Series, p. 46.

⁷ Daniel Schreiber, "The School Dropout--Fugitive from Failure," Bulletin of the National Association from Secondary School Principals (May, 1962), p. 46.

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student is rurally oriented. This rural orientation is determined by a residence factor and an attitudinal test. Third, it includes a relationship between propensity and rurality. The propensity of a student dropping out of school is considered in its relationship to the student's degree of rural orientation. The study attempts to consider these three dimensions of the problem and to provide the basis for meaningful observation.

There are numerous items which this study does not include. First, this is not a prediction study in as much as it does not attempt to establish a causal relationship between rural orientation and propensity for dropping out of school. It is, however, a relational study in as much as it attempts to explore whether a positive relationship exists between rural orientation and propensity for dropping out of school. Second, it does not attempt to identify specifically the nature of the conflict which is believed to arise when a rurally oriented student attends a school in an urban setting. Rather, the study attempts only to indicate conflict which could hinder academic adjustment.

Theoretical Basis

The study of educational aspirations of adolescents has been an important problem area in educational, psychological and sociological research. In a very early study of the subject of aspiration, D. W. Chapman and John Volkmann (1939) examined reference theories relative to determination of aspiration levels.⁸ They conclude that level of

⁸D. W. Chapman and H. Volkmann, "A Social Determinant of the Level of Aspiration," Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology, XXXIV (1939), pp. 225-238.

aspiration is strongly influenced by the subject's "knowledge of the achievement of groups whose status or ability, relative to his own, he could assess."⁹ Many subsequent endeavors to analyze the nature and function of reference groups have been made and the concept of reference group is now considered fundamental in the field of social sciences. Robert K. Merton deals significantly with the definition of a reference group. He argues that a reference group has three characteristics.¹⁰ First, any reference group must conform to the sociological concept of a group, a number of people interacting with one another in accord with established patterns. Second, the interacting person must define himself as a member, i.e., he must be conscious of the role he is assuming as part of the group. Third, the person who is involved in the interaction must be defined by others in the group as part of the group. In Merton's analysis, two pertinent emphases emerge: (1) the subject must have a conscious view of himself, and (2) the group must have a definitive view of him. These two foci parallel the conclusions of Robert E. Merriott who relates reference theory to educational aspirations. He advocates the theory that two factors greatly determine one's level of aspiration.

One influence upon an individual's level of aspiration is the level of his self-assessment to others. Human beings are observing creatures who gain information about themselves and others through interaction with others. A second influence on an individual's level of aspiration is the level of the expectations which he perceives significant others hold for his behavior.

⁹ Ibid., p. 225.

¹⁰ Robert K. Merton, Social Theory and Social Structure (Glencoe, Ill.).

Incumbents of counter positions in the social network in which an individual is involved are the primary source of expectations while incumbents of counter positions isolated from the individual can be perceived to hold expectations also.¹¹

These two factors, self-assessment relative to others and expectations of significant others, provide the theoretical model upon which this study relies heavily.

In application, it is assumed that the rural oriented student whose basic aspiration levels have been set by a rural oriented reference group will conform to the aspiration norms of rurality. Furthermore, it is believed that the student's concept of himself, as defined by his self-assessment and expectation by significant others, operates critically on his relationship to his academic community. Leland Hott and Manford Sonstegard relate the concept of self to academic involvement. "Those self-concepts which the individual possesses at any moment influence the extent to which he is capable of relating to the curriculum at that time."¹² To emphasize the point further, Manford Kuhn and Thomas McPartland base their study of an empirical investigation of self-attitude on the premise that "human behavior is organized and directed...[and] the organization and direction are supplied by the individual's attitudes toward himself."¹³

¹¹Robert E. Herriott, "Some Social Determinants of Educational Aspiration," Harvard Educational Review, XXXIII (1963), pp. 157-177.

¹²Leland Hott and Manford Sonstegard, "Relating Self-Conception to Curriculum Development," The Journal of Educational Research, LVIII, No. 8 (1965), pp. 348-351.

¹³Manford H. Kuhn and Thomas McPartland, "An Empirical Investigation of Self-Attitudes," American Sociological Review, XIX (1954), pp. 68-76.

In recapitulation, the theoretical basis of this study leads to the four following assumed sociological propositions: (1) the concept of the self is vitally interrelated to one's reference group, (2) the concept of the self organizes and directs one's behavior, (3) the concept of the self operates functionally in establishing the level of educational aspiration, and (4) the concept of the self operates vitally in one's relationship to his academic community.

Each of these four sociological propositions is fundamental to the theoretical framework of this study. First, if the concept of the self is vitally interrelated to one's reference group, then a careful examination of the characteristics of the reference group is important. For this reason, serious consideration is given to the nature of the influence the rural mentality may have on the student personality. In what way does the rural reference group relate to the concept of the self of the student? What kind of view of the self does the rural reference group foster? Does conflict arise when one changes from a rural reference group to an urban reference group? What effect does the change have on the stability of the person? Such questions as these reflect the significance of the first sociological proposition.

The second proposition is equally important to this study. To affirm that the concept of the self organizes and directs one's behavior is to affirm the possibility of relating cultural influence to behavioral patterns. The ability to move from abstracted cultural motifs to concrete forms of expression is necessary if one is to make a meaningful correlation between rural orientation and the propensity for dropping out of school.

The concept of the self operates functionally in establishing the level of educational aspiration. This third sociological proposition has obvious relevance to the school dropout problem. Do low level educational aspirations contribute to school dropout propensity? Does a rural reference group give rise to a concept of self which includes a low aspiration level? The appropriateness of these two questions rests on the premise that the concept of self does play a vital role in determining aspiration levels.

The fourth proposition which is operative in this study is that the concept of self is vitally influential on one's relationship to his academic community. Similarly, how a student views his needs establishes the criteria by which he judges the adequacy of the academic community to fulfill them. In both cases, there is a direct relationship between the concept of the self and how the self relates to the academic community.

Population of the Study

The population used in this study consisted of the 1963-64 enrollment of the Roosevelt Junior High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. The grades included were the seventh, eighth and ninth. There are three reasons for the selection of Roosevelt Junior High School: (1) the faculty and staff was willing and cooperative in the study, (2) the building was located in an urban setting, and (3) the school is located in a city which is exposed to a considerable rural immigration.

Hypotheses

Major Hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between

a student's rural orientation and his propensity for dropping out of an urban school.

Sub-Hypothesis 1: There is no significant difference between sexes with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Sub-Hypothesis 2: There is no significant difference among grade classifications with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Sub-Hypothesis 3: There is no significant difference among years spent on the farm with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Sub-Hypothesis 4: There is no significant difference among farm residence classifications with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Sub-Hypothesis 5: There is no significant difference among rurality test scores with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

In exploring the relationship between a student's propensity for dropping out of school in an urban setting and the degree of his rural orientation, three issues emerge which need investigation. First, what effect does rurality have on student personality? Second, what can be expected from the rural oriented student who moves to an urban setting? Third, what characterizes a school dropout?

The Effect of Rurality on the Student Personality

Many studies reviewed conclude that rurality does have a unique effect upon the student personality. The nature of this effect seems to manifest itself in two areas: educational and occupational aspirations and personality orientations.

A study made by Russell Middleton and Charles M. Grigg finds that "there was a significant rural-urban difference in educational aspirations,"¹ and that this difference indicates that rural youth have much lower levels of aspirations.² The same results are outlined by Lee G. Burchinal in his study of the differences in educational and occupa-

¹Russell Middleton and Charles M. Grigg, "Rural-Urban Differences in Aspirations," Rural Sociology, XXIV (1959), p. 354.

