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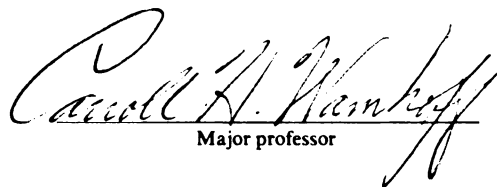
THE EFFECTS OF A REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW
ON THE TENURE AND SATISFACTION OF
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE FIELD AGENTS

presented by

Mary Elizabeth Harvey

has been accepted towards fulfillment
of the requirements for

Ph.D. degree in Educational Administration



Major professor

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THE EFFECTS OF A REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW
ON THE TENURE AND SATISFACTION OF
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE FIELD AGENTS

By

Mary Elizabeth Harvey

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

1990

64-9790

ABSTRACT

THE EFFECTS OF A REALISTIC JOB PREVIEW ON THE TENURE AND SATISFACTION OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE FIELD AGENTS

By

Mary Elizabeth Harvey

The effects of a videotape realistic job preview (RJP) on the satisfaction and tenure of Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service new agents hired between Oct. 1, 1988 and Sept. 30, 1989 were determined.

Experimental subjects took a pre- and post-RJP video test to determine if the RJP affected their expectations about the job. A two-tailed t test was used to compare the means of the pre- and post-tests. For six out of the 10 questions on the test, change was significant at the .01 confidence level and in the desired direction. For one question, change was significant at the .05 confidence level and in the desired direction.

Turnover rates for the experimental subjects were compared to turnover rates for new hires for the previous 10 years. There were no significant differences between the turnover rates during the first year of employment for the experimental year hires when compared to the archival data. Average yearly turnover was found to be 6.4% for the 10 year period.

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI) was administered to the experimental subjects and to subjects from two control groups. Their

scores were compared using a one-tailed t test.

When comparing experimental subjects' scores to those of the first control group, the scores for the experimental subjects were significantly higher at the .05 confidence level for four out of the six satisfaction variables measured. However, when the experimental subjects' scores were compared to the second control groups' scores the experimental subjects' scores were not significantly higher.

In summary, it was found that the RJP, in all probability, had no effect on turnover during the first year of employment. Job Descriptive Index satisfaction comparisons between the experimental group and two control groups were inconclusive in that statistical significance was obtained for one control group comparison, but not the other. However, the pre- and post-video questionnaires established that the RJP was effective in changing recruits' expectations about the job of field agent.

To the two most important men in my life:

My husband and best friend, Lynn R. Harvey,
who encouraged me throughout my
entire doctoral program.

My father, Felix A. Budnick (1913-1978),
who would have been very proud
of this accomplishment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

First and foremost, I thank Dr. Maxine S. Ferris, my friend and my supervisor, who nudged me in this direction to begin with and who then enthusiastically supported me throughout the entire program. Her satisfaction in this accomplishment means a great deal.

I also thank James Artabasy and Gary Glazier of the CES Personnel Office. Though their financial stipend made the development of the video possible, I most appreciate the cooperation and patience I encountered in face of my numerous requests for information and the disruption to their normal interviewing procedures for a year.

I owe a great deal of thanks to the staff members of the Gratiot, Saginaw and Ingham county CES offices -- Marv, Pat, Milt, Gary, Van, Cheri, Corey, Bret and Geri -- who willingly agreed to serve as the "actors" in my video. The time and thoughtful reflection that went into their preparation exemplifies the "extension spirit."

I owe a great deal of thanks to Dr. Jake Wamhoff, chairperson of the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, and my doctoral committee chairperson, who found himself in the starring role as narrator in the RJP video. His narrative ability was the key to pulling the various sections of the RJP together into a coherent whole.

I thank Dr. Tim Little and Dr. Joe Levine, committee members, whose consultation and suggestions added greatly to the research.

I also thank Steve Evans and Lisa Telder of ANR Information Services, who assisted me in the production of the RJP.

And last but not least, I thank my husband, Lynn and my step-sons Rob and Dave, who tolerated a great deal while this work was taking place.

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Chapter One

Introduction and Statement of the Problem

Introduction

There are two ways to view the process of an individual's entry into an organization -- from the organization's perspective and from the individual's perspective. For decades, the research literature on organizational entry was predominantly written from the organization's point of view. Industrial psychologists and others knew more about how to select, place, train and assess the performance of newcomers than they did about why people join organizations, how they react as newcomers, and why they remain (Wanous, 1977a).

The entry process begins outside the organization when a person thinks about possible entry. The process continues throughout the phase where an effort is made to join, when there is an acceptance of the individual by the organization and when the individual makes the final decision to enter (Wanous, 1977b).

According to Wanous, two match-ups are made when a person is hired. The organization matches its talent requirements with the individual's talents and the individual matches his or her human needs with the organizational climate. The first match probably has the greatest effect on performance, while the second match has the greatest effect on satisfaction and tenure (Wanous, 1977b).

Organizations and researchers have tended to view job candidates primarily as passive figures. They have tended to concentrate on the applicant's abilities and skills in the context of predicting how that applicant will perform in the job.

They are also immensely concerned with making the organization appear attractive to new recruits, usually to attract a large pool of applicants so that the best can be selected, but have seldom considered the impact of this strategy on newcomers. This emphasis overlooks the fact that individuals choose new organizations -- in other words, an applicant accepts or rejects the job offer often based on whether he/she feels the job will fulfill a set of needs. Whether those needs are actually met, resulting in the individual's satisfaction, can be a critical element in keeping effective employees from leaving.

Research done at an automotive manufacturer (Dunnette, Arvey & Banas, 1973) examined two groups of employees -- those who left within their first four years and those who remained longer than four years. The research found that most peoples' expectations were not realized in actual job situations.

Research on turnover shows that turnover tends to be highest during the first six months to one year of work experience. Research on satisfaction has also shown that satisfaction levels plummet during the first year of employment. This disappointment after entry into the organization clearly implies that many people are led to expect the wrong things about their jobs or the new organizations. Because the majority of the information that newcomers receive about their jobs and the organization comes from recruiters, interviewers or others within the organization, it is possible that people inside the organization are providing inaccurate information.

Various satisfaction and turnover studies have focused on the accuracy of information outsiders have or receive about the organization

prior to their entry. A 1972 study of Harvard MBA students revealed that recruiters from various companies gave glowing rather than balanced descriptions and glossed over details of organizational life (Ward & Athos, 1972).

Outsiders tend to have inaccurately inflated expectations about an organization. And some researchers have posited that even if an organization tried to describe itself accurately to new recruits, it would not be easy.

Realistic Job Previews

In order to set initial expectations at a realistic level and make better organizational choices, it's important for individuals to receive accurate information about the organization. Numerous research studies done over the past 20 years have suggested that a realistic job preview (RJP) can help provide an individual with information about the job and organization that is congruent with organizational reality and that will help him or her set initial expectations at a realistic level. An RJP is an untraditional recruiting approach that stresses efforts to communicate, before the applicant has accepted the job offer, what organizational life on the job will actually be like. (Wanous, 1975). The basic difference between a realistic job preview and a traditional preview is that the realistic one emphasizes facts that typify both the desirable and undesirable aspects of the organization while a traditional one tries to present the job in its most positive light.

There is a substantial body of evidence that new employees who receive an RJP have longer tenure with the organization than recruits

hired under usual procedures.

The theoretical basis for RJPs is found in expectancy theory. Expectancy theory suggests that people make "expected value calculations" about all aspects of entry into a job (Wanous, 1988; Ayner, Gaustello, & Alderman, 1982). How well life in the organization measures up to these expectations affects satisfaction, turnover and performance.

Baker (1985) refers to these expectations as an "unwritten, psychological contract" between employer and employee. These contracts, he states, govern the interaction between both parties as surely as any legal document, and affect productivity and satisfaction.

Under normal recruitment, an employee may enter the organization with unrealistically high expectations. When those expectations are not met, the employee may express disappointment in a variety of ways -- absenteeism, lowered productivity or departure.

A major benefit of the RJP is that it tends to lower the employee's initial job expectations. That finding is consistent across a 1985 meta-analysis of 21 RJP studies with a total of 9,166 participants (Premack & Wanous, 1985).

Wanous postulates that realism lowers the individual's expectations to a level more congruent with the organizational climate. It "inoculates" employees against unpleasant shocks of a new environment and leaves them better able to cope.

Just as with a medical vaccination, job candidates are given a small dose of organizational reality during the recruitment process in an attempt to lower initial expectations. And similar to a medical

vaccination, which is of no use once the person has contracted the disease, the "inoculation" of organizational reality is ineffective after the person has joined the organization (Dean, Ferris, & Konstans, 1985).

Miceli (1985) argues that reality shock is an inadequate explanation for job dissatisfaction. In her laboratory study of 832 junior- and senior-level students who performed two tasks, one with an RJP, many subjects reported dissatisfaction, which she attributed to lack of opportunity for the students to match their attributes to those of the task.

Wanous (1980), however, posits that job applicants do use a matching model of decision making. They choose organizations based on congruence with their self-image. And when realistic information is available and provided to them, they have a better basis for matching.

A major concern of organizations -- that realism would drive away potential job candidates and reduce the favorability of the selection ratio for the organization -- was not confirmed in an analysis Wanous (1977) conducted of six experimental studies. All organizations reported that there was no significant difference in their ability to recruit applicants when using an RJP.

Structuring an RJP Experiment

Most experimental RJP studies typically divide new recruits into two groups. The experimental group receives a brochure, hears a talk or views a film that realistically portrays the positive and negative aspects of the job. Controls receive no special preview material, or,

in some cases, a preview that reports fewer negative aspects. Tenure rates or satisfaction measures of both groups are compared at the end of the study to determine whether the RJP had an effect.

Turnover

There are two turnover issues to consider in RJP research. First is the issue of overall rate of turnover, e.g. how many employees leave during the first six to twelve months of employment. Second is the speed of the turnover, e.g., some people leave sooner than others. Some RJP research has found that overall turnover rate decreases for employees who have had an RJP, while other research has found no differences in the numbers of employees who left, but a marked difference in when the turnover occurs. For example, employees who have had an RJP tend to leave the organization sooner, implying that they are able to more quickly realize that the job is not going to meet their needs or satisfy their expectations.

Turnover Rate

In Wanous's 1977 meta-analysis of six studies, he found the major dependent variable to be job survival rate. In all six studies -- two of the military and four of life insurance companies -- each RJP group had higher retention levels at measures taken from 6 weeks to one year after entry.

Other studies confirm these findings. Ayner, et.al. (1985) conducted an experiment with 437 applicants for service positions with a midwest chain of self service stations. The RJP consisted of a brochure

attached to the job application of half of the applicants. The RJP subjects who accepted the job had significantly longer tenure than the non-RJP controls.

McEvoy and Cascio (1985) found, in a meta-analysis of 20 turnover experiments, that managers who institute RJP or job enrichment programs can expect to improve retention rates 9 to 17 percentage points over rates they are experiencing without either intervention. They also found that job enrichment was about twice as effective as an RJP in reducing turnover.

Speed of turnover

Dean and Wanous (1984) found that the survival rate for 249 newly hired bank tellers did not differ among the two experimental and one control groups, but the rate at which turnover occurred did. Subjects from the two experimental groups left during the first three weeks of formal, off-the-job training -- a point at which the bank had not made a large per-teller capital investment. Controls left much later during the first 20 weeks. Their displacement cost averaged \$2,800 per teller.

In the Ayner, et. al. (1985) study of self service stations, no difference was found between voluntary and involuntary turnover, however, RJP subjects had a significantly greater rate of voluntary turnover within the first seven days. The early turnover among RJP recipients probably occurred because the RJP brought their expectations more in line with organizational reality and they were thus quicker to decide that the job was not going to satisfy their needs. It apparently took non-RJP subjects longer for their initial expectations to decline

to a level where they were able to reach that same conclusion.

Reilly, Brown, Blood and Malatesta (1981), in an experiment conducted with 842 candidates for telephone service operator positions, reported findings that were at variance with the conclusions of previous RJP research. They found no difference between experimental and control groups in turnover. In explaining why their study was at variance with the majority research, they hypothesize that RJP's are more effective with more complex jobs. McEvoy and Cascio (1985) concur with this hypothesis.

Productivity

Of all the areas in which RJP's can have an impact, productivity appears to be one of the least significant. The majority of research does not support a positive correlation between RJP's and job productivity or performance.

Wanous (1978) suggests that it may be difficult to correlate RJP's, performance and job tenure. He suggests that the best job performers may even be high turnover employees because of the thrust of their upward mobility internally and with other organizations.

Dean and Wanous (1984) did find small increases in performance in an experiment conducted with 249 bank tellers. Of the two experimental groups, the group that received a realistically general preview showed only reduced turnover. However, the group that received a realistically specific preview evidenced reduced turnover and increased productivity. They speculate that the RJP may have affected job performance by increasing initial role clarity.

In a meta-analysis of 21 RJP studies, Premack and Wanous (1985) concluded that audio-visual RJP's can increase job performance. They speculate this is because an audio-visual RJP, when the message is not overly long and complex, can graphically show a successful behavior for the new employee to emulate.

Satisfaction

The RJP is concerned with matching human needs to organizational climate. Thus it is designed to influence job satisfaction and voluntary turnover rather than job performance (Wanous, 1978).

Though there are many RJP studies addressing turnover, relatively few have dealt with satisfaction. In the Premack and Wanous (1985) meta-analysis, only seven studies out of 21 included a measure for satisfaction. The measures varied from ad hoc items to some better known instruments, such as the Job Descriptive Index (JDI). In the seven studies, RJP's were found to increase initial levels of job satisfaction slightly.

