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educational organization—the Michigan Cooperative Extension  
Service**

Wahl, Mary E., Ph.D.

Michigan State University, 1989

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FACTORS INFLUENCING LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A STATE-  
SUPPORTED EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION--THE MICHIGAN  
COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

By

Mary E. Wahl

A DISSERTATION

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Educational Administration

1989

## ABSTRACT

### FACTORS INFLUENCING LEGISLATORS' PERCEPTIONS OF A STATE-SUPPORTED EDUCATIONAL ORGANIZATION--THE MICHIGAN COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

By

Mary E. Wahl

The purpose that directed this exploratory study was to determine whether legislators' perceptions of a state-supported educational organization, the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service (CES), are influenced by selected familiarity factors and socio-demographic/organizational factors. The dependent variables under consideration were legislators' perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES, adequacy of information received from the CES, and familiarity with the CES.

The population for this study comprised the 148 legislators in the 1986 session of the Michigan legislature. A stratified random sample of 60 legislators representing rural, urban, and mixed constituencies and the six CES administrative regions was selected. Legislators were interviewed during June and July 1986 using a structured interview schedule.

Basic descriptive statistics were used to analyze various aspects of the data. Stepwise multiple regression was performed for each of the 14 research subquestions to determine which independent

Mary E. Wahl

variables, if any, were factors influencing legislators' perceptions. Although the familiarity factors and the socio-demographic/organizational factors used in this study were analyzed collectively to test for significance, several individual independent variables emerged as statistically significant factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the CES.

Based on the study findings, it was concluded that (a) legislators' perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness were influenced primarily by frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES; (b) both nonpersonal and personal contacts with the CES are necessary for legislators to perceive an adequate information base concerning the CES; (c) the method by which the majority of legislators preferred to receive CES information was personal contact, especially at the local level; (d) there were no consistently significant socio-demographic/organizational factors influencing legislators' perceptions of all CES program thrusts; (e) rural constituency make-up and prior occupation in agriculture most often influenced legislators' perceived familiarity with the CES; (f) prior involvement with the CES and legislative committee experience were not factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES; and (g) legislators with a rural constituency make-up perceived the CES to be significantly more effective than did legislators with a nonrural constituency.

To my parents, Arthur and Phyllis Garlick, who through their example proved that age need not be a deterrent to academic achievement. They are shining examples of lifelong learners and educators. Their continuous support and unconditional love will always be remembered and cherished.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have provided support, encouragement, and guidance for this study and my doctoral program. My sincere appreciation to all of them. I especially acknowledge the following:

Sincere appreciation to Dr. Richard E. Gardner, my advisor throughout my doctoral program and chairman of my guidance committee. His encouragement, understanding, and patience are greatly appreciated. I am grateful for the assistance and advice of my committee members--Drs. Charles A. Blackman, Howard W. Hickey, Marylee Davis, Winston R. Oberg, and Mary P. Andrews--and for the unique perspectives they brought to the committee. I especially acknowledge Dr. Andrews for her guidance in the research design and analysis of this study. She has always provided me with academic inspiration and broadened my horizons.

I express appreciation to the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service for granting me study leaves to complete my course work and the research for this study. I especially acknowledge Dr. Gordon E. Guyer, former State Director of the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service, for his support of this study from its inception; Dr. Doris E. Wetters, former Assistant Director of Extension for Home Economics Programs, for her support and confidence in me as a professional and a graduate student; and Dr. Adger B. Carroll,

Assistant Director of Extension for Natural Resources and Public Policy Programs, whose support was a key factor in the completion of this project.

To the National Association of Extension Home Economists I express appreciation for a NAEHE graduate fellowship, which provided financial assistance for my doctoral program.

Special appreciation is extended to the 60 Michigan legislators in the sample who granted me interviews and the legislators who participated in the pilot study. They provided me not only with the data for this research project but also insights into the legislative process. I acknowledge my local legislators, Representative Lewis N. Dodak and Senator James A. Barcia, for encouraging their colleagues to participate in this study and for their confidence in me as a professional.

Sincere appreciation is extended to Judy Pfaff for her statistical and computer assistance, to Marilyn Whittaker for typing numerous rough drafts and to Susan Cooley for editing and typing the final manuscript. Their patience and professionalism are greatly appreciated.

Special thanks to Bill and Fran Mester for their encouragement and support and for sharing in my professional growth.

Appreciation is extended to my very good friend, Betty Ketcham, who provided me with a "home away from home" and an environment conducive to study, reflection, and relaxation. Her friendship will always be cherished.

A special note of gratitude is reserved for the late Madeline Caruso, who provided loving care for our children and household while I was involved in graduate studies.

Most important, I extend my thanks to my strongest "support team"--my husband, Ken, and our sons, Mike and Mark--who sacrificed and endured so that Mom could achieve a personal and professional goal.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Introduction to the Study

The roots of the Cooperative Extension Service's philosophical base are broad and deep. One aspect, nonformal education for all adults, has a long history. As long ago as 1785, informal learning activities became systematically organized through agricultural societies (Sanders, 1966). The informal learning approach became especially important as formal learning opportunities for agriculture were extremely limited. Through the first half of the nineteenth century, most colleges offered few, if any, courses related to agriculture. In 1862, the Morrill Act established the land-grant college system, which helped promote formal learning. Not only was formal learning being promoted, but the need for research emerged. When President Cleveland signed legislation in 1882 that established experiment stations at one land-grant college in each state, research became firmly established as a function of land-grant institutions.

Another component of the Extension philosophy has been attributed to Seaman Knapp (Vitzthum & Florell, 1976). He believed that farmers would change their behavior and use the latest knowledge and research through "demonstrations conducted by farmers

themselves on their own farms under ordinary farm conditions" (Vitzthum & Florell, 1976, p. 5). Regardless of the topic, Extension's informal teaching relied heavily on demonstrations or providing resources for demonstrations.

As Extension-type work increased and flourished, it became apparent that greater federal support was needed. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson signed the Smith-Lever Act, which formally established the Cooperative Extension Service (CES). The purpose of Extension, as stated in the act, was "to aid in diffusing among the people of the United States useful and practical information on subjects related to agriculture and home economics, and to encourage the application of the same" (Section 1). Extension was proposed as a division of a land-grant college; the chief task of Extension faculty was to teach people who could not go to college (Caldwell, 1976). Applying the most current knowledge for problem solving became a major attribute of the Cooperative Extension philosophy. The purpose or role of the CES became the integration of teaching, research, and public service in land-grant institutions to provide education in its broadest sense.

In the years that followed, as research and technology raised farm-production capacities, the perspective of the CES expanded to include other areas of concern: management of the farm and home, marketing and utilization, resource development and conservation, community development, and 4-H and family living in urban areas. Changing clientele, changing needs, and social issues have continued to thrust Extension into new fields. Its open-ended charter has

allowed Extension to be almost literally all things to all people (Hildreth, 1976). This freedom to serve brought with it certain inherent risks. Emphasis on accountability, duplication of efforts, and ever-growing financial constraints necessitated a careful evaluation of an organization trying to serve all people (Edwards, 1979).

At its inception, the CES depended primarily on federal funding. Later, the CES depended on state and county dollars, as well. State support became even more important; almost two-thirds of the Michigan CES budget is now derived from state dollars, with federal and county funds combined contributing one-third of the budget. The nature of this relationship between a state-supported organization such as the CES, community colleges, or K-12 public education and the state legislature is crucial in these days of competition for dollars.

Trends indicate that decisions about public organizations will increasingly be made in the public domain. Such decisions by elected or appointed officials can directly or indirectly affect the CES. It is critical to the future of Extension that these decision makers have a knowledge and understanding of the CES as a basis for their decisions concerning appropriations (Thomson & Brown, 1976).

Simon (1964) stated, "No administrative organization can long exist without the support of the legislature" (p. 383). A thorough understanding of legislators' perceptions is the first step in building stronger legislative support. Knezevich (1969) noted the extent of a legislature's influence over public education:

State legislatures determine broad policy matters governing the organization, financing, and operation of public education and then delegate the establishment of standards to a state agency. No one today questions the authority of a state legislature to influence the organization and operation of public education within its boundaries. (p. 155)

Community colleges, as well as the CES, depend on an informed and supportive relationship with the state legislature. Harper (1971) noted that during President Lyndon Johnson's Great Society many human-service organizations emerged. Community colleges, in particular, experienced phenomenal growth during the 1960s and 1970s because state lawmakers endorsed and funded that program. However, as the prosperity of the nation declined, the competition for state dollars became more intense. Gleaser (1985) contended that community colleges across the nation encounter difficulties when trying to communicate their philosophy and role at the state level. He described three major factors as sources of difficulty: "relative newness and an associated lack of sophistication in relating to the legislature, lack of a unified voice, and lack of reliable, accurate data" (p. 110).

Many educators, including the leaders of the National Council of Community Colleges, are recognizing a need for greater astuteness in political thinking and expertise in political action if the general well-being and integrity of the community college concept are to be preserved and effectively promoted. In a nationwide survey to determine the need to improve communications between community college representatives and state legislators, community college presidents ranked as their first need "to communicate our

strengths to the legislature" (Management Needs Assessment Survey, 1979).

In summary, the CES is a federal-, state-, and county-supported organization whose primary purposes are to help people identify their own problems and opportunities and then to provide practical, research-based information that will help them overcome the problems and take advantage of the opportunities. The CES, like such other state-supported organizations as community colleges and public education, relies on an informed and supportive relationship with the state legislature for continued funding.

#### Need for the Study

Little research has been conducted on the factors influencing legislators' perceptions of state-supported organizations. This study differed from previous investigations because the focus was on the factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the CES, a particular state-supported organization, rather than simply describing the legislators' perceptions per se. Such a study was necessary to help the CES be proactive in developing a relationship with legislators that is mutually beneficial for both the CES and the legislators.

Even though ten research studies have been conducted on legislators' perceptions of the CES, not one has been done in the Midwest. Like all states, Michigan has unique political, geographic, and demographic characteristics. These distinctive

characteristics were explored in this study so that Michigan CES personnel can better understand the legislators they serve.

### Statement of the Problem

To maintain a viable state-supported organization in a time of budget cutbacks, it is essential to know as accurately as possible how legislators perceive the organization. More important, an understanding of the factors influencing legislators' perceptions will allow administrators to direct future efforts more effectively in educating legislators.

Because of the influence that legislators exert on a state-supported organization, it is important to know not only how they perceive that organization, but what factors influence their perceptions. Channels of communication need to be open for organizations to inform and educate legislators about the organization and also to solicit their input into identifying needs and determining future directions. Therefore, the researcher was interested in investigating the factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of selected CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES, familiarity with the CES, and adequacy of information received from the CES.

### Purpose

The writer's purpose in conducting this study was to determine whether legislators' perceptions of a state-supported organization, the Cooperative Extension Service, can be predicted from selected familiarity and socio-demographic/organizational factors. Factors



involving familiarity with the CES were (a) frequency of personal contacts, (b) frequency of nonpersonal contacts, (c) prior involvement with the CES, and (d) legislative committee experience. The socio-demographic/organizational factors selected for inclusion were (a) age, (b) educational level, (c) place of residence, (d) prior occupation--education related, (e) prior occupation--agriculture related, (f) position in legislature, (g) political party, (h) constituency make-up, and (i) years served in the legislature. The familiarity factors were examined as possible factors influencing legislators' perceptions of (a) the relative importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES and (b) the adequacy of information received about the CES. In addition, socio-demographic/organizational factors were examined as factors influencing legislators' perceptions of (a) the relative importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES and (b) familiarity with the CES.

#### Importance of the Study

State-supported organizations such as the CES, community colleges, and public education rely on financial support from the state legislature. The decisions that state legislators make affect that financial support. If factors that influence legislators' perceptions can be identified or predicted, a basis may be established for making better decisions regarding the education of legislators. If insight can be gained into what factors influence legislators' perceptions of the CES, the organization can develop a

more effective educational delivery system. This educational system could capitalize on the new knowledge regarding these influential factors and could thus be more effective in developing communications with legislators.

Because this study was focused on factors influencing legislators' perceptions of a state-supported educational organization, the findings may be useful to other state-supported organizations. Results of the study may also provide insight into future planning for other state-supported organizations that need to communicate with and educate a legislative body.

#### Research Questions

The following major research questions and subquestions were posed to guide the collection and analysis of data for the study.

1. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
  - 1a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
  - 1b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
  - 1c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
  - 1d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
  - 1e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

2. Can legislators' perceptions of the adequacy of information received from the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
3. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
4. Can legislators' perceptions of familiarity with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 4a. Can legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 4b. Can legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 4c. Can legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

### Delimitations

The major delimitations of this study were as follows:

1. The study was confined to investigating the perceptions of members of the 1986 Michigan Legislature. Members of other sessions or legislators from other states might have given different responses.

2. A random sample of legislators was interviewed, not all of the legislators.

3. Only one structured interview was conducted with each legislator in the sample.

4. The study was delimited to the legislators' perceptions of the CES as one example of a state-supported organization.

5. Factors other than the ones examined in this study may influence legislators' perceptions. However, the study was delimited to the variables chosen for investigation.

6. The relationship between legislators' perceptions of the CES and their voting record on matters pertaining to the CES was not considered in this study.

### Limitations

The data gathered in this study might be limited by the following factors:

1. Some data distortion might have occurred even though the researcher took precautions to prevent such a possibility. The respondents were guaranteed confidentiality and told that the interview data would be presented in an aggregate manner, in an

attempt to encourage the legislators to express their perceptions openly and honestly.

2. The interviews were conducted while the legislature was in session. Hence, the legislators' duties and responsibilities might not have allowed them to reflect on their responses.

3. The process used in this study could be used by other state-supported organizations to obtain insights into legislators' perceptions of those organizations. However, the results of this study are generalizable only to members of the 1986 Michigan Legislature.

#### Assumptions

The researcher made the following assumptions in conducting this study:

1. An individual's perceptions are influenced by his/her interaction with external forces.

2. An individual's perceptions are important factors influencing his/her behavior.

These assumptions are supported by the theories of perceptual psychologists. Allport (1955) and Combs, Richards, and Richards (1976) theorized that all behavior is influenced, not by the objective environment, but by a personal, individual manner of perceiving that is unique to each person and includes the entire universe as it is experienced by the individual.

### Definition of Terms

To ensure clarity, the following terms are defined as they are used in this dissertation:

Familiarity with the CES. The frequency with which a legislator had personal and nonpersonal contact with the CES (in the past year), the legislator's prior involvement with the CES, and the legislator's legislative committee experience.

Legislative committee experience. The total number of years a legislator had served on the House/Senate Appropriations, Higher Education, and Agriculture Committees, plus the number of years served as a county commissioner.

Michigan Cooperative Extension Service. A nonformal educational organization supported by federal, state, and county appropriations. The Michigan CES serves as an extension of Michigan State University and the United States Department of Agriculture to Michigan citizens. The four program areas of the Michigan CES are Agriculture/Marketing, Natural Resources/Public Policy, 4-H Youth, and Extension Home Economics.

Michigan Legislature. The law-making body composed of 38 members of the Senate and the 110 members of the House of Representatives. This body approves or rejects bills and resolutions that determine various policies that govern the State of Michigan as well as local governments. Legislators also review agency operations and determine whether public laws are administered in accordance with legislative intent. The body also makes

appropriations for the operation of agencies, state departments, and educational organizations/institutions, including the Michigan CES.

Nonpersonal contacts. Communication between the CES and legislators that is not on a one-to-one or personal basis, i.e., mass mailings to legislators, radio and television announcements or programs, newsletters and newspaper articles, and Extension bulletins and publications.

