

It may well be that the key to a successful attack upon hard-core unemployment is in relating specific techniques to the degree of deprivation of the trainee. Thus Professor Goodman's statement that the development of social skills is "probably more important for the hard-core trainee than the production skills" is most applicable to the more severely disadvantaged. For the most employable members of the disadvantaged, those falling within the technical definition but differing very little from the average worker, this would probably not be the case.

Since there is a considerable proportion of the disadvantaged which does not differ substantially from the average work force, the real need is to identify factors which have been effective in training and retaining of those for whom the term "hard-core" really fits. Professor Goodman did not attempt to study the characteristics of the successful and unsuccessful trainees themselves. It is quite possible that very few of the real hard core were successfully trained and retained, and consequently that the degree of success achieved was proportional to the level of employability of the trainee. Such a finding would indicate that little success was attained in resolving the problem of hard-core unemployment, as usually perceived.

Since the degree of deprivation of the trainee may be so crucial in assessing the success of programs for employing the disadvantaged, Professor Goodman's study could well be attributing successful performance to those companies receiving the least disadvantaged trainees. Certain companies may have received the most employable trainees either by chance or because of more restrictive hiring standards (i.e., at least a tenth-grade education). Firms imposing such standards would thereby assure themselves of getting the cream of the disadvantaged. Without some indication that hiring standards of the firms were uniform and the quality of the trainees that each firm received was roughly comparable, the real reasons for the firm's success or lack of success could easily be mistaken.

The main research need at present is to identify factors that prove successful in employing and retaining the most severely disadvantaged of the unemployed, those once thought to be unemployable. Tight labor market conditions represent the most effective device for the employment of those who technically fit the disadvantaged category but differ little from the average work force. Special techniques and programs for this group tend to be unnecessary and wasteful. Studies aimed at depicting the most effective techniques for aiding the hard-core unemployed would be more informative if the criteria for falling within this category were more stringent than the disadvantaged criteria now used.

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REPLY TO PROFESSOR MALOY

Professor Maloy's suggestion to define precisely the term "disadvantaged worker" and to examine how variation in different types of disadvantaged workers relates to their job retention is well taken. Research in this area should strive to examine interactions between structural characteristics of the hiring and training organization and individual characteristics of the disadvantaged worker.

In my article, "Hiring, Training, and Retaining the Hard-Core,"¹ and in a subsequent paper,² however, I wanted to emphasize two main points.

First, variables at the organizational level of analysis (e.g., organization size, climate, the reward system for the supervisor's job) should receive more attention from those researchers and administrators concerned with the retention of the hard-core worker. I feel that much of the literature on the disadvantaged worker focuses primarily on the individual characteristics or on training techniques to modify the individual to fit the organization. Implicit in my analysis is that dimensions of the organization (e.g., the structure of the supervisor's job) are critical and may have to be modified to fit the trainee.

A second goal in the two papers was to emphasize the importance of multivariate analysis in research on the disadvantaged. Some of the literature in this area, at least from the psychological and sociological perspective, seems replete with two variable analyses. Generally one variable (e.g., sensitivity training) is related to some criterion variable (e.g., turnover). My basic argument is that a complex set of variables affect the trainee's behavior. Unless the type of training alternative is examined within the context of structural variables at the organizational level of analysis, it will be difficult to assess the relative contribution of training to the retention of the disadvantaged worker.

Presently, I am supervising a study which incorporates the basic themes in the paper cited above, and Professor Maloy's request to deal precisely with variations in characteristics of the disadvantaged worker. The study examines interaction effects between structural characteristics of the organization and characteristics (e.g., age, sex, marital status, prior work status) of the disadvantaged worker. This particular approach then incorporates different levels of analysis (e.g., individual, intra- and inter-organizational) in a multivariate framework to assess the relative importance of factors contributing to the retention of the disadvantaged worker.

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¹ Paul S. Goodman, "Hiring, Training, and Retaining the Hard-Core," *Industrial Relations*, IX (October, 1969), 54-66.

² Paul S. Goodman, "Hiring and Training the Hard-Core Unemployed: A Problem in System Definition," *Human Organization*, XXVIII (Winter, 1969), 259-269.