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ABSTRACT

Academic unionism emerged during the 1960's for a variety of reasons. Higher education faculty are organizing for collective bargaining for professional advancement. To what factors are individual faculty members' attitudes toward collective bargaining attributable? This study's findings supported hypothesized relationships between sets of previously established attitudinal themes vis-a-vis collective bargaining, perceptions of the conditions of employment, and certain biographic/demographic variables. It identified a set of predictors useful for explaining individual attitudes. (Author)

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AN EXPLANATION OF
FACULTY ATTITUDE TOWARD COLLECTIVE BARGAINING
IN SELECTED OHIO HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS¹

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Academic unionism emerged during the 1960's for a variety of internal and external reasons. Two basic factors which influenced unionism among blue-collar workers, desire to control the conditions under which they worked and the impersonalness of employee-employer relations in corporate bureaucracies, may also be helpful in explaining the unionization movement among professionals in higher education. Other factors influencing this trend may include changes in enrollments and financial support for higher education, changes in the structure of higher education institutions, and the extension of legal encouragement for collective bargaining (CB) to public employees.

In addition, prominent national groups have begun to focus attention and resources on organizing higher education units for the purpose of bargaining collectively with institutional representatives. Internal organizations, such as faculty councils and university senates, have traditionally been the "preferred representatives" of faculty, but the National Education Association (NEA), the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), and the American Federation of Teachers (AFT) have begun to assert themselves in this regard.

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At its 1973 Representative Assembly at Portland, Oregon, the NEA created a task force on higher education. The task force's report (NEA, 1974) offers recommendations to the NEA leadership for developing a national strategy for organizing college professors in the United States and for extending NEA's program of services to that group.

Significant disagreement over CB among the membership and leaders of the AAUP has precipitated the most controversial national election in that organization in almost 60 years (Semas, 1974). One wonders, parenthetically, what might be the present status of the AAUP in this respect had it patterned itself after the so-called "trade union" model favored by its first president, John Dewey, rather than adopting the "professional association" concept as interpreted by Arthur Lovejoy, its first executive secretary.

The AFT, an affiliate of the AFL/CIO, is currently in the throes of a struggle with the NEA to maintain its right to represent higher education faculties in Hawaii (Slevert, 1974). Significant in its recent national strategy has been the employment by AFT of former higher education faculty as field personnel instead of relying solely on the union personnel it traditionally has used.

States in which outside-affiliated bargaining units have been established in institutions of higher education include New York, Michigan, New Jersey, and Massachusetts. In these states, fifty-five percent of all such units have been activated in the past year. Other states in which bargaining units have been established by representatives of the NEA, AAUP, or AFT are Nebraska, Illinois, Colorado, Wisconsin, Hawaii, Pennsylvania and Ohio. In several states, including Ohio, such bargaining units have been established without benefit of permissive CB legislation.

A national survey of American Institutions of higher education (Kennelly, 1973) included 244 randomly selected institutions from among the 2,551 institutions listed in the Educational Directory. Inquiries were sent to the presidents and chairpersons of representative faculty organizations. Responses from seventy-eight percent of the institutions showed that twenty-nine percent of the institutions were in one of three stages of CB development: 1) fifteen percent were in the organizing stage; 2) four percent were in the negotiations stage; and, 3) ten percent were in the contract stage. Sixty-two percent of the institutional respondents indicated an increased interest in CB and thirty-one percent suggested that CB was here to stay. In his recent address, Hook (1973) agreed that some form of CB seems historically inescapable.

Despite considerable CB activity in higher education in the past decade, however, the number of reports of objective inquiry into faculty attitudes in this area is small. This report presents results of exploratory research into those variables which provide prediction of faculty members' attitudes toward CB in institutions of higher education.

Research sought, first of all, to measure the strength of bivariate relationships between a measure of CB attitude and each of fourteen specific measures. Attitude was measured using a set of "approach-avoidance" themes identified by Weldon (1972) based on his analysis of interview and questionnaire data gathered at a large midwestern university. Potential explanatory variables included other attitudinal as well as demographic measures.

Next, this study investigated the nature of multivariate relationships between the attitude measure used as criterion and the fourteen specific measures taken as predictor group. Formulation of these relationships provided a smaller set of explanatory variables predicting CB attitude and also indicated

the relative usefulness of the fourteen variables for collectively explaining college professors' acceptance or rejection of CB.

Then, the study analyzed the set of specific measures to discern its underlying structure in terms of: 1) an expanded set of factors by analyzing the most significant variable as well as 2) a reduced set of total factors. Combining results of the correlation, regression and factor analyses led to identification of a small set of relatively independent and significant measures for predicting CB attitude. Finally, the research used regression to measure the strength of relationships between the criterion variable and the latter set of predictors which balanced need for predictive power of the set and need for independence among specific measures.

METHOD

Instrument

Data used for this study were collected by a questionnaire designed to survey college faculty with respect to several variables thought to be important in determining attitudes about CB in higher education. The questionnaire asked college professors: 1) to identify their perceptions of potential bargaining issues at their institutions, 2) to indicate their relative agreement with previously identified CB themes, 3) to indicate familiarity with, membership in, assessment of, and preference for several potential faculty bargaining agents, 4) to predict their own as well as their colleagues' reactions to organizing their campuses for bargaining, and 5) to provide demographic information, including (a) academic rank, (b) type of institution, (c) highest earned degree, (d) discipline, (e) extent of professional activity, (f) years of higher education experience, (g) current appointment status, (h) tenure status, (i) institutional salary and other income, (j) proportionate attention

to various duties, (k) level of students worked with, (l) age, and (m) marital status. Scoring was based on Likert-type scales developed for each set of items. Positive or greater responses were scored at the higher ends of the respective continua and negative or lesser responses at the lower ends.

Subjects and Administration

Questionnaires were distributed to 1588 faculty members at three higher education institutions in Ohio. Two of the institutions were universities, one a newer and primarily undergraduate urban institution and the second a major comprehensive state institution. The third institution was one of the state's new two-year technical colleges.

The sample was assumed to include a significant number of faculty predisposed to support collective bargaining. These three institutions were independently reported to have been at different stages of development with respect to CB. At the first, only a small segment of the faculty was reported convinced that faculty interests could be achieved only through collective action despite the fact that one of its faculty members is a state senator who has sponsored a CB bill in the state legislature. A significant number of the faculty members at the second institution were reported to have been strongly promoting CB at the time the questionnaire was distributed; since that time, over sixty-five percent of the faculty have signed petitions requesting negotiations. Faculty at the third institution had formed a local affiliate of the NEA, and it has been successful in reversing faculty dismissals by the institution's board of trustees.

The questionnaires guaranteed individual faculty anonymity. There were 245 responses (41%) returned from the first institution, 564 (66%) from the second, and 52 (37%) from the third.

Analysis

Analysis examined, first of all, correlations between the CB attitude measure and the fourteen specific measures constructed from the data where all responses were complete. These measures fell into three categories: 1) perceptions of Institutional Issues, 2) perceptions of potential faculty agents, and 3) demographics.

While correlation coefficients indicate strength and significance of the relationships, a further question involved whether a subset of the fourteen explanatory variables could be selected which provides prediction of CB attitude. For this purpose, the study turned second to stepwise regression utilizing the CB attitude measure as criterion variable with all fourteen potential predictors considered for inclusion in the regression equation (Halinski and Feldt, 1970).

Third, a factor analysis of the fourteen predictor variables by the method of principal components using pair-wise deletions for missing data formed a reduced set of six orthogonal factors which were rotated toward simple structure by the varimax method. Fourth, factor analysis examined the twenty-four items of the category (1) measure because of the significance of that variable and the difficulty of assigning it to previously identified factors. Finally, analysis used least-squares regressions on a fixed set of predictors selected from the two factor analyses for minimum multicollinearity and high predictive power.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents correlation coefficients (N=495) for relationships between the CB attitude measure and the fourteen potential predictor measures grouped into three categories. Four of the relationships are significant at

TABLE 1

Correlations Between Faculty Attitudes Toward Collective Bargaining and Fourteen Variables

Variables	CB Attitude
Perceptions of Campus Issues (x ₁)	0.41***
Perceptions of Potential Agents	
Membership/Activity Status (x ₂)	-0.16*
Performance/Potential Assessment (x ₃)	-0.01
Demographics	
Age (x ₄)	-0.07
Highest Earned Degree (x ₅)	-0.19*
Higher Education Experience (x ₆)	-0.17*
Type of Institution (x ₇)	0.15*
Appointment Status (x ₈)	0.01
Professorial Rank (x ₉)	-0.25***
Tenure Status (x ₁₀)	-0.23***
Institutional Compensation (x ₁₁)	-0.30***
Discipline (x ₁₂)	0.06
Extent of Professional Activity (x ₁₃)	-0.16*
Marital Status (x ₁₄)	0.05

*p .01

***p .001

the .001 level, five more at the .01 level.

The faculty member's perceptions of the severity of institutional potential bargaining issues correlates more highly with attitude toward CB than does any other variable, and the relationship is positive and very significant. The faculty member's institutional income is also a significant correlate, but the relationship with CB attitude is a high negative one. Other significant negative correlates include professorial rank and tenure status and, to a lesser extent, age, highest earned degree, higher education experience, and extent of professional activity. Perhaps most interesting of all is the significant negative correlation between CB attitude and membership in and

familiarity with one or more of the outside associations which are potential faculty bargaining agents and the absence of a relationship between a faculty member's attitude and assessment of the past performance and future potential of those same associations.

Other variables which are not related to the faculty member's attitude toward CB are the type of institution where employed, the nature of his appointment, his discipline and marital status.

Results of the stepwise regression ($N=495$) utilizing the fourteen potential predictor variables appear in Table 2. All the equations derived represent relationships based on those predictors whose regression coefficients are significantly different from zero at the .01 level by t -test, and all predictors were included by this selection rule. It should be noted, however, that the addition to R^2 by including more than the first three to enter is less than .01.

The multivariate regression gives added insight into the degree to which salient variables relate to CB attitude. Thus the comparative importance of the faculty member's perceptions of the severity of potential institutional bargaining issues is highlighted. In absolute as well as relative terms, it is perhaps the only variable worthy of further consideration, but individual institutional compensation and the level of professional activity outside the institution also make some contribution to predicting CB attitude. And these three variables apparently represent CB attitude's covariance with academic rank and tenure status as well as involvement with bargaining associations so that the latter's predictive effects are considerably diminished. Thus, perceptions of issues and level of individual compensation, at least, assume par importance with these other correlates in predicting CB attitude. Other variables entered explain virtually none of the remaining variance.

TABLE 2

Coefficients and Standard Errors for Regression and Increase In R^2 of Fourteen Predictor Variables

Predictor Variables	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Increase In R^2
(Constant = 35.934)			
Perceptions of Issues (x_1)	-0.1605	0.016	0.1729
Compensation (x_{11})	-0.0003	0.000	0.0684
Professional Activity (x_{13})	-0.4109	0.176	0.0116
Marital Status (x_{14})	1.5547	0.759	0.0076
Degree (x_5)	-0.7046	0.650	0.0060
Tenure Status (x_{10})	0.1353	0.081	0.0054
Age (x_4)	0.0809	0.043	0.0075
Perceptions of Agents I (x_2)	-0.0742	0.044	0.0030
Type of Institution (x_7)	0.0318	0.030	0.0023
Discipline (x_{12})	0.0829	0.107	0.0013
Appointment (x_8)	-0.5744	0.661	0.0009
Academic Rank (x_9)	0.3710	0.470	0.0010
Perceptions of Agents II (x_3)	0.0196	0.035	0.0005
Experience (x_6)	-0.0132	0.064	0.0001

The results of the factor analysis ($N=770$) of the fourteen variables, which appear in Table 3, indicate the difficulty in assigning logically consistent and mutually exclusive, if arbitrary, factor labels. Three factors (I - III; lowest eigenvalue, .78) account for eighty-four percent of the variance. A five-factor rotation with the fourteen variables gave results

TABLE 3

Loadings of Fourteen Variables on Six Underlying Factors

Variables	Underlying Factors					
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI
Bargaining Status						
Perceptions of Issues (x ₁)	.24	.11	-.02	-.11	.00	.13
Perceptions of Agents I (x ₂)	.68	-.04	.05	.09	-.06	.01
Perceptions of Agents II (x ₃)	.52	-.06	-.02	.13	.05	-.25
Compensation I Status						
Experience (x ₆)	.00	.80	.22	-.05	-.10	-.04
Age (x ₄)	-.04	.85	.03	.07	.02	.13
Compensation (x ₁₁)	.15	.47	.48	.20	-.41	.26
Compensation II Status						
Degree (x ₅)	.01	.04	.67	.01	-.14	.16
Compensation (x ₁₁)	.15	.47	.48	.20	-.41	.26
Area Status						
Discipline (x ₁₂)	.05	-.02	-.05	.51	-.01	-.09
Professional Activity (x ₁₃)	.04	.12	.30	.40	-.04	.04
Appointment Status						
Academic Rank (x ₉)	.01	-.52	-.57	-.05	.34	.02
Appointment (x ₈)	.03	-.17	-.60	-.01	.42	.12
Tenure Status (x ₁₀)	-.06	-.56	-.35	-.04	.37	.16
Other Status						
Type of Institution (x ₇)	.03	-.17	-.60	-.01	.01	.12
Marital Status (x ₁₄)	-.02	.00	.01	-.03	-.02	.27

similar to those of the four-factor rotation, and comparisons among results highlighted the difficulty of assigning perceptions of issues and compensation to specific factors. Both analyses led to other unsatisfactory results though they did suggest an expanded examination of perceptions of issues (x₁) as an isolated variable and the importance of individual compensation (x₁₁) in explaining the covariance with CB attitude of other variables.

A factor analysis ($N=770$) by the same method described above of the twenty-four items ($KR_{20}=0.89$, $N=660$) which constituted the faculty member's perceptions of institutional issues revealed the eight factors displayed in Table 4. One factor (V; eigenvalue, 6.33) explains nearly fifty percent of the variance, and the addition of four factors (II - IV and VI; lowest eigenvalue, .82) explains ninety-five percent of the variance.

Factor labels, while arbitrary, describe the basic items underlying each factor of the x_j variable. Three of the factors involve the direct and indirect monetary benefits of institutional employment. The "working conditions" factor includes a range of items from teaching load to parking facilities. Items related to faculty relations to other groups, originally thought to constitute a single factor, were sorted into two factors, "faculty-student relations" and "participation in decision-making." Other factors are related to research, promotion and tenure.

Results of the stepwise regression ($N=574$) utilizing the eight factors underlying perceptions of issues and the other two principal predictors identified earlier, individual compensation and extent of professional activity, are displayed in Table 5. The selection rule described above again required including all predictors. But the increase in R^2 by including more than the first three predictors to enter was less than .01.

The predictors thus selected include the faculty member's perception of the relative severity of faculty salaries and recent salary increases and of faculty participation in policy-making as institutional issues as well as the level of the individual faculty member's present institutional income.

DISCUSSION

Findings of this study lead to three sets of conclusions. First, our

TABLE 4

Loadings of Twenty-four Items On Eight Underlying Factors

Items	Underlying Factors							
	I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII	VIII
Salary								
Present Annual Salaries	.79	.18	.12	.13	.25	.14	.01	.03
1972-73 Increases	.71	.19	.17	.08	.16	.10	.07	.11
Benefits								
Medical Insurance	.20	.62	.17	.07	.08	.01	.06	.09
Retirement	.10	.78	.13	.11	.07	.03	.16	.06
Other Financial								
Outside Income Sources	.23	.23	.48	.21	.08	.14	-.01	.08
Sabbaticals	.13	.15	.84	.04	.14	-.02	.12	.09
Paid Leaves	.06	.09	.61	.16	.19	.22	.15	-.01
Working Conditions								
Teaching Load	.13	.03	.13	.42	.26	.26	.21	.13
Class Size	.10	.01	.08	.39	.20	.14	.14	.24
Instructional Facilities	.10	.15	.15	.48	.15	.06	.25	.10
Office Space	.05	-.01	.04	.69	.14	.01	.01	.06
Secretarial Assistance	.05	.08	.19	.61	.08	.01	.04	.01
Eating Facility	-.01	.08	-.03	.43	.12	.09	.10	.05
Parking Facility	.16	.24	.20	.25	-.04	-.04	-.13	.17
Participation in Decision-Making								
Faculty-Administration	.17	.01	.15	.17	.65	.03	.15	.37
Faculty-Trustees	.05	-.01	.15	.18	.56	.11	.13	.29
Program Policies	.10	.05	.05	.22	.74	.21	.06	-.03
Personnel Policies	.10	.08	.08	.18	.84	.20	.08	-.04
Budget Policies	.16	.07	.14	.15	.72	.17	.07	.05
Promotion-Tenure Policies								
Promotion	.13	.03	.16	.09	.30	.75	.04	.02
Tenure	.09	.01	.05	.14	.24	.73	.12	.04
Research Support								
Library Facilities	-.03	.11	.01	.14	.11	.08	.71	.01
Research Facilities	.09	.07	.21	.18	.13	.06	.58	.10
Faculty-Student Relations								
	.03	.10	.01	.11	.16	.05	.11	.70

TABLE 5

Coefficients and Standard Errors and Increase in R^2 of Three Predictor Variables

Predictor Variables	Regression Coefficient	Standard Error	Increase in R^2
(Constant = 41.234)			
Participation in Decision-Making (V)*	-0.3146	0.057	0.1485
Salary (I)	-0.6680	0.117	0.0735
Individual Compensation (x_{11})	-0.0004	0.000	0.0448
Benefits (II)	-0.2702	0.108	0.0093
Professional Activity (x_{13})	-0.3668	0.163	0.0076
Promotion-Tenure Policies (VI)	-0.1876	0.111	0.0037
Working Conditions (IV)	0.0519	0.048	0.0009
Other Financial (III)	-0.0978	0.111	0.0010
Research Support (VII)	-0.0359	0.108	0.0002
Faculty-Student Relations (VIII)	-0.0584	0.212	0.0001
*I - VIII are factors of x_1			

knowledge of the extent of relationships between the college professor's relative acceptance or rejection of CB in higher education, specifically, a faculty member's attitude toward its emergence at his or her own institution, and the other attitudinal as well as demographic measures investigated clarifies our general understanding of this phenomenon. Second, knowledge of the relationships identified is potentially useful to all of the parties who are involved in organizing and negotiating within higher education institutions according to the CB liturgy. Third, the results of the study reported here have implications

for further investigations in this area.

Most of the results of this study were consistent with the authors' anticipations, though some were not. In particular, the inverse relationship between acceptance of CB in higher education and such factors as age, highest earned degree, higher education experience, level of activity in respective professional fields, academic rank, tenure status and level of institutional compensation was not surprising. The strong direct relationship between the faculty member's perceptions of the seriousness of institutional issues and CB attitude was anticipated though not that it should explain other relationships to the extent it apparently does. Too, the demonstrated lack of relationships between CB attitude and type of higher education institution, discipline or marital status was expected and suggests that similar attitudes among academic generations cross department and institutional barriers. It was somewhat surprising that faculty members who were familiar with the programs of one or more of the associations vying for faculty representation had generally negative attitudes toward CB though present differences among the respective organizations may help to explain this finding. Finally, the results reinforced a priori assumptions about the importance of faculty participation in institutional decision-making vis-a-vis predicting CB attitude.

The results of this study may be interpreted in a variety of ways which suggest courses of action for individual faculty, campus organizers and institutional officials. No cause and effect relationships can be implied, but some interesting contingencies can be hypothesized.

It might be speculated that younger and less experienced faculty have not yet discovered the rewards or satisfactions that seasoned veterans have found in exclusive attention to professional activities, especially research and

authorship. Or, younger faculty members, not constrained by traditional assumptions and stereotyped perspectives about higher education, may be the agents of some fundamental if inevitable institutional changes. The results of this study are not conclusive in either regard.

Those traditional governance bodies which are organized within institutions of higher education to represent faculty interests may have demonstrated alternatives which faculty perceive to be more effective than CB in achieving the goals desired. Or, faculty, caught in a means-ends dilemma, may be more concerned about traditional ethics or procedural rubrics than the immediate results which might be achieved by organizing under the auspices of outside associations. Or, these latter associations, which are intended to meet faculty needs, either have not in fact been successful in so doing or, possibly, haven't yet identified the dominant concerns. Again, the results present no conclusive evidence of any of the above. But distinctly different courses of action for those interested in higher education organizing are implied.

College and university administrators and boards of trustees concerned about the onslaught of CB within their traditional domains may recognize the necessity of demonstrated success in shoring up institutional resources in the face of the present economic peril and attempting to meet faculty demands for higher salaries. In another instance, these leaders, concluding that present enrollment declines and inflationary trends preclude satisfying faculty monetary demands, may revitalize traditional faculty participation in institutional policy-making by seeking the involvement of the more vocally concerned and less mobile younger faculty. Or perhaps both administrators and faculty will conclude that CB is in their mutual best interests. In any case, the behaviors of the institutional officials will have significant repercussions.

From a research perspective, this study demonstrates the lack of a conclusive understanding of the higher education CB phenomenon. But it suggests several avenues for further investigation.

The results of a comprehensive study using random or stratified data from all higher education institutions can support conclusive insights. Such a study should include comparable data from institutions demonstrated to be at various stages of CB development. Results of the factor analyses reported here bear implications for the design of relevant instrumentation for such studies.

The use of a set of predictors constructed according to the researcher's interests at a point in time, may lead to a set of relationships other than those shown in this study. Though optimum predictive power may be reduced, such a procedure may ultimately prove beneficial in understanding the phenomenon being studied.

Finally, the results of a series of comparable studies within individual institutions at various stages of CB development would provide data reflecting differences in CB attitudes, if any, which, in turn, could be used to establish a set of predictors for predicting changes in CB attitude over time. Such studies would lend yet another perspective to our understanding of the CB movement.

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