Perception. The process by which an individual makes differentiations in his/her perceptual field or calls to the front with a degree of clarity certain events over others. This process of differentiating events and relationships between or among events constitutes the field of personal meaning for the individual at a given time (Combs et al., 1976).

Personal contacts. One-to-one communication between legislators and the CES or CES clientele, i.e., visits, personal letters, participation in Extension events.

Program thrusts. Educational efforts in four program areas (Agriculture/Marketing, Natural Resources/Public Policy, 4-H Youth, and Extension Home Economics) on which the Michigan CES has focused its resources.

State-supported (organization). A portion of the organizational budget is provided by state appropriations.

#### Organization of the Dissertation

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. In Chapter I, a brief introduction to the topic of concern, the need for the

study, and a statement of the problem were provided. This was followed by the purpose and importance of the study, the research questions, delimitations and limitations, assumptions, and definitions of key terms.

A review of literature on the concept of perception and the role of perception in cognitive learning is presented in Chapter II. An exploration of factors used in related research studies is included to provide a rationale for the variables selected in this study. Related research is reviewed to examine how other state-supported organizations have investigated the perceptions of state legislators.

The design employed in this study is discussed in Chapter III. Included are a description of the population and sample, the dependent and independent variables, and development and testing of the research instrument. The data-collection and data-analysis procedures are also explained.

Results of the statistical analyses of data related to the research questions, additional findings, and responses to the open-ended interview questions are presented in Chapter IV.

Chapter V contains a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations for practical applications and further research, and reflections.



## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Introduction

This chapter contains a review of literature related to the topics of interest in this investigation. First, a basic understanding of the concept of perception is provided. Attributes and properties of perception are elaborated to help identify possible factors that influence perception. The relationship between perception and cognitive development is also explored. Then related studies in which researchers have attempted to identify variables that affect legislators' perceptions are presented. Investigations of legislators' perceptions of other state-supported organizations, such as community colleges and public education, are also reviewed.

#### The Concept of Perception

Early definitions of perceptions, such as that of Helmholtz (cited in Allport, 1955), focused on physical sensory stimulation. Allport broadened the definition by stating that perception involves both sensory awareness and understanding or meaning:

[Perception] is dependent to a large extent upon the impressions those objects make upon our senses. It is the way things look to us, or the way they sound, feel, taste, or smell. But perception also involves, to some degree, an

understanding, a "meaning" or a "recognition" of these objects.  
(p. 14)

Allport suggested that perception is more complex than just the reception of sensory stimuli. It involves the meaning an individual associates with those sensory messages.

Combs and Snygg (1959) contributed to a comprehensive description of perception by defining a perceptual field. Instead of focusing on perceptions of individual objects or events, the authors explored perceptions from a larger perspective. They stated:

By the perceptual field, we mean the entire universe, including himself, as it is experienced by the individual at the instant of action. It is each individual's personal and unique field of awareness, the field of perception responsible for his every behavior. (p. 20)

Thus, Combs and Snygg underscored the importance of experiences and personal meaning to the concept of perception.

Combs et al. (1976) asserted that these perceptions and personal meanings give direction to people's actions, choices, or behaviors.

People do not behave according to the facts as others see them. They behave according to the facts as they see them. What governs behavior from this point of view are the person's unique perceptions of himself and the world in which he lives, the meanings things have for him. (p. 20)

In essence, Combs et al. asserted that behavior is a function, not of an external event but of the individual's perception of it. All behavior, then, is lawful or purposive, relevant, and pertinent to the situation only as the individual understands it at the moment.

Combs et al. identified four dimensions of the perceptual field as it relates to a person's perception at a given time:

1. The perceptual field is fluid or constantly changing. This allows the individual to respond to new or changing conditions in the environment.

2. The perceptual field has stability as a result of imposing order and meaning on the environment.

3. The perceptual field has direction. It is always organized and meaningful; perceptions are never masses of meaningless stimuli.

4. The perceptual field has a figure-ground characteristic; that is, at any given time certain aspects of the field are brought into a clear figure or are seen with greater intensity than other aspects of one's field. This is called the process of differentiation.

Hilgard and Atkinson (1967) supported this definition when they wrote:

Perception is the process of becoming aware of objects, qualities or relations by way of the sense organs. While sensory content is always present in perception, what is perceived is . . . the result of complex patterns of stimulation plus past experience and present attitude. (p. 632)

Hilgard and Atkinson added to previous definitions of perception the dimensions of past experience and current attitudes. They said that perception is a process of becoming aware--a process that helps the individual incorporate past knowledge or information with current inputs. Thus, perception can be seen as resulting from the complex interaction among incoming information, past experience, and current attitudes. As perceptions form, they become part of past

experiences, which come to bear upon and influence the development of future perceptions.

Hilgard and Atkinson's notion of perception was similar to Dewey's views concerning habit and the continuity of experience. Dewey (1935) stated:

The basic characteristic of habit is that every experience enacted and undergone modifies the one who acts and undergoes, while this modification affects, whether we wish it or not, the quality of subsequent experiences. It covers the formation of attitudes, attitudes that are emotional and intellectual; it covers our basic sensitivities and ways of meeting and responding to all the conditions which we meet in living. (p. 35)

Perception is similar to habit in that both concepts affect an individual's attitudes and behaviors, based on how that person perceives and incorporates the experience. Dewey described this relationship as follows: "The principle of continuity of experience means that every experience both takes up something from those which have gone before and modifies in some way the quality of those which come after" (p. 35).

Combs et al. (1976) said that what an individual perceives will, to a great extent, depend on the kinds of opportunities afforded him. Exposure to events in no sense completely determines or guarantees the perceptions a person will have. Even with equivalent exposure to an event, different people's perceptions of that event might not be alike. Exposure to events is only one of the factors involved in determining whether an event will be differentiated. Opportunities to experience are essential to

perceiving, but what is perceived is influenced by the unique perceptual field of each person.

Perception, then, involves both internal and external factors and depends on the experiences and attitudes of the individual. Krech, Crutchfield, and Ballachey (1962) supported the notion of the individual nature of perception when they stated:

There are no "impartial facts." Data do not have a logic of their own that result in the same perceptions and cognitions for all people. Data are perceived and interpreted in terms of the individual perceiver's own needs, own emotions, own personality, own previously formed cognitive patterns. (p. 24)

Because facts do not have the same meaning for all people, it is imperative to consider people's perceptions of the facts.

In summary, theorists have expanded the concept of perception throughout the years. Initial definitions of perception emphasized sensory stimuli; later ones incorporated the role of meaning or understanding. Theorists have concluded that experiences and attitudes, as well as internal and external factors, influence perceptions.

#### The Role of Perception in Cognitive Learning

The relationship of perception to cognitive learning was explored by Forgas (1966), who related perception to learning and thinking, thereby connecting these to knowledge. He stated that perceptual phenomena can be described as being organized at different levels and that "perception is first concerned with man's reception and meaningful interpretation of information received

through his senses" (p. 289). These perceptions are then combined and grouped with other perceptions to form more complex phenomena.

Cognition or thinking has been used to describe these more complex levels of organization. Forgas wrote, "Just as perception is concerned with the reception and interpretation of information, so is thinking concerned with the manipulation of this information in order to adjust to the world and to solve problems" (p. 289). Thus, Forgas supported the notion that perceptions are not only the way in which people receive information about their world, but, most important to this study, perceptions are the process individuals use to think about their world and adjust to it. Forgas linked thinking to behavior when he described the process of adjusting to the world. This link has implications for the present study as legislators' perceptions of an organization influence their thinking or final decision-making process.

Forman (1979) supported the notion of a relationship between perception and cognition in defining cognition as "an unobservable system of mental rules inferred from behavior suggesting that information has been organized in some manner that may or may not be consciously known" (p. 4). In addition, Forman stated that the system of mental rules or the way the information has been organized changes over time. The change can be related to past experience as well as to new information, as discussed in the previous section.

In conclusion, perception, thinking, and learning are directly related. An investigation of legislators' perceptions might indicate their current thinking but would not provide insight into

how to influence or predict their future thoughts. More important would be to determine what factors influence legislators' perceptions. Using such information, an effective plan for educating legislators might be developed--one that takes into account those areas of experience and perception that legislators rely on most for the cognitive knowledge that influences their decisions.

#### Related Research on Legislators' Perceptions of the CES

A review of the literature indicated that researchers have explored relationships between many independent variables and perception--in particular, perceptions of a state-supported organization such as the CES. The present literature review was limited to studies with state legislators as the population. Although many studies have been conducted using legislators as the population, none investigated Michigan legislators' perceptions of a state-supported educational organization. Neither did any researchers attempt to explore a predictive relationship between the combined variables identified in this study and legislators' perceptions.

Earlier researchers like Blalock (1963) did not attempt to identify factors influencing legislators' perceptions, but they did explore various areas of perception. Investigators gathered information to assess legislators' perceptions of a state-supported organization--in Blalock's study the North Carolina Cooperative Agricultural Extension Service. Blalock explored legislators'

degree of understanding of the Extension Service's purposes, objectives, and activities; current programs and program areas; organizational affiliation and structure; method of financing; clientele and the amount of time and effort devoted to each group; and professional staff. In addition, he attempted to determine the relationship between legislators' perceptions of the Extension Service and the following independent variables: degree of knowledge, degree of appraisal of Extension's value, and breadth and scope of Extension's programs and clientele.

Blalock found that, in general, legislators viewed the Extension Service as an educational agency but one that was oriented solely toward working with farmers. The legislators' level of understanding of the organization and financing was relatively low, but they had a high regard for the training and ability of the staff.

Chadwick (1966) conducted a descriptive study of Colorado legislators' perceptions of the CES. He attempted to identify correlations between two variables: (a) degree of knowledge and understanding of the Extension Service and (b) evaluation of the Extension Service. Chadwick found that legislators from rural areas had a greater understanding of the organization than did their urban counterparts. Also, legislators who had a high degree of understanding evaluated the CES as being more effective than did those with a low degree of understanding.

Smith (1967) also investigated the perceptions of state legislators toward a state-supported organization--the North



Carolina Agricultural Extension Service. However, he examined the degree of association between selected personal factors and legislators' perceptions about certain areas of the Extension Service. Smith used the following personal factors as independent variables: (a) the legislator's concept of the county or district he/she represented, (b) the legislator's degree of involvement with Extension Service, (c) the geographic area of the state in which the legislator resided, (d) place of residence (rural, urban, etc.), (e) length of legislative service, (f) occupation, and (g) size of the business or farm with which the legislator was associated.

Smith found that legislators' degree of involvement with the Extension Service was the most important of the seven factors related to perception. Degree of involvement was significantly associated with 10 of the 42 elements of perception; three of these associations were significant at the .01 level of probability. The legislators' occupations and size of business or farm with which they were associated exerted the second greatest influence on their perceptions. Length of legislative service exerted the least influence.

White (1970) investigated the relationship of seven independent variables to Alabama state legislators' perceptions of a state-supported organization, the CES. White selected variables such as legislative experience, residence, urbanization, and occupation, which had been used in previous studies, but he also included level of education and degree of conservatism. He limited degree of

involvement to direct contact. Using chi-square values to determine the level of significance, White found that direct contact with the Extension Service appeared to be more significantly related to the legislators' perceptions than were the other factors he studied. Place of residence and urbanization of the district the legislator represented exerted the second greatest influence. Level of education exerted the least influence on legislators' perceptions.

In Florida, McCown (1969) investigated independent variables similar to those used by Smith (1967). He used chi-square analysis to determine whether there was a statistically significant relationship between five independent variables and five dependent variables. The independent variables were (a) number of years legislators had served in the legislature, (b) legislators' place of residence, (c) legislators' perceptions of the rural-urban orientation of the district, (d) legislators' contact with the Extension Service, and (e) legislators' attitudes toward liberalism or conservatism. The dependent variables were the following areas of perception: (a) Extension's purpose, (b) Extension's objectives, (c) Extension's programs and program areas, (d) Extension's operational procedures, and (e) Extension's clientele. In stating his results, McCown focused on describing the actual perceptions of legislators toward the Florida CES, rather than identifying factors influencing those perceptions.

Walker (1977) attempted to determine whether there was a relationship between several independent variables, such as occupation, selected legislative committee memberships, familiarity,

and extent of participation, and the perceptions of Louisiana legislators concerning the overall Extension program and other selected variables. In addition, she attempted to determine whether there was an association between legislators' perceptions of the Extension Service and their degree of familiarity with and participation in the Extension Service. Walker found that legislators' place of residence was directly related to their familiarity with the overall Extension Service program. Rural legislators were more aware of and involved in the CES than were urban legislators. Legislators with farm-related occupations and committee assignments were more familiar with the total Extension program than were legislators with non-farm-related occupations and committees. Even though some legislators knew more about the overall Extension program, they did not participate at a higher level than those who knew less.

In Alabama, Curtis (1978) sought to determine the relationship of previously investigated variables, which he termed legislators' characteristics, to legislators' perceptions of the CES. These characteristics included position in legislature, occupation, committee membership, place of residence, and character of district. In addition, Curtis explored the variable of contacts with Extension. He defined contacts as being made through an advisory council member or by means of reports. The major areas of legislators' perceptions of the CES were identified as: (a) understanding of the major purposes, (b) familiarity with

Extension's major program thrusts, and (c) participation in Extension's program and activities. Curtis found that legislative position and committee membership were significantly associated with the areas of perceptions examined. He also noted that legislators who had received reports on the CES's work and accomplishments did not have a more accurate perception of the Alabama CES than those who had not received such reports.

Adkins (1980) attempted to discover whether a relationship existed between the perceptions of Maryland state legislators toward the CES and the following factors: (a) role in legislature, (b) party affiliation, (c) tenure in general assembly, (d) committee leadership, (e) service on county council, (f) age, (g) gender, (h) race, (i) educational level, (j) schools attended, (k) occupation, (l) geographic region represented, (m) constituents represented, and (n) place of residence. The factors most frequently associated with the legislators' perceptions of the Maryland CES were (a) geographic region represented, (b) legislator's place of residence, (c) constituents represented, (d) age, and (e) race. Legislators representing constituents from rural areas or living in rural areas were more familiar and involved with Extension work than were their urban counterparts. Older legislators were more familiar than younger legislators with the Extension Service.

In South Carolina, Miller (1986) attempted to determine whether there was an association between legislators' perceptions of the CES and certain personal characteristics. He examined such independent variables as role in the legislature, years of legislative

experience, political party affiliation, place of residence, character of the district, age, and occupation. The dependent variable was legislators' perceptions of the CES's purpose and objectives, participation and involvement in programs and activities, basic program areas, and clientele. Results of a chi-square test indicated that all of the independent variables were significantly related to one or more areas of perception that were examined. Political party affiliation, place of residence, and character of the district exerted the greatest influence.

Gatchell (1986) examined not only demographic characteristics similar to those included in previous studies but also a broader scope of socioeconomic characteristics. The following characteristics or factors served as independent variables in Gatchell's study: (a) length of service as a legislator, (b) legislative title, (c) agriculture-related committee assignments, (d) length of residence in Georgia, (e) age, (f) gender, (g) description of residence, (h) description of district represented, (i) elected or appointed position, (j) occupation, (k) personal affiliation with 4-H, (l) children's affiliation with 4-H, and (m) philosophy for Extension's future mission. The last three factors or characteristics were not considered in previous research. Following a multiple-regression analysis, several independent variables emerged as factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the Georgia CES. They were experience on agriculture-related committees, gender, personal affiliation with 4-H, children's affiliation with 4-H, and length of residence in Georgia.

