

Research in Brief

ROBERT L. BRUCE, *editor*

EDITORIAL COMMENT is not expected to be a regular thing. Those that follow seem to be called for, however:

Source: Most of the studies reported have been theses or state-office research. They don't have to be. Contributions will be welcomed from any reader. We do ask that the method be sound (not fancy—just sound) and that the results have some general value.

Status studies: Two of the studies reported are simply descriptive. This information is useful, but it will be more useful when other studies show what causes the attitudes described or what the effects are.

WHAT KIND OF COUNTY WORKER IS MOST EFFECTIVE?

THE MORE EFFECTIVE county Extension workers seem to be higher in two important areas of leader behavior than their less effective colleagues, according to this study of county workers in Ohio. The two qualities are consideration (behavior indicating trust, friendship, warmth, etc.) and initiating structure (the tendency to delineate relationships with others, to establish well-defined patterns of organization, channels of communication, and methods of procedure).

On the basis of agent self-descriptions on a leader behavior questionnaire developed for this study and supervisor descriptions of the agents on the same form, Ohio agents were divided into four groups: (1) high on both initiating structure and consideration; (2) high on initiating structure and low on consideration; (3) low on initiating structure and high on consideration; or (4) low on both initiating structure and consideration. The agent's classification on this test was then compared to his rating on a personnel performance evaluation.

Following are some of the general conclusions reached:

1. Supervisors saw the leader behavior of agents differently than the agents saw their own behavior.
2. The most effective Extension agents were above the median on both *initiating structure* and *consideration* leader behavior dimensions (when described by supervisor).
3. The least effective Extension agents were below the median on both *initiating structure* and *consideration* leader behavior dimensions (when described by supervisor).

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4. The *initiating structure* and *consideration* dimensions of leader behavior were related less to performance of home economics agents than to performance of agents in agriculture and 4-H.
5. The effective Extension agents performed at a high level regardless of the leader behavior of the other agents working with them.

Clarence J. Cunningham, "Measures of Leader Behavior and Their Relation to Performance Levels of County Extension Agents." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio, 1964.

HOW MUCH URBANIZATION IN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION?

EXTENSION WORKERS in counties with high total populations and counties which have grown rapidly in the past decade agree that workers should spend a substantial portion of their time working with urban people. They are supported in this opinion by their state directors, and are focusing an increasing number of programs toward urban audiences.

In this study of the opinions of 150 county workers and of state directors of Extension it was found that:

1. While county workers and state directors agree that workers should spend a substantial proportion of their time working with urban people, county workers tend to say a larger proportion than state directors.
2. There is a trend toward more educational programs and projects directed to urban people.
3. The five major program areas of the Cooperative Extension Service ranked in order of the number of urban-oriented programs and projects are (1) Extension home economics, (2) 4-H and other youth Extension work, (3) community and public affairs, (4) marketing and utilization of agricultural products, and (5) agricultural production, management, and natural resource development.

The author concludes that, with the increasing interdependency of all segments of the society and the existence of a clientele in urban and urbanizing areas asking for the type of educational assistance which Extension has provided in rural areas, a need exists for an educational institution such as Cooperative Extension to inform, interpret, and help urban people in their decision making as individuals and groups.

Kaye Francis Bartlett, "The Role of the Cooperative Extension Service in Urban and Urbanizing Areas: An Analysis of Extension Workers' Opinions." Unpublished M.S. thesis, Department of Resource Development, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan, 1964.

WHAT IS EXPECTED OF 4-H?

EXTENSION WORKERS, local 4-H leaders, 4-H parents and community leaders in Arizona agree that Extension should have a good program for non-farm as well as farm children, should reach all ages from 5 to 20, should train its leaders and give all of them recognition, and should give donors a voice in the program. They feel that children

under 10 are too young for 4-H, that urban children are not too busy for the program, and that members should not be forced to compete. They also agree that 4-H is as important as adult work.

The four groups of respondents revealed considerable lack of unanimity over the remainder of the 145-plus questions. The questions were in nine major areas: (1) size of membership; (2) 4-H clientele eligibility; (3) program planning; (4) organization of 4-H work; (5) local 4-H leader system; (6) government control; (7) responsibility of extension workers in the 4-H program; (8) donors; and (9) public relations in 4-H.