In a 1977 review of 14 studies, Wanous found only three that gathered global satisfaction data. All three were unanimous in concluding that people are less satisfied the longer they are in the new organization. However, the decrease in satisfaction that comes with longevity in the organization can be attributable to many factors. After a year or 18 months, employees begin to understand the nuances of organizational life. They are affected by their environment, co-workers and management. They have generally also gone through their first evaluation and salary review.

The Problem

Every state has a Cooperative Extension Service that is an integral part of a land-grant university. (The second Morrill Act of 1890, prohibiting racial discrimination, led to the establishment of 17 southern universities known as 1890 institutions, which also have Extension components.)

The CES is a very complex organization. It is headquartered and staffed at the university but also maintains an office and staff members in almost every county in the state. It receives funding at federal, state and local levels. The organization as a whole is administered by a director at the university level, yet each county office is administered on a day-to-day basis by a local county extension director.

The CES is staffed at two levels. At the university level, various faculty members and specialists hold extension appointments. At the county level, field agents staff the offices and work with the public on a daily basis. Most county offices also have program assistants and secretarial support staffs.

In Michigan, the CES has four program areas: home economics, agriculture-marketing, 4-H youth programs and natural resources and public policy.

Agents are appointed to counties based on local needs and available resources. For example, in a county where swine production is the primary agricultural occupation, the agricultural field agent will usually hold a degree in animal science. Every county has a home economist or access to one. Every county has a 4-H youth program. And

every county has some staff member who assumes responsibilities in the area of natural resources and public policy.

When a CES field agent is hired, he or she becomes part of a large, bureaucratic organization. Field agents have a great deal of autonomy with regard to their programming and daily activities, yet they report to their county extension director, their regional supervisor and to the person who directs their respective program area (in Michigan called assistant directors).

Just as with any new worker, prospective field agents approach entry into the CES organization with personal needs and expectations about the job, which, in actuality, may or may not be met.

The CES organization recruits and screens potential employees in a traditional manner. They attempt to match the talents and skills offered by the recruits to the talents and skills needed on the job. Little overt attention is given to matching an employee's personal needs and expectations with the organizational climate.

There is also a common perception, whether accurate or not, within the organization that the turnover rate among new agents is fairly high and that their level of satisfaction with the organization is not as high as it could be. This is viewed as an organizational problem and discussion has taken place at various levels concerning methods of reducing turnover and increasing satisfaction.

Since RJPs have demonstrably lowered new employee expectations, leading to reduced turnover rates and increased levels of employee satisfaction, the questions addressed in this research are whether an RJP can be effective in reducing turnover rate and increasing the

satisfaction levels of new CES field agents.

Because there is no consensus in the literature regarding the impact of an RJP on productivity and because of the complexity and variety of field agents' jobs and the difficulty in determining a uniform productivity measure for them, no predictions regarding productivity were addressed in this research.

Most RJP studies have examined homogeneous groups, e.g., bank tellers, gas station attendants, technicians, telephone operators, etc. There were no studies found in the literature review that addressed the effects of RJP's on jobs as complex and diverse as that of a Cooperative Extension Service field agent, therefore, there were no models, exact or similar, on which this research could be based.

This research study proposed to develop an RJP for the position of CES field agent and assess whether that RJP had an impact in reducing turnover and increasing satisfaction for those agents hired between Oct. 1, 1988 and Sept. 30, 1989.

Turnover

Turnover rates for the experimental group, 1988-89, were compared to turnover rates for each year beginning in 1978-79 through 1987-88, as documented in the CES Personnel Office records.

Turnover, for purposes of this study, was defined as voluntary termination occurring at any point within the employee's first 12 months of employment.

Satisfaction

Satisfaction measures of new agents were taken at approximately the same time of year during three consecutive years, 1987, 1988 and 1989, for the two control groups and for the experimental group. The Job Descriptive Index (JDI), was used as the measurement instrument.

The JDI, developed by Dr. Patricia Smith at Bowling Green State University, is a widely used instrument. It has high reliability, validity and internal consistency. It is job-referent rather than self-referent in that it asks workers to describe five areas of work rather than how satisfied they are with work. The areas measured are: work on present job, opportunity for promotion, pay, supervision and co-workers, with a final category titled job in general.

The Hypothesis

The hypotheses for this study were, first, that after being exposed to a realistic job preview videotape, the experimental subjects would evidence a lower turnover rate than that of the control groups, and, second, that the Job Descriptive Index measurement for the experimental subjects would show a higher degree of satisfaction than those for the control groups.

Chapter Two

Methodology

Experimental Subjects

The subjects for the experiment consisted of applicants for positions as field agents with the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service who had never held prior positions with an Extension service and who were interviewed and hired between October 1, 1988 and September 30, 1989.

Prior positions were defined as county Extension director, field agent, program assistant, student intern or campus specialist, either in Michigan or in another state.

Between October 1, 1988 and September 30, 1989, 39 field agents were hired. Of that number, 18 were eligible to be included in the study because they had not held prior positions with Extension and had been exposed to the realistic job preview.

Of the 21 subjects determined to be ineligible, three had interviewed for their jobs prior to the beginning of the experiment, 11 were former agents or program assistants, one was a former county Extension director, one had held a campus departmental position, one was interviewed via a telephone conference call and did not come to campus, one was interviewed on campus but was not shown the experimental video, one was hired after August 1, 1988, and data regarding method and location of interview was missing for two subjects.

Of the eligible 18 subjects, nine were female and nine were male.

Four were home economists, four were ag/mktg. agents, three were county directors, five were 4-H youth agents and two were in the NRPP program. One subject was a member of a minority group.

Table 2-1 lists the experimental subjects by title, region and hire date.

**Table 2-1
Experimental Group 1988-89
by Title, Region and Hire Date***

N=18

Title	Region	Hire Date
Home economist	Southwest	12/88
Agricultural agent	West Central	1/89
4-H youth agent	West Central	1/89
Agricultural agent	East Central	1/89
Home economist	North	1/89
NRPP agent	East Central	2/89
4-H youth agent	East Central	2/89
County director	Upper Peninsula	3/89
4-H youth agent	Southwest	3/89
Home economist	North	4/89
Home economist	Southwest	4/89
Agricultural agent	West Central	4/89
County director	Upper Peninsula	5/89
County director	Upper Peninsula	5/89
4-H youth agent	Southeast	6/89
Agricultural agent	West Central	7/89
4-H youth agent	Southeast	7/89
Res. Dev. agent	North	7/89

* there were no terminations in this group as of 3/90

New agents are hired when a position becomes available through resignation, retirement or death of the incumbent agent. Due to budgetary restrictions, internal transfers have been utilized where possible to fill positions. Very few new positions have been created in

recent years, although this study reflects some soft money new positions in one program area.

In any given year there is an equal chance that positions that become available will be in any of the four program areas: home economics, 4-H youth, NRPP or Ag/Mktg. It is impossible to predict how many positions in any one program area will become available in a given year or who will apply for them.

Control Subjects

There were two groups of control subjects. The first group consisted of new agents who were hired between July 1, 1986 and June 30, 1987. The second group consisted of new agents hired between July 1, 1987 and June 30, 1988.¹

Table 2-2 lists Control Group I subjects by title, region, hire date and termination date.

Table 2-3 lists Control Group II subjects by title, region, hire date and termination date.

Table 2-4 displays the control and experimental subjects by program area. The distribution by program area is felt to be fairly proportionally representative of the Cooperative Extension Service as a whole. (E.g., home economists constituted 17.5% of the sample, compared to 27.4% of the agents on staff as of Oct. 1, 1989; ag agents constituted 35.2% of the sample, compared to 35% of the staff; 4-H youth agents, 41% of the sample, compared to 28.8% of the staff; and NRPP agents 7.8% of the sample, compared to 8.6% of the staff.)

Table 2-2
Control Group I 1986-87
by Title, Region, Hire Date and Termination Date*

N=24

Title	Region	Hired Term.	
Ag Agent	North	7/86	12/87
4-H Agent	Southwest	7/86	
4-H Agent	Southeast	8/86	4/89
NRPP	North	8/86	12/88
4-H Agent	West Central	8/86	1/88
4-H Agent	Southwest	8/86	
4-H Agent	West Central	9/86	1/89
Ag Agent	East Central	10/86	5/88
Home Econ.	East Central	11/86	
4-H Agent	Southwest	11/86	
4-H Agent	East Central	12/86	
Ag Agent	Southwest	1/87	6/88
Ag Agent	Southeast	1/87	
Home Econ.	Southeast	2/87	9/88
Ag agent	Southeast	2/87	
4-H Agent	Southeast	3/87	
4-H Agent	North	3/87	8/89
Ag Agent	East Central	4/87	
County dir.	North	5/87	
NRPP	Upper Penn.	6/87	
Home Econ.	Southwest	6/87	
Ag Agent	Southeast	6/87	8/88
Ag Agent	Southwest	6/87	9/87
4-H Agent	East Central	6/87	

*terminations as of 3/90

Realistic Job Preview

When deciding what form -- print vs. film vs. oral -- the RJP should take, the literature review was not particularly helpful. The general conclusions were that a realistic job preview, regardless of medium, had an effect.

Table 2-3
Control Group II 1987-88
by Title, Region, Hire Date and Termination Date*

N=14

Title	Region	Hire Date	Term.
Home economist	West Central	7/87	
4-H youth agent	East Central	7/87	
4-H youth agent	Southeast	9/87	
4-H youth agent	East Central	11/87	
4-H youth agent	Southeast	11/87	
Agricultural agent	Southwest	11/87	
Agricultural agent	Southwest	12/87	
Housing agent	East Central	2/88	
Agricultural agent	Southwest	1/88	
4-H youth agent	Upper Peninsula	2/88	10/89
Agricultural agent	West Central	2/88	
Agricultural agent	East Central	4/88	
Agricultural agent	East Central	4/88	
4-H youth agent	Southeast	5/88	

* terminations as of 3/90

Table 2-4
Control and Experimental Subjects
By Program Area

Program Area	Group I*	Group II**	Exp Group ***	Totals
Home Economics	N=3	N=2	N=4	N=9
Agriculture Mktg	N=8	N=6	N=4	N=18
4-H Youth Programs	N=10	N=6	N=5	N=21
NRPP	N=2	N=0	N=2	N=4
Administrative CED	N=1	N=0	N=3	N=4
Totals	N=24	N=14	N=18	N=56

*Control Group I, 1986-87

** Control Group II, 1987-88

*** Experimental Group, 1988-89

A videotape was selected because video is the prevalent medium today. Among the factors favoring this medium were the general public's familiarity with the medium due to the increase in use and ownership of VCRs and videotapes, the ease of use, the availability of playback equipment within the CES organization, and the fact that the general public has become accustomed and attentive to receiving information via a television screen.

The researcher, as a member of the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Information Services staff, had access to the resources of the CES in-house video production staff and equipment and was supported in the research endeavor by the manager of the information services unit. The CES personnel office was also willing to pilot the RJP and financially supported its development.

Development of the RJP

The literature review revealed that the most common method of determining what aspects of life-on-the-job within the organization should be portrayed in the RJP is employee interviews. In general, randomly-selected employees are interviewed at the workplace regarding their duties, responsibilities, pressures, demands, pay, interesting aspects and general likes and dislikes (Ayner, Gaustello and Aderman, 1982). Information from the interviews is condensed by the researcher(s) into the RJP with care taken to depict both positive and negative job aspects.

The Cooperative Extension Service is an organization in which its members are prone to hold strong biases about any given issue, including

what factors might constitute positive and negative aspects of work within the organization. Therefore, it was critical that the RJP not reflect the personal biases of any one person or group of persons, but, rather, that the basis for determining the positive and negative aspects of work illustrated in the RJP be determined as dispassionately and scientifically as possible.

It was initially proposed that a survey be developed and administered to the total population of field agents regarding what they considered the most positive and negative aspects of their jobs. However, discussions with the personnel office revealed that an instrument entitled "Provost Approved Cooperative Extension Field Staff Job Opinion Questionnaire" had been mailed to all 270 field agents in May of 1987. Two hundred and fifteen field agents returned the questionnaire, giving the survey an 80 percent response rate.

The last two questions on the survey -- "The two most positive aspects of my Extension employment are:" and "The two most negative aspects of my Extension employment are:" were of particular interest.

The last two questions on all 215 surveys were reviewed and the positive and negative aspects were rank ordered according to how many times a particular aspect was mentioned.

The rank order distribution was as follows.

Positive Aspects of Extension Work

Ranking	Aspect	Times Mentioned
1	Professional development/in-service	57
2	Freedom to plan programs to meet the needs of clients	52
3	Helping People	46
4	Flexible schedule/time	45
5	Working with people	37

6	Self-directing	30
7	Freedom to be creative	25
8	Good Co-workers	24
9	Variety	23
10	Good Benefits and Pay	18
11	Recognition	14
12	Satisfaction	13
13	Interesting and Challenging	13
14	Association with the University	11
15	Support	7

Negative Aspects of Extension Work

Rank	Aspect	Times Mentioned
1	Large Time Commitment Required	67
2	Paperwork	45
3	Pay	37
4	Administration (and specialists)	36
5	Ambiguity	26
6	Funding	23
7	Too Many Programs	22
8	Stress	22
9	Evaluation	15
10	Unreasonable expectations	14
11	No support (from administration)	12
12	Political behavior	11
13	Lack of Staff	8
14	Staff Problems	8
15	Limited Career Ladder	6

The complete rank order distribution, including a break down of comments within some categories, is included in Appendix A.

Stayer and Leaver Survey

An attempt was made to check the negative and positive aspects of work reported in the CES survey via telephone interviews of persons identified as "stayers" and "leavers" within the Cooperative Extension Service organization.

Lists of people who had voluntarily left CES jobs after 12 months but prior to 24 months on the job were obtained from the personnel

office. These were designated as the "leavers."