In summary, research on legislators' perceptions of the CES has progressed from descriptions of perceptions (Blalock, 1963) to attempts to establish correlations between a variety of independent variables and legislators' perceptions regarding various aspects of the CES (Adkins, 1980; Curtis, 1978; Gatchell, 1986; Jennings, 1983; McCown, 1969; Miller, 1983; Smith, 1967; Walker, 1977; White, 1970). Recently, Gatchell attempted to determine what variables exerted the greatest influence on legislators' perceptions. In previous studies, independent variables determined to be significantly associated with legislators' perceptions were (a) degree of involvement, (b) direct contact, (c) personal or children's affiliation with 4-H, (d) place of residence, (e) committee membership, (f) constituents represented, and (g) party affiliation. The dependent variables in the previous studies were most often defined as involving the following areas of perception: (a) purpose, objectives, activities; (b) operational procedures, (c) familiarity with program thrusts; (d) participation with programs; (e) clientele, (f) structure, and (g) organizational funding.

#### Related Research on Legislators' Perceptions of Other State-Supported Organizations

Administrators of state-supported organizations such as K-12 public school districts and higher education institutions such as community colleges have realized the value of exploring legislators' perceptions of their organizations. Early investigations of legislators' perceptions included detailed descriptions of those

perceptions. For example, the National Center for Research in Vocational Education and the National Conference of State Legislatures conducted a telephone and mail survey of 209 state legislators (Nunez & Russell, 1981). The purpose of this survey was to determine state legislators' views about vocational education and its outcomes, what vocational education should be doing and how it could be improved, and federal and state roles relative to the improvement of vocational education programs.

In addition to describing legislators' perceptions, investigators have also compared legislators' perceptions with those of other groups. St. Gemme (1975) investigated legislators' perceptions of 20 critical issues facing Missouri public education institutions. He also compared the legislators' perceptions with those held by educational groups toward the same 20 critical educational issues.

Milstein and Jennings (1971) studied the educational policy-making process by comparing the perceptions of New York state legislators with those of educational interest groups. The authors conducted structured interviews with 207 state legislators and executive officers in six major education interest groups. The results indicated that there were several critical differences in legislators' and executive officers' perceptions of the educational policy-making process. These critical differences in perceptions had major implications for educational policy-making staff as they planned future interactions with state legislators.

Cistulli (1977) ascertained the perceptions of state legislators in Connecticut regarding guidelines and considerations for community colleges and then compared them with the perceptions of advisory council members and faculty and administrative personnel from public two-year colleges. He found that most groups had different perceptions regarding community services. The groups also disagreed significantly regarding the organization and management of community services.

Glasman (1981) compared the perceptions of California legislators, department administrators, and outside evaluators regarding the functions and uses of state department of education evaluations. He said that comparisons of perceptions are necessary, especially with regard to state legislators, because these lawmakers influence funding sources.

Raho (1980) compared the perceptions of Florida state legislators and presidents of Florida's independent colleges and universities concerning various types and forms of state support. Raho discovered that there were significant differences between the perceptions of legislators and college and university presidents. He recommended further research to determine the factors influencing legislators' perceptions.

Other investigators have supported the notion that research focused on the perceptions of state legislators should be conducted on an individual-state basis (Raho, 1980; Root, 1983). One reason for this position is that each state's unique history and traditions



shape the state's policies as much as do current conditions or future considerations.

Another area of investigation has concerned factors that influence legislators' perceptions of education-related matters. Ferguson (1960) interviewed more than 420 state legislators from four states concerning their perceptions of the problems of educational need. He then correlated those data with individual variables of age, education, occupation, urban-rural nature of the home county, ideology, political party, lobbyist perception, and legislative experience. Ferguson found that members with longer tenure in the legislature were more likely to be favorable to education than those who had less experience. Legislators who were generally "liberal" in their political views were more likely than "conservatives" to be favorable. Legislators who lived in metropolitan areas were less likely to be favorable than those who lived in other areas.

Vann (1970) examined North Carolina legislators' perceptions of the North Carolina Community College System (NCCCS). One purpose of the study was to examine the association between selected demographic factors and legislators' perceptions of four elements of the NCCCS--philosophy, objectives, programs, and clientele. Vann found that there were significant associations between seven variables (length of legislative service, occupation, level of education, geographic region of district, urbanization of district, degree of contact with the community college system, and

legislators' degree of conservatism) and one or more of the elements of perception examined.

Wilson (1973) investigated the correlation between social and personal attributes of legislators and their level of perceptual knowledge about the community college concept in North Carolina. Multiple-regression analysis was used to determine the nature of the relationships. Only two factors, membership on the board of trustees of an institution in the NCCCS and membership in the Democratic Party, were found to be significantly correlated to legislators' knowledge about the community college concept.

Other researchers have explored such variables as race, profession, and education when examining legislators' perceptions of the NCCCS (Parker & Seymour, 1984). Hessenflow (1987) used variables such as capacity and tenure in the general assembly, service as a county commissioner, membership on a board of education, and membership on a higher education committee of the general assembly in her research on the perceptions of North Carolina legislators concerning the community college system in their state. She concluded that legislators' level of agreement with the tenets of the NCCCS was not influenced by the socio-demographic, political participation, or political orientation factors selected for her study.

In summary, many researchers have investigated the perceptions of legislators concerning state-supported vocational education programs, K-12 public education, and higher education institutions

in an attempt to identify factors that might influence lawmakers' knowledge, understanding, and support.

### Summary

A review of the literature pertinent to the investigation was presented in this chapter. The concept of perception was reviewed to support the theoretical basis of this study. Perception was defined as the process by which an individual makes differentiations in his/her perceptual field or calls to the front certain events over others. This process constitutes the field of personal meaning for the individual at a given time. Experience and attitudes as well as internal and external factors influence perception. The role of perception in cognitive learning was also reviewed; researchers have indicated that perception, thinking, and learning are directly related.

Research on factors associated with perceptions was presented next. Investigators have explored the relationships between numerous independent variables and legislators' perceptions of a particular state-supported organization, the CES. Variables examined in these studies included age, gender, educational level, tenure, degree of involvement with the CES, geographic area represented, attitudes toward liberalism and conservatism, and role in the legislature. Some major areas of legislators' perceptions of the CES were identified as (a) understanding of the major purposes, (b) familiarity with Extension's major program thrusts, and (c) participation in Extension's programs and activities.

Research concerning state-supported institutions was also reviewed. Personnel in vocational education, K-12 public education, and higher education institutions such as community colleges have realized the importance of exploring legislators' perceptions. Demographic and personal-social characteristics of legislators have been explored as factors that might be related to legislators' perceptions of particular institutions.

## CHAPTER III

### RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

#### Introduction

The study design and procedures used in the research are described in this chapter. The chapter includes an explanation of the design, dependent and independent variables, research questions, a description of the population and sample, development and testing of the research instrument, and data-collection and data-analysis procedures.

#### Design of the Study

The purpose that directed this exploratory study was to determine whether legislators' perceptions of a state-supported educational organization, the Cooperative Extension Service, can be predicted from selected familiarity and socio-demographic/organizational factors. The design of the study is illustrated in Figure 3.1. The figure also shows how the four broad research questions relate to the design. This design was used in determining whether legislators' perceptions of the importance of program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES, familiarity with the CES, and adequacy of information received from the CES could be predicted from the independent variables identified.

<u>Question</u>	<u>Dependent Variable</u>		<u>Independent Variable</u>
1.	Importance of Program Thrusts/ Effectiveness of the CES	X	Familiarity With the CES
	Importance of Agriculture/ Marketing program thrusts		Frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES
	Importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts		Frequency of personal contacts with the CES
	Importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts		Prior involvement with the CES
	Importance of Natural Resources/ Public Policy program thrusts		Legislative committee expe- rience
	Overall effectiveness		
2.	Adequacy of Information	X	Familiarity With the CES
			Frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES
			Frequency of personal contacts with the CES
			Prior involvement with the CES
			Legislative committee expe- rience
3.	Importance of Program Thrusts/ Effectiveness of the CES	X	Socio-Demographic/Organiza- tional Factors
	Importance of Agriculture/ Marketing program thrusts		Age Educational level Place of residence
	Importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts		Prior occupation ed.-related Prior occupation ag.-related Position in legislature
	Importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts		Political party Constituency make-up Years served in legislature
	Importance of Natural Resources/ Public Policy program thrusts		
	Overall effectiveness		
4.	Familiarity With the CES	X	Socio-Demographic/Organiza- tional Factors
	Frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES		Age Educational level Place of residence
	Frequency of personal contacts with the CES		Prior occupation ed.-related Prior occupation ag.-related Position in legislature
	Prior involvement with the CES		Political party Constituency make-up Years served in legislature

Figure 3.1: Design of the study.

### Dependent and Independent Variables

The dependent variables for this study were legislators' perceptions of (a) the importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES, (b) adequacy of information received from the CES, and (c) familiarity with the CES. Two categories of independent variables were used in this study: socio-demographic/organizational factors and familiarity with the CES. The socio-demographic/organizational variables included age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation education-related, prior occupation agriculture-related, position in the legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in the legislature. Variables related to familiarity with the CES included frequency of nonpersonal contact with the CES in the past year, frequency of personal contact with the CES in the past year, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience (number of years served on the County Board of Commissioners and on the Senate/House Agriculture, Higher Education, and Appropriations Committees). When familiarity with the CES was used as a main dependent variable, the subvariable legislative committee experience was omitted because of its high correlation with the independent variable of years served in the legislature.

### Research Questions

1. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

- 1a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
- 1b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
- 1c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
- 1d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
- 1e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
2. Can legislators' perceptions of the adequacy of information received from the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?
3. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
  - 3e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?
4. Can legislators' perceptions of familiarity with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?



- 4a. Can legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/ organizational factors?
- 4b. Can legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/ organizational factors?
- 4c. Can legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/ organizational factors?

#### The Population and Sample

The population for this study comprised the 148 legislators in the 1986 session of the Michigan Legislature: 110 members of the House of Representatives and 38 members of the Senate. (See Appendix A for maps showing Michigan legislative districts and CES administrative regions.)

A stratified random sample of 25 senators and 43 representatives was selected for the study, representing rural, urban, and mixed constituency districts within the six CES administrative regions. This sample size was determined to be adequate for the study. Before selecting the sample, each senator and each representative was assigned to a rural, urban, or mixed constituency category. Names in each category were placed in alphabetical order and assigned a two-digit number. Numbers for sample members were then drawn from a table of random numbers. This procedure was followed in an effort to obtain proportionate representation of legislators, based on population, from each of the six CES regions. Of the 68 legislators selected for the study, 60 agreed to participate--22 senators and 38 representatives. Three

legislators indicated they did not grant interviews to any researcher, and the other five had schedules that prevented their participation.

The researcher secured socio-demographic/organizational information on the legislators in the sample from the Michigan Manual (1986) before the interviews. Missing information was elicited during the interviews.

Table 3.1 shows the socio-demographic/organizational characteristics of the sample. Fifty-five members of the sample (91.7%) were males; 52 (86.7%) were Caucasians. Respondents' ages ranged from 30 to 69 years; the mean age was 46.5 years. The sample contained slightly more Republicans (33 or 55%) than Democrats (27 or 45%). A majority of sample members (44 or 73.4%) were college graduates; 29 (48.4%) held graduate or professional degrees. Sixteen legislators (26.7%) had previously been employed in education-related occupations; 16 (25%) had agriculture-related prior occupations.

The number of years respondents had served in the legislature ranged from 2 to 30; the mean was 9.6 years. Fifteen (25%) had served on the House or Senate Agriculture Committee, 10 (16.7%) on the Higher Education Committee, and 25 (41.7%) on the Appropriations Committee. In terms of constituency make-up of their legislative districts, the largest number of respondents (36 or 61%) represented urban districts, 16 (27.1%) mixed districts, and 7 (11.9%) rural districts. Most respondents had an urban (22 or 36.7%) or a suburban (17 or 28.3%) place of residence.

Table 3.1.--Characteristics of the sample (N = 60).

Characteristic	n	%	Mean	S.D.
Position in Legislature				
Senator	22	36.7		
Representative	38	63.3		
Political Party Affiliation				
Democrat	27	45.0		
Republican	33	55.0		
CES Administ. Region Represented				
Upper Peninsula	2	3.3		
North	3	5.0		
East-Central	6	10.0		
West-Central	8	13.3		
South West	9	15.0		
South East	32	53.3		
Gender				
Male	55	91.7		
Female	5	8.3		
Age	(Range 30-69)		46.5	9.41
Race				
Caucasian	52	86.7		
Black	8	13.3		
Highest Academic Level			3.3 <sup>a</sup>	1.17
High school	14	6.7		
Attended college but no degree	12	20.0		
Four-year college graduate	15	25.0		
Graduate degree	19	31.7		
Professional school graduate	10	16.7		
Years in Michigan Legislature	(Range 2-30)		9.6	6.59
Served on House/Senate Agriculture Comm.				
Yes	15	25.0		
No	45	75.0		
Years served	(Range 0-8)		1.1	2.22
Served on House/Senate Higher Education Committee				
Yes	10	16.7		
No	50	83.3		
Years served	(Range 0-10)		0.9	2.45

Table 3.1.--Continued.

Characteristic	n	%	Mean	S.D.
Served on House/Senate Appropriations Committee				
Yes	25	41.7		
No	35	58.3		
Years served	(Range 0-18)		2.2	3.92
Served as County Commissioner				
Yes	18	30.0		
No	42	70.0		
Years served	(Range 0-14)		1.2	2.51
Legislative District Constituency Make-Up <sup>b</sup>				
Urban	36	61.0		
Mixed	16	27.1		
Rural	7	11.9		
Place of Residence				
Rural farm	10	16.7		
Rural nonfarm	2	3.3		
Small town	9	15.0		
Suburban	17	28.3		
Urban (city)	22	36.7		
Prior Occupation				
Education-related	16	26.7		
Business-related	15	25.0		
Agriculture-related	10	16.7		
Political science-related	8	13.3		
Law	7	11.7		
Religion	2	3.3		
Student	1	1.7		
Other	1	1.7		

<sup>a</sup>This figure represents schooling beyond the four-year college degree.

<sup>b</sup>Response categories on the interview schedule were combined for analysis purposes.

### Development and Testing of the Instrument

The structured personal interview was chosen as the method of data collection for this study. Questionnaires from eight studies dealing with legislators' perceptions of the CES were reviewed, and appropriate items were selected for incorporation into the first draft of an interview questionnaire. To ensure accuracy and increase meaningfulness, Assistant Directors of Extension (for programs) were queried about their current program thrusts and major program activities. The information they provided was used in formulating additional questions for the interview schedule.

### Validation

The instrument was reviewed by a panel of experts who were knowledgeable about the CES and the Michigan Legislature; these individuals included the former State Director of the CES, the present State Director of the CES, the Manager of Agriculture/Natural Resources Information Services, and the Administrative Assistant to the Dean of the College of Agriculture at Michigan State University, who previously had worked at the State Capitol. Several suggestions were made for deleting items and modifying the instrument.

After the recommended changes had been made, the interview schedule was pilot tested with two legislators who were not included in the sample. Their suggestions for modifying the interview schedule and improving the interview procedure were also used. The final version of the interview schedule is contained in Appendix B.

### The Final Interview Schedule

As Kerlinger (1973) suggested, the interview schedule contained fixed-alternative questions, scaled questions, and open-ended questions. The instrument was divided into the following sections:

0. Personal Data. This information was gathered before the interview from public records and the Michigan Manual (1986).

I. Background. This section contained items pertaining to the urban/rural constituency make-up of the legislator's district, place of residence, previous experience as a county elected official, perceived degree of involvement with the CES, and prior occupation.

