

THE RELATIONSHIP OF FFA, VO-AG, AND WORK EXPERIENCE WITH WORK ATTITUDES

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Modern technology has caused a shift from production oriented to service oriented agricultural occupations. This trend indicates the importance that human relations skills will play in the success of the future worker. Vocational education and industry programs have historically emphasized cognitive and psychomotor skills for their students and workers. However, recent studies suggest that the affective skills related to work are just as important to job success and survival as those in the psychomotor and cognitive domains. The worker is increasingly facing the problem of an earlier obsolescence of specific job skills and has to work in an environment where work values, work habits, and work attitudes become the essentials for job survival.

Industrial research studies emphasize the importance of affective skills training. Many workers lose their jobs not because they are incompetent in the area of knowledge or skills but because they fail to get along with people (Wilson, 1973). Another study (Burns, 1973) pointed out that personal traits were the reasons many workers did not progress or advance in their organization.

Objective and Purpose

This study was an attempt to measure affective work competencies in order to provide additional information for vocational educators to use in planning vocational training programs. The purpose was to compare the rated level of certain affective work competencies with background experiences (FFA, high school agriculture course enrollment, and work experience) of students, graduates, and on-job-training (OJT) industry supervisors of agricultural mechanization programs of Illinois community colleges.

Methodology

Illinois community colleges with approved agricultural mechanization programs were selected to provide a population of 922 subjects. The names of the thirteen colleges were arranged in a random order and eight were chosen from the list as a sample. *Affective Work Competencies Inventories* (AWCI) were then administered to a sample of 646 subjects from the eight colleges and responses were categorized by selected background experiences. A total of 506 people responded, thus making the return rate 78.33 percent. The two independent variables of the ex-post-facto design were: three role classifications (student, graduate, and supervisor) and three background experiences (FFA membership, agriculture course enrollment, and work experience). The fifteen dependent variables were the affective work competency clusters (ambitious, cooperative, adaptable, considerate, independent, accurate, careful, pleasant, follows directions, emotionally stable, persevering, neat, dependable, efficient, and dedicated).

The following hypotheses, stated in the null form, were tested at the .05 level of significance:

- Ho₁: There is no significant difference in the expressed level of affective work competencies as measured by the *Affective Work Competencies Inventory* (AWCI) among students, graduates, and OJT supervisors.
- Ho₂: There is no significant difference in the expressed level of affective work competencies as measured by the AWCI between students and graduates who have held FFA membership and those who have not.
- Ho₃: There is no significant difference in the expressed level of affective work competencies as measured by the AWCI between students and graduates who have had high school agriculture courses and those who have not.
- Ho₄: There is no significant difference in the expressed level of affective work competencies as measured by the AWCI between students and graduates with various amounts of work experience.

Data were analyzed for each hypothesis by first using a multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) procedure. The results of the MANOVA comparisons were significant for each hypothesis, as shown by the Hotelling's trace test (Tables 1, 2, 3, and 4). Therefore, all four null hypotheses were rejected.

Since MANOVA comparisons were significant for each hypothesis, analysis of variance (ANOVA) comparisons were made of the AWCI Cluster mean scores as they were affected by the independent variables. A Scheffe' test was used in the univariate comparisons to determine which groups' scores differed significantly from each other.

Table 1

HOTELLING'S TRACE TEST RESULTS OF THE MANOVA
FOR MEAN SCORES OF STUDENTS, GRADUATES, AND SUPERVISORS

Variables	Hotelling Value	Hypothesis df	Error df	F
Roles	.51	30	960	8.12*

*Significant at .05 level.

Table 2

HOTELLING'S TRACE TEST RESULTS OF MANOVA FOR MEAN SCORES
OF STUDENTS AND GRADUATES WITH AND WITHOUT FFA MEMBERSHIP

Variables	Hotelling Value	Hypothesis df	Error df	F
FFA	.12	15	361	2.97*
Roles	.28	15	361	6.62*
FFA by Roles	.05	15	361	1.20

*Significant at .05 level.