Data on "leavers" reported in CES exit interviews is incomplete because not all leavers participate in an exit interview. For those who complete an exit interview, the common response to the question "Why are you leaving?" is "For another job," which provided little or no relevant information to this study.

The six CES regional supervisors identified agents who had been on the job two years or less and who had demonstrated career potential with the organization. These were designated as the "stayers."

"Stayers" and "leavers" were sent a letters that introduced the researcher, explained the research and indicated that a follow-up phone call would be made. No "leavers" were reached by telephone.

Five "stayers" were interviewed via telephone. Their responses tracked with the survey results, providing no new or contradictory information.

Development of the Videotape

Once the questionnaires had been analyzed and the negative and positive aspects of the job had been identified, the next task was to actually tape and produce the videotape.

The Actors

Field staff members were asked to serve as actors in the videotape. Because of time and travel constraints and the limited availability of the ANR Information Services cameraperson, it was decided to limit the county offices from which volunteer actors would be

solicited to those that were within an hour's drive of the Michigan State University campus.

The determination of which county offices within this parameter would be asked to participate was left entirely to random chance. The first two field agents the researcher encountered, whose county offices were within the defined geographic boundary, were asked if their staff members would consent to participate in the videotape.

The first agent encountered was a home economist from a rural county one hour's distance from campus. The staff consisted of four persons: two male, two female, all caucasian.

The second agent was the Extension director of the county in which the university's campus is located. Their office was approximately 15 miles from the campus and had a staff consisting of six agents: four male, two female; four caucasian and two minority. (At the time of the taping two staff members -- a male caucasian and a female caucasian, were on vacation and did not participate.)

In the interest of adding female and minority balance, a female minority field agent who happened to express interest in the research was asked to make some comments on camera.

Therefore, the completed tape featured four males and four females, five caucasians and three minorities, in addition to the narrator, who is a caucasian male.

The Script

Each field agent who agreed to participate was sent a short letter of explanation about the research (sample letter in Appendix B) and the

lists of the positive and negative job aspects. Each agent was asked to select one characteristic from each list that he or she would be prepared to talk about on camera.

The agents were allowed to select the two aspects they wanted to talk about rather than having aspects assigned to them. The risk in proceeding this way was that there might be some topics that did not get addressed. However, it was felt that if the agents were allowed to talk about topics they chose, their belief in what they said and their sincerity and comfort level in saying it would be apparent and lend to the credibility of the video.

Even though the choice of topic was left to random chance, no two agents chose the same topic. Also, a majority of the positive and negative aspects were represented. The top 13 out of 15 positive aspects were addressed in the videotape. Those not addressed were (14) association with the university, and (15) support. Of the 15 negative aspects, 10 were addressed in the video. Those not addressed included (9) evaluation, (11) no support, (12) political behavior, (13) lack of staff, and (14) staff problems.

The Taping

The actual taping of the video took place during August of 1988. Two tapings took place on location in county offices and one took place on the campus. The narration was taped on campus, and the editing and production was done on campus by ANR Information Services. The tape was completed in early September, 1988 and previewed by the staff members from the personnel office, and later at a meeting of the CES

administrative staff members. The finished videotape ran 15 minutes, 30 seconds.

A complete transcript of the tape is included in Appendix C.

The Experiment

Procedure

After the RJP was completed, the procedures for showing it to job applicants were established in coordination with the CES personnel office.

When an applicant for a field agent position comes to campus for the interview, the current procedure is as follows: each applicant arrives approximately one half hour before the actual interview in order to view a 20-minute slide tape developed by the program area that explains the program area and outlines some of the work the field agent will be doing. The slide tape, it is hoped, helps them understand the nature of the job for which they are applying and the situation in Michigan, all of which would otherwise have to be detailed during the interview.

Following the viewing of the slide tape, the applicant then has an interview with a panel of people from the program area and administration.

The Pre- and Post-tests

In many educational experiments it is standard to administer a pre-test, followed by the experimental treatment and then the post-test.

Assuming that the experimenter has controlled for extraneous intervening variables, the changes between the two tests can usually be attributed to the experimental treatment.

Pre- and post-tests were designed to assess the applicants' level of expectations about the jobs they were interviewing for prior to and after viewing the RJP video.

The two tests were identical and consisted of 10 questions arranged on a Likert scale of 1 to 5, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

9. How much stress do you expect with this job?

1 2 3 4 5

Fig. 1. Sample pre- and post-test question

The pre- and post-test instrument can be found in Appendix D.

The basis for selecting the pre- and post-test questionnaire items was the positive and negative job aspects identified by the field agents in the 1986 personnel office administered survey.

For purposes of this research, it was decided, first, that the viewing of the realistic job preview and concomitant pre- and post-testing would take place before the program area slide tapes were viewed. This was done to prevent any information from the program area slide tapes influencing the subjects' responses on the pre- and post-tests.

Second, it was decided that the researcher would personally administer the pre- and post-tests and show the video, rather than having a staff member from the personnel office perform this task. It

was hoped that by having the researcher introduce herself and administer the questionnaires and show the video, it would clearly disassociate the research in the subjects' minds from the personnel or administrative functions of the Cooperative Extension Service.

Having the researcher involved to this degree complicated the work of the personnel office. For every set of interviews scheduled, they had to apprise the researcher of the time and place. They also made arrangements with the job candidates to arrive one hour prior to the scheduled interview so that they could take the pre-test, view the RJP, take the post-test and then view the program area slide tape.

The Interviews

The first interviews took place on Oct. 12, 1988. The last interviews took place on July 20, 1989. There were no interviews scheduled during August, 1989.)

The procedure at the time of each interview was as follows. The personnel office secretary brought the subject into the office or conference room where the video playback equipment was set up.

She introduced the subject and researcher to each other and told the subject "This is the doctoral student I told you about who is conducting some research. She will explain what she's going to do. When you're finished, come back to my office and I'll take you down for the interview."

After the secretary left, the researcher asked the subject to sit down and said, "As X explained, I'm a doctoral student in the College of Education and I'm currently conducting research for my dissertation. If

you are willing, you can help me with my research by filling out a short questionnaire both before and after you watch a 15-minute videotape. The questionnaire is completely confidential. You do not have to sign your name. No one in the Cooperative Extension Service will see the questionnaire and your participation in this research will have absolutely no bearing on your selection for this position. Your participation will constitute your informed consent."

A similar statement was printed at the top of each pre- and post-test.

All subjects, without exception, consented to participate. Only two or three subjects attempted to engage the researcher in conversation about the nature of the doctoral research. This lack of curiosity can, perhaps, be attributed to pre-interview anxiety. When a question was asked about the research, the researcher responded, "I'd prefer to discuss that after you fill out the questionnaires and see the video."

The researcher handed out the pre-test. The only identification on either questionnaire was a number handwritten by the researcher in the upper right hand corner of the page, e.g., "34A" for the pre-test and "34B" for the post-test.

The subject was asked to write in the date and read the statement printed on the pre-test. The researcher indicated that for each question, the subject should circle the number from 1 to 5 that most accurately reflected the subject's expectations regarding the job for which he or she was applying. The researcher then informed the subject that she would give him or her a "few minutes" to fill out the questionnaire, thereby cueing the subject that the test was to be

completed fairly quickly.

Approximately five subjects asked for clarification of one kind or another. The most common question concerned item six, "How much ambiguity do you expect to feel about your role and responsibilities." At least two subjects asked for a definition of "ambiguity."

All subjects generally finished the pre-test in 5 minutes or less.

In three instances, the screening procedure established by the personnel office broke down and the pre-test was administered to someone who had previously worked for Extension. It was interesting to note that each time the subject looked up from the pre-test after a few minutes and informed the researcher that he or she had experience with Extension and knew what to expect and did the researcher still want him or her to fill out the questionnaire. In these instances, the researcher thanked the subject for informing her of their previous experience and said that she preferred to not have them complete the questionnaire.

When the subject completed the pre-test, the researcher thanked him or her and placed the pre-test in a manila envelope. The researcher then turned on the video playback machine and played the RJP tape, which was approximately 15 minutes in length.

Immediately following the showing of the video, the researcher handed out the post-test (see Appendix D), which was identical to the pre-test except for the color of the paper and the numerical code in the upper right-hand corner.

When the subject completed the post-test, the researcher placed the form in a manila envelope and thanked the subject for his or her

participation. The subject was then instructed to view the slide tape that was set up in the room and when finished to go back to the personnel office. The researcher then left the room.

Analysis of Pre- and Post-tests

There was a total of 54 eligible pre- and post-tests gathered during the experimental year. They were analyzed using a two-tailed t test to determine whether the movement between the pre- and post-test answers was significant.

Job Descriptive Index

The Job Descriptive Index (JDI), developed by Dr. Patricia Smith, of Bowling Green University, and her colleagues, was selected as the satisfaction measurement to be administered to control groups and the experimental group.

The JDI was selected because it is a widely used and popular instrument. Extensive testing by its developers shows the instrument to have high reliability, validity and internal consistency. It is an easy instrument to administer. The verbal level required to fill out the questionnaire is quite low. It does not directly ask how satisfied the worker is with work, but rather, to describe it, thereby making the instrument job-referent, rather than self-referent.

The JDI measures five areas of job satisfaction: work on present job, opportunity for promotion, pay, supervision, and co-workers, with a final category titled job in general.

The five categories were developed using a content analysis of critical incident interviews with a total of 988 subjects. The order

effects were checked and found to be non-significant. The JDI items are written in a check-list format. They are balanced in the number of favorable and unfavorable items. Ambiguous items were eliminated through an item analysis.

For each category, a series of adjectives is listed. The employee has to indicate with a "Y" for yes, an "N" for no or a "?" for cannot decide, whether that adjective relates to his or her job. A few examples are given below. (The JDI is replicated in full in Appendix E.)

Work on Present Job

☐ Fascinating
☐ Boring
☐ Tiresome

Opportunity for Promotion

☐ Good opportunity for advancement
☐ Dead-end job
☐ Promotion on ability

Supervision on Present Job

☐ Impolite
☐ Asks my advice
☐ Stubborn

Each category has 18 descriptive adjectives except for "pay" and "promotion," which have 9.

The use of a check-list format with only short descriptive phrases to be marked permits the administration of the JDI across a wide variety of educational levels, ranging from no formal schooling to the Ph.D. degree and to persons on the job from janitor to top management.

There is no composite score for the JDI. Rather, each of the categories is looked at individually. According to Smith, et. al., various aspects of satisfaction can and should be separated. A summary measure, while adding information in its own right, could mask

relationships that involve only one aspect of the employee's feelings.

Smith defines job satisfaction as the feelings a worker has about the job which "are associated with perceived differences between what is expected as fair and reasonable return and what is experienced" (Smith, p. 6). Because a person could simultaneously be satisfied with something like supervision and be dissatisfied with pay, the different facets of satisfaction must be measured separately if any substantial understanding is to be achieved. This is not to say that all the areas on the JDI are discriminably different, but it does provide for those situations where discriminable differences exist.

Mailing of JDI

The JDI measure was mailed to eligible (i.e., no previous Extension experience) new hires each August or September for three years -- 1987, 1988 and 1989. The two control groups received their letters in mid- to late August. The experimental group received their letters in mid-September.

Each questionnaire was sent with a letter from the researcher (See Appendix F) and a stamped, self-addressed return envelope. The responses were blind, i.e., no attempt was made to code the envelopes or forms in any way so that respondents could be identified. No follow-up reminders were sent.

The rate of response ranged from 67% in 1986-87, and 71% in 1987-88, to 88.9% in 1988-89.

The high rate of return in the experimental year is attributed to

the fact that the subjects had personal contact with the researcher during that year. In fact, even though respondents were specifically asked not to write their name on the form, several subjects wrote a personal comment, such as "Good luck!" and signed their first names or county.

At the time the JDI survey was mailed each year, each group contained subjects who had been on the job anywhere from one year to 2 months.

The JDI surveys were analyzed using a one-tailed t test.

1. The experimental year ran from Oct. 1, 1988 through Sept. 30, 1989 due to the fact that the RJP video was not completed until after Labor Day in 1988.

Chapter Three

Results

Turnover

Archival Data 1978-79 to 1987-88

Turnover, for purposes of this research, was defined as termination within the first 12 months of employment. To determine what the actual Cooperative Extension Service turnover is, the yearly turnover rates for a ten-year period -- 1978-79 to 1987-88 -- were analyzed.

Table 3-1 displays the number of field agents hired, the number of terminations within the first 12 months of employment and the percentage of turnover for each year of the ten-year period.

Table 3-1
Hires, Terminations and Percent Turnover
1978-79 to 1987-88

Year	Number of Field Agents Hired	Number who left first 12 months	percent of turnover
1978-79	32	5	15.6
1979-80	37	2	5.4
1980-81	33	1	3
1981-82	20	2	10
1982-83	32	1	3
1983-84	21	2	9.5
1984-85	39	4	10.2
1985-86	43	1	2.3
1986-87	24	1	4
1987-88	14	0	--
Total	295	19	
Mean	29.5	1.9	6.4

The number of agents hired ranged from a low of 14 in 1987-88 to a high of 43 in 1985-86. The numbers who left during their first 12 months ranged from none in the 1987-88 group to five in the 1978-79 group. The turnover ranged from 0% for 1987-88 to 15.6% for the 1978-79 group.

During the ten-year period examined, 295 new field agents were hired. Of that total, 19 -- or 6.4% -- terminated within the first 12 months of their employment.

An average of 29.5 field agents were hired each year during the ten-year period. An average of 1.9 new employees each year terminate during their first 12 months on the job, resulting in a 10-year average turnover rate of 6.4 percent.¹

Control Group I, 1986-87, consisted of 24 new agents, which is below the average, but still similar to the numbers for the previous eight years. Control Group II, 1987-88, however, consisted of only 14 new agents, giving it the distinction of being the year with the smallest number of new hires in a decade.

