

INFLUENCE OF ECONOMIC RESTRUCTURING ON RURAL  
MISSOURI HIGH SCHOOL DROPOUT RATES

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ABSTRACT

This research has argued that large scale social forces can influence individual level decisions, such as the decision to leave high school before graduating. The influence of Globalization, via economic restructuring, as measured by the transition from a manufacturing based economy to an economy of services and information, was found to influence students' decisions to drop out. Structural equation models were used to analyze the rural trends taking place from a rural-regional state-wide level. Findings indicated that increases in symbolic analyst and in-person service employment decreased high school dropout rates and the increase in routine production employment increased the dropout rate. Changes in all three occupation categories affected student family characteristics during the 1980s. Increases in in-person service employment had the greatest influence on family structure characteristics. Findings regarding student perceptions of education that resulted in increases in school commitment contributed to decline in high school dropout rates while increases in the number of hours students spent working at a part-time job increased the high school dropout rate.