

AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF THE PTA
AND ITS COMMUNICATION OF GOALS AND PROGRAMS

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Attitude research is still relatively new and involves many different variables and areas of interest. This study has been undertaken to add to the information on attitudes toward a specific organization and its communication practices.

The organization selected for this study is the Parent-Teacher Association, or PTA. Although the scope is limited to the Texas PTA, attitudes toward PTA in general are reflected in the responses. A brief description of its history is given, as well as information on its structure and available literature on the subject.

This study provides information on volunteer organizations in general, including their characteristics, communication, leadership, and the effect changes have on the communication of the organization.

The method used for the study was a self-report questionnaire. It was specifically designed to secure the following information, (1) demographic data about the respondents; (2) respondents' relationship to PTA;

(3) their attitude toward the role of the PTA and what changes, if any, need to be made; (4) ways they secured information about PTA goals and programs; and (5) their attitude toward PTA communication and how they thought it could be improved.

The questionnaire was administered to more than 300 individuals representing four levels of the organization. The 130 who responded were leadership personnel from state, district, and council, and persons from a local PTA. A vertical, "pie-shaped" slice was taken of the organization, going from a large proportion of state leadership to a very small proportion of persons from the local PTA level.

Results of the survey are reported in sections corresponding to those on the questionnaire. Most of the information is given in the form of tables, but the responses to the semantic differentials are shown graphically. The graphs demonstrate that those from the leadership levels view the PTA and its communication more positively than those from the local level.

Outstanding aspects of the role of the PTA which respondents suggested are to be involved in the school and be an open line of communication, to supply information to parents and help them to be better parents, to encourage action and participation in education, and to be a link between the school and community.

Most of the respondents felt the current structure was suitable to carry out the tasks of the PTA, but several did make suggestions for changes. Those mentioned most often were to strengthen leadership, to provide better means of communication, and to give less emphasis to fund-raising projects.

Ways to improve communication suggested most often were to involve more people, to use newsletters, to provide more personal contact, to inform the public as well as members, and to make better use of the news media.

This study recommends that the PTA (1) involve more individuals in leadership roles through a limitation on the length and levels of service, (2) involve more men, (3) place an emphasis on the role(s) of PTA, especially in parent education, working with the school administration, and keeping the public informed, (4) increase communication, (5) study involvement and ways to do it more efficiently, and (6) maintain interest in leadership training.

For further research, this study recommends (1) an extensive study of attitudes of non-members and/or members of minority groups, (2) extensive study of members from over the state, and (3) ways to involve people in a volunteer organization for maximum profit to the persons and to the organization.

AN ANALYSIS OF ATTITUDES TOWARD THE ROLE OF THE PTA
AND ITS COMMUNICATION OF GOALS AND PROGRAMS

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Although interest is now being shown in the study of interpersonal communication and attitude acquisition and change, it is still a new field of study. Dow wrote in 1961 that "the concept of communication research and theory is one which has appeared in comparatively recent years."¹ To further illustrate, one outstanding compilation of articles on the subject contains no article written before 1953.²

Another factor which influences study in this area is the fact that interest has "blossomed from a variety of disciplinary sources."³ Many of the contributions to the literature in the field have been written by social scientists, while those who were more concerned with the rhetorical aspects have seemed to lag behind.

¹Clyde W. Dow, editor, An Introduction to Graduate Study in Speech and Theatre (East Lansing, 1961), p. 316.

²Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen, editors, Foundations of Communication Theory (New York, 1970).

³Bruce H. Westley and Malcolm S. MacLean, Jr., "A Conceptual Model for Communications Research," Foundations of Communication Theory, edited by Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen (New York, 1970), p. 73.

While this thesis is not a rhetorical analysis, it is an examination of the "symbolic activities of human beings" in one setting in an attempt to learn "what people in it say to each other."⁴ This is done through an analysis of their attitudes toward an organization and toward the communication of that organization.

Purpose of the Study

Since most organizations function more effectively in some areas than in others, an initial step which can be taken is to make an audit of the organization and determine wherein lie its strengths and its weaknesses. This can be done through securing data about it, organizing the data, and examining the results. Then it is possible to make knowledgeable observations about the necessity for improvement in the organization, and, if improvement is necessary, in what areas it needs to come.

The purpose of this study is to examine some aspects of one specific organization through designing a questionnaire, administering it to individuals involved to some degree in the organization, evaluating the data received, and then making knowledgeable observations about it. The specific aspects to be examined are its role and its communication of goals and programs as seen by several groups. ✓

⁴Dow, op. cit., p. 316.

The organization chosen for the study is the Parent-Teacher Association. The scope has been limited to the area of the Texas Congress of Parents and Teachers, since a survey of a national scope would be too complex and time-consuming for a thesis. It is assumed that attitudes toward the National Congress of Parents and Teachers are reflected in the responses, however.⁵

Instead of taking a general communication or organizational audit, the information was obtained through use of a questionnaire sent to those representing a "vertical, pie-shaped slice" of the organizational structure. This included all of the top state leadership (State Board), a portion of leadership from the next level (districts), a smaller portion from the next level (councils), and, proportionately, a very small sample from the local level.

The specific areas of information included in the questionnaire relate to the PTA as a volunteer organization. The method used in the study is to compare the attitudes held by these specific groups, namely, PTA leadership at the state and district levels, council leadership and local school administrators, and "rank-and-file" members as well as parents who had the opportunity to join a local PTA but did not.

⁵For the sake of brevity, and since the term "PTA" is a registered service mark for the organization, this designation will be used throughout the paper.

Reasons for Selecting the Topic

There are multitudes of organizations in operation today which are staffed almost exclusively by volunteers. However, the one which represents probably the largest segment of the population is the PTA. As one of its publications notes,

Almost everybody--from five-year-olds to nonagenarians--has heard of the PTA. For the PTA is as familiar a part of American life and tradition as baseball, politics, picnics on the Fourth of July, and pumpkin pie at Thanksgiving.⁶

Through the years since its founding in 1897, the PTA has become not only a "household word," but also a symbol of parent-teacher-school cooperation. It is available to many millions of parents and teachers in the United States and many other countries, and is the only organization which is concerned with all the children of America, regardless of sex, race, color, creed or national origin.

Since it does involve so many volunteer workers from all areas of society, it is being used to represent many other volunteer groups who operate in much the same way. Because of this, information about its flow of communication and of attitudes toward it should be of benefit to other groups also.

⁶National Congress of Parents and Teachers, The PTA Works for Children (Chicago, n. d.), p. 1.

⁷A personal reason for selecting this topic is that the writer has served in an official PTA capacity for the past seven years, including service at the local, council, district, and state levels.

Content of the Study

A general introduction to the area of communication and attitude research is given in Chapter I. It also includes the purpose of the study, and the method to be used. The reasons for selecting the specific topic are given, followed by a general statement of the content of the study.

Chapter II gives an introduction to the PTA as a volunteer organization. The development of the PTA on the national and state levels is traced briefly, including information about the structure of the levels used in the study. There is a brief review of research done in the past, other literature concerning the PTA which is available in the Denton area, and some observations on volunteer organizations. This includes their characteristics, communication, leadership, and other conditions which affect communication.

The design of the questionnaire used for the survey is discussed in Chapter III, along with the selection of subjects and administration of the instrument.

Chapter IV contains the results of the survey. This is treated through analysis of the demographic material, the semantic differential scales, and the responses to the constructed- and selected-response items.

The concluding chapter, Chapter V, gives a summary of the study, conclusions drawn from it, and some recommendations for the organization for further research.

CHAPTER II

THE PTA AND VOLUNTEER ORGANIZATIONS

The PTA as An Organization

In the 1890's, the status of children was very low in comparison to today's standards. They worked many hours, received little or no education, and were expected to act as if they were miniature adults. However, as the general public learned more about people as individuals, and the study of psychology became more popular, a few parents became concerned about the plight of children.

One of these who was concerned was Alice McClellan (Mrs. Theodore) Birney. Upon the birth of a third daughter, the realization came anew to her of the responsibilities of motherhood. It was then that she had the idea of a national organization of mothers through which many mothers could be educated and "the nation be made to recognize the supreme importance of the child." Alice Birney wrote later,

"Congress was in session at this time, and I knew how its doings were telegraphed to all parts of the earth and how eagerly such messages were read, in this continent at least, and then like a flash came the thought: Why not have a National Congress of Mothers, whose growth would quickly become international? It seemed the full answer to all my perplexed questioning."

That was the idea from the first--to become a nation's council where the mothers of America could

come to legislate their mother-concern into action. . . . There was to be talk, indeed, for the best minds must be brought together. But the talk, as in the nation's Congress, must lead to the doing of things.¹

Development of the PTA Nationally

By 1895, Alice Birney was giving much time and energy to the idea of a Congress, but it was too much for one woman. It was then that she met Phoebe Apperson (Mrs. George) Hearst, "fabulously wealthy, (who) cared deeply about boys and girls and about people who needed help. . . . (But) she did her caring intelligently. Wherever she bestowed gifts, her mind went along."²

Together the two women contacted notables, educators, women who were leaders in their communities, presidents of local women's clubs and sewing circles--in short, anyone who might be interested in an organization of mothers. The people they contacted were ones who were "already sensitized to the needs of children and . . . in their small local ways . . . were already trying to meet those needs."³

When the day came which had been set for the first meeting of the Congress, February 17, 1897, instead of 200 women as they had expected, there were 2,000. Since they

¹Harry Overstreet and Bonaro Overstreet, Where Children Come First (Chicago, 1949), p. 41.

²Ibid., p. 43.

³Ibid., p. 45.

were people who were really interested,

It was a deeply serious and knowing audience . . . that surged out of the (overcrowded) ballroom of the hotel into the larger quarters of the First Baptist Church and later into the armory above the old Central Market. They came from all states, one woman bringing her seven children. Three hundred of them were delegates.⁴

Through the years since then, the organization has grown to include others who were interested besides mothers. By 1908, the name was changed to National Congress of Mothers and Parent-Teacher Associations. Then in 1924, in an effort to improve the awkward title and make it more realistic, it was shortened to the National Congress of Parents and Teachers, the present name.

Development of the Texas PTA

The Texas branch of the National Congress was organized in Dallas in October, 1909, by Ella Caruthers Porter who had been designated as the organizer for Texas. It is now the second largest state congress, with almost 700,000 memberships, and, in the opinion of its membership, is considered a progressive and forward-looking organization. It was the first state congress to have its own office building, and now has a paid staff of ten full-time employees plus a few part-time workers.

⁴Ibid.

Structure of the PTA Levels
Used in the Survey⁵

Through its twenty-two districts, the Texas PTA coordinates the work of local units over the state. Each of the districts is composed of PTAs in a specified geographical area, and has from one to nineteen councils within its boundaries. Some districts also have local associations in areas too small to form into a council. There are over 2,000 local PTAs, and more than 120 councils in the state.