During the experimental year, 1988-89, 39 new field agents were hired. However, only 18 of those were eligible to serve as experimental subjects for reasons explained in Chapter 1.

In order for the hypothesis that exposure to a realistic job preview will result in a lower turnover, the experimental group of 18 new hires who saw the RJP must demonstrate a termination rate of less than 1.9 persons during their first year of employment.

As of March 1, 1990, no agents in the experimental group had terminated.

Depending on the industry, occupation or profession, turnover levels below 10% are not generally considered a problem. Given a turnover rate of 6.4%, the organization's perception that it has a "high turnover rate" among new agents may be inaccurate. When the turnover data is examined differently, insight into some of the reasons for the prevalence of this belief in high new agent turnover is provided.

When the data is configured according to turnover by program areas or regions, it is readily apparent that there are clusters where turnovers are higher than elsewhere within the organization.

Program Area

When the data is configured to show the turnover by program areas, it can be observed that 13 out of 19 turnovers, i.e., more than two-thirds -- 68.4% -- of the organization's turnover (again, defined as termination within the first 12 months of employment) for the past decade has occurred in the 4-H youth program area. This data is displayed in Table 3-2.

Table 3-2
Turnover in First 12 Months of Employment
by CES Program Area
1978-79 to 1987-88

Year	N=turnover	Home Ec	4 - H	Ag/Mktg	NRPP
1978-79	5		5		
1979-80	2		2		
1980-81	1		1		
1981-82	2		2		
1982-83	1	1			
1983-84	2		1	1	
1984-85	4	1	1	2	
1985-86	1			1	
1986-87	1			1	
1987-88	-				
Totals	19	2	13	4	
% of total turnover		10.5	68.4	21	

According to the data for the past ten years, 21% of the new agent turnover (4 out of 19 agents) occurred in the Ag/Marketing program area, and 10.5% (2 out of 19) occurred within Home Economics. The NRPP program area experienced no turnover.

The relatively high rate of new employee turnover in one program area may have been generalized to the organization as a whole, resulting in the organization's belief in high turnover.

Regions

Another way to configure data is according to turnover by region. This data is displayed in Table 3-3. A map of the Michigan CES regions is shown in Fig. 2.

Table 3-3
Turnover in First 12 Months of Employment
by CES Region
1978-79 to 1987-88

Year	N= turnover	SE Region	SW Region	WC Region	EC Region	N Region	UP Region
1978-79	5	2	1	2			
1979-80	2	1				1	
1980-81	1	1					
1981-82	2	2					
1982-83	1				1		
1983-84	2	1		1			
1984-85	4	2		1	1		
1985-86	1					1	
1986-87	1		1				
1987-88	- -						
Totals	19	9 *	2	4 **	2	2	
% of total turnover		47.3	10.5	26.3	5.2	10.5	

*Wayne (5), Macomb (2), Oakland (1), Genesee (1)

** Kent (2), Muskegon (1)

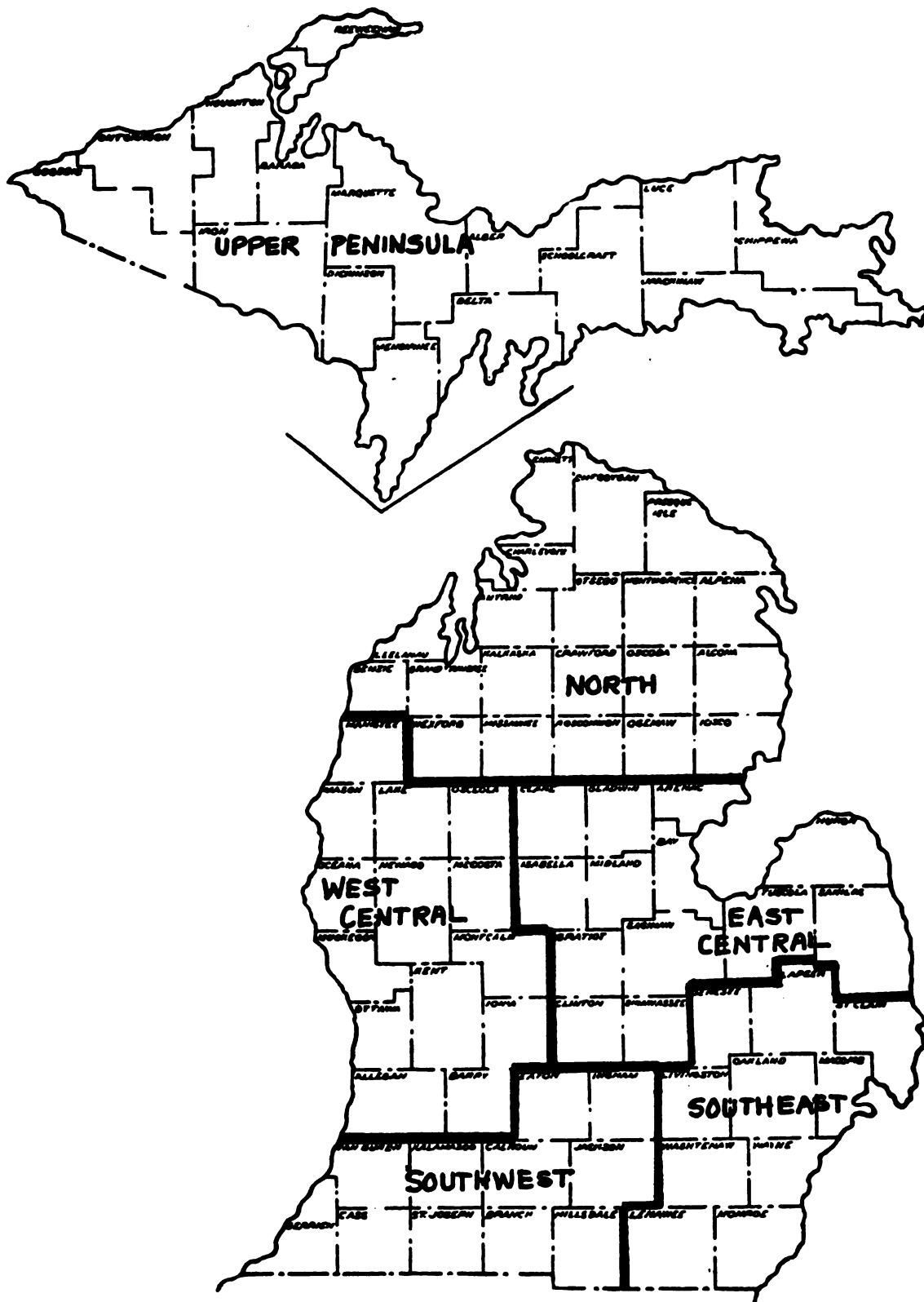


Fig. 2. CES Regions

When the turnover distribution by region is examined, it can be seen that just under three-quarters -- 73.6% -- of the terminations within the first 12 months of employment occurred in two regions with major population centers -- the West Central Region and the Southeast Region.

A closer look shows that of the 13 terminations that occurred in these two regions, 12 were in the offices located in Detroit, Pontiac, Mt. Clemens, Grand Rapids and Muskegon -- all urban centers.

The Southwest, East Central, North and Upper Peninsula regions combined accounted for slightly more than 25% of the organizational turnover for the decade.

A final observation is that of the 13 terminations in the Southeast and West Central regions, 10 were for 4-H youth positions, two were for ag positions, and one was for home economics.

From this analysis, it can be concluded that when the organization's staff members refer to high rates of new agent turnover, the referent is likely to be the turnover rates experienced by new 4-H youth agents in urban offices. The assumption that all program areas and all counties have experienced like new agent turnover is inaccurate.

Turnover Definition

In predicting that an RJP would lower turnover, defined as termination within the first 12 months of employment, the assumption, commonly shared by members of the CES organization, was that turnover rates for new agents are high. Archival data, however, has shown that an average turnover rate of 6.4% was actually experienced across the

organization during the past decade.

It must then be considered whether the definition of turnover as "termination within the first 12 months of employment" was too limiting and precluded meaningful results.

Looking at the year 1986-87, which is the Control Group I year, (see Table 3-1), it can be seen that only one agent out of 24 terminated within the first 12 months of employment. However, further tracking (See Table 2-2, p. 17) shows that at the 17-month point, four out of those 24 agents --16% -- had terminated. At 19 months, seven agents, or 29% of the total, were no longer with the organization. And at 28 months, just over two years into the job, 10 of those 24 agents -- 41.6% -- had resigned.

As indicated in Chapter One, the bulk of RJP studies have attempted to lower turnover rates for fairly simple jobs, e.g., bank teller or telephone operator, through use of an RJP. This research attempted to examine the effects of an RJP on people holding extremely complex jobs. And this complexity, in itself, may have confounded the results. With a complex job, the introductory period is, of necessity, longer than for a simple job. Many seasoned agents have indicated that they feel new agents may need to experience an entire year's cycle before they can have a true understanding of their jobs.

Pre- and Post-test Questionnaires

Pre- and post-test questionnaires were administered to applicants for field agent positions between Oct. 12 and July 20, 1989. During this 10-month period, 60 pre- and post-test were administered. Six of

the questionnaires were rejected because the subjects admitted having prior experience with an Extension Service, either as a program assistant, field agent in another state, student intern or campus specialist. Fifty-four questionnaires were determined to be valid.

The purpose of the pre- and post-test, which were based on information reported by the field staff in the 1896 personnel office survey, was to determine, under controlled conditions, whether the RJP video was effective in lowering or raising the subjects' expectations about the job of Extension field agent to levels more congruent with the organizational reality.

The pre-test attempted to determine what levels of expectations the naive subjects held on 10 job variables. The variables were:

- amount of variety in your work
- amount of time on the job each week
- feelings of satisfaction from the job
- amount of time spent on paperwork
- level of involvement with people
- feelings of ambiguity about role and responsibilities
- flexibility with regard to programing and scheduling
- opportunity for advancement and promotion
- level of stress
- opportunity for personal and professional growth.

Each question was constructed so that the subject circled a number from 1 to 5, indicating his or her level of expectation about that particular variable, with 1 being low and 5 being high.

After completing the pre-test, all subjects viewed the 15-minute

RJP. Immediately following the RJP, the post-test was administered. The post-test was identical to the pre-test except for the color of paper and the number written in the upper right hand corner. A pre-test, for example, was labeled "34A" with the corresponding post-test labeled "34B."

The differences between the answers on the pre- and post-test questions showed whether the subject's expectations changed and, if so, in what direction and by how much. It was predicted that the subjects' expectation levels would increase for nine out of the 10 variables and decrease for one variable -- opportunity for promotion and advancement.

The 54 valid pre- and post-tests were analyzed using a two-tailed t test for comparison of means.

The analysis is displayed in Table 3-4.

Question 1: How much variety in your work do you expect on this job?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test questionnaire average for this question was 4.37. After viewing the RJP, the post-test expectations rose to a mean of 4.59. The change was significant at the .01 level.

As a result of the RJP, the subjects, on the average, expected that a field agent's job would provide a higher level of job variety than they did before viewing the RJP.

Question 2: How much time do you expect to spend on this job each week?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test questionnaire average for this question was 4.29. The average post-test expectations rose to

a level of 4.46. The change was significant at the .05 level.

As a result of the RJP, the subjects' expectations about the amount of time they would spend on the job increased.

Table 3-4
Analysis of Pre- and Post-test Questionnaires

Pre- and post-test Questions	Mean Scores (N=54)		t-value
	Pre-test	Post-test	
1. How much variety in your work do you expect on this job?	4.37	4.59	2.85**
2. How much time do you expect to spend on this job each week?	4.29	4.46	2.01*
3. How much satisfaction do you expect to get from this job?	4.62	4.59	1.00
4. How much time do you expect to spend on paperwork?	3.42	3.75	3.98**
5. How much do you expect this job will involve you with people?	4.85	4.90	1.35
6. How much ambiguity do you expect to feel about your role and responsibilities?	2.66	3.18	5.29**
7. How much flexibility do you expect with regard to programing and scheduling?	3.90	4.20	3.15**
8. How much opportunity do you expect for promotion and advancement?	3.68	3.0	6.31**
9. How much stress do you expect with this job?	3.09	3.51	4.36**
10. How much opportunity do you expect for personal and professional growth with this job?	4.53	4.48	0.82

*significant at .05 level

**significant at .01 level

Question 3: How much satisfaction do you expect to get from this job?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test questionnaire average for this question was 4.62. The average post-test expectation decreased to 4.59. The change was not in the predicted direction, nor was it statistically significant at the .05 level.

Question 4: How much time do you expect to spend on paperwork?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 3.42. The post-test average rose to 3.75. The change was significant at the .01 level.

The large amount of paperwork required by the organization is a major complaint among field agents. As a result of the RJP, the subjects' expectations about the amount of time they would have to devote to paperwork increased.

Question 5: How much do you expect this job will involve you with people?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 4.85. The post-test average rose to 4.90. The change was not statistically significant at the .05 level.

In explaining this finding, the pre-test scores show us that people who apply for a job as Extension service field agents already have high (4.85 on a 5 point scale) expectations about the amount of involvement they will have with people. The RJP did not significantly change their expectation level.

Question 6: How much ambiguity do you expect to feel about your role and responsibilities?

Measured on a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 2.66. The post-test average rose to 3.18. This change was significant at the .01 level.

Most people expect that they will not experience high levels of feelings of ambiguity about their role and responsibilities on their job as field agent. However, according to experienced agents, there is a period of high ambiguity for the new agent when he or she is first learning lines of reporting within the organization and is trying to understand the different expectations that various people -- clientele groups as well as people within the organization -- have of him or her.

Question 7: How much flexibility do you expect with regard to programing and scheduling?

On a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 3.90. The post-test average rose to 4.20. The change was significant at the .01 level.