²Ibid.

tional aspirations of farm, small-town, and city boys. He states his findings in an even more emphatic manner: "the severely depressing effect of plans to farm upon educational aspiration is seen."³ Burchinal emphasizes that it is the planning to farm which has significant influence on educational aspirations.

A. O. Haller contends that the reasons for the differences is rooted in the "farm background and environment."⁴ More specifically, the most significant factor in explaining the difference in this educational and occupational aspiration level is the attitude of the parents of rural youth. Robert Jay Thomas finds this to be a most important consideration in a study of over two thousand students in the greater Chicago area. He groups fathers' occupations into sixteen different categories and relates them to the aspiration levels of their children. His findings indicate that offspring of farmers have among the lowest educational and occupational aspirations of the entire group.⁵

This observation is understandable. It is based upon the very fundamental sociological concept of socialization. Raymond Payne studies this aspect in particular and finds that groups like the family exert the greatest amount of influence upon the development of the

³Lee G. Burchinal, "Differences in Educational and Occupational Aspirations of Farm, Small-Town, and City Boys," Rural Sociology, XXVI (1961), pp. 113-114.

⁴A. O. Haller, "The Occupational Achievement Process of Farm-Reared Youth in Urban-Industrial Society," Rural Sociology, XXV (1960), pp. 329-330.

⁵Robert Jay Thomas, "An Empirical Study of High School Drop-Outs in Regard to Ten Possibly Related Factors," Journal of Educational Sociology, XXVIII (1954), pp. 15-16.

child. He states, "informal interpersonal situations contributed most to the formation of such expectations."⁶ After reviewing much of the same type of literature which has been presented here, Haller concludes with the statement:

It appears, then, that farm people tend not to be aware of the objective requirements of the non-farm world of work. Yet these are the people who usually provide the effective learning for the farm youth. They are the people whose opinions he trusts.⁷

It is apparent that differences exist in the levels of aspirations along with the area of personality characteristics.

The most significant differences of personality characteristics between rural and urban youth are summarized in a study by Byron Munson. He compares the personality differences among urban, suburban, town and rural children. His results show that in four very important areas the rural child feels significantly lower in his ratings than does the urban child. To a substantial degree rural children feel as though they do not belong to the group, they express withdrawing tendencies, are lacking in many social skills, and feel ill at ease in many of their school relationships.⁸

In an article written especially for American Child Magazine, Lee G. Burchinal states, "greater proportions of farm and rural youth

⁶ Raymond Payne, "Development of Occupational and Migration Expectations and Choices Among Urban, Small Town, and Rural Adolescent Boys," Rural Sociology, XXI (1956), p. 117.

⁷ Haller, pp. 329-330.

⁸ Byron E. Munson, "Personality Differences Among Urban, Suburban, Town, and Rural Children," Rural Sociology, XXIV (1959), pp. 261-262.

expressed feelings of shyness, self-depreciation and suspicion or distrust of others."⁹ Starke R. Hathaway, Elio D. Monachesi, and Lawrence A. Young state the conclusions to their study with striking similarity:

In summary, the data presented indicated that rural and urban ninth grade school children differ in personality characteristics. Rural boys and girls in general express more feeling of shyness, self-depreciation, suspicion of others, and a few fears rational to farm life.¹⁰

It may be thought that these personality characteristics are more the result of lower class status than of rural residence influence. This is not the case, however. Haller, along with Carole Ellis Wolff, made a study to test class variables. After holding class constant, results show that there is a "clear demonstration of the hypothesis that personality orientations are related to residence."¹¹ They observe twenty-six different personality traits, but three seem most appropriate. They find that rural youth score highest on submissiveness, withdrawn shyness and depressive anxiety. They further observe that they score lowest on occupational and educational aspirations."¹²

Another personality characteristic which is impressed upon the child from a rural background is expressed by Pitirim Sorokin and

⁹ Lee G. Burchinal, "Characteristics of Rural Youth," American Child, XLIV (1962), p. 7.

¹⁰ Starke R. Hathaway, Elio D. Monachesi, and Lawrence A. Young, "Rural-Urban Adolescent Personality," Rural Sociology, XXIV (1959), p. 346.

¹¹ A. O. Haller and Carole Ellis Wolff, "Personality Orientations of Farm, Village, and Urban Boys," Rural Sociology, XXVII (1962), p. 283.

¹² Ibid.

Carle C. Zimmerman. They feel that because of the type of knowledge rural people have (a result of direct experience), they are less flexible in their thinking. The extension of this thought is that the farm reared person may have difficulty in adapting to new thoughts and new environments.¹³

There is one school of thought which says that even though this rural-urban difference does exist, it is rapidly declining because of increased transportation and communication.¹⁴ A rather unique exploration of this idea and its impact upon personality differences is made by M. A. Strauss and L. J. Houghton. They study the underlying themes in editorials of the National 4-H Club News from its founding in 1924 through 1958. They consider the themes as relating to personality orientations in the following way: achievement-oriented editorials are assumed to reflect the rural areas; affiliation and co-operation oriented editorials are assumed to reflect the more urban personality identified by its group-consciousness.¹⁵

The results of this analysis indicate a significant decline in the achievement content of the editorials, a slight but not statistically significant upward trend in the affiliation content, and no discernable trend in co-operation values...however, despite this decline, the achievement theme remains dominant.¹⁶

¹³ Pitirim Sorokin and Carle C. Zimmerman, Principles of Rural-Urban Sociology (New York, 1929), p. 571.

¹⁴ Richard Dewey, "The Rural-Urban Continuum; Real but Relatively Unimportant," American Journal of Sociology, LXVI, p. 60-66.

¹⁵ M. A. Strauss and L. J. Houghton, "Achievement, Affiliation, and Co-operation Values as Clues to Trends in American Rural Society," Rural Sociology, XXV (1960), p. 402.

¹⁶ Ibid.

leave its imprint upon the student personality; and 4) this imprint expresses itself in shyness, self-depreciation, and suspicion of others.

The Rural Oriented Student's Relationship to School in an Urban Setting

If, as previous evidence indicates, the rural environment produces a particular type of personality, what happens when this rural personality moves into the urban setting? The implications of this question are the very basis for this portion of the review.

The bulk of the evidence seems to indicate that rural people are at a definite disadvantage when they move into the urban setting. This disadvantage may take many avenues of expression. One avenue in particular is the labor market competition. W. A. Anderson observed in the early 1950's "that farm-reared people tend not to be successful in the urban-industrial occupational world."¹⁹

Burchinal supports Anderson's observation by outlining two particular areas of disadvantage. The first is occupational and the second is educational.

In commenting on the occupational disadvantage, he says,

There are still important differences in some characteristics between rural and urban youth, and some of these differences place rural youth at a disadvantage in competing with urban youth in the urban labor market.²⁰

He goes further by implying that farm people are also less educated

¹⁹W. A. Anderson, "High School Youth and the Value in Urban Living," Rural Sociology, XVIII (1953), p. 331.

²⁰Lee G. Burchinal, "Characteristics of Rural Youth," American Child, XLIV (1962), p. 5.

the time required to attain normal urban patterns of social participation. For the farm-reared migrant, the process of incorporation into the local urban institutions is likely to be more painful and to require a longer period of time for the learning of new social roles.²⁴

The expected reaction to this "learning of new social roles" is one of regression or, at least, hesitation. That this reaction is not only expected but real has been borne out in many ways. The Freedmans pose this question in their study: "Do the farm-reared elements of our urban population have low rates of social participation?"²⁵ Their answer is in the affirmative.