II. Contacts with the CES. Items in this section concerned the frequency with which legislators had various types of contacts with the CES (i.e., newspaper articles, radio programs, visits with local Extension staff members, attending Extension events, and so on) (0 = never to 3 = frequently). Respondents were also asked to select and rank order their preference for the five most important methods of contact with the CES.

III. Network Information. In this section, legislators were asked to rate the extent to which they thought they had received adequate information about the CES (1 = not at all to 5 = excellent). They were also asked to rank order their preferences for types of CES information they would like to receive, sources of that information, and time frame for delivery of the information. The last question in this section was open ended. Legislators were

asked: "Are there any comments you'd like to make regarding receiving information from CES?"

IV. Perceptions of CES Program Thrusts. Items in this section were intended to elicit legislators' ratings of the importance of various CES program thrusts (1 = not important to 6 = extremely important). Respondents were also asked how they would rate the overall effectiveness of the CES (1 = not effective to 6 = extremely effective). The final question was open ended. Legislators were asked: "Are there any other points concerning the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service which we have not talked about that you feel are important to discuss?"

A tabular presentation of the specific interview items that were used to elicit information on particular study variables is shown in Table C.1, Appendix C. The means and standard deviations for the combined variables for importance of program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES, combined variable for familiarity, and adequacy of information received are provided in Tables C.2 through C.4.

#### Reliability

To simplify data analysis, several interview items were grouped to form variables. The 16 items pertaining to program thrusts were grouped into four dependent variables (one for each of the four program areas in CES) under the major dependent variable, relative importance of program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES. The five nonpersonal-contact items were grouped into one variable (frequency

of nonpersonal contacts with CES). Likewise, the eight personal-contact items were grouped into one variable (frequency of personal contacts with CES), under the major variable, familiarity with the CES.

Because these variable categories were formed by the researcher and a consultant, a reliability analysis was conducted to check the consistency of the items comprising each combined variable. Table 3.2 shows the Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient for each variable. All of the reliability coefficients were over .70; thus, the newly formed variables had good internal consistency.

#### Data-Collection Procedures

A letter describing the purpose that directed the study was mailed to the legislators selected for the sample. A letter of support for the study from the Assistant Vice-President for Administration and Public Affairs, Office of State and Public Affairs, at Michigan State University was attached. In addition, the writer's local representative and senator prepared letters of introduction, which were personally delivered to legislators' offices when the interview appointment was requested. (These letters may be found in Appendix D.)



Table 3.2.--Reliability coefficients for combined variables under major variables of importance/effectiveness and familiarity.

Major Variable/ Combined Variables	N	Interview Section/Items	No. of Items Included	Alpha Coeff.
<b>Importance of Program Thrusts/Overall Effectiveness of the CES<sup>a</sup></b>				
Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts	56	IV: 1,5,9,13	4	.71
4-H Youth program thrusts	57	IV: 2,6,10,14	4	.81
Extension Home Economics program thrusts	57	IV: 4,8,11,15	4	.86
Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts	57	IV: 3,7,12,16	4	.75
<b>Familiarity With the CES</b>				
Nonpersonal contacts	60	II: a-e	5	.80
Personal contacts	60	II: f-k,o,p	8	.85

<sup>a</sup>Overall effectiveness of the CES was a single-item variable and therefore does not appear on this table.

During June and July 1986, while the legislature was in session, interviews were conducted with the 60 legislators who agreed to participate in the study. The interviews were conducted in the legislators' offices. Participants were given a copy of Sections II, III, and IV of the interview schedule to follow during

the interview, to facilitate their response. All interview responses were recorded on the interview schedule form. Within a week following the interview, each legislator was sent a letter of appreciation for participating in the study (see Appendix D).

#### Data-Analysis Procedures

The interview schedule was designed so that response options for most of the questions could be coded by the researcher directly onto computer spreadsheets and entered into the mainframe computer at Michigan State University. The data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X).

Basic descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and rank order, were used to analyze various aspects of the data. Stepwise multiple regression was performed for each research question to determine which independent variables, if any, were factors influencing the dependent variable(s). The .05 level was chosen as the criterion for statistical significance.

The design and procedures used in conducting the study were described in this Chapter. The results of the data analyses, additional findings, and responses to the open-ended interview questions are presented in Chapter IV.

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS OF THE DATA ANALYSES

#### Introduction

Results of the analysis of data gathered through interviews with 60 Michigan legislators are presented in this chapter. In the first section, each research question is restated, followed by the results of the data analysis for that question. Additional findings are discussed in the second section. Qualitative data, based on responses to the open-ended interview questions, are presented in the third section. A brief summary concludes the chapter.

#### Results of Analyses for the Research Questions

Relative Importance of CES Program Thrusts/  
Overall Effectiveness of the CES  
X Familiarity Factors

1. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

For analysis purposes, the broad research question was divided into five subquestions, which are discussed below.

- 1a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing

program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables. Based on this analysis, no significant relationship was found ( $p > .05$ ) between legislators' perceptions of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts and selected familiarity factors. Therefore, legislators' perceptions of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts could not be predicted from the selected familiarity factors.

- 1b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables (see Table 4.1).

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts could be predicted from only one independent variable, frequency of nonpersonal contacts, which was significant at the .001 level. The nonpersonal-contact variable accounted for 17% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of 4-H Youth program thrusts.

Table 4.1.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts and selected familiarity factors (N = 57).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .413 df = 1,55</div> <div>R Square = 17.1% F = 11.35</div> <div>Standard Error = .903 p = .001</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Nonpersonal contacts	.591	.175	.413	3.366	.001
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation			Beta In	T	Sig. T
Personal contacts			-.178	-1.127	.265
Prior involvement with CES			-.085	-.617	.540
Legislative committee experience			.027	.188	.851

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

- 1c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables (see Table 4.2).

Table 4.2.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts and selected familiarity factors (N = 57).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .457 df = 2,54</div> <div>R Square = 20.9% F = 7.12</div> <div>Standard Error = .891 p = .002</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Nonpersonal contacts	.835	.223	.584	3.750	.000
Personal contacts	-.635	.237	-.418	-2.690	.010
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Prior involvement with CES	-.033		-.207	.837	
Legislative committee experience	.168		1.211	.231	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts could be predicted from frequency of nonpersonal contacts and frequency of personal contacts. Both independent variables worked together to predict the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts. However, nonpersonal contacts contributed more to the prediction of the dependent variable than did personal contacts. Together, these two independent variables accounted for 21% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of Extension Home Economics program thrusts.

- 1d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables (see Table 4.3).

Table 4.3.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts and selected familiarity factors (N = 57).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .527 df = 2,54</div> <div>R Square = 27.7% F = 10.36</div> <div>Standard Error = .724 p = .000</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Personal contacts	-.840	.192	-.651	-4.373	.000
Nonpersonal contacts	.675	.181	.555	3.732	.001
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Prior involvement with CES	.071		.464	.644	
Legislative committee experience	.070		.520	.605	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts could

be predicted from frequency of personal contacts and frequency of nonpersonal contacts. Personal contacts contributed more to the prediction than did nonpersonal contacts, but in a negative direction. The two independent variables together accounted for 28% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts.

- 1e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the overall effectiveness of the CES as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables (see Table 4.4).

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES could be predicted from frequency of nonpersonal contacts. Thirty-four percent of the explained variance in the dependent variable was accounted for by this independent variable. Therefore, frequency of nonpersonal contacts with legislators was a factor influencing legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES.



Table 4.4.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of the CES and selected familiarity factors (N = 56).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .583 df = 1,54</div> <div>R Square = 34.0% F = 27.854</div> <div>Standard Error = .774 p = .000</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Nonpersonal contacts	.806	.153	.583	5.278	.000
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Personal contacts	.246		1.789	.079	
Prior involvement with CES	.097		.789	.434	
Legislative committee experience	-.114		-.903	.371	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

#### Adequacy of Information X Familiarity Factors

2. Can legislators' perceptions of the adequacy of information received from the CES be predicted from selected familiarity factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of adequacy of information received from the CES as the dependent variable and selected familiarity factors (nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, prior involvement with the CES, and legislative committee experience) as the independent variables (see Table 4.5).

Table 4.5.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived adequacy of information received from the CES and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 58).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .720 df = 2,55</div> <div>R Square = 51.8% F = 29.52</div> <div>Standard Error = .825 p = .000</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Nonpersonal contacts	.739	.212	.454	3.492	.001
Personal contacts	.554	.222	.325	2.500	.015
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Prior involvement with CES	-.005		-.042	.967	
Legislative committee experience	-.046		-.420	.676	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the adequacy of information received from the CES could be predicted from two independent variables--frequency of nonpersonal contacts and frequency of personal contacts. Both variables together accounted for 52% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of adequacy of information received. However, nonpersonal contacts was a slightly stronger influencing factor.

Relative Importance of CES Program Thrusts/  
Overall Effectiveness of the CES X Socio-  
demographic/Organizational Factors

**3. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?**

For analysis purposes, the broad research question was divided into five subquestions, which are discussed below.

**3a. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?**

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.6).

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts could be predicted from the legislator's position in the legislature--whether the legislator was a representative. This variable accounted for 9% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts.

Table 4.6.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 55).

Multiple R = .291 df = 1,53		R Square = 8.5% F = 4.899		Standard Error = .636 p = .031	
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Position in legislature (Representative)	.395	.178	.291	2.21	.031
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Political party (Democrat)	-.049		-.367	.715	
Age of legislator	.200		1.473	.147	
Educational level	-.019		-.141	.889	
Years served in legislature	.230		1.632	.109	
Constituency make-up (rural)	.100		.754	.454	
Place of residence (farm)	.023		.166	.869	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.233		1.791	.080	
Prior occupation--Ag-related	-.099		-.745	.460	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

- 3b. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the

independent variables. Based on this analysis, no significant relationship ( $p > .05$ ) was found between legislators' perceptions of the importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors. Therefore, legislators' perceptions of the importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts could not be predicted from the selected socio-demographic/organizational factors.

- 3c. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.7).

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts could be predicted from legislators' prior occupation in an education-related area, position in legislature, and age. These three independent variables together accounted for 23% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of the importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts. Position in legislature (representative) contributed the most; age and prior occupation in education

occupation in education were likely to rate the identified Extension Home Economics program thrusts as being important.

Table 4.7.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 56).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .480 df = 3,52</div> <div>R Square = 23.0% F = 5.187</div> <div>Standard Error = .869 p = .003</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Prior occupation-- Ed-related	.562	.274	.261	2.053	.045
Position in legisla- ture (Representative)	.709	.254	.356	2.792	.007
Age of legislator	.030	.014	.280	2.132	.038
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Political party (Democrat)	.224		1.886	.065	
Educational level	-.075		-.548	.586	
Years served in legislature	.083		.561	.577	
Constituency make-up (rural)	-.088		.719	.475	
Place of residence (farm)	.004		.026	.979	
Prior occupation--Ag-related	-.084		-.628	.533	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

- 3d. Can legislators' perceptions of the relative importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the importance of Natural Resources/Public

Policy program thrusts as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.8).

Table 4.8.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 56).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .412 df = 1,54</div> <div>R Square = 17.0% F = 11.049</div> <div>Standard Error = .751 p = .002</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Prior occupation-- Ag-related	-.871	.262	-.412	-3.324	.002
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Position in legislature (Representative)	.108		.864	.391	
Political party (Democrat)	-.004		-.028	.978	
Age of legislator	.202		1.628	.109	
Educational level	-.035		-.246	.806	
Years served in legislature	.195		1.594	.117	
Constituency make-up (rural)	-.086		-.676	.502	
Place of residence (farm)	.001		.006	.995	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.120		1.567	.123	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts could be predicted from whether the legislator's prior occupation was agriculture-related. However, because the beta value was negative, this finding could be interpreted to mean that if the legislator's occupation was agriculture-related he would not be likely to perceive the identified Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts as important. This variable accounted for 17% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts.

3e. Can legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' ratings of the overall effectiveness of the CES as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.9).

The results indicated that legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES could be predicted from constituency make-up--whether the legislators' constituency make-up was rural. This variable accounted for 14% of the explained variance in legislators' perceptions of the overall effectiveness of the CES.



Table 4.9.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived effectiveness of the CES and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 55).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .373 df = 1,53</div> <div>R Square = 13.9% F = 8.550</div> <div>Standard Error = .887 p = .005</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Constituency make-up (Rural)	.493	.169	.373	2.924	.005
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Position in legislature (Representative)	.019		.151	.880	
Political party (Democrat)	-.112		-.809	.422	
Age of legislator	.177		1.400	.168	
Educational level	-.026		-.204	.839	
Years served in legislature	.236		1.881	.066	
Place of residence (farm)	.047		.340	.735	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.083		.648	.520	
Prior occupation--Ag-related	.067		.512	.611	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

#### Familiarity With the CES X Socio-demographic/Organizational Factors

#### 4. Can legislators' perceptions of familiarity with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

For analysis purposes, the broad research question was divided into three subquestions, which are discussed below.

4a. Can legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.10).

The results indicated that legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES could be predicted from three independent variables--constituency make-up, age of legislator, and educational level. These three variables together accounted for 29% of the explained variance in legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES. Constituency make-up contributed the most to the prediction; age contributed a small amount. Educational level, with a negative beta value, subtracted from the equation. Therefore, legislators who had a rural constituency, were older, and had a slightly lower educational level than their colleagues were likely to perceive a greater frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES.

Table 4.10.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 59).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .538 df = 3,55</div> <div>R Square = 29.0% F = 7.471</div> <div>Standard Error = .655 p = .000</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Constituency make-up (rural)	.378	.123	.352	3.084	.003
Age of legislator	.020	.010	.243	2.043	.046
Educational level	-.160	.079	-.241	-2.032	.047
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Position in legislature (Representative)	-.055		-.450	.655	
Political party (Democrat)	.044		.345	.732	
Years served in legislature	.164		1.231	.224	
Place of residence (farm)	.059		.445	.658	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.099		.805	.424	
Prior occupation--Ag-related	.010		.079	.937	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

4b. Can legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' frequency of personal contacts with the CES as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency

make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.11).

Table 4.11.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 59).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .670 df = 2,56</div> <div>R Square = 44.9% F = 22.78</div> <div>Standard Error = .521 p = .000</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Constituency make-up (Rural)	.492	.099	.503	4.974	.000
Prior occupation-- Ag-related	.652	.184	.358	3.542	.001
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Position in legislature (Representative)	-.156		-1.574	.121	
Political party (Democrat)	-.172		-1.556	.125	
Age of legislator	.014		.142	.888	
Educational level	.022		.196	.845	
Years served in legislature	.045		.450	.654	
Place of residence (farm)	.128		.773	.443	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.054		.520	.605	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

The results indicated that legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES could be predicted from constituency make-up (rural) and prior occupation in agriculture. Of the two

predictor variables, rural constituency make-up contributed slightly more than did prior occupation in agriculture. The two variables together accounted for 45% of the explained variance in legislators' perceived frequency of personal contacts with the CES.

4c. Can legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES be predicted from selected socio-demographic/organizational factors?

Stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed using legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES as the dependent variable and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (age, educational level, place of residence, prior occupation, position in legislature, political party, constituency make-up, and years served in legislature) as the independent variables (see Table 4.12).

The results indicated that legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES could be predicted from whether the legislators' prior occupation was in agriculture. This variable accounted for 17% of the explained variance in legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES.

Table 4.13 contains a summary of the results of the stepwise multiple regression analyses conducted to test the research questions.

Table 4.12.--Results of stepwise multiple regression analysis of legislators' perceived degree of prior involvement with the CES and selected socio-demographic/organizational factors (N = 59).