The author concludes that the study shows a lack of communication among the groups involved, leading to different understandings of 4-H. He does not speculate on the effect of other interests of the respondents on their expectations of 4-H.

Bruce C. Kell, "Expressed Attitudes and Opinions of Extension Personnel, Certain 4-H Local Leaders, Parents of 4-H Members, and Other Adults, Concerning Philosophy, Objectives, Principles, Policy, and Operational Procedure of the Arizona 4-H Club Program." Unpublished problem, M. Agr. Ed., University of Arizona, Tucson, Arizona, 1964.

THE SAME QUESTIONNAIRE was administered to 223 county Extension workers in Minnesota with somewhat different results. Among the items on which agents were nearly unanimous were (1) that Extension's responsibility extends to non-farm children of both sexes and that the Extension youth program should go beyond 4-H Club work, (2) that all leaders of both sexes need training, (3) that parents and leaders should share responsibility for aiding the member in his work, and (4) that donors should not have a voice in determining the 4-H program.

An interesting area of agreement centers on the questions of quantity, quality, and competition. Again, agreement on the following points is nearly unanimous: Project work is not the only essential part of the work program and the county worker should not be judged primarily on its excellence; clubs with no potential winners should get as much attention as any other; the member should like his project, but can improve in areas other than the project; and it is not essential that project work be of competitive quality to be acceptable in 4-H.

Wayne Bath, "Research Results of Opinions and Attitudes Toward 4-H Objectives and Operational Procedures." Agricultural Extension Service, University of Minnesota, St. Paul, Minnesota, 1964 (mimeographed).

HOW GOOD IS PROGRAMMED LEARNING?

SIXTY COUNTY Extension workers, including equal number of experienced and inexperienced workers of both sexes, were selected for training in radio as a means of Extension teaching. Half were trained through a self-instructing program while on their regular jobs, and half attended a workshop on the subject.

On the basis of comparison between pre-training and post-training

tests of both groups, the authors conclude that self-instruction is at least as effective as workshop instruction in this subject. They regard self-instruction as more efficient in terms of time spent by trainees and costs of travel, etc. They point out, however, that the cost of developing the self-instructing programs is high and that the apparent efficiency might be lost unless the material could be used extensively.

This would support the results of other research in indicating the value of programmed self-instruction on a state-wide or area-wide basis, but casting doubt on its efficiency as a local effort. Applications would seem to be in areas such as in-service training for agents, local leader training, and training in topics which are brief enough to be handled and not local in application (record-keeping, for example).

C. Paul Marsh and T. M. Hyman, *Programmed Learning in Extension Training*. Technical Bulletin 161, North Carolina Agricultural Experiment Station, Raleigh, N.C., 1964.

A THEORY FOR REJECTION?

BASED ON THE ASSUMPTION that rejection of change is an integral and necessary part of the acceptance process, the author of this study proposes five forms of rejection, somewhat analogous to the so-called stages of adoption: ignorance, suspended judgment, situational ("it won't work *here* or *now*"), personal ("it won't work for *me*"), and experimental ("I tried them and they aren't any good").

To throw further light on these categories, he interviewed 45 teachers known rejectors of audio-visual instruction. He concludes that ignorance as a category is relative in a professional audience but that the amount of available information can be increased. (One might question if non-adoption by reason of ignorance is rejection at all.)

Suspended judgment and situational rejection can best be handled through opportunity for trial, the author found, since rejectors in these categories are open to evidence. Rejection for personal reasons may require other techniques, however, since the person who is anxious about change itself may not be moved by appeals to logic.

Rejection after trial is, of course, most difficult to overcome (presumably since it may be the sound course of action). To the degree that the trial has not been fair or that the outcome is untypical, it is possible that further trial can be encouraged.

[Despite the orientation of this study toward rejection rather than adoption, the author's conclusions reveal an implicit assumption (common to most such studies) that adoption is good and rejection is bad. Research on the adoption and rejection of unwise practices is needed to round out the picture.]

Gerhard C. Eichholz, "Why Do Teachers Reject Change?" *Theory Into Practice*, II (December, 1963), 264-68. (This journal is published at The Ohio State University and can likely be found in the local school library.)