More specifically, they find that "the farm-reared are less active politically than the rest of the non-farm population in an urban setting."²⁶ They further discover that they are less active in voluntary organizations.²⁷

The reasons for this social retardation are no doubt involved and complex, but some explanations can be made. Carl C. Taylor offers this:

But from childhood to old age he /the farmer/ lacks thousands of contacts which are a part of the average city person's social environment. He is therefore...[much more rigid] than the city person.²⁸

He elaborates on his idea by contending that the "farmer is not subjected to the forces of social change which are continually upsetting old ideas

²⁴Ronald Freedman and Deborah Freedman, "Farm-Reared Elements in the Nonfarm Population," Rural Sociology, XXI (1956), pp. 50-51.

²⁵Ibid., p. 50.

²⁶Ibid., p. 60.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Carl C. Taylor, Rural Sociology (New York, 1926), p. 466.

in other walks of life."²⁹

While all of this may be true of the rural family who moves into the urban setting, there still needs to be a more specific examination of the rural student who moves into the urban school. Studies which attempt to examine this problem support the thesis that rural students are considered as the out-group in urban schools. Louis H. Orgack investigated preference and prejudice patterns of rural and urban pupils in a consolidated high school where sixty-eight per cent of the students were urban and thirty-two per cent of the students were rural. He concludes that "substantial preference and prejudice by students for each other exists; and minority-group status is accorded to rural students by urban schoolmates and is accepted by rural students."³⁰ A similar study was made by Kenneth L. Cannon and his conclusions are consistent with Orgack's. His results indicate that "farm pupils were not so well accepted as town pupils by the high-school student body."³¹

It may be concluded that the rural student has a definite disadvantage to overcome when he moves from his native environment to an urban school system. His personality has been directed toward more self-reliance and less interdependability. Yet the school system in which he moves stresses interdependability over self-reliance. His

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Louis H. Orgack, "Preference and Prejudice Patterns Among Rural and Urban Schoolmates," Rural Sociology, XXI (1956), p. 33.

³¹ Kenneth L. Cannon, "The Relationship of Social Acceptance to Socio-Economic Status and Residence Among High School Students," Rural Sociology, XXII (1957), p. 142.

personality has been shaped by one environment while his activity must be released in another. What appears to be a very obvious theoretical contradiction becomes, in actuality, a very real tension.

Concepts Related to the Student Dropout

As the dropout problem becomes of increasing importance to the general public as well as educators, increased research is being done on the subject. Much of this research deals with the nature and characteristics of the dropout. It is hopefully assumed that understanding the "typical" dropout will aid in the development of programs for corrective measures. The studies designed to identify the definitive characteristics of the dropout have usually combined data from several of the following sources: (1) personal interviews with the dropouts and their parents, (2) teachers' opinions of the dropout, (3) examination of the information from cumulative school records of the dropouts, (4) comparisons of dropouts with pupils who finish with respect to intelligence, sex, age, grades, attendance, socio-economic status of the family, race and reading abilities.

In an analysis of the nature and characteristics of the dropout, certain prevalent misconceptions need to be corrected. First, it should be noted that the dropout is not necessarily someone of low intelligence. One of the most recent studies deals with the question of intelligence in a very thorough manner. The conclusion is quite clear on this point. "Most...significant is the fact that it is not necessarily the less intelligent who leave school before graduation."³² Percy V. Williams

³² Sam M. Lambert, High-School Dropouts, (Washington D.C., 1959), p. 7.

reports on a study made by the Maryland State Department of Education in cooperation with the state's twenty-three county systems and the Baltimore City Department of Education. A pupil dropout study for the year 1960-1961 was conducted in every high school in the state and records were compiled on 13,715 high school dropouts. His conclusion is revealing:

Lack of intelligence may be a big factor for some dropouts, but it certainly is not the dominant cause. The Maryland study showed that 49.8 per cent of the dropouts had average to above average intelligence.³³

J. F. Elstrom contends that there are many other factors besides scholastic ability which play important roles in the decision of a potential dropout.

Factors such as lack of interest on the part of pupils, failure to adjust, lack of parental encouragement and the farm help problem are more often causes of dropping out of high school than the factor of scholastic ability.³⁴

To recognize that there are many factors other than intelligence is not to say that intelligence does not have its effect. In some studies, the relative importance of intelligence seems especially significant. Table I represents the findings of a United States Department of Labor study of dropouts in seven communities. Although more than half (54%) of all dropouts tested had IQ's of over 90, the level of IQ remains important. As indicated by the table, three times as many dropouts as high school graduates had IQ's under 85, and nearly three times as

³³ Percy V. Williams, "School Dropouts," National Education Association Journal (1963), p. 11.

³⁴ J. F. Elstrom, "Why Farm Children Leave School," School Review, LIV (1946), p. 236.

many graduates as dropouts had IQ's of 110 and over. The study by Lazare indicates the equivocal way in which the intelligence factor can be considered in relation to dropouts. He found that 82.4 per cent of the dropouts from the Tecoma and Pierce County public schools during the first semester of 1956 had IQ's from 90 to 110. In the three years previous to 1956, however, he found that only 60.1 per cent, 60.9 per cent and 57.6 per cent of the ninth grade dropouts had average ability.

TABLE I
THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN INTELLIGENCE
AND DROPOUTS IN SEVEN COMMUNITIES

EDUCATIONAL STATUS	PER CENT			
	IQ UNDER 85	IQ 85-89	IQ 90-109	IQ 110 AND OVER
High School Graduates	10	11	63	16
Dropouts	31	15	48	6

Source: United States Department of Labor

In view of the ambiguous evidence relating intelligence to dropouts, it must be concluded that (1) the dropout is not necessarily someone of low intelligence, (2) students of lower intelligence are more likely to drop out of school than those of higher intelligence, and (3) many other factors operate which are more influential on the dropout than his intelligence quotient.

The second prevalent misconception which needs correction is that the dropout group approximates identity with the juvenile delinquent group.³⁵ In the Maryland Study previously cited, the inaccuracy of this view is made quite clear. The study produced no evidence to support the idea that most dropouts are delinquent children. A large majority, 79 per cent, were not considered serious behavior problems by either their counselors or their principals. The student continued to support their contention by stating that 76 per cent of the dropouts have never been suspended from school.³⁶

If delinquency and low intelligence are not the primary reasons prompting students to drop out of school, the immediate concern is to identify the factors which do account for school dropouts. While there is much argument as to which specific factors most directly relate to propensity for dropping out of school, there is overwhelming agreement that no one basic factor can be singled out as the cause. Consequently, most studies examine several contributory elements.

A study quite similar to the Maryland study was made in Detroit's public secondary school with a total research population of 622. Richard H. Dresher, in reporting on the findings, lists some of the

³⁵J. Kelly Frances, Donald J. Veldman, and Carsen McGuire studied the problem of measuring the relationship between delinquency and dropouts. They argued that previous studies had (1) neglected cross-validation procedures, (2) failed to note the influence of incarceration upon the S's test performance and (3) considered only extreme deviants in testing. Additional information can be seen in the article by the above mentioned authors, "Multiple Discriminant Prediction of Delinquency and School Dropouts," Educational and Psychological Measurement, XXIV, pp. 534-544.

³⁶Williams, p. 11.

main characteristics which he found to be common among most dropouts.

