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APPROVAL

of a thesis submitted by

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This paper has been read by each member of the thesis committee and has been found to be satisfactory regarding content, English usage, format, citations, bibliographic style, and consistency, and is ready for submission to the College of Graduate Studies.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

This paper addresses the attitudes and perceptions of employers in Baker, Montana toward selected aspects of cooperative education. This was done to provide information to the Marketing Advisory Committee of Baker High School.

The distributive education program at Baker High School was established in 1965. At the present time many businesses who formerly employed cooperative education students are no longer doing so. Some employers have never participated in the program. This survey documents and compiles results to provide insight and improve the cooperative education program.

During the past four years, students have been released to work without being enrolled in the cooperative education program. During the 1984-85 school year, 11 students were released in this manner. In addition, 11 students were also enrolled in the marketing program and seven of these students were employed. All 11 of the marketing students were seeking employment.

In recent years, the number of students seeking employment through the cooperative education program ranged from 10 to 25. Some of the students in the Marketing class were not working in jobs related to their interest or were not working at all. The writer was aware that a greater number of students were able to be employed in

earlier years. He became interested in this study and was unsure of the reasons why students were having difficulty finding employment today.

Statement of the Problem

The educational effectiveness of cooperative education programs is dependent upon the participation of the employers. In order to improve the participation of the employers and the relationship between the school and the employers, this study was designed to answer the following questions:

1. How many sales-related jobs are available to cooperative education students?
2. Do employers have a positive perception of the cooperative education program?
3. What types of training do employers find desirable for entry-level employees?

Need for the Study

Any cooperative organization must accomplish two objectives if it is to be successful. First, the organization must accomplish the purposes of the organization. Secondly, the individual motives of the parties cooperating must be satisfied. This study was needed to determine if the employers perceived the cooperative education program as useful and if the program did in fact provide the types of training desirable for entry-level workers.

The small size of the community makes Baker unique from other Montana schools offering cooperative education programs. The training

stations that are available must be developed because the situation of being able to select only the best training stations is not present. Also, in order to accommodate the number of students desiring cooperative education, new training stations must be developed. An understanding of employer attitudes and perceptions of cooperative education will assist the coordinator in developing those new training stations. The development of those stations must be done properly because "a program to be classified as vocational, must have the essential ingredients which make it accountable." (Mason and Haines, 1972:13) An employer willing to provide a meaningful educational training station is one of those essential ingredients.

Cooperative Marketing Education does not enjoy wide acceptance in the state of Montana. There are only 18 marketing programs in a state with hundreds of secondary public schools. Edgar Morphet, Roe L. Johns, and Theodore L. Reller (1974:70) state, "It is assumed that any formal organization must fulfill its purposes at least to the extent required by its environment or it will cease to exist or be substantially restructured." This research was needed to insure the cooperative education program in Baker was fulfilling its purpose. This research was also designed to publicize the marketing education program so that it would be better accepted in the community, determine the attitudes of employers regarding marketing education, and determine the number of employers interested in aiding the program.

There is a need for the cooperative education program to have more and better training stations. This research attempted to fill

this need by: (1) gaining an understanding of the attitudes and perceptions of Baker businesses, (2) determining the interest of employers in the program, (3) learning what training opportunities exist in Baker, and (4) determining the type of knowledge or abilities that are desirable for entry-level employees.

Limitations of the Study

The following limitations were placed on this study:

1. Only the retail businesses located in Baker, Montana were surveyed.
2. Participating businesses were limited to those capable of providing sales-related employment.
3. The review of literature was limited to the Montana State University Library and the library of the staff of the Business Education and Office Systems Department at Montana State University.
4. The review of literature was limited to publications of the years 1973 to 1984.

Definition of Terms

The definitions which follow are generally accepted for cooperative education programs and are provided to assist the reader. These definitions have been taken from various educational sources.

1. Cooperative Education: A plan for achieving instructional goals within a particular occupational curriculum through a training station and in-school related instruction. (Mason, 1972:97)

2. Employers: Persons providing or capable of providing opportunities for supervised educational experiences. (Mason, 1972:102)

3. Marketing Education: A plan of instruction designed to prepare students for initial entry jobs in areas of Marketing. (Mason, 1972:107)

4. Training Station: A cooperating business, industry, or government with the ability to provide the opportunities for those supervised educational experiences which prepare the student for the intended career objective. (Mason, 1972:102)

Organization of the Study

This research project is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is the statement of the problem, the need for the study, the limitations of the study, the definition of terms, and the organization of the study.

Chapter two includes a review of literature related to employer's attitudes and perceptions toward cooperative education.

Chapter three is a review of the procedures used in completing this project. This chapter covers the sources of data, design of the survey instrument, administration of the survey instrument, and the compilation and analysis of the data.

Chapter four contains the results of the study. Findings of the questionnaire are presented and analyzed.

Chapter five summarizes the study. It includes the conclusions and recommendations of this research project and recommendations made by the researcher.

Chapter 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The purpose of this chapter was to examine research which took into consideration employer's attitudes and perceptions toward cooperative education.

Research differs as to whether employers are useful in providing input for marketing programs. "There is some evidence that non-practitioners can effectively evaluate a cooperative education program." (Bowman, 1979:318) Program evaluation, if this is true, can benefit by including employers. Keen Carter's study (1972:1184A) disagreed with this. He concluded "Training sponsors are not able to effectively evaluate Distributive Education teachers performance of critical tasks." The writer felt employer's attitudes and perceptions to be useful and pursued this review of literature.

The information presented is general in nature and covers employer's attitudes and perceptions in a variety of situations.

Employer's Attitudes and Perceptions Toward Cooperative Education

JAMES KEETON STUDY (1975:5779-A)

James Keeton prepared 28 selected objectives of Cooperative Vocational Education. Twenty-four of twenty-eight objectives were agreed upon by employers and coordinators. Employers did not agree that student-learners should be paid at least the prevailing rate for

beginning workers and students in cooperative vocational education should be prepared to work without supervision. In addition, employers believed that present training plans are of little value in developing competencies by the student. Neither employers or coordinators were convinced that the cooperative vocational education program provided the maximum potential benefit for the employer.

DAVID JACOBS STUDY (1973:3078-A)

Data was collected from Arizona employers and coordinators of cooperative education programs and an analysis was prepared of their actual and ideal perceptions as they related to administrative procedure and student attainment. He found significant differences in: (1) factors related to successful coordinators, (2) coordinator contacts and evaluation calls, (3) value of materials, (4) placement procedures, (5) activity priorities, (6) coordinator activity, (7) employer participation, (8) scheduling of students, (9) entry level characteristics and (10) interest levels.

WILLIAM THEODORE STUDY (1977:4127-A)

Mr. Theodore attempted to identify program elements and their levels of fulfillment in Oregon community college cooperative education programs which are essential if the success of an employer's contribution to a student's training is to be reasonably assured. Results indicated substantial differences existed among Oregon's training sponsors and coordinators regarding their perceptions of concern, expectation and expectation fulfillment. The program element

judged highest in expectation by both groups of respondents stated that both suitable academic experience and practical work experience are necessary to develop well rounded students who are prepared for employment. The element scored as least beneficial by the training sponsors and their companies concerned receiving recognition for their participation in work experience programs.

TARRY SLUSHER STUDY (1974:5023-A)

This study described employer attitudes and policies toward cooperative education in the greater Houston area. The purpose of the study was to: (1) develop a profile of employer attitudes and policies, (2) determine differences between large and small employers as to salary, benefits, definition of Cooperative Education, retention of coop graduates, support of coop from management, and objectives of management in using coop from one work period to the next, and (3) determine relationships existing between starting salaries and length of time an employer has employed cooperative students and types of industry/business fringe benefits offered. Large and small employers were in agreement with the intent of cooperative education. The length of time an employer had employed cooperative students did not affect the starting salaries offered.

WANDA MARTIN STUDY (19:2143-A)

This research attempted to determine differences of opinions among participating employers, previous-participating employers, and non-participating employers concerning cooperative vocational education. An analysis indicated the opinions of these groups were

basically the same. It was suggested additional research be conducted to assess if variations do exist between the three employer groups.

MARY KLAURENS EDITORIAL (1984:3)

Ms. Klaurens stated "We must improve our image among business employers." Her concerns included paying close attention to placement standards, utilization of training plans, and demonstrating that program completers excel in job performance attitudes and abilities. She perceived this to be important because "there have been some statements in the media that indicate employers have negative attitudes toward cooperative education."

RICHARD D. FOSTER, JOHN E. ELIAS, AND CLIFTON L. SMITH STUDY
(1983:30)

The purpose of this study was to measure the perception of marketing and distributive education on the secondary level as perceived by parents of marketing and distributive education students, marketing and distributive education students, training sponsors, secondary school teachers, school administrators, and secondary school counselors. The researchers found in their review of literature that, in general, different populations have different perceptions depending upon their values and their experiences with the organization, institution, or program. The findings revealed that marketing and distributive education was perceived positively by the six populations participating in the study, but each perceived the concepts differently. These differences indicated some confusion about the goals of marketing and distributive education as each population

perceived the program according to their experience or contact with the program. One finding showed that training sponsors, teachers, and administrators had a lower perception of work experience than did the students. The researchers concluded that for marketing and distributive education to improve its image, a common goal or purpose must be developed and understood by all those who have contact with the program.

JOHN E. ELIAS AND BARRY L. REECE ARTICLE (1978:19)

The writers suggested that employers have a more positive attitude and give greater support to specialized marketing programs rather than general distributive education programs. They believed business people were more interested in training people for their own industry than for marketing in general.

DON SODERQUIST ARTICLE (1978:60)

Mr. Soderquist indicated there has been a loss of recognition for distributive education. This was evidenced by reports from the private sector.

ROY D. HENDERSON ARTICLE (1979:20)

Mr. Henderson discussed the lack of public recognition and visibility for distributive education. He suggested that before beginning a promotional program, educators must determine what the general public opinion of distributive education is at this time. He stressed that this survey should not be given to just employers and students, but should include the general public.

CHRIS STROTHER ARTICLE (1983:14)

This article examined the importance of involving the community in the marketing and distributive education program. It is helpful to the program if the community groups perceive that your school is their school. There is a definite need to utilize sources outside those traditionally supplied for the classroom.

WILLIAM M. CRISP ARTICLE (1981:15)

Mr. Crisp, sales administrator for Kinney Shoe Corporation, indicated that business and education have trouble working together because business leaders perceive educators are not interested in business involvement. He suggested it is important for educators to bring businesses into the classroom to acquaint them with the educational "feeling."

ELINOR F. BURGESS ARTICLE (1984:5)

The author discussed the resurgence of interest in public education by the business community. Businesses have not turned their backs on public education, but their interest is now more general. This reinforces the view of marketing educators that quality education results when schools and communities join hands in the process.

MARY K. KLAURENS ARTICLE (1980:18)

Ms. Klaurens stressed the importance of employers having positive attitudes and perceptions of marketing education. she maintained that the difference between a part-time job and a learning experience comes

from the support given by top management, operating managers, supervisors, and co-workers.

DR. STEPHEN LUCAS AND DR. BENTON MILES ARTICLE (1979:21)

The writers stated that the distributive education teacher should involve other individuals in the evaluation of his or her program. The employer is a strong advocate for a better program. Involving the employer in the evaluation process can be a powerful tool that can bring about positive action for the distributive education program.

JOHN L. MILLER STUDY (1974)

John Miller surveyed Billings' businesses to determine how many retail stores participating in cooperative distributive education planned to continue, interest in participating in the cooperative distributive education program, and in what areas of distribution they could assist with in training cooperative education students. He concluded the majority of employers would or might be interested in a cooperative distributive education program, and the learning experiences the firms stated they could offer student-learners they might employ would benefit all concerned by providing better educated and adjusted future employees.

NORMAN E. HAGEN STUDY (1974)

Mr. Hagen asked employers to rate cooperative education students on traits and areas of the cooperative business education program which could be improved. Employers' ratings were favorable indicating positive attitudes and perceptions of the program.

CHARLES KOON STUDY (1973)

Charles Koon surveyed employers of cooperative distributive education students about coordination practices and employer preferences. He recommended, among other things, implementation of an annual survey of participating employers to provide general overall data to trends on coordination practices, employer involvement, and employer opinions on program activities and effectiveness.

Summary

This chapter gave the reader an overview of research concerning employers' attitudes and perceptions. The importance attached to understanding employer attitudes and perceptions is shown by the amount of research in this area. The findings of these studies do not always support one another but, in general, show support for the use of employer feedback to strengthen cooperative education programs.

Chapter 3

PROCEDURES

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the following: (1) employer attitudes and perceptions toward cooperative education, (2) the number of sales-related jobs available to cooperative education students, and (3) the types of training employers find desirable for entry level employees.

The purpose of this chapter is to describe the procedures followed in completing the study. The chapter will (1) define the sources of data, (2) examine the construction of the questionnaire, (3) indicate how the questionnaire was administered, and (4) examine the procedures used in the analysis of the data.

Sources of Data

The data for this study were obtained from owners and managers of businesses with sales-related employees in Baker, Montana during the spring of 1985. The businesses were selected by the writer on the basis of whether the business employed sales-related employees in the marketing area. As Baker is a small community, the writer included all businesses capable of providing cooperative marketing employment. The study included businesses who had not participated in the program, but were thought to be able to provide training stations.

Data for the review of literature was obtained from the Roland R. Renne Library, Montana State University; and from the library of the Business Education and Office Systems Department at Montana State University. The Dissertation Abstracts International and Marketing and Distributive Educators' Digest were among the major sources of research information. The Master of Science in Business Education professional papers of Richard Darsaw, John Miller, and Charles Koon were helpful in preparing portions of the questionnaire.

Construction of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was designed to obtain information from the employers. This survey instrument was developed by the writer in July of 1980 with the help of Dr. Daniel Hertz and the business research class composed of fellow graduate students. It was subsequently changed and refined by the writer and his Marketing Advisory Committee in the spring of 1985.

The questionnaire contained questions relating to the following areas:

1. What is the position of the respondent?
2. How many part-time sales and sales-related employees are currently employed in the respondent's business?
3. Does the respondent fully understand the cooperative education program?
4. Does the respondent perceive cooperative education as a worthwhile community-school program?

5. Does the respondent perceive cooperative education as teaching students skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for entry-level employment?
6. Does the respondent believe school instruction and on-the-job training should be based upon the student's career goal?
7. Is the respondent interested in aiding in classroom instruction?
8. Has the respondent participated in the cooperative education program in the past or is the respondent interested in participating?
9. What types of knowledge or abilities does the respondent find desirable in entry-level employees?
10. What types of learning experiences could the respondent offer to a cooperative education student?

A majority of the questions asked for a yes or no response.

Questions to determine the attitudes and perceptions of employers were selected subjectively by the writer based on past conversations with members of the Marketing Advisory Committee. No neutral answers were allowed to prevent employers from selecting a convenient category. The writer avoided using terms that might not be familiar to the employer.

Administration of the Questionnaire

Those businesses with sales or sales-related employees were approached in person by the writer. In most cases, the questionnaires were filled out immediately and given to the writer. If the

employer was busy, the writer returned at a later time to collect the survey. In this way, the employer could fill out the questionnaire at his or her leisure. If after the third personal visit the questionnaire was not completed, the writer left a stamped, self-addressed envelope with the potential respondent.

The writer selected 32 businesses he felt to be suited to provide training stations for his Marketing class. During the first visits beginning on June 3, 1985, 19 or 59 percent of the respondents completed the questionnaire immediately. Six questionnaires were completed when the writer returned for a second visit on June 10. One more survey was collected during a third visit on June 13. The remaining six potential respondents were given a stamped, self-addressed envelope to send in the questionnaire. By June 23, two more questionnaires were received by mail. Four businesses had not mailed in their surveys. Twenty-eight of 32 questionnaires were returned and a 87 percent return had been achieved.

Analysis of Data

The primary purpose of this study was to determine attitudes and perceptions of Baker employers toward selected aspects of cooperative education. Information was gathered on their feelings toward cooperative education, the number of potential jobs for cooperative education students, the employer's interest in assisting the program, the type of knowledge or abilities employers feel desirable in entry-level employees, and the types of learning experiences available in the Baker community.

After three weeks, the survey was terminated and responses for each question were tabulated. The results of the survey are reported in table format in Chapter 4. An examination was made of the number of replies to each question and the percent of total responses to each reply.

Chapter 4

RESEARCH FINDINGS

Introduction

This chapter contains the findings of the study. Findings of the questionnaire, which was delivered to 32 businesses in Baker, Montana, are presented and analyzed. (See Appendix B, for a complete list of the surveyed businesses.)

The primary objective of the survey instrument was to gather information concerning perceptions and attitudes of Baker employers toward selected aspects of cooperative education. Also, information was sought on the number of part-time sales and sales-related jobs available in the Baker community, the types of training available in the community, the types skills and abilities that employers consider desirable, and the interest of employers in assisting with instruction of students.

The questionnaire contained fifteen questions, eleven of which were yes or no and four called for the respondent to fill in the blank. Ample room was left for respondents to write in answers when none of the choices were applicable to them.

Questionnaires were returned by 28 of 32 businesses in Baker, Montana. The information contained in the 28 completed questionnaires is presented and analyzed in the tables and explanatory paragraphs

which follow. The respondent's answers are grouped in the tables according to the type of firm.

Presentation of Data

1. WHAT IS THE POSITION OF AUTHORITY OF THE PERSON
RESPONDING TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE?

Table 1

TYPE OF FIRM	OWNER	MANAGER	OTHER	TOTAL
Auto Parts	1	1		2
Clothing	3		1	4
Convenience	1	1		2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	1	1		2
Hardware	1	1		2
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber		2		2
Pharmacy	1	1		2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station		3		3
Tire Store		1		1
Variety Store	1			1
TOTALS	16 (57%)	11 (39%)	1 (4%)	28 (100%)

Of the 28 respondents that returned the questionnaire, 16 (57 percent) were owners of the business. Eleven (39 percent) of the respondents were managers. The remaining questionnaire (4 percent) was filled out by a president. The information is contained in Table 1.

2. WHAT IS THE CURRENT NUMBER OF PART-TIME SALES AND SALES
RELATED EMPLOYEES IN YOUR STORE UNDER THE AGE OF 18?

Table 2

TYPE OF FIRM	FEMALES UNDER 18	MALES UNDER 18	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL EMPLOYEES
Auto Parts				
Clothing	2		2	4
Convenience	1			1
Floral	1			1
Furniture				
Grocery		4		4
Hardware				
Jewelry			1	0
Lumber	.			
Pharmacy				
Restaurant	7			7
Service Station		2		2
Tire Store				
Variety Store				
TOTALS	11	6	3	19

Of the 28 respondents, 25 completed the question asking the number of males and females under the age of 18 employed in sales or sales-related positions. Of the 28 respondents, 11 females are employed in six of the businesses. Six males were employed in three of the respondent's businesses. As shown in Table 2, three businesses did not respond to the question. Of the 25 businesses responding, nineteen part-time sales and sales-related positions currently exist. Nine of 28 respondents (32 percent) reported employing males or females under 18 years of age leaving 19 (68 percent) who did not employ people in this category. The majority of young people were employed in restaurants (37 percent), clothing stores (21 percent), and grocery stores (21 percent).

3. DO YOU FULLY UNDERSTAND THE COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM?

Table 3

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	1	1		2
Clothing	4			4
Convenience	1	1		2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	2			2
Hardware	1	1		2
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber	1	1		2
Pharmacy	1	1		2
Restaurant	3	1		4
Service Station	2	1		3
Tire Store		1		1
Variety Store		1		1
TOTALS	19 (69%)	9 (31%)	0	28 (100%)

Table 3 shows the replies to the question concerning if the respondents fully understand the cooperative education program. It revealed 19 (69 percent) indicated a full understanding of the program and 9 (31 percent) indicated they did not fully understand the program.

4. IS COOPERATIVE EDUCATION A WORTHWHILE
COMMUNITY-SCHOOL PROGRAM?

Table 4

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	2			2
Clothing	4			4
Convenience	2			2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	2			2
Hardware	2			2
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber	2			2
Pharmacy	2			2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station	3			3
Tire Store	1			1
Variety Store	1			1
TOTALS	28 (100%)	0	0	28 (100%)

All (100 percent) of the respondents perceived cooperative education as a worthwhile community-school program as shown in Table 4.

5. DO YOU FEEL BAKER HIGH SCHOOL SHOULD OFFER A
COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM?

Table 5

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	2			2
Clothing	4			4
Convenience	2			2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	2			2
Grocery	2			2
Hardware	1			1
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber	2			2
Pharmacy	2			2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station	3			3
Tire Store	1			1
Variety Store			1	1
TOTALS	27 (96%)	0	1 (4%)	28 (100%)

The person completing the questionnaire was asked whether Baker High School should offer a cooperative education program (Table 5). Twenty-seven (96 percent) said yes and one (4 percent) did not respond.

6. DO YOU FEEL COOPERATIVE EDUCATION STUDENTS LEARN
NECESSARY SKILLS, ATTITUDES, AND COMPETENCIES
NECESSARY FOR ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYMENT?

Table 6

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts			2	2
Clothing	4			4
Convenience	2			2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	2			2
Hardware	2			2
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber	2			2
Pharmacy	1		1	2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station	3			3
Tire Store	1			1
Variety Store			1	1
TOTALS	24 (86%)	0	4 (14%)	28 (100%)

Over three-fourths (24 of 28) of the respondents indicated they felt cooperative education students learn necessary skills, attitudes, and competencies that are necessary for entry-level employment. Four (14 percent) of the respondents did not respond. One of the non-respondents commented that employers generally take advantage of a cheap labor opportunity.

7. SHOULD SCHOOL INSTRUCTION AND ON-THE-JOB TRAINING
BE BASED UPON THE STUDENT'S CAREER GOAL?

Table 7

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	1		1	2
Clothing	4			4
Convenience	1	1		2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery		2		2
Hardware	1			1
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber	2			2
Pharmacy	2			2
Restaurant	2	2		4
Service Station	1	1	1	3
Tire Store			1	1
TOTALS	16 (57%)	8 (19%)	4 (14%)	28 (100%)

More than half (16 of 28) of the respondents answered yes when asked if school instruction and on-the-job training should be based upon the student's career goal. Eight (29 percent) responded negatively and four (14 percent) did not respond. One of the respondents commented that students might not have a career in mind at that time.

8. WOULD THE RESPONDENT BE INTERESTED IN AIDING
IN CLASSROOM INSTRUCTION?

Table 8

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts		2		2
Clothing	1	3		4
Convenience		2		2
Floral	1			1
Furniture		1		1
Grocery		2		2
Hardware		1	1	2
Jewelry		2		2
Lumber		2		2
Pharmacy	2			2
Restaurant	1	3		4
Service Station		3		3
Tire Store	1			1
Variety Store	1			1
TOTALS	7 (25%)	20 (71%)	1 (4%)	28 (100%)

Only seven (25 percent) of the respondents indicated an interest in giving assistance to the classroom instruction. A vast majority, 71 percent (20 of 28) said they were not interested in aiding in instruction. One of those responding with a no indicated no time as the reason. One (4 percent) did not respond to the question.

9. HAVE YOU EMPLOYED COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
STUDENTS IN THE PAST?

Table 9

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	2			2
Clothing	1	3		4
Convenience	1	1		2
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	2			2
Hardware	1	1		2
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber		2		2
Pharmacy	2			2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station	3			3
Tire Store		1		1
Variety Store	1			1
TOTALS	20 (71%)	8 (29%)	0	28 (100%)

Question 9 was asked to determine the number of respondents who had employed cooperative education students in the past. Twenty (71 percent) of the respondents had employed cooperative education students and 8 (29 percent) had never employed cooperative education students.

9A. DID THE RESPONDENTS PLAN TO HIRE COOPERATIVE
EDUCATION STUDENTS IN THE FUTURE?

Table 10

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	2			2
Clothing		1		1
Convenience	1			1
Floral	1			1
Furniture	1			1
Grocery	1		1	2
Hardware		1		1
Jewelry			1	1
Lumber				0
Pharmacy	1		1	2
Restaurant	4			4
Service Station	3			3
Tire Store				0
Variety Store	1			1
TOTALS	15 (75%)	2 (10%)	3 (15%)	20 (100%)

As shown in Table 9, 20 respondents had employed cooperative education students. Table 10 shows 15 (75 percent) intend to hire cooperative education students in the future. Two (10 percent) did not plan to hire cooperative education students in the future, and 3 (15 percent) did not respond to the question. One respondent who did not respond yes or no to the question did comment that he/she would be interested in hiring if business picked up.

9B. DID THE RESPONDENTS EMPLOY COOPERATIVE EDUCATION
STUDENTS WHO HAD BEEN UNSATISFACTORY?

Table 11

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts	1	1		2
Clothing		1		1
Convenience			1	1
Floral		1		1
Furniture		1		1
Grocery		2		2
Hardware	1			1
Jewelry	1			1
Lumber				0
Pharmacy		1	1	2
Restaurant	2		1	4
Service Station	2		1	3
Tire Store				0
Variety Store		1		1
TOTALS	8 (40%)	8 (40%)	4 (20%)	20 (100%)

Table 11 shows that of the 20 respondents who had employed cooperative education students, 8 (40 percent) indicated that at some time they had employed unsatisfactory cooperative education students. Eight (40 percent) had never employed unsatisfactory cooperative students. Four (20 percent) of the respondents did not answer this question.

9C. DID THE ACTIONS OF UNSATISFACTORY COOPERATIVE
EDUCATION STUDENTS AFFECT THE RESPONDENT'S
PARTICIPATION IN THE PROGRAM?

Table 12

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts		1		1
Clothing				0
Convenience				0
Floral				0
Furniture				0
Grocery				0
Hardware	1			1
Jewelry		1		1
Lumber				0
Pharmacy				0
Restaurant		3		3
Service Station		2		2
Tire Store				0
Variety Store				0
TOTALS	1 (13%)	7 (87%)	0	8 (100%)

As shown in Table 11, 8 respondents indicated having employed unsatisfactory cooperative education students. Table 12 shows that one (13 percent) of the respondent's participation was affected. Seven (87 percent) of the respondents indicated that employing unsatisfactory cooperative education students did not affect their participation in the program.

9D. IS THE RESPONDENT INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING IN A COOPERATIVE EDUCATION PROGRAM IN THE FUTURE?

Table 13

TYPE OF FIRM	YES	NO	NO RESPONSE	TOTAL
Auto Parts				0
Clothing		1	11	3
Convenience		1		1
Floral				0
Furniture				0
Grocery				0
Hardware		1		1
Jewelry				0
Lumber	1		1	2
Pharmacy				0
Restaurant				0
Service Station				0
Tire Store	1			1
Variety Store				0
TOTALS	2 (24%)	3 (38%)	3 (38%)	8 (100%)

Eight of the 28 respondents had not employed cooperative education students in the past. Two (24 percent) indicated that they had an interest in participating in a cooperative education program. Three (38 percent) had no interest in participating in the cooperative education program. Three (38 percent) did not respond to the question. In addition, 10 of the 20 respondent who had employed cooperative education students responded to the question indicating interest in participating in the program in the future. One respondent commented that students were not employed because they were usually not old enough to sell alcohol. Another respondent stated the reason for no interest in the cooperative education program was due to the downturn in the local economy.

10. WHAT TYPES OF KNOWLEDGE OR ABILITY DOES YOUR FIRM
FIND DESIRABLE FOR ENTRY-LEVEL EMPLOYEES?

Table 14

KNOWLEDGE OR ABILITY	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Knowledge of Receiving and Marking Goods	20	71%
Knowledge of Stocking Merchandise	22	79%
Knowledge of Display	19	68%
Knowledge of Advertising and/or Promotions	9	32%
Ability to Sell	23	82%
Ability to Run a Cash Register	25	89%
Knowledge of Customer Credit Procedures	11	39%
Ability to Relate to Customers	28	100%
Ability to Use the Telephone	24	86%
Knowledge of Buying and Ordering	5	18%
Knowledge of Pricing	10	36%
Knowledge of Inventory Control	18	64%
Knowledge of Shipping and Delivery	10	36%
Knowledge of Safety Procedures	20	71%
Knowledge of Store Security	12	43%

Table 14 gives the number of respondents and the percentage of the total respondents indicating the knowledge or ability as desirable. More than three-fourths indicated knowledge of stocking merchandise, ability to sell, ability to run a cash register, and ability to use the telephone as desirable. All (100 percent) of the respondents checked ability to relate to customers as desirable. The least desirable knowledge was the knowledge of buying and ordering. One of the respondents commented that most young people could not stock parts for his firm because they could not read and arrange consecutively large part numbers, especially if letters are used in the part numbers. Another respondent indicated that the ability to divide and multiply without pencil and paper was desirable.

11. WHAT TYPES OF LEARNING EXPERIENCES COULD YOUR
FIRM OFFER TO A STUDENT-LEARNER?

Table 15

LEARNING EXPERIENCE	NUMBER OF RESPONSES	PERCENTAGE
Receiving Goods	21	75%
Stocking Merchandise	26	93%
Display	22	79%
Sales Advertising and/or Promotions	7	25%
Selling	22	79%
Cash Register Operation	23	82%
Customer Credit Procedures	14	50%
Customer Relations	24	86%
Telephone Usage	24	86%
Buying and Ordering	9	32%
Pricing	15	64%
Shipping and Delivery	10	36%
Safety Procedures	21	75%
Store Security	14	50%

Table 15 indicated the types of learning experiences Baker businesses could offer to cooperative marketing education students. The number of respondents and the percentage of total respondents indicating an ability to offer each type of learning experience is shown. The types of learning experiences most often checked were stocking merchandise (93 percent), cash register operation (82 percent), customer relations (86 percent), and telephone usage (86 percent). The two learning experiences least indicated were buying and ordering (32 percent) and sales advertising and/or promotions (25 percent).

Several of the respondents commented at the end of the questionnaire. Below is a sample of comments:

"At the present time we have sufficient help."

"It is debatable if we could afford to employ any additional help on a regular schedule."

"Students should be placed as Juniors so they are available over a two year period. This would benefit the employer, but would enable the student to acquire a much more rounded experience during the employment. One year does not afford much training with limited hours."

Chapter 5

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

The research project was undertaken to determine the attitudes and perceptions of employers in Baker, Montana toward selected aspects of cooperative education, the number of part-time sales-related jobs available, the types of training employers would be able to provide cooperative education students, and the knowledges and abilities employers find desirable in entry-level employees. The specific questions answered as a result of this study were:

1. How many sales and sales-related jobs were available to cooperative education students?
2. Do employers have a positive perception of the cooperative education program?
3. What types of training do employers find desirable for entry-level employees?
4. What types of learning experiences are available to cooperative education students in the Baker community?

Questionnaires were given to 32 Baker businesses. Twenty-eight were returned and an 87 percent return was achieved. The information contained in the 28 returned questionnaires was tabulated and analyzed in Chapter IV. From the information received, this researcher was able to make the following summary, conclusions, and recommendations.

Summary

The summary of the major findings of the study is listed below and on the following page.

1. Fifty-seven percent of the respondents were owners of the firms surveyed. Thirty-nine percent of the respondents were managers.
2. Thirty-two percent of the respondents currently employ persons under 18 years of age on a part-time basis. A total of 19 jobs were reported.
3. Thirty-one percent of the respondents reported they did not fully understand the cooperative education program.
4. Every respondent perceived cooperative education as a worthwhile community-school program.
5. Almost all (27 of 28) of the respondents felt Baker High School should offer cooperative education.
6. More than three-fourths (24 of 28) of the respondents felt cooperative education students learned skills, attitudes, and competencies necessary for entry-level employment.
7. Over half (16 of 28) of the respondents thought instruction and on-the-job training should be based upon the student's career goal.
8. One-fourth of the respondents indicated an interest in aiding classroom instruction.
9. Seventy-one percent of the respondents had employed cooperative education students in the past.

10. Seventy-five percent of the respondents who had previously employed cooperative education students intended to hire students again at some time in the future.

11. Forty percent of the respondents who had employed cooperative education students had employed unsatisfactory students.

12. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents who had employed unsatisfactory cooperative education students did not feel it affected their participation in the program.

13. Twenty-four percent of the respondents who had never employed cooperative education students indicated an interest in doing so in the future.

14. Nine of the 15 knowledges and abilities were marked as desirable by 50 percent or more of the respondents.

15. Fifty percent or more of the employers indicated twelve of the 15 learning experiences could be offered if they were to employ a cooperative education student.

Conclusions

The conclusions drawn from this research project are as follows:

1. Depending on marketing enrollment, there may be limited employment possibilities related to the student's career objective.

2. Although a majority of Baker employers indicated a full understanding of the cooperative education program, a majority of Baker employers also disagreed that instruction and on-the-job training should be based upon a student's career goal. It is questionable that employers do fully understand the cooperative education program,

and in fact only perceive they fully understand it. It is not known why a majority of employers have no interest in aiding classroom instruction, but the participation would help employers to better understand the cooperative education program.

3. Employers currently perceive cooperative education as a worthwhile community-school program. However, due to the current downturn in the local economy, some employers are unable to provide training stations to support the program.

4. The current marketing curriculum appears to be relevant to local needs.

5. There is an abundance of learning experiences available with Baker businessmen.

6. Overall, the cooperative education program is positively perceived by employers and should be maintained.

Recommendations

The writer makes the following recommendations in regard to the cooperative education program offered at Baker High School:

1. The cooperative education coordinator should promote the contacts made with respondents of the questionnaire to increase public relations for the cooperative education program.

2. The cooperative education coordinator should maintain a close examination of local jobs and concentrate placing cooperative education students in those jobs.

3. The cooperative education coordinator should continue to educate employers about the cooperative education program.

4. The cooperative education coordinator should maintain the positive image of the cooperative education program.

5. Baker High School should continue to offer the cooperative education program.

6. The cooperative education coordinator should continue to teach skills, attitudes and competencies for entry-level employees.

7. Although the cooperative education program is perceived positively, employers differ in their perceptions. School personnel should educate the employers about the importance of basing class instruction and on-the-job instruction upon a student's career goal.

8. A program should be undertaken to show employers the satisfaction received in sharing their knowledge with young people. This could be accomplished by having employers as guest speakers or by using the employer's businesses for a field trip.

9. A program should be developed to closely screen cooperative education applicants in hopes that fewer unsatisfactory students will be allowed to be placed in training stations.

10. School personnel should follow up on employers interested in employing cooperative education students.

11. Knowledges and abilities that were highly desirable to Baker employers should be included in the marketing curriculum.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

COOPERATIVE EDUCATION EMPLOYER QUESTIONNAIRE

Purpose: The purpose of this questionnaire is to survey the attitudes and perceptions of Baker employers toward Cooperative Education.

Introduction: Before filling out this questionnaire, one clarification must be made. In the past, the Cooperative Education program has been referred to by many names. Consider DECA, D.E., Distributive Education, and Marketing to be synonymous with Cooperative Education.

Name of Business: _____

1. Are you the: ☐ Owner ☐ Manager ☐ Other (specify) _____
2. What is the current number of part-time sales and sales-related employees in your store?

☐ Female under the age of 18 ☐ Male under the age of 18
3. I fully understand the Cooperative Education program. ☐ yes ☐ no
4. Cooperative Education is worthwhile community-school program. ☐ yes ☐ no
5. Do you feel Baker High School should offer a Cooperative Education program? ☐ yes ☐ no
6. Do you feel cooperative Education students learn necessary skills, attitudes, and competencies that are necessary for entry-level employment? ☐ yes ☐ no
7. Should school instruction and on-the-job training be based upon the student's career goal? ☐ yes ☐ no
8. Would you be interested in aiding in classroom instruction? ☐ yes ☐ no

9. Have you employed Cooperative Education students in the past? ☐ yes ☐ no

If yes: Do you plan to hire students in the future? ☐ yes ☐ no

Have you had cooperative Education students who have been unsatisfactory? ☐ yes ☐ no

If Yes: Did the actions of that student adversely affect your participation in the program? ☐ yes ☐ no

If no: Would you be interested in participating in such a program in the future? ☐ yes ☐ no

10. Check the type of knowledge or ability which your firm would find desirable for entry-level employees.

☐ Knowledge of receiving and marking goods
☐ Knowledge of stocking merchandise
☐ Knowledge of display
☐ Knowledge of advertising and/or promotions
☐ Ability to sell
☐ Ability to run a cash register
☐ Knowledge of customer credit procedures
☐ Ability to relate to customers
☐ Ability to use the telephone
☐ Knowledge of buying and ordering
☐ Knowledge of pricing
☐ Knowledge of inventory control
☐ Knowledge of shipping and delivery
☐ Knowledge of safety procedures
☐ Knowledge of store security
☐ Other (please specify) _____

11. Check the types of learning experiences your firm could offer if you were to employ a student-learner.

☐ Receiving goods
☐ Stocking merchandise
☐ Display
☐ Sales advertising and/or promotions
☐ Selling
☐ Cash register operation
☐ Customer credit procedures
☐ Customer relations
☐ Telephone usage
☐ Buying and ordering
☐ Pricing
☐ Inventory control

- ___ Shipping and delivery
- ___ Safety procedures
- ___ Store security
- ___ Other (please specify) _____

APPENDIX B

LIST OF PARTICIPATING FIRMS

Anfinson's Inc.	J & A Store
Baker Drug Company	Larry's Service Center
Baker Furniture	Lawler Drug
Baker Trustworthy Hardware	M & H Tire Company
Ben Franklin	Mona's Floral
Cellar Pizza	Midland Lumber Inc.
DD's Super Value	Randash Motors/NAPA Supply
Eilek's Ready Wear	Reynold's Supermarket
Farmer's Union Oil Company	Russell's Clothing
Four Seasons Restaurant	Samsell's Clothing
Fullerton Lumber Company	Talk of the Town Restaurant
Groshan Jewelry	Seven-Eleven
Hanewald & Sons Clothing	Valley Motor Supply
Husky Service	Willa's Cafe/Cue & Brew