The State Board of Managers is composed of a president, two vice-presidents, recording secretary, historian, parliamentarian, immediate past president, eight regional vice-presidents (two from each of the four regions in the state), approximately twenty-five chairmen, and the presidents of the twenty-two districts. The term of office for all the board members is two years, but several of the offices are vacated each year in a rotating system so that at any time there are experienced members serving. All of these people serve as volunteers, but their expenses for meetings and other types of field service are paid from state funds.⁶

Each of the districts also has a Board of Managers whose members serve in volunteer capacities. The district

⁵More complete information on each of these can be found by consulting the by-laws of the respective units--state, district, council, and suggested by-laws for local PTAs.

⁶The term "State Board" will be used throughout the thesis to refer to this group.

used for this study, District Two, is in the north-central portion of the state, and encompasses twelve counties. Its boundaries run along the counties represented roughly by the cities of Dallas, Denton, Gainesville, Denison, Bonham, Greenville, Canton, Kaufman, Ennis, and Waxahachie. The District Board is composed of a president, six vice-presidents representing geographic areas (one of whom is designated as aide-to-the-president), recording and corresponding secretaries, historian, parliamentarian, twenty-seven chairmen (at the time of the survey), and the presidents of each of the nineteen councils in the district. When any of these leaders are assigned responsibilities by the District President, their expenses are paid from the district budget which is supplied from state funds. The term of office for the council presidents varies according to the council, but all other officers and chairmen serve concurrently for a two-year term.⁷

The Denton City Council of PTAs was the council used in this survey. It is composed of the nine local PTAs in the elementary schools in the Denton Independent School District. Though all of the following are not official members of the Executive Committee of the Council, for the purpose of this survey, questionnaires were sent to the

⁷The term "District Board" will be used throughout the thesis to refer to this group.

nine officers and chairmen, principals of the elementary schools, PTA presidents of the local schools, and the superintendent of the schools.

The local PTA used in the study is from the Woodrow Wilson Elementary School, Denton. It is in a relatively new part of the city with many higher-priced homes surrounding it. Many of the parents whose children attend the school are leaders in the community, professors at the two universities, and outstanding businessmen. However, a number of children are bussed in from other areas, so there are a few Negro and Latin-American children. The PTA is known in the community as one of the more progressive PTA organizations, and it works closely with the school principal. For the past several years, they have had a "Christmas Festival" as a fund-raising project, and have purchased equipment for the school, including closed-circuit television for each room. Its meetings are well attended by mothers and the teachers, but only a few fathers are able to come since most of the monthly meetings are held in the afternoons.

Review of Literature on PTA

The PTA as an organization has many publications which serve to explain its functions. Perhaps the ones with most popular appeal in Texas are the national magazine, The PTA Magazine, and the Texas PTA Bulletin, monthly publications.

The most factual for study would be the PTA Manual and the monthly National Bulletin.⁸ Various other booklets and pamphlets are available which are written to appeal to different readers.⁹

In addition to PTA publications, several dissertations have been written in recent years using the PTA as their main topic. Of the nine which were reported in Dissertation Abstracts, seven are about specific state congresses or PTAs in certain areas, and would seem to be somewhat historical. Only two would be considered general in nature.¹⁰

In the North Texas State University Library there are four theses written by North Texas graduates which relate to the PTA. In 1938, a study was done of PTAs in the Thirteenth PTA District which is the Wichita Falls area of the state.¹¹ The Second District, Dallas-Denton area, was

⁸Publications which are designated as "monthly" are actually published eight or nine times each year.

⁹Complete listings may be secured from the Texas PTA office, 408 W. 11th, Austin, Texas, 78701.

¹⁰Elliott Castleton Howe, "Educational Problems and Concerns of Parents and Teachers with Recommendations for PTA Activities," unpublished doctoral dissertation, School of Education, University of Utah, Salt Lake City, Utah, 1959. Also, Robert Earl Splawn, "Oklahoma Public School Superintendents Perceptions of 'Real' Activities and 'Ideal' Activities of Local PTA's," unpublished doctoral dissertation, College of Education, The University of Oklahoma, Norman, Oklahoma, 1966.

¹¹Grover E. McAlister, "The Extent to Which the Parent-Teacher Association is Achieving Its Objectives in the Thirteenth District of the Congress of Parents and Teachers in Texas," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Education, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1938.

the topic for a study done in 1947.¹² The more specific subject of a local PTA in Denton was covered in another thesis done in 1947.¹³ The other work, written in 1942, was the result of a study made of parents and teachers from several elementary schools in the Denton area. It concluded that the PTA could become "more representative of the parents through more practical application of its objectives and encouragement of parental participation in its activities."¹⁴

Volunteer Organizations

Introduction

There are many organizations which are led mostly by volunteers rather than by a large paid staff. Most of these are organized for non-profit purposes. When the term "volunteer organizations" is used in this thesis, it refers to those with these two major characteristics.

¹²Georgia Sargent, "An Evaluation of Parent-Teacher Associations in the Second District of Texas," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Education, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1947.

¹³Mary Elizabeth Lowe, "The Analysis of the Reasons for and the Lack of Attendance at the Parent-Teacher Association of the Robert E. Lee School, Denton, Texas," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Education, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1947.

¹⁴Annie Patterson Schleinat, "An Evaluation of Activities that Effect Better Parent-Teacher Cooperation in Relation to Child Development and Welfare," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Education, North Texas State Teachers College, Denton, Texas, 1942, p. 65.

There are two basic reasons that people band together in such organizations: to protect and/or to promote. Most human activities are goal-directed, and people realize that by uniting they can more easily accomplish their goals. This concept is presented graphically in Appendix I. In order to fulfill the needs, wants, and desires of a person or group, people unite through an organization so that they may reach these goals. This organization can only be effective if there is some type of management or leadership. It is then that people are willing to give of their ideas, energies, and resources to the organization, so that they might be able to attain the goals.¹⁵

Characteristics of Organizations

Just the fact that a group of people are together in a physical setting does not make them a group or an organization. Through a process of time and building up of group norms and group structure, they can become a reference group. This involves also the development of interest in the group and development of a goal or goals for the group. They then become a "social unit consisting of a number of individuals who stand in role, power, status, and intent relationships with one another, who possess

¹⁵Chamber of Commerce of the United States, "The Organization Structure, First Year Course," lecture materials for Institutes for Organization Management, Houston, Texas, 1962.

certain norms which regulate behavior in areas of importance to the group."¹⁶

The term "group" implies at least three people, and each differs in their relationships with the other members of the group according to which members are present at the time. Thus, communication within an organization is the flow of information and attitudes within these human networks, and is in reality a whole series of interpersonal relationships.¹⁷

Characteristics of Communication Within an Organization

Communication has been described in a general way as (1) understanding and being understood, and (2) getting the right information to the right person at the right time.¹⁸ In any organization, but especially in one which is run by volunteers who do not see each other every day, it is important to inquire into the situation and determine whether the right information is getting to the right people at the right time. It is therefore helpful to review some things

¹⁶Don Edward Beck, "Organizational Communication," class lecture materials, Speech 460, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, December 1, 1972.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸United States Department of Agriculture Soil Conservation Service, "Communications in Management," lecture materials for Management Conference, Fort Worth, Texas, April 17, 1968.

that are known about communication, especially as it relates to organizations.

Several studies have found that persons do not receive the message intended for them, or do not perceive it as it was intended.¹⁹ Some items are enlarged upon, some are ignored, and many times a story is made to conform to the desires of the one receiving it. Distortions may also come in other ways, such as exaggeration of differences, and thinking that if things are similar then they must be identical. In general, then, much of the communication within an organization does not result in the intended message being received properly.

Another problem that is often found is that there is only downward communication and very little, if any, upward flow. At times there is also a need for more horizontal communication between those of equal status. One of the solutions to this problem is the use of "feed-forward" by the leaders. This involves giving the members as much factual information as possible before a problem arises.²⁰

¹⁹Two of these studies are (1) Gail S. Saunders, "An Analysis of the Methods and Effectiveness of the Downward Flow of Communication at Texas Instruments Incorporated," unpublished master's thesis, Department of Speech and Drama, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, 1972. (2) Ross A. Webber, "Perceptions of Interactions Between Superiors and Subordinates," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Wharton School of Finance and Commerce, University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1970.

²⁰Chamber of Commerce of the United States, "Eliminating Barriers to Communication, Second Year Course," lecture materials for Institutes for Organization Management, Houston, Texas, 1963.

Specific comments from leaders in various volunteer organizations give further insight into the communication problems faced by such groups:

(1) "Would you believe, people won't read their mail, even when I send them something?"

(2) "The messages I receive, even by mail, are so garbled and lengthy that a person can't remember the few essential points." Writers do not use the five w's of who, what, where, when, and why.

(3) "Information is often sent to the wrong people--those who do not need it or will be confused by it, but it is not sent to those who do need it."

(4) Even after information is received, there is a lack of follow-up on the part of the leadership in communicating with the officers or members of a committee or board. "There is no consistent follow-through. . ."

(5) When something is finally accomplished or planned, there is no pre-sell to the group. "You are hit with a major project and expenditure, and there has been no communication preparing you for it - no facts, propaganda, no nothing."

(6) "As you wrap-up a term of office, there is no written record or evaluation for the benefit or edification of the new leadership or membership." The person doing the job doesn't analyze his term, doesn't admit that he needs to be graded, sets up no written goals or objectives for the following officer, no discussion about the year. The general membership or the public doesn't know, and the new officers have no guidelines.

(7) "I think groups need to spend more time and energy (and money, if necessary) in the training of qualified leaders, committee chairmen, and members. If we told them more about the organization, they could do a more effective job.

(8) "We need to encourage members as well as officers to become involved all year long, not just at peak seasons. This means involving more people in active roles."

Leadership As It Affects Communication
Within an Organization

The type and quality of leadership within an organization has an effect on communication. In fact, the communication within the organization is a "print-out" of the power relationship that exists there. The communication system will be complementary with the power ratios and organizational theory of the group.

An examination of how leaders are enlisted is pertinent to the understanding of this topic, because leadership is assigned to someone by the followers. It is a function of interpersonal influence. "The very presence of large numbers of only loosely organized and committed people summons efforts of leaders to manipulate and mobilize them."²¹ It is possible to study leadership, but not leaders as such, because they are leaders only in the minds of their followers. Because of this, it must be realized that there are no universal leadership traits.²²

Organizations function through one of three approaches to leadership. The first of these has been described as "classical" with an authoritarian-type leadership. In the

²¹Denis McQuail, Towards a Sociology of Mass Communications (London, 1969), p. 21.