1. Occupation of the father
2. Birthplace of parents and child
3. Number of times family changed residence
4. Sense of belonging³⁷

In Albert J. Riendeav's analysis of the problem, he identifies four factors to be most influential: (1) poor relationships in school, (2) lack of personal interest at home or at school, (3) inability to see value in school subjects, and (4) limited participation in extra-curricular activities.³⁸ A more comprehensive study of 247 dropouts conducted by Joseph C. Bledsoe examines six correlates in relation to student withdrawals:

1. Boys are more likely to drop out of high school than are girls.
2. More dropouts were found to have attended larger classes in grades one, two, and three than those in which nondropouts were found.
3. Nearly four times as many students who changed schools were found to drop out as those who did not.
4. Pupils whose parents are engaged in professional, managerial, agricultural, clerical, and sales work are less likely to drop out than students whose parents are unskilled laborers, retired, unemployed, or whose occupation is unknown.
5. Parents who had more education tended to have fewer children drop out.

³⁷Richard H. Dresher, "Factors in Voluntary Drop-Outs," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXII (1954), p. 28.

³⁸Albert J. Riendeav, "Facing Up to the Dropout Problem," The Clearing House, XXXVI (1962), pp. 523-526.

6. Students who left school in the ninth and tenth grades had a mean reading comprehension score of 7.9. Those students who remained in school had a mean reading comprehension score of 8.9.³⁹

John W. Porter reviewed the theoretical basis of numerous city-wide holding programs and concludes that it is not possible to describe a prototype dropout. He does offer a list of eleven characteristics which distinguish the potential dropout student from students of similar intelligence and social status who remained in school. It appears that the first six items describe the observable traits of the potential dropout while the last five items offer the social-psychological reasons for his behavior.

1. Often resides in a homogeneous area of low socio-economic status.
2. Does not have the skill, responsibility, and personal or social adjustment necessary to obtain and hold a part time job while attending school and he does not obtain a good job after leaving school; usually makes poor work record.
3. In personal adjustment lacks the ability to gain status, is socially immature, irresponsible, defensive and pessimistic about his vocational future.
4. Is sometimes socially withdrawn and sometimes aggressive. Lacks stay-in friends and is not a constructive leader. The dropout seldom participates in extra-curricular activities.
5. If a girl, often plans to marry early and is likely to be sexually precocious.
6. Academically below average, a poor reader, often absent from school and clashes with certain middle class teachers who reject him on the basis of social class or academic inadequacy.

³⁹J. C. Bledsoe, "Investigation of Six Correlates of Student Withdrawal from High School," Journal of Educational Research, LIV (1959), pp. 3-6.

7. If not below average academically, is more likely to exhibit a dislike for the school situation because of reasons not yet fully identified.
8. System of values tells him to reject school, self and competitive system.
9. He feels frustrated and insecure in the school situation.
10. Has extreme difficulty seeing the possibility of education as a means to vocational success, and can find no suitable training program in our schools.
11. His parents are indifferent to school persistence by their child. While they may not express negative feeling concerning school persistence, they will not⁴⁰ act to intervene on the occasion of school leaving.

L. M. and R. A. Tesseneer made a review of the literature on school dropouts and compiled a list of the most frequently occurring characteristics. They list seven characteristics which they find to be the most common among all dropouts.

1. Are 16 or 17 years of age and are retarded by one or more grades
2. Are from low-income families
3. Are discouraged with their work or are failing
4. Are dissatisfied with teaching methods
5. Have a feeling of "not belonging"
6. Leave because of the lure of a job
7. Are from weak and broken homes.⁴¹

⁴⁰J. W. Porter, "Heart of the Dropout Problem: Early Identification," Michigan Educational Journal, XLV (1963), pp. 362-365.

⁴¹R. A. Tesseneer and L. M. Tesseneer, "Review of the Literature on School Dropouts," National Association of Secondary School Principals Bulletin, XLII (1958), p. 143.

While there appears to be considerable difference of opinion on the issue of the identifiable marks of the dropout, five specific characteristics emerge as the ones most frequently considered important: (1) a lack of a sense of belonging, (2) personality adjustment problems, (3) reading retardation, (4) apathetic parental attitudes toward education, and (5) a feeling that the achievement of his goals is not materially aided by formal education. Each of these items has been considered in great detail by sociological and educational researchers.

The dropout does not have a sense of belonging. The Director of the Research Division of the National Education Association states that "the typical dropout is also frequently characterized by failure to belong to an in-school group."⁴² A statement from the Maryland report seems to sum up the findings of most writers concerning this point:

Many dropouts...reveal feelings of being left out. Having a sense of belonging, a feeling of being wanted and respected as a person, is a universal need, and the fact that so many dropouts show little interest in school activities may be a sign that the programs in the schools are not meeting this need.⁴³

The feeling of many dropouts that "they do not belong" begins to emerge as the single, most important consideration. As a more specific measure of this lack of feeling of belonging, the Maryland study investigated the areas of extracurricular activity and student participation.

⁴²Sam M. Lambert, High-School Dropouts, (Washington, D. C., 1959), p. 8.

⁴³Percy V. Williams, "School Dropouts," National Education Association Journal (1963), p. 12.

When nonscholastic factors were studied, it was found that more than two-thirds of the dropouts never participated in athletics or extracurricular activities of any kind, and this tendency was most pronounced in large schools.⁴⁴

Robert Jay Thomas made a four-year study of ten factors possibly related to school dropouts. He concurs with the contention that the dropout does not have a sense of belonging, and that this lack is reflected in his failure to participate in group activities. "Without danger of overgeneralizing, it may be said that those students who engage in at least one extracurricular activity are much less likely to drop out than those who do not."⁴⁵

While it appears true that the need to belong is the most significant factor related to school dropouts in urban schools, other factors are influential.

The dropout usually has a problem of adjustment. Ethelwyn G. Arnholter made a study relating school persistence with personality factors using the Arsenal Technical High School of Indianapolis, Indiana, as the population group. She finds that there is a "significant difference...in personality adjustment between the graduates and the dropouts."⁴⁶

The dropout often labors with a reading retardation handicap. A study under the direction of W. L. Gragg finds that academic retardation was the most significant factor dealing with dropouts as compared to

⁴⁴ Ibid.

⁴⁵ Thomas, pp. 15-16.

⁴⁶ Ethelwyne G. Arnholter, "School Persistence and Personality Factors," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXXIV (1956), p. 108.

the graduate.⁴⁷ In a pilot study conducted in Ohio under the auspices of the Ohio State Department of Education, the researchers discovered that 75.4 per cent of the dropouts who took reading tests scored below the median for the level and 54.4 per cent of them were in the bottom quartile. Ruth Penty has done extensive research in this area and reports that three times as many poor readers as good readers dropped out of school. The following chart which Penty published makes conveniently clear the basis for her arguments.⁴⁸

TABLE II

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF TENTH GRADE STUDENTS -- 593
POOR READERS AND 593 GOOD READERS -- WHO DROPPED
OUT OF SCHOOL BETWEEN SEPTEMBER 1947 AND
JUNE 1951 BEFORE GRADUATION

	<u>Poor Readers</u>		<u>Good Readers</u>	
	N	%	N	%
Dropped Out:				
During tenth grade	120	20.2	8	1.3
Completing tenth grade	38	6.5	13	2.2
During eleventh grade	68	11.4	31	5.2
Completing eleventh grade	22	3.7	21	3.6
During twelfth grade	48	8.1	13	2.2
Transferred (All grades)	27	4.6	26	4.3
Total Dropouts	296	49.9	86	14.5

Source: Ruth C. Penty, Reading Ability and High School Dropouts, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University, New York, 1956.