Agents typically have high levels of flexibility with regard to their ability to program to meet the needs of the community and to schedule their time accordingly. The subjects expected a moderately high level of flexibility, but as a result of the RJP, that expectation was increased.

Question 8: How much opportunity do you expect for promotion and advancement?

On a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for that question was 3.68. The post-test average decreased to 3.0. The change was significant at the .01 level.

It may not be apparent to people outside of the system, but CES is a fairly flat organization. Opportunities for promotion and advancement within the organization are somewhat limited. The RJP was able to lower the subjects' expectations about promotion and advancement.

Question 9: How much stress do you expect with this job?

On a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 3.09. The post-test average rose to 3.51. The change was significant at the .01 level.

Field agents indicate that they experience high levels of stress caused by the job. The subjects expected an average level of stress with a field agent job and the RJP succeeded in raising that expectation.

Question 10: How much opportunity do you expect for personal and professional growth with this job?

On a scale of 1 to 5, the pre-test average for this question was 4.53. The post-test average was 4.48. The change was not statistically significant at the .05 level, nor was it in the predicted direction.

Summary

Six out of the 10 pre- and post-test questions had movement in the predicted direction that was significant at the .01 level. These questions were:

- How much variety in your work do you expect on this job?
- How much time do you expect to spend on paperwork?
- How much ambiguity do you expect to feel about your role and responsibilities?

- How much flexibility do you expect with regard to programing and scheduling?

- How much opportunity do you expect for promotion and advancement?

- How much stress do you expect with this job?

One question -- How much time do you expect to spend on this job each week -- had movement that was significant at the .05 level.

Three of the 10 questions failed to have statistically significant movement. They were:

- How much satisfaction do you expect to get from this job?
- How much do you expect this job will involve you with people?
- How much opportunity do you expect for personal and professional growth with this job?

The analysis of the pre- and post-test questionnaires shows that the RJP was extremely effective in altering the subjects' expectations about various aspects of their jobs as CES field agents to levels more congruent with the organizational reality. Therefore, it appears that the RJP is a satisfactory method of inoculating potential CES field agents against the shock of some of the unexpected organizational realities they might otherwise be expected to encounter.

Analysis of JDI Questionnaire

JDI Mailing

In the late summers of 1987, 1988 and 1989, satisfaction measurements were taken for the two control groups and the experimental group. The instrument used was the Job Descriptive Index developed and validated by Dr. Patricia Smith and her colleagues at Bowling Green State University. (See Appendix E.)

During each August or September for the three-year period, the researcher mailed the JDI questionnaires along with a letter of introduction and instruction and a stamped, self-addressed envelope to new field agents hired during the previous 12 months.

Each JDI questionnaire had a cover sheet with a designated space for respondents to write their name and organization. An "x" was drawn through this part of the cover sheet, and the subjects were instructed in the letter not to write their names on the form. The respondents were assured complete anonymity. The forms and envelopes were not marked or coded in any manner. Further, the postal service practice of postmarking mail in regional centers all but guaranteed that the researcher would be unable to tell where the envelope had come from by looking at the postmark.

The return rates from each group differed, ranging from 67% (16 out of 24 questionnaires returned) for Control Group I, and 71% (10 out of 14 questionnaires) for Control Group II, to 88.9% (16 out of 18) for the Experimental Group. Again, the high rate of return in the experimental group was attributed to the fact that the researcher was known to the experimental subjects because of personal contact during

the interview process.

Scoring the JDI

The questionnaires were scored using the scoring key provided with the JDI manual. A mean score for each of the six categories -- work on present job, present pay, opportunity for promotion, supervision on present job, people on present job, and job in general -- was derived. Each of the six categories was examined separately. The JDI does not have a composite score. The closest to a kind of "overall score" can be found in the sixth category -- job in general.

Table 3-5 contains the expected JDI scores under various assumptions, as determined by Dr. Smith and her colleagues.

For all categories the maximum score is 54. A score of 18 assumes a state of indifference. A score of 27 is the expected score assuming a balanced attitude with an equal probability of endorsing favorable and unfavorable items. However, in actuality, Smith and her colleagues found through testing that the equated neutral point for each category differed, ranging from a low of 20 on promotion to a high of 33 for supervision.

Control Group I

The scores for Control Group I are displayed in Table 3-6.

Of the 24 questionnaires mailed, 16 were returned, giving a 67% response rate. In tables 3-6, 3-8 and 3-10, "subject number" refers to the number assigned to each questionnaire as the envelopes were opened and not to a specific agent.

Table 3-5
JDI Expected Scores under Various Assumptions

Expected Scores Under Assumption of
Response Set

Scale	Maximum Score	Indifference	Yes	No	Balanced Attitude	Equated Neutral Point
Work	54	18	30	24	27	26
Pay	54	18	24	30	27	22
Promotion	54	18	30	24	27	20
Supervision	54	18	30	24	27	33
Co-workers	54	18	24	30	27	32

Indifference: The points of indifference, where a worker answers with a question mark to each item, are the same for all scales -- a raw score of 18.

Response Set: The expected scores resulting from a consistent response set, endorsing all favorable and unfavorable items, are nearly equal.

Balanced attitude: The statistically expected scores from a balanced attitude resulting in equal probabilities of endorsing favorable and unfavorable items are the same for all scales -- a raw score of 27.

Neutral Point: The empirically equated neutral points differ among scales.

(Measurement of Satisfaction in Work and Behavior,
 copyright Bowling Green State University, 1975)

Table 3-6
JDI Scores for Control Group I
1986-87

Mailing: N = 24
 Response: N = 16
 Percent of Return: 67%

(Maximum score = 54)

subject number	work on present job	present pay	opptn. for promotion	suprvsn on present job	people on present job	job in general
1	36	36	50	41	28	54
2	31	36	26	25	18	15
3	36	14	34	31	22	40
4	37	22	46	47	52	45
5	37	38	42	51	51	45
6	40	42	38	54	24	54
7	39	42	46	50	50	52
8	40	28	32	49	39	49
9	41	38	20	43	28	51
10	37	24	18	16	50	46
11	43	14	22	33	34	45
12	40	20	10	29	28	40
13	44	0	10	38	37	46
14	35	28	30	50	46	50
15	31	2	14	36	37	25
16	38	24	30	31	48	37
mean	37.81	25.5	29.25	39.0	37.0	43.37

The mean scores for the Control Group I respondents ranged from a low of 25.5 for present pay, to a high of 43.37 for job in general.

To put these scores in perspective we need to compare them to Smith's expected scores under various assumptions. This comparison is displayed in Table 3-7.

Table 3-7
Comparison of Control Group I Mean Scores
with JDI Expected Scores

	Work	Pay	Promotion	Supervision	People
Control Group I mean scores	37.81	25.5	29.25	39.0	37.0
Maximum expected score	54	54	54	54	54
Assumption of Indifference	18	18	18	18	18
Equated Neutral Point	26	22	20	33	32

The control group's mean scores exceeded the equated neutral point for each category. Smith did not provide expected scores for her sixth category -- job in general.

Control Group II

The JDI scores for Control Group II, 1987-88, are displayed in Table 3-8. Of the 14 questionnaires mailed, 10 were returned for a 71% response rate.

The mean scores ranged from a low of 24 for pay to a high of 44.5 for supervision. Again, a comparison of the control group scores to Smith's expected scores is displayed in Table 3-9.

Table 3-8
JDI Scores for Control Group II
1987-88

Mailing: N = 14
 Responses: N = 10
 Percent of Return: 71%

(Maximum Score = 54)

subject number	work on present job	present pay	opptn for promotion	sprvsn on present job	people on present job	job in general
1	39	20	54	54	52	54
2	48	36	24	42	48	54
3	31	0	42	48	42	42
4	34	18	8	48	42	42
5	48	42	54	54	54	51
6	49	34	54	50	54	54
7	47	22	12	52	25	54
8	48	20	46	37	52	54
9	41	22	16	54	44	54
10	33	26	16	6	26	39
mean	41.8	24.0	32.6	44.5	43.9	49.8

Table 3-9
Comparison of Control Group II Mean Scores
with JDI Expected Scores

	Work	Pay	Promotion	Supervision	People
Control Group II mean scores	41.8	24.0	32.6	44.5	43.9
Maximum expected score	54	54	54	54	54
Assumption of Indifference	18	18	18	18	18
Equated Neutral Point	26	22	20	33	32

Table 3-10
JDI Scores for Experimental Group
1988-89

Mailing: N = 18
 Responses: N = 16
 Response Rate: 88.9%

(Maximum score = 54)

subject number	work on present job	present pay	opptn for promotion	sprvsn on present job	people on present job	job in general
1	44	2	18	54	50	48
2	48	38	38	38	40	51
3	42	18	8	34	30	37
4	38	26	52	51	33	45
5	43	38	24	47	43	48
6	54	36	18	43	43	*
7	32	34	18	39	42	45
8	46	22	30	54	52	52
9	22	32	10	27	19	42
10	41	12	34	30	43	45
11	36	14	20	45	41	42
12	33	26	14	51	42	48
13	45	38	46	49	54	54
14	51	6	48	54	45	54
15	45	42	38	54	51	51
16	41	36	40	52	54	52
mean	41.31	26.25	28.5	45.12	42.62	47.6

*Respondent 6 left this page in the answer booklet blank. Because it was the last page in the booklet, the researcher assumed it was overlooked and calculated the mean for this column on N=15.

The mean scores for the control group are higher than the equated neutral point for each category. The pay category, with a control group mean of 22 compared to an equated neutral point of 22, comes closest to being a neutral score.

Experimental Group

The JDI scores for the Experimental Group, 1988-89 are presented in Table 3-10.

The scores ranged from a low of 26.6 for present pay to a high of 45.12 for supervision.

The comparison of these scores to Smith's expected scores is displayed in Table 3-11. The mean scores for the experimental group are higher than the equated neutral point for each category.

Table 3-11
Comparison of Experimental Group Mean Scores
with JDI Expected Scores

	Work	Pay	Promotion	Supervision	People
Experimental Group Mean Scores	41.31	26.25	28.5	45.12	42.62
Maximum Expected Scores	54	54	54	54	54
Assumption of Indifference	18	18	18	18	18
Equated Neutral Point	26	22	20	33	32

Table 3-12 compares the mean JDI scores by category for the two control groups and the experimental group.

Table 3-12
Mean JDI Scores by Category
For Control and Experimental Groups

Possible score: 54

	Year*	work on present job	present pay	opprty for promotion	suprvsn on job	people on job	job in general
N = 16	Control Group I	37.81	25.5	29.25	39.0	37.0	43.37
N = 10	Control Group II	41.8	24.0	32.6	44.5	43.9	49.8
N = 16	Experimental Group	41.31	26.25	28.5	45.12	42.62	47.6

* Control Group I, 1986-87; Control Group II, 1987-88; Experimental Group, 1988-89

Comparison with National Sample

Smith sampled more than 2,500 workers across 21 organizations and computed raw score means for this sample. Her sample was separated by gender. Because of the anonymity of CES responses, mean score data by gender for the control groups and experimental group are not available. Though it is impossible to make a meaningful comparison by gender, certain general observations can be made.

When CES raw score means were compared to those of the national sample, it was found that CES workers scored higher than Smith's sample on almost all variables. The comparison is displayed in Table 3-13.

Table 3-13
Comparison of Mean Scores of CES Subjects
with National Sample Mean Scores
and Equated Neutral Points

	work	pay	promotion	supervision	co-workers
Sample: female workers	35.74	27.90	17.77*	41.13	42.09
Sample: male workers	36.57	29.90	22.06	41.10	43.49
Control Group I	37.81	25.5	29.25	39.0	37.0
Control Group II	41.8	24.0	32.6	44.5	43.9
Experimen- tal Group	41.31	26.25	28.5	45.12	42.62
Equated Neutral Point	26	22	20	33	32

*Lower than the Equated Neutral Point of 20

Each group of CES workers reported more satisfaction with the category "work" than the 1,900 males and approximately 630 females (across 21 organizations) in Smith's sample.

All three CES groups were less satisfied with "pay" than Smith's samples for males and females. Even though they were less satisfied than the national sample, however, they still scored above the equated neutral point of 22.

For the category of "promotion," the females in Smith's national sample scored 17.77, which is below the equated neutral point of 20. This means that the females in Smith's sample were dissatisfied with

their opportunities for promotion. CES workers scored substantially above the national sample in this category. It would have been of interest to compare data by gender for this category to see if female Extension workers were less satisfied than their male counterparts, but because of the guaranteed confidentiality of the responses, this data was unavailable.

Except for Control Group I, the CES sample was clearly more satisfied in the category "supervision" than the national samples. And even though Control Group I scored lower than the national samples, at 39, they were still above the equated neutral point of 33.

For the category "co-workers," CES most closely matched the national averages. Control Group I was less satisfied than either males or females in the national sample. Control Group II was slightly above, but very close to, the national averages. And the Experimental Group scored slightly above the average mean for females and slightly below the average mean for males. Again, however, all three CES groups scored higher than the equated neutral point of 32.

The CES workers were more satisfied in four out of five categories than the national sample of workers. The clear exception was "pay."

Rank Ordering of the Categories

Smith also discovered that the rank orders of satisfaction were identical for men and women and across occupations. The rank order, based on raw means, was as follows: co-workers, supervision, work, pay, and promotion.

This rank order can be compared to the rank orders for the control

groups and the experimental group. This comparison is displayed in Table 3-14.

Table 3-14
Rank Order Comparisons

Expected Rank Order	Control Group I	Control Group II	Experimental Group
Co-workers	Supervision	Supervision	Supervision
Supervision	Work	Co-workers	Co-workers
Work	Co-workers	Work	Work
Pay	Promotion	Promotion	Promotion
Promotion	Pay	Pay	Pay

This comparison shows that the rank ordering of the three CES groups differed from Smith's expected rank orderings, and that Control Group I also differed slightly from Control Group II and the Experimental Group. While Smith found that workers reported the highest satisfaction with their co-workers, all three CES groups reported the highest satisfaction with their supervisors.

