ABSTRACT

WIGGINS, MARY CASSANDRA. Family and Consumer Sciences Field Faculty's Perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Orientation Training. (Under the direction of Paula Berardinelli and J. Conrad Glass).

The purpose of this descriptive-correlational study was to determine North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NCCE) Family and Consumer Science (FCS) field faculty's perceptions of the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training for new NCCE FCS field faculty. It also examined relationships that existed between personal and professional attributes and the perceptions of the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training.

The population of the study was 118 NCCE FCS field faculty, and a census was used in gathering the data. A web-based/ mail questionnaire was developed to measure the NCCE FCS field faculty's perceptions of "the availability and or accessibility of ", "applicability of content" and "importance of content" in the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training. The questionnaire was reviewed by NCCE county directors with FCS programming responsibilities for face validity. Cronbach alpha was used to establish reliability.

A final response rate of 79% was achieved. The data were analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), Davis (1971) conventions and NUD•IST qualitative data analysis software.

The study revealed that NCCE FCS field faculty considered the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training to be beneficial. The respondents concluded that the NCCE FCS departmental orientation be a combination of face-to-face and on-line training.

FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES FIELD FACULTY'S PERCEPTIONS OF NORTH CAROLINA COOPERATIVE EXTENSION'S DEPARTMENT OF FAMILY AND CONSUMER SCIENCES ORIENTATION TRAINING

DISSERTATION

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By

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DEDICATION

This study could not have been completed without the support, encouragement, and prayers provided by my mother, Marguerite T. Wiggins. She was always there as a pillar of strength at the right moments. In addition, I thank my sisters, family and very dear friends for providing me the guidance, inspiration, and determination to accomplish my goals and fulfill my dreams. I dedicate this study to the most important people in my life, my mother, sisters, family and friends.

BIOGRAPHY

Mary Cassandra Wiggins (Sandy), daughter of Marguerite T. Wiggins and the late Cabot Gordon Wiggins, is a native of Wayne County, North Carolina and the youngest of eight daughters. She received her bachelor’s degree in home economics education from Appalachian State University, a master’s degree in adult and community college education from North Carolina State University with a minor in family relations and child development from East Carolina University. Her career has been devoted to education, during which she has been a home economics Extension agent in Tyrrell, Johnston, Wilson and Wake Counties with North Carolina Cooperative Extension. For the past seven years she has been an Extension Associate Specialist for environmental housing and health with North Carolina Cooperative Extension at North Carolina State University. She has served as an officer and board member of several professional associations. In her spare time, she enjoys outdoor activities such as sailing, hiking, the beach and traveling, as well as history of other cultures and genealogy.

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Chapter 1

INTRODUCTION

North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NCCE) is an outreach effort of the two land-grant universities, North Carolina State University (NCSU) and North Carolina Agricultural &Technical State University (NCA&T). North Carolina Cooperative Extension's mission is "to help individuals, families, and communities put research-based knowledge to work to improve their lives" (Richardson, 2000, p.1). This organization has field faculty (Extension agents) located in Extension centers in each of the 100 counties and the Cherokee Indian Reservation, as well as Extension specialists located at NCSU, at NCA&T, and in research stations in various parts of the state. Each center has field faculty representing the following educational program areas: Family and Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, Agriculture and Natural Resources, and Community and Rural Development.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension has professional assistants, associates, technicians, and support staff on both the state and county levels. There is also a statewide Advisory Leadership System comprised of 25,000 volunteer leaders. NCCE receives its funding from seven sources: the federal government (13%), the state government (36%), state contracts and grants (11%), the county government (22%), county contracts and grants (12%), sales and service (5%), and foundations (1%) (CALS Business Office, 2002).

Professional development is an integral part of the field faculty career development plan. Extension field faculty have educational degrees ranging from bachelor to doctoral degrees and, as agents of change, they are challenged to continually improve and further their own knowledge, skills, and abilities to serve their individual needs and those of the Extension Organization.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension is currently facing numerous challenges which may affect professional development, including:

- Shrinking budgets—a deficit of $1.8 million per year for fiscal years 2000-2002
- Competition for non-mandated funds—placing NCCE in competition with public school systems
- Reduction in force—which has been most significant on the county level
- Continuing to be effective as a role model for 'The Engaged Institution' program of collaboration and partnering with numerous agencies and organizations within the communities. (Ort, 2000).

Statement of the Problem

The researcher has ascertained that no research investigating participants' perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences' orientation training offered to new Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty has been conducted. Orientation of all new Extension state and field faculty/staff is a major function of the Personal and Organizational Development Unit. New employees, though not mandated, are encouraged to participate in the new Extension state and field faculty/staff orientation during the first year of employment. In addition, the departments of Family and

Consumer Sciences, 4-H Youth Development, and Horticulture provide an additional two to three days of orientation training for their new field faculty during the first year on the job. Participation in the departmental orientations is not mandated, but field faculty are strongly encouraged to attend.

As stated in the fact sheet, *Orientation Training for New County Extension Field Faculty* (1998), the Extension Education Unit works cooperatively with District Directors and Department Extension Leaders to establish departmental orientation. The departmental orientations are coordinated by the County Extension Director, the District Extension Director, and the appointed coordinator from within the departments. The new field faculty are encouraged to attend but not mandated to participate in the department's orientation training.

Extension faculty and staff are confronted with the dilemma of understanding the multiple roles, relationships, and responsibilities that produce high anxiety among new hires. Although many new field faculty are technically skilled in their respective subject matter areas, many recent graduates do not have a background in education and do not have previous experience with the Cooperative Extension Service. Among the Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty hired during the past five years, 63% have no education background, and 45% have no previous experience. (CALS Personnel Files, 2000-2002).

The role of the FCE field faculty has changed dramatically during the past ten years. Prior to 1986, the focus was on general topics such as family and human development, food preservation, house furnishings, budgeting, etc. which required the FCS field faculty to have a bachelor of science degree in home economics education or a related field A significant shift occurred in 1987 when, in some counties, the role of the FCS field faculty shifted from being very general to highly specialized. As documented in the four-year-long range plan of work , NC Cooperative Extension's *People Plan 87* (p. 28), the FCE focus shifted to environment, health and wellness, health effects of proper nutrition, community and leadership development, public policy, gerontology, affordable and accessible housing, family issues, child development and care and management of family resources, etc In 2002, the major educational programming areas are: family resource management, foods and nutrition, health, housing, human development, and leadership development.

There has been a decline in the number of college graduates in the field of Family and Consumer Sciences during the past decade. North Carolina Cooperative Extension is in competition with the public school system in the hiring of Family and Consumer Sciences college graduates. NCCE is currently hiring individuals from a variety of disciplines including registered dieticians, public health educators, and sociologists. (CALS Personnel Files, 2000-2002).

Research Problem

Zimmer and Smith (1992), cite that "building helping relationships is very important in the professional development of new workers. Most organizations use an orientation training to assist with the process of blending personally and professionally into the organization. New employees can be the new life and energy of an organization. Nurturing this energy is critical if organizations want to assist new field faculty in reaching their potential and at the same time preventing them from becoming overwhelmed" (p. 2).

One of the most significant phases of staff and human development resource management is that of properly orienting and socializing new workers to an organization. According to Buford and Bedeian (1988), orientation is the process that introduces newly hired persons to their jobs, superiors, and peers. All new employees for any organizational position are entitled to, and most often expect, some form of orientation or induction training. The primary focus of this research project is to study the NCCE Family and Consumer Sciences departmental orientation training for new FCS field faculty. The outcomes will support recommendations the future.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the North Carolina Cooperative Extension's FCS field faculty's perceptions of the annual FCS departmental orientation training. The study will attempt to explore Extension Family and Consumer Education orientation training for new FCE field faculty.

Research Questions

The research questions formulated to achieve the purposes of this study include:

1. What effect do the perceptions of the NCCES FCS field faculty have on the availability and/or accessibility of the FCS new field faculty orientation training?
2. What effect do the perceptions of the NCCES FCS field faculty have on the importance of the content of the FCS new field faculty orientation training?
3. What effect do the perceptions of the NCCES FCS field faculty have on the applicability of the content of the FCS new field faculty orientation training?

4. What effect could certain personal and professional attributes of NCCES FCS field faculty have on respondents' perceptions of the FCS new field faculty orientation training?
5. What effect could certain personal and professional attributes of NCCES FCS field faculty have on respondents' perceptions of the FCS new field faculty orientation training?
6. What effect could possible relationships between personal and professional attributes and respondents' perceptions have on the FCS new field faculty orientation training?

Objectives of the Study

The specific research objectives of this study are:

OBJECTIVE 1: Describe North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service FCS field faculty's perceptions of the availability and/ or accessibility of the orientation training for new Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty.

OBJECTIVE 2: Describe NCCES FCS field faculty's perceptions of the importance of the content in the orientation training for new Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty.

OBJECTIVE 3: Determine applicability of the content in the FCS new field faculty orientation training.

OBJECTIVE 4: Identify and describe related demographic attributes (personal and professional) of NCCES FCS field faculty.

OBJECTIVE 5: Investigate the respondents' perceptions of possible relationships between demographic attributes and the dependent and independent variables of the NCCES FCS orientation training.

Limitations of the Study

The study is restricted to Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty who are currently employed by North Carolina Cooperative Extension. Documentation of previous annual Department of Family and Consumer Sciences orientation training for new FCS field faculty is limited. The most comprehensive documentation is from a research project in 1998, which was conducted by the researcher who has continued to document the annual orientation training since 1998. Research on the orienting of new employees in Cooperative Extension is limited and dated. Studies addressing Cooperative Extension's orientation of new field faculty ranged from Reynolds in 1970, Hubbard in 1971, and Smith and Beckley in 1985. Studies investigating departmental orientation training for new Extension field faculty could not be located.

Basic Assumptions

The researcher has subscribed to the following assumptions:

1. The individuals in the study will provide the researcher with valid and reliable data.
2. Respondents will accurately remember orientation training.
3. Perceptions of respondents completing the questionnaire are good indicators of the concepts being measured.

Significance of the Study

Based on the lack of an education background, the complexity of the job, and the strategic position to carry out Cooperative Extension's mission, an overview of the new FCE field faculty orientation training was conducted in a study by the researcher in 1998 "*Got To Know When To Hold Them and When To Fold Them: Family and Consumer Sciences New Field Faculty Orientation.*" A focus group was conducted involving six new FCS field faculty hired in 1996, 1997, and 1998. The six participants represented rural and urban counties in each of the three regions of the state. Individual interviews were conducted with four county Extension directors, three district Extension directors, and two state-level Extension administrators. The most significant conclusions that surfaced from the focus group and the nine interviews were:

- that the annual FCS departmental orientation training should continue to be conducted face-to-face.
- that the structure and content of the FCS departmental orientation training for new FCS field faculty needed to be reexamined.
- and that a formal mentoring program needed to be established.

Since then, Extension FCS field faculty have been assigned as mentors to new Extension FCS field faculty by District Directors.

It is important that Extension field faculty from the same field of discipline be appointed as mentors to new hires. A study by Mincemoyer and Thomson (1998) also found that assigning mentors from the same assigned programming areas, critical in the success of the mentor/new hire relationship, provides opportunities to meet and interact during professional development activities and provide guidance relating to the Extension program planning process.

On a contrary note, a report released by the NCCE Blue Ribbon Commission for Professional Development System (PODS) in 1999, suggested recommendations for orientation training. One of the recommendations is to provide orientation training on-line and reduce or eliminate face-to-face orientation training, including departmental orientation training (Blue Ribbon Report, 1999). Outcomes from the 1998 study conducted by the researcher suggest continuing the annual FCS departmental face-to-face orientation training and making some components available on-line.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension has never conducted a formal investigation of the FCS departmental orientation training for FCS field faculty. Presently, there is no formal structure with identifiable goals and objectives for the annual FCS departmental orientation training for FCS field faculty. Changes that have been instituted since the 1998 study by the researcher have been limited. One significant change is the utilization of FCS field faculty as presenters at the FCS departmental orientation training. A formal mentoring program has not been established, and the format and structure for the FCS departmental orientation training has varied each year due to budget constraints.

The researcher proposes that this study will provide new knowledge and, therefore, direction for planning and implementing orientation training for new FCS field faculty. This is particularly important in a time of rapid organizational change which increases the demands on Extension FCS field faculty.

Study results will help to tailor appropriate orientation training content and supporting materials to enhance the value of the orientation experience. The data gathered from this study may be used by the Extension administrators and department heads, especially FCS and Extension Personal and Organizational Development System (PODS) Unit, in considering the structure and design of the orientation training and how it will be offered for new Extension field faculty, especially Family and Consumer Sciences' field faculty.

This study may also offer insight into the relevancy and continuance of the FCS new field faculty orientation training. Another outcome may be identification of the barriers and limitations to participation in the FCS new field faculty orientation training. Data analyzed from this study will provide further contributions to (1) the research on orientation training of Cooperative Extension new field faculty, especially FCS new field faculty, and (2) non-formal education organizations. A further value of this study could be the restructuring of the orientation training for FCS new field faculty that could be adapted by other Cooperative Extension Systems. The study results will be published in the National Association of Extension Association of Family and Consumer Sciences (NAEAFCS) professional journal. The research for this study was supported by a scholarship from NAEAFCS.

Definitions of Terms

Following are terms used throughout this research study and warrant specific definition.

CALS: College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at North Carolina State University.

County Extension Director: A field faculty member of a Land Grant University who has primary responsibility for providing leadership for and coordinates the programming efforts of the County Extension staff.

County Extension Field Faculty Member (Extension Agent): A faculty member of a Land Grant University who has primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating county Extension programming outreach efforts in assigned areas of responsibilities in one of the following disciplines: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Community and Rural Development, 4-H Youth Development, or Family and Consumer Sciences.

Cooperative Extension Service: The largest non-formal adult education organization in the world. This out of school adult education organization helps people improve the quality of their lives by providing research-based information and informal educational opportunities to diverse clientele. A non-formal education organization, it is supported by county, state, and federal government and Land Grant universities in North Carolina, including North Carolina State University (Raleigh) and North Carolina A&T State University (Greensboro).

Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) field faculty: A faculty member of a Land Grant University who has primary responsibility for planning, implementing, and evaluating county Extension programming outreach efforts in the assigned area of Family and Consumer Sciences.

NCA&T: North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, 1890 land-grant University.

NCCE: North Carolina Cooperative Extension.

NCSU: North Carolina State University, 1860 land-grant university

NCREN: North Carolina Research and Education Network is a multi-state, multi-channel, interactive video network connecting over nineteen universities, medical schools, and research organizations in North Carolina.

New Worker: A new employee within an organization with less than six years of tenure.

Orientation Training: The process of introducing and welcoming a new employee to the organization via scheduled training, consultations, etc., and assisting the new employee to become a superior, productive employee.

PODS: NC Cooperative Extension's 'Personal and Organizational Development System'.

Volunteer Leader: Influential and knowledgeable volunteers across North Carolina who give personal time and other resources to serve the North Carolina Cooperative Extension System.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

To better understand the research problem, the researcher identified three important areas in which to review the literature: professional development, training, and new employee orientation. Concepts derived from this review of literature will provide the foundation for designing the conceptual schema/framework.

Professional Development

In researching the literature on professional development, several viewpoints emerged. Jarvis (1991) viewed professional development as "1. Staff development resulting in a person's being of greater use to the organization for which he /she works through the acquisition of greater *knowledge, skill,* or different *attitudes.* 2. Building personal competence in a field, such as *adult education.* 3. *Personal development* in which the person gains *knowledge, skill,* or *attitude* for his/her own benefit" (p 276).

Professional development has been perceived as "the maintenance and enhancement of the knowledge, expertise and competence of professionals throughout their careers according to a plan formulated with regard to the need of the professional, the employer, the profession and society" (Madden & Mitchell 1993, p.12).

Gear, McIntosh, and Squires (1994) drew the conclusion in the early 1990's that, "the inadequacy of initial professional education as a preparation for one's entire working life is now well recognized by professional bodies. It is not just that knowledge dates, but that the very conception and interpretation of professional tasks and roles change over time" (p. 77).