<div> <div>Multiple R = .408 df = 1,57</div> <div>R Square = 16.7% F = 11.395</div> <div>Standard Error = 1.373 p = .001</div> </div>					
Independent Variable	B	SE of B	Beta	T	Sig. T
Prior occupation-- Ag-related	1.608	.476	.408	3.376	.001
=====					
Variables Not Entered in Equation	Beta In		T	Sig. T	
Position in legislature (Representative)	-.086		-.703	.485	
Political party (Democrat)	-.204		-1.630	.109	
Age of legislator	.010		.080	.937	
Educational level	.083		.605	.548	
Years served in legislature	.163		1.355	.181	
Constituency make-up (rural)	.177		1.450	.153	
Place of residence (farm)	.088		.469	.641	
Prior occupation--Ed-related	.099		.781	.438	

Note: Tolerance level for the entry of each independent variable set at .05.

#### Additional Findings

Additional data pertaining to legislators' preferences for methods of contact with the CES and their preferences for communications of CES information were obtained from the interviews with legislators. Those findings are discussed in this section.

Table 4.13.--Summary of stepwise multiple regression analysis results.

Research Question	Dependent Variable	Independent Variable	Significant Factor	R <sup>2</sup> (%)	p
<b>1. Importance/Effectiveness x Familiarity:</b>					
1a	Ag/Marketing	Familiarity	---	--	--
1b	4-H Youth	Familiarity	Nonpersonal	17	.001
1c	Extension Home Economics	Familiarity	<sup>a</sup> Nonpersonal Personal }	21	.002
1d	Natural Resources/ Public Policy	Familiarity	<sup>a</sup> Personal Nonpersonal }	28	.000
1e	Overall Effect.	Familiarity	Nonpersonal	34	.000
<b>2. Adequacy of Information x Familiarity</b>					
	Perceived adequacy of information	Familiarity	Nonpersonal Personal }	52	.000
<b>3. Importance/Effectiveness x Socio-demog./Organizational</b>					
3a	Ag/Marketing	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Pos. in legis.	9	.031
3b	4-H Youth	Socio-demog./ organiz.	---	--	--
3c	Extension Home Economics	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Prior occ.-Ed. Pos. in legis. } Age	23	.003
3d	Natural Resources/ Public Policy	Socio-demog./ organiz.	<sup>a</sup> Prior occ.-Ag.	17	.002
3e	Overall effect.	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Const. make-up	14	.005
<b>4. Familiarity x Socio-Demographic/Organizational</b>					
4a	Nonpersonal contacts	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Const. make-up <sup>a</sup> Age Educ. level }	29	.000
4b	Personal contacts	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Const. make-up Prior occ.-Ag. }	45	.000
4c	Prior involvement	Socio-demog./ organiz.	Prior occ.-Ag.	17	.001

<sup>a</sup>This factor had a negative effect in the multiple regression equation.

### Preferences for Contact Methods

After indicating the frequency of their contacts with the CES, legislators were asked to review the printed list of contact methods and to rank order their five "most important" or preferred methods of contact with the CES. Table 4.14 indicates legislators' rank order of preferred contact methods. Their first preference was to visit with local Extension staff member(s) (73%), followed by personal contact with Extension clientele (50.8%). It is interesting that both the first and second choices of contact methods are personal in nature. These were followed by local Extension newsletters (49.1%) and Extension bulletins/publications (39.1), both of which are nonpersonal contact methods. The method ranked fifth was to attend or participate in an Extension program/event (30.6%).

Table 4.14.--Rank order of legislators' five "most important" methods of contact with the CES (N = 59).

Rank	%	Method of Contact
1	73.0	Visit with local Extension staff member(s)
2	50.8	Personal contact with Extension clientele
3	49.1	Local Extension newsletters
4	39.1	Extension bulletins/publications
5	30.6	Attend or participate in Extension program/event



Preferences for Communications  
of CES Information

Three supplemental questions were asked relative to legislators' preferences for types of CES information, sources of information, and time frame for receiving such information. The findings are discussed in this section.

Legislators' most useful types of information received from the CES are shown in rank order in Table 4.15. Of the six choices of types of information, statistics/data was ranked first (65%), followed by announcements of new programs (63.3%). State annual reports were ranked lowest (6.6%).

Table 4.15.--Rank order of legislators' most useful types of information received from the CES (N = 58).

Rank	%	Type of Information
1	65.0	Statistics/data
2	63.3	Announcements of new programs
3	60.0	Specific success stories
4	55.0	Broad accomplishment reports
5	28.3	County annual reports
6	6.6	State annual reports

Legislators' preferred sources of information about the CES are shown in rank order in Table 4.16. Of the five possible choices, County Extension offices were ranked first by 96.7% of the

legislators as the preferred source of information, followed by State Extension offices (80%).

Table 4.16.--Rank order of legislators' preferred sources of information about the CES (N = 58).

Rank	%	Type of Information
1	86.7	County Extension offices
2	80.0	State Extension offices
3	53.3	Michigan State University Information Services
4	50.0	Legislative research offices
5	5.0	Other

Legislators' preferred time frames for receiving information from the CES are shown in rank order in Table 4.17. Of the five possible choices, 78.3% of the legislators preferred to receive information at the time the legislature is discussing issues relating to Extension's expertise. Tied for second place (61.7% each) were legislators' preferences for receiving information when new programs are being developed and on a regular basis (quarterly). The least preferred time frame was at the beginning of the year (5%).

Table 4.17.--Rank order of legislators' preferred time frame for receiving CES information (N = 58).

Rank	%	Time Frame
1	78.3	At time legislature is discussing issues related to Extension's expertise
2	61.7	When new programs are being developed
2	61.7	On a regular basis (quarterly)
4	6.7	Other
5	5.0	At the beginning of the year

#### Analysis of Responses to Open-Ended Questions

Two open-ended questions were posed during the interviews with legislators. Responses to those questions are discussed briefly here. The responses appear in their entirety in Appendix E.

The first open-ended question was: "Are there any comments you would like to make regarding receiving information from the Cooperative Extension Service?" Legislators' comments were extremely varied. Some legislators said they would like more information, some thought the amount of information they received was just right, and others said they received too much information. Many legislators liked personal contacts with the CES. All respondents who preferred personal contacts were most positive about such contacts. However, not all of the comments about other information methods, such as direct mail, were positive.

In concluding the interviews, the researcher asked: "Are there any other points concerning the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service which we have not talked about that you feel are important to discuss?" This question received numerous responses, which generally could be grouped into four categories. The first category could be termed "visibility." Phrases such as "greater awareness of the organization," "marketing," and the word "visibility" itself were frequently voiced. Legislators seemed to be concerned that the organization was not promoting itself to others. People were either very familiar or not familiar at all with the CES. Another category of responses pertained to "staff." Respondents often mentioned the outstanding job that particular staff members were doing or had done. Staff members from all levels of the organization were mentioned; however, local county staff members were most often cited. Another category, termed "programming," pertained to different programs legislators said they had experienced or heard about. The programs most often were related to agriculture. In addition, legislators recommended programming that the CES should be offering. The one mentioned most often was a need to provide programs in urban settings. Water-quality programming in schools was also mentioned. The last category, "CES as a resource," included statements such as "I probably use CES more than any other legislator." Another respondent said, "CES has done an excellent job of assisting the House Taxation Committee." Sometimes legislators perceived the CES as a resource on a personal level:

"[CES] came to my farm several times and helped us get our farming operation on target."

#### Summary

This chapter contained a presentation and discussion of the results of the data analysis for the research questions, as well as additional findings. In addition, responses to the two open-ended interview questions were discussed. Chapter V contains a summary of the study, conclusions, recommendations for application and further research, and reflections.

## CHAPTER V

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND REFLECTIONS

#### Introduction

This chapter contains an overall summary of the study, including the methodology and major findings. Conclusions drawn from the findings are then presented, followed by recommendations for application and further research. The writer's reflections conclude the chapter.

#### Summary

Because of the influence legislators exert on state-supported organizations, it is important to determine not only how they perceive those organizations but, more important, the factors influencing their perceptions. Channels of communication need to be open to inform and educate legislators about the organization and also to solicit their input into identifying needs and determining future directions. In this study, the factors influencing legislators' perceptions of a state-supported organization, the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service, were examined. Such a study was considered important in order for the CES to be proactive in developing a relationship with legislators that is mutually beneficial to society, the organization, and the legislators themselves.

### Purpose

The purpose that provided direction for this study was to determine whether legislators' perceptions of a state-supported educational organization, the CES, can be determined from selected familiarity and socio-demographic/organizational factors. The main dependent variables under consideration were legislators' perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES, adequacy of information they received from the organization, and their familiarity with the CES.

### Description of the Sample

The population for this study comprised all legislators in the 1986 session of the Michigan Legislature--110 representatives and 38 senators. A stratified random sample of 43 representatives and 25 senators, representing rural, urban, and mixed constituencies and the six administrative regions of the CES, was selected. Of that number, 60 legislators agreed to be interviewed in the study.

A majority of the sample were Caucasian males with a mean age of 46.5 years. The sample contained slightly more Republicans than Democrats. A majority of sample members were college graduates; almost half held graduate or professional degrees. The largest number of respondents represented urban constituencies; most of them lived in urban or suburban areas. Respondents had served in the legislature from 2 to 30 years; the mean was 9.6 years. About 40% had served on the House or Senate Appropriations Committee, 25% on the Agriculture Committee, and 16.7% on the Higher Education

Committee. About 25% of the respondents had previously been employed in education-related occupations; another 25% had agriculture-related prior occupations.

### Methodology

The researcher developed a structured interview schedule, using several items from previous studies of legislators' perceptions of the CES. In addition, input was secured from CES administrators and university faculty who had previously been involved with legislative activities. A panel of experts who were knowledgeable about the CES and the Michigan Legislature validated the instrument. Further validation was provided by pretesting the instrument with legislators who were not in the sample.

Data were collected through personal interviews with the 60 legislators in the sample. Structured interviews were conducted during June and July 1986, while the legislature was in session. Interview responses were coded onto computer spreadsheets and entered into the mainframe computer at Michigan State University, where the data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS-X) (Norusis/SPSS, 1988).

Basic descriptive statistics, including frequency distribution, percentage, mean, standard deviation, correlation, and rank order, were used to analyze various aspects of the data. Stepwise multiple regression was performed for each research question to determine which independent variables, if any, were factors influencing the



dependent variable(s). The .05 level was established as the criterion for statistical significance.

#### Findings Regarding Research Questions

Nonpersonal contacts were found to be a significant factor in five of the six research subquestions concerning the effectiveness of selected familiarity factors in influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance/effectiveness of the CES and the adequacy of information received. Nonpersonal contacts, in combination with personal contacts, were significant factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of Extension Home Economics and Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts and in legislators' perceptions of the adequacy of information received from the CES. Neither nonpersonal nor personal contacts were significant factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts. Furthermore, the other two familiarity factors included in this study, prior involvement in the CES and legislative committee experience, did not surface as significant factors for any of the research subquestions.

Of the nine socio-demographic/organizational factors examined as possible factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES, prior occupation in agriculture, constituency make-up, age, position in legislature, and prior occupation in education were found to be significant factors, individually or in combination, for one or more of the research subquestions. Educational level, place

of residence, political party, and years served in legislature were not predictive of legislators' perceptions of CES program thrusts or overall effectiveness of the CES. There were no significant factors influencing legislators' perceptions of 4-H Youth program thrusts.

Four of the nine socio-demographic/organizational factors examined as possible factors influencing legislators' familiarity with the CES--constituency make-up, age, educational level, and prior occupation in agriculture--surfaced as significant factors, individually or in combination, for one or more of the research subquestions. Position in legislature, years served in legislature, place of residence, and prior occupation in education were not factors influencing legislators' perceptions of frequency of nonpersonal contacts, personal contacts, or prior involvement with the CES.

#### Additional Findings

Legislators' preferred method of contact with the CES was to visit with local Extension staff members, followed by personal contact with Extension clientele, local Extension newsletters, Extension bulletins/publications, and attending or participating in an Extension program/event, in that order. Respondents cited statistics/data as the most useful type of information about the CES. Announcements of new programs were ranked second, followed by specific success stories. State annual reports were ranked lowest. Legislators preferred receiving information from county Extension offices, followed by state Extension offices. They also preferred

to receive information "while the legislature is discussing issues relating to Extension's expertise," followed by "when new programs are being developed" and "on a regular basis."

### Conclusions

Based on the study findings, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. Legislators' past experience and hence their perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts/overall effectiveness of the CES were formed primarily by nonpersonal contacts.

The CES has largely been influencing legislators in a nonpersonal manner. Although this approach has been having a positive effect, perceptual psychology theorists such as Allport, Combs, and Hilgard have suggested that experience of a personal nature tends to have a greater impact. Because the legislators in this sample had fewer personal contacts than nonpersonal contacts with the CES from which to draw, it was concluded that their perceptions of the organization were formed by nonpersonal contacts. Or it is possible that they experienced more personal contacts than they remembered. Perhaps those personal contacts were not meaningful enough to have left an impression.

2. Both nonpersonal and personal contacts with the CES were necessary for legislators to perceive that they had an adequate information base concerning the CES.

Experience influences a person's feelings, thoughts, and emotions. People interpret their experiences, forming them into perceptions. These perceptions serve as a way of organizing a person's future experience. People do not act or behave according

to an objective set of facts; rather, they act according to how they have interpreted those facts or experiences. What drives decision making, what drives behavior, then, are the personal meanings or perceptions people have formed regarding their experiences.

It can be concluded that legislators rely on both nonpersonal and personal experiences for their information. Perhaps different types of information are being delivered through the various types of contacts. Factual data designed to increase knowledge concerning the organization have been delivered through nonpersonal means. On the other hand, personal contacts, although they also impart information through a cognitive domain, might more strongly influence the individual's feelings and emotions. Personal contacts could help legislators remember previous contacts of a similar nature that might not be recalled by reading a report or hearing a radio program.

3. There were no consistently significant socio-demographic/organizational factors influencing legislators' perceptions of all program thrusts.

Although legislators perceived their role as fairly representing their constituencies, they must also secure support from other legislators for their particular agendas. It is evident that the elements that influence a legislator's decision-making process might not be restricted to socio-demographic/organizational factors. Legislators must engage in a give-and-take political process of support, in order to represent their own constituencies successfully. They must support other legislators' interests in

order to be assured of reciprocal support in matters of interest to their own constituents.

4. Certain socio-demographic/organizational factors influenced legislators' perceived familiarity with the CES. Rural constituency make-up and prior occupation in an agriculture-related field were the two factors that most frequently surfaced.

The legislators who were most familiar with the CES had the most experience with the agricultural component of the organization. Perhaps the organization has promoted that particular program area more than others. It is also possible that certain legislators' long-term agricultural experiences had influenced how they perceived the world. If a legislator had a rural constituency, those constituents could have been active clientele of the CES; thus, the legislators would have become familiar with the CES by interacting with those residents. It is logical to conclude that these legislators were familiar with the organization, but it cannot be concluded that they were necessarily supportive of it.

5. According to the additional findings, personal contact, especially at the local CES level, was the method by which a majority of legislators preferred to receive information about the CES.

Legislators valued the information they received at the local CES level more than the information they received at the state level. Perhaps legislators perceived a need to return to the raw data of the experience. Information received at the local CES level is closer to direct contact with their constituents and has not been filtered through layers of the organization to reach the state

level. The preference for personal rather than nonpersonal contacts also reflects the desire of legislators to maintain closer contact with constituents in their districts, who may also be clientele of the CES.