Smith found supervision ranked second. The first control group ranked work second, while the second control group and the experimental group ranked co-workers second.

Smith's findings ranked work third. Control Group I ranked co-workers third, and Control Group II and the Experimental Group ranked work third.

Smith's findings ranked pay fourth, but the three CES groups all ranked promotion fourth.

And finally, Smith ranked promotion fifth, while all three CES groups reported the least amount of satisfaction with their pay.

The fact that pay was ranked last among the categories corresponds with the findings displayed in Table 3-14. CES workers are less satisfied with their pay than the other variables of work, promotion opportunity, co-workers or supervision.

T-test for comparison of means

In order to determine whether the differences in the means between the Control Group I and the Experimental Group and Control Group II and the Experimental Group were significant, a one tailed t-test was conducted.

Table 3-15 displays the means for each of the three groups and the computed t-value for the comparison of each control group with the experimental group.

Table 3-15
Comparison of Means and Computed t-Value
for Control and Experimental Groups

	Control Group I 1986-87	Control Group II 1987-88	Experimental Group 1988-89	Absolute t-value	Absolute t-value
Variable	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3	1 and 3	2 and 3
work	37.81	41.80	41.31	1.61*	-.16
pay	25.50	24.00	26.25	.16	.46
promotion	29.25	32.60	28.50	-.16	-.59
supervision	39.00	44.50	45.12	1.73*	.12
people	37.00	43.90	42.62	1.52*	-.32
job in gener	43.37	49.80	47.60	1.45*	-.94

*significance at .05

Control Group I with the Experimental Group

At the .05 level, the Experimental Group was significantly more satisfied than Control Group I for four of the six variables. The four variables were: work, supervision, people and job in general.

The Experimental Group was slightly more satisfied with pay, and slightly less satisfied with their opportunity for promotion than Control Group I, though not at a statistically significant level.

Control Group II with the Experimental Group

In the comparison of Control Group II with the Experimental Group, however, there was no statistical significance in the comparison of means.

The hypothesis, namely that the Realistic Job Preview experienced

by the Experimental Group would cause them to report a significantly higher level of satisfaction on the Job Descriptive Index than the two control groups, holds when comparing Control Group I and the Experimental Group in four of the six categories.

However, the satisfaction reported by the Experimental Group was not significantly higher for any category than reported by Control Group II. The Experimental Group was slightly more satisfied than Control Group II with pay and supervision, and slightly less satisfied with work, promotion and co-workers, but not at a statistically significant level.

1. Because of the variability in the way in which national personnel data is collected, as well as the variability of the definition of turnover, no attempt was made to compare Michigan's 10-year data to national data.

Chapter Four

Conclusions

The research, as conducted, did not support the original hypothesis that a realistic job preview would reduce the turnover rates of Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service new field agents hired between Oct. 1, 1988 and Sept. 30, 1989. The hypothesis that the RJP would increase the satisfaction levels of these new agents to a level higher than those of two control groups was only partially supported.

This research study was undertaken because of a widely-held belief within the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service that there was a significant problem with new field agents experiencing high turnover and low morale. This research sought to determine whether a realistic job preview could have a positive effect in reducing turnover and increasing satisfaction for these new employees, and to determine the accuracy of the perceptions related to the two variables, turnover and satisfaction.

Employees often leave during the first year of employment because their expectations about the job are not met. Employees generally begin their jobs expecting to experience certain satisfactions and to have certain needs met. When actual life on the job does not live up to these expectations, they experience dissatisfaction, which, if it is great enough, may cause them to leave the organization.

Most satisfaction studies show that satisfaction levels plummet dramatically during the first year of employment and then level off somewhat for the rest of the employee's tenure. If employees'

expectations about their jobs can be brought to levels more congruent with organizational reality and they enter their jobs with realistic expectations, it's possible that their satisfaction levels would not drop as much as they would otherwise.

Another possibility is that if potential employees are realistically told what to expect on the job, they may realize -- before the job is accepted -- that it will not be satisfying or meet their personal or professional needs. They may at this point decide to withdraw from the selection process, thereby saving the organization the costs associated with early turnover or high dissatisfaction.

The purpose of a realistic job preview is to present a balanced picture of what life on the job will be like -- both the positive and negative features -- thereby bringing the employees' expectations to levels that match organizational reality.

A video RJP, titled "An Extension Agent Is ... " was, therefore, produced and shown to the MSU-CES field agent recruits for the year 1988-89 when they came to interview for their jobs. The recruits who accepted the job were tracked to see if they left during their first year. They were also asked to fill out a satisfaction measure identical to the measure completed by two control groups comprising new agents hired during the previous two years.

Pre- and Post-tests

At the time that the experimental year's new recruits came to campus for job interviews, they filled out pre- and post-test questionnaires immediately before and after they viewed the RJP video.

An analysis of these questionnaires showed that the RJP video was successful in moving the expectations of these recruits in desired and predicted directions for eight out of the 10 pre- and post-test questions.

The changes between pre- and post-test raw mean scores were found to be statistically significant at the .01 (99%) confidence level for six out of the 10 questions. For one question, change was significant at the .05 level.

For the question: How much satisfaction do you expect to get from the job, the post-test mean dropped to 4.59 from 4.62 on the pre-test. It is possible that persons seeking an Extension career are usually drawn to service careers and they may expect to derive high levels of satisfaction from their work. The RJP may have made them aware of some aspects of the job, such as paperwork or long hours that are generally less satisfying than serving people.

For the question: How much personal and professional growth do you expect, the pre-test mean dropped to 4.48 from 4.53 -- a drop of .05. Because the RJP portrayed a high level of opportunity available to agents for their professional and personal growth, a decrease in the level of expectation for this variable was not desired nor anticipated. The subjects may have confused personal and professional growth with opportunities for promotion and advancement. Because their expectations about opportunities for promotion and advancement were lowered, they may have decided that there were also less opportunities for personal and professional growth. Failing this explanation, it is unknown why the RJP, which featured field agents and the narrator speaking glowingly of

the opportunities for personal and professional growth through in-service, foreign travel experiences and the ability to design one's own personal development plan, failed to achieve movement in the predicted direction.

In summary, without even considering the tenure and satisfaction comparisons, it can be concluded that the RJP successfully and effectively performed the desired task of bringing the recruits' expectations into congruence with organizational reality.

Tenure

The tenure results, on the other hand, were somewhat surprising and did not support the original hypothesis. The reason the hypothesis was not supported is because the premise upon which it was based -- namely, high new agent turnover -- was false. A 10-year analysis of turnover revealed that the MSU Cooperative Extension Service actually experiences, by general industry standards, a fairly low average annual turnover of new employees during their first year of employment, not the "high" level widely believed to exist.

During the 10 years examined, the turnover ranged from zero to 15%, with a 10-year annual average of 6.4%. The numbers of employees leaving during their first year of employment ranged from zero to 5, with a 10-year annual average of 1.9. The experimental year hires are being tracked and at this point there have been no terminations within the group. In order for the hypothesis of less turnover to hold, this group must have a turnover rate of less than 1.9 agents. However, even should this group complete its first year on the job with no

terminations, it must be noted that the new hires in Control Group II all went through their first year with no terminations. Should the experimental year hires have no turnovers, they would meet the criterion of a turnover rate of less than 1.9 persons per year, but they would, at best, match the turnover rate for Control Group II.

It is quite possible that the definition of turnover as "terminations within the first 12 months on the job" may have been too limiting and precluded meaningful results. Because of the complex nature of an Extension field agent job, the typical agent may need an introductory period of time longer than one year before disillusionment sets in to the point where it causes resignation from the job. Had the definition of turnover been changed to "terminations within the first 18 months of employment" or "terminations within the first 24 months of employment," it is possible that turnover data thus analyzed would have supported the hypothesis more strongly.

If "turnover" were redefined to encompass a longer period than 12 months, we must seriously consider how long the RJP can realistically be expected to influence the decision to stay or leave. It is probably unrealistic to attribute turnover decisions that occur after one year to the effects of an RJP. After one year on the job, there are many intervening variables that could influence the agent's decision. At this point the agent is no longer naive to the system, he or she has had many experiences and has formed many biases about people, personalities and the organization that will affect his or her decision to stay or leave.

When the turnover data were examined configured by region and

program area, it was discovered that the most turnover occurred in urban counties and among 4-H youth agents. This level of turnover in urban 4-H could be attributed to many factors. For example, urban 4-H youth agents may experience different kinds of frustration than rural 4-H youth agents, or urban 4-H youth agents have more employment alternatives available to them than rural 4-H youth agents.

If all 4-H youth agents experience the same kinds and levels of dissatisfiers and frustrations, the high turnover experienced with urban agents may be attributed to the fact that it's easier for them to leave because they have more employment alternatives. However, it is possible that there is something about the urban 4-H experience that in and of itself, makes it a more frequent turnover position.

Operating from the premise that knowledge is power, these particular findings could be of use to the 4-H program as they structure in-service training and support structures for their new agents. If their goal is to lower turnover, it may be that they need to invest more heavily or in a different way in their urban agents.

When considering turnover, there are variables other than satisfaction with the job, which cannot be accounted for and that must be taken into consideration. For example, during times of recession, high inflation, economic uncertainty and high unemployment, individuals may tend to stick with their jobs, even if they are not happy with them, rather than risk unemployment. During the 10 years that turnover data was examined, Michigan's higher education infrastructure experienced fluctuating economic times and budgetary draw downs. During some of these times, the field staff may have been somewhat insulated from cuts

that took place on the university campus due to the fact that they are partially funded by county budgets. However, since the recent decrease in federal revenue sharing, county governments are experiencing the same pressures to trim expenditures and streamline operations that have been felt on the university campuses.

For purposes of the measurements among the two control groups and the experimental group, 1986 to 1989, however, economic pressures were fairly consistent. In each of the three years, there was a freeze on hiring at approximately the same time each year pending state and federal budget allocations. And the freeze was lifted at the same time each year.

JDI Analysis

The Job Descriptive Index comparisons between the Experimental Group and each control group were inconsistent. The Experimental Group's scores when compared to those of Control Group I were significantly higher at the .05 confidence level for four out of the six variables examined. The two variables for which significance was not found were pay and promotion. The experimental group was slightly higher (26.25) than the control group (25.50) for pay, and slightly lower (28.50) than the control group (29.25) for promotion.

However, when comparing the Experimental Group's scores to those of Control Group II, no statistical significance was found for any of the six categories.

Had the JDI comparison been made only between the Experimental Group and Control Group I, it could be concluded that the RJP had,

indeed, significantly increased satisfaction levels of the experimental group subjects. However, the comparison between the Experimental Group and Control Group II prevents us from stating this. Not only did the comparison of means between the Experimental Group and Control Group II lack statistical significance, the raw mean scores for the Experimental Group were lower than those for Control Group II in four out of the six categories.

It must, therefore, be concluded that the satisfaction measure comparisons were inconclusive in determining RJP effect. Some possible reasons for this phenomenon follow.

As noted earlier, all samples were extremely small. The Experimental Group had 18 subjects, 16 of whom returned the questionnaire. The first control group had 24 subjects, 16 of whom returned the questionnaire. And the second control group had 14 subjects, 10 of whom returned the questionnaire. Some would argue that statistical significance with this small of a sample is almost an impossibility.

However, given the smallness of the sample, the fact that the comparison between the Experimental Group and Control Group I was significant at the .05 level for four of the six variables, may attest to the success of the RJP in increasing satisfaction levels of the Experimental Group.

The second control group consisted of the smallest group of agents hired for any year in the 10 year period reviewed. Because there were so few openings that year, agents may have been screened more carefully than in other years, resulting in new hires who matched the job better

than in any other year. Major personnel changes within the organization also occurred that year that may have resulted in all Extension employees, including Control Group II subjects, feeling higher levels of optimism about the organization and its future. It is entirely possible that the smallness of this group and the internal changes skewed this control group's satisfaction measurement.

Comparison to National Mean Scores

The CES raw mean scores were compared to Patricia Smith's national sample of more than 2,500 males and females across 21 organizations. In four out of the six categories, the three CES groups had higher raw mean scores than the national sample. The two categories in which they scored lower were pay and co-workers.

Another of Smith's findings showed that there was a definite rank ordering of the categories that held across gender. Her sample ranked co-workers highest of the five categories examined -- co-workers, supervision, work, pay and promotion. (Smith does not provide national data or rank order data for the sixth category -- job in general.) One CES group ranked co-workers second and two groups ranked it third. In Smith's rankings, pay was fourth, while the CES groups unanimously ranked it last.

Smith's national sample was broken down by gender. Unfortunately, gender information was unavailable due to the promise of confidentiality. A comparison of CES data with Smith's data divided by gender might have provided some interesting comparisons.

Smith also provided comparisons based on age, education level, job

tenure, income level, community prosperity, and so forth. It would be interesting at some time in the future to administer the JDI across the entire CES organization and make some of these comparisons.

General Conclusions

Despite the fact that the turnover analysis showed that there is not a high level of turnover of new employees during their first 12 months on the job, and the fact that the satisfaction measurements were inconclusive, this research is valuable in that it provides a foundation or basis for other researchers interested in further exploring RJPs and concomitant satisfaction and turnover in diverse and complex organizations.

It is also a first attempt in Michigan CES to look at some widely-held organizational perceptions, such as "high" new agent turnover and "low" new agent satisfaction and establish an empirical basis for their support or non-support.

Chapter Five

Recommendations and Areas for Future Research

Turnover

The scope of this research was to investigate turnover as defined as "termination within the first 12 months of employment." As pointed out earlier, this definition had some limitations. It would, therefore, be of value to the organization to examine its turnover in a variety of other ways.