⁴⁷ W. L. Gragg, "Some Factors Which Distinguish Drop-Outs from High School Graduates," Personnel and Guidance Journal, XXVII, p. 458.

⁴⁸ Ruth C. Penty, Reading Ability and High School Dropouts, Bureau of Publications, Columbia University (New York, 1956).

The parental attitudes influencing the dropout are usually apathetic toward education. A report on the Holding Power Project of New York prepared by James W. Moore stresses the importance of parental attitudes. The project spanned the years from 1956 to 1960 and 89 New York School Districts participated in the study. The report includes the following comment on the characteristics of voluntary withdrawal.:

The attitude of the parents of the pupils toward continued school attendance for their children seemed to be of crucial importance. According to school officials, only one-third of the parents of pupils who withdrew were positively oriented toward this question, in contrast with 90 per cent of the parents of pupils who remained in school.⁴⁹

The dropout frequently feels that the achievement of his goals is not materially aided by formal education. Most often, the dropout does not have a real awareness of his goals or his goals are so constructed as to preclude the need for education. In either case, he considers his continuation in a secondary school as not useful for his purposes. Evelyn N. Deno, a consultant in Special Education and Rehabilitation to the Minneapolis Public School System, studied the question of means and ends in relation to dropouts. She concludes that the value system of the dropout is so constructed as not to include "... school education as a serviceable and attainable route to gaining self-advantage."⁵⁰

The effort to identify distinguishing characteristics of the school dropout reinforces the contention of most writers that there

⁴⁹ James W. Moore, "Dropout and Public Responsibility," New York State Education, LI (1964), p. 7.

⁵⁰ Evelyn N. Deno, "Early Identification of Dropouts," Minnesota Journal of Education, XLIV (1963), pp. 12-13.

is no prototype dropout; numerous factors contribute to the concrete decision of a student to withdraw from school. However, this survey of the literature dealing with the characteristics by which the potential dropout may be recognized indicates the complex inter-relatedness of the observed behavioral actions of the potential dropout and the motives which initiate and sustain this behavior.

Because of the extensive number of studies dealing with the characteristics of the student dropout, it is impossible to review them all. It is believed that a sufficient number of studies have been considered to give a representative view of current research. However, few studies have dealt with dropouts in relation to variables emerging from rurality.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Methodology Employed

Two variables were selected to determine the degree of rurality of each student: a rurality test and a residence classification system. The rurality test was designed to measure the subject's degree of rural orientation. The residence classification system was based on the number of years the student or his parents had lived on a farm.

One variable was used to indicate the propensity to drop out of school. It consisted of the results of a test devised by the Oklahoma City Board of Education, Department of Research, under the direction of Dr. Larry Hayes. The test consisted of eleven characteristics which were believed to be major dropout symptoms.

Two other variables were chosen to offer additional information. They were sex and grade classification.

The propensity for a student's dropping out of school was used as the dependent variable and the remaining four variables were handled as independent variables.

Three statistical interpretations were made on the data: a correlation coefficient, analysis of variance, and comparison of means.

The Mathematical Model

The following basic mathematical model was used to determine the effects of the five variables on the propensity of students dropping out of school:

$$y_{ijk\epsilon} = \mu + \alpha_i + \tau_j + \beta_1 X_{1ijk\epsilon} + \gamma_k + \beta_2 X_{2ijk\epsilon} + \epsilon_{ijk\epsilon}$$

In this model, Y represents dropout propensity, the dependent variable. The remainder are independent variables: α_i is the sex of the students with i equal to 1 (male) and 2 (female); τ_j is the grade of the student with j equal to 1 (seventh grade), 2 (eighth grade), and 3 (ninth grade); X_1 is a covariable and is the actual number of years the student has spent on the farm; β_1 is a partial regression coefficient associated with the covariable X_1 ; γ_k is the farm residence classification of the student with γ equal to 1 (neither student nor parents ever lived on the farm), 2 (student has not, but parents have lived on the farm), 3 (student has lived on the farm, but parents have not), and 4 (both student and parents have lived on the farm); X_2 is a covariable and is the actual score of the rurality test and β_2 is a partial regression coefficient associated with the covariable X_2 . The errors are assumed to be independently and normally distributed. There are five independent variables and one dependent variable.

In this thesis, the following five hypotheses will be tested:

1. $H_0: \alpha_1 = \alpha_2$. There is no significant difference between sexes with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

2. $H_0: \tau_1 = \tau_2 = \tau_3$. There are no significant differences among grade classifications with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

3. $H_0: \beta_1 = 0$. There is no significant difference among years spent on the farm with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

4. $H_0: \gamma_1 = \gamma_2 = \gamma_3 = \gamma_4$. There are no significant differences among farm residence classifications with regard to the propensity for dropping out of school.

5. $H_0: \beta_2 = 0$. There is no significant difference among rurality test scores with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Source of Data

Two instruments were used as the primary source of data for this study. The first instrument was designed to identify potential dropouts and was formulated by the Oklahoma Holding Power Committee of 1963 and 1964. Educators from the university and secondary level who worked with the dropout problem participated in the development of the instrument. The functioning of the instrument depended upon teacher participation. The nature of the participation demanded objective as well as subjective information from the teachers. The teacher gave information relating to eleven characteristics for each pupil. The form used by the teachers instructed them to check discernible characteristics. The characteristics given were low scholastic ability, low achievement, reading retardation, overage, disinterest, absenteeism, undesirable behavior, low economic status, transiency,

poor health, and non-participation in activities. Characteristics such as overage and absenteeism involve substantially objective reporting of a given set of circumstances. On the other hand, characteristics such as disinterest and undesirable behavior require a more subjective interpretation on the part of the teacher.

During 1964, the propensity test was used in 46 school systems in Oklahoma to identify potential dropouts. The results of the propensity test, along with additional information, were added to the potential dropout's permanent school record. Local and statewide programs were initiated to hold the students in school.

The second instrument was used to determine the degree of rural orientation of each student. The rurality data came from a test administered directly to the students. The test was once employed in a study by W. A. Anderson which contrasts attitudes toward ten aspects of rural living. The groups in Anderson's study were measured according to their attitudes towards the rural environment as a place

1. For healthful living
2. For doing enjoyable work through farming
3. For obtaining the necessary education for life
4. For earning a satisfactory living through farming
5. For enjoying wholesome recreation and leisure
6. For having aesthetically pleasing experiences
7. For carrying on a sociable life as a community member
8. For obtaining the necessary facility for a good living
9. For developing wholesome family life
10. For the proper rearing of children

However, because of the length of the original test, only four of the ten sections were used. The four sections chosen for use were (1) for healthful living, (2) for doing enjoyable work through farming, (3) for obtaining the necessary education for life, (4) for developing wholesome family life.

The reasons for limiting the testing instrument to these four parts and the justification for choosing these particular four are as follows:

1. It was limited out of necessity. Each section contains questions ranging in number from 25 to 45. When all the questions are considered, there are almost 200. This number was too large for the testing situation which was available. Therefore, the number of questions asked was limited by eliminating six of the ten sections.

2. The four sections chosen were most representative of all ten sections. When the ten sections are divided into various areas, the breakdown shows that two of the sections deal with the rural environment as a place for an adequate education; two of the sections deal with the rural environment as an adequate context of work; two sections deal with the rural environment as an adequate place for family relations; and the remaining sections deal with the rural environment as a good place to live. Thus, one section was chosen from each area of concern. This selection provided the same scope of possible areas as the original test had done.

3. Suitability for junior high students was considered in selecting the sections to be used. After the various subject areas had been determined, the specific group of questions which contained the more

elementary language and which seemed to be more appropriate to junior high school student level was selected.