²²Don Edward Beck, "Leadership and the Group Process," class lecture materials, Speech 462, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas, November 13, 1972.

language of the late psychiatrist, Eric Berne, this is the "critical or prejudicial parent" ego state.²³

The second approach is designated as "human relations" or a paternalistic type, which Berne calls the "nurturant parent." This involves a large amount of empathy and warmth on the part of the leader. The last approach is a synthesis of the first and second, and has been designated as the "structuralist." It is based on the importance and humanity of all employees or members, no matter how high or low their status in the organization.²⁴

Using a scale of one to nine, power ratios within the organization can be designated numerically. For instance, if there is a strongly authoritarian leader and very submissive follower, then the ratio could be called a nine-to-one ratio. If there is almost an equality of power, then it would perhaps be a six-to-four ratio. Thus the quality and quantity of communication within the organization can and does show what power relationships exist, and what is its particular theory of organization.²⁵

²³Muriel James and Dorothy Jongeward, Born to Win: Transactional Analysis with Gestalt Experiments (Reading, Massachusetts, 1971), p. 110.

²⁴Beck, Speech 462, November 13, 1972.

²⁵Beck, Speech 460, September 11, 1972.

General Conditions Which Affect
Organizational Communication

There are several conditions in an organization which have some effect on its communication. Katz and Lazarsfeld explain,

Differences in the degree of mutual attraction among individuals, differences in the degree of their interdependence, differences in status, and, of course, mere differences in such things as propinquity or group size will make significant differences in the rate of contact and communication and often, too, in the content of what is communicated.²⁶

One condition which would work against productive communication would be the lack of adequate channels or media to transmit information. This would result in a restriction of opportunity for and means of communicating. If there is not some type of regular, informative material sent to each member or leader, then the work of the group is hampered. Failure to use the many different channels available to most groups would contribute to an ineffective organization.

The geographic area covered by the organization is another item to be considered, including the distances among the organizational units. When members do not see each other very often, it decreases the amount of person-to-person contact and hampers other types of communication.

²⁶Elihu Katz and Paul Lazarsfeld, "Interpersonal Networks: Communicating Within the Group," Foundations of Communication Theory, edited by Kenneth K. Sereno and C. David Mortensen (New York, 1970), p. 332.

In many volunteer organizations, members are scattered over a wide geographic area, and this makes it impossible to have daily contact.²⁷ It also makes it difficult to have general meetings very often. For example, members of the State PTA Board do live literally in every part of the state. Because of the expense involved, as well as time, they do not meet but three times a year. Two of these are held in connection with other statewide meetings, and only one is scheduled separately for just a meeting of the Board.

The size of the organization also affects the quality of communication within its structure. Getting messages to five people does not seem to be as mammoth a task as getting messages to 500 or 5,000. As McQuail has pointed out,

The use of mass organizations results in a "relatively unmediated and depersonalized relationship between the membership and the organization." The great majority are led or governed in most of what they do by elite groups located at a distance, without the possibility of personal interaction. Individuals cannot easily understand the workings of the overall system, or see the connections between different activities.

²⁷In a study conducted within the context of different levels and units of a labor union, it was found that the usual channels of communication were not as effective as in some other types of unions. This was deemed to be caused by the fact that there was a lack of physical propinquity on the job, whereas other unions had members in close daily contact. Phillip Knox Timpkins, "An Analysis of Communication Between Headquarters and Selected Units of a National Labor Union," unpublished doctoral dissertation, Department of Communication, Purdue University, Lafayette, Indiana, 1962.

The result is to discourage participation in society as a whole and increases the possibility of manipulation from above.²⁸

The complexity of the organization and its cohesiveness, or lack thereof, are other factors to be considered. In a profit-making organization, there can be a rather complex structure, and the employees will likely accept it without question. However, if people are serving on a part-time basis, on their own time, and often at their own expense, they do not want anything too complicated or that requires a lot of paper work or "red tape" before anything can be accomplished. Their personal commitment to the cause of the organization also affects how much complexity they will abide. If they are highly committed to the organization, as many district and state PTA leaders are, then they will be more tolerant of minor inconveniences. But if it is not a major part of their lives, they are not interested in spending time on extraneous matters.

A final condition which may exist part of the time also affects the type and amount of communication within an organization. This is when there are changes made in the structure of the group, or when there is discussion of the possibility of changes. The number and kinds of rumors are usually increased when there is a hint that change is to come. The use of the "grapevine" is tremendous, even in day-by-day routine matters. This can be true in volunteer

²⁸McQuail, op. cit., p. 21.

groups as well as businesses, and mis-information can be a very disruptive element in the overall climate of the group.

Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter has been to study the PTA and other volunteer organizations. It has been developed through looking at the origin of the PTA, its development at the national and state levels, the structure of the PTA levels used in the survey, and a review of the literature related to the PTA which is available in the Denton area.

There has also been a study of volunteer organizations, and their peculiar characteristics. Communication within an organization has been described by looking at its characteristics and how it is affected through the leadership style used. The concluding section delineated general conditions which affect organizational communication, including availability of adequate channels or media to transmit information, the geographic area covered by the organization, the size and complexity of the organization, and the effect which impending change has upon it.

Chapter III will discuss the design of the questionnaire, the selection of subjects to be used for the survey, and the administration of the survey.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The measurement of attitudes is recognized as a difficult task, because of the many variables involved in securing a "true" measurement. Summers explains that

Measurement is the assignment of numbers to observations according to some set of rules. This is true whatever the phenomenon being observed. When that phenomenon is attitude, the process of measurement becomes complicated, since attitude cannot be observed directly but must always be inferred from behavior.¹

There are several types of techniques available for attitude measurement, and the researcher must determine which is best suited to his purpose and most practical within his personal, budgetary, and time limitations.

Design of Questionnaire²

For this survey, it was determined that a self-report questionnaire which could be mailed would best serve the purpose. This was because the respondents were widely scattered geographically, and budgetary considerations

¹Gene F. Summers, editor, Attitude Measurement (Chicago, 1970), p. 1.

²See Appendix II for a copy of the cover letter and the questionnaire used.

eliminated the use of interviews or individually administered questionnaires. Realizing that there are limitations to such an instrument, efforts were made to design it to be as valid and reliable as possible.³ It was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and giving references in the event anyone desired to verify it.

Demographic Information

The first portion of the questionnaire involved several items of demographic information. The questionnaire did not ask for the name of the respondents, but the items included did serve to classify the responses. This was particularly true of the items showing whether they were currently serving as a PTA officer or chairman and at what level they were serving. By using these items, four subgroups were to be set up and used for comparison. The original sub-groups were: those serving at the state level, serving at district level, council leaders and local school administrators (including presidents of the

³"Its limitations are enormous and virtually impossible to overcome. For example, large proportions of the mailed questionnaires typically are never returned, thus adversely affecting the representativeness of the sample from which behavioral specimens are collected. Also, once the questionnaire is in the hands of the respondent, the researcher can never be sure behavioral specimens collected are actually those of the intended or supposed respondent . . . (since others) may 'help' in framing the respondents's self-report. Finally, the researcher's assistance in interpreting a question to the respondent is an impossibility." Summers, op. cit., p. 6.

local PTAs in the elementary schools), and parents and teachers from Woodrow Wilson Elementary, Denton, Texas.

The other information which was felt to be necessary included whether they were a PTA member, and, if so, how many years they had belonged. Since a criticism has been given that too many PTA officers at the state and district levels are "out of touch" with education because they no longer have children in public schools, this information was requested. The grade level(s) of their PTA was not as necessary as other items, but was of interest. This is also true of their level of education.

Another item which is often used as a criticism refers to the percentage of women involved in the organization. Some critics say there are too many mothers, and not enough fathers and teachers or administrators, and so this information was deemed to be important. Also of importance were the ages of those involved, especially at state and district levels of service.

Since a person's commitment to a group or organization usually reflects their attitude toward it, this information was determined by use of a continuum. The respondents were asked to mark somewhere along a line showing how important PTA was in their life. To tabulate this item, it was scaled to designate a number for their answer, assuming equal spaces along the continuum. For example, if they marked near the end of the line designated

"Not Important at All," this was rated as a "one." Responses ranged all the way to a "nine" answer, "Extremely Important."

Semantic Differentials

One of the accepted ways to measure attitudes is through the use of semantic differentials made up of bipolarized adjective or noun word sets. There is not just "one" semantic differential for all uses, but it is

a very general way of getting at a certain type of information, a highly generalizable technique of measurement which must be adapted to the requirement of each research problem to which it is applied. There are no standard concepts and no standard scales; rather, the concepts and scales used in a particular study depend upon the purpose of the research.⁴

The first step in planning a semantic differential is to determine which concepts are of interest to the study, and then decide upon a scale by which to measure them. Since this study involves two different areas of information, it was decided to devise a semantic differential for each of them.

A large number of items which could relate to the role of and personal opinions about the PTA were selected. They were concepts used in various portions of Osgood's book and others from known descriptions. This list was

⁴Charles E. Osgood, George J. Suci, and Percy H. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of Meaning (Urbana, Illinois, 1957), p. 76.

examined and shortened to fifteen concepts which seemed to be most pertinent. The persons who were consulted in the pilot study were asked for usggestions, and from their ideas the list was revised again to total twelve adjective or adjective phrase sets.

The same procedure was used in selecting concepts for the attitudes toward the flow of information about PTA goals and programs. There were sixteen of these sets used in the pilot study, and that number was also shortened to twelve.

Three other factors relate to the design of the semantic differentials. They are (1) the scales representing the same general attitude were "alternated in polarity direction (e. g., fair-unfair, but worthless-valuable) to prevent the formation of position preferences,"⁵ (2) the possible answer spaces was set at eight, so there would not be an exact mid-point, and (3) for scoring, it was assumed that intervals were equidistant, producing interval data."⁶

⁵Osgood, op. cit., p. 82.

⁶Interval data yields itself to more treatment statistically, since it can be used in formulas requiring equal distance (intervals), as well as rank order and general classification. George A. Ferguson, Statistical Analysis in Psychology and Education (New York, 1971), p. 13.

Constructed- and Selected-
Response Items

The final types of questions used were mostly constructed-response items. Two of these were the questions concerning the role of the PTA, and what, if any, changes need to be made. This type question causes those surveyed to think through their answer and also gives them a chance to express attitudes in their own words.

The other constructed-response item concerned their ideas on how the PTA could have more effective communication. On this topic they were also given a selected-response question in which they were asked to check their sources of information about PTA activities. It was felt that this information would be helpful in determining how much was already being done to impart information to members and non-members.

Selection of Subjects⁷

In order to secure a true "vertical slice" of the organization, it was necessary to get respondents who were

⁷The entire project had been discussed in person and in correspondence with the State PTA President, Eadie (Mrs. Marvin) Armstrong of Lubbock. (See Appendix III for copies of this correspondence.) At the February, 1973, meeting of the State Board, the ideas for the thesis were discussed, and permission was given the researcher to determine which of the suggested ideas to develop. All during the planning and execution of the study, there was complete cooperation from Mrs. Armstrong, Tom Prather and the other members of the State Office staff, and PTA workers at all levels of service.

representative of a "cut away" picture of the total possibilities. It was determined that the best way to do this would be by taking all of the population at the state level, and a representative sample of the district level and of the council and local school administrators level. The final group would be a very small, proportionately, number of respondents from a local PTA level. It was felt that this would suffice as a modified random sample.⁸

As noted, all of the members of the State Board were to be asked to respond. District Two was chosen as the one to use in the study because it is the one in which Denton is located, and because of the writer's personal acquaintance with the members of the District Board and the work of the district. In the April, 1973, copy of the district newsletter, The Oak Leaf, the District President, Anne (Mrs. James) Eppright of Dallas, noted that the thesis was being written, and that the board members would be involved in it. The same reasons were true for choosing the Denton City Council of PTAs as for choosing the district.

