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AUTHOR Drabick, Lawrence W.  
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## ABSTRACT

The occupational and educational expectations of high school seniors in 1970 were compared to those of seniors in 1963. Data were obtained in 1963 for 1,200 seniors and in 1970 for 3,100. Both samples were from North Carolina high schools, although the 1970 sample had a much larger urban component and included non-public school students. The measurement techniques included an arbitrary dichotomization based on a modification of the North-Hatt scale and the ability to name the college which the student planned to attend in the fall. Analysis of data was limited to percentages of students with high expectations. The major findings were: (1) the proportion of males with high occupational expectation increased from rural, through village, to urban residence in 1970; (2) expectation was slightly greater for females from village than urban residence in 1970; (3) there was greater increase for males than for females in 1970; and (4) educational expectations followed the same trends as occupational expectations. Data were presented in tabular form. Comparisons with other studies were given in narrative form. (NQ)



## SOME ECLECTIC CONSIDERATIONS REGARDING STUDENT EXPECTATIONS

Lawrence W. Drabick, North Carolina State University

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In this paper I concern myself with aspects of the occupational and educational expectations of high school seniors. Of necessity limited by the time restriction, I shall address myself basically to four items: (1) the occupational and educational expectations of a sample of North Carolina high school seniors in 1970; (2) a comparison of these with the expectations of a similar 1963 sample; (3) comparisons of these data with findings obtained elsewhere; and (4) some thoughts regarding theoretical ramifications of the data.

The more recent data were obtained in the spring of 1970 from approximately 3100 students. The older data were obtained from about 1200. Other differences are that the 1970 sample included students from some of the larger cities in North Carolina, had a much larger urban component, and included students from non-public schools.

I am dealing here with the expectations rather than the aspirations of the students. The basic data breakdown is between those who had high expectations and those who did not. For occupations this constituted an arbitrary dichotomization based on a modification of the North-Hatt scale, using a prestige level of 70 as the division point. For education, the ability to name the college which the student planned to attend in the fall constituted the differential. I recognize the weaknesses in these measurement techniques, but note that they were empirically verified.

### Analysis and Findings

The analysis of data presented here is limited to the percentages of students who expressed high expectation. While tentative, this technique accomplished my present purpose. Contingency tables utilizing multiple variables show a depreciation from the sample due to non-response in the categories.

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At least half of each male residence category indicated high occupational expectation in 1970 as did approximately half of the village and town females (Table 1). The proportion of males with high occupational expectation increased from rural, through village, to urban residence. Females indicated the same tendency, with the exception that expectation was slightly greater for village than for urban residents. Male expectation was considerably greater than that of females in each residence category.

In comparison with 1963, the residence trends were quite constant. However, male expectation exceeded that of females in each category in 1970 whereas they had not in 1963. The greatest disparity in the seven year interim was the great increase in the proportion of respondents with high expectation. The increases characterized both males and females but were considerably greater for males.

Educational expectation followed the same trends as had occupational (Table 2). The proportion naming a college increased across all residence categories except for open country and urban females. Male expectations were greater than that of females. Comparison with 1963 showed rather large increases for males in each residence category. The overall trend was for increased levels of expectation, reflected across the residence categories in the expected pattern.

The major perceived source of influence upon the respondent's occupational expectation continued to be the mother, who was nominated slightly more frequently by the 1970 sample (Table 3). Other major sources were teachers, friends, and father, with mostly minor variation between the two samples. Urban respondents named parents more frequently than did open country respondents in both samples. Siblings were named even less frequently in 1970 than in 1963.

Most 1970 respondents considered their parents to be in agreement with the expected occupation (Tables 4 and 5). 1963 respondents had perceived their parents as less enthusiastic and somewhat more frequently opposed. Urban

respondents consistently perceived their parents more frequently in agreement than did open country students, in each sample. The general impression of parental agreement is quite overwhelming, although one might question the attitudinal frame producing the response. Initially, one tends to reject the "alienation" theories so common at the time these data were collected. On second thought, one concludes that a kind of arrogance on the part of the students, independence if you will, could have been responsible for the findings. Unfortunately, no conclusion can be drawn from these data.