Limitations of Methodology

There are two primary limitations of the methodology employed in the study. First, neither the propensity test devised by the Oklahoma Holding Power Committee nor the rurality test designed by W. A. Anderson has been standardized. Consequently, the data from these two instruments has to be considered without the benefit of comparison to standardized results. Second, the exact impact of using only some of Anderson's rurality tests cannot be determined. In section 3 of this chapter, it was argued that reduction from the original ten part test to four parts did not involve significant sacrifice. However, statistical evidence is not available to defend this argument.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Propensity Test

Of the total sample of 947 students, 199 were identified as having some inclination towards dropping out of school. Included in the 199 students were 134 males and 65 females. The actual breakdown can be seen in the following chart which divides the sample according to sex, grade, and propensity ranking. These 199 students had propensity scores ranging from one to seven, the higher the number indicating the greater the propensity. The highest possible propensity score is eleven.

In examining the chart, two points are observable:

1. No students received a propensity ranking higher than seven. Eleven was the maximum number possible.
2. Of those with a tendency to drop out, the majority of the students were concentrated in the numbers from one to four.

Rurality Test

The average rurality test score for all 947 students was 43.38 with the mean scores declining as grade increased. The range possible of scores on the rurality test was from 0 to 71, while the range of actual observance was from 2 to 70. There are three categories in which the rurality test scores should be considered: grade, sex,

and residence classification.

TABLE III

SCHOOL DROPOUT PROPENSITY SCORES OF 947 STUDENTS OF
ROOSEVELT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, OKLAHOMA
CITY, BY SEX AND GRADE

Propensity Score	Grade Level											
	Seventh				Eighth				Ninth			
	M		F		M		F		M		F	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Totals	129	100	166	100	167	100	175	100	164	100	146	100
0	91	71	143	86	126	76	163	90	109	66	116	78
1	19	13	9	5	7	4	5	4	8	5	4	3
2	5	4	3	2	7	4	3	2	10	6	11	7
3	6	5	5	3	6	4	1	1	15	9	4	3
4	4	3	4	3	10	6	2	2	7	4	5	4
5	3	2	1	.6	7	4	1	1	4	3	5	4
6	0	0	1	.6	4	2	0	0	8	5	0	0
7	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	3	2	1	1

Students in the seventh grade scored highest on the rurality test with a mean of 46.01. Students in the eighth and ninth grades had means of 42.69 and 41.63 respectively. Male students scored higher on the test than did female students with means of 45.62 and 41.26 respectively.

A very interesting comparison can be made concerning the rurality scores and the residence classifications. Without exception, the average rurality score increased as the rural residence factor increased.

For those students who had not lived on a farm and whose parents had not lived on a farm, the mean score for the rurality test was 39.57. This mean was lower than that of any of the other residence categories. For those students who had not lived on the farm, but whose parents had, the result was very close to the overall mean--43.53. There were 49 students who had lived on the farm, although their parents had not. The mean of this group was 46.02. The highest mean, which was 48.52, was calculated on those students who had lived on a farm and whose parents had lived on a farm.

These results are in agreement with what was expected: as the rural residence factor increases, the rurality test score increases. The results of the comparison of means relating rurality test scores with grade, sex and residence is summarized in Table IV.

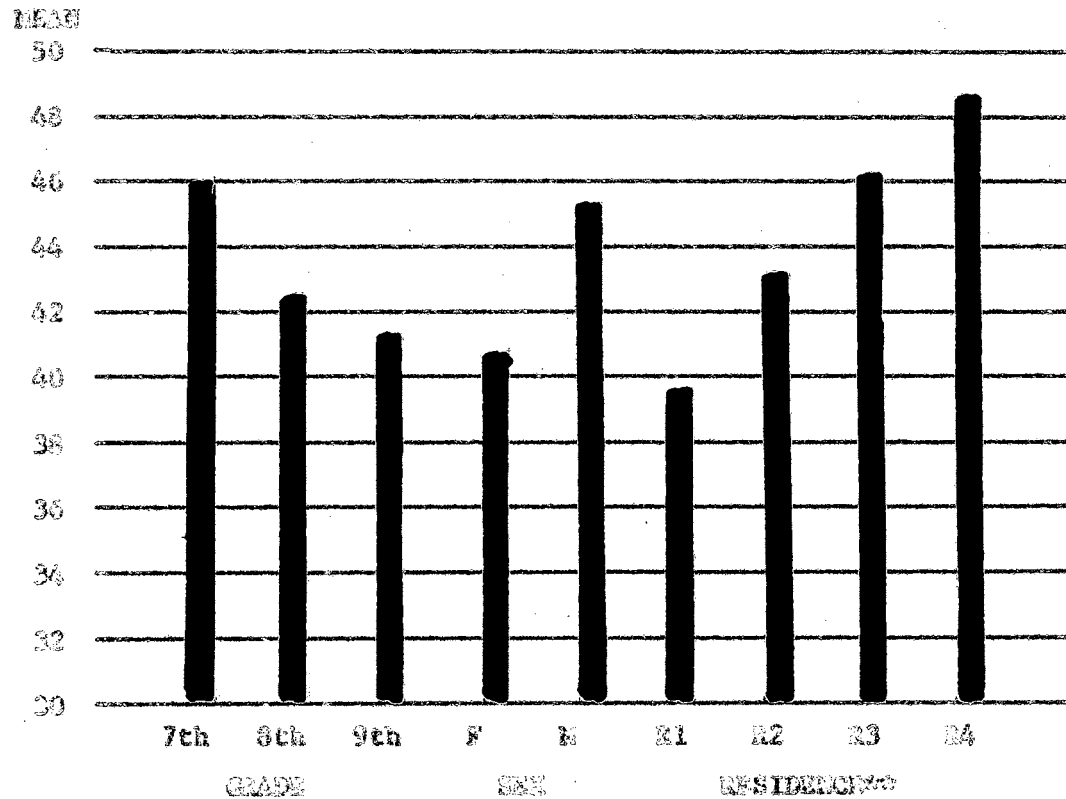
TABLE IV

RURALITY TEST MEANS OF 947 STUDENTS OF ROOSEVELT JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL, OKLAHOMA CITY, BY GRADE, SEX AND RESIDENCE CLASSIFICATION

GRADE, SEX, RESIDENCE	MEAN
GRADE:	
Seventh	46.01
Eighth	42.69
Ninth	41.63
SEX:	
Male	45.62
Female	41.26
RESIDENCE:**	
R1	39.57
R2	43.53
R3	46.02
R4	48.52

- **R1: Neither parents nor student have ever lived on a farm.
R2: Parents have lived on the farm but student has not.
R3: Parents have not lived on the farm but student has.
R4: Both parents and student have lived on the farm.

The results shown in Table IV can be seen more vividly in the following chart:



- R1: Neither parents nor student have ever lived on a farm.
 R2: Parents have lived on the farm but student has not.
 R3: Parents have not lived on the farm but student has.
 R4: Both parents and student have lived on the farm.

Figure 1. Rurality Test Means of 947 Students by Grade, Sex, and Residence Classification

Relationship Between Rurality and Propensity

There are various approaches which can be taken to examine the relationship between rural orientation and the propensity for dropping out of school. The first is a correlation coefficient.

The results indicate that there is a statistically significant positive relationship between rurality and propensity. At the one

percent level, the correlation coefficient is small (.14123). However, it is still significant.

A second approach to the examination of the relationship between rurality and propensity is by an analysis of variance. The table on the following page analyzes the variables related to the propensity factor.