According to Spokane (1991), the average individual will view the world of work as being so complex that navigating a safe and personally rewarding course will require professional assistance. Diverse populations have warranted over time that just having a job does not automatically foster an individual's full growth potential. Interestingly, Mott and Daley (2000) note that the field of professional development has experienced significant change in the past decades, but, unfortunately, there is very little current literature illustrating the new issues and developing trends.

The furtherance of professional competence and confidence are the optimal qualities that every individual desires in his/her respective career. Career development, the importance of continuing education, staff development, and mentoring are explored within the concept of professional development.

Career Development

This section reflects on historical as well as contemporary perspectives on career development. McLagan (1989) states that, "Career development focuses on assuring an alignment of individual career planning and organization career-management processes to achieve an optimal match of individual and organizational needs" (p. 7). Story (1979) defines career development as, "the outcomes of actions on career plans. The outcomes that are pursued may be based on the need of the organization and/or the individual" (p. 5).

In 1988, the National Career Development Association surveyed Americans to determine how many had career plans. Of the respondents reporting, 39 percent had a career plan and 69 percent indicated if they were to start anew, they would seek additional information and professional guidance after obtaining a job. It has been noted by Flamer (1986) that a large number of adults are experiencing some variation of dysfunction with their work environment and work experience. Work related stresses and anxieties often are attributed to little or no orientation, lack of confidence in executing job skills, and limited knowledge of additional professional development opportunities. Spokane (1991) surmised that, though some organizations have extensive staff development options for their employees, others have very limited options which may signal to employees the respect the organization has for them and for their avenues of career growth.

The more contemporary perspectives focus on the rapid changes that are occurring in the workplace and its effect on career development. According to research conducted by Knowdell (1996), career development is not regarded the same as it was in 1986. To be successful in the twenty-first century, career development strategies will be more flexible—allowing for change and modification on a yearly, monthly, weekly, or daily basis—and the employee will be in charge of the direction of his or her career development. Kummerow's (2000) view is that, historically, organizations took primary responsibility for directing the careers of their employees. This is no longer true. Today, one's career is shaped and managed primarily by the individual rather than by the organization. Reardon, Lenz, Sampson and Peterson (2000) concur with their findings on the current status of career development. This team of researchers proposes that the workforce is changing rapidly. That has a direct effect on career development, and individuals rather than the organization will take leadership in guiding their careers.

Continuing Education

Harkins and Giber (1989) share the view that, to truly respond to the educational needs of the changing workforce, higher education institutions, agencies, and corporations will have to strengthen strategic educational collaborations and partnerships that provide continuing education in the development of employees. Professionals, in representing different occupations, need to learn to meet the changing demands of their chosen professions by acquiring at various stages new knowledge, new skills, and new attitudes.

Rogers (1986) views continuing education as placing emphasis on the concept of education of both children and adults; where learning is a life-long process. According to the author, continuing education is defined in a narrower frame of reference (to include all education for all adults returning to school), and in the broad spectra of professional vocationally oriented training at advanced levels (for adults who have already acquired a vast quantity of education.) Rothwell & Sredl (1992) contend that continuing education, "conducted on or off the work site, keeps individuals abreast of changes in their occupations or professions, though not necessarily (as upgrading training does) how those changes affect them on their jobs" (p.6).

Current literature also illustrates the need for continuing education. Davies (1998) concludes that continuing education is becoming a major issue for individuals and for organizations. Continuing education is now reflected upon as a main strategy in remaining employed and assisting the individual in acquiring and demonstrating the skills needed to remain current in the workplace.

With new discoveries emerging throughout the world, Jarvis (2001) states, "there is a greater need for the knowledge-based occupations to keep up with the new developments" (p.33). Jarvis concludes that all employees need to have practical knowledge at the various levels within the organization at which they work.

Staff/Employee Development

Rothwell and Sredl (1992) conclude that employee development, when sponsored by an organization for its employees, focuses on identifying, giving assurance and support, and, with the development of planned learning, preparing individuals for career advancement. Griffin (1983) contends that staff development should be a "systematic attempt to alter the professional practices, beliefs, and understandings of staff members" (p.2). Essentially, "effective staff development will move professional staff from what is, to what should be" (Fitch & Kopp, 1990, p.5).

Staff /employee development is essential because it prepares employees for changing social and political climates, assists in recognizing and improving outdated curricula, upgrades professional skills, and compensates for the slowness of educational institutions. Staff/employee development is a means by which the organization "provides for change, renewal, quality education, and professional competence" (Bishop, 1976, p.1). According to Bertcher (1988), staff development is "a planned process designed to improve the ability of staff members to do their jobs in such a way that they and their organization achieve their goals for clients, and that staff members find their work personally rewarding" (p.4).

Rothwell and Sredl (1992) note that staff/employee development, when sponsored by an organization for its employees,

> focuses on identifying, assuring, and helping evoke new insights through planned learning. It gives individuals opportunities to grow; it gives organizations employees who are capable of working smarter rather than harder because they have a burgeoning storehouse of creativity, experience, and knowledge from which to draw as they do their work (p. 7).

Mentoring

Most organizations provide a new employee orientation to assist with the process of integrating personally and professionally into the organization. Zimmer and Smith (1992) noted that "increasingly, organizations are using the benefits of mentoring as a part of the orientation process. The mentoring system for Ohio Extension was developed as a supplement to orientation activities provided during the agent's first year of employment" (pp. 1-2).

"Articles in the popular press, as well as in academic journals, cite increasing evidence that mentors play a major role in people's career development" (Kutilek and Earnest, 2001, p. 1). This team of researchers stated that "to assist with the assimilation of new staff into Ohio State University Extension, a peer mentor is assigned within the first month of employment. The mentor, usually employed in a similar job, helps to develop familiarity with the organization while building trust and mutual respect through this interaction" (p. 3).

Virginia Cooperative Extension (VCE) established a New Agent Training Program in 2000. The purpose of the New Agent Training Program is to: "provide opportunities for newly employed agent faculty to receive unit-based, hands-on orientation and training in preparation for assuming assigned roles in their field units" (Gibson and Brown, 2002, p.1). This team of researchers concludes that "training agents are providing valuable educational leadership and support, not only to the agents but also to the training process" (Gibson and Brown, 2002, p.3).

Mincemoyer and Thomson (1998) suggest the following personal characteristics when Extension administrators select mentors: "(a) knowledge of the Extension organization; (b) empathy towards new staff; (c) program knowledge in their respective fields, and (d) a friendly personality and a positive attitude" (p. 6). The authors recommend the information presented to the mentees by mentoring agents includes both program development and career development information.

Seevers, Graham, Gamon, and Conklin (2000) view mentors as a means for new employees to make a smooth transition into the organization and profession. The authors emphasize the importance of selecting an experienced employee as the mentor. The new employee will rely on the experience and wisdom of the mentor, especially during the first year on the job. According to Zachary (2002), as one engages in mentoring, one brings to each situation his or her own timetable, own history, own individuality, and own way of doing things. For learning to take place, the mentor must understand who they are, what they bring, and what the mentoring partner brings to the relationship.

Meighan (2002) notes, "Mentoring has in recent years been seen as a powerful tool in staff development. Mentoring is a support system wherein staff new to the organization, new to a department, new to the job are assisted in coping with the changes through the support of objective and independent third parties" (p. 106).

Training

According to many, training activities help professionals remediate deficiencies, foster growth, and facilitate change for practice which, combined with the fact that training can assist in applying professional skills in daily practice, helps explain why professionals turn to training to improve practice and organizational learning (Scanlan, 1985; Smutz, Crowe, & Lindsey, 1986). Traditional methods of training and of reinforcing knowledge in the workplace have been replaced by new methods, downsizing of organizations, and the loss of informal learning environments (ASTD, 1996) even though there is increasing evidence that training, in combination with human resource practices, enhances performance and result in financial benefits (Benahou, 1996).

Today's new workers must respond to this climate by becoming actively engaged in learning and training beyond their initial education. According to highly regarded business authors, those who can train their workers fastest and develop organizations that support learning will be most successful in today's marketplace (Blickenstein, 1996; Drucker, 1992).

Merriam-Webster defines *training* as, "the act, process, or method of one that trains; the skill, knowledge, or experience acquired by one that trains; or the state of being trained" (Webster, 1993). Nadler (1992) views training as, "learning, provided by employers to employees, that is related to their present jobs" (p.4). Lawrie's perspective for training is "a change in skills...its major focus is on acquisition of knowledge and skills for presently known tasks. The emphasis is on enhancing skills fundamental to present jobs" (Rothwell, 1992, p. 4).

The definition used by The American Society for Training and Development and adopted by the majority of human resource development professionals is as follows:

> training focuses on identifying, assuring, and helping develop, through planned learning, the key competencies that enable individuals to perform their current job...Training's primary emphasis is on individuals in their work roles. The primary training...is planned individual learning (Rothwell, 1992. p. 4).

Goldstein and Ford (2002) define training as "the systematic acquisition of skills, rules, concepts, or attitudes that result in improved performance in another environment…effective training stems from a learning atmosphere systematically designed to produce changes in the working environment" (p 1).

Training Perspectives

American Society for Training and Development (1992) ascertains that the surest way to achieve effective, quality training is for an organization to follow a defined, consistent procedure when planning training programs. Using a consistent procedure is more result-oriented than unplanned training, because it focuses on accomplishing predictable outcomes in a predetermined time reference. It should be organized in a logical manner so that trainees can learn new information or skills as quickly and easily as possible and become completely productive in a shorter period of time. Traditionally, training has been more reactive than proactive in relaying an organization's or business' goals, values, and needed skills for job performance. For organizations and businesses to remain current and competitive, they must look at the current status of training and development and the direction the field is taking in the new millennium.

The industrial revolution transformed the workplace beyond many's expectations. It set the framework for the transformation of the nature of the work and was the introduction to technology. This was a profound influence on production and transportation, which changed the nature of work and organizations.

Today, we are experiencing a similar transformation with information technology, which is having a major impact on how training is being conducted in the world of work. London (1995) states, "Information technology, workplace training needs, and the tendency of an educated population to regard learning as worthwhile will drive quaternary education for the next decade. To encourage people's desire to learn more, human resources must promote new learning technologies and create easy access to new knowledge at the individual's convenience" (p. 7). This view is also supported by Gutteridge (1993): "...research has understood the value of learning on the job as well as the importance of practice, reinforcement, and follow-up. If learning is to stick, it must be an ongoing process instead of a one-shot event...and also most cost effective" (p. 202).

Organizational change is ongoing, and a new appreciation for training has developed regarding how an organization/business moves to new levels of productivity and effectiveness. Linde (1997) sees the redesigning of traditional training departments with the rise of high-performance organizations and their new role. Many organizations are recognizing that training is giving employees, from executives to front-line supervisors and workers, the skills they need to be successful.

This perspective is a new way of viewing training. In the past, most training has not been linked to the organizations' or business' priorities but has been basically comprised of classroom teaching, static courses, and packaged learning modules that were not updated on a regular basis or customized to meet the identified and evolving job requirements and main competencies. In the high-performance organizations, there is close and specific association between what senior executives and/or administrators think is important to the business or organization and the type of training employees receive.

In 1994, American Society for Training and Development surveyed 400 human resource development executives concerning trends in business, technology, and training. The findings were released in a 1996 report in which respondents noted that new models of learning that account for the way people learn—in the work environment, by interacting with others, and through experience—pose a serious challenge to the traditional transfer model of learning. These emerging models that provide training via self-directed learning and team learning will become the foundation for another trend: how businesses and organizations learn and how they evaluate learning (ASTD, 1996).

Heathfield (2002) states, "the right employee training, development, and education at the right time provides big payoffs for the employer in increased productivity, knowledge, loyalty, and contribution" (p. 1). The author reflects that it is critical for organizations to understand (a) how training needs are determined, (b) how training is viewed by employees, and (c) how training is provided in a time of rapid change in the workplace, workforce reduction, and budget constraints.

Training Trends

Bassi, Benson, and Cheney (1997) discussed two major forces which have attributed to the significant change in the workplace and will continue to do so, especially in the United States: global competition and rapid technological advances. This team recognizes that many organizations are developing high-performance work systems and evolving into learning organizations. More responsibility is being delegated to employees who are doing more with less. These changes have made the role of training departments and professionals more significant.

Heathfield (2002) purports that organizations experiencing change and that want to succeed in the future are carefully developing their most important resource: the employee. Two trends that Heathfield (2002) identified are (1) utilizing a training professional to provide performance consulting instead of conducting needs assessments and (2) measuring results to access impact. Organizations today are concerned with maximizing training monies and are requesting measurable outcomes. The author comments that Donald Kirkpatrick's (1979) four levels of training evaluation are difficult for organizations to execute—especially levels three and four. And, it is the third and fourth levels that provide measurable outcomes. The author states: "Third level training evaluation measures changes in behavior the participants exhibit on the job as a result of the training program. Level four measures the results of the training program as these results affect the organization's bottom line" (p. 2).

The editors of *Workforce* (2002) offer the following trends affecting training and development: reduction in workforce due to budget deficits which affects training budgets; training departments will have to be more cost effective; sustained recovery for organizations is based on the remaining employees; training investment in good employees pays off; cross training is essential with reduction in the workforce, especially in a small organization; training expenditures are not being delayed as a result of economic issues; and with the downsizing of training departments, there are fewer people to manage and track employee training programs which will require implementing a new training management system.

Trainers are becoming an important part of their organizations by assisting in the planning of strategic direction. Another important accomplishment is that training is now becoming a necessary investment, not just a line item to be included in the budget. Training will become more aligned with major organizational goals and will move closer to people's jobs via just-in-time and just-what's-needed interventions. This would allow more efficient use of time and resources. Modular training and flexible courses focusing on specific needs are already replacing traditional classroom teaching.

Technology in Training

Technology affects work in several ways; it changes the organization of work and the nature of work itself; it changes the way in which learning takes place; and changes the means by which knowledge is maintained and transferred. These aspects are especially important with the recommendation that departmental orientation for new field faculty be conducted via the intranet (NCCE Blue Ribbon Report, 1999). Technology enhances or becomes the work process, introducing more demands on the interaction between the technology and the workforce. It enhances the process of learning.

"Current training is multisensory. Trainees learn by doing, seeing, and hearing. They learn on their own time. Multimedia technologies, such as audio and video, are breathing new life into training and creating more opportunities for learning" (Cohen, 1997, p.1). The author reached the conclusion that, in the future, a major shift will occur from event-based learning to technology-based learning. It will be a profound change in the way we learn.

Another type of learning is asynchronous learning, which allows learning to take place at different sites and at different times. The Consortium for Manufacturing

Competitiveness (CMC), association of leading two-year colleges administered by Regional Technologies Strategies, Inc. (RATS) located in Chapel Hill, NC, is investigating the value of asynchronous learning as a tool for making education and skill improvement more available to small and medium-sized manufacturing companies. In a recent project, six CC member colleges converted education and training courses to Asynchronous Learning Networks (ALAS) to evaluate how well they met educational needs in the technical work environment.

Students had access to computers provided by ALAS which allowed them to receive instruction when and where it was convenient; anywhere, anytime education. The students were located at different sites. Internet-based communication lends to virtual classrooms which allow students to interact with each other and their trainer/instructor, eliminating the isolation normally linked with computer-based learning. This method of learning is very beneficial when workers are too far from a campus or the enrollment number is too few to justify expenses for on-site classes, or for employees with irregular schedules (ASTD, 1996).

Another technological trend that has emerged is ‘cyberschools’. According to Peter Drucker (1992), it will be difficult for universities to survive. The future is outside the traditional campus—outside the traditional classroom. Distance learning is provided by fifty-five percent of the United States’ four year colleges and universities. “Cybercollege is a highly effective means of providing continuing education in a fast-changing world. In an age when many jobs require continuing education, cyberlearning brings it to people who cannot afford to interrupt a career” (Gubernick and Ebeling, 1997, p. 85).