The Woodrow Wilson Elementary PTA, Denton, was selected to represent local PTAs. It was chosen because of its progressiveness, and because of the cooperative attitude of its officers and of the principal, Sammy Spratt. In

⁸"A random sample is one such that every member of the population has an equal probability of being included in it." Ferguson, op. cit., p. 121. The modification limits the population involved.

consultation with him, it was decided that a fairly representative sample could be secured by using teachers and parents from one classroom at each grade level.

Administration of the Questionnaire

Pilot Study

The preliminary form of the surveying instrument was completed and duplicated in late March, 1973. Copies were distributed personally to twelve parents who have children in Denton public schools⁹ and one North Texas State graduate student whose children attend school in a nearby city.¹⁰

The Actual Survey

After the questionnaires were returned from a sufficient number of those in the pilot study, the finalized form was completed and duplicated in early April. Copies were mailed to each of the members of the State Board along with a stamped self-addressed envelope. Since the District Spring Conference was to be held at that time, copies were

⁹One of these was a Negro father who had served as a local PTA officer during the year at one of the elementary schools, and is on the administrative staff at North Texas State University. Probably his higher level of education and his personal interest in PTA prevented him from responding as a more average Negro parent might have answered.

¹⁰She had bragged that she had a child graduating from high school, and she had never attended a PTA meeting. It was felt that she might have some worthwhile ideas on how non-members would respond to the questionnaire.

distributed personally to the members of the District Board at their pre-conference board meeting. These were in unsealed, stamped and self-addressed envelopes, so they could be returned with ease and at no expense to the board member. Since there was a very low percentage of returns from this group, it was probably a mistake to have distributed the questionnaires to them at such a busy time. It might have been better to incur the added expense of mailing them at a later time when the board members were not involved with the Conference.

Questionnaires for the local council officers and chairmen were mailed in the manner described for State Board members. Copies for the local school administrators were distributed through the intra-school district routing system, each in an unsealed, stamped, self-addressed envelope.

In order to secure maximum cooperation, copies of the survey to be sent through Woodrow Wilson Elementary classes were distributed personally to each of the six classroom teachers involved (one each from grades one through six). The basic idea of the survey was discussed with each one, and they were asked not only to distribute the questionnaires to the children to take home, but to remind their students a few days later to ask their parents if they had returned them. Each copy was sent home in a stamped, self-addressed envelope, so that parents would be more encouraged to fill

it out and return it. Each teacher was very cooperative, and later helped with an added effort to contact a few of the families that were not involved in the PTA. Another copy of the questionnaire was sent to these few families, with a personal note asking for their assistance. However, this did not seem to bring in any more responses.

Conclusion

A description of the questionnaire and the survey has been given in this chapter. The different parts of the questionnaire have been discussed, including reasons for choosing this type instrument. The general demographic information was used to classify subgroups and secure information about what types of people responded. Opinions about the PTA itself and about its communication were to be secured through use of the semantic differential scales. More definite suggestions were asked for by use of the constructed-and selected-response items.

The selection of subjects has been discussed, as well as administration of the survey. The final section includes administration of the pilot study and of the actual survey.

The results of the survey are reported and analyzed in the following chapter.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The purpose of this survey was to secure data to point out strengths and possible weaknesses of the PTA, so that the information could be used by PTA leadership as a basis for further improvements of the PTA on all communication levels.

Number of Questionnaires Returned

The highest percentage of responses by the four original subgroups was 76.92 per cent from the Denton City Council and local school administrators. The next highest was 69.81 per cent from the State Board.

As previously discussed in Chapter III, the number of responses from the District Board was much lower than expected. Because of this, and the similarity of their commitment to the PTA, these were grouped with the State Board for analysis of most of the information.

When asking for responses from persons who are not committed to the cause or organization, a low percentage of responses is expected. This proved to be true in the number returned from parents and the six teachers at Woodrow Wilson Elementary, Denton. However, the number returned was higher than anticipated.

Unfortunately, a few responses were not clear as to classification, since a code had not been used for distribution. These were placed in the subgroup which seemed most appropriate.

Information from Demographic Data

Items Related to PTA

A comparison of the data related to these items is given in Table I, page 36.

Membership.--All of the respondents except one from levels other than the local PTA checked that they were members. Since it is a requirement to be a member in order to serve as an officer, it is assumed that the State Board member who marked that she was not a member does actually belong, and merely checked the wrong blank.

On the local level, eleven of the fifty-seven who responded were non-members, or nineteen per cent. In comparison to the total population of the school, this is estimated to be a six per cent difference and does not seem to be significant.¹

¹The Woodrow Wilson Elementary PTA was aggressive in enlisting members, and reported approximately 550 memberships for the 1972-73 school year. Considering the school population of over 730, and the high percentage of families who had two or more children in the school, it was estimated that this represented over seventy-five per cent of the families. In comparison with many PTAs, this is a high percentage.

TABLE I

DEMOGRAPHIC DATA RELATED TO PTA

Items	State	District	Council	Local
Total population	53	48	26	185 est.
Percentage responding	69.81%	33.33%	76.92%	30.81%
Members	98.25%	100.00%	100.00%	80.70%
Non-members	1.75			19.30
Length of membership				
0-1 years				17.54%
2-4 years	1.75%		10.00%	21.05
5-up	98.25	100.00%	90.00	61.41
Grade level of PTA*				
Elementary	51.35%	62.50%	100.00%	100.00%
Junior High	40.54	43.75		
Senior High	43.24	56.25		
Combination	10.81	6.25		
Other	2.70	6.25		
Serve as officer				
Yes	100.00%	100.00%	55.00%	1.75%
No			45.00	98.25
Level of service*				
Local	16.21%	37.50%	37.50%	1.75%
Council	24.32	75.00	62.50	
District	40.54	100.00	6.25	
State	100.00			
National	2.70			
Importance in life				
9-Extremely important	59.46%	50.00%	35.00%	7.02%
8	24.32	12.50	20.00	
7	5.41	25.00	25.00	8.77
6	5.41	6.25	5.00	7.02
5		6.25	10.00	28.07
4				3.51
3				14.04
2			5.00	12.28
1-Not important	2.70			15.79
No response	2.70			3.51

*Each person may be involved at more than one level.

As to length of membership, all except one on the State and District Boards had belonged five years or more, and several proudly gave the total number of years. One district president had belonged only two-to-four years, but, in contrast, two state leaders wrote in twenty-two and twenty-six years. The longest times indicated were by two district leaders who claimed thirty-three and thirty-four years of membership. There was naturally much more variety in length of membership for those at the local level.

All of the respondents in Denton belonged to an elementary PTA, since there are none in the secondary schools. District and state leaders showed more variety in the type of PTAs to which they belonged, with one district president on the State Board belonging to a Kindergarten PTA, and one of the district leaders belonging to a Preschool PTA. Five also indicated that they belonged to a combination PTA, which is usually one organization for parents of all grades in a small school district. Twenty-five individuals belonged to two or more PTAs, and seven of these belonged to three.

Service.--All of the individuals at the state and district level marked that they were serving as a PTA officer or chairman except one. The rest of her information showed that she was a district leader, so it is supposed that she merely marked in the wrong blank.

One of the respondents served as a national officer or chairman, as well as being one of the thirty-seven who served on the State Board. The ones on the State Board who also served as district officers were probably district presidents. This is also the case for the council officers serving on the District Board, since perhaps most of them were council presidents. The nine on council level who were not serving in a PTA capacity were all administrators.

Importance in life.--As was expected, over half of the State Board members considered PTA very important in their life. Only one felt it was not important at all. Much the same picture prevailed for the District Board members. Those responding at council level were still predominantly above the center of the scale, but the ones at local level had only slightly more at center or above than below.

Personal Information

A comparison of the data related to these items is given in Table II, page 39.

Children in school.--One of the suggestions often given on how to improve the PTA is to have leaders who are directly involved in the education process, either as a teacher or administrator or an individual who has children

TABLE II
PERSONAL INFORMATION FROM DEMOGRAPHIC DATA

Items	State	District	Council	Local
Total population	53	48	26	185 est.
Percentage responding	69.81%	33.33%	76.92%	30.81%
Children in school				
Yes	45.95%	62.50%	75.00%	96.49%
No	54.05	37.50	25.00	3.51
Sex division in population				
Male	6	4	9	Unknown
Female	47	44	17	Unknown
Sex of respondents				
Male	16.22%	12.50%	40.00%	14.04%
Female	83.78	87.50	60.00	85.96
Teachers or administrators				
Yes	13.51%	6.25%	45.00%	12.28%
No	86.49	93.75	55.00	87.72
Age				
21-30			5.00%	14.04%
31-40	8.11%	18.75%	45.00	57.89
41-50	48.65	50.00	30.00	24.56
51-60	37.84	12.50	20.00	3.51
61-over	5.40	18.75		
Education level				
Less than high school				1.75%
High school	16.22%	12.50%	5.00%	15.79
Some college	40.54	37.50	35.00	38.60
College degree	43.24	50.00	60.00	43.86

in the public school. Information concerning this personal item is therefore of importance to this study.

One of the respondents on the State Board who indicated that they did not have children in school was an administrator. On the District Board, one of the six who did not have any children in school commented that she had not had any in school for ten years. Others wrote in "grandchildren."

Of those surveyed at the council level, all who did not have children in school were administrators. The two at the local level were teachers, perhaps from two of the classrooms used in the survey.

Sex and role in education.---Since the PTA is often criticized for having too many women and not many men in leadership roles, data on the sex of those responding was of interest, as well as their role in education.²

Six of the respondents serving at state and district levels are administrators. Of the five of them who serve on the State Board, two are men and three are women. The one on the District Board who is an administrator is a man. There are several others who are known to be teachers or administrators, but they did not respond to the survey.

²Since the survey was made, several men have become district presidents and are serving on the State Board, along with the men who were serving previously.

Of the nine administrators who responded on the council level, eight are men and one is a woman. On the local level, seven of the respondents were teachers or administrators, but several of these were probably university professors, since the questionnaire did not specify public school education.

Age.--Another item which is of interest to many is the age of those serving at state and district levels. Considering the fact that it takes a number of years of leadership experience to be able to capably fill a position on one of these boards, it is not surprising to find many who are past the age of fifty.³ Another consideration is that younger women usually have more pressing home duties and are not free to travel as much.