With any number larger than 6.63 being significant at the one percent level, the Analysis of Variance Table indicates that three factors are significant. Those three factors are sex, grade, and rurality. The T-test was run on all pairs of grades to determine their relative contribution to the variance. The T-test indicated that while there is almost no difference between the seventh and eighth grade students as related to propensity, there is a significant difference between seventh and ninth, and eighth and ninth grades.

TABLE V
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE

Source of Variance	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F
Total	2201	947		
Mean (μ)	363.85	1		
Total (corr. for mean)	1927.15	946		
Sex	41.0908	1	41.0908	21.9**
Grade	31.7720	2	15.8860	8.5**
Farm Years	6.0916	1	6.0916	3.3
Residence	13.3730	3	4.4577	2.4
Rurality	15.4878	1	15.4878	8.3**
Error	1756.95	938	1.8731	

**Significant at the one percent level.

The third approach to be taken in an analysis of the relationship between rurality and propensity is a comparison of means. In a comparison of the means, the same results are indicated as have been expressed previously: as the rurality test scores increase, the propensity for dropping out of school responds accordingly.

The mean for all students who had no indications of dropping out of school is 42.56. However, the mean for all students who were indicated as having propensity for dropping out of school was 47.33. In this case, the scores of students who were considered to be potential dropouts averaged about five points higher on the rurality test than did those who were not considered potential dropouts.

The same kind of results can be seen when the students are broken down into sex categories. Female potential dropouts scored a rurality mean of 46.06 whereas female non-potential dropouts scored only 40.73. Similarly, male potential dropouts scored an average of 45.60 on the rurality test whereas non-potential dropouts scored 44.35.

Summary of the Hypotheses

1. Sub-Hypothesis 1

There is no significant difference between sexes with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Statistical Tests

Analysis of Variance

Results

In all grades, males were more likely to drop out of school than females. This was found to be significant at the .01 level.

Disposition of Hypothesis

Null: Rejected

II. Sub-Hypothesis 2

There is no significant difference among grade classifications with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Statistical Tests

Analysis of Variance, T-Test and Comparison of Means

Results

Grade was found to be significantly related to propensity at the .01 level. A T-Test was run on grade to determine which of the three grades was most significantly related to propensity. The T-Test indicated that while there is almost no difference between seventh and eighth grade students as related to propensity, there was a significant difference between seventh and ninth, and eighth and ninth grade.

Disposition of Hypothesis

Null: Rejected

III. Sub-Hypothesis 3

There is no significant difference among years spent on the farm with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Statistical Tests

Analysis of Variance

Results

Number of years spent on the farm was not found to be significantly related to propensity at the .01 level.

Disposition of Hypothesis

Null: Confirmed

IV. Sub-Hypothesis 4

There is no significant difference among farm residence classifications with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Statistical Tests

Analysis of Variance

Results

Farm residence classification, like number of years on the farm, was found not to be significantly related to propensity at the .01 level.

Disposition of Hypothesis

Null: Confirmed

V. Sub-Hypothesis 5

There is no significant difference among rurality test scores with regard to propensity for dropping out of school.

Statistical Tests

Analysis of Variance, correlation coefficient and comparison of means.

Results

Rurality test scores significantly related to propensity at the .01 level. Also, the correlation coefficient indicates that there is a significant relation at the .01 level. A comparison of means reveals that the mean rurality test score for those students who have no propensity for dropping out of school is less than that for those who have some indication towards dropping out.

Disposition of Hypothesis

Null: Rejected

VI. Major Hypothesis

There is no significant relationship between a student's rural orientation and his propensity for dropping out of an urban school.

Results

The results of this study generally support the contention that there is a significant relationship between rurality and propensity for dropping out of school in an urban setting. The implications of Sub-Hypothesis 5, relating rurality test scores with propensity, is that there is a significant relationship at the .01 level.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS

Summary of Findings

In Chapter II of the study, numerous theoretical propositions were advanced and the findings of Chapter IV either support or are compatible with these previously advanced contentions.

First, the results of this research lend further support to the contention that rural oriented persons have lower educational aspiration levels than do urban oriented persons. The contention by Middleton, Grigg, Burchinal and Haller is supported by the fact that rurality and propensity were significantly related. Since many of the factors on the propensity test dealt with academic areas, it is consistent that as propensity increases, so does rurality.

Likewise, the results of the research are compatible with the contention that personality differences exist between rural and urban youth which would tend to make the former less adjusted to a school in an urban setting. The rural imprint on a student personality is likely to involve feelings that one does not belong to the group, tendencies towards withdrawing, lack of many social skills, and feelings of being "ill at ease" in school relationships. When these contentions are considered in the light of the propensity test which included factors dealing specifically with the degree to which a student felt a part of the group, it would be expected that rural students should rank

higher on the propensity test than urban students. Indeed, the expectation was confirmed by the data.

A third theoretical consideration presented in the earlier chapter maintained that even though rural and urban differences do exist, they are becoming less significant. Although the study was not designed to determine any kind of trend, the results indicate that a rural-urban difference does remain.

A fourth consideration advanced previously is one by Sorokin and Zimmerman, who maintain that inherent in the impact of rural work on the rural personality is the inability to make frequent and easy adjustments to new environments. This particular view is not necessarily supported by the results of this research. Since there is no statistical significance between propensity and residence factors, this study offers no justification for maintaining this position. However, the testing instruments of this study were not adequate either to support or to deny this proposition.

A fifth point made earlier is that, since rural people move to the city without skilled training, they are more likely to be held to the lower income jobs. Low occupation status means additional disadvantages for the student from a rural background. Previous dropout studies have indicated a high relationship between propensity and low income. This study agrees with this contention to the extent that rurality and low income are overlapping in influence.

Summarily, the data produced in this research effort does support the major thesis of this study: There is a significant relationship between a student's rural orientation and his propensity for dropping out of an urban school. This conclusion seems justified when one

significant qualification is acknowledged. The qualification emerges from a distinction between rurality considered as an attitude and rurality considered as an experience. When rurality is considered as an attitude (as the Anderson rurality test does), then rurality is found to be significantly related to propensity for dropping out of an urban school. However, when rurality is considered as an experience (as the number of years actually spent on the farm and the farm residence classification system do), then rurality is not significantly related to propensity. Subsequently, the major thesis of this study is upheld when rural orientation is considered to be an attitude.

Limitations of the Study

The limitations of the study are most pronounced in four specific areas: the instruments which are used are not standardized, the scope of the study does not include the possibility of prediction statements, the existence of a clearly defined rural-urban difference is questionable, and some variables which may have influenced the data were not controlled.

Neither of the two primary testing instruments used in this study are standardized. The propensity test devised by the Oklahoma Holding Power Committee and the rurality test designed by W. A. Anderson have both been used extensively for their expressed purposes. However, neither one offers the study the advantages of comparison which is offered by the use of standardized instruments. However, there are reasons for their selection in face of this limitation. The propensity test had already been administered to all the students in the Oklahoma City public school systems and the information was readily available.

The rurality test was the best test available for the purposes of determining rurality as an attitudinal expression.

The scope of the study, as indicated in Chapter I, does not include the possibility of prediction statements. Consequently, from the standpoint of utility in a local school situation, it has severe practical limitations. While it is not a prediction study, this work is a relational study in as much as it attempts to explore whether a positive relationship exists between rural orientation and propensity for dropping out of school.

The existence of a clearly defined rural-urban difference is questionable. Because of increased communications and population mobility, the clearly defined difference between the rural and urban personality is diminishing. The extent to which the two polar types have actually fused into one represents a limiting factor for this study because the study is based on the presupposition that a difference is identifiable.