Each sample was in agreement that prior education had exerted meaningful influence upon their occupational expectation (Table 6). Approximately half considered the influence to be great, with the bulk of the remainder indicating important effect. Any difference between the two samples appears to reside in the slightly greater tendency of the 1970 sample to minimize educational influence. The basic response component remains a definite recognition of positive educational effect.

As had been the case regarding occupation, the mother was recognized as the major influence upon educational decision, and by even larger proportions (Table 7). Open country respondents in the 1970 sample were considerably more aware of the mother's influence than had been true in 1963. Recognition of the father's influence was greater for both residence categories in 1970 while that of teachers was less, notably so for urban students. Sibling influence continued to be weak, with that of brothers depreciating for the 1970 sample. Parents and teachers continued to be major sources of influence, while that of friends was greater for the urban sample in 1970.

Parents were perceived in agreement with the educational decision by most of the 1970 respondents, about equally for mother and father (Tables 8 and 9). The increase in perceived parental agreement was quite large between 1963 and 1970, being most pronounced for open country students. While a tenth of the

1963 sample had perceived parents as opposed to the educational decision, this figure was more than halved in 1970.

Half of the 1970 sample considered their education to have had great influence upon their consequent educational decision (Table 10). Slightly fewer urban students said so than had in 1963, with somewhat more open country students of this belief. If any trend is discernible it would be that a slightly greater proportion considered previous education to have had little or no influence upon their decision, a factor more noticeable among urban than rural students.

We turn now from findings which were analyzed in a residence context to some with other, and rather familiar, bases.

Notably fewer blacks than whites in the 1970 sample had high occupational expectations (Table 11). This is consistent with findings of many studies but contrary to my 1963 data, although proportions with high expectation had increased for each racial category in the interim. In 1963 black females had greater occupation expectation than did black males. In 1970 this condition had reversed and males of each race exceeded proportions of females with high occupational expectations, while black female expectation was less than in 1963.

The situation with regard to educational expectation was almost exactly duplicated (Table 12). The exception is that the proportion of black students with high educational expectation was less in 1970 than in 1963. One could worry about that finding, and could get very curious to know whether it is replicated elsewhere. Otherwise, white expectations exceed those of blacks, those of males exceed those of females, there was an increase in white expectation, and a large depreciation in expectation of black females - a fact accounting for the gross black expectational decline since those of black males increased slightly.

My 1963 data had established Bayer's (1969) later conclusion that marriage plans (or intentions) of students were correlated with their educational expectations. Likewise, I had determined that a similar relationship inhered for occupational plans (Table 13). It was as true for the entire sample as it was for males and females, and continued in the 1970 data as persuasively as it had in 1963. The basic difference between the two samples already has been established - the later sample had greatly increased expectation. The net outcome of this was that even those with early marriage intent had high occupational expectation, a condition most notable among males, but quite obvious for females also.

Essentially the same condition obtained regarding the relationship between marriage plan and educational expectation (Table 14). The sole exception being that females in the 1970 sample who expected late marriage did not contain as great a number with high educational expectation as had been true in 1963. Otherwise, expectation of marital delay was associated with increased expectation; and the proportion with expectation of advanced educational attainment was considerably greater in 1970 than in 1963.

These data also indicate a relationship between the student's expectation to migrate and occupational expectation (Table 15). Those who expect to leave the community in which they were living at the time of interview contained a much greater proportion with expectation of participating in occupations of high prestige. This was true in 1963 as well as in 1970, but the variation was greater at the later date. The only trend difference between the two samples was that 1970 nonmigrants contained a lesser proportion with high expectation than was true in 1963.

A nearly identical pattern obtained between migration and educational expectation (Table 16). Migrants had higher expectation, expectation of 1970 nonmigrant females was less than that of the 1963 counterpart, and the

proportion of migrant females with high expectation was greater than that of migrant males. The latter condition was reversed only for 1970 male occupational expectation.

The last table (Table 17) is not so defensibly demographic as the preceding, but contains information I consider important as well as compelling. My 1963 data had indicated variation in reasons for entry into the expected occupation which was associated with sex and race. While the majority of all respondents indicated a general interest to have led them to their choice, males were much more apt than females to indicate a desire for material reward to have influenced their decision, females expressed reasons indicative of altruism more frequently than did males, blacks expressed altruistic reasons more often than did whites, and a surprisingly large proportion of black females noted altruistic reasons. Somewhat similar patterns obtained in 1970. The amount of general interest response depreciated considerably, perhaps indicating increased comprehension of the occupational marketplace. Material reward response increased markedly, indicating potentials better speculated upon than proclaimed at this time. Males continued to express more reward motivation than did females. The proportion of altruistic response increased among whites and decreased among blacks, although black response in this category continued to lead that of whites sex for sex. "Other" response, a residual category embracing numerous motivations, increased dramatically, probably indicating a more diversified outlook upon life.

#### Comment

Some comment, basically in the form of summary, is obvious. Males continue on the whole to have greater expectation than do females, although this is not an unqualified statement for either sample. Rural residents continue to have lesser expectations, within our context, than do urban residents. Black



expectation is, in the 1970 sample, less than that of whites and therefore more consistent with general findings and theory.

Other comment, perhaps no less obvious nor summary, may be related more directly to previous research and/or questions by others interested in this field of endeavor. For example, it seems indisputable a la Bayer that marriage plans are negatively related to both occupational and educational expectation. Bayer showed this to be true even with student aptitude and socioeconomic background controlled, a condition supported by other analysis of my 1963 data (Drabick, 1965). The 1963 data support Bayer's contention that the effect is greatest for females, but the condition appears to have been reversed in the 1970 sample.

Kuvlesky, in a paper presented to the Rural Sociological Society's Research Committee in 1969, noted a paucity of aspirational research based upon theory. I would claim that theoretical implications of the relationship between marriage intent and expectation are obvious and potentially comprehensive. The relationship lends itself to theories of the middle range with ease, and may even meet Kuvlesky's request for more broadly gauged theoretical applications. Further, it contains within itself the potential for interdisciplinary approaches utilizing motivational and perceptual theory from social psychology, and economic theories in addition to the sociological implications inherent in the relationship.

I would like to continue with some thoughts from Kuvlesky's paper as I conclude these comments. Remaining for the moment with the desirability of theoretically based expectational research, I would contend that the observed relationship between migration intent and expectation, strong for both occupation and education for both sex and race categories, has basic and essential theoretical implications. While the data as presented here only hint at the potentials for theoretical ramification, it seems certain that such investigation would be not only possible, but profitable and productive.



I believe, in other words, that we have a multi-facted basis for conforming with the mandate for theoretically-based research into expectation extended by Kuvlesky. On the one hand, a mature discipline demands theoretically based research. On the other, preliminary empirical data provide substantive rationale for belief that it would be possible and meaningful.

Citing Merton re integrated sets of aspirations, Kuvlesky notes the possibility that rationally ordered sets of goal levels exist across a number of status areas and criticizes the tendency of researchers to treat various expectations as discrete items. There is some evidence in these data to support his position, but other which appears to refute it. In the latter vein, the proportions of respondents with high occupational and educational goals are quite different, a variance noted also in the sex and race findings. A rational ordering of sets of priorities would seem to indicate the necessity of correspondence between educational and occupational expectation. It is part of the prevalent mythology that good jobs are dependent upon advanced education. The timing of these studies particularly supports such a contention, unless one believes the respondents to have been prescient. On the other hand, it is necessary to bear in mind that educational expectation here is limited to a four year college. We know nothing about the junior college, tech school and other such plans of the respondents. This information might create additional correspondence between occupational and educational plans.

Supporting the potential existence of sets of rationally ordered goal levels is the data contained in Tables 13-16. If we conclude rational ordering to mean a similar effect upon expectation of variant type of a given intellectual or emotional commitment or condition, then the fact that marital expectation and migration intent factors caused similar expectational patterns across type of expectation, race, and sex would seem to be evidence of patterning.

The idea of patterning constitutes a hypothesis-developing inductive field. Data to investigate it can be developed, perhaps along the lines initiated here. It seems appropriate that effort of such nature should be undertaken.

Kuvlesky also commented regarding the advisability of doing longitudinal studies. While sample memberships noted in these studies consist of different individuals, they do provide opportunity to present for investigation responses of similar groups to what was essentially the same interview schedule administered in basically the same situation. Neglecting for the moment the possibility that response variation may be a consequence of methodological error, the findings seem to have some merit analogous to those of longitudinal research. Further, they provide some apparent, if not real, answers to additional questions raised in the Kuvlesky paper. It would seem that Slocum's contentions, for example, regarding a rise in the expectations of farm youth are borne out, along with increases in the expectations of nonfarm youth. In other words, there appears to have been a youthful revolution of expectation, if that term is not pre-empted nor passe. Further, rural-urban differentials in expectation could be assumed to be real, rather than artifacts, by virtue of the fact that they remained evident over a period of time and in the face of increasing expectations.

However, this latter thought must be cast in a context of the social change to which members of the latter sample have been exposed, a condition which incidently provides opportunity to comment on Lipset's theory regarding the effects of differential role model and occupational exposure upon the expectations of rural youth. A search for an explanation of the observed differences incorporates social changes to which this sample has been exposed as well as those which may be more generic. The time period under study has seen great alterations in North Carolina: increased urbanization and industrialization; introduction of new industrial forms and technology; basic changes in the

nature and inclusions of the educational enterprise and an expansion of vocational education programs; fundamental changes in both attitudes and relationships about and between the races; a great deal of immigration with much of it coming from outside the south. One consequence of all this is that all youth in North Carolina have been directly exposed to a much expanded and diverse set of role models and to an increasing variation in the local industrial array, which could be expected to affect their expectations. Additionally, the indirect factors of communication and transportation changes undoubtedly have played their well-known consciousness-expanding role as well.

While the net results, namely increased occupational and educational expectation, are evident, the consequence has been to create more questions than are answered. The potentials for additional research, and ultimate increased knowledge seem to have increased rather than diminished. To the extent that there is light at the end of the tunnel, it is provided by the increasing evidence that expectational research need not be limited to discrete empirical studies, but is indeed amenable to integrated, longitudinal studies based in acceptable and developed theory.

Table 1. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high vocational expectation, male and female, by residence.

		Open Country	Village	Town
<u>1963</u>	Male	28.4 (296)	39.0 (82)	37.9 (103)
	Female	31.7 (376)	43.8 (89)	41.5 (171)
	Total	30.2 (672)	41.5 (171)	40.1 (274)
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<u>1970</u>	Male	50.1 (451)	64.3 (112)	69.7 (552)
	Female	34.6 (508)	50.5 (95)	48.0 (586)
	Total	41.9 (959)	58.4 (207)	58.5 (1138)

Table 2. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high educational expectation, male and female, by residence.

		Open Country	Village	Town
<u>1963</u>	Male	19.3 (296)	36.6 (82)	35.9 (103)
	Female	24.7 (376)	33.7 (89)	44.2 (104)
	Total	22.3 (672)	35.1 (171)	40.1 (207)
<hr/>				
<u>1970</u>	Male	30.5 (509)	39.5 (129)	48.8 (629)
	Female	20.9 (549)	43.7 (103)	36.7 (674)
	Total	25.5 (1058)	41.4 (237)	42.5 (1303)

Table 3. 1963-1970 comparison, source of influence upon vocational expectation, in per cent, by residence.

	Source	Open Country	Town
		(228)	(69)
<u>1963</u>	Mother	21.9	24.6
	Father	12.7	17.4
	Sister	7.5	5.8
	Brother	7.0	7.3
	Other Relative	13.2	4.4
	Friend	14.5	14.5
	Teacher	14.0	20.3
	Other	9.2	5.8
		(752)	(945)
<u>1970</u>	Mother	25.7	28.2
	Father	14.4	15.5
	Sister	4.4	4.7
	Brother	4.8	3.1
	Other Relative	6.5	6.4
	Friend	16.4	16.5
	Teacher	19.3	16.4
	Other	8.6	9.4

Table 4. 1963-1970 comparison, mother's attitude toward vocational expectation, by residence.

	Attitude	Open Country	Town
		(617)	(184)
<u>1963</u>	Agrees	34.9	41.9
	Accepts	59.8	54.4
	Opposed	5.4	3.8
		(1026)	(1232)
<u>1970</u>	Agrees	85.8	88.1
	Accepts	12.6	9.7
	Opposed	1.7	2.2

Table 5. 1963-1970 comparison, father's attitude toward vocational expectation, by residence.

	Attitude	Open Country	Town
		(590)	(164)
<u>1963</u>	Agrees	29.8	34.2
	Accepts	64.9	62.8
	Opposed	5.3	3.1
		(957)	(1103)
<u>1970</u>	Agrees	85.4	87.4
	Accepts	11.7	9.3
	Opposed	2.9	3.3

Table 6. 1963-1970 comparison, influence of education upon vocational expectation, by residence.

	Influence	Open Country	Town
		(637)	(192)
<u>1963</u>	Great deal	48.4	54.2
	Some	35.8	30.2
	Very little	10.2	8.8
	None	5.7	6.8
<hr/>			
		(1061)	(1288)
<u>1970</u>	Great deal	49.1	48.4
	Some	30.2	30.2
	Very little	14.6	15.8
	None	6.1	5.6



Table 7. 1963-1970 comparison, source of influence on educational expectation, in per cent, by residence.

	Source	Open Country	Town
		(198)	(90)
<u>1963</u>	Mother	36.4	46.7
	Father	13.6	12.2
	Sister	4.6	5.6
	Brother	4.6	5.6
	Other Relative	4.6	3.3
	Friend	8.6	2.2
	Teacher	19.2	21.1
	Other	8.6	3.3
		(829)	(1088)
<u>1970</u>	Mother	44.6	46.7
	Father	18.9	22.7
	Sister	4.6	4.2
	Brother	3.7	3.4
	Other Relative	3.7	3.0
	Friend	7.8	7.9
	Teacher	13.2	8.7
	Other	3.4	3.3

Table 8. 1963-1970 comparison, mother's attitude toward educational expectation, in per cent, by residence.

	Attitude	Open Country	Town
		(611)	(183)
<u>1963</u>	Agrees	32.1	50.8
	Accepts	54.0	37.2
	Opposed	13.9	12.0
		(987)	(1244)
<u>1970</u>	Agrees	82.6	86.1
	Accepts	13.2	10.1
	Opposed	4.3	3.9

Table 9. 1963-1970 comparison, father's attitude toward educational expectation, in per cent, by residence.

	Attitude	Open Country	Town
		(586)	(165)
<u>1963</u>	Agrees	25.1	37.0
	Accepts	63.8	54.6
	Opposed	11.1	8.5
		(927)	(1116)
<u>1970</u>	Agrees	81.1	86.8
	Accepts	13.2	9.4
	Opposed	5.7	3.8

Table 10. 1963-1970 comparison, influence of education upon educational expectation, in per cent, by residence.

	Influence	Open Country	Town
		(634)	(197)
<u>1963</u>	Great deal	46.7	59.0
	Some	30.1	28.9
	Very little	11.5	7.6
	None	11.7	4.6
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		(1023)	(1290)
<u>1970</u>	Great deal	50.2	56.1
	Some	25.1	23.3
	Very little	17.0	14.3
	None	7.6	6.4

Table 11. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high vocational expectation, male and female, by race.

		White	Black
<u>1963</u>	Male	31.6 (291)	32.0 (197)
	Female	29.0 (328)	45.6 (252)
	Total	30.2 (619)	39.6 (449)
<hr/>			
<u>1970</u>	Male	64.7 (765)	53.7 (350)
	Female	46.1 (774)	38.6 (435)
	Total	55.4 (1539)	45.4 (785)

Table 12. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high educational expectation, male and female, by race.

		White	Black
<u>1963</u>	Male	21.3 (291)	32.0 (197)
	Female	20.1 (328)	41.7 (252)
	Total	20.7 (619)	37.4 (449)
<hr/>			
<u>1970</u>	Male	44.1 (862)	32.8 (405)
	Female	32.9 (819)	27.2 (507)
	Total	38.6 (1682)	29.7 (912)

Table 13. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high vocational expectation, male and female, by marriage intent.

	Marriage Intent	Male	Female	Total
<u>1963</u>	Early	14.3 (91)	15.6 (263)	15.3 (354)
	Intermediate	28.5 (151)	47.1 (191)	38.9 (342)
	Late	43.3 (224)	70.6 (109)	52.3 (333)
<u>1970</u>	Early	44.5 (263)	26.2 (604)	31.7 (867)
	Intermediate	67.4 (313)	61.9 (362)	64.4 (675)
	Late	68.7 (409)	62.4 (170)	66.8 (579)

Table 14. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high educational expectation, male and female, by marriage intent.

	Marriage Intent	Male	Female	Total
<u>1963</u>	Early	9.9 (91)	11.8 (263)	11.3 (354)
	Intermediate	19.9 (151)	39.3 (191)	30.7 (342)
	Late	36.6 (224)	58.7 (109)	43.8 (333)
<u>1970</u>	Early	19.0 (295)	15.5 (657)	16.6 (952)
	Intermediate	45.9 (355)	49.6 (389)	47.9 (744)
	Late	55.6 (471)	46.8 (188)	52.4 (659)

Table 15. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high vocational expectation, male and female, by migration intent.

	Migration Intent	Male	Female	Total
<u>1963</u>	Yes	37.1 (251)	39.8 (347)	38.6 (598)
	No	27.7 (217)	31.8 (214)	29.7 (431)
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<u>1970</u>	Yes	64.8 (855)	50.1 (930)	57.1 (1785)
	No	47.6 (422)	27.9 (470)	37.2 (892)

Table 16. 1963-1970 comparison, percentage of high educational expectation, male and female, by migration intent.

	Migration Intent	Male	Female	Tot.
<u>1963</u>	Yes	29.1 (251)	34.0 (347)	31.9 (598)
	No	22.1 (217)	23.4 (214)	22.7 (431)
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<u>1970</u>	Yes	44.8 (949)	54.0 (700)	48.7 (1649)
	No	26.8 (493)	19.4 (505)	23.1 (998)

Table 17. 1963-1970 comparison, reason for expected vocation, in per cent, male and female, by race.

Reason	White		Black	
	Male	Female	Male	Female
<u>1963</u>	(271)	(315)	(167)	(232)
General	78.2	78.1	72.4	60.8
Reward	15.1	7.6	15.6	4.7
Altruism	1.8	9.8	10.2	33.2
Other	4.8	4.4	1.8	1.3
<u>1970</u>	(897)	(861)	(477)	(622)
General	52.2	59.1	47.6	54.2
Reward	20.2	10.3	19.7	9.3
Altruism	4.8	11.9	6.7	17.0
Other	22.9	18.7	26.0	19.5