For example, it would be possible, with the cooperation of the personnel office, to track the people who were hired during the past 10 years and note at what point they terminated. With data of this nature, it might be possible to determine an "average" termination time. If it could be learned that the average agent who quits does so at, for example, 20 or 22 months into the job, those first 20 or 22 months could be considered a critical period. The following questions could then be asked:

-- Should this period of time be considered the introductory or indoctrination period for new agents?

-- Should new agents be tracked and communicated with in a special manner during these months?

-- Should the Cooperative Extension Service structure experiences for these agents during this time period that would help reinforce their satisfiers, deal with dissatisfiers and provide a network of support and developmental experiences that could help smooth their entry and keep them on the job?

Related questions are:

- What turnover level is acceptable?
- Can too low of a turnover be unhealthy for the organization?
- What turnover level is desirable?

Satisfaction

Comparison of CES satisfaction mean scores to those of a national sample showed that the CES groups had higher mean scores than the national sample for four out of the six variables examined. The only two variables in which they scored lower (yet still above the equated neutral point) were co-workers and pay.

Pay

CES agents in this study ranked pay as one of the least satisfying aspects of their jobs. Yet these findings were not entirely consistent with those reported on the 1986 CES-administered survey. In that survey, pay was the third highest ranked negative and the tenth highest ranked positive.

Individual comments ranged from fair pay, steady paycheck, job security, good retirement options, and good/flexible vacation benefits on the positive side, to low starting pay, inequity within system, good talkers get rewards, no pay for extra efforts and not competitive with industry on the negative side.

It was not within the scope of this study, but an area for future research could be to derive average salaries breakdowns across program area, gender, length of tenure, age and education level. These findings

could be compared to those from other Extension services in other states as well as to other comparable occupations as described by the agents.

It is entirely possible that what appears to be an issue related to pay could be an issue that is really tied to, for example, evaluation equity. It could also be that older agents are more satisfied with their pay and benefits than younger agents. Or it could be that the dissatisfaction reported with pay could prove similar to the generally-held beliefs about high turnover and low satisfaction. In other words, it could be a belief not grounded in reality.

Co-Workers

The fact that the CES sample of new workers reported lower satisfaction with co-workers than the national sample seems to belie the existing feeling that good co-workers are a reason to work for the Extension Service. Co-workers were ranked the eighth most positive aspect on the 1986 survey.

An area for future research could be to explore the whole area of satisfaction with co-workers.

Job Descriptive Analysis

At some point in time it would be useful to administer a statewide Job Descriptive Index and compare the results to the national data as well as to the data derived from new agents. This information could provide the organization with a benchmark for making some comparisons about the satisfaction levels of agents with a large national sample to determine areas that need to be addressed, changed or improved.

Realistic Job Preview

Based on the conclusions of this study, it is recommended that the Michigan CES continue to show the RJP video to prospective employees. The fact that it is successful in moving recruits' expectations in the desired direction can help them better adjust to the realities of life on the job.

One program area -- Extension Home Economics -- produced an RJP video that has replaced the program area slide tape shown in the past. It is recommended that the Ag/Marketing, 4-H Youth Programs and Natural Resources and Public Policy programs critically review their program area slide tapes and give some thought to producing an up-dated and more realistic slide tape or video. The existing slide tapes are more than 10 years old and no longer accurately reflect organizational goals, program area objectives and field agents' activities.

A final recommendation about the RJP is that it is not meant to be used ad infinitum. It needs to be updated at least every five or six years. Not only will the appearance and dress of the actors date the RJP, but it is also entirely possible that sufficient organizational changes could take place within five years that would result in different rank orderings of or emphases on the positive and negative aspects of work on the job. In other words, by 1995, the organizational character and climate could have changed to the point where the 1989 RJP would no longer realistically reflect organizational reality.

When the RJP is re-done, it is recommended that the same method of determining the positive and negative job aspects be followed. I.e., the field agents should be surveyed regarding their perceptions.

It is recommended that the RJP be scripted to make certain the top negatives and positives are included. The agents or actors should still be allowed the freedom to structure their comments about the job, but within the framework of topics that need to be addressed.

APPENDICES

Appendix A

Positive and Negative Aspects of Extension Work

Positive Aspects of Extension Work: Rank Ordered by Raw Score

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| 1. Professional development/in-service | Raw Score: 57 |
| --gain knowledge | |
| --professional improvement | |
| --professional enrichment | |
| --opportunity for foreign travel | |
| 2. Freedom to plan programs to meet clients' needs | Raw Score: 52 |
| 3. Helping People | Raw Score: 46 |
| 4. Flexible schedule/time | Raw Score: 45 |
| 5. Working with people | Raw Score: 37 |
| 6. Self-directing | Raw Score: 30 |
| --plan work day | |
| --set own goals | |
| --self-directing/autonomous/responsible | |
| 7. Freedom to be creative | Raw Score: 25 |
| 8. Good Co-workers | Raw Score: 24 |
| 9. Variety | Raw Score: 23 |
| 10. Good Benefits and pay | Raw Score: 18 |
| --fair pay | |
| --steady paycheck | |
| --job security | |
| --retirement options | |
| --good/flexible vacations | |
| 11. Recognition | Raw Score: 14 |
| --community support and recognition | |
| --sense of what I do is important | |
| 12. Satisfaction | Raw Score: 13 |
| --meet the community's needs | |
| --see the results of what I do | |
| 13. Interesting and challenging | Raw Score: 13 |
| 14. Association with the University | Raw Score: 11 |
| 15. Support | Raw Score: 7 |
| --specialist support | |
| --CED support | |
| --administrative support | |

Negative Aspects of Extension Work: Rank Ordered by Raw Score

1. Large time commitment required (31) Raw Score: 67
 - night meetings (10)
 - hard on family life (11)
 - too much travel (5)
 - week end work (6)
 - work at home, overnights, too many meetings, overtime
2. Paperwork (21) Raw Score: 45
 - too much reporting (15)
 - too much planning (5)
 - surveys (2)
 - evaluating programs (2)
3. Pay Raw Score: 37
 - low starting
 - inequity within system
 - good talkers get rewards
 - no pay for extra efforts
 - not competitive with industry
4. Administration and Specialists Raw Score: 37
 - lack of leadership, problem leadership (10)
 - campus doesn't understand real world (5)
 - poor communication from administration (8)
 - program areas compete (8)
 - ag driven (3)
 - organizational problems (3)
5. Ambiguity Raw Score: 26
 - lack of structure/direction (7)
 - mixed messages, ambiguity, unclear expectations (9)
 - need to balance requests from many masters (4)
 - multiple demands (3)
 - can't reach closure (2)
 - unwritten rules
 - hard to understand staffing plans
6. Funding Raw Score: 23
 - funding limitations (13)
 - uncertainty of funding (7)
 - job uncertainty (4)
7. Too many programs Raw Score: 23
 - top down programming in addition to normal load (11)
 - too many programs (7)
 - keep all programs, add on (2)
 - cover too much (2)
 - last minute assignments

- | | |
|--------------------------------------|---------------|
| 8. Stress | Raw Score: 22 |
| --stress (7) | |
| --overload (3) | |
| --burnout (2) | |
| --demanding | |
| --disruptive schedule | |
| --administrative pressure | |
| --competition | |
| --morale | |
| 9. Evaluation | Raw Score: 15 |
| --problems with evaluation system | |
| 10. Unreasonable expectations | Raw Score: 14 |
| --seen as authority on anything (11) | |
| --expected to know everything | |
| --unreasonable expectations | |
| 11. No support (from administration) | Raw Score: 12 |
| --lack of support (5) | |
| --lack of respect (4) | |
| --abilities not recognized (3) | |
| 12. Political behavior | Raw Score: 11 |
| 13. Lack of Staff | Raw Score: 8 |
| --not enough staff | |
| --not enough support | |
| --spread too thin | |
| 14. Staff Problems | Raw Score: 8 |
| --isolated from other agents (4) | |
| --no input for new people (2) | |
| --conflict (2) | |
| 15. Limited Career Ladder | Raw Score: 6 |

**Appendix B
Field Agent
Videotaping Letter**

July 18, 1988

TO: _____ County Extension Staff

FROM: Mary Harvey

RE: August 2 videotaping

This is to confirm our scheduled videotaping on Tuesday, August 2 in your office. We are planning to arrive at approximately 8:30 a.m. I anticipate that I will need no more than a half hour with each of you.

As _____ explained, I am producing this realistic job preview (RJP) as part of my doctoral dissertation. My underlying theory is that new hires who have had a realistic preview -- a preview that discusses positive and negative aspects of the job, as opposed to a preview that highlights only the positive -- will stay with the organization longer and evidence a higher level of satisfaction at the end of the first year of employment.

The CES personnel office has agreed to use this RJP for a period of one year. The administration knows about this tape and understands that field staff members have volunteered to be the "actors."

I will ask each of you to talk about one positive aspect of Extension work and one negative aspect of Extension work selected from the attached list. The most commonly reported positive and negative aspects have been determined via a survey. Please review the attached list and select the negative and positive aspect you would like to talk about. I would prefer you to use your own words.

I appreciate your cooperation very much and look forward to working with you all on the morning of August 2.

Appendix C

Transcript Realistic Job Preview

Title: AN Extension Agent Is...

Marv: An Extension agent has to be a teacher first of all -- that's a part of the job -- we're educators. Has to be a teacher, a coordinator and a motivator. And then you have to be a good student.

Pat: You definitely have to be a people person.

Van: Well, there is stress in Extension and it's something that has to be dealt with daily.

Gary: You don't punch a time clock. We come and go pretty much as we want. Based on what we get done is how we're evaluated.

Brett: You have to like small town life.

Cheri: I don't think that I could find anything I like to do as much as I do Extension work.

Narrator: What it's like to be an Extension agent in Michigan is probably as different as there are numbers of agents in the state, because of their varied background, agents vary in their experiences educationally -- from home economists to crop scientists to those who are involved in youth development or public policy. Their ages vary. Their degrees -- some with bachelors' degrees, some with a Ph.D. Some are located in Detroit or other metropolitan areas; some in Gogebic County in the Upper Peninsula or other less populated areas. The job of an Extension agent varies. There is one common thread, however, and that is that

they're in the business to help people.

Cheri: Extension, the whole essence of it, is helping people. We're helping people put knowledge to work, as the saying goes, and we're helping people to learn how to manage on their own. And they use the Extension Service as a place to gain knowledge, as a place to gain information, and they rely on us to help them in many different ways. I'd say the Cooperative Extension Service is a place where people know they have a friend that can help them. And I personally get lots of satisfaction out of helping people and knowing that I make a difference.

Narrator: We often call Extension people "people-people."

Pat: Probably one of the things I like best about Extension is working with people. It's probably one of the things that attracted me to the job.

Milt: I'm people oriented and by that I mean if I did not have a job like Extension, I probably would help people in terms of community service or my civic duty.

Narrator: If an Extension agent is in the business to just dispense technical knowledge and to answer questions specifically, often times they find themselves in the wrong business.

Van: We've seen some shifts in looking at the whole person, the whole farm -- the technical as well as the personal. And in-service training has given us a lot of that.

Narrator: Probably one of the most important aspects of CES is the commitment the organization has to keep up-to-date both

technically and professionally. The in-service options and opportunities for Extension agents and others within the Extension system to grow professionally is a key factor in job satisfaction and in the ability for agents and other professionals within the Extension organization to cope with the stresses and the need for technical updating.

Van: In any organization it's critical that you have in-service training. And I don't care if you're in business or a county employee or in the school system, people need to update their skills on a yearly basis. It's not something you just do every five years on the job. And for Extension there's many things changing that we need that constant update.

Narrator: To be effective, Extension needs to be right on the cutting edge and consequently I think most agents really value the opportunity for this in-service.

Brett: It's challenging because I have to keep up with all the modern technology and deliver it to those people. I have to stay competent. I have to stay on the leading edge, the cutting edge, with the top producers.

Narrator: There are a number of other ways that Extension agents can find ways to learn and grow.

Van: When you look at in-service training or professional development, it's more than going to campus for a two-day in-service on swine production. It's in-service training when the specialist comes out to the county and goes to the

farm with you.

Gerri: Throughout the year and throughout your Extension career, we do have many, many opportunities not only to become more competent in our work areas, but also to try on new experiences without penalty. I think that's a definite plus.

Narrator: Extension provides a great opportunity for freedom for taking on challenges -- planning your own life within the profession. Those freedoms can be looked at in a very beneficial way.

Cory: One of the things that draws them is the idea that you are really going to be running your own program and that is something that was reinforced time and time again during the interview and then as I was starting the job and asking questions. Initially I thought "This is really ambiguous -- give me some direction. How do I know what I'm supposed to be doing? Am I going in the right direction?" And initially it really did cause me some concern, but the more I got to work with the system I found out that each program is really whatever the person makes of it. And I've come to really enjoy that aspect because each county is different. And after working with groups, I think that every county's needs are certainly different. So, I work with my council and I work with my advisory group and that helps me to be able to direct the program in the areas where I feel the greatest needs are.

Narrator: Many staff find this freedom we spoke of so positively earlier to be a real stressful kind of situation.

Pat: You have to examine your personality I think to decide whether you can accept a job that has so much variety and so much confusion because even for a person who likes to be organized, it's difficult to employ that kind of self discipline.

Narrator: People who are highly structured or looking for a job that leaves no uncertainties will probably not find Extension as being that kind of professional role that will be satisfying to them. Oftentimes, a job with Extension is in itself a commitment. It's a commitment to a purpose and to some ideas. And it does take ones' life over -- not only on the job, but oftentimes in other times even with family matters.

