

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PARENTS' OCCUPATION AND SELECTED  
FACTORS RELATED TO STUDENT SUPERVISED  
OCCUPATIONAL EXPERIENCE

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Supervised occupational experience (SOE) is recognized as an important method in teaching vocational agriculture. It is through this method of teaching that students derive occupational skills for work in agriculture. SOE is planned by teachers, students, and parents and is conducted by students with career aspirations and career development in mind. Research conducted by Williams (1977) shows that help given students by vocational agriculture teachers was among the top five factors that influence student SOE. These findings support the belief that both parents and teachers are involved in SOE.

Parents of many vocational agriculture students are in a position to impart meaningful information and experiences to their sons and daughters which can be relevant to their career aspirations in agriculture. Such information and experiences can be provided by parents of vocational agricultural students through SOE (Rawls, 1978; Rawls and Williams, 1979). Parents in many communities are capable and are equipped to provide assistance to students in developing and conducting SOE. Many parents have acquired agriculture-related experiences from their involvement in agricultural occupations.

*Purpose and Objectives*

The primary purpose of this research was to determine if significant differences existed in selected ways parents provide assistance to their sons and daughters in developing and conducting SOE when parents were classified according to type of occupation. The specific objectives were to:

1. Determine the ways parents who were engaged in farming provide their sons and daughters assistance in developing and conducting SOE.
2. Determine the ways parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations provide their sons and daughters assistance in developing and conducting SOE.
3. Determine the ways parents who were engaged in non-agricultural related occupations provide their sons and daughters assistance in developing and conducting SOE.

### *Methodology*

The population for this research was parents of all Iowa vocational agricultural high school students who were seniors in 1976-1977. The population was divided into three subgroups based on the occupation in which parents were engaged. A stratified random sample was drawn from the three subgroups: (1) parents of students who were employed as farmers; (2) parents of students who were employed in agribusiness; and (3) parents of students who were employed in non-agricultural occupations. This sampling procedure identified a composite sample of 446 parents.

To collect data from the sample, a questionnaire was developed which included 30 different ways parents may provide assistance to their sons and daughters in SOE. A 1 to 99 response scale was used for the parents to indicate how much assistance they felt they provided their sons and daughters by responding to the 30 statements. These data were transformed to a 167 to 733 scale (500 representing mid-point) for data analyses.

Questionnaires and cover letters were mailed to the homes of participants in the sample. Four follow-up mailings to non-respondents were made at two-week intervals, yielding a 65 percent return of properly completed questionnaires.

Means and standard deviations were calculated for the total group and each subgroup of parents. One-way analysis of variance was used to test for significant differences among the three subgroups of parents on each of the 30 assistance factors studied. The Scheffé post hoc procedure was used to identify significant differences between all the possible pairs of subgroup means.

### *The Findings*

The means, standard deviations, and F-ratios for the 30 ways parents perceived themselves providing assistance to their sons and daughters in SOE when grouped according to occupation are presented in Table 1. There were significant differences among the three groups on 26 of the 30 assistance factors. The assistance factors where no significant difference was observed among the three groups of parents were: (1) making business arrangements for SOE; (2) evaluating the SOE program; (3) developing a budget for SOE; and (4) summarizing records for SOE.

The means were significantly higher on all assistance factors for parents who were engaged in farming as an occupation than parents who were engaged in non-agricultural occupations and significantly higher on all but two assistance factors than parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations. The two factors were: (1) making long-range plans for SOE, and (2) making business arrangements for SOE. Parents who were engaged in farming rated 11 of the 30 assistance factors "above average." The five ways parents who were engaged in farming provided the greatest assistance were: (1) providing equipment for SOE, (2) learning

Table 1

MEANS, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, AND ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR  
 PARENTAL ASSISTANCE PROVIDED STUDENTS IN DEVELOPING AND  
 CONDUCTING SOE BY PARENTS' OCCUPATION