The number of administrators on the council level affected the age level of those responding, and the two on the local level who were over fifty were teachers.

Level of education.--The level of education of those serving is not usually discussed, but it was of interest for this survey. Almost half of those serving at state

³Several changes were made in the fall of 1972 regarding the persons serving on the State Board which lowered the mean age level. There is now more of a balance in the age categories, rather than a large percentage of those over fifty. The range of ages on the District Board has not been reduced, however, and still shows several who are past fifty.

and district levels had college degrees. Due to the high percentage of administrators who responded at the council level, there were also a large number of those responding who had college degrees.

On the local level, there were also a large number who had college degrees. This was perhaps due to so many of the parents being involved with one of the two universities in Denton. Only one young mother had less than high school.

Semantic Differentials

Opinions about PTA

Analysis of the data concerning the respondents' opinion of PTA was of interest. Generally it followed the expected pattern, with the State and District Board members showing a more positive attitude toward it. This was reflected in the arithmetic mean (generally referred to as the "average") of their responses being higher than the mean for the total responses. The mean for council-level leaders was also slightly larger, but the local-level respondents were more negative than the total group.

Figure 1 on the following page depicts the items rated and means for each of the groups. The lower line shows the mean for that group on all items. The scale which was marked by the respondents showed only "1" to "8," so

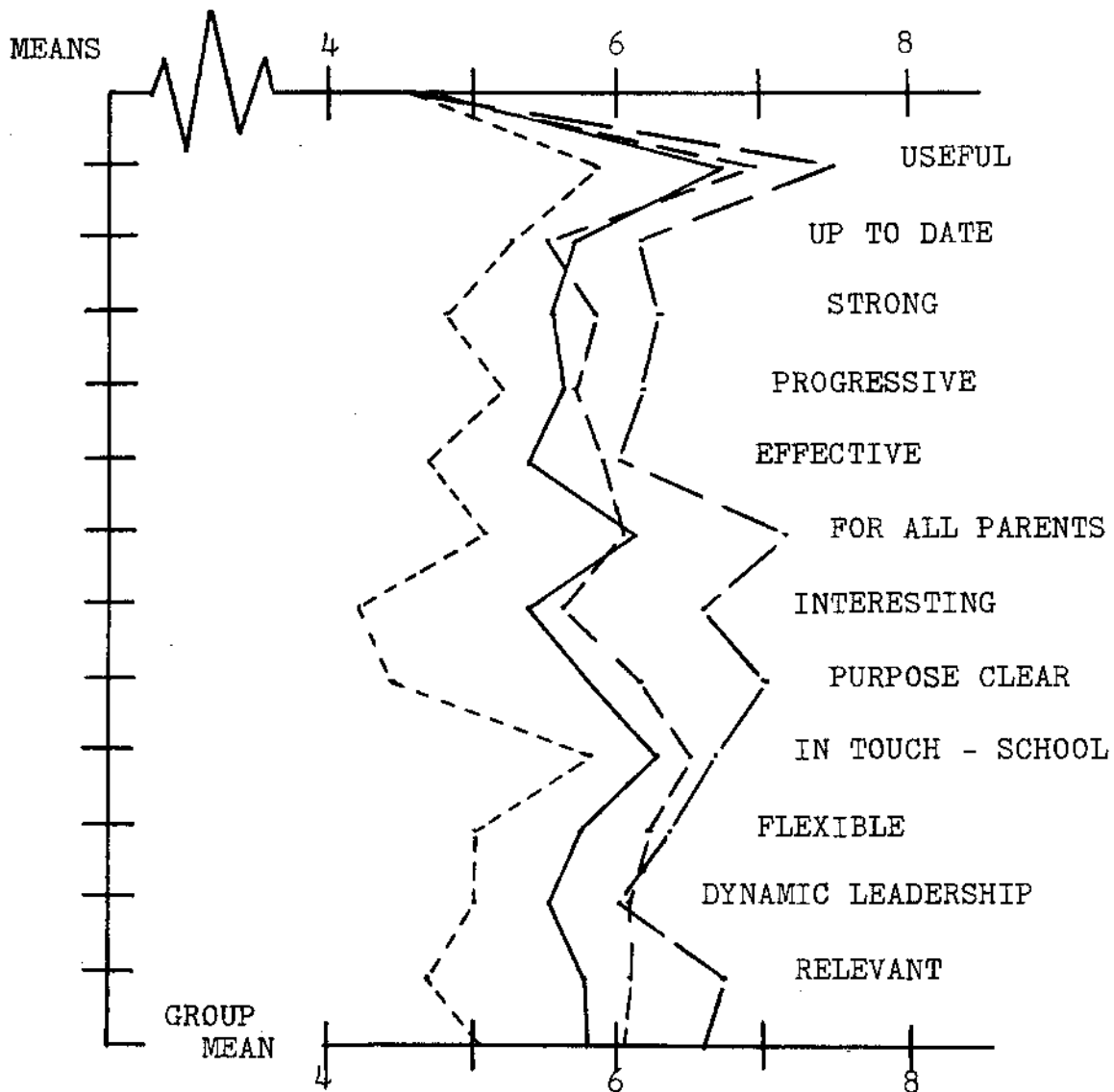


Fig. 1--Opinions about PTA from the semantic differential

Groups:

State and District Council — — — — —

Local — — — — —

Total — — — — —

there was no mid-point. Since there were no means below 3.5, the lower portion of the scale in Figure 1 has been elided.

Of particular interest is the parallel between the ratings of state- and district-level leaders and those at the council level. Also, these leaders are perhaps in better position to see areas which need more emphasis, and therefore gave lower scores to some items than might have been expected. The lower scores on the local PTA scale probably are significant also.

Standard deviations.--The standard deviation for each item was meaningful, since it shows how much the scores, as a group, are spread. For the state and district respondents, the standard deviations were smaller than for the total responses, showing they were more in agreement. The ones for council were a little smaller than the total. Those from the local included more large than small scores, but did not present a total picture of being extremely diversified. Appendix IV gives the standard deviations for the items on the semantic differentials.

Correlations.--The scores of one variable or item can be paired with those of another variable and the degree of relationship between the variables determined statistically. For this part of the study, 0.7 or higher was

selected as the level of strength at which to specify a strong positive relationship.⁴ The square of this correlation coefficient could then be used to specify a proportion. In this case, the square of 0.7 would express a proportion of $+.49$ out of $+1.0$, or approximately half.⁵

Practically speaking, this means that the scores for a particular set of adjectives are closely related to those on another. The attitude a person or group hold on one item is similar to their attitude on the other.

For the total group, the correlation coefficient between the score on this semantic differential and the one on PTA communication was $.6437$. Although it could be considered a strong positive relationship, it did not meet the standard of 0.7 which had been selected. Relationships between the attitudes on the two semantic differentials expressed by the subgroups were $.3998$ for State and District, $.7029$ for Council, and $.5764$ for the local PTA. The score of the Council subgroup is the only one of significance.

⁴Ferguson, *op. cit.*, pp. 96-98. A maximum positive relationship exists when scores for both items are identical and is designated by $+1.0$. Maximum negative is designated by -1.0 , showing that scores on the items are exact opposites.

⁵*Ibid.*, p. 116: "In general, in attempting to conceptualize the degree of relationship represented by a correlation coefficient it is more meaningful to think in terms of the square of the correlation coefficient . . . (which) can quite meaningfully be interpreted as a proportion."

The items on this section which had the necessary level of strength were Up to date--Progressive (.7217), Progressive--Effective (.7648), and Interesting--Purpose clear (.7493). There were more highly correlated items on the semantic differential giving their opinions about communication, but these will be discussed in that section. (See page 48.)

Opinions About PTA Communication

For a discussion of the statistical information relating to the data presented in Figure 2 on the following page, the reader is referred to the section Opinions About PTA, page 42.

It is interesting to note that the scores for the respondents from the council level do not parallel the state and district composite as on the previous semantic differential, but the local level scores do follow much the same pattern. Council respondents scored even higher on two items than did state and district.

Scores for the local level reflect the type of printed communication used by that PTA. Each month a note is sent home by way of the children giving pertinent information about the next meeting. However, it is not sent until two days before the meeting, and always looks almost the same. The date of the meeting and name of the speaker are

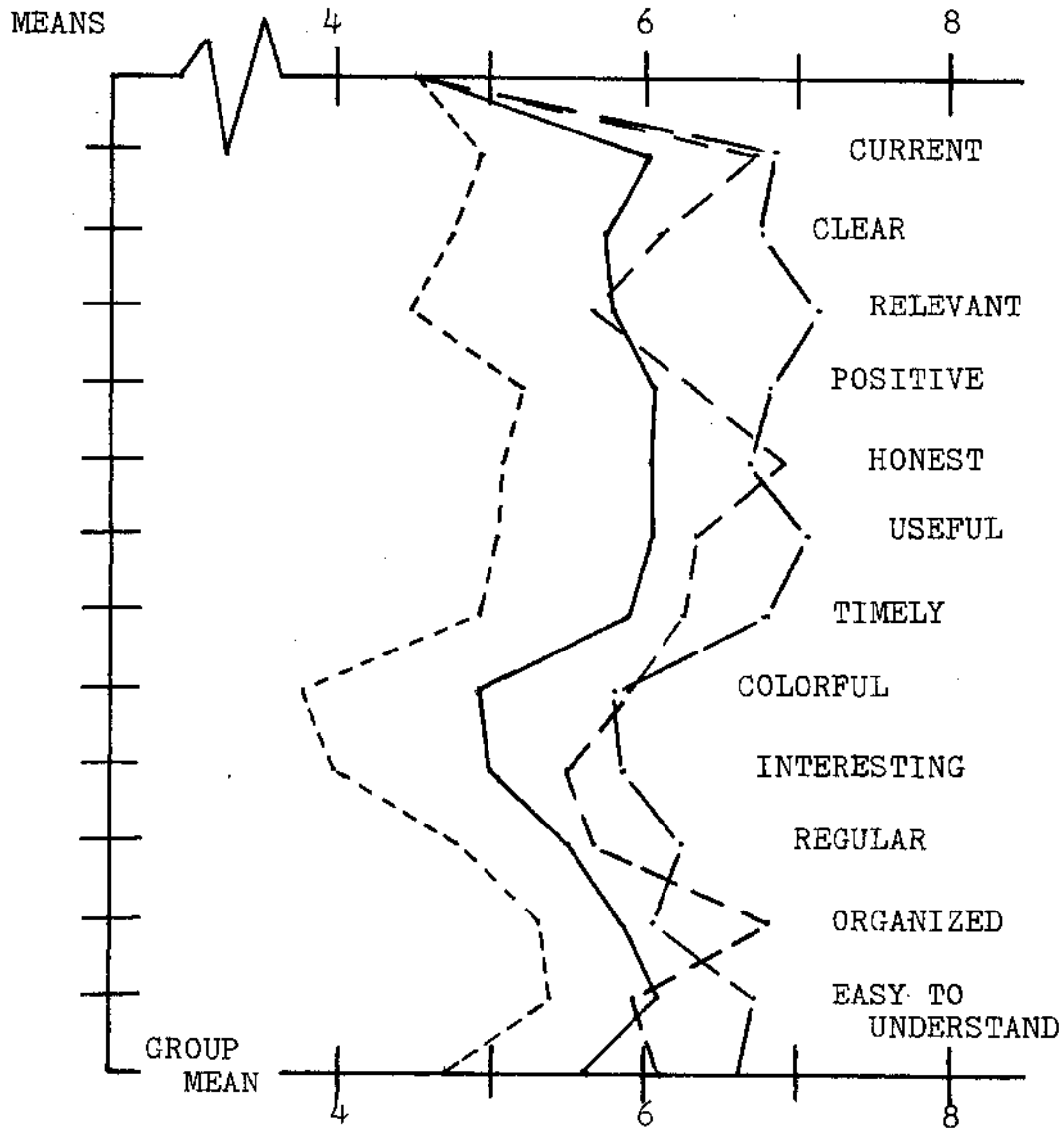


Fig. 2--Opinions about PTA communication from the semantic differential.