Cory: Without a shadow of a doubt, the biggest problem I had to face with Extension is how to balance time between home and work and the days where you can't tell where one leaves off -- the feeling that you're always at work. It's got to be the biggest problem I think particularly for 4-H agents or home economists, probably because so much of our clientele work has to be done at night -- absolutely has to be done at night. Trying to raise children along with this kind of job is a real balancing act. There's no doubt about that. The countless number of basketball games that you don't make it to; the after school meetings that have to be missed; the parents' nights because you're away at a conference. It's a

very difficult thing to come to grips with.

Milt: We do put in a lot of time in night meetings and week end meetings and those things. Anywhere from 44 to 50 hours per week working with the public. Many weeks we'll probably have two to three night meetings per week. It could be a board of commissioners' meeting; it could be anywhere from a 4-H club meeting to a workshop with community agencies. So a lot of time is spent with night meetings. Week ends, again, it's about the same.

Cory: Every agent comes in knowing that it's a 40 hour a week job, but 50, 60 hours is the way it works out to.

Narrator: Some agents do become frustrated over time because of the inability, I believe, to schedule themselves and to state and live by priorities of accomplishments.

Pat: It's easy to fall into the trap of saying "Yes, Yes, Yes!" and then feeling very overwhelmed. And the problem with that is not only the stress that creates within yourself, but if you want to do a good job, it's difficult.

Narrator: Agents who often become burned out are those who do not recognize that in order to be successful, doing the to-do-list is not the most important thing. Oftentimes that client who walks through the door or that phone call is as important as the things that were on the to-do-list.

Van: I know that I've been really on the edge of burnout myself here in Gratiot County with the Extension Service.

Milt: Stress is part of the job. You have a way of balancing that

with recreation. If it was not for jogging to relieve those pressures for me, I could have an overload of stress.

Narrator: Extension can be tremendously taxing, both in terms of the time commitment as well as the paperwork involved and so on. I don't know a job around that doesn't involve some kind of paperwork.

Pat: The paperwork.

Milt: The paperwork.

Marv: The paperwork. There's a lot of paperwork.

Pat: We have a monthly report in which we need to say what we've done and then there is the annual report for the whole year and then there's the plan of work which tells you what you're going to do the next year, and so on and so forth. All that work is necessary, but if you're sort of action-oriented, and I think that a lot of people who choose Extension are action-oriented, they want to get going on the job and that you hate to sit down and have to do this reporting back. We have to do this paperwork because I'm sitting out here in the county and there's the administrators on campus and how do they know what we're doing, so I appreciate why they're asking for the paperwork, but that still doesn't mean that I love to do it. (Laughs)

Narrator: Extension agents have the freedom to program in the way that they see fit to do it and that may include doing it themselves, getting volunteers involved, getting people from the campus, as we've mentioned before, to assist them. But

the opportunity to find innovative and creative ways to help people to learn and to gain information is available to every Extension agent.

Gary: Most hort agents don't have a specialty in every area. They may be fruit production specialists or a vegetable specialist or ornamentals, but we're called on to do all those many different things so you're called on not only to be flexible in terms of learning things, but also quite creative because the same thing doesn't work every time.

Narrator: Because of the many opportunities in Extension, many times there are a number of unrealistic expectations that develop.

Cheri: Very often I think we place ourselves in the position where we're building the unrealistic expectations. And because there's so much knowledge in Extension we think that we can be all things to all people. And I think there are some unrealistic expectations that come down from administration. If they're shifting gears in a program, or a problem comes up, sometimes they'll expect that you'll drop what you're doing and take on a new program.

Gerri: You really have to refine your time, prioritize your program emphasis and then try to do what is best for the community at a particular point in time.

Narrator: There are some agents who worry about moving up in the system.

Brett: It's going to be different than in industry. In industry you are measured on sales performance, for instance. You

can move up through the corporate ladder if you happen to get with a group that's on the way up, you can ride up with them. You can get in the right organization and go up that way and by the time you're my age, you know if you're going to be able to get to the top. Well, I've been with Extension now for 12 years as an Extension ag agent and chances are that unless they change the category, I'll probably be an ag agent, if I want to stay in, for the next 18 years, so that I can get my 30 years in. You have to understand that and accept that. There are limitations with career moves.

Narrator: On the other hand, there are others who have found a career ladder that is extremely satisfying.

Marv: It's been very good or I would have changed. And there are opportunities within the organization to have different roles. And that gives you an opportunity to change.

Narrator: And of course, some of the problems that face Extension staff in carrying out programs is a matter of funding. Now I don't know of any educational institution that has an overabundance of financial resources and that causes problems periodically for Extension staff in order to carry out their job.

Gary: We always have opportunities to do new programs and different programs, but now we're being faced with the situation of choosing. This might be the best way of teaching in my opinion, of course, looking from a creative

standpoint, but there's also now dollar signs saying that, well it might be a real nice thing to do and it might be real interesting for people, too, but it's too expensive and that kind of bothers me sometimes.

Narrator: So, what's it like to be an Extension agent? Well, it's fun. It's hard work. It's exciting. It's drudgery. It's a commitment. It's exuberance and excitement and strong satisfaction. And some days frustrating and some times a little depressing in the sense that sometimes people don't move as fast as you want them to move. But through it all most Extension people get the excitement, the sparkle in their eye from seeing the results of their work -- that is people learning and growing and being happy with themselves in terms of a better life, better production on the farm, more exciting careers for their young people. Discovery! I would just say it that way. Extension clientele are in the discovery business and Extension agents are the lead explorers...and that's exciting.

Appendix D
Pre- and Post-test Questionnaire

DATE: _____

This short questionnaire is part of a research study being conducted by a doctoral student in the College of Education. This questionnaire will not be seen by anyone in the Cooperative Extension Service or any member of the interview committee for this position. Your participation in this research will have no bearing on your selection. Your participation is entirely voluntary and constitutes your informed consent.

Rank the following 10 questions on the following scale:

1	2	3	4	5
low		average		high

Circle the appropriate number:

1. How much variety in your work do you expect on this job?
1 2 3 4 5
2. How much time do you expect to spend on this job each week?
1 2 3 4 5
3. How much satisfaction do you expect to get from this job?
1 2 3 4 5
4. How much time do you expect to spend on paperwork?
1 2 3 4 5
5. How much do you expect this job will involve you with people?
1 2 3 4 5
6. How much ambiguity do you expect to feel about your role and responsibilities?
1 2 3 4 5
7. How much flexibility do you expect with regard to programing and scheduling?
1 2 3 4 5
8. How much opportunity do you expect for promotion and advancement?
1 2 3 4 5
9. How much stress do you expect with this job?
1 2 3 4 5
10. How much opportunity do you expect for personal and professional growth with this job?
1 2 3 4 5

Appendix E

The Job Descriptive Index

<p>Think of your present work. What is it like most of the time? In the blank beside each word given below, write:</p> <p><u>Y</u> for "Yes" if it describes your work <u>N</u> for "No" if it does NOT describe it <u>?</u> if you cannot decide</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">WORK ON PRESENT JOB</p> <p>_____ Fascinating _____ Routine _____ Satisfying _____ Boring _____ Good _____ Creative _____ Respected _____ Hot _____ Pleasant _____ Useful _____ Tiresome _____ Healthful _____ Challenging _____ On your feet _____ Frustrating _____ Simple _____ Endless _____ Gives sense of accomplishment</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Go on to next page...</p>	<p>Think of the kind of supervision that you get on your job. How well does each of the following words describe this supervision? In the blank beside each word, put</p> <p><u>Y</u> if it describes the supervision you get on your job <u>N</u> if it does NOT describe it <u>?</u> if you cannot decide</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">SUPERVISION ON PRESENT JOB</p> <p>_____ Asks my advice _____ Hard to please _____ Impolite _____ Praises good work _____ Tactful _____ Influential _____ Up-to-date _____ Doesn't supervise enough _____ Quick tempered _____ Tells me where I stand _____ Annoying _____ Stubborn _____ Knows job well _____ Bad _____ Intelligent _____ Leaves me on my own _____ Around when needed _____ Lazy</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Go on to next page....</p>
---	--

<p>Think of the pay you get now. How well does each of the following words describe your present pay? In the blank beside each work, put</p> <p><u>Y</u> if it describes your pay <u>N</u> if it does NOT describe it <u>?</u> if you cannot decide</p> <p>.....</p> <p style="text-align: center;">PRESENT PAY</p> <p>_____ Income adequate for normal expenses _____ Satisfactory profit sharing _____ Barely live on income _____ Bad _____ Income provides luxuries _____ Insecure _____ Less than I deserve _____ Highly paid _____ Underpaid</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Go on to next page...</p>	
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Think of the opportunities for promotion that you have now. How well does each of the following words describe these? In the blank beside each word put

Y for "yes" if it describes your opportunities for promotion.
N for "No" if it does NOT describe them
? if you cannot decide

.....

OPPORTUNITIES FOR PROMOTION

_____ Good opportunities for promotion
 _____ Opportunity somewhat limited
 _____ Promotion on ability
 _____ Dead-end job
 _____ Good chance for promotion
 _____ Unfair promotion policy
 _____ Infrequent promotions
 _____ Regular promotions
 _____ Fairly good chance for promotion

Go on to next page....

Think of your job in general. What is it like most of the time? In the blank beside each word given below write

Y for "Yes" if it describes your job
N for "No" if it does NOT describe it
? if you cannot decide

.....

JOB IN GENERAL

_____ Pleasant
 _____ Bad
 _____ Ideal
 _____ Waste of time
 _____ Good
 _____ Undesirable
 _____ Worthwhile
 _____ Worse than most
 _____ Acceptable
 _____ Like to Leave
 _____ Better than most
 _____ Disagreeable
 _____ Makes me content
 _____ Inadequate
 _____ Excellent
 _____ Rotten
 _____ Enjoyable
 _____ Poor

Think of the majority of the people that you work with now or the people you meet in conjunction with your work. How well does each of the following words describe these people? In the blank beside each word below, put

Y if it describes the people you work with
N if it does NOT describe them
? if you cannot decide

.....

PEOPLE ON YOUR PRESENT JOB

_____ Stimulating
 _____ Boring
 _____ Slow
 _____ Ambitious
 _____ Stupid
 _____ Responsible
 _____ Fast
 _____ Intelligent
 _____ Easy to make enemies
 _____ Talk too much
 _____ Smart
 _____ Lazy
 _____ Unpleasant
 _____ No privacy
 _____ Active
 _____ Narrow interests
 _____ Loyal
 _____ Hard to meet

Go on to next page...

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Appendix F
Letters to Control and Experimental Groups
Requesting Participation in Survey

Control Group 1
August 1987 Letter

August 1987

Dear Extension Service Staff Member:

My name is Mary Harvey. I am currently completing a doctorate in adult and continuing education at Michigan State University. For my dissertation study I will be looking at the role that job previews can play in the satisfaction and retention of Cooperative Extension Service employees.

Part of the data I will be collecting is a satisfaction measure for persons who have been employed by CES for approximately one year. I will do that this year and in each of the following two years.

I am, therefore, asking you to complete the enclosed Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR ON THE RETURN ENVELOPE. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty if you decline.

All information received will remain absolutely confidential and will be reported only in aggregate as part of the general survey findings.

At no time will the fact that you have received this survey be documented in writing or in spoken conversation with anyone. I am in no way connected to the administration or personnel office of the Cooperative Extension Service and this information will not be shared with them or with regional supervisors except in the form of the finished dissertation.

Your return of the questionnaire constitutes your informed voluntary consent. I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Cordially,

Mary E. Harvey

Enc: JDI
Return envelope

Control Group 2
August 1988 Letter

August 26, 1988

Dear Extension Service Staff Member:

My name is Mary Harvey. I am currently completing a doctorate in adult and continuing education at Michigan State University. For my dissertation study I will be looking at the role that job previews can play in the satisfaction and retention of Cooperative Extension Service employees.

Part of the data I will be collecting is a satisfaction measure for persons who have been employed by CES for approximately one year. I collected a measure last year and will do so this year and again in 1989.

I am, therefore, asking you to complete the enclosed Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR ON THE RETURN ENVELOPE. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty if you decline.

All information received will remain absolutely confidential and will be reported only in aggregate as part of the general survey findings.

At no time will the fact that you have received this survey be documented in writing or in spoken conversation with anyone. I am in no way connected to the administration or personnel office of the Cooperative Extension Service and this information will not be shared with them or with regional supervisors except in the form of the finished dissertation.

Your return of the questionnaire constitutes your informed voluntary consent. I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Cordially,

Mary E. Harvey

Enc: JDI

Return envelope

Experimental Group
September 1989 Letter

September 12, 1989

Dear Extension Service Staff Member:

My name is Mary Harvey. I am currently completing a doctorate in adult and continuing education at Michigan State University. For my dissertation study I am looking at the role of job previews in the hiring of Cooperative Extension Service employees.

Part of the data I will be collecting is a satisfaction measure for persons who have been employed by CES for approximately one year. I also collected this measure in 1987 and 1988.

I am, therefore, asking you to complete the enclosed Job Descriptive Index (JDI) Questionnaire and return it to me in the enclosed stamped and self-addressed envelope. DO NOT PUT YOUR NAME ON THE QUESTIONNAIRE OR ON THE RETURN ENVELOPE. Your participation is completely voluntary and there will be no penalty if you decline.

All information received will remain absolutely confidential and will be reported only in aggregate as part of the general survey findings.

At no time will the fact that you have received this survey be documented in writing or in spoken conversation with anyone. I am in no way connected to the administration or personnel office of the Cooperative Extension Service and this information will not be shared with them or with regional supervisors except in the form of the finished dissertation.

Your return of the questionnaire constitutes your informed voluntary consent. I thank you in advance for your time and cooperation.

Cordially,

Mary E. Harvey

Enc: JDI
Return envelope

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