Finally, there are variables which may have had influence on the data that were not controlled. In most cases, these variables were not controlled because it was a practical impossibility. Some of the more significant uncontrolled variables are: the effect of class status on the studied variables, the effect of income on class status, the effect of the movement of students within the city in breaking potentially strong group ties which would otherwise tend to hold a student in school.

Implications of the Study

The paramount implication of this study is that further research

needs to be conducted in three related areas. First, an instrument needs to be developed and standardized which can separate rural attitudes from urban attitudes if, indeed, such a separation exists. Second, further investigation needs to be pursued in the area of the rurally oriented person's modes of self expression and release of conflict in an urban setting. Third, assuming that conflict does arise when a rural personality type is freed to function in an urban setting, study should be made as to how this kind of conflict might best be controlled or minimized.

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APPENDIX A

Name _____ Student Number _____

Male _____ Female _____

Age _____

Grade _____

Have you ever lived on a farm? Yes _____ No _____

If so, how many years did you live on the farm? _____ years.

Where was it located? _____ Nearest town _____

County _____

Give your home address now _____

Have your parents ever been farmers? Yes _____ No _____

(Read the following sentences and check TRUE if you agree with the statements and check FALSE if you disagree with the statements.)

T F

- () () 1. Because the rural environment is one of fresh air and sunshine, I believe it is the most healthful one in which to live.
- () () 2. I think the schooling the children now receive in rural areas is the kind they should have for meeting their needs in earning a living.
- () () 3. The independence of farming appeals strongly to me.
- () () 4. To me, the farm home is the most pleasant place in the world.
- () () 5. Since rural people do not have good medical aid and hospitalization, I think they do not have as good health as city residents.
- () () 6. Since most occupations benefit society, farming has little advantage in this respect.

T F

- () () 7. I hold that farming requires less education than most other types of work.
- () () 8. Farming is most fascinating work.
- () () 9. Farming develops the kind of family relationships that results in more enduring families than are found in cities.
- () () 10. I feel that city occupations cause physical defects since they are so routine, confining, and do not allow for enough exercise, and so are unhealthy.
- () () 11. The farmer is a truly creative worker.
- () () 12. Because the farm and rural environment constantly challenge thought, they make for continuous adult mental development.
- () () 13. I would not enjoy farming as much as most farm people seem to.
- () () 14. I maintain that all families are bound together by strong ties of affection and no great differences exist in this regard between rural and other families.
- () () 15. Because rural people live at considerable distances from towns and cities, I believe they do not have the proper health attention.
- () () 16. Living in the country deprives one's children of the chance for an adequate education.
- () () 17. I cannot be enthusiastic about farming as a way to enjoy life.
- () () 18. The ideas of thrift and wholesome hard work that are a part of rural life build more united families than it is possible to have in other situations.
- () () 19. In the country people do not have medical care when they need it.
- () () 20. Because rural people deal with so many unpredictable problems they must solve, it makes them more inventive than most other classes of people.
- () () 21. Although farmers may have plenty of time to meditate, I feel that this does not assure them the incentives for thinking and so growing mentally.

T F

- () () 22. Farming is so monotonous, it cannot give much pleasure.
- () () 23. I believe that because the farm becomes the hereditary home of all the members and they constantly turn to it in thought, it creates strong families.
- () () 24. I believe farming is the most healthful of occupations because one gets plenty of physical exercise in the open air and sunshine.
- () () 25. Because the farmer must be so practical, he does little in his work that is creative.
- () () 26. School equipment and materials in rural areas are now, in my opinion, the equal of those available to city children.
- () () 27. I think that farming teaches the true value of work better than most other occupations.
- () () 28. I feel that farm and rural living gives people more new experiences than any other environment can.
- () () 29. Children living in the open country have the best environment to grow up in.
- () () 30. My opinion is that farm work teaches good judgment better than do most occupations, for the individual must solve his own job problems.
- () () 31. I believe that rural schools now give general education that is as satisfactory as similar education in other schools.
- () () 32. Since the farmer manages his own business it is more interesting than most types of work.
- () () 33. I believe that urban families break up more rapidly than rural families since they have no hereditary home or land to hold them together.
- () () 34. I think that rural people have a better chance to keep healthy than others since they have a more wholesome diet.
- () () 35. I feel that most rural school buildings are as safe and sanitary nowadays as most other school buildings.
- () () 36. Farming forces one to work until it becomes drudgery.
- () () 37. Farm families live together more intimately than any class of families.

T F

- () () 38. I feel that expectant mothers in the country do not have the proper medical attention before or after childbirth.
- () () 39. Rural life is isolated from the educationally broadening contacts of our society.
- () () 40. As my life's work, farming would be unbearable.
- () () 41. In my opinion, city occupations break family unity since each member follows his own work, frequently eats away from home, and usually follows his own pleasures.
- () () 42. I believe that city environments, being so artificial, cannot have the superior healthfulness that the natural rural environment gives.
- () () 43. Most occupations do not lend themselves to such a full way of life as does farming.
- () () 44. Rural schools have developed programs for adult education and for community services that make better use of the facilities than is true of cities.
- () () 45. There are few other occupations that offer as substantial enjoyment as farming.
- () () 46. I maintain that family unity is a characteristic of rural life because farming is a family industry where work and home life are not divorced; I believe the opposite is usually true in most cities.
- () () 47. I maintain that the limitations on good health facilities in the country have been overcome by rapid means of transportation and by the development of rural public health service.
- () () 48. I think that farming involves too many distasteful tasks.
- () () 49. Farming requires more intelligence than do most other types of work.
- () () 50. I maintain that the farm home is more nearly ideal than any other since the interests of the family members are all one.
- () () 51. For me, living on a farm would be just too much hard work.
- () () 52. My opinion is that proper clothing and other facilities for the care of children are difficult to have in country homes.

T F

- () () 53. Since farming does not call for vigorous mental action, it unfits rural people for serious thinking.
- () () 54. Since the rural family is so closely knit, it exerts a greater influence on the molding of personality than does the city family.
- () () 55. I hold that farming is society's most beneficial form of work.
- () () 56. I think that farming is one of the most dangerous occupations because machines, animals, and other circumstances cause so many accidents.
- () () 57. Since city people have educational opportunities within easy reach, I think they have much advantage over rural people.
- () () 58. Rural homemaking makes possible the pleasure of enjoyable family meals more generally than does city homemaking.
- () () 59. I feel that city jobs involve only the accomplishment of some detailed task.
- () () 60. I believe that city children have as healthful an environment to grow up in as have rural children.
- () () 61. I think that since rural schools are still patterned so closely after city schools, they train away from rural living.
- () () 62. My opinion is that rural schools just do not have the equipment necessary for as good training as city children get.
- () () 63. As I see it, the farmer has the satisfaction of being more productive than most workers.
- () () 64. I think farming certainly would be the finest work for me.
- () () 65. I feel that since the satisfactions of life are measured by the level of living obtainable from one's work, most farm families have a more satisfactory life than do most other workers.
- () () 66. Farming deadens a person's ambitions.
- () () 67. Farming has limitations as a life work but they are not so great as those of other forms of work.

T F

68. Farming yields less personal satisfaction than most other occupations.
69. I think that no other occupation but farming can provide the great enjoyment of working with plants and animals.
70. Because city workers are usually not their own bosses but must follow orders they have little of the joy of independence in their jobs.
71. Everything considered, I would be happier at farming than any other work.

VITA

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