Groups:

State and District Council ————

Local Council ————

Total ————

usually the only variable items. The fact that meeting dates are given in the yearbook does not seem to be noticed by members.

Standard deviations.--Appendix IV gives the standard deviations for the items on this semantic differential. For information related to the significance of this data, the reader is referred to the section in the previous discussion relating to Opinions about PTA, page 44.

Correlations.--Apparently attitudes toward PTA communication are rather consistent, judging by the large number of items which are positively correlated with other items on this semantic differential. Since there were eighteen sets which showed a 0.7 or higher level of strength, discussion in this section will be restricted to those which showed a 0.8 or higher level. These sets were Current--Clear (.8309), Current--Positive (.8688), Clear--Positive (.8677), Positive--Timely (.8097), Colorful--Interesting (.8384).

For a discussion concerning the relationship between these scores and those on opinions about PTA in general, the reader is referred to page 45.

Selected-Response Item

There was a great variety of answers telling how the respondents received their information about PTA, as given in Table III below.

It is of interest to note the significant differences in the subgroups. State and district leaders get more information from meetings, newsletters, magazines, and the newspapers than the other groups. However, council- and local-level respondents depend more on notes from school. Also, only a small number get anything from the radio or television.

TABLE III
WAYS RESPONDENTS RECEIVED INFORMATION ABOUT PTA

Method	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Notes from school	49.06%	85.00%	91.23%	73.08%
Your children	24.53	40.00	33.33	30.77
Meetings	86.79	50.00	17.54	50.77
PTA newsletters	81.13	55.00	5.26	43.85
PTA magazines	79.25	45.00	1.75	40.00
Newspaper	71.70	45.00	8.77	40.00
Radio/TV	22.64	---	---	9.23
Telephone	54.72	40.00	---	28.46
Other	9.43	---	1.75	4.62

Constructed-Response Items

Specific suggestions from respondents concerning the role of PTA, changes which need to be made in the role and structure, and how to have more effective communication were quite diverse and enlightening. For the process of tabulation, responses to each of these items were grouped into nine major categories. Each of the three sections will be considered separately with a table showing the related data, and followed with a discussion of the categories and their significance.

Role of PTA

Ninety per cent of the respondents had at least one concept of the proper role of the PTA. The breakdown of information about these concepts is given in Table IV on the following page, as well as the respondents' opinion on whether the current structure would fit into this role. A definition of each role is given here and following the table.

Child welfare.--This response refers to the PTA Objects which have remained basically the same for more than seventy-five years. The first of these states, "To promote the welfare of children and youth in home, school, church, and community."⁶

⁶National Congress of Parents and Teachers, PTA Manual, 1972-73 (Chicago, 1970), p. 15.

TABLE IV
PERCEPTIONS OF THE ROLE OF PTA

Roles	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Percentage responding*	94.34%	95.00%	84.21%	90.00%
Current structure fit				
Yes	90.57%	75.00%	56.14%	73.08%
No	5.66	20.00	22.81	15.38
No response	3.77	5.00	21.05	11.54
1. Child welfare	13.21%	15.00%	---	7.69%
2. Involvement	39.62	80.00	54.39%	52.31
3. Information	43.40	20.00	28.07	33.08
4. Action	20.75	5.00	31.58	23.08
5. Link	24.53	10.00	1.75	12.31
6. Projects	3.77	10.00	12.28	8.46
7. Community	3.77	---	---	1.54
8. Legislation	1.89	---	---	0.77
9. Help with problems	---	---	10.53	4.62

*Fifty-four per cent suggested more than one role.

Involvement.--This included several ideas such as be involved in the school, be an open line of communication, a meeting place for parents and teachers and students, work with the school, do more than fund-raising. From the large number who suggested this, it is evident that many people feel that this is really what the PTA should be doing. It is interesting that council leadership endorsed it so strongly.

Information.--Many people believe that the PTA was founded more for parent education than for anything else. This role is accepted by approximately one-third of the respondents, especially state and district leadership. Other areas suggested were to help keep parents informed on school policies, educational trends, problems and solutions affecting children, and also to have more meaningful programs.

Action.--Encourage action and participation in education and matters of concern to parents; deal with relevant issues. This role was suggested by almost one-fourth of the respondents, especially those at the local level.

Link.--For a more effective educational process, the PTA should be a link between the school and community. This idea was expressed more by PTA leadership than by local members.

Projects.--Only a small percentage felt that this was the major role of the PTA, in spite of some emphasis at the local level on money-raising projects. Suggestions were to undertake and complete worthwhile projects, to help the school with equipment, and to do something for the school.

Community.--Only two people, both at the state or district level, suggested the PTA assume leadership in the community and involve citizens. Perhaps for many this idea

was a part of the items on involvement, action, or serving as a link between school and community.

Legislation.--Only one person suggested this role, though the PTA is vitally concerned with legislation. It does, however, spend only an insubstantial part of its time and resources directly on legislation.⁷

Help with problems.--This was the idea of helping children with their problems in school, in their play, work, and citizenship. It was only persons at the local level who felt this was the proper role.

Changes Needed

This section included suggestions on what changes could be made in order to make the PTA more effective. Many felt that the current structure did not need to be altered, but that more work needed to be done in some areas. Table V on the following page gives this information.

Leadership.--State and district leaders pointed out the need for stronger leadership, and also for more effective nominating committees who select the leaders. As has been discussed previously, some feel that leaders should be persons

⁷National Congress of Parents and Teachers, op. cit., p. 16: "Basic Policies: The association shall not . . . devote more than an insubstantial part of its activities to attempting to influence legislation by propaganda or otherwise."

TABLE V
CHANGES NEEDED

Changes	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Percentage suggesting changes*	45.28%	25.00%	26.32%	33.85%
1. Leadership	15.09%	---	---	6.15%
2. Purpose	3.77	---	1.75%	2.31
3. No change	1.89	---	---	0.77
4. Communication	16.98	20.00%	17.54	17.69
5. Structure	7.55	---	---	3.08
6. Projects	5.66	10.00	8.77	7.69
7. Cooperation	5.66	---	7.02	5.38
8. Improvement	5.66	5.00	1.75	3.85
9. Reconstruction	---	---	3.51	1.54

*Fifteen per cent of the total suggested more than one.

who are directly involved in the education process, either as an educator or as parents who have children in public school.

Purpose.--In spite of those who felt that the purpose of the PTA was clear, some indicated that there needed to be a more well-defined purpose. One comment was that time should not be spent discussing whether it is proper for a PTA to do something or not, but that there should be more complete guidelines.

No change.--Only one person indicated that no major changes were needed. However, seventy-one others evidently agree since they indicated that the structure was satisfactory and no changes were needed.

Communication.--This category included several different ideas related to this, including better communication, spread information in order to inspire leaders, involve more people, encourage more study of issues, have more specific topics discussed at meetings, have night meetings so fathers and working mothers are able to attend.

Structure.--A few individuals feel that the leaders should stress structure more. Others suggested that all parts or levels of the organization should carry out the "real" role of PTA.

Projects.--The idea of this suggestion was that there should be fewer fund-raising projects to purchase needs for the schools which should be supplied through public funds. It is interesting to note that none of the council respondents felt that this was a change which needed to be made in light of the fact that many of those responding at this level were administrators. Almost every PTA in Denton has some type of large-scale fund-raising project, and many of them do buy equipment for the school. Local

leaders feel that it does involve many parents who would not participate in any other way. However, it has caused some discussion and jealousy on the part of those who represent a "poorer" school, since they feel that they could not raise large sums of money in their immediate area.

Cooperation.--The suggestions here included the ideas of more cooperation with the schools in the educational program, parents being required to attend teacher conferences, and the PTA Leadership Procedure Course being required for all future teachers.

Improvement.--In reference to the new state program theme for the next two years, one respondent suggested, "We have a commitment." This involves, among other ideas, creating a climate for multi-cultural and multi-economic understanding. Another suggested that any organization can always strive for improvement.

Reconstruction.--There were only two who suggested this idea, but it seemed to be a very sincere answer. One said, "No way!" The other suggested that total reconstruction of the organization was needed, and wrote, "Bring in a system analysis [sic]."

How to Have More Effective Communication

Many of the respondents suggested at least one way to improve communication, and a large percentage suggested three or four ways. These have been grouped into categories, and Table VI gives the information concerning these suggestions.

TABLE VI
WAYS TO IMPROVE COMMUNICATION

Methods	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Percentage making suggestions*	84.91%	65.00%	63.16%	72.31%
1. Newsletter	13.21%	20.00%	19.30%	16.92%
2. Personal contact	22.64	20.00	10.53	16.92
3. Publications	7.55	5.00	12.28	9.23
4. Involvement	28.30	25.00	28.07	27.69
5. Leadership	20.75	---	---	8.46
6. Direct mail	9.43	---	3.51	5.38
7. Community	9.43	5.00	---	4.62
8. Inform	20.75	10.00	1.75	10.77
9. News media	22.64	20.00	8.77	16.15

*Thirty-five per cent of the total respondents suggested more than one.

Newsletter.--This was one of the more specific suggestions made, and one person even proposed that the state PTA mail one to each member. It is one of the ideas frequently used by the PTAs who are doing something about contacting their members and keeping them informed. Some PTAs budget funds to mail them, while many depend on the students to take them home.

Personal contact.--Suggestions were made about using the telephone more extensively, even having room representatives⁸ contact each parent before the meetings. Another suggested using a buddy system, while others felt that it could be accomplished through every member telling others, in a positive manner rather than apologetically.

Publications.--Improve the quality and readability of all materials, with emphasis on their content and timing. Inform all the membership through existing publications.

Involvement.--This idea seems to be included in every area: proper role, changes needed, and how to improve communication. Specific suggestions were involve more people, try to reach the uninterested, show more enthusiasm, be positive, be more involved with the schools, include more teachers, have some night meetings.

⁸"Room mothers" is the more common, though incorrect, terminology.

Leadership.--Improving the quality of leadership was the basic suggestion on this item. One person also suggested that this could be done through encouraging the leaders to read the information they receive, and then pass it on to other interested members. Several seemed to feel that the flow of communication stopped at the local or council level, and that helpful information was not being given to everyone who needed it.

Direct mail.--As was suggested under the section on newsletters, mailing a newsletter or other type publication to each member or each family would help the situation. By using bulk mailings, material could be sent at a relatively low cost. One PTA uses volunteers to address the newsletters each month, while another has the students address one to their parents during school time.

Community.--This included cooperation with like-minded community organizations, and also building a better image through effective involvement in the community.

Inform.--Informing not only members but the general public is the basic thought here. Inform the public of accomplishments; inform membership through open, honest discussion; have a PTA speakers' bureau.

News media.--More and better use of the news media can be achieved through informing all of the mass media of the goals, programs, and accomplishments of the PTA, and also through preparing and submitting materials which could be used, such as timely television tapes.

Conclusion

A descriptive, and in some areas analytical, account has been made in this chapter of the results of the survey. This included a summary of the number of responses from each subgroup.

Data from the demographic information has been discussed in regard to membership, PTA service, and the importance of PTA in their life. This section also included personal information, involving whether they had children in public school, sex of the respondent, and their role in education. It also included their age and their level of education.

Opinions about the PTA and about its communication have been discussed through an analysis of the semantic differential sets used in the survey. A report was also given of the individuals' sources of PTA information.

The opinions expressed about the role of the PTA have been categorized and discussed. Their response concerning

whether the current structure will fit the role has also been enumerated.

In order to fulfill the role, many individuals suggested changes which needed to be made. These have also been categorized and discussed. The final section concerned how the PTA could have better communication, and these responses have been delineated and discussed.

The concluding chapter, Chapter V, will give a summary of the study, further conclusions which can be drawn, some recommendations for the organization and for further research.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Since the area of attitude research is still relatively new and involves so many variables, this study has been undertaken to learn more about attitudes toward a specific volunteer organization and its communication. This added knowledge in the field should be of benefit to those in the particular organization studied, and to others who serve in similar organizations.

Summary of the Study

The organization which was selected for the study was the Parent-Teacher Association, or PTA. The scope was limited to the Texas PTA, but attitudes toward PTA in general were reflected in the responses. A brief description of its history was given, as well as information on its structure and available literature on the subject.

Information on volunteer organizations in general was given, including their characteristics, communication, leadership, and the effect changes have on the communication of the organization.

The method used for the study was a self-report questionnaire, designed for this survey. It was constructed to secure information regarding the individuals who responded and their relationship to PTA; their attitude toward the role of the PTA and what changes, if any, needed to be made; how they secured information about PTA goals and programs; and their attitude toward PTA communication as well as suggestions on how to improve it.

The questionnaire was administered to over 300 individuals representing four levels of the organization. There were leadership personnel from state, district, and council, and persons from a local PTA. A vertical, "pie-shaped" slice was taken of the organization, going from a larger proportion of state leadership to a smaller proportion of persons from the local PTA level.

Results of the survey have been reported in sections corresponding to those on the questionnaire. These included the demographic information, the semantic differential scales indicating their attitudes, and the constructed- and selected-response items by which specific suggestions were made for changes and improvements. Most of the information has been given in the form of tables showing percentages, but the two semantic differentials have been shown graphically.

Conclusions

Some conclusions have been drawn in reporting the results of the survey, however others can be made. These will be treated according to the arrangement of the questionnaire.

Number of Respondents and Information About Them

Even though the percentage of responses from two of the subgroups was low, the other groups had a high percentage, and a relatively reliable sample was secured. The only other group which might have added to the range of attitudes would be parents who had an opportunity to join a PTA but did not, or parents who are of a minority race or group.

Membership and service.--Due to the type of population selected, the majority of respondents have belonged to a PTA for at least five years. This is not surprising, since it usually takes a number of years of involvement to be well-known and knowledgeable enough to be asked to serve beyond the local or council levels.

Once an individual does become involved, service is not limited to only one level of the organization. Although State Board members are discouraged from serving at other levels, evidently a number of them do.

Importance in life.--The amount of time and energy, and sometimes money, that an individual is willing to spend on a project or an organization determines its importance to him. Those serving at the various levels of PTA were naturally more committed to it than the "rank-and-file" members from the local PTA. This would have an effect on their attitude toward the organization.

Personal information.--There were different patterns shown in three items of personal information. (1) There was an increasingly larger percentage of persons with children in public school as the focus changes from state to district to council and to local members. There was not such a pattern in regard to sex division or the role the respondents play in education (whether teachers or administrators). (2) The information on the ages involved showed almost a normal bell-shaped curve with more of a concentration in the center areas and a tapering off at each end. That is, there were more middle-aged persons, and fewer younger or older ones. (3) The pattern for the amount of education at all levels showed a consistent increase from those with only high school to those with college degrees. It would seem that all ages and education levels were represented in the study.

Semantic Differentials

Opinions about PTA.--The respondents from all levels of leadership above the local reported similar attitudes toward the PTA, except state and district leaders had more positive scores than those from the council level. Several of the state leaders commented that they knew they were going "right down the party line," but felt they should honestly express their feelings. As noted in Chapter IV, they are probably more aware of the weaknesses in some areas. This is particularly true of the following adjective sets: Up to date--Out of date, Strong--Weak, Progressive--Passive, Effective--Ineffective, and Dynamic leadership--Poor leadership.

Relatively low scores were given by local respondents on the following items: Strong--Weak, Effective--Ineffective, Interesting--Boring, and Purpose clear--Purpose hazy. This should give the local PTA some suggestions on areas which need improvement.

One of the comparisons which was of interest related to the correlation between opinions about PTA in general and about its communication. There was a strong positive relationship, but it was not sufficient to meet the pre-determined standard.

Opinions about PTA communication.--Perceptions of PTA communication follow much the same pattern for the local as for the state and district respondents, only at a much lower scale. They had relatively negative attitudes toward Relevant--Irrelevant, Colorful--Colorless, and Interesting--Dull.

The strengths seem to be in the areas of Current--Out of date, Relevant--Irrelevant (state and district respondents), Honest--Slanted, Useful--Useless, and Organized--Disorganized. Attitudes toward PTA communication appear to be more consistent in each individual than their attitudes toward PTA itself.

Selected-Response Item

The major ways by which the individuals received their information were notes from school, meetings, PTA newsletters and magazines, and the newspaper. Not many of them depend on their children, the radio or television, or the telephone.

Constructed-Response Items

Role of the PTA.--Four major concepts are predominant as suggested roles. These are involvement in the education process, keeping parents informed, being active in educational matters, and serving as a link between the schools

and community. Each of these is a part of one or more of the PTA Objects which serve as a guide to the organization.

Changes needed.--The only area which was mentioned to any extent was that of increasing communication and involving more people. These ideas seem to underlie all of the suggestions for improvement.

Ways to improve communication.--As just stated, the key concept here is involvement. This means involving the uninterested, teachers, working parents, and also being involved as a partner with the schools. Also of importance were suggestions to use newsletters, have more personal contact, keep the public as well as members informed, and use all available news media.

Recommendations for the PTA

Based upon the results and conclusions of the study, and upon personal knowledge of the organization, the following recommendations are made.

1. In order to involve more individuals in leadership roles, as well as to use those who are capable and qualified, the length of service at district and state levels should be limited in some way. Possible methods are:

- a. By some type of rotation system or setting a specified length of time a person may serve at that level;

b. By limiting an individual's service to only one or two level(s) at a time;

c. By allowing only those who are directly involved in the education process to serve. This can be either an educator or a parent who still has children in public school. Perhaps the specification could be made that a certain percentage of those serving on a specific board (e. g., seventy-five per cent) would have to meet this requirement.

If enacted, this recommendation would mean that there was more personnel turn-over, but involving new and qualified persons would strengthen the quality of work done. Although it is the tendency in many organizations to use the same people repeatedly, others do operate quite effectively without doing it. Another consideration is that if leadership in the PTA became more of a positive challenge, it would attract better candidates for the offices.

2. Involve more men in leadership roles. There are many areas of service which they could fill without having to devote too much time to them, and their perspective is needed in the organization.

3. Place an emphasis on the role(s) of the PTA and study them more intensely in order to do more effective work.

a. Put more emphasis on informing and educating parents, through Parent and Family Life Education courses, programs at meetings, printed information, and so forth.

b. As an organization, be more active and involved in the education process as a "friend" and not a "foe" of the administration.

c. Place more emphasis on being a connecting link between the schools and the community, keeping the general public informed and involved to some extent in the education process.

4. Increase communication by all available means. Make it more colorful, interesting, and relevant. Use a variety of methods.

5. Study involvement and how to do it more efficiently. Then put the concepts into practice with ideas such as having more night meetings and trying to attract working parents.

6. Maintain the current interest in leadership training, and gradually raise the requirements for leadership.

Recommendations for Further Research

At least three areas suggest the need for further research.

1. Do an extensive study of the attitudes toward PTA which are held by non-PTA members and/or members of minority

groups. Since they are not interested enough to complete a questionnaire and return it, information should be secured through use of interviews.

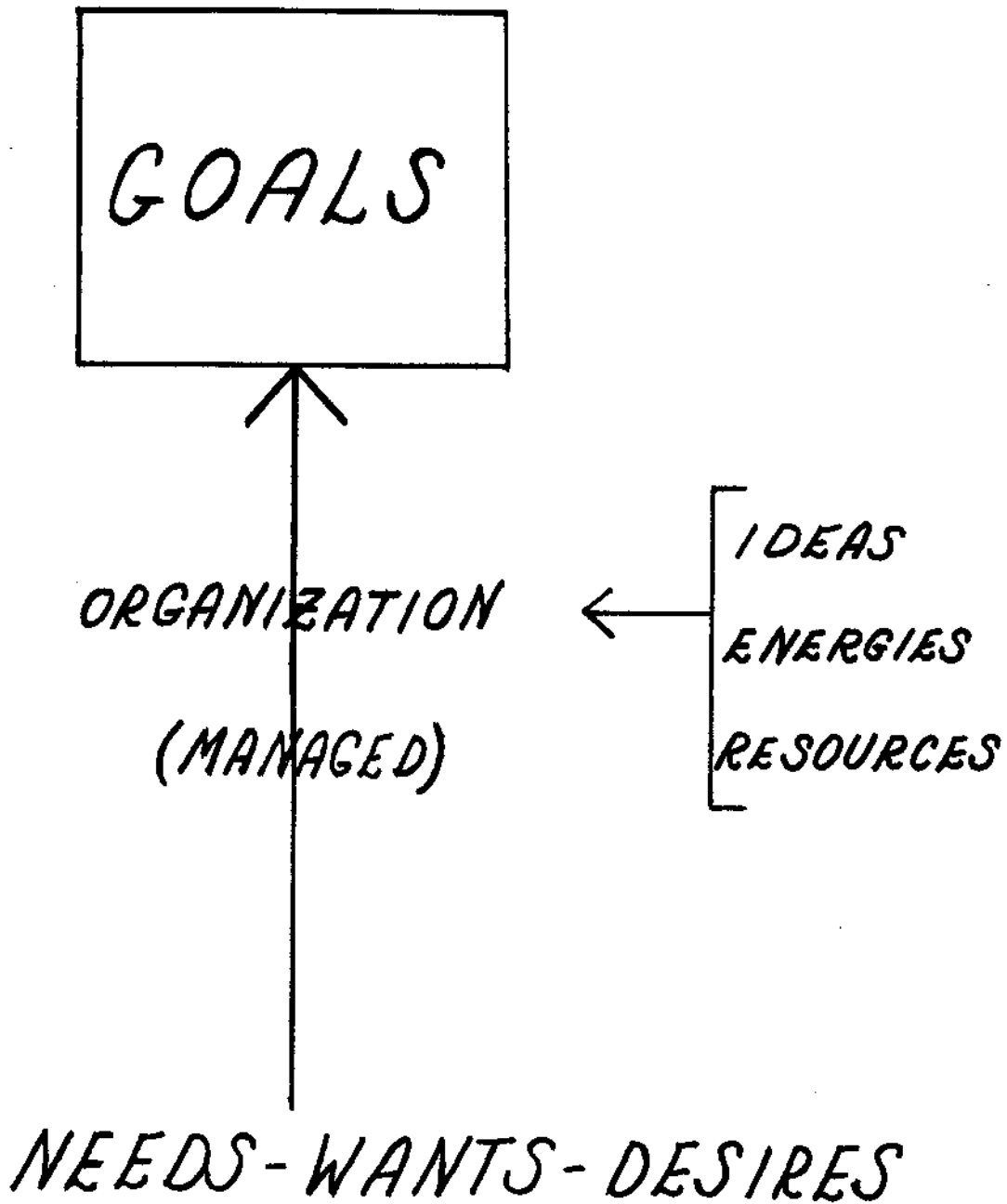
2. There is need for an extensive study of the attitudes of "rank-and-file" PTA members across the state, rather than in just one microcosm as this study has been.

3. There is need for more research into ways to involve people in a volunteer organization for maximum profit to the individual and the organization.

APPENDIX I

RATIONALE FOR ORGANIZATIONS

RATIONALE FOR ORGANIZATIONS



APPENDIX II

COVER LETTER AND QUESTIONNAIRE

April 9, 1973

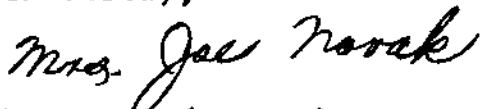
Dear Friend,

With the permission of the State Board of Managers of the Texas PTA, we are conducting a research project about communications related to PTA. The information received will be used in my Master's thesis at North Texas State University, Denton, Texas.

So that we can determine more about how people feel toward PTA, and about the flow of communication from PTA to its members and to the general public, we are asking you to complete the questionnaire on the following pages. PLEASE RETURN IT in the enclosed envelope within ten days.

Thanks for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



Mrs. Joe (Rynell) Novak
2120 Preston Place
Denton, Texas 76201

References: Mrs. Marvin Armstrong, President, Texas PTA
Mrs. A. T. Leveridge, Jr., First Vice President,
Texas PTA
Mr. Tom Prather, Executive Director, Texas PTA
Dr. Don E. Beck, Dept. of Speech and Drama, NTSU
Dr. Forrest Rollins, Education Dept., NTSU
Dr. R. V. Holland, Chairman, Dept. of Speech and
Drama, NTSU

Texas PTA Questionnaire

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Please complete the following questions by checking the appropriate blanks:

Are you a PTA member? Yes___ No___

How many years have you belonged to PTA? 0-1___ 2-4___ 5-up___

Do you have children in public school now? Yes___ No___

What grade level(s) is your PTA? Elementary___ Junior High___
Senior High___ Combination___ Other (specify)_____

Are you currently serving as a PTA officer or chairman? Yes___ No___

If so, at what level(s) are you serving? Local___ Council___
District___ State___ National___

Your sex: Male___ Female___ Are you a teacher or administrator? Yes___
No___

Your age group: 21-30___ 31-40___ 41-50___ 51-60___ 61-up___

Your education: Less than high school___ High School___
Some college___ College degree___

Please indicate by a mark somewhere along this line the importance of
PTA in your life:

Extremely Important _____ Not Important
At All

=====

Instructions for Next Two Pages

In the next two pages are sets of adjectives which we would like for you to mark to let us know how you feel about PTA. There are also two questions at the end of each sheet to answer in your own words. Please work at a fairly high speed. We want your first impressions - the way you actually feel at the present time.

For purposes of illustration, suppose you were asked to evaluate a PTA policy on the adjective sets. If you felt the policy to be "extremely fair," you would put a check here:

UNFAIR ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ☒ FAIR

Or, if you felt it to be moderately unfair, check here:

UNFAIR ___ : ___ : ☒ : ___ : ___ : ___ : ___ : FAIR

NOTE: There are, of course, no right or wrong answers.

But be sure to mark every set

YOUR OPINIONS ABOUT PTA

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The following sets of adjectives could be used to describe the PTA. Note that there are eight degrees of difference between the two descriptions. Please check the space which is the closest indication of how you feel about PTA.

Useful	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Worthless
Out of date	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Up to date
Strong	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Weak
Passive	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Progressive
Ineffective	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Effective
For all parents	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	For select few
Boring	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Interesting
Purpose hazy	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Purpose clear
In touch with school	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Out of touch with school
Flexible	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Rigid
Dynamic leadership	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Poor leadership
Irrelevant	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	:	_____	Relevant

=====

1. What do you feel should be the role of the PTA? What should it do? _ _ _

2. Would the current structure fit into this role? Yes ___ No ___. If not, what changes should be made? _ _ _ _ _

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[illegible]

How do you get information about PTA activities? Notes from school____
Your children____ Meetings____ PTA newsletters____ PTA magazines____
Newspaper____ Radio/TV____ Telephone____ Other (specify)_____

9. How could PTA have more effective communication? _ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _
_ _ _ _ _

APPENDIX III

CORRESPONDENCE WITH STATE PTA PRESIDENT

February 3, 1973

Mrs. Marvin Armstrong
President, Texas PTA
408 W. 11th
Austin, Texas 78701

Dear Eadie,

After consultation with professors in Speech and Education, we have decided on three areas which would be suitable for a thesis in Communication.

Rather than decide which one we would like, we felt it would be appropriate to give these suggestions to the Continuity Committee and let them decide which investigation would be most helpful to the Texas PTA.

Any of these would be pursued with the understanding that the information would be used only for my thesis or other class work, and for any use you would deem proper and suitable.

The suggestions are:

1. Compare attitudes of three different groups on what PTA is, what it should or could be, how effective it is in communicating down and up the line, how it can make more impact on its immediate community or geographic area, etc. For such an attitude study we would take a "vertical slice" of (1) state, district, council, and local PTA leaders, (2) rank and file PTA members, and (3) parents who had an option to join a PTA but didn't. This could be done by a combination of interviews and questionnaires.

2. An in-depth study of the topics given above, but limit the sample to members of the State Board. This would have to be done mostly by questionnaire.
3. A communication audit of a particular letter, memo, or publication. This would trace it from its origin, at whatever level, determine how it is received and how well it achieves its intended purpose.

As I have mentioned to you, I would like to do all the initial investigation this spring and finish writing the thesis by early summer, so this may affect your decision. I look forward to hearing from you about the committee's decision.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Joe Novak
2120 Preston Place
Denton, Texas 76201

cc: Tom Prather, Exec. Dir., Texas PTA
Mrs. A. T. Leveridge, Jr., First Vice-President,
Texas PTA



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*T*EXAS CONGRESS OF PARENTS AND TEACHERS

MRS. MARVIN ARMSTRONG

STATE PRESIDENT

4802 16th Street
Lubbock, Texas 79416

State Office:
408 West Eleventh Street
Austin, Texas 78701

February 15, 1973

Mrs. Joe Novak
2120 Preston Place
Denton, Texas 76201

Dear Rynell:

We are happy to tell you that the board of managers of the Texas PTA approved unanimously your request to write your thesis on PTA Communication.

The continuity committee felt, and the board concurred, that we would not want to limit you to any one area, however, the entire group felt that your first suggestion included in your letter would be most beneficial to the Texas PTA.

We feel both complimented and honored that you have selected PTA Communications for your thesis. With your background of PTA work we feel that the results can be of great value to the future work of the Texas PTA.

Please let us hear from you from time to time. We await with interest reading your thesis.

Most sincerely,

Mrs. Marvin Armstrong
State President

EA:gb

cc: Mr. Thomas J. Prather
Mrs. A. T. Leveridge, Jr.

APPENDIX IV

SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCORES

ATTITUDE TOWARD PTA
SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCORES*

Adjective Set	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Useful/worthless	1.25	1.36	1.71	1.65
Up to date/ out of date	1.62	2.21	1.84	1.86
Strong/weak	1.32	1.66	1.60	1.65
Progressive/ passive	1.69	1.78	1.89	1.84
Effective/ ineffective	1.70	1.74	1.87	1.88
For all parents/ for select few	1.34	2.06	2.54	2.26
Interesting/ boring	1.43	1.85	2.06	2.10
Purpose clear/ purpose hazy	1.20	1.84	2.16	2.13
In touch with school/ out of touch	1.76	1.67	1.80	1.80
Flexible/rigid	1.64	1.37	1.75	1.77
Dynamic leadership/ poor leadership	1.53	1.05	1.64	1.59
Relevant/ irrelevant	1.69	1.29	1.90	1.97
Group sum	0.93	1.24	1.43	1.42

*Given in standard deviations.

ATTITUDE TOWARD PTA COMMUNICATION
SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL SCORES*

Adjective Set	State & District	Council	Local	Total
Current/ out of date	1.69	1.29	2.27	2.13
Clear/confusing	1.75	1.89	2.35	2.25
Relevant/ irrelevant	1.48	1.75	2.21	2.21
Positive/negative	1.70	1.34	2.13	1.99
Honest/slanted	1.88	1.16	2.25	2.12
Useful/useless	1.41	1.60	2.16	2.01
Timely/untimely	1.64	1.65	2.14	2.06
Colorful/colorless	1.78	1.29	2.02	2.09
Interesting/dull	2.17	1.15	1.89	2.11
Regular/ irregular	2.11	1.63	2.35	2.24
Organized/ disorganized	2.04	1.01	2.10	2.01
Easy to understand/ hard to understand	1.69	1.41	2.08	1.92
Group sum	1.47	1.07	1.70	1.73

*Given in standard deviations.

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