Table 3

HOTELLING'S TRACE TEST RESULTS OF MANOVA FOR MEAN SCORES OF STUDENTS AND GRADUATES WITH AND WITHOUT AGRICULTURE COURSES

Variables	Hotelling Value	Hypothesis df	Error df	F
Agriculture	.16	15	361	3.76*
Roles	.28	15	361	6.63*
Agriculture by Roles	.06	15	361	1.37

*Significant at .05 level.

Table 4

HOTELLING'S TRACE TEST RESULTS OF MANOVA FOR MEAN SCORES OF STUDENTS AND GRADUATES WITH VARIOUS AMOUNTS OF WORK EXPERIENCE

Variables	Hotelling Value	Hypothesis df	Error df	F
Work	.34	75	1602	1.44*
Roles	.25	17	322	5.37*
Work by Roles	.27	75	1602	1.17

*Significant at .05 level.

Findings

Based on the responses to the *Affective Work Competencies Inventory*, and to the extent that the data and findings resulting from the study were valid and reliable, the following conclusions were made:

1. Supervisors, when compared with students and graduates, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. cooperative/helpful
 - b. pleasant/friendly/cheerful
 - c. efficient/quantity of work/achieving/speedy
 - d. dedicated/devoted/honest/loyal/conscientious.
2. Supervisors, when compared with students, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. adaptable/resourceful
 - b. accurate/quality of work
 - c. careful/alert/perceptive.
3. Supervisors, when compared with graduates, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. responsive/follows directions
 - b. neat/orderly/personal appearance/manner.
4. Supervisors and graduates, when compared with students, possess a higher level of the affective work competency: independent/initiating.
5. Graduates, when compared with students, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. independent/initiating
 - b. persevering/patient/enduring/tolerant
 - c. dependable/punctual/reliable/responsive
 - d. efficient/quantity of work/achieving/speedy
6. Students, when compared with graduates, possess a higher level of the affective work competency, neat/orderly/personal appearance/manner.
7. Students and graduates who had FFA membership, when compared with those who had not, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. cooperative/helpful
 - b. pleasant/friendly/cheerful.

8. Students and graduates who had high school agriculture courses, when compared with those who had not, possess a higher level of the following affective work competencies:
 - a. cooperative/helpful
 - b. pleasant/friendly/cheerful.
9. Students and graduates with less than five years of work experience are not significantly different in their level of affective work competencies.

Recommendations

Considering the findings of the study, several recommendations are suggested:

1. It is important for students in agricultural mechanization programs to participate in on-job-training (OJT) programs with industry supervisors. Vocational educators should use their industry supervisors to a greater degree in order that students might attain higher levels of affective work competencies through this exposure.
2. Students should participate in the FFA as an integral part of an agriculture program. The FFA organization offers many opportunities for student involvement to develop leadership, citizenship, and cooperation. The FFA organization does not claim to promote affective work competencies specifically, but there seems to be a contribution to the acquisition of these competencies through membership and active involvement.
3. Students should be involved in a vocational agriculture program to attain higher levels of affective work competencies. Vocational agriculture programs offer many opportunities for student involvement outside of the classroom as well as inside the classroom. The supervised occupational experience program (SOEP) is an excellent teaching tool for development of proper attitudes. Enrollment and involvement in vocational agriculture courses and programs of a high quality provide significant contributions toward obtaining proper work attitudes.
4. Students should gain a higher level of affective work competencies through involvement in work experience programs. If the school is to become more responsible

for building good work habits and attitudes as parents continue to work more outside the home environment, more consideration should be given to the type and quality of work experience gained by the student while in school.

References

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(McMillion--continued from page 18)

with wealth were to be benevolent and give to the poor, because it was the noble thing to do.

Reindustrialization, trickle down, reduce taxes, cut out welfare, volunteers. Does it sound familiar? The classical liberal position sounds a little severe, but it just might have some relevance to vocational education in agriculture in the present economic situation.

References

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