Assistance <sup>a</sup>	Group 1 <sup>b</sup>	Group 2 <sup>b</sup>	Group 3 <sup>b</sup>	F-Value
	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	
Providing Equipment for SOE	<u>576.7</u> 137.1	<u>472.4</u> 184.8	<u>459.9</u> 173.0	<u>15.8*</u> (1 > 2,3)
Providing Encourage- ment for SOE	<u>551.2</u> 124.5	<u>545.7</u> 115.8	<u>473.9</u> 146.8	<u>7.7*</u> (1 > 3)
Learning Skills in Agriculture	<u>553.8</u> 98.2	<u>464.1</u> 116.3	<u>453.7</u> 135.3	<u>22.1*</u> (1 > 2,3)
Determining Interest in Agriculture	<u>540.2</u> 108.4	<u>521.5</u> 124.7	<u>473.8</u> 132.4	<u>7.2*</u> (1,2 > 3)
Financing SOE Enter- prises & Activities	<u>534.3</u> 137.2	<u>457.6</u> 172.7	<u>438.8</u> 155.8	<u>10.8*</u> (1 > 3)
Locating a Place for SOE	<u>527.3</u> 139.6	<u>506.7</u> 174.7	<u>445.5</u> 164.7	<u>6.5*</u> (1 > 3)
Producing Agricul- tural Products	<u>535.2</u> 117.4	<u>464.5</u> 125.0	<u>414.3</u> 152.0	<u>20.5*</u> (1 > 3)
Marketing Agricul- tural Products	<u>527.7</u> 116.5	<u>476.9</u> 149.6	<u>418.8</u> 147.6	<u>16.4*</u> (1 > 3)
Selecting Supplies for SOE	<u>505.2</u> 128.9	<u>469.4</u> 150.0	<u>442.4</u> 142.7	<u>5.0*</u> (1 > 3)
Selecting Animals for SOE	<u>511.4</u> 131.9	<u>459.6</u> 165.2	<u>407.4</u> 147.4	<u>12.2*</u> (1 > 3)
Determining Cost of Producing Crops and Animals	<u>508.1</u> 114.9	<u>420.3</u> 131.8	<u>407.2</u> 129.4	<u>18.2*</u> (1 > 2,3)
Determining the Size of SOE	<u>499.9</u> 134.5	<u>430.9</u> 123.5	<u>420.6</u> 140.9	<u>8.7*</u> (1 > 3)
Setting Educational Goals in Agriculture	<u>495.4</u> 119.8	<u>465.6</u> 123.2	<u>421.0</u> 123.6	<u>8.0*</u> (1 > 3)

Table 1, Continued

Assistance <sup>a</sup>	Group 1 <sup>b</sup>	Group 2 <sup>b</sup>	Group 3 <sup>b</sup>	F-Value
	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	
Identifying Agricultural Experiences to Obtain	<u>494.7</u> 108.7	<u>469.3</u> 109.4	<u>419.0</u> 132.8	<u>9.4*</u> (1 > 3)
Making Decisions Related to SOE	<u>474.9</u> 112.6	<u>459.9</u> 138.5	<u>429.8</u> 123.7	<u>3.2*</u> (1 > 3)
Developing an Agreement for SOE	<u>478.6</u> 127.3	<u>481.1</u> 125.7	<u>407.1</u> 138.1	<u>6.6**</u> (2,1 > 3)
Selecting Approved Practices for SOE	<u>471.6</u> 123.1	<u>459.6</u> 144.6	<u>420.8</u> 133.5	<u>3.4*</u> (1 > 3)
Setting Goals for SOE	<u>468.2</u> 121.9	<u>451.7</u> 149.2	<u>416.5</u> 123.6	<u>3.6*</u> (1 > 3)
Identifying Agricultural Skills to be Developed through SOE	<u>462.9</u> 117.6	<u>452.2</u> 129.1	<u>411.8</u> 134.9	<u>3.9*</u> (1 > 3)
Making Long-Range Plans for SOE	<u>456.9</u> 122.9	<u>486.3</u> 105.3	<u>402.3</u> 138.1	<u>5.1*</u> (2,1 > 3)
Selecting Improvement Projects Related to SOE	<u>460.5</u> 117.6	<u>449.7</u> 129.1	<u>408.3</u> 134.8	<u>3.8*</u> (1 > 3)
Making Business Arrangements for SOE	<u>457.6</u> 124.7	<u>460.9</u> 133.4	<u>407.3</u> 133.2	<u>3.3</u>
Expanding SOE	<u>455.7</u> 120.1	<u>442.5</u> 137.1	<u>405.7</u> 140.6	<u>3.3*</u> (1 > 3)
Evaluating the SOE Program	<u>452.1</u> 115.5	<u>448.1</u> 142.5	<u>412.1</u> 131.5	<u>2.27</u>
Selecting Crops for SOE	<u>469.4</u> 143.4	<u>362.6</u> 115.1	<u>369.9</u> 136.7	<u>14.1*</u> (1 > 3,2)
Developing a Budget for SOE	<u>451.3</u> 124.6	<u>400.5</u> 127.6	<u>407.1</u> 124.1	<u>3.7</u>
Developing a Detailed Plan for SOE	<u>451.2</u> 122.0	<u>424.7</u> 139.6	<u>396.6</u> 116.5	<u>4.3*</u> (1 > 3)
Keeping Records on SOE	<u>451.5</u> 130.9	<u>385.1</u> 131.8	<u>405.9</u> 129.6	<u>4.4**</u> (1 > 3,2)
Interpreting Results of Records on SOE	<u>450.4</u> 124.4	<u>407.2</u> 126.7	<u>397.9</u> 128.9	<u>4.3*</u> (1 > 3)

Table 1, Continued

Assistance <sup>a</sup>	Group 1 <sup>b</sup>	Group 2 <sup>b</sup>	Group 3 <sup>b</sup>	F-Value
	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	Mean S.D.	
Summarizing Records for SOE	443.7 121.2	391.4 128.9	401.1 128.8	3.7

<sup>a</sup>Assistance provided students in developing and conducting SOE are ranked for the total sample.

<sup>b</sup>Group 1 = parents of students who were employed as farmers; Group 2 = parents of students who were employed in agribusiness; Group 3 = parents of students who were employed in non-agricultural occupations.

\*Group means differed significantly at the .05 level when tested by the Scheffé procedure.

\*\*Group means differed significantly at the .10 level when tested by the Scheffé procedure.

skills in agriculture, (3) providing encouragement for SOE, (4) determining interest in agriculture, and (5) producing agricultural products.

The means were significantly higher for parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations than for parents who were engaged in non-agricultural occupations on 26 of the 30 assistance factors. Parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations rated only three of the assistance factors "above average." The three ways parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations provided the greatest assistance were: (1) providing encouragement for SOE, (2) determining interest in agriculture, and (3) locating a place for SOE. Two of these assistance factors were among the top five factors for parents who were engaged in farming as an occupation.

The means were significantly higher for parents who were engaged in non-agricultural occupations than for parents who were engaged in agribusiness occupations on only four of the 30 assistance factors. Those four factors were: (1) selecting crops for SOE, (2) developing a budget for SOE, (3) keeping records on SOE, and (4) summarizing records for SOE. Parents who were engaged in non-agricultural occupations did not rate any of the assistance factors "above average."

### Conclusion

Parents who were engaged in farming as an occupation felt themselves providing their sons and daughters greater assistance in developing and conducting SOE than parents who were engaged in either agribusiness and non-agricultural occupations. These findings may indicate that parents who were engaged in agribusiness and non-agricultural occupations are not as effective in assisting their sons and daughters in developing and conducting SOE as parents who were engaged in farming.

### Implications

The findings of this research have great implications for both pre-service and in-service teacher education programs, curriculum specialists, and personnel committed to improving the quality of SOE provided through vocational agriculture. Long-term research is needed to determine the effect of parents' assistance and the effect of parents' occupations on the career aspirations and career development of students interested in careers in agriculture.

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