CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF OKLAHOMA EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR HOME ECONOMICS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence has long been recognized by adults as a time of transition. The pubescent child is going through physical, emotional, social, and mental changes, as the body begins to reach adulthood. This period of development can be a turbulent time for youth as they begin to think and look more like adults, rather than children.

The term early adolescence is seen as a combination of two worlds - childhood and adulthood. The primary sexual characteristics of the reproductive system mature in males and females. There is growth in the secondary sexual characteristics such as beginning of menstruation, rounding of pelvis, growth of breasts and signs of pubic hair for girls; and for boys, growth of body and hair, deepening of voice, expansion of chest cavity and thickening of muscles (Kagan & Coles, 1972).

The world is a confusing place as the preadolescent strives to make sense of the body changes, as well as seeking independence from parents and gaining approval from peers. There is a general preoccupation with the body and as a result shyness and sensitivity are experienced in most young adolescents.

Adolescence brings about many changes over a period of several years. Therefore, these changes are usually studied in three stages: early, middle, and late adolescence. It is important for adults, teachers, counselors, and anyone who works with this age group to differentiate between the stages of adolescence in order to meet the needs of those youth involved (Jones-Webb, 1982).

Basic survival skills that are used throughout life are taught within the home economics classroom and contribute significantly in helping the preadolescent prepare for adolescence and eventually for adulthood. Youth are interested in looking their best and developing better relationships with family and friends (Kindred, et. al., 1981). They are concerned about school grades, money, and sibling relations (Smith, 1980). According to Alexander and George (1981), "Early adolescents also need help in diet, nutrition, personal hygiene, and coping with such physical problems as menstruation, growing beards, changing voices, and outgrowing clothes" (p. 6). Within the home economics classroom the student has the opportunity to learn practical things that could help improve their personal lives, family lives, and society.

According to Mahaffey, (personal communication, April 26, 1989) Oklahoma has developed home economics curriculum guides for grades 8-12. In the past, Oklahoma promoted state curriculum for 9-12 grades only. Recently, Oklahoma adopted the Missouri Comprehensive Guide For Exploratory Home

Economics Programs (OHEEC) for use in eighth grade home economics classrooms.

The purpose of this study is to determine the concerns and interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students. The results of the study will provide a basis for future curriculum planning.

The objectives guiding this study are as follow.

1. to identify the concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state nd school district size,
2. to identify the interest in future study of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state and school district size,
3. to determine relationship between student concerns and student interests in future study of home economics, and
4. to make recommendations for home economics curriculum at the eighth grade level.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses guides the research.

1. There is no significant difference between the concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students as

associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size.

2. There is no significant difference between interest in future study of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size.
3. There is no significant difference between student concerns and student interests in future study of home economics.

Assumptions

The following assumptions were made in planning and conducting this study: 1) Oklahoma eighth grade students have specific needs that can be met in the home economics classroom, 2) eighth grade males and females are capable of identifying some of their interests and concerns, 3) student response is one way of determining curriculum content for eighth grade home economics classes, and 4) students' responses will reflect the general concerns and interests of eighth grade science students across Oklahoma.

Limitations

This study is limited to schools randomly selected from a current list of schools approved for vocational home economics for the eighth grade. This study is further limited to 385 eighth grade students enrolled in the randomly selected science classes in each of the participating schools within the state of Oklahoma. This study is also limited by an unequal number of racial groups in the participating sample. Concerns and interest of future study were limited to the objectives of the Oklahoma eighth grade home economics curriculum and content of the study conducted by Crawford (Crawford, 1985).

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms were used as defined:

adolescence - a transition period resulting in many changes between childhood and full maturity (Kindred, Wolotkiewicz, Mickelson, & Coplein, 1981, p. 24).

concern - an uneasy state of blended interest, uncertainty, and apprehension; to be of importance by causing care or distress (Webster's, 1976, p. 233).

developmental task - a significant accomplishment an individual achieves by a certain time if societal demands are to be met (Sale, 1979, p. 29).

home economics - the study of laws, conditions, principles and ideals which are concerned on the one hand with man's immediate environment (i.e., food/nutrition/food service; textiles/clothing; housing/design/equipment) and on the other hand with his nature as a social being (i.e. human development and relationships), and is the study especially of the relation between these two factors (i.e. resource management, decision making, communications) (Hawthorne, 1984, p. 3).