The 2001 ASTD ***State of the Industry Report*** revealed there was still a lot of training taking place within organizations in lieu of economic issues. One key trend that has re-emerged is e-learning. Training being delivered via learning technologies had stalled in 1998 and 1999, but, due to travel cutbacks and security risks, organizations are increasing the use of e-learning to deliver training.

One of the most recent forms of distance education to be explored is interactive instruction exclusively via the Internet. This type of training as stated by Lippert, Plank, Camberato and Chastin (1998) " allows for constant personal interaction….Second, it allows much greater time flexibility than a televised real-time instruction…And third, it expands resource opportunities through access to the World Wide Web" (p. 2). The authors suggest that training via the Internet has tremendous potential for Extension field faculty. The Extension field faculty can log-on at their convenience and it eliminates the need to travel to locations within the state for training, hence saving time and money.

NCCE Advances in Technological Training

NCCE has made strides in updating and diversifying training for its employees located at two universities, 100 counties, and the Cherokee Reservation. Twelve years ago, NCCE installed computers system-wide to allow access to e-mail and sharing of information. Two years later, special computers were purchased and installed in each of the county units with funding from federal, state, and local governments. This has provided access to the internet leading to the development of curriculum and other educational materials, that can be downloaded not only by field faculty, but by consumers. In 1996, the intranet was developed which provided field faculty the ability to retrieve all or portions of training modules, publications, etc. Many departments within Cooperative Extension are utilizing the NCREN network to conduct training with down link sites throughout the state. This has proven to be cost effective and a better utilization of time and travel funds.

County Extension field faculty are required to earn a masters degree for promotion and career advancement. Those that live in remote areas and have to travel some distance to a university or college, are now enrolling in cybercollege. Several are acquiring their degrees via the Internet. Extension field faculty are requesting that more training be offered via the internet (NCCE Training Needs Assessment, 2000).

Boone (1985) contends that trainers have four major responsibilities when planning an educational program or training: “(1) to identify, assess, and analyze educational needs specific to the target audience; (2) to plan and design educational programs to fit those expressed needs; (3) to implement the planned programs; and (4) to evaluate and account for the outcomes of such programs” (p.3). Boone (1985) concludes that, “The planned program serves as a guide and provides direction for adult educators in deciding on strategies for coping with the educational needs of their learners” (p.69).

Effective training programs are those based on the needs of the learners and require an understanding of the reasons people participate; reasons that affect the instructional strategies selected, the content covered, and the evaluation procedures used (Grotelueschen, 1985). Smutz and Queeney (1990) suggest that professional development requires an understanding of the various features of a profession and the role it has on participation in continuing education or training programs. This encompasses an understanding of the profession’s knowledge and skills, responsibilities and tasks, the division of labor, and various career stages.

Training Models

The American Society for Training and Development (1992, p. 3) stated that, to have effective training, it has to include:

> (1) specific, relevant content; (2) combined focus on what, why, how; (3) varied method of learning; (4) regular involvement of learners; (5) build on learners' experience and knowledge; (6) cyclical development to reinforce learning; (7) realistic, problem-centered and (8) application and follow-up.

Reyes, (1990) proposes that models of instruction are useful tools for educators in various roles and learning environments. He concludes that using models of instruction can simplify the work of the instructor and can direct teaching research toward a practical structure. Davidson and Smith (1990) suggest that "the tools, processes, and procedures of instructional design can contribute to the development of instructional sequences" (p 14).

Richey and Sikorski (1993) explore instructional design and its effect on staff development. They suggest that instructional design presents a source of guidance and offers suggestions based on four basic principles:

- Effective training is systematically developed by those trained in instructional design.
- Principles of training design typically used in the corporate area are applicable to the field of education.
- The most critical outcome of employee training is a permanent change in on-the-job behavior, followed by impacts upon the organization's goals.
- To be successful, training programs need to address systemic factors, particularly those related to a given education environment and the attitudes of its instructors.

James (2001) concurs that instructional design operates on a set of basic fundamental assumptions, and that these assumptions impact the many decisions the instructor or training designer makes during the instructional design process.

Goldstein and Ford (2002) realize that new employees are sent to a training program and state that it is essential to understand the effects of training experiences as part of the socialization process as well as to assess certain training outcomes. Therefore, a systematic approach to training is suggested. "The system approach uses feedback to continually modify instructional processes. From this perspective, training programs are never totally finished products; rather, they are modified as information becomes available as to whether the program is meeting its stated need" (Goldstein and Ford, 2002, p 23).

The intent of an instructional system is to provide the necessary components for achieving all the types of outcomes called for in the curriculum or course being considered. The development of an instructional system is like a framework in which a variety of intended learned outcomes can be accomplished during the training (Gagne and Briggs, 1979). In his work Principles of Instructional Design, Gagne (1988) expands on events of instruction. These events of instruction are as follows: inform the learner of the objective, present the stimulus material, provide learning guidance, bring out one's performance, give feedback, assess the performance, and improve transfer and retention.

Buckley and Caple (2000) support Atkins' (1983) theory on systematic approach to training. Atkins suggests that the systems approach can be twofold: "(1) views training as a sub-system interacting with the other sub-systems upon which an organization depends for its progress and survival; and (2) a logical relationship between the sequential stages in the process of investigating training needs, designing, delivering and validating training" (p 17).

Instructional Systems Development Training Model

The Instructional Systems Development (ISD) training model is used by North Carolina Cooperative Extension. The ISD training model can be used to guide the adult educator, administrators, and county field faculty in planning, designing, implementing, evaluating, and accounting for adult education programs such the FCS departmental orientation training.

Gagne and Medsker (1996) present five basic components of the ISD training model:

1. Analyze – performance requirements of the work assignment and needs and characteristics of the learner are analyzed;
2. Design – work assignments are divided into skill and knowledge segments. It is during the design phase that specific instructional objectives and a list of items to be tested to measure the learner's achievements are created.
3. Develop – resources and materials are authored and produced based on criteria derived from the design phase.
4. Implement – instruction is piloted with learners representing the learner population; and
5. Evaluate – two types of evaluation, formative and summative are used to collect feedback and data for assessment of the training.

Barber (2002) supports the ISD model by stating "In ISD, I saw my potential to respond to all sorts of learning needs. I was and still am enamored of its situational adaptivity" (p 34).

New Employee Orientation

Orientation and training are both concerned with organizational influence on employees. Neither are a process but are considered to be programs. Thus, the literature on training methods is relevant for orientation. Orientation and training also have distinct differences as noted by Wanous and Reichers (2000). The authors contend that orientation focuses more on context performance than task performance. Orientation most often occurs upon entry, and training can be conducted throughout the employee's career. Orientation takes place when a new employee is experiencing stress during the first days on the job, and training is provided when the issues of stress and being a new employee have been resolved.

Heathfield (2002) concludes that new employee orientation is a very important factor in assisting new employees to hit the ground running within an organization. The author ventures to say that orientation training helps new employees develop their skills and knowledge to better perform their current job and increases employee loyalty.

New employee orientation is a common feature in business, education, and the military. According to Wanous and Reichers (2000), "In the 1980s, two surveys reported that such programs were used in 64 percent and 70 percent of the organizations sampled. A 1994 survey conducted by the Society for Human Resource Management found that 87 percent of the respondents said their organizations provided orientation programs" (p. 435). McGillicuddy (1998) cites, "employee orientation is perhaps the critical introduction to an organization for a new employee. Based on their experience during orientation, an employee often can tell how an organization truly views its work force" (p. 551). Robert Half International (2000), a staffing specialist, was commissioned to survey 1,400 chief financial officers, and an overwhelming 83 percent of respondents said formal orientation programs are effective in retaining and motivating personnel (p. 25).

Davis (1994) states " the literature clearly reflects unanimous agreement among personnel management professionals about the value of the new employee orientation concept and the administrative wisdom of actively addressing it" (p.ix). According to Barbazette (1994), "An orientation occurs whether an organization plans for it or not. The result of an 'unplanned orientation' is often a confused new employee who is not very productive, will probably make mistakes, and is likely to leave the organization within a year" (p. 1). Zall (2000) agrees that a thorough orientation for new employees will ensure that new employees experience less initial stress resulting in less initial turnover (p.49).

Rothwell & Sredl (1992) cites new employee orientation as a vehicle for which workers are given fundamental information about their organization, work group, or job (p. 5). According to Buford and Bedeian (1988), orientation is the process that introduces new workers to their jobs, superiors, and peers. Time spent in the recruiting of new employees for specific jobs must be equated with time spent to orient new workers to their designated positions, the organization, and their job performance expectations. Lehr (2001) agrees,

> Orienting new employees to their environment is one of the most effective means of getting employees off on the right foot, which translates to higher employee

> retention and, in the long run, more profit for your company. A recent survey in Training magazine reported that 92 percent of the companies surveyed provide some type of new-employee orientation (p.15).

Koehler (1992) cites, "An ongoing orientation program helps to develop the kind of individuals the organization will need—staff who understand the organization, its philosophies, and its products and services. Furthermore, it develops managers who know how to listen, how to train staff, and how to lead effectively" (p. 7).

Kleiman (2000) points out that, "Effective orientation programs, where new employees are introduced to a company's mission and made to feel part of the team, are key to sparking early productivity and improving employee retention" (p. 4). A study at Corning Glass found new employees who completed a positive employee orientation program were 69 percent more likely to be with the company three years later than those who did not. A similar two-year study at Texas Instrument concluded that employees who had been carefully oriented to the company and their jobs reached full productivity two months sooner than those who hadn't (Kleiman, 2000).

Roderer and Hickman (2000) view orientation as "a process, not an event. It's part of the overall integration of new employees into an organization, by which it helps new employees adapt to the work environment and their jobs" (p. 59). Successful orientation accelerates the adaptation process by helping new employees to feel comfortable in the organization, increasing productivity, and possibly reducing employee turnover (Roderer and Hickman, 2000).

Ray (1988) emphasizes that, "No organization should hire a new employee without a systematic program that exposes the new employee to all aspects of the business the first few months" (p. 34). Barbazette (1994) contends,

> A successful orientation program has several key elements: it is well planned; its content is appropriate, clear, and complete; its materials and the roles of the participants are well designed; appropriate activities are used to involve the new employee; and the program is evaluated and feedback is solicited from its participants, including the new employee (p. 5).

Klein (2001) points out "New employees are like recent immigrants to a country. They don't fully understand the language, history or culture. A good orientation program helps workers better understand the organization and its goals, and feel more at ease in the culture – and that helps build commitment" (p. 8). The author continues, "There are a lot of things companies can do to assist in adjusting, and orientation programs are one of the most common… If employers want a committed workforce, a good orientation program is an important first step in developing that commitment" (p.9).

Lehr (2001) gleams from her experience that "the most successful orientation programs include both formal and informal learning environments…Formalized new-employee orientation should involve both classroom time devoted to the specifics of the position and on-the-job training with a peer, where theory is shown in practice" (p. 16).

Reinhardt (1988) concludes that new employee orientation programs "reduce turnover and absenteeism, prevent performance problems, instill positive attitudes about the organization, and pave the way for better communication between the supervisor and the new employee" (p. 24). McShulskis (1997) concurs that numerous companies and organizations use employee orientation training "to reduce turnover and increase productivity. An important element in evaluating effectiveness is to identify measures related to cost; time and quality, such as turnover rates; productivity levels; job satisfaction; and hours and dollars spent on the program" (p. 25).

Adams (1985) supports Reinhardt's view on positive attitudes, "Employee performance is often directly related to attitude, and therefore shaping a positive attitude must begin on the first day of work and continue throughout the first few months" (p. 35).

Tyler (1998) points out that orientation is often one of the most neglected areas of employee training. "Large companies commonly establish new employee orientation programs, only to forget about them until they become outdated and inadequate…But with today's tight labor markets, most organizations can't afford to have a poor or nonexistent orientation program" (p. 49). Loraine (1999) shares the revelation that,

> "One area in business which cuts deeply into profits is employee turnover and new employee orientation. The cost of orientation has been looked at in the past with indifference. Now the one thing that a company cannot afford is a failed orientation" (p. 12).

Abramson (1993) points out that orientation is viewed with less importance because of "uncertainty about its overall value and about the merits of various approaches: on-the-job versus off-site training, ongoing versus initial orientation, departmental versus organizational emphasis, content focus versus process focus, and so forth" (p.152). In Hutchins' (2000) exploration of the literature on new employee orientation, she contends that a majority of organizations use formal orientation training "as part of the socialization process, making it one of the most common types of training programs. The literature provides examples of companies thought to do a good job with orientation training, but there is surprisingly little in the academic literature examining the impact or most appropriate structure of these programs" (p. 44).

The authors Orlikoff and Totten (1997) contend that a meaningful orientation is not a one-time activity. Instead, it should be planned as an ongoing process conducted over a period of months, utilizing a variety of formats.

Arthur (1998) suggests several formats for orientation information to be imparted and states "variety is essential to the success of a program where a great deal of new information is to be presented" (p. 305). Suggested formats may include lectures by one or more presenters, a variety of audio-visuals, handout materials, question-and-answer periods, and tours.

Caffarella (1994) cites the importance of selecting the most appropriate format or combination of formats for the learning activity which may be offered through distance-learning. Design a program schedule that is best suited for the format(s) selected and the learner's personal and/or job commitments. In the 1999 American Society for Training and Development State of the Industry Report, it was noted that how adults learn is similar in an informal setting. "The most unforgettable and transformational learning experiences occur through personal experience, group support, or mentoring. That's astounding, considering that more 70 percent of all training is still the instructor-led classroom variety" (Caudron, 2000, p.54).

Cooperative Extension New Employee Orientation

The researcher reviewed written materials addressing new employee orientation offered by Cooperative Extension. Cooperative Extension provides some type of orientation to its new hires. Seevers, Graham, Gamon, and Conklin (2000) affirm, "when an extension professional is hired, most states provide a thorough orientation. Although methods used to conduct new staff orientation vary greatly, most programs offer information on cooperative extension philosophy, structure and policies and program development, delivery, and evaluation " (p. 56). As stated by Reynolds (1970),

> "Authorities agree and research studies support the feeling that in-service training is necessary, and induction training is probably the most important phase of in-service training in the Cooperative Extension Service. Not only does induction training aid in orientation toward goals and objectives of the organization, it also provides a basic need of the new worker to continue with professional development" (p. 8).

The National Task Force on Cooperative Extension In-Service Training (1960, p.1) recognized the importance of induction training which is relevant today:

> Every newly employed worker wants to succeed at his or her job and is highly motivated. There are things that happen during the first day, the first week or the first few months which may determine whether the new Extension Agent continues to be highly motivated or whether his or her will to work is weakened or even destroyed.
>
> The first day is red letter day for the new employee. Everything that happens on this day, especially the behavior he or she observes, may effect job attitude and future performance. The impression gained of the Extension organization during the first weeks is likely to remain with the new employee throughout his or her career. The success that new employees hope for and which others want them to have, is likely to come only when they: (1) understand what is expected of them, (2) feel that they are an important part of the Extension Service –that they belong, (3) feel secure in their work, and (4) receive recognition for their efforts.

The researcher examined new employee orientation training for FCE field faculty in Delaware, New York, Kentucky, Wisconsin, Kansas, Ohio, and North Carolina.

<u>Delaware Cooperative Extension</u>

In Delaware, the approach is mentoring. The new field faculty are assigned to experienced field faculty for approximately six months. The senior field faculty's role is to assist the new FCS field faculty member with developing and delivering an Extension program. Upon completion, the senior mentor is expected to maintain contact with the new FCS field faculty and encourage the new FCS agent to remain in contact as well. Because so few FCS field faculty are hired in Delaware, they participate in new field faculty orientation in either the states of Maryland or Pennsylvania. Their participation is mandatory (Barber, 1998).

New York – Cornell Cooperative Extension

The second site reviewed was Cornell Cooperative Extension in New York, which has an orientation program for all new hires. The content is organized into the following units: Cornell Cooperative Extension System Information; Self-Directed Orientation Guide; Individualized Learning Plan; On-Campus Orientation to Cornell Cooperative Extension. The on-campus orientation is a three-day session, with the first day being a general overview and concurrent workshops. The second and third days are an introductory overview of programs, projects, resources, and people related to their programming area. The goal for these two days is two-fold: to present useful information designed to entice participants to do further explorations depending on their individual needs and to introduce participants to key campus based resources.

They also have the opportunity to meet with other newly hired agents to share experiences and to learn what has and has not worked for them. It is during this two-day period that the FCS agents are oriented by FCS specialists. In New York this department is called the Agriculture and Food Systems Industry and Children, Youth and Family Programming. It is not mandatory but strongly encouraged for new agents to participate (Cornell CES, 1998).

Kentucky Cooperative Extension

Kentucky CES was the third state to be assessed. A comprehensive and systematic approach for facilitating professional growth is utilized. "During the first two years, the new agent is involved in a comprehensive training and development program designed to provide a firm foundation for continued growth and development as a professional. The focus of the first two years of training is on acquiring the basic skills and knowledge necessary to do the job while building a feeling of camaraderie among peers" (Rennekamp, 1998). There are four components to the orientation process for new agents:

- Phase I: Two-day orientation on campus. The two-day orientation is offered several times throughout the year and the new agent is allowed to attend once.
- The Phase II: Core training addresses these topics...individual development, organization development, management skills, teaching and communication, and program development. The order in which the new agents participate is determined by the date of initial appointment;
- Phase III: Program Area Training where FCS agents receive training specific to their jobs. The content of the sessions in Phase III is tailored to their academic background, work experience, and the geographic area to which they are assigned. All agents are required to participate in Rural and Economic Development training.
- Phase IV: Professional Development which includes in-service education provided by CES and professional improvement not sponsored by CES but, by professional associations, etc.

Phase III is equivalent to the three - day orientation for FCS, except for the facts that there is not a time limit for the one in Kentucky and that it can be held on a district or regional basis (Rinnekamp, 1998).

Wisconsin Cooperative Extension

The fourth state is Wisconsin Cooperative Extension. The general orientation is an outgrowth of the one that was being held by the Department for Family Living Programs. Initially, this program was the single department providing orientation for its new field faculty. Other departments sent their new field faculty to participate in the program, but they did not receive specific program training. The new field faculty participate in a total of eight days of orientation away from the home office. These include: a three-day session held on campus; one-day of Affirmative Action, Equal Opportunity & Civil Rights training; one-day of 'job shadow' opportunity conducted elsewhere in the state; and a three-day session out-of-state.

If field faculty are aware of outstanding field faculty in a nearby state, they may go and spend three days 'job shadowing' the field faculty. The new field faculty are divided into two categories: Junior Class and Senior Class. The Junior Class consists of field faculty who have not completed orientation. The Senior Class is comprised of field faculty having participated in the first orientation.

Participation is mandatory. There are some exceptions, but new field faculty are given an orientation timeline listing expectations and completion deadlines. Orientation is held semi-annually. Each orientation accommodates both the juniors and the seniors. This schedule prevents field faculty from having to wait, in some situations, almost a year before participating in an orientation program. A specific agenda exists for each class.

The seniors also have the opportunity to serve as mentors for the juniors and share their experiences, etc. The seniors participate in various phases of the junior orientation (New Orientation Guide, 1998).

Kansas Cooperative Extension

The fifth site is Kansas Cooperative Extension. In Kansas, it is mandatory to participate in the FCS orientation, which is generally a two - to three - day session held on campus. The first two months of employment are spent in a neighboring county with a mentoring agent. When these two months are completed, the new agent begins working officially in his or her assigned county. Kansas CES has found that working with a mentoring agent on a daily basis for the first two months is more beneficial than assigning a mentor and meeting once a month. This action provides the opportunity for the new agent to learn on the job with daily guidance (Kansas CES, 1998).

Ohio State University Cooperative Extension

Orientation training is multilayered, according to Kutilek and Gunderson (2002). An on-the-job training program has been developed for the first two weeks of a new field faculty's job. This training includes: clarification of expectations and goals of performance; shadowing of an experienced trainer-agents to gain insight into role performance; and learning from co-workers the needs of the community within which they will be working. Methods used to deliver orientation training include: presentations providing information about the organization and employee roles via written materials, statewide orientation training sessions, and on-going core training workshops. Core job skill areas offered in the training programs are: effective teaching, program development and evaluation, team building, individual development, and volunteer program management. Additional training sessions are provided during the first 2 years to assist in developing the core competencies and training in subject-matter and computer technology. Departmental orientations are not conducted.

North Carolina Cooperative Extension

The orientation programming process for new field faculty in North Carolina includes five components: (1) EPA Benefits/Education Unit in the Department of Agricultural and Extension Education, (2) County-level Orientation Program, (3) Departmental Orientation, (4) State Extension New Faculty Orientation Conference, and (5) District Orientation. The State Extension New Faculty Orientation is held on campus or in designated areas of the state during the month of January. Topics addressed include: Philosophy, Overview of Extension's Programming Process, Principles of the Extension Advisory Leadership System, Recruiting and Managing Extension Volunteers, Building An Effective Extension Team, The Program and Its Impacts, Extension Reporting System, Accountability and Target Marketing, Survival Skills, Learning/Teaching Styles and Delivery Methods, Valuing Diversity, Professionalism, and Professional Associations (NCCE PODS, 2002). It is noted that subject matter training and topics specific to FCS field faculty are included in the one to three day Family and Consumer Sciences departmental orientation that is held in the summer of each year.

Related Research of Literature

Characteristics of Adult Learners

Cantor (1992) maintains adult learners, in comparison with children and teens, have special needs and requirements. The author concludes that it is necessary to understand adult learning theory and its relationship to the delivery of instruction in order to select and design appropriate programs; first the adult educator must recognize characteristics of adult learners in order to understand and work with the learner. The author identifies six major characteristics of adult learners:

1) Need to be shown respect…appreciate their wealth of experience.
2) Is autonomous and self-directed…need to be free to direct themselves. Goal-oriented…appreciate a well organized training program and has clearly defined goals and objectives.
3) Relevancy-oriented…need a reason to learn; learning must relate to their work-setting or other life responsibilities to be of value to them.
4) Practical…will focus on those aspects of a lesson that will be useful to them in their work.
5) Has accumulated personal life experiences…from their work activities, family life, personal hobbies and interests, and previous training and education (pp. 36-37).

Rogers (1986) and Apps (1991) have compiled a similar list of characteristics that appear to be evident in the large majority of adult learners. Cervero (1988) has noted that participation in education programs is frequently linked to age, career stage, and practice settings. Rogers (1986) states, "In adult education, our students are not there just to be taught; they are our greatest resource in the learning process…These characteristics aim to help teachers of adults to become more conscious of what they are doing when they draw up a profile of their students, to test out the items specified to see which do not apply to their particular group and to identify other characteristics specific to their teaching context" (p. 21).

Availability and Accessibility of Training

Cantor (1992) states, "A learning environment is like any other environment, except that it has a specific purpose – to foster learning and instruction. Certain instructional materials, physical conditions, and human factors constitute an effective an effective learning environment" (p. 10). The author reflects that materials and conditions include the room itself (such as chairs, props, overhead) and other environmental conditions (including climate and ventilation, lighting, time of day, room size) are important factors in the accessibility of training.

With the natural changes in vision such as sensitivity to glare, sensitivity to color, and depth perception, Perlmutter and Hall (1985) note that "illumination needs can be compensated for with increased lighting in the learning environment. Yet, no matter how much the light level is raised, 60-year olds cannot see as clearly as 20-year olds" (p. 186). "Gradual but consistent decline in hearing capacity begins around age 25, with noticeable changes starting during the mid-30s" (Perlmutter and Hall, 1985, p.189).

Apps (1991) states "because of their busy lives which usually include family, work, and social responsibilities, adult learners prefer some control over the place, pace, and time they learn. Work and personal responsibilities often prevent their traveling long distances to learning sites" (p. 41). Hence, learning opportunities in the workplace have become popular. Many adults, also because of busy schedules, want involvement in the determination of how fast or how slowly they learn something. Also, because of personal scheduling challenges, adult learners want choices for when they learn—time of day, day of the week, or some other convenient time.

Arthur (1998) suggests several formats for orientation information to be imparted and states "variety is essential to the success of a program where a great deal of new information is to be presented." (p. 305). Suggested formats may include lecture by one or more presenters, variety of audio-visuals, handout materials, question-and-answer periods, and tours. Caffarella (1994) cites that it is important to select the most appropriate format or combination of formats for the learning activity which may be offered through distance-learning in order to design a program schedule that is best suited for the format(s) selected and the learner's personal and/or job commitments.

In the study, Induction Experiences for Cooperative Extension Agents, Reynolds (1970) reached the following conclusion that the degree held by the respondents was directly correlated with responses on when induction training is to be offered to new agents. The respondents with a bachelor's degree indicated the need to have induction training within the first six months. The respondents with a Master's degree preferred to have the induction training within the second or third six months. (p. 107).

The duration of an orientation program depends mainly on the size and complexity of the organization. Arthur (1998) reports that in relatively small organizations, a minimum of one day may be warranted; in larger organizations, a full week or more may be needed to cover the key elements.

Arthur (1998) notes if an organization is hiring new employees each month, it cannot conduct an organizational orientation on a monthly basis. This is applicable to the FCS departmental orientation program. Arthur (1998) suggests cyberspace orientation: an avenue for which new employees can access relevant information from an internal HR Web page. Cyberspace orientation allows new hires to log on to a guide that covers several areas of typically covered in a conventional orientation program. The disadvantage of cyberspace orientation is the lack of face-to-face contact that is fundamental to orientation programs: the opportunity for two-way communication, exchanging information, questions and answers, and ideas. Cyberspace orientation is to be used as a support measure until new hires can attend the traditional orientation program. This format is also useful after orientation is over to answer new hires remaining or new questions.

Training Content

Effective training programs are those based on the needs of the learners and require an understanding of the reasons people participate; reasons that affect the instructional strategies selected, the content covered, and the evaluation procedures used (Grotelueschen, 1985).   Smutz and Queeney (1990) suggest that professional development requires an understanding of the various features of a profession and the role it has on participation in continuing education or training programs. This encompasses an understanding of the profession's knowledge and skills, responsibilities and tasks, the division of labor, and various career stages.

Apps (1991) contends that "adults participate in adult education because of a relationship to vocation. They want to improve on their current job…They want to learn something that they can apply immediately" (pp. 41-42). Johnstone and Rivera (1965) conducted the first significant national study of participation and the two reasons identified for participating in training that are applicable to this study are: becoming a better-informed person and preparing for a new job or occupation.

Cookson (1998) mentions Houle's research (1980) on why adults participate in learning and identifies three types of learners: (1) *Goal-oriented* learners, who are the most common type and use learning to meet specific objectives; (2) *Activity-oriented* learners, who participate primarily for the sake of activity itself—they participate because it is recommended by a superior, too receive credit, etc. but, not for the content or its practical value; (3) *Learning-oriented* is the adult learner who enjoys learning and will pursue opportunities for learning in their choices of work and leisure activities.

Another key component to participation is motivation. Wlodkowski (1993) and Cantor (1992) agree that when learning lacks motivation, learning does not take place. Wlodkowski goes on to say, "the *motives* people bring with them to the learning situation strongly affect how and what they learn" (1993, p.2).

Apps (1992) emphasizes using the learner's needs based on Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs to motivate. "Meeting learner needs is one way to enhance motivation. Most adults learn in order to address specific needs, solve life problems, or meet challenges" (p. 149). Wlodkowski (1993) writes on the use of Maslow's hierarchy to create motivation strategies that will have a positive influence on learning.

Apps (1991), Wlodkowski (1993), and Houle's (1980) research on adult learners is important for instructional strategies for adult learners. The literature describes in detail instructional strategies and program designs for a wide range of learners in a variety of settings. Cafferalla (1994) builds her recommended instructional strategies from the works of Robinson, 1979; Apps, 1991; Rothwell and Kazanas, 1992; Tracey, 1992. Cafferalla's (1994) strategies focus on learning objectives; instructors; content; participants; characteristics of the teaching techniques themselves; time; cost; space, equipment, and materials. Of these eight factors, the first two—the focus of the learning objectives and the capability of the instructor to use the chosen technique—are key.

Cookson (1998) notes that the word 'strategies' is inclusive of all methods, techniques, and devices available to facilitate the learning process. This may include bringing in other instructors. One must think about the learners and the fact that they have different learning styles. Consideration should be given to the management practices in the organization, such as availability of funds. Facilities need to be taken into account to ensure the right amount of space is available and the environment is conducive to learning. One additional instructional strategy to consider is the culture of the organization.

Cantor (1992) states, “Instructional methods are the various approaches, strategies, and procedures by which you convey knowledge, information, skills, etc., to your learners” (p. 67). Apps (1991) and Cantor (1992) wrote on the various tools that are used as a part of instructional strategies. Along with the tools, (lecture, seminar, drawing, role playing, etc.) they include suggested tips for implementation.

Burden and Bryd (1999) define instructional strategies as, “method for delivering instruction that is intended to help students achieve a learning objective. Strategies range from being very explicit and teacher-oriented to being less explicit and student-centered” (p.85). Instructional strategies organize the content, skills, and outcomes of a lesson (McNair, 1989). Research by curriculum planners and theorists such as Tyler (1950) and Hunter (1981) believe learning and achievement increases when instructional strategies are planned according to student performance outcomes.

Houle’s (1972) definition of content is, “anything taught or learned in an educational activity, including knowledge, skill, or sensitiveness” (p. 230). Dean (1994) notes developing content knowledge depends on three critical steps: (1) identifying tasks and skills to be learned; (2) translating tasks and skills into learning goals and objectives; and (3) identifying goals and objectives as belonging to one or more learning domain. It is important to identify all of the tasks to be learned to insure accuracy of the information to be disseminated through the goals, objectives, learning activities, and evaluation procedures for the learner.

Knowles' (1960) *Pedagogical Model* and *Andragogical Model* have very different orientations to teaching and program design and operation. Cookson (1998) views this model as "not an ideological entity to which one must be faithful and apply obediently, but a system of concepts, principles, and strategies that are responsive to the realities of particular situations" (p. 53). According to Cookson (1998), "the basic format of the pedagogical model is a *content plan*, which requires the educator to answer only four questions:

1) What content needs to be covered?
2) How can this content be organized into manageable units?
3) What would be the most logical sequence in which to present these units?
4) What would be the most efficient means of transmitting this content? (p. 50).

In contrast, the basic format of the andragogical model is a *process design* which consists of seven elements. The learner is involved in the development of each element.

Shea (1981) notes "all new employees need to know how they and their work will interface with other people, other departments, and other programs. Most of all, they need to know the value of the contribution they are expected to make to the organization. The value of training that meets these needs is important, no matter what the level of existing job knowledge and skill is for the new employees" (p. 172).

Applicability of Training Content

Caudron (2000) has conducted an informal survey to assess learners' perception of actual training. When asked what made training more effective, responses were focused around the comment that, "it had to be real. The training had to take into account their perspectives and experiences, and have relevant and direct application to their work" (Caudron, 2000, p.3). In the study, Training Needs of County Extension Agents in South Carolina, Hubbard (1971) reported findings that support Caudron's views: (1) field faculty's interests are influenced mainly by current problems and program activity, (2) field faculty have the tendency to relate to items for effectiveness and felt needs on previous experience, and (3) field faculty tend to relate planned programs of graduate study and in-service training on present and future needs.

Components of effective professional development design, which contribute to the applicability of the program content and the adult learner, have been proposed by Speck (1996).

1. Adults need real-world applications. The training is more meaningful to the participants if what they have learned is applicable in the workplace.
2. Adults want constructive feedback on their attempts to learn and implement new skills.
3. Adults benefit from professional development activities allowing them to participate in small-group activities that provide opportunities for application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.
4. Adult learners are unique individuals with a variety of skills and experiences. Individual needs and differences must be considered in the professional development process of planning and implementation.

The researchers have stated the importance of the applicability of the programming content to the learner's needs or its relevance to their work. Caffarella (1994) notes that it is important to have clear and understandable learning objectives (content) and to select the content based on the learner's knowledge and experience, the nature of the content itself, and the trainer's preference. Arthur (1998) suggests,

" An orientation program should emphasize what employees can expect from the organization and what the organization expects to receive from them. In addition, the orientation should expose employees to the larger picture of the overall function, status, structure, philosophy, and goals of the organization. This holistic view can benefit individuals in their jobs, assist them to develop a sense of commitment to the organization, and help them plan a future with the organization" (p.102).

Heathfield, (2002) concludes that it is important to design training that has clearly stated objectives with measurable outcomes. This is accomplished by providing content that leads the employee to acquiring the skill or information declared in the objectives. The author surmises that the employee will have ways to apply the training towards the accomplishment of objectives in the real workplace.

Summary

Chapter Two discusses three major areas reviewed in the literature: (1) professional development; (2) training; and (3) new employee orientation.

The literature reveals that there is limited research addressing departmental new employee orientation in a non-formal organization. The majority of research conducted has been within the Cooperative Extension System, and that research is based on general orientation of all new employees.

It is well documented in the literature that professional development is critical to the success of new employees. As a part of professional development, mentoring evolved as a key component in successfully orienting new employees.

A correlation has been established between how and why adults learn and the success of training and new employee orientation. Training is multi-faceted. Training delivery methods and models are varied. If training is planned well, it will meet the needs of its learners. Reinhardt (1988) notes that new employee orientation training "reduces turnover, prevents performance problems, instills positive attitudes about the organization, and paves the way for better communication" (p, 24).

The literature indicates that the decision to participate in orientation training is a complex one associated with career stages, organizational roles, and education preparation. To respond to the demands of a fast-paced and ambiguous work environment, training activities must be responsive to the perceived needs, motives, and expectations of the professionals involved.

Understanding why professionals participate in new employee orientation training can lead to determining the relative influence of motivational factors and ultimately provide orientation training that is more suitable to work performance needs.

Finally, the research overwhelmingly shows a correlation between a well-planned orientation and its impacts on the organization. Belaiche (1999) supports this concept by stating, a well-planned orientation can effectively contribute to length of employment, improved relations, better work attitude, more effective communication among the administration and new employees and can create a positive perception of the organization. Koebler (1992) reached the conclusion that, “A sound, well administered orientation program can improve quality, performance and morale. It can help retain employees with potential, who might otherwise leave during their critical induction period” (p. 3).

Conceptual Schema

Merton (1957) surmises that, “the interrelation of concepts to form a particular framework or conceptual schema marks the emergence of a theory.” Whereas, Miles and Huberman (1994) contend that a conceptual schema “explains, either graphically or in narrative form, the main things to be studied – key factors, concepts, or variables – and the presumed relationships among them” (p.18).

For the purposes of this research study, perceptions of NCCES FCS new field faculty orientation training were conceptualized as possibly being dependent upon personal attributes and professional characteristics. The conceptual schema for the study is shown in Figure 2.1.

CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA

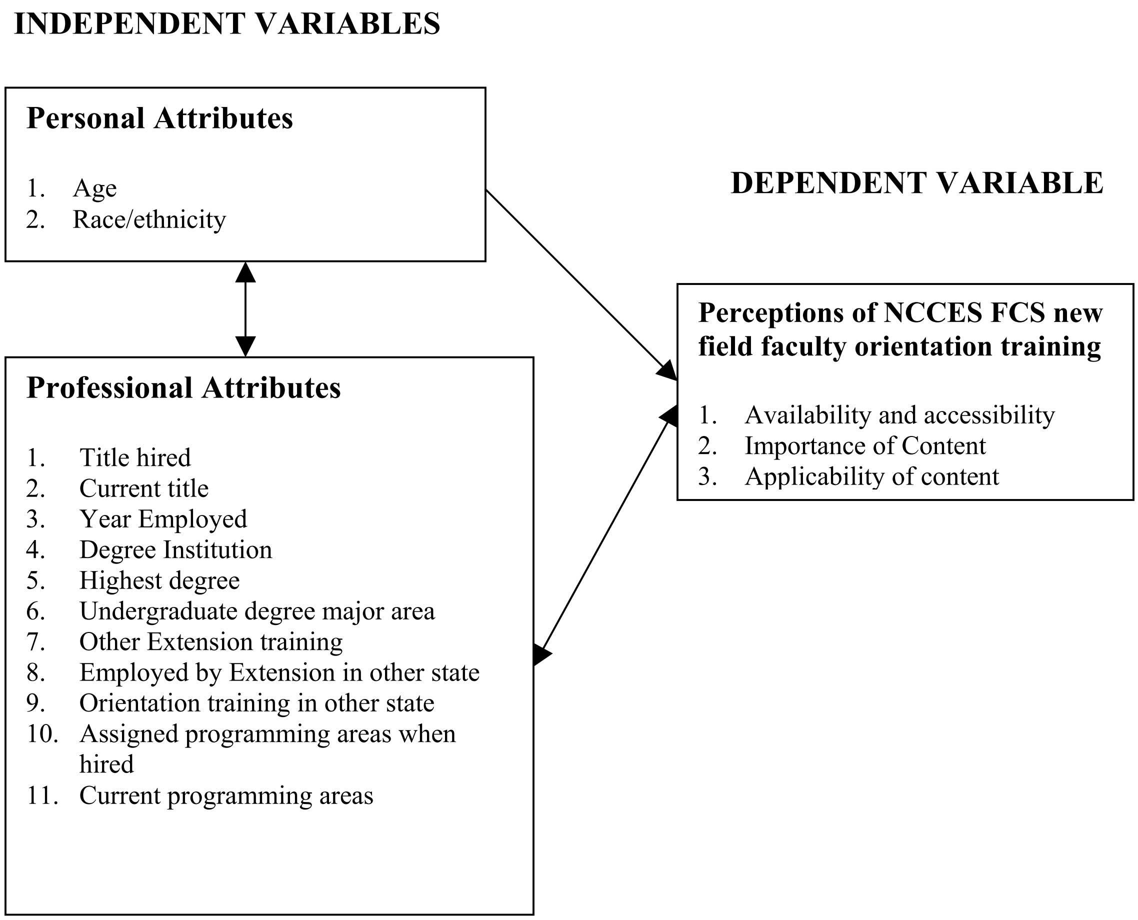

Figure 2.1: A conceptual schema of potential relationships between selected personal attributes and professional attributes variables and perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences new field faculty orientation training.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This chapter explains the methodology used for this study. The methodology is described using the following sections: (a) research design, (b) population, (c) instrumentation, (d) data collection, and (e) data analysis.

Research Design

A research design may be perceived as a plan that guides the researcher in making decisions regarding the collection and analysis of data. The research design helps decide "when and how often to collect data, what data to gather, from whom to collect data and how to collect them, and how to analyze the data" (O'Sullivan and Rassel, 1989, p.20).

The researcher conducted a descriptive-correlational study to investigate the research questions and fulfill the study's objectives. A census was used in conjunction with an electronic and mailed questionnaire to collect data. Permission was obtained from NCCES Administrative Council to conduct the study. Clearance was received from NCSU Institutional Review Board (Appendix A). This descriptive-correlational study utilized both qualitative and quantitative methodology.

Population

The researcher used a census to gather data from the target population of Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS) field faculty employed by North Carolina Cooperative System as of February 1, 2002. A list of FCS field faculty names and work addresses were confirmed via the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences Department of Personnel Services, and permission was obtained from NCCES Administrative Council. The census included 118 Family and Consumer Education Extension field faculty.

Instrumentation

The researcher developed a five-section written questionnaire based on adaptations from Reynolds (1970) survey entitled "Induction Training For New Agents in Virginia", a literature review, and an independent research project "North Carolina Department of Family and Consumer Sciences' New Field Faculty Orientation Assessment", (Wiggins, 1998).

Section I gathered information from respondents about their satisfaction with the availability and accessibility of the annual FCS departmental orientation training. This section utilized a 4 point Likert scale for rating perception of satisfaction (where 1 corresponded to "dissatisfied" and 4 to "very satisfied" for items one through six and where 1 corresponded to "strongly disagree" and 4 corresponded to "strongly agree" for items seven through eleven.) Likert rating scales are the most widely used response format and allow respondents to supply a large amount of information in a small amount of time (Aron & Aron, 1994).

Section II gathered information from respondents related to their perception of the importance of the content in the annual FCS departmental orientation training. In this section (12–17), items were rated utilizing a 4 point Likert scale in which 1 corresponded to "not very important" and 4 corresponded to "very important".

Section III gathered information from respondents related to their perception of applicability of the content in the annual FCS departmental orientation training. Items

18–27 were rated utilizing a 4 point Likert scale in which 1 corresponded to ” not very applicable” and 4 corresponded to “very applicable”.

Section IV consisted of four open-ended questions designed to provide additional perspectives concerning the annual FCS departmental orientation training. Open-ended questions require respondents to provide answers in their own words. This format allows the respondent to convey information that cannot be derived from responses to questions with a fixed set of answers and may provide insights into the issues important to the respondents (Aron & Aron, 1994).

Section V gathered information on personal and professional characteristics of respondents. Personal characteristics investigated included age and race/ethnic background. Professional characteristics investigated included title when hired; current title; institution at which received undergraduate degree; highest degree completed; major area of undergraduate study; participation in Extension training opportunity prior to employment with NCCE; participation in orientation trainings; employed as FCE Extension Agent in another state; assigned programming areas when hired; and current assigned programming areas.

Levels of satisfaction, agreement, importance, and applicability were conceptualized as possibly being dependent upon personal and professional characteristics. The conceptual schema for the study was shown in figure 2.1(p. 56).

Validity

Validity is the degree to which a test measures what it is designed to measure (Gray, 1981) and is the extent to which correct inferences can be made based on results from an instrument, on the instrumentation process, and the characteristics of the population studied (Fraenkel and Wallen, 1993). The researcher utilized a panel of experts in the field of Extension Family and Consumer Sciences to establish face validity of the instrument. Face validity is considered the simplest form of validity; it is the extent to which the question or statement appears to measure the concept (Weisberg, Krosnick & Bowen, 1996).

The panel of experts consisted of Extension County Directors with assigned FCS programming areas. The panel of experts received a cover letter and a evaluation form along with the questionnaire. (Appendix C). The panel of experts established face validity by reviewing the study questionnaire. The panel of experts suggested the addition of two items to Section II of the instrument.

Reliability

The reliability of an instrument measures the degree of consistency or stability over time (Ary, Jacobs, and Razavish, 1990). The researcher calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient to measure internal consistency of the test as an indicator of reliability, based on the degree to which the test participants completing the test answer a test item one way respond to another related test item the same way (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996). The Cronbach's alpha coefficient for this test was 0.95. According to Nunnally (1976), a Cronbach's alpha between 0.50 and 0.60 is acceptable for beginning research. Therefore, the researcher considered the questionnaire to be reliable.

Data Collection

A major concern in the outcome results of survey research is external validity. External validity is "the extent to which the findings of an experiment can be applied to individuals and settings beyond those that were studied" (Gall, Borg & Gall, 1996, p. 473). Four major threats to external validity in survey research have been identified: frame error, sampling error, selection error, and non-response error. Frame error, sampling error, and selection error were controlled by using a census, verifying respondents' names, and checking for possible duplication.

The quantitative and qualitative data were collected using an electronic and directly mailed questionnaire (Appendix B). The first mailing was sent electronically in PDF format to 118 FCE field faculty on February 27, 2002.with a cover letter. (Appendix D). The respondents had the options of electronically mailing or downloading and faxing the completed questionnaires to the researcher. Participants were encouraged to respond by March 14, 2002. A list with the counties was used to assist in follow-up with non-respondents.

On March 23, 2002, a reminder e-mail message including a second copy of the questionnaire was sent to all subjects. The first electronic mailing resulted in 6% of the NCCE FCS field faculty responding. Twenty-two percent of the questionnaires were faxed. On March 26, 2002, the questionnaire was mailed to non-respondents including a self-addressed stamped return envelope and asked to return by March 30, 2002. Salent and Dillman's (1994) method of survey research was used to collect the data from the mail questionnaire. The third mailing resulted in an additional 51% response. 18 FCS field faculty electronically notified the researcher that they would not complete the survey because of not having participated in a FCS departmental orientation training and having not served as a mentor to new FCS field faculty. The researcher e-mailed another reminder to the non-respondents. The study response rate was 79%.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data collected were coded, entered, and analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 10.0 to analyze the data generated by the study (Norusis, 1988). After the data were entered, the researcher randomly selected ten percent of returned questionnaires to check for accuracy. The researcher calculated descriptive and correlational statistics to analyze the objectives of the study. An accuracy rate of 87% was established. The researched deemed this percentage acceptable and proceeded to analyze data.

Descriptive statistics utilize “data analysis techniques enabling the researcher to meaningfully describe many scores with a small number of numerical indices” (Gay, 1981, p. 431). One of the data analysis techniques utilized was frequency distribution. Fraenkal and Wallen (1993) define frequency distribution as a “tabular method of showing all of the scores obtained by a group of individuals” (p. 550). Sprinthall, Schmutte, and Sirois (1991) defined correlational statistics as “an indication of the degree to which two or more variables are related, and that can be used to predict unknown values on one variable from known values on the others” (p. 368).

Davis’ (1971) conventions, as shown in table 3.1, were used in describing the measures of association.

Table 3.1: Conventions Used to Describe Measures of Association

Coefficient	Description
0.70 or higher	Very Strong Association
0.50 to 0.69	Substantial Association
0.30 to 0.49	Moderate Association
0.10 to 0.29	Low Association
0.01 to 0.09	Negligible Association

An alpha level of 0.05 was set a *priori* to determine the significance of the discriminant functions.

Data from the open-ended questions were collapsed into reoccurring themes by the researcher based on Tesch's (1990) discussion of content analysis in uncovering grounded theory from qualitative data. For further analysis, two separate Extension specialists familiar with orientation training and qualitative research, the researcher, and QSR NUD•IST Version 4 software for qualitative data analysis were employed. Bogdan and Biklen (1998) recommend the use of computer software for qualitative data analysis, as it assists recoding during analysis and eliminates the need for multiple paper copies.

CHAPTER 4

FINDINGS

This chapter includes the presentation of the findings for the study. The findings are organized according to the objectives of the study. The majority (84.9%) of the respondents are currently classified as assistant FCS Extension agents (20.3%) and full FCS Extension agents (64.6%). The minority (15.1%) are associate FCS Extension agents. Hence, the data are reported under the following categories: respondents, assistant FCS Extension agents, and full FCS Extension agents.

Objective 1. Describe North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service FCS field faculty's perceptions of the (a) availability and/ or (b) accessibility of the departmental orientation training for new Family and Consumer Education field faculty.

<u>Availability and /or Accessibility of NCCE FCS Departmental Orientation Training for New FCS Field Faculty</u>

Table 4.1 reports data concerning availability of the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training. A note of interest was the difference in agreement concerning availability of general information in the FCS departmental orientation training. The respondents and full FCS Extension agents percent were above 90%, whereas, 87.5% of assistant FCS Extension agents were satisfied.

Interestingly, the largest reports of disagreement expressed by 87.3% of respondents was to having intranet orientation only. Comparatively, 86.1% reported a preference for a combination of orientation over the intranet and face-to-face training.

The reported percentages were consistent with 87.6% of assistant FCS Extension agents and 86.3% of full FCS Extension agents not wanting intranet orientation only. Consistency was again reported with 87.5% of assistant FCS Extension agents and 86.3% of full FCS Extension agents favoring FCS orientation in combination with intranet and face-to-face training. More than 90 % of respondents reported the modal of "satisfaction" (satisfied or very satisfied) with the following Availability factors:

Table 4.1: Frequency of NCCE FCS Extension Field Faculty (Extension Agents) by Availability and /or Accessibility of FCS Departmental Orientation Training.

Availability Factors	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Support received from county director	75	94.6	16	100	47	92.2
Support received from district director	75	95	16	100	47	92.2
General Information	74	93.6	16	87.5	49	96.1
Orientation required for new field faculty	75	94.9	16	100	47	92.2

Objective 2: Describe North Carolina Cooperative Extension FCS field faculty's perceptions of the importance of the content in FCS departmental orientation training for new Family and Consumer Education field faculty to their jobs.

<u>Content of NCCE FCS Departmental Orientation for New FCS Field Faculty</u>

Table 4.2 reports data on the importance of content in the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training. Interestingly, 92.1% of full FCS Extension agents

reported the level of interest in the orientation as being important. The respondents (88.6%) and 87.5% of assistant FCS Extension agents found level of interest in the orientation as being important. More than 90 % of respondents reported the modal of "important" (important and very important) with the following Content factors:

Table 4.2: Frequency of NCCE FCS Extension Field Faculty (Extension Agents) for Importance of Content in FCS Departmental Orientation Training.

Content Factors	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Relevant to programming needs	76	96.2	16	100	50	98
Relevant to job performance	75	94.9	16	100	49	96.1
Useful as FCS professional	74	93.6	16	100	48	94.1
Expectations met	73	92.4	16	100	47	92.2
Range of topics appropriate	74	93.7	16	100	48	94.1

Objective 3: Determine applicability of the content in the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training.

Table 4.3 reports data on the applicability of content in the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training. It is important to note that 89.9% of the cumulative percent reported the overall structure of the program as being applicable. Other data worth noting are: (1) 88.7% of the cumulative percent and 87.5% of assistant Extension agents reported balance of information presented as applicable; (2) 87.5% of assistant Extension agents determined clarity of information as being applicable; (3) 89.9% of the cumulative percent and 87.5% of assistant FCS Extension agents reported presenters knowledgeable as applicable; (4) 89.9% of cumulative percent and 88.3% of full FCS Extension agents viewed quality of visuals as applicable; (6) 88.6% of all respondents and 86.3% of full FCS Extension agents rated FCS Dept. philosophy/procedures as applicable; (7) 84.8% of respondents and 75% of assistant FCS Extension agents reported understanding of FCS philosophy to programming as applicable; and (8) 89.8% of respondents and 87.5% of assistant FCS Extension Agents reported FCS organization structures being applicable to the content in the FCS Dept. orientation training.

More than 90% of respondents reported the mode “applicable” (applicable and very applicable) with the following Applicability of Content Factors:

Table 4.3: Frequency of NCCE FCS Extension Field Faculty (Extension Agents) for Applicability of Content in FCS Departmental Orientation Training.

Applicability of Content Factors	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Clarity of the information	72	91.1	16	87.6	47	92.2
Quality of handouts	73	92.4	16	93.8	47	92.1

Objective 4: Identify and describe related demographic attributes (personal and professional) of NCCES FCS field faculty.

Personal Attributes

Age

As illustrated in table 4.4, 72.1 percent of the FCS Extension Agents are in the range of 41- 60 years of age. Nineteen percent of the respondents are in the range of 31-40 years of age; 6.3% in the 20-30 years of age range; and 2.5% are 61 and over.

Race/Ethnic Background

As shown in Table 4.4, 64.6 percent of respondents reported being White, not of Hispanic origin. Of the respondents reporting, 21.5 percent are African American.

Table 4.4: Frequency of NCCE FCS Field Faculty by Age and Race\Ethnic Background.

Age	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
20 – 30	5	6.3	4	25	1	2
31 – 40	15	19	7	43.8	4	7.8
41 – 50	31	39.2	5	31.3	20	39.2
51 – 60	26	32.9	0	0	24	47.1
61 and older	2	2.5	0	0	2	3.9
Total	79	100	16	100	51	100
Background	**Respondents**		**Assistant FCS Agent**		**Full FCS Agent**	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
White, not of Hispanic origin	51	64.6	13	81.3	28	54.9
African American	17	21.5	1	6.3	14	27.5
Total	68	86.1	14	87.6	42	82.4

Professional Attributes

Titles When Hired

Table 4.5 indicates the majority (57%) of FCS field faculty were hired as Assistant Extension Agents. The second largest group (22.8%) were hired as Associate FCS Extension Agents.

Current Titles

A majority (64.6%) of the respondents currently have the title Full FCS Extension Agent (Table 4.5). The second largest group (20.3%) of respondents reported having the current title Assistant FCS Extension Agent.

Table 4.5: Frequency of NCCE FCS Field Faculty's Titles When Hired and Current

Title when hired	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Assistant FCS Extension Agent	45	57
Associate FCS Extension Agent	18	22.8
Full FCS Extension Agent	8	10.1
Specialized Area Agent	2	2.5
4-H Extension Agent	6	7.6
Total	79	100
Current Title	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Assistant FCS Extension Agent	16	20.3
Assistant 4-H Extension Agent	1	1.3
Associate FCS Extension Agent	7	8.9
Full FCS Extension Agent	51	64.6
Specialized FCS Area Agent	2	2.5
Other	2	2.5
Total	79	100

Undergraduate Institution

A majority (70.9%) of the study respondents received undergraduate degrees from non-land grant universities (Table 4.6).

Highest Academic Degree

Table 4.6 indicates that the majority (63.3%) of the respondents had a Master's Degree. Thirty-one percent held a bachelor's degree and five percent of the respondents reported their highest degree as a doctoral degree.

Major Area of Undergraduate Study

Table 4.6 reports data concerning the major area of undergraduate study. A high percentage (54.4%) of the respondents had their major undergraduate area of study in Family and Consumer Sciences/Home Economics Education. The next most prevalent group had a major area of undergraduate study in specialized areas of Family and Consumer Sciences (32.9%). Other majors and their respective percentage were education (7.6%), health education (3.8%) and sociology (1.3%).

Table 4.6: Frequency of Undergraduate Institutions Attended, Major Area of Undergraduate Study and Highest Academic Degree Completed by Respondents

Undergraduate Institution	**Respondents**		**Assistant FCS Agent**		**Full FCS Agent**	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Non-land grant university in NC	44	55.7	10	62.5	27	52.9
Land grant university in NC	9	11.4	1	6.3	8	15.7
Private college/ university in NC	12	15.2	3	18.7	6	11.8
Out of state college or university	14	17.7	2	12.5	10	19.6
Major Area of Undergraduate Study	**Respondents**		**Assistant FCS Agent**		**Full FCS Agent**	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Education	6	7.6	0	0	3	5.9
Home Economics Education	9	11.4	1	6.3	7	13.7
Family and Consumer Sciences	34	43	7	43.8	24	47.1
Specialized Area of Family and Consumer Sciences	26	32.9	6	37.5	16	31.4
Health Education	3	3.8	1	6.3	1	2
Sociology	1	1.3	1	6.3	0	0
Academic Degree	**Respondents**		**Assistant FCS Agent**		**Full FCS Agent**	
	Frequency	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**	**Frequency**	**Percent**
Bachelor Degree	25	31.6	12	75	8	15.7
Master's Degree	50	63.3	4	25	39	76.5
Doctoral Degree	4	5	0	0	4	7.8
Total	**79**	**100**	**16**	**100**	**51**	**100**

<u>Participation in Extension Training Prior to NCCE Employment</u>

Table 4.7 reveals 81 percent of the respondents had not participated in an Extension Training prior to NCCE employment. A majority (75%) of the assistant FCS Extension agents and a majority (84.3%) of full FCS Extension agents had not participated in a Extension training prior to employment with NCCE. Five respondents completed internships with NCCE prior to employment.

Table 4.7: Frequency of Respondent's Participation in Extension Training Prior to NCCE Employment

Extension Training Prior to NCCE Employment	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
None	64	81	12	75	43	84.3
Internship	5	6.3	3	18.8	2	3.9
Extension Trainee	3	3.8	0	0	3	5.9
Shadowed other Agent	1	1.3	0	0	1	2
4-H Agent before	1	1.3	0	0	1	2
Curriculum Trainings	1	1.3	1	6.3	0	0
Collaborated with Ext. Agents, used other materials	1	1.3	0	0	1	2
Hours for RD status	1	1.3	0	0	0	0
Former Extension Agent	2	2.5	0	0	0	0
Total	70	100	16	100	51	100

Participation in NCCE Training

As shown in table 4.8, 82.3 percent of respondents reported participating in Extension administration benefits training and Extension new faculty orientation training. Nearly 80 percent of the respondents participated in the FCS department orientation training. The data indicate duration of FCS department orientation was nearly evenly distributed between two days (29.1%) and three days (26.6%).

Table 4.8: Frequency of Respondents' Participation in NCCE Training

Extension Training	Respondents		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
Extension Administrative Benefits Training	65	82.3	14	87.5	42	82.4
Extension New Faculty Orientation Training	65	82.3	11	68.8	42	82.4
FCS Dept. Orientation Training	60	75.9	14	87.5	35	68.6
Duration of FCS Dept. Orientation Training Attended						
1 Day	6	7.6	1	6.3	4	7.8
2 Days	23	29.1	5	31.3	15	29.4
3 Days	21	26.6	8	50	11	21.6
4 Days	7	8.9			4	7.8
Orientation Training in Another State	2	2.5	0	0	1	2.0

Assigned Programming Areas

As illustrated in table 4.9, 32.9 percent of respondents were assigned all FCS programming areas when hired and 45.6 percent currently are assigned all FCS programming areas. The data indicate a decline from when hired to current status in the areas of textiles and apparel (31.6 % to 21.5%), family resource management (36.7% to 27.8%), human development (32.9% to 29.1%), foods and nutrition (31.6% to 27.8%), health and human safety (15.2% to 11.4%), with the most significant decline in 4 – H youth development (24.1% to 3.8%). The data indicate an increase from when hired to current status in the areas of housing (19 % to 25.3%), supervision/liaison agent for program assistants (16.5% to 26.6%) and supervision/liaison agent for Extension and Community Association (35.4% to 43%). Respondents assigned community resource development (5.1%) remained the same from when hired to current status.

Table 4.9: Frequency of Respondents Change in Assigned Programming Areas When Hired to Current.

Assigned Programming Area	When Hired		Current	
	Frequency	Percent	Frequency	Percent
All FCS Areas	26	32.9	36	45.6
Textiles and Apparel	25	31.6	17	21.5
Family Resource Management	29	36.7	22	27.8
Human Development	26	32.9	23	29.1
Food and Nutrition	25	31.6	22	27.8
Health and Human Safety	12	15.2	9	11.4
Housing	15	19.0	20	25.3
4-H and Youth Development	19	24.1	3	3.8
Community Resource Development	4	5.1	4	5.1
Supervision/Liaison Agent for Program Assistants	13	16.5	21	26.6
Supervision/Liaison Agent for Extension and Community Association	28	35.4	34	43

Decade Began Employment With NCCE

As shown in table 4.10, the majority of respondents (41.6%) were hired in the 1990's followed by the 1980's with 23.4 percent, 1970's with 19.5 percent, 2000+ with 11.7 percent and pre 1970 with 3.9 percent.

Table 4.10: Frequency of Respondents Decade Began Employment with NCCE

Decade Hired	Respondent		Assistant FCS Agent		Full FCS Agent	
	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Cumulative Percent	Frequency	Cumulative Percent
Pre 1970	3	3.9	0	0	3	12.2
1970's	15	19.5	0	0	15	30.6
1980's	14	23.4	0	0	13	26.6
1990's	36	41.6	16	100	17	34.7
2000+	9	11.7	0	0	1	2

Objective 5: Investigate the respondents' perceptions of possible relationships between demographic attributes and the dependent and independent variables of the NCCES FCE orientation training.

This section summarizes the correlations of the relationships between the variables of the study. Correlations reveal what happens to one variable if the other variable changes. The Davis' (1971) conventions used to describe measures of association, as shown in table 3.1, page 61, were used to discuss the magnitude of the relationships of the correlation coefficients in the correlational matrix (table 4.11).. The matrix reveals forty-one low associations (0.10 to 0.29) and three moderate associations (0.30 to 0.49).

Strength of the correlation is understood by looking at the correlation coefficient. The closer to zero the number is, the weaker the correlation. The positive or negative sign does not affect the strength of the correlation. A negative correlation means that as one variable changes, the other variable changes in the opposite direction. A positive correlation means that as one variable increases, the other variable also increases. Correlations tell the researcher a lot about how two variables change in relation to each other, but correlations cannot tell what caused those changes.

Availability and /or Accessibility

Low associations were found between availability and accessibility of FCS departmental orientation training and age (.121); race (.214); highest degree completed (.143); assigned foods and nutrition at hire (.113); assigned 4-H youth and development (.249); currently health and human safety (.123); and currently community resource development (.177). Low negative associations were found among assigned housing as hire (-.210); assigned supervisor/liaison agent – Extension and Community (-.221); currently textiles and apparel (-.127); currently human development (-.223). Moderate associations were found among assigned human development at hire (-.360) and currently foods and nutrition (.304).

Importance of Content

Low associations were found between importance of content and FCS departmental orientation training and current title (.254); participated in Extension training prior to NCCE employment (.122); participated in FCS departmental orientation training (.249); currently all FCS (.107); currently community resource development (.140). Low negative associations were found among undergraduate institution (-.121); duration of FCS departmental orientation training (-.256); assigned 4-H and youth development at hire (-.188); assigned supervisor/liaison agent- program assistants at hire (-.166); currently human development (-.137); and currently supervisor/liaison agent-program assistants (-.196).

Applicability of Content

Low associations were found between applicability of content and FCS departmental orientation training and age (.215); title when hired (.136); current title (.234); participated in Extension training prior to NCCE employment (.107); participated in NCCE administration benefits training (.172); participated in NCCE new faculty training (.119); assigned textiles and apparel at hire (.122); assigned health and human safety at hire (.115); assigned housing at hire (.124); currently family resource management (.126); currently health and human safety (.163) and currently housing (.101). Low negative associations were found among undergraduate institution (-.147); participation in orientation in another state (-.104); assigned family resource management at hire (-.135); assigned foods and nutrition at hire (-.103); currently all FCS (-.155); Moderate association was found with currently assigned community resource development (.356).

Table 4.11: Relationship Between Selected Personal and Professional Characteristics of NCCE FCS Field Faculty and Their Attitudes Toward Critical Aspects of FCS New Agent Orientation (* = Low Association, ** = Moderate Association)

Independent Variable Trait	FCS New Agent Orientation		
	Availability and Accessibility	Importance of Content	Applicability of Content
Personal			
Age	.121* (N = 63)	.056 (N = 74)	.215* (N = 72)
Race/Ethnicity	.214* (N = 53)	.097 (N = 63)	.120* (N = 62)
Professional			
Title when hired	-.026 (N = 63)	.074 (N = 74)	.136* (N = 72)
Current Title	.073 (N = 63)	.254* (N = 74)	.234* (N = 72)
Undergraduate Institution	.096 (N = 63)	-.121* (N = 74)	-.147* (N = 72)
Highest Degree Completed	.143* (N = 63)	.087 (N = 74)	.068 (N = 72)
Major Area of Graduate Study	-.052 (N = 63)	-.081 (N = 74)	-.058 (N = 72)
Participated in Extension Training Prior to NCCE Employment	.091 (N = 63)	.122* (N = 74)	.107* (N = 72)
Participated in NCCE Administration Training	-.076 (N = 63)	.009 (N = 74)	.172* (N = 72)
Participated in NCCE New Faculty Training	-.024 (N = 63)	-.060 (N = 74)	.119* (N = 72)
Participated in FCS Dept. Orientation Training	-.028 (N = 63)	.249* (N = 74)	-.049 (N = 72)
Duration of FCS Dept. Orientation Training	.068 (N = 62)	-.256* (N = 73)	-.070 (N = 71)
Employed as FCS Agent in Another State	.012 (N = 62)	.037 (N = 72)	.089 (N = 70)
Participated in Orientation in Another State	.017 (N = 62)	-.045 (N = 72)	-.104* (N = 71)

Table 4.11: Continued

Assigned All FCS Areas at Hire	.063 (N = 62)	-.023 (N = 73)	-.050 (N = 71)
Assigned Textiles and Apparel at Hire	-.059 (N = 62)	.056 (N = 73)	.122* (N = 71)
Independent Variable Trait	FCS New Agent Orientation		
	Availability and Accessibility	Importance of Content	Applicability of Content
Assigned Family Resource Management at Hire	-.028 (N = 62)	-.022 (N = 73)	-.135* (N = 71)
Assigned Human Dev. at Hire	-.360** (N = 62)	-.055 (N = 73)	.045 (N = 71)
Assigned Foods and Nutrition at Hire	.113* (N = 62)	.022 (N = 73)	-.103* (N = 71)
Assigned Health and Human Safety at Hire	.098 (N = 62)	.071 (N = 73)	.115* (N = 71)
Assigned Housing at Hire	-.210* (N = 62)	.092 (N = 73)	.124* (N = 71)
Assigned 4-H and Youth Dev. at Hire	.249* (N = 62)	-1.88* (N = 73)	.050 (N = 71)
Assigned Community Resource Dev. at Hire	.062 (N = 62)	-.070 (N = 73)	.021 (N = 71)
Assigned Supervisor/ Liaison Agent - Program Assistants at Hire	.093 (N = 62)	-.166* (N = 73)	.005 (N = 71)
Assigned Supervisor/ Liaison Agent- Extension and Community Association at Hire	-.221* (N = 62)	.000 N = 73)	-.050 (N = 71)
Currently all FCS	.026 (N = 62)	.107* (N = 73)	-.155* (N = 72
Currently Textiles and Apparel	-.127* (N = 62)	-.050 (N = 73)	.027 (72)
Currently Family Resource Management	-.087 (N = 62)	-.058 (N = 73)	.126* (N = 72)
Currently Human Dev.	-.223* (N = 62)	-.137* (N = 73)	.096 (N = 72)

Table 4.11: Continued

Currently Foods and Nutrition	.304** (N = 62)	-.023 (N = 73)	.025 (N = 72)
Currently Health and Human Safety	.123* (N = 62)	-.068 (N = 73)	.163* (N = 72)
Currently Housing	.092 (N = 62)	-.181* (N = 73)	.101* (N = 72)
Currently 4-H and Youth Dev.	.028 (N = 62)	-.053 (N = 73)	.045 (N = 72)
Independent Variable Trait	FCS New Agent Orientation		
	Availability and Accessibility	Importance of Content	Applicability of Content
Currently Community Resource Dev.	.177* (N = 62)	.140* (N = 73)	.356** (N = 72)
Currently Supervisor/ Liaison Agent - Program Assistants	.060 (N = 62)	.107* (N = 73)	-.009 (N = 72)
Currently Supervisor/ Liaison Agent- Extension and Community Association	-.015 (N = 62)	-.064 (N = 73)	.004 (N = 72)
Availability Summative Scale	1 (N = 63)	.122* (N = 60)	.298** (N = 61)
Content Summative Scale	.122 (N = 60)	1 (N = 74)	.429** (N = 70)
Applicability Summative Scale	.298** (N = 61)	.429** (N = 70)	1 (N = 72)

Additional Perspectives

Additional perspectives concerning the annual FCS departmental orientation training was solicited via four open-ended questions. Three to five reoccurring themes were identified for each question.

Which segment of the FCS orientation training did you find most informative and least informative? Reoccurring themes most informative were: (a) meeting FCS specialists and learning about their assigned areas of concentration: (b) receiving list of FCS resources and FCS specialists; (c) time to share with other new agents and facilitate agent networking: (d) and programming process. Reoccurring themes least informative were: (a)unclear understanding of new agents roles; (b) introduction of FCS specialists and staff; (c) and felt overwhelmed- too much information covered.

As a result of the FCS orientation training, do you better understand your role as a FCS field faculty member? Five reoccurring themes were identified in assisting FCS field faculty in understanding role as a FCS field faculty member : (a) expectations of FCS field faculty; (b) importance of evaluation; (c) where to seek answers; and (d) overall view of NCCE and field faculty and (e) importance of having a FCS agent as a well-trained mentor.

List three suggestions you have for improving the annual FCS departmental orientation training. The five reoccurring themes identified by the respondents were: (a) allow additional time for interaction with FCS specialists, other FCS field faculty, especially FCS field faculty with less than five years; (b) online introductory orientation session and face-to-face orientation training with FCS specialists with question and answer periods; (c) provide information via educational technology for self-directed learning; (d) recommendations and examples for working with field faculty in other Extension program areas (4 – H, CRD, and Agriculture); and (e) FCS departmental orientation training be conducted in segments over a two - year period.

What are some suggested topics and or issues to be included in future annual FCS departmental orientation training? Five reoccurring themes identified were: (a) setting priorities; (b) partnerships and collaboration; (c) marketing strategies and promotional pieces; (d) accomplishment reports including success stories; and (e) measuring impact.

Revised Conceptual Schema

Based on the conclusions drawn from this study, the conceptual schema presented in Chapter 2 was revised. As illustrated in Figure 4.1, there were positive associations between the personal attributes, age and race/ethnicity and availability of orientation training. Positive associations were found among eight of the professional attributes and the dependent variable, perceptions of NCCE FCS new field faculty orientation training. Three of the professional attributes, undergraduate degree major area, employed by Extension in other state, and orientation training in other state, did not have any level of association with the dependent variable and eliminated from the conceptual schema. A positive association was revealed within the components of the dependent variable – availability of orientation training and applicability of the content. A positive association was also found between importance of content and applicability of content.

REVISED CONCEPTUAL SCHEMA

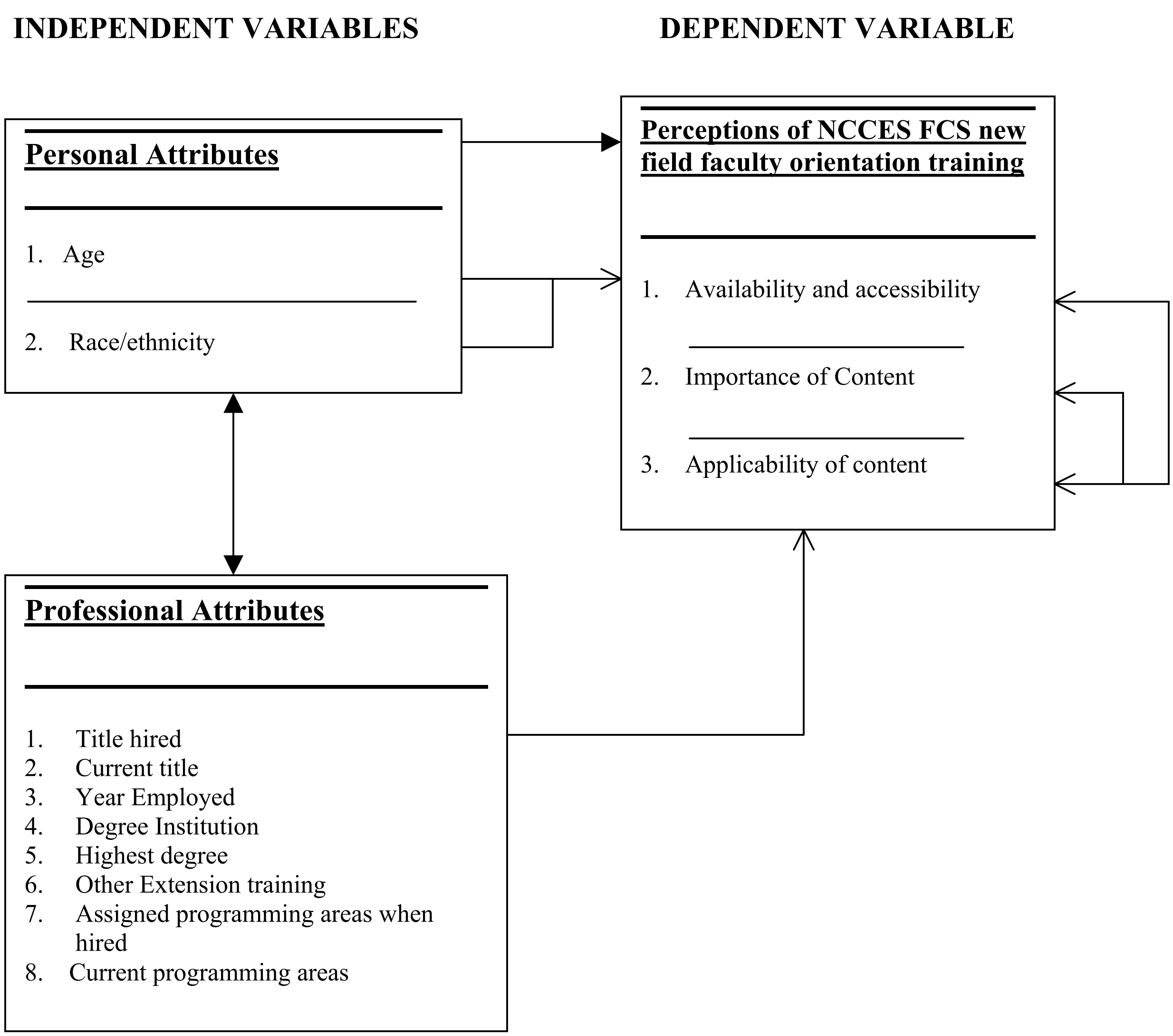

Figure 2.1: A conceptual schema of relationships between selected personal attributes and professional attributes variables and perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service Family and Consumer Sciences new field faculty orientation training.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

North Carolina Cooperative Extension (NCCE) is an outreach effort of the two land-grant universities, North Carolina State University (NCSU) and North Carolina Agricultural &Technical State University (NCA&T). North Carolina Cooperative Extension's mission is "to help individuals, families, and communities put research-based knowledge to work to improve their lives". (Richardson, 2000, p.1). This organization has field faculty (Extension agents) located in Extension centers in each of the 100 counties and the Cherokee Indian Reservation plus Extension specialists located at NCSU, NCA&T and research stations in various parts of the state. Professional development is an integral part of the field faculty career development plan. As agents of change, the field faculty are challenged to continually improve and further their own knowledge, skills and abilities to serve their individual needs and those of the Extension Organization.

Statement of the Problem

The researcher had ascertained that no research investigating participants' perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences' orientation training offered to new Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty had been conducted. Orientation of all new Extension state and field faculty/staff is a major function of the Personal and Organizational Development Unit. The NCCE FCS departmental orientation training is coordinated by a member of the FCS department.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to investigate the perceptions of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension's FCS field faculty of the annual FCS departmental orientation training. Specific objectives included:

1: Describing North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service FCS field faculty's perceptions of the availability and/ or accessibility of the orientation training for new Family and Consumer Education field faculty.

2: Describing NCCES FCS field faculty's perceptions of the importance of the content in the orientation training for Family and Consumer Sciences new field faculty.

3. Determining applicability of the content in NCCE FCS new field faculty orientation training.

4: Identifying and describe related demographic attributes (personal and professional) of FCS field faculty.

5. Investigating the respondents' perceptions of possible relationships between demographic attributes and the dependent and independent variables of the FCS orientation training.

Research Design

The study was descriptive-correlational in nature with the purpose of describing perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty regarding the " availability and /or accessibility of", "importance of content of" and " applicability of content of" new FCS field faculty orientation training. A five-segment questionnaire was used to collect quantitative and qualitative data. The data were collected over a six - week period with a response rate of 79%. The data were analyzed utilizing the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS), version 10.0. generated Norvusis (1988), Davis (1971) conventions and NUD•IST qualitative data analysis software.

Conclusions

The conclusions of this study have implications for NCCE FCS departmental orientation training for new NCCE FCS field faculty. The findings of this study parellel the work of Reynolds (1970), Hubbard (1971) and Smith and Buckley (1985).

Conclusion #1: FCS Field Faculty Are Satisfied with Availability and /or Accessibility of New FCS Field Faculty Orientation Training.

The data indicated a majority were satisfied with location, scheduling, overall agenda and information presented. The study results revealed the duration of the orientation training should be two to three days. Less interest was shown beyond three days. Arthur (1998) reports that in relatively small organizations, a minimum of one day may be warranted; in larger organizations, a full week or more may be needed to cover the key elements.

The study results indicated that orientation training be conducted face-to-face and selected information available online. Arthur (1998) supports this concept by stating that cyberspace training is important in the orientation process, but should but used in conjunction with the face – to – face orientation training. Its interesting to note that the largest reports of disagreement expressed by 87.3% of the respondents was to having intranet orientation only. This finding does not support the recommendation by NCCE PODS unit to have orientation be delivered exclusively online. The implication is that the current FCS departmental orientation training be restructured to include providing selected information online.

Orientation training is made available via the approval of travel and support from the county and district directors. If one of these two administrators were not supportive, the FCS field faculty orientation training would not be accessible. A majority of the respondents were satisfied with the support received from both county and district Extension directors. This finding supports the results from the 1998 study conducted by the researcher in which the county and district directors felt the FCS departmental orientation training for new FCS field faculty was important and strongly encouraged participation.

Conclusion #2: Content Offered in New NCCE FCS Field Faculty Orientation Training Supports Roles Of NCCE FCS Field Faculty Within Their Respective Counties.

As Apps (1991) found "adults participated in adult education because of a relationship to vocation. They want to improve on their current job… They want to learn something that they can apply immediately" (pp. 412-42). Apps finding was borne out in this study. It is therefore concluded that the content was found to be important and meets the needs of new FCS field faculty in light of their roles and responsibilities. It is evident that it is important to evaluate orientation content each year to ensure that the content is relevant and supportive of FCS field faculty roles.

Conclusion #3: Content Provided in the New NCCE FCS Field Faculty Orientation Training is Applicable. It has been found that a variety of approaches and methods are necessary in the adult learning process (Caudron, 2000:; Hubbard (1971); and Speck (1996). The methods employed for delivering orientation content were deemed applicable by the respondents, especially programming needs and content relevant to job performance. Subsequently, based on the study results, the overall structure and process of the orientation training would be retained.

Conclusion #4: Perceptions Of NCCE FCS Departmental Orientation Training Are Related To Certain Personal and Professional Attributes of Respondents.

Conclusion A: The majority of NCCE FCS field faculty (72.1%) are 41-60 years of age. Therefore, the majority of NCCE FCS field faculty are eligible for early and full retirement. The researcher concludes that this could have a significant impact on the future of FCS and NCCE. This conclusion reflects one of the trends cited by the editors of *Workforce* (2002). The editors state that with budget deficits and possible permanent reduction in the workforce, cross training and mentoring are essential and sustained recovery for organizations is based on the remaining employees. The implication is that NCCE needs to begin developing strategies to lessen the impact of a possible significant reduction in the workplace and loss of knowledge and experience.

Conclusion B: Current assistant NCCE FCS agents have a better appreciation for NCCE FCS departmental orientation training. A greater number of current assistant Extension NCCE FCS agents reported having an appreciation for the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training as compared to full Extension NCCE FCS agents. Kleiman (2000) points out that, "Effective orientation programs, where new employees are introduced to a company's mission and made to feel part of a team, are key to sparking early productivity and improving employee retention" (p. 4). Roderer and Hicknman (2000) concur with Kleiman's comments. The implication is that the FCS departmental orientation training has incorporated changes on a yearly basis to remain current and meet the needs of the new FCS field faculty.

Conclusion C: NCCE FCS field faculty have reported a shift in priorities from when hired to current responsibilities. This may be due to downsizing of the NCCE workforce and or other responsibilities being assigned to 4-H Extension field faculty. Rothwell and Sredl (1992) note that staff development, when sponsored by the organization, will assist the employee in focusing on identifying, assuring, and helping evoke new insights through planned learning. It gives the employee the capability of working smarter rather than harder because they have the experience and knowledge to set priorities to carry out their work. Staff development is an avenue to assist professional staff to move from what is, to what should be. Setting priorities will become more critical in the future if the trend of downsizing and budget deficits continue.

Conclusion # 5: Associations between the independent variables: personal and professional attributes, and dependent variable: perceptions of the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training support the strength of the construct validity of the research topic. According to Gall, Borg and Gall (1996) in education and social science, correlation statistics allow the researcher to analyze how the variables, single or in combination, affect the pattern of behavior. Even though the associations in this study are primarily low or negligible, these associations contribute to the strength and validity of the research study

Conclusion # 6: NCCE FCS field faculty believe that NCCE FCS departmental orientation training is beneficial and should continue being supported by the

Department of Family and Consumer Sciences and NCCE. Klein (2001) supports this conclusion by stating " A good orientation program helps workers better understand the organization and its goals, and feel more at ease in the culture – and helps build commitment. If employers want a committed workforce, a good orientation program is an important first step in developing commitment" (p. 9). Loraine (1999) shares the revelation that when budgets are tight, new employee orientation is reduced or eliminated. The author states, "The cost of orientation has been looked at in the past with indifference. Now the one thing that an organization cannot afford is a failed orientation" (p. 12).

Recommendations

The review of literature, the findings of this study, and the subsequent conclusions led this researcher to several recommendations for NCCE Administration and Extension FCS department. The recommendations are classified as recommendations for practice and for research.

Recommendations for Practice:

1. NCCE FCS state faculty continue to offer NCCE FCS departmental orientation training to new NCCE FCS field faculty.
2. NCCE FCS department restructure the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training based on the outcomes of the research study: face-to-face and on-line training.
3. NCCE administration emphasize the recruitment and hiring of NCCE FCS field faculty who have education backgrounds and a concentration in Family and Consumer Sciences or a related field.

4. NCCE District Directors, NCCE State FCS Specialists and NCCE state-level administrators encourage NCCE FCS field faculty, currently working on master's degree, to enroll in courses to support their assigned programming area(s).

5. Additional training be offered to NCCE County Extension Directors, NCCE District Directors, NCCE FCS Specialists and NCCE PODS State Specialists on the importance of NCCE FCS departmental orientation training for new NCCE FCS field faculty.

6. Given the large number of retirees, one strategy for getting new NCCE FCS field faculty oriented more effectively may include mentoring by well trained NCCE FCS field faculty.

7. The profession of Extension Family and Consumer Sciences should more aggressively conduct and support research in further defining the importance and impact of FCS orientation training and job performance.

8. Cooperative Extension more aggressively conduct and support research in further defining training delivery methods and how different races and cultures learn.

Recommendations for Further Research:

1. It is recommended that the study be replicated with other states' Family and Consumer Sciences Programs. Then, comparisons of the results between states could be made.

2. Since the study dealt exclusively with NC Cooperative Extension Family and Consumer Sciences field faculty, a modified questionnaire could assess the perceptions of other Extension departmental orientations.
3. NCCE administration explore the effect on the organization in the recruitment and hiring of NCCE FCS field faculty who are representative of North Carolina's predominant populations: white, African-American and Hispanic/Latino.
4. Since the study did not solicit the NCCE FCS state specialists' perceptions, a modified questionnaire could assess their perceptions of the NCCE FCS departmental orientation training for new NCCE FCS field faculty. The comparisons of the results between the NCCE FCS state specialists and NCCE FCS field faculty could be made.
5. A further study investigating in what concentrations NCCE FCS field faculty are obtaining master's and doctoral degrees would be beneficial. The important question to explore is, 'how are these degrees supporting/not supporting the current program areas of responsibility?'

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Human Subjects Approval Letter

North Carolina State University is a land-grant university and a constituent institution of The University of North Carolina

Office of Research and Graduate Studies

NC STATE UNIVERSITY

Sponsored Programs and
Regulatory Compliance
Campus Box 7514
1 Leazar Hall
Raleigh, NC 27695-7514
919.515.7200
919.515.7721 (fax)

From: Debra A. Paxton, Regulatory Compliance Administrator
North Carolina State University
Institutional Review Board

Date: February 18, 2002

Project Title: Perceptions of North Carolina Cooperative Extension's Department of Family and Consumer Sciences Orientation Training

IRB#: 0048-02-2

Dear Ms. Wiggins:

The research proposal named above has received administrative review and has been approved as exempt from the policy as outlined in the Code of Federal Regulations (Exemption: 46.101.b.2). Provided that the only participation of the subjects is as described in the proposal narrative, this project is exempt from further review.

NOTE:

1. This committee complies with requirements found in Title 45 part 46 of The Code of Federal Regulations. For NCSU projects, the Assurance Number is: M1263; the IRB Number is: 01XM.

2. Review de novo of this proposal is necessary if any significant alterations/additions are made.

Please provide your faculty sponsor with a copy of this letter. Thank you.

Sincerely,

Debra Paxton
NCSU IRB

Appendix B: Research Questionnaire

Family and Consumer Science Departmental Annual Orientation Training For
New Field Faculty in North Carolina

SECTION I: Perceptions of Availability and Accessibility of the Annual FCE Departmental Orientation Training

Instructions: For each statement below, place an (x) beside the number that best describes the extent to which you are satisfied or dissatisfied using the following scale: (1) “Very Dissatisfied”, (2) “Dissatisfied”, (3) “Satisfied”, and (4) “Very Satisfied”.

	Very Dissatisfied 1	**Dissatisfied 2**	**Satisfied 3**	**Very Satisfied 4**
1. Support received from County Director	1	2	3	4
2. Support received from District Director	1	2	3	4
3. Convenient Location	1	2	3	4
4. Convenient Scheduling	1	2	3	4
5. Structure:				
5a. Overall Agenda	1	2	3	4
5b. Duration of individual sessions	1	2	3	4
5c. Duration of overall program:	1	2	3	4
6. Environmental:				
6a. Lighting	1	2	3	4
6b. Parking	1	2	3	4
6c. Room Accessibility	1	2	3	4
6d. Temperature	1	2	3	4
6e. Acoustics	1	2	3	4
6f. Room Set-up	1	2	3	4

Instructions: For each statement below, place an (x) beside the number that best describes the extent to which you agree or disagree using the following scale: (1) “Strongly Disagree”, (2) “Disagree”, (3) “Agree”, and (4) “Strongly Agree”.

	Strongly Disagree 1	**Disagree 2**	**Agree 3**	**Strongly Agree 4**
7. General information (FCS Department mission, vision, goals, policies, etc.) be made available via the intranet and/or video prior to orientation training.	1	2	3	4
8. FCE orientation training be conducted only over the intranet.	1	2	3	4
9. FCE orientation training be a combination of the intranet, face to face training and additional sessions via the MCNC network.	1	2	3	4
10. FCE departmental orientation training be conducted over a two year period.	1	2	3	4
11. FCE departmental orientation training be required for new FCE field faculty.				

SECTION II: Perceptions of Importance of the Content in the Annual FCS Departmental Orientation Training

Instructions: For each statement below, place an (x) beside the number that best describes the extent to which you consider important or not important using the following scale: (1) " Not Very Important", (2) "Not Important", (3) "Important", and (4) "Very Important".

		Not Very Important 1	**Not Important 2**	**Important 3**	**Very Important 4**
12.	Content relevant to programming needs.	1	2	3	4
13.	Content relevant to job performance.	1	2	3	4
14.	Useful as a FCE professional.	1	2	3	4
15.	Expectations met.	1	2	3	4
16.	Range of topics appropriate.	1	2	3	4
17.	Level of interest in the orientation.	1	2	3	4

SECTION III: Perceptions of the Applicability of the Content in the Annual FCS Departmental Orientation Training

Instructions: For each statement below, place an (x) beside the number that best describes the extent to which you consider applicable or not applicable using the following scale: (1) " Not Very Applicable", (2) "Not Applicable", (3) "Applicable", and (4) "Very Applicable".

		Not Very Applicable 1	**Not Applicable 2**	**Applicable 3**	**Very Applicable 4**
18.	The overall structure of the program.	1	2	3	4
19.	The balance of the information presented.	1	2	3	4
20.	The completeness of the information.	1	2	3	4
21.	The clarity of the information.	1	2	3	4
22.	Specialists and presenters were knowledgeable about topics and issues presented.	1	2	3	4
23.	Quality of handouts.	1	2	3	4
24.	Quality of visuals.	1	2	3	4
25.	FCS Department philosophy, mission, vision, goals, policies and procedures.	1	2	3	4
26.	Clear understanding of relation of FCS Department philosophy, mission, vision and goals, policies and procedures to programming.	1	2	3	4
27.	FCS organizational structure.	1	2	3	4

Section IV: Additional Information Concerning the Annual FCS Departmental Orientation Training

Please answer the following questions:

28. Which segment of the orientation programming process did you find most informative? Least informative? Why?
29. As a result of the orientation programming process, do you better understand your role as FCE field faculty member? Explain.
30. List three suggestions you have for improving the annual FCS departmental orientation training?
31. What are some suggested topics and or issues to be included in future annual FCS departmental orientation training?

SECTION V. Demographic Attributes

Please answer the following questions:

32. What title were you hired as? (check one)
    ___ Assistant Extension Agent, FCE
    ___ Associate Extension Agent, FCE
    ___ Full Extension Agent, FCE
    ___ Specialized Area Agent, FCE
    ___ Other (___4-H, ___Agriculture, ____CRD)
33. What is your current title? (check one)
    ___ Assistant Extension Agent, (___ FCE ___4-H___Ag ___CRD)
    ___ Associate Extension Agent (___ FCE ___4-H___Ag ___CRD)
    ___ Full Extension Agent (___FCE ___4-H ___Ag ___CRD)
    ___ Specialized Area Agent (___FCE ___4-H ___Ag ___CRD)
    ___ Other (please specify) ____________________________________
34. From what institution did you receive your undergraduate degree? (check one)
    ___ Non-land grant university in North Carolina
    ___ Land-grant university in North Carolina
    ___ Private college or university in North Carolina
    ___Out-of-state college or university
35. What is the <u>highest</u> degree you have completed?
    ___ Bachelor's degree
    ___ Master's degree
    ___ Doctoral degree
    ___ Other (please specify) ____
36. What was the major area of your undergraduate study?
    ___ Education
    ___ Family and Consumer Sciences (general home economics)
    ___ Specialized area of Family and Consumer Sciences (foods & nutrition, textiles and apparel, child development, housing, etc.)
    ___ Health Education
    ___ Other (please specify) ____
37. Did you participate in an Extension training opportunity prior to your employment with North Carolina Cooperative Extension?
    ___ No
    ___ Internship
    ___ Extension Trainee
    ___ Other (please specify) ____
38. Which orientation trainings have you participated in:
    ____ NC Cooperative Extension Administration/Benefits
    ____ NC Cooperative Extension New State and County Faculty/ Staff
    ____ Annual FCS Departmental Orientation Training (held during the summer)
39. Duration of the annual FCS Departmental Orientation Training you attended:
    ___ N/A ___ 1 day ___ 2 days ___ 3 days ___ 4 days
40. Were you employed as a FCE agent in another state? ___ Yes ___ No
41. If you were previously employed by Cooperative Extension in another state, did you participate in a FCS departmental orientation training for new hires?
    ___ Yes ___ No
42. What were your assigned programming areas when hired by NC Cooperative Extension: (may check more than one)
    ___ All areas of FCE
    ___ Textiles and Apparel
    ___ Family Resource Management
    ___ Human Development (__ Child Development/Care ___ Aging)

___ Foods and Nutrition
___ Health and Human Safety
___ Housing
___ 4-H and Youth Development
___ CRD
___ Supervisor/Liaison Agent:
    ___ Program Assistants/Associates
    ___ Extension and Community Association
    ___ Other (please specify) ______________________________________

43. What are your current assigned programming areas: (may check more than one)?
___ All areas of FCE
___ Textiles and Apparel
___ Family Resource Management
___ Human Development (__ Child Development/Care ___ Aging)
___ Foods and Nutrition
___ Health and Human Safety
___ Housing
___ 4-H and Youth Development
___ CRD (Community Resource Development)
___ Supervisor/Liaison Agent:
    ___ Program Assistants/Associates
    ___ Extension and Community Association
    ___ Other (please specify)______________________________________

44. Sex: _____Male _____Female
45. Age: ___ 20-30 ___ 31-40 ___ 41-50 ___ 51-60 ___ 61+
46. Race/ethnicity _____________
47. In what year were you employed by North Carolina Cooperative Extension? ____

Thank you for taking time to complete the questionnaire. The information will be used in planning future annual FCE Departmental Orientation Training.

Please respond to all questions and email to sandy_wiggins@ncsu.edu or return in an envelope to M. Cassandra Wiggins, Department of Family and Consumer Sciences, Box 7605, North Carolina State University, Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7605. The completed questionnaire may also be faxed to M. Cassandra Wiggins at 919-832-8109.

Disclaimer: In August 2002, the NCCE Administrative Council made the decision to change the County FCE program title to FCS. The questionnaire was sent out prior to this change.

Appendix C: Letter to Panel of Experts

Department of Family & Consumer Sciences
Box 7605, North Carolina State University
Raleigh, North Carolina 27695-7605

To: Selected Family & Consumer Education Extension Field Faculty

As part of my graduate program at North Carolina State University, I am conducting an analysis of the Family & Consumer Sciences' annual departmental orientation training provided to new Family & Consumer Education field faculty. As a county Extension director, formerly or currently having assigned FCE programming responsibilities, you have been selected to pilot the questionnaire to be sent to FCE field faculty.

The study is not an assessment of any particular person but, rather seeks to determine how FCE field faculty feel about the annual FCS departmental orientation training. Your participation in reviewing the enclosed questionnaire will contribute to the success of the study, the future of the FCS departmental orientation training, and to the greater understanding of the training needs of beginning field faculty.

A pilot study evaluation form has been included. Please return the pilot study evaluation form with your recommendations along with the completed questionnaire in the enclosed stamped envelope by February 18, 2002.

If you need additional information or clarification, you may contact me at 919-515-9155, or email sandy_wiggins@ncsu.edu or Dr. Saundra Williams, faculty advisor, 919-733-7051, ext. 314 or email swilliams@ncccs.cc.nc.us.

It is a pleasure working with you in this endeavor. I will appreciate your support and prompt cooperation.

Sincerely,

M. Cassandra Wiggins
Doctoral Student

FCE Orientation Training Pilot Study Evaluation Form

Please complete the top portion of the evaluation form before beginning the survey.

Evaluator's Name: Date:

Time Survey Started: Time Survey Ended:

1. Comments about the title and introduction (clarity, suggested changes, etc.)

2. Comments about the directions provided in each section (ease of use; terminology; clarity; suggested changes, etc.).

3. Comments about the scales used in the sections (ease of use; terminology; suggested changes, etc.).

4. Comments about section statements (additions/deletions; rewording, clarity, suggested changes, etc.).

5. Comments about overall format/layout of the survey (ease of reading, ease of use, organization / suggested changes, etc).

Additional comments or suggestions (attach additional pages if needed).

Thank you for your time and support!

Appendix D: Letter to Participants

Dear Extension Field Faculty:

As part of my graduate program at North Carolina State University, I am conducting an analysis of the Family & Consumer Sciences' annual departmental orientation provided to new Family & Consumer Education field faculty. The study is not an assessment of you or any other person, but seeks to determine your perceptions of the annual FCS departmental orientation training. The annual FCS departmental orientation training is most often held during the summer for new FCE field faculty.

The study has been approved by the Administrative Council of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service. Your responses and suggestions are highly valued. All information will be kept anonymous. Only summary data will be utilized and released.

It will take you approximately ten to fifteen minutes to complete the attached questionnaire. Your participation in completing the attached questionnaire will contribute to the success of the study, the future of the annual FCS departmental orientation training and to the greater understanding of the training needs of beginning field faculty. Please respond to each question as it applies to your participation in the annual FCS departmental orientation training.

Please return the completed questionnaire to me by March 4, 2002.

If you need additional information or clarification, you may contact me at 919-515-9155, or email sandy_wiggins@ncsu.edu or Dr. Saundra Williams, faculty advisor, 919-513-3706 or email saundra_williams@ncsu.edu.

It is a pleasure working with you in this endeavor. I appreciate your support and prompt response.

Sincerely,

M. Cassandra Wiggins
Doctoral Student
Department of Adult and Community Education
North Carolina State University