6. According to responses to the open-ended interview questions, legislators were willing to contribute to the CES.

Legislators expressed a willingness to share insights gained from their past experiences. Some suggested that the CES needs increased visibility--that more legislators need to be aware of the CES and the services it offers. Legislators also suggested new programs and services. Perhaps if more legislators were aware of the organization, it would be easier to gain their support. If the CES wants to influence legislators' perceptions, legislators should be encouraged to provide input into the organization.

#### Recommendations

In this study, data were gathered on factors influencing legislators' perceptions of various aspects of the Michigan CES, as well as how legislators prefer to receive information about the CES. It is hoped that the findings will be beneficial to other state-supported organizations/institutions and will perhaps serve as a stimulus to the CES in Michigan and in other states. The following recommendations are made for application and further research.

#### Recommendations for Application

1. Legislators' committee experience was not a significant factor influencing their perceptions of the importance of CES

program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES. Thus, CES personnel should focus on educating and informing all legislators about the organization, and not just on communicating with those legislators serving on the Appropriations, Agriculture, and Higher Education Committees.

2. Legislators indicated they had fewer personal than nonpersonal contacts with the CES, yet 73% of the legislators preferred personal contacts with the local staff. Therefore, CES personnel should examine their public relations/marketing strategies with legislators. The researcher recommends that the CES develop a strategic plan for increasing the number of personal contacts with legislators, particularly from the local staff level, as a means of educating legislators about the organization.

3. An on-going staff-development program needs to be established to ensure that all CES agents are prepared to make personal contacts with legislators and are comfortable with making those contacts. Administrators need to provide not only the training but also the support, including time allocation, for local agents to perform in this public relations role.

4. Frequency of nonpersonal contacts was the primary factor influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of CES program thrusts/effectiveness of the CES. Therefore, nonpersonal contacts should be continued but should be reevaluated for effectiveness. To the extent possible, local county CES offices should send their legislators CES information.

5. Legislators preferred to receive CES information while the legislature is discussing issues related to the organization's expertise. Thus, it is recommended that a CES legislative liaison position be created in collaboration with the Michigan State University Office for Governmental Affairs to monitor the issues confronting the legislature and to be proactive in providing CES expertise and information.

6. Sixty-two percent of the legislators said they preferred to receive information from the CES when new programs are being developed. Thus, it is recommended that each State Assistant Director directly communicate with legislators when new programs are being developed, keeping the Office for Governmental Affairs informed. Input from selected legislators could be sought during the program-development stage. Selected legislators could be involved on state program area advisory boards.

7. Sixty-two percent of the legislators also preferred to receive CES information on a regular basis (i.e., quarterly). It is recommended that local Extension offices provide brief reports on various program areas to legislators semi-annually or quarterly.

8. Both personal and nonpersonal contacts are necessary for legislators to perceive they are receiving adequate information from the CES. Thus, it is recommended that both contact methods be continued. Just because legislators indicate they are receiving adequate information, this cannot be interpreted to mean they are receiving information that is truly "educative." It is imperative that CES personnel review their present nonpersonal contact methods,



such as county newsletters, to ascertain how educative and effective they are.

9. Long- and short-range plans should be developed at the county, regional, and state levels to increase personal contacts with legislators, particularly concerning the Extension Home Economics, Natural Resources/Public Policy, and 4-H Youth program thrusts.

10. Legislators who had a prior occupation in an agriculture-related area perceived Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts to be significantly less important than did their colleagues who had not previously been employed in agriculture. Thus, it is recommended that Natural Resources/Public Policy staff members develop a marketing strategy for educating legislators who were previously employed in agriculture about the importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts and their effect on rural and urban areas of Michigan.

11. Legislators with a rural constituency perceived the CES to be significantly more effective than did legislators with a nonrural constituency. The CES should address this issue by analyzing the perceived needs in nonrural areas, to align the mission and services of the CES with clients' needs. In addition, CES administrators should encourage local CES staff and clientele in urban and mixed constituencies to communicate more frequently with their legislators about CES programs/services and should support the staff in these efforts.

12. Legislators who represented rural constituencies were older and had less formal education than those from urban and mixed constituencies, and they perceived a greater frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES than did other legislators. Perhaps these legislators were more available for and attuned to the nonpersonal contacts, such as CES radio programs, articles in rural newspapers, newsletters, and so on. CES personnel should examine their efforts and redefine their strategies for reaching other legislators.

13. Legislators from rural constituencies who had a prior occupation in agriculture perceived a greater frequency of personal contacts with the CES than did other legislators. Therefore, it is recommended that the organization develop a strong marketing effort, using personal contacts directed toward legislators from urban and mixed constituencies whose prior occupations were other than agriculture.

#### Recommendations for Further Research

1. The study should be replicated with another session of the Michigan Legislature, to validate the findings of this exploratory study.

2. To promote the generalizability of this study, the interview schedule should be adapted for another state-supported agency/organization so that the process used in this exploratory study might be further validated.

3. An investigation using other socio-demographic factors, such as prior occupation in a business-related area, might yield additional factors influencing legislators' perceptions and prove valuable for other organizations.

4. An experimental study should be conducted, involving in-depth legislative staff-development training for part of the CES staff, with an emphasis on personal contact with legislators, followed by a study on factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the CES.

5. To validate the factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the importance of program thrusts and overall effectiveness of the CES, a study should be conducted on the correlation between legislators' voting records on appropriate issues and the factors found to be significant in this study.

6. An in-depth ethnographic study of several legislators might yield additional insights into factors influencing legislators' perceptions of the CES.

7. A correlational study should be conducted that would compare legislative aides'/assistants' perceptions of the CES with their legislators' perceptions of the CES.

### Reflections

For this study, the CES was chosen as an example of a state-supported organization. The CES is a nonformal educational organization whose purpose is to extend knowledge from the land-grant university to the people of the state. Although the nature of

CES program thrusts and the variety of clientele have changed as the CES has evolved, the fact that this organization depends on the state legislature for financial support has remained unchanged. Consequently, at the state level, the CES has put forth major efforts in communicating with legislators each year, in order to secure funding.

Upon reflection, two issues emerged from this research. Although it is indeed appropriate for an organization depending on the legislature for funding to engage in an extensive administrative communication effort, it does not appear that this is the only factor that influences legislators' decision making. In this study, legislators expressed a desire for personal contact with local CES staff members and with their constituents, who are also CES clientele. Were legislators indicating that they want their perceptions of the CES to be influenced by local staff members and the clientele who are participating in CES programs?

As the CES intensifies its efforts to communicate with legislators, is there a tendency for the organization to become rigid? Does that rigidity contradict the question: Does the CES need to sustain a self-renewing, evolutionary organizational pattern in order to meet the changing needs of its clientele? In other words, it would seem that the danger of an extensive administrative communication effort is that the people furthest from direct experience or raw data, those at the state administrative level of the CES, may be portraying a fairly rigid, fixed image of the CES in their communications. Legislators clearly indicated a preference

for interaction and communication at the local level. The information they receive locally would be varied and rich because it would not be shaped, filtered, or controlled as it could be at the state administrative level.

In his book Self-Renewal, Gardner (1981) addressed the need for organizations to shake off their rigid structure and for top-level managers to throw off the shackles of filtered experiences and to get in touch with the raw data of their organizations. Legislators seemed to recognize this need as they expressed a desire to receive communication directly from the local level. A state-supported organization such as the CES must heed Gardner's advice: that a self-renewing organization must see itself as comprising self-renewing individuals. It must keep pace with the changing needs of the organization, the individuals within the organization, the clientele, and society.

Decision-making and public-relations efforts with legislators need to be a collaborative venture between the various levels of management, especially because legislators indicated their preference for personal contacts with local CES staff members and clientele. This is similar to Peters and Waterman's (1982) proposition that, when searching for excellence, one should "stay close to the customer" and Peters and Austin's (1985) concept of the adaptive organization.

Methods of communications with legislators need to be well planned and orchestrated if they are to be effective. Nonpersonal

and personal contacts need to be planned so that the appropriate method is used for the desired result--that is, nonpersonal-contact methods for detailed and technical information, and personal-contact methods to influence attitudes and values. Electronic media could be used with legislators so they would receive information as rapidly as field staff and clientele. However, participating in CES events with clientele would allow legislators to feel personally involved. This illustrates the "high tech, high touch" approach discussed by Naisbitt (1982) in Megatrends.

If local staff are to be more involved in communications with legislators, in-depth planning for staff development needs to be undertaken, particularly in view of the turnover in staff and the low age and experience level of many new staff members. The principles of adult learning espoused by Cross (1978), Knowles and Knowles (1972), and Aslanian and Brickel (1980) need to be considered in this process.

Newer, less traditional program areas, such as Natural Resources/Public Policy, need time to develop and establish an identity, in order to be perceived as important. The goals and objectives of such a program area need to be clearly defined so that the program's identity can be communicated.

From this study, it became evident to the researcher that legislators viewed the CES primarily as an agriculture-related organization. Perhaps the word "agriculture" is perceived as something tangible and measurable, unlike human development, nutrition, leadership, and public policy, which have more abstract

connotations. Perhaps agriculture is more central to legislators' lives, and they see it as a business or a livelihood and hence attach more importance to it. In addition, agriculture has many strong lobbying groups, such as the Farm Bureau, which support agricultural organizations' budget requests, which are basically nonexistent for other program areas.

In reflecting on this study and the future of CES, the researcher finds Boyle's (1989) comments in "Extension System Change: Fact or Fiction" appropriate: "We're preoccupied with existing structures and traditional linkages that blind us from seeing the Extension System [CES] as it might be."

## APPENDICES

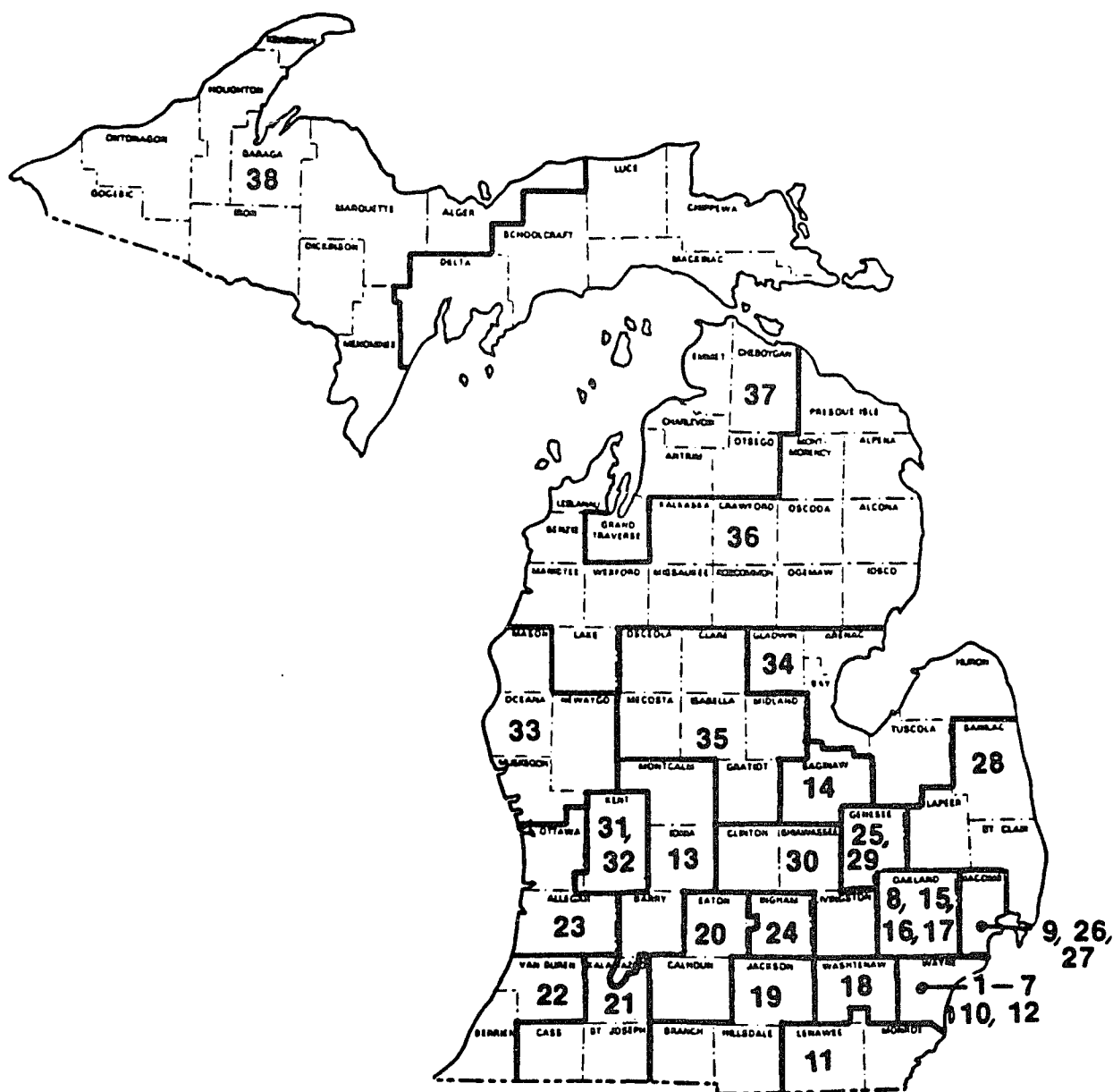


## APPENDIX A

### MAPS OF LEGISLATIVE DISTRICTS AND CES ADMINISTRATIVE REGIONS

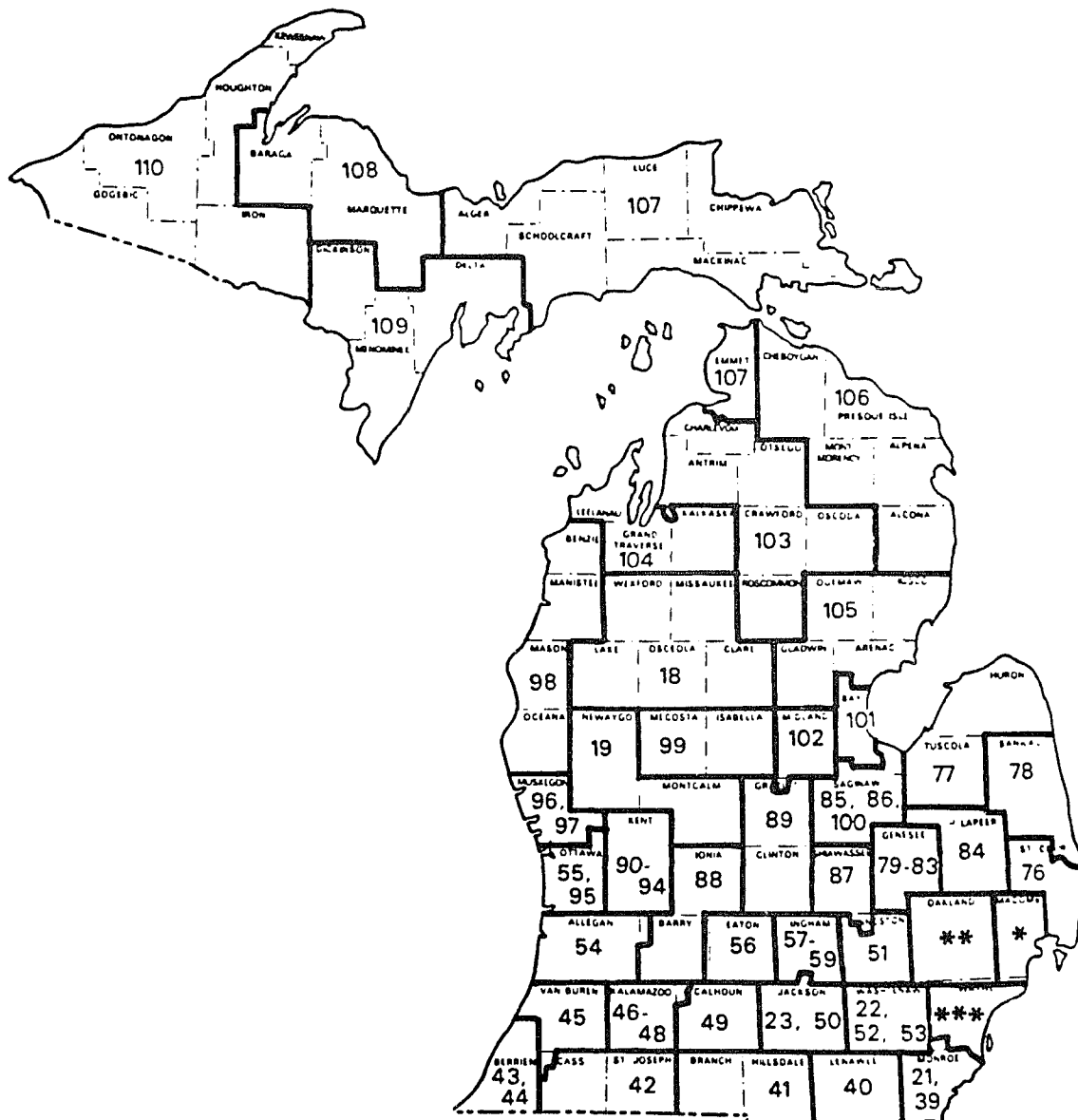
# SENATORIAL DISTRICTS

Apportionment and Districting  
Plan of 1982



# REPRESENTATIVE DISTRICTS

## APPORTIONMENT AND DISTRICTING PLAN OF 1982



\*MACOMB — DISTRICTS 25,26,70-75

\*\*OAKLAND — DISTRICTS 20,24,60-69

\*\*\*WAYNE — DISTRICTS 1-17, 27-38



## APPENDIX B

### THE INTERVIEW SCHEDULE (RESEARCH INSTRUMENT)

## PRE-INTERVIEW SCHEDULE DATA COLLECTION

## Section 0. Personal Data/Selected Factors About Michigan Legislators

1. Name of Legislator \_\_\_\_\_ Code # \_\_\_\_\_
2. Position during the 1986 Legislature  
\_\_\_\_\_ Senator \_\_\_\_\_ Representative
3. Political Party  
\_\_\_\_\_ Democrat \_\_\_\_\_ Republican
4. Legislative District Represented \_\_\_\_\_  
Counties included totally or in part in Legislator's District  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- C.E.S. Supervisory Region represented  
\_\_\_\_\_UP\_\_\_\_\_ North \_\_\_\_\_ East \_\_\_\_\_ West \_\_\_\_\_ South \_\_\_\_\_ South  
Central Central West East
5. Sex of Legislator \_\_\_\_\_  
Male Female
6. Age of Legislator \_\_\_\_\_
7. Race of Legislator \_\_\_\_\_  
White Black Indian Spanish Asian Other
8. Highest academic level completed in school:  
\_\_\_\_\_ High school  
\_\_\_\_\_ Attended college, but did not complete a degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ 4-year college graduate (name of inst. \_\_\_\_\_; major \_\_\_\_\_)  
\_\_\_\_\_ Graduate Degree Masters \_\_\_\_\_ Ph.D. \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_ Professional school graduate (ex. law school)
9. How many years has legislator served in Michigan Legislature? \_\_\_\_\_  
# years
10. Is legislator a candidate for re-election to one of the chambers of the  
Michigan Legislature? \_\_\_\_\_ Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No  
If yes, which chamber? \_\_\_\_\_
11. Has legislator served on the House/Senate Agriculture Committee? \_\_\_\_\_  
No Yes #Yrs.
12. Has legislator served on the House/Senate Higher Education Committee? \_\_\_\_\_  
No Yes #Yrs.
13. Has legislator served on the House/Senate Appropriations Committee? \_\_\_\_\_  
No Yes #Yrs.

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

A Study of Michigan Legislators' Perceptions  
of the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service

The purpose of this interview is to find out if the Cooperative Extension Service has done an effective job of communicating with you. We'll also be discussing how much contact Cooperative Extension Service has had with you/you've had with Cooperative Extension Service. In summary, this is feedback that will be valuable to Cooperative Extension Service in evaluating their communications efforts with legislators.

Section I. - Background

(Brief oral review of personal data with legislator - Section 0.)

As we start this interview, I would like to ask you a few questions about your legislative district and your background.

1. What is the percentage of urban/rural constituency make-up of your legislative district?

☐ 90% + urban  
☐ 75% urban/25% rural  
☐ 50% urban/50% rural  
☐ 25% urban/75% rural  
☐ 90% + rural

2. Where is your place of residence? \_\_\_\_\_  
Town

Would you consider it to be: ☐ Rural farm  
☐ Rural non-farm  
☐ Small town  
☐ Suburban  
☐ Urban (city)

3. Prior to becoming a Michigan legislator, what was your main occupation?  
 \_\_\_\_\_ (Record and categorize later)

4. Have you ever served in a county elected official position? ☐ No ☐ Yes  
 If yes, what position? \_\_\_\_\_ # years

5. Prior to becoming a legislator, you may have participated in various aspects of the Cooperative Extension Service such as 4-H club work, community leadership development, educational meetings, workshops, or tours, related to agriculture, horticulture, natural resources or home economics, etc. In your opinion, to what extent do you feel you were involved in Cooperative Extension Service activities?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
 Not at all    Very little    Somewhat    Involved    Highly involved

6. In what programs or activities were you involved?

Section II. - Contacts with Cooperative Extension Service

There are a number of different ways that people may come in contact with the Cooperative Extension Service. Would you estimate how frequently you had contact with the Cooperative Extension Service during the past year for each of the contact methods?

CONTACT METHOD	Not Very			
	Never (0)	Often (1 or 2 times per year)	Occasionally (3 to 5 times per year)	Frequently (6 or more times per year)
___ a. Newspaper articles about Extension programs	0	1	2	3
___ b. Radio programs	0	1	2	3
___ c. Television programs	0	1	2	3
___ d. Local Extension newsletters	0	1	2	3
___ e. Extension bulletins/publications	0	1	2	3
___ f. Visit local Extension office	0	1	2	3
___ g. Telephone local Extension office	0	1	2	3
___ h. Telephone state Extension office at M.S.U.	0	1	2	3
___ i. Visit with local Extension staff member/s	0	Once per year	Twice per year	3 or more times/year
___ j. Attend or participate in an Extension program/event	0	Once per year	Twice per year	3 or more times/year
___ k. Attend local Extension event for elected officials	0	Once per year	Twice per year	3 or more times/year
___ l. Attend VIP Breakfast at Ag. Expo (MSU)	0	Once per year		_____
___ m. Attend Legislative Breakfast for 4-H Capitol Extension Program	0	Once per year		_____
___ n. Participate in CES Legislative Tours	0	Once per year		_____
___ o. Personal contact with Extension clientele	0	1	2	3
___ p. Letters/visits from Extension clientele	0	1	2	3
___ q. <u>Others</u> (identify): _____ _____				

NOW PLEASE RANK ORDER THE FIVE MOST IMPORTANT CONTACT METHODS WITH CES, FROM YOUR VIEWPOINT. (PLACE NUMBER TO LEFT OF CONTACT METHOD.)



## SECTION III - NETWORK INFORMATION

1. During the time you have served in the legislature, to what extent do you feel you have received adequate information from the Cooperative Extension Service?

1                      2                      3                      4                      5  
Not at all           Poor           Average           Good           Excellent

2. Rank order the 3 most useful types of information you would like to receive.

\_\_\_\_ Statistics/data  
\_\_\_\_ Specific success stories  
\_\_\_\_ Broad accomplishment reports  
\_\_\_\_ County Annual Reports  
\_\_\_\_ State Annual Reports  
\_\_\_\_ Announcements of new programs  
\_\_\_\_ Other. Identify \_\_\_\_\_

3. Rank order the 3 sources from which you would prefer to receive CES information.

\_\_\_\_ County Extension offices  
\_\_\_\_ State Extension offices  
\_\_\_\_ M.S.U. Information Services  
\_\_\_\_ Legislative Research offices  
\_\_\_\_ Other. Identify \_\_\_\_\_

4. Indicate when you would prefer to receive information. (Indicate your 3 preferences.)

\_\_\_\_ At the beginning of the year  
\_\_\_\_ On a regular basis (quarterly)  
\_\_\_\_ When new programs are being developed  
\_\_\_\_ At the time the legislature is discussing issues related to Extension's expertise  
\_\_\_\_ Primarily when you request it  
\_\_\_\_ Other. Identify \_\_\_\_\_

5. Are there any comments you'd like to make regarding receiving information from C.E.S.? (Record and categorize later)

## SECTION IV -- PERCEPTION OF COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE PROGRAM THRUSTS

The definition of program thrust for this study is the direction in which the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service will focus its programming efforts.

Please rate the following statements on program thrusts in program areas of Cooperative Extension Service according to the degree of emphasis you feel they should receive. A rating of 5 indicates the topic should receive a high degree of emphasis while a rating of one indicates the topic should not receive emphasis.

Not Important	Not very Important	Of Some Importance	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important

Cooperative Extension Service should:

1. Counsel farm families faced with financial crisis.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2. Provide youth programs in leadership, citizenship, and world understanding.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3. Conduct educational programs on the management of forest resources for the economic development of Michigan.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4. Provide up-to-date information on food preservation and food safety.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5. Provide information and educational programs on pesticide safety and certification.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6. Provide youth with opportunities to enhance self-esteem and develop responsibility through relevant projects.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7. Provide information and educational programs on solid and hazardous waste management.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8. Assist low income families with wise use of their food dollars for improved nutrition.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9. Conduct educational programs that promote crop residue management and tillage systems which reduce soil erosion and improve water quality.	1	2	3	4	5	6

	Not Important	Not very Important	Of Some Importance	Important	Very Important	Extremely Important
10. Provide leadership training for adult volunteers.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11. Provide parent education and child development programs.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12. Provide information and educational programs on surface and ground water quality and non-point source pollution control.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13. Assist in regaining profitability in Michigan agriculture.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14. Assist young people with the exploration and evaluation of career and job opportunities.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15. Provide information and educational programs that will enhance the health/wellness of all family members.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16. Provide educational programs for local government officials.	1	2	3	4	5	6

In your opinion, how would you rate the overall effectiveness of the Cooperative Extension Service?

1	2	3	4	5	6
Not Effective	Slightly Effective	Somewhat Effective	Effective	Very Effective	Extremely Effective

This completes the interview questions I have for you. Are there any other points concerning the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service which we have not talked about that you feel are important to discuss?

I truly appreciate your time and cooperation.

# # #

## APPENDIX C

### SUPPLEMENTARY TABLES

Table C.1.--Interview items for each variable.

Combined Variable	Individual Variable	Section/Items
Familiarity With the CES	Frequency of nonpersonal contacts	II.a-e
	Frequency of personal contacts	II.f-k,o,p
	Prior involvement with the CES	I.5
	Legislative comm. experience	0.11b,12b,13b, I.4b
Importance/Effectiveness	Perceived importance of Ag./Marketing program thrusts	IV.1,5,9,13
	Perceived importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts	IV.2,6,10,14
	Perceived importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts	IV.4,8,11,15
	Perceived importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts	IV.3,7,12,16
	Perceived effectiveness of the CES	IV.17
	Socio-demographic/Organizational Factors	
	Age	0.6
	Educational level	0.8a
	Place of residence	I.2
	Prior occupation-Ed. related	I.3b
	Prior occupation-Ag. related	I.3d
	Position in legislature	0.2
	Political party	0.3
	Urban/rural constituency make-up	I.1
	Legislative years served	0.9
	Perceived Adequacy of Information	III.1

Table C.2.--Combined variables for importance of program thrusts/  
effectiveness of the CES.

Combined Variable	N	No. of Items	Mean <sup>a</sup>	S.D.
Average Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts	56	4	5.03	0.666
Average 4-H Youth program thrusts	57	4	4.46	0.983
Average Extension Home Economics program thrusts	57	4	4.22	0.984
Average Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts	57	4	4.44	0.836
Overall effectiveness	56	1	4.73	0.944

<sup>a</sup>Rating scale: 6 = Extremely important      3 = Of some importance  
                          5 = Very important                2 = Not very important  
                          4 = Important                                1 = Not important

Table C.3.--Combined variables for familiarity.

Combined Variable	N	No. of Items	Mean	S.D.
<sup>a</sup> Average nonpersonal contacts	60	5	1.63	0.750
<sup>a</sup> Average personal contacts	60	8	1.15	0.684
<sup>b</sup> Average prior involvement in the CES	60	1	2.85	1.482
<sup>c</sup> Average legislative comm. experience	60	4	1.95	0.832

<sup>a</sup> Scale: 3 = Frequently 2 = Occasionally 1 = Not very often 0 = Never	<sup>b</sup> Scale: 5 = Highly involved 4 = Involved 3 = Somewhat 2 = Very little 1 = Not at all
<sup>c</sup> Scale: 3 = 7-32 years 2 = 1-6 years 1 = 0 years	

Table C.4.--Average rating for adequacy of information received.

	N	No. of Items	Mean <sup>a</sup>	S.D.
Adequacy of information received	58	1	3.72	1.167

<sup>a</sup> Scale: 5 = Excellent 4 = Good 3 = Average 2 = Poor 1 = Not at all
--

Table C.5.--Legislators' ratings of importance of Agriculture/Marketing program thrusts  
(N = 57)

Item No./Program Thrust	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)						Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Cooperative Extension Service should:								
1. Counsel farm families faced with financial crisis.	1.8	--	5.3	17.5	43.9	31.6	4.97	0.999
5. Provide information and educational programs on pesticide safety and certification	--	1.8	5.3	19.3	40.4	33.3	4.98	0.954
9. Conduct educational program that promote crop residue management and tillage systems which reduce soil erosion and improve water quality	1.8	1.8	1.8	22.8	45.6	26.3	4.88	1.001
13. Assist in regaining profitability in Michigan agriculture	--	--	5.4	8.9	39.4	46.4	5.27 <sup>b</sup>	0.842

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not important                      4 = Important  
           2 = Not very important            5 = Very important  
           3 = Of some importance         6 = Extremely important

<sup>b</sup>One legislator indicated that this program thrust was too general to respond.



Table C.6.--Legislators' ratings of importance of 4-H Youth program thrusts (N = 57).

Item No./Program Thrust	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)						Mean	S.D.	
	1	2	3	4	5	6			
Cooperative Extension Service should:									
2. Provide youth programs on the management of forest resources for the economic development of Michigan	1.8	7.0	5.3	31.6	21.1	33.3	4.63	1.291	
6. Provide youth with opportunities to enhance self-esteem and develop responsibility through relevant projects	1.8	5.3	8.8	29.8	22.8	31.6	4.61	1.264	
10. Provide leadership training for adult volunteers	--	1.8	19.3	43.9	12.3	22.8	4.35	1.094	
14. Assist young people with the exploration and evaluation of career and job opportunities	3.5	5.3	15.8	33.3	22.8	19.3	4.23	1.286	

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not important  
2 = Not very important  
3 = Of some importance

4 = Important  
5 = Very important  
6 = Extremely important

Table C.7.--Legislators' ratings of importance of Extension Home Economics program thrusts  
(N = 57).

Item No./Program Thrust	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)						Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Cooperative Extension Service should:								
4. Provide up-to-date information on food preservation and food safety	1.8	1.8	12.3	45.6	24.6	14.0	4.32	1.038
8. Assist low-income families with wise use of their food dollars for improved nutrition	3.5	3.5	7.0	22.8	35.1	28.1	4.67	1.258
11. Provide parent education and child development programs	5.3	7.0	26.3	40.4	10.5	10.5	3.75	1.229
15. Provide information and educational programs that will enhance the health/wellness of all family members	3.5	3.5	15.8	40.4	24.6	12.3	4.16	1.162

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not important  
2 = Not very important  
3 = Of some importance

4 = Important  
5 = Very important  
6 = Extremely important

Table C.8.--Legislators' ratings of importance of Natural Resources/Public Policy program thrusts (N = 57).

Item No./Program Thrust	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)						Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Cooperative Extension Service should:								
3. Conduct educational programs on the management of forest resources for the economic development of Michigan	--	--	15.8	35.1	33.3	15.8	4.49	0.947
7. Provide information and educational programs on solid and hazardous waste management	--	3.5	10.5	24.6	33.3	28.1	4.72	1.098
12. Provide information and educational programs on surface and ground water quality and non-point source pollution control	1.8	1.8	14.0	22.8	35.1	24.6	4.61	1.161
16. Provide educational programs for local government officials	3.5	5.3	26.3	35.1	17.5	12.3	3.95	1.216

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not important  
2 = Not very important  
3 = Of some importance

4 = Important  
5 = Very important  
6 = Extremely important

Table C.9.--Legislators' ratings of the overall effectiveness of the CES (N = 56).

	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)						Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5	6		
Overall effectiveness of the CES	0	1.8	8.9	23.2	46.4	19.6	4.73	0.944

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not effective  
 2 = Slightly effective  
 3 = Somewhat effective

4 = Effective  
 5 = Very effective  
 6 = Extremely effective

Table C.10.--Legislators' perceptions of frequency of nonpersonal contacts with the CES during the past year (N = 60).

Contact Method	Frequency <sup>a</sup> (in %)				Mean	S.D.
	0	1	2	3		
Newspaper articles about Extension programs	10.0	20.0	41.7	28.3	1.88	0.940
Radio programs	33.3	18.3	25.0	23.3	1.38	1.180
Television programs	53.3	25.0	16.7	5.0	0.73	0.918
Local Extension newsletters	11.7	13.3	31.7	43.3	2.07	1.023
Extension bulletins/publications	10.0	11.7	36.7	41.7	2.10	0.969

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 0 = Never  
1 = Not very often (1-2 times/year)  
2 = Occasionally (3-5 times/year)  
3 = Frequently (6 or more times/year)

Table C.11.--Legislators' perceptions of frequency of personal contacts with the CES during the past year (N = 60).

Contact Method	Frequency <sup>a</sup> (in %)				Mean	S.D.
	0	1	2	3		
Visit local Extension offices	43.3	30.0	18.3	8.3	0.92	0.979
Telephone local Extension office	35.0	25.0	25.0	15.0	1.20	1.086
Telephone state Extension office	46.7	31.7	18.3	3.3	0.78	0.865
Visit with local Extension staff members	26.7	13.3	30.0	30.0	1.63	1.178
Attend or participate in an Extension program/event	23.3	35.0	26.7	15.0	1.33	1.003
Attend local Extension event for elected officials	50.0	33.3	15.0	1.7	0.68	0.792
Attend VIP breakfast at Ag. Expo (MSU)	68.3	31.7	--	--	0.32	0.469
Attend legislative breakfast for 4-H Capitol Extension Program	53.3	46.7	--	--	0.47	0.503
Participate in CES legislative tours	75.0	25.0	--	--	0.25	1.066
Personal contact with Extension clientele	25.0	18.3	38.3	18.3	1.50	1.066
Letters/visits from Extension clientele	21.7	21.7	35.0	21.7	1.57	1.064
Others	58.3	25.0	15.0	1.7	.60	0.807

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 0 = Never  
1 = Not very often (1-2 times/year)  
2 = Occasionally (3-5 times/year)  
3 = Frequently (6 or more times/year)

Table C.12.--Legislators' ratings of adequacy of information received from the CES  
(N = 58).

	Rating <sup>a</sup> (in %)					Mean	S.D.
	1	2	3	4	5		
Adequacy of Information Received	5.2	8.6	27.6	25.9	32.8	3.72	1.167

<sup>a</sup>Scale: 1 = Not at all  
2 = Poor  
3 = Average

4 = Good  
5 = Excellent

## APPENDIX D

### CORRESPONDENCE



W-629 Owen Graduate Center  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48825-1109  
June 6, 1986

<ADDRESS>

Dear <NAME>:

I am a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University and my doctoral research focuses on legislators' perceptions of the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service.

Your name has been randomly selected from a stratified sample of Michigan legislators to be included in this study. Your perceptions and responses are extremely important to the successful completion of this project. The study focuses on channels of communication between the Cooperative Extension Service and legislators as well as legislators' perceptions of the importance of various program thrusts.

Within the next few days I will be contacting you to schedule a 20-30 minute interview. You can be assured that your anonymity will be observed and that the identity of all legislators in this study will be treated in a confidential manner.

Enclosed is a letter of support for this study from Dr. Marylee Davis, Assistant Vice President for Administration of Public Affairs of Michigan State University.

Thank you in advance for your cooperation and time. I look forward to visiting with you about the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Wahl  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Adult and Continuing Education

Enclosure

## MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF STATE AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS  
484 ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

EAST LANSING • MICHIGAN • 48824-1046

June 6, 1986

<ADDRESS>

Dear <NAME>:

This letter is to introduce you to Mary E. Wahl, a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University, whose research topic is entitled "Determinants of Legislators' Perceptions of the Cooperative Extension Service."

You have been selected to be interviewed as part of this important study. The stratified sample represents legislators from rural, urban and mixed constituencies and includes a total of 68 legislators.

Ms. Wahl is keenly aware of the accelerated schedule the legislative leadership has agreed upon; however, it is most important that she meet with each legislator in the sample.

I know you will find Ms. Wahl pleasant, trustworthy and competent. You may be assured your responses will be handled with complete anonymity. In behalf of Michigan State University and the Cooperative Extension Service, we sincerely thank you in advance for your assistance.

Yours truly,

Marylee Davis, Ph.D.  
Assistant Vice President  
and  
Associate Professor  
College and University Administration

MD:bw

# House of Representatives

LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909



MAJORITY FLOOR LEADER

86TH DISTRICT  
**LEWIS N. DODAK**  
STATE CAPITOL  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
TELEPHONE (517) 373-0637

COMMITTEES ON  
HOUSE OVERSIGHT, CHAIR  
LEGISLATIVE COUNCIL

June 9, 1986

TO MY COLLEAGUES:

I would like this to serve as a letter of introduction to my constituent, Mary Wahl, who is completing her doctorate at Michigan State University.

I would appreciate your taking a few moments to allow Mary to interview you as part of her doctoral research on the topic "Determinants of Legislators' Perceptions of the Cooperative Extension Service."

Thank you for this courtesy.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Lewis N. Dodak".

LEWIS N. DODAK

LND/da

**THE SENATE**  
**LANSING, MICHIGAN**



**JAMES A. BARCIA**  
34TH DISTRICT  
STATE CAPITOL  
LANSING, MICHIGAN 48909  
(517) 373-1777

ASSISTANT MINORITY WHIP  
MEMBER  
AGRICULTURE AND FORESTRY  
STATE AFFAIRS, VETERANS, AND TRANSPORTATION  
EDUCATION AND HEALTH

June 11, 1986

Dear Colleague:

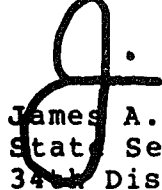
I would like to take this opportunity to respectfully ask your cooperation and assistance on behalf of Ms. Mary Wahl.

Ms. Wahl is a doctoral candidate at Michigan State University. She is currently conducting research for her thesis topic entitled "Determinants of Legislators' Perceptions of the Cooperative Extension Service." The study will focus upon channels of communication between the Cooperative Extension Service and legislators.

It would be extremely helpful to Ms. Wahl if you would grant her a few minutes of your time to be interviewed for her research. The entire interview should last no longer than twenty to thirty minutes and your participation would assist her in completing this important study.

Thank you very much for considering this request. Your cooperation and assistance is greatly appreciated.

With warm regards,

  
James A. Barcia  
State Senator  
34th District

JAB/mss/s

W-629 Owen Graduate Center  
Michigan State University  
East Lansing, MI 48825-1109  
<DATE>

<ADDRESS>

Dear <NAME>: :

Thank you very much for allowing me a few minutes from your very busy schedule to visit about your communications and contacts with the Michigan State University Cooperative Extension Service. Your participation in my doctoral research project is greatly appreciated.

Please extend my sincere appreciation to <ASSISTANT>, who was so helpful in arranging our interview time.

Besides completing my research interviews, I have learned a great deal by being at the State Legislature during this very busy time. Most of all I have gained an enormous amount of respect and admiration for state legislators and your dedication to the well-being of Michigan citizens.

Sincerely,

Mary E. Wahl  
Ph.D. Candidate  
Adult and Continuing Education

## APPENDIX E

### RESPONSES TO OPEN-ENDED INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Responses to Open-Ended Questions

**Section III--Network Information--Question 5: Are there any comments you would like to make regarding receiving information from the Cooperative Extension Service?**

Would like to be advised of CES speakers available on current and futuristic issues--such as public affairs topics.

I've had a good flow of information from the county offices in my district on a regular basis. It's very much appreciated.

O.K.

Somewhat lacking (however, my administrative assistant would receive and handle most information when it is received from CES).

Excellent because I get all I need--I don't need any!

Would like to receive annually or semiannually the Available Publications Bulletin--Don't think I've ever received one. I would like to get these out to my constituents.

Could be better!

Most CES information I receive is thrown out. I throw out all direct mail information because it is self-serving to CES.

Information I receive is on target.

It's important to get CES information to urban legislators.

I like the way CES material [information] is presented; I especially like graphs.

My best information contact is with \_\_\_\_\_, my CED [County Extension Director].

O.K.

I'd like to receive information on CES, especially programs for youth in the inner city.

At times I receive too much CES information.

I'd like more direct contact with recipients of CES programs. I get very little direct contact with CES now (I used to a few years ago when there was a black 4-H youth agent on the staff in my county).

I have never had any contact from CES except perhaps newsletters, which I don't read.

Personal contacts with constituents in my district are most important.

Please don't send more printed material!

I throw out junk mail that doesn't refer to my committee assignments. My secretary would know if I receive adequate information from CES.



**Last question: Are there any other points concerning the Michigan Cooperative Extension Service which we have not talked about that you feel are important to discuss?**

I think sometimes the CES staff members overstep their boundaries--get too involved politically such as the \_\_\_\_\_ situation. Gordie Guyer is a personal friend of mine. He did a good job. I also had a cousin of mine in the Michigan CES.

CES agents have been excellent as P.R. agents in my district. CES is used as a resource frequently by me. I think CES should expand their public (mass media) in all areas of the state. I'd especially like to see soil erosion and water-quality programming in schools.

I probably use the CES more than any other legislator.

CES needs to be more visible to state legislators, particularly the new CES State Director, and I've talked to him at MSU about this!

I'm very supportive of CES. \_\_\_\_\_, former CED in \_\_\_\_\_ County, and I were college roommates at MSU. We're still good friends. I know \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_, and \_\_\_\_\_ well. They are all three CEDs in my district.

CES needs to be visible to state legislators. Gordon Guyer did a good job with legislators. It's becoming highly competitive for state dollars, and CES must become very assertive and very visible to all legislators. It's a good program, but many legislators still don't know it exists. Also, the state may not always be able to fund CES at the present level--the county should and must do more in funding! Back in the 50s there were lots of legislators opposed to CES because they heard about "basketweaving" and that type of program. CES must be careful that doesn't happen again! CES is a very cost-effective organization. They do an excellent job with the resources they have--and I know they don't have enough dollar resources.

I really support the Cooperative Extension Service. I'm also a big supporter of the \_\_\_\_\_ County Fair and 4-H horse show. I'm always at the horse show to present a trophy to the winner.

I don't really know much about CES. I'm primarily interested in things that are related to my Judiciary Committee assignment.

CES should keep in contact with legislative aides--legislators are too busy!

CES seems to be a "sidekick" in MSU lobbying and budget presentations. The high-level MSU officials appear not to value CES. CES needs to help farm families become up-to-date in agricultural business management--that is not what it used to be. MSU has lobbyists, etc., down here at the Capitol to get what they want, but they don't mention CES. I feel this is a detriment to the Extension Service.

CES needs to create a greater awareness of its organization and programs. It needs to let legislators know how they as legislators can use CES. CES should let the public know what programs it provides and publicize them more. I'd like to receive a calendar of CES events in my county.

CES is not that big a thing in my area. Not that many people in the urban area know about it or its programs. CES should do more marketing of its organization and its programs. It should also do more P.R. with urban folks. I think they should get the county commissioners to promote CES to their constituents.

It's hard to believe one can be around here 20 years and never even run over [into] someone from CES, but I never have. I'd suggest that CES do more than just lobby the members of the Appropriations Committee!

I think that CES is probably a very effective organization, maybe even more than just effective, but I really don't know much about it.

CES is a good program, the kind that people ought to know about, but it needs to be more visible all over! I'd like to be more well rounded, and I'd like to know more about agricultural concerns. I find the early morning agricultural TV program very intriguing. I've never been exposed to problems of agriculture. I'm presently on the \_\_\_\_\_ County CES Advisory Board, but I don't get to attend meetings. I'm always in Lansing!

President DiBiaggio is going to be in my home town this Friday. I got a letter from, \_\_\_\_\_ CED, about this, and I'm going to attend.

CES contacts are all self-serving P.R.!

I've always been very impressed with the CES program and staff, both at the state and county levels. They've done a good job to keep me informed.

I serve on the \_\_\_\_\_ County Extension Advisory Board.

I'm a very strong supporter of the 4-H program. That's an excellent program.

The Extension agents I know are very competent and know their subject matter material.

Dr. Al House has done an excellent job of assisting the House [of Representatives] Taxation Committee, which I serve on. CES does an excellent job in general.

I'm very supportive of CES.

Have heard many good things about CES from my colleagues in the State Legislature, but I really don't know about it first-hand.

I really don't know much about CES, but I hate to not put in a good word for \_\_\_\_\_ [County CED].

I'm interested in knowing more about urban 4-H programs in my city.

CES is one of the best grass-roots organizations in Michigan!

CES needs more services [programs] directed toward urban youth.

I really don't know too much about CES because I serve on the Appropriations Committee, so most of my time and concerns are on the budget. I hope CES will keep those "cards and letters" coming! CES has real good material--I keep some of it, share some with my family members [sons], and send the rest to my local libraries.

I serve on the \_\_\_\_\_ County 4-H Advisory Board, but I don't get to any meetings. I'm invited to lots of events and meetings by the CES, but I never get to any. I really don't know much about CES in my district.

CES needs to relate more to new legislators. [This legislator is in his first term of office.]

CES is a good program. It's good when Extension agents make presentations to community groups such as Kiwanis, Rotary, etc. One of my Extension agents made a presentation on Agent Orange to a local community group. This topic's of interest in my district and local area.

\_\_\_\_\_ [County CED] has done a good job of keeping the three local legislators informed.

My parents [as farmers] didn't use CES like I have because they didn't need to. They didn't have the farming problems we have had in the 60s and 70s. I used CES extensively for a number of years [converting to bulk dairy tanks, etc.]. [An MSU specialist] came to my farm several times and helped us get our farming operation on target. I'll always be grateful to CES.

MSU has done a super job with the legislators, especially Jack Breslin. Jack gets what he wants out of the Legislature, whether it's needed or not! CES has gotten into too many areas it shouldn't be involved in. [It was obvious that this legislator believed the main CES area should be agriculture.]

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