interest - excitement of feeling accompanying special attention to some object or area of quality (Webster's, 1976, p. 602).

middle school - a school between elementary and high school including grades six through eight, with programs designed specifically according to the developmental and educational needs of early adolescents. (Alexander & George, 1981, p. 3).

middle school curriculum - the courses and actual learning experiences of early adolescents that take place under the responsibility of the middle school and is flexible, varied, and responsive to the continuously changing needs of middle school students (Sale, 1979, p. 185).

pubescence - the point in a child's life when rapid physical changes begin to take place (Kindred et. al, 1981, p. 19).

transescence - the stage of development which begins prior to the onset of puberty and extends through the early stage of adolescence (Eichhorn, 1966, p. 3).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

In order to develop the scope and focus of this study, a review of literature was conducted, examining articles and research studies related to the objectives. The review of literature revealed an interest in and concern for the middle school age child. This review was divided into four general areas. Characteristics and interests of early adolescents will be examined in the first section, focusing on physical, mental, social, and emotional development, and developmental tasks particular to early adolescents. The second section will explore the differences between the middle school and the junior high school. The characteristics of the middle school curriculum will be examined in section three. Finally, home economics in the middle school will be discussed in relation to meeting transescents' needs as well as describing the home economics program.

Characteristics of Early Adolescents

The literature provides several definitions for the early adolescent age group. Eichhorn (1966) defines transescence as the physical development which begins at the onset of puberty and continues throughout early adolescence. Transescence is based upon many physical, social, emotional, and intellectual changes that occur with early adolescents (Eichhorn).

Some characteristics of students between the ages of 10 and 14 are: desiring independence, growing importance of peer group, and maturing sexually, emotionally, and socially. Maturing intellectually and searching for values and norms are other characteristics common with this age-group, as listed in the Research Brief, Organization of the Middle Grades (1983).

Some characteristics and developmental patterns of thirteen and fourteen year olds are cited by Biese (1977). Thirteen year old early adolescents are affected by complex body changes in tensions, emotions, posture, coordination, attitudes and behavior. They have increased in self-awareness, search of self, and in the development of attitudes, beliefs, and values. They have a strong sense of right and wrong. There is an increase in visual coordination. Early adolescents at this age show an unusual skill and interest in handling of preschool children and in the care of the home (Biese, 1977).

Fourteen year old early adolescents like to exercise self-expression and are enthusiastic but have short interest

spans. They like variety and change and are realistic and objective in judgement. They have gained the ability to think logically. They like to dress like their peer group and show an interest in sewing. Early adolescents at this age like their privacy and show an interest and responsibility for the care of the kitchen and equipment and for helping at home. They show an interest in others and in understanding themselves. They are aware of personality differences and have a greater understanding of family. They are energetic and often plan too much (Biese, 1977).

Physical Development

The 10-year old child is entering preadolescence or pubescence, the time where rapid physical changes occur. Coleman describes growth spurt as the accelerated rate of increase in height and weight that occurs during early adolescence. Puberty, as defined by Coleman (1980), ". . . [is derived] from the Latin 'pubertas', meaning age of manhood, and is usually considered to date from the onset of menstruation in girls and the emergence of pubic hair in boys" (p. 12).

There is research to evidence the fact that children and adolescents are maturing more rapidly mentally and biologically now than at the turn of the century. Brazee (1982) states, "Since 1830, primarily because of better nutrition, children have matured four months earlier with

every passing decade" (p. 31). Brazee also suggests that exposure to television and society's mores has also increased their development and knowledge of the world. Coleman (1980) suggests better health care, housing, and social conditions to be the primary causes of this earlier maturation.

Early adolescents are increasingly concerned with physical growth and appearance. Both males and females experience increasing height, body breadth and depth, lung capacity, heart size, and muscular strength (Sale, 1979). Although females tend to begin puberty two years earlier than males, and are ahead of males in height, males usually have more physical energy and endurance (Klingele, 1979).

In males the growth spurt begins as early as 10, or as late as 16, and peaks at around 14 years of age. Females begin the same process as early as seven, or as late as 14 or 15, and peak at around 12 years of age. The most noticeable changes in height and weight occur at the onset of puberty. Adjusting to the rapid physical, emotional, and social changes becomes a major problem for adolescents, and they need a great deal of understanding from adults around them. During puberty early adolescents should be taught to recognize the processes and changes they are going through, in order to better understand their emotions, thoughts, and reactions (Alexander & George, 1981).

Sex maturation and development and growth of the body often causes embarrassment, especially if these changes are noticeable. Females sometimes go on dangerous fad diets in

order to lose weight around the hips and stomach. Others sometime become stoop-shouldered in order to hide their heavy breasts. Boys often avoid singing or talking to cover their voice change. Early adolescents are better able to cope with these changes if they learn that the processes they are going through are normal and to be expected (Howard & Stoumbis, 1970).

Rapid growth brings about awkwardness and clumsiness, as the early adolescents' suddenly become aware of big feet, long noses, and ears that stick out. Students at this age are acutely aware of their appearance and any differences they have from their peers. Educators, parents and other adults should help youngsters recognize the different stages of their development and understand that differences are to be expected. Kindred et al., (1981) declared "It is essential that maturing boys and girls understand the changes taking place within themselves and accept them as part of growing up" (p. 24).

Mental Development

During puberty, the early adolescent begins to think in abstract terms especially in the areas of problem solving and creativity. They are able to tackle more complex mathematical equations, and gain the capacity to think about the many realities of life (Lewis, 1978). For the first time they begin to conceive an ideal world and become impatient with

their own world. They begin to question the authority of their parents, teachers, and others. Lewis (1978) suggests that young people of this age begin to think philosophically and ask philosophical questions such as, "Who am I? What is life? What makes me tick?" (p. 22).

Early adolescents no longer take everything for granted, but begin to ask questions and want specific answers from professionals. The parents are no longer the youngsters' idols. Early adolescents begin to express deeper interest in things, yet with evident restraint. More introversion is seen at this age, as is present in grades four and six (Klingele, 1979).

Social Development

Socially, early adolescents begin to show interest in the opposite sex. In later childhood, the preadolescent is mainly concerned with same sex activities, but with increasing interest in opposite sex interaction (Howard & Stoumbis, 1970). With the other sex, young adolescents soon learn the adult social skills such as, how to converse, to dance, and to play social games. These skills are important to early adolescents because they learn adult behavior while interacting with peers (Kindred, et. al., 1981).

As transescents mature physically, they begin to look more like adults and less like children, and are expected to act like adults. Peers tend to treat those who look older

differently. A 12 year-old girl who is fully developed is sometimes pressured by high school boys to date. Although she looks older, her behavior still is very childlike and immature, and she is probably not emotionally ready to handle such responsibility. One of the worries of the early developing child is whether he or she is able to cope with the social and intellectual demands upon them. On the other hand, the under-developing child, who is more mature intellectually and emotionally than more developed peers, wonders when he/she will stop being treated like a child and will physically catch up with peers (Howard & Stoumbis, 1970).

Emotional Development

There is a great amount of personal stress associated with early adolescence . Denning (1965) states, "Much disorientation is produced by the sudden loss of childhood" (p. 2).

Peer relationships take on a greater emotional significance in eighth grade, with increasing importance. A lot of interest focuses on attracting the opposite sex, dating and 'going steady. (Lewis, 1978). Lewis suggests that eighth graders display fear about diseases of the body, such as the common cold, measles, venereal diseases, etc. This age group shows a strong desire for better understanding and communication with family members, especially parents (Lewis).

Developmental Tasks

Sale (1979) defines a developmental task as "a significant accomplishment that an individual must achieve by a certain time if he is going to meet the demands placed upon him by society" (p. 29). Many authorities agree there are developmental tasks to be accomplished by each individual through each stage of life. Havinghurst (1972) states that as the individual grows, he/she finds himself with new physical and psychological ability, and therefore faces new demands and expectations from society. Havinghurst suggests that these series of developmental tasks need to be mastered to be a successful human being. Havinghurst defines developmental task as:

> . . . a task which arises at or about a certain period in the life of the individual, successful achievement of which leads to his happiness and to success with later tasks, while failure leads to unhappiness in the individual, disapproval by the society, and difficulty with later tasks (p. 2).

Havinghurst (1972) has presented the following as developmental tasks of adolescence:

1. achieving new and more mature relations with age-mates of both sexes,
2. achieving a masculine or feminine social role,
3. accepting one's physique and using the body effectively,
4. achieving emotional independence from parents and other adults,
5. preparing for marriage and family life,

6. preparing for an economic career,
7. acquiring a set of values and ethical system as a guide to behavior - developing an ideology, and
8. desiring and achieving socially responsible behavior (p. 45).

Havinghurst states that these tasks may come about from physical maturation, from cultural pressures, and from the desires, goals, and values of the emerging adolescent. In addition, these tasks may arise from combinations of these factors.

Interests of Early Adolescents

Faunce and Clute (1961) cite a Purdue Opinion Poll which compiled data from American teenagers throughout the United States about the special fears and worries of adolescents. Ninth graders identified their chief concerns and worries as:

1. wanting people to like me more,
2. wanting to gain or lose weight,
3. getting stage fright before a group,.
4. wishing I were more popular,
5. wanting to make new friends,
6. seldom have dates,
7. having a "crush" on a (boy) (girl),
8. doing things I later regret,
9. wanting to improve my posture and body build, and
10. Not having a (girl) (boy) friend (p. 47).

Smith (1980) conducted a study to determine the concerns and interests of adolescents. He administered a survey to 271 young people between the ages of eight and 21 and asked them to list three concerns and three areas of interest for which they wanted more information. They were asked to rank the items in order of importance on a scale of 1 to 10. The items with the highest degree of concern are school/grades, dating, relations with friends, future, parents, money, and sibling relations. Adolescents showed an interest in and requested more information about the following items: careers, dating relations, sports, and cars. Smith notes that sex differences between male and female on concerns and informational interests are insignificant. Smith adds that additional up-to-date information about the interests of adolescents is needed if measurements about and insights into the lives of adolescents are to be academically and societally meaningful.

According to Klingele (1979), early adolescents are interested in clothes, good grooming, clubs, the opposite sex, and other factors related to peer approval. Klingele further states that "transescents have shown increased interest in what is real and meaningful to them" (p. 22). Also, young adolescents develop a desire to relate and identify with adults, especially those other than their parents.

Middle School vs. Junior High School

There has been a great deal of controversy among educators the past two decades, about junior high schools and middle schools. The transition between elementary and secondary education occurs sometime during the middle years of schooling, but educators disagree over the grade in which it begins and the grade in which it ends (Organization of the Middle Grades, 1983). Questioning the original 8-4 (first through eighth, ninth through twelfth grade) plan and now the junior high plan of 6-3-3 (first through sixth, seventh through ninth, tenth through twelfth grades), educators propose the middle school concept. Alexander et. al., (1968) defines the middle school concept as a school providing a program for preadolescents or early adolescents that builds upon the elementary school program, and is also built upon for high school adolescents.

Middle School

Middle school can be defined several different ways. One definition describes middle school as a school of three to five years between elementary and high school that focuses on the educational needs of students (Alexander and George 1981). Another popular definition describes the middle school as a school that builds upon the elementary school program and in

turn is built upon by the high school's program for adolescence (Alexander et al. 1968).

A common method of defining the middle school is to contrast the concept with the junior high school. The traditional junior high school includes the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades. Classes and activities resemble the senior high school. The middle school includes some combination of the fifth or sixth, seventh, and eighth grades and has a specific instructional program designed for students between 10 and 14 years. Some schools have attempted to develop a middle school by combining the grades in different ways, such as 6-2-4, 6-3-3, 5-3-4, or 4-4-4, or by simply changing the name from junior high to middle school. A major role in the development of both types of schools was the attempt to find the best grade organization for preadolescents and early adolescents (Organization of the Middle Grades, 1983).

Defining the middle school based on the child's physiological development is another common way to define the middle school (Eichhorn, 1966). Some schools devote their instructional and program planning to meet the early adolescents' needs as the biological changes take place. Eichhorn emphasizes the development of a philosophical base, program organization, and instructional procedures that are designed in accordance with the physiological changes occurring in transescents.

Some school systems view the middle school as a link between elementary school and high school. The middle school

is seen as a place to put those students that do not particularly fit anywhere. These students have developed mentally, physically, and socially beyond students in elementary school, yet are not mature enough for high school. Many researchers find that the concept of the middle school as a step or bridge from elementary to high school is not enough, because children between the ages of 10 and 14 have unique characteristics and needs which are not met in the elementary or high school setting. Alexander and George (1981) state that an effective middle school program must build upon earlier childhood programs, anticipate the program of secondary education to follow, and be directly concerned with the current problems and interests of its students.

According to Alexander et. al., (1968), an exemplary middle school is one that is planned, organized and operated so that it serves as a model for middle school education. Research suggests that middle schools should strive to focus on meeting the needs of the early adolescent student, which is the primary reason for the establishment of the middle school concept.

Klingele (1979) states:

> We believe that the middle school should be a student-centered school, developed as a distinct, flexible, and unique organization committed to meeting the common and special needs of the transescent. As a student-centered school, the middle school should provide an environment which focuses upon and provides guidance for the student. It should be a school where the program is designed to help the students progress intellectually, socially, physically, and emotionally in ways which (a) enhance the individual's self-image, (b) provide opportunities for success, (c) promote "active" learning, and (d) encourage exploration. An

> atmosphere should also exist which encourages students to assume responsibility for their own behavior as well as becoming responsible members of a democratic society (p. 14).

Junior High School

The junior high school came into existence at the turn of the century as a result of growing dissatisfaction with the 8-4 plan (Faunce and Clute, 1961). Two major factors that led to the birth of the junior high, are congestion in high school enrollment, and the realization that early adolescents require a school geared to their developmental characteristics (Faunce & Clute).

McGlasson (1973) lists five factors that led to the establishment of a middle school/junior high school:

1. increase in college freshmen enrollment at the latter half of 19th century,
2. large increase in dropouts after seventh or eighth grade,
3. lack of teacher training for this age group,
4. expansion of extracurricular activities in high schools that offered potential as learning experiences in grades seven and eight,
5. need for more rigorous academic program to prepare youth for college.

According to Klingele (1979), a criticism of the junior high system was the inability to cope with the earlier physical development of today's youth. Klingele suggests that

there is more likeness among students at the sixth, seventh, and eighth grade levels than at any other grade levels. McGlasson (1973) states that with earlier development, today's sixth graders are equivalent to the seventh graders of a half century ago. Therefore, it seems that the junior high school was more appropriate for early adolescents 50 years ago, whereas the middle school better fits the transescents of today Alexander, et. al., 1968).

Faunce & Clute (1961) cite a definition of the junior high school issued by the United States Commissioner of Education in 1912.

> A junior high school is defined as an organization of grades 7 and 8, or 7 to 9, whether housed with the senior high school or independently, to provide by various means for individual differences, especially by an introduction of earlier prevocational work or of subjects usually taught in high schools (p. 8).

Three functions of a junior high (Alexander et al., 1968) are to serve as a bridge between elementary school and senior high school, offer exploratory experiences, and offer guidance services. Alexander el al., further suggest that the junior high system has not met these purposes and is being challenged by middle school advocates. Alexander et al. state that today's interest in the middle school stems partly from dissatisfaction with what the junior high school has become, not with the original intent of the system. Research indicates that one of the greatest criticisms of the junior high school has been that this system lost sight of the transitional program and meeting the needs of early adolescents, and has become a high school in nature and

program (Alexander et al., 1961; Hansen & Hearn, 1971; Klingele, 1979; McGlasson, 1973).

Middle School Curriculum

In the past, curriculum referred to the subjects taught in school, which suggests there is a planned body of objectives all students accomplish (Kindred et al., 1981)). Another concept of curriculum involves a curriculum guide, a set course of study or a list of course offerings of an educational institution. Sale's definition of a more modern concept of curriculum ". . . includes all student experiences for which the school accepts responsibility" (1979, p. 185). A middle school curriculum includes learning experiences of early adolescents that take place under the guidance of the middle school (Sale, 1979).

Kindred et al., (1981) suggest common definitions of curriculum such as ". . . consists of all the planned learning activities under the aegis of the school" confuses curriculum with instruction. Curriculum design places emphasis on content, whereas instructional design emphasizes planned interaction between teachers and students. A good curriculum design includes the following components: objectives, content, and instructional strategies (Kindred et al., 1981). Sale (1979) proposes that middle school curriculum is to be developed according to the characteristics and developmental

needs of the emerging adolescent population as defined in the local school-community setting.

A critical step in curriculum planning is assessing needs of which a variety of procedures are used. Some procedures used in assessing needs are: longitudinal studies, surveys of opinions of students and faculty, and use of supportive data and research to determine the immediate and long-range needs of the school population (Sale, 1979).

A goal of middle school education is to develop a program that fits the needs of early adolescents according to chronological and biological age, capabilities, and community orientation. Sale (1979) declares the most important principle in developing middle school curriculum is to design the curriculum around the characteristics and needs of the emerging adolescent.

When planning and developing curriculum, educators recognize characteristics of middle school curriculum. Some essential characteristics for middle school curriculum reported by Sale (1979), are as follows.

> Curriculum should be self-paced, flexible, intellectually stimulating, rich in exploratory experiences, and emphasis placed on the learner. Curriculum should maintain a proper balance of the cognitive (emphasis on basic skills), affective (emphasis on development of personal value system), and psychomotor (emphasis on physical fitness, personal hygiene, family-life education and sports).

Other middle school characteristics Sale (1979) emphasizes are career exploration and school evaluation or pupil progress. Sale also suggests provisions be made for the exceptional learner and stated that effective guidance

services should be available to each teacher and student, with training geared specifically for the early adolescent.

Each middle school has its own planned program of curriculum and activities, and the curriculum is to be specifically designed to serve the educational needs of a school population that has a wide range of differences in many traits (Howard & Stoumbis, 1970). The planned program of instruction and activities can vary from school to school giving administrators and teachers flexibility in academic instruction. As DiVirgilio (1972) states, "The middle school is a total experience. It uses the curriculum content to develop all aspects of the human being, social, emotional, physical, mental; and/or all domains" (p. 78).

Kindred et al. (1981) suggests middle schools provide opportunities for self-development, exploration, and individualization, which help transecents deal with areas relevant to their lives. Many schools attempt to do these experiences by offering exploratory or elective courses. As Alexander and George (1981) state, "The original intent of the exploratory program was to have relatively brief, introductory courses for beginners, with longer, more intensive courses available another year for those interested" (p. 61). Many middle school authorities and curriculum writers recognize home economics as an exploratory course in the middle school and junior high curriculum (Alexander & George, 1981; Alexander et al., 1986; Faunce & Clute, 1961; Hansen & Hearn, 1971; Howard & Stoumbis, 1970; Kindred et al., 1981; Klingele,

1979; Lounsbury & Vars, 1978; Lounsbury et al., 1961; Sale, 1979).

Oklahoma Curriculum

Today, there are an increasing number of people with international origins living in the United States as legal aliens and as American citizens. Naisbitt (1982) suggests that the many diverse ethnic groups in America today make uniformity impossible. Educators can no longer ignore the fact that children in the schools are not just caucasian English speaking Americans who know only the American culture. Many children attend public schools without knowing the English language and it becomes the teachers' job to not only teach the children the academic subject, but also English. Naisbitt predicts that ". . . we will be transformed into a bilingual country before the end of the century" (p. 246).

Many educators believe that many minority children with inadequate learning situations will grow up with little knowledge of how they can contribute positively to society. Hodgkinson (1987) states that ". . . we cannot treat 'minorities' as if they all have the same curricular needs, because the diversity within and across our major minority categories is unlike anything we have ever seen before in the United States" (p. 8).

In Oklahoma, alone, the total population is 3,025,290, with Caucasians totaling 2,597,791, Negroes totaling 204,674, and American Indians totaling 169,292 (1980 Census of

Population, 1982, p. 38). The remaining number of people are from other minority groups or international in background. In 1980 the total number of young people ages 13 and 14 was 91,846, with 74,464 of those Caucasian, 18,524 of American Indian (10-14 years old), 8,024 of Negro origin, and 2,309 from Spanish origin.

Anderson (personal communication, September 8, 1989) states that Oklahoma curriculum does not meet the needs of the different cultural groups. She says that there are some programs to help the Native Americans and Hispanics, but there is nothing to help the other groups, especially Black children. Anderson states that teachers need to learn how to teach children of different cultures. Anderson says that it is hard on these teachers to have to deal with these children, but that it is worse on the children in the long run. She says that these children must learn to live in their new environment without forgetting the customs and traditions of their homeland. Without this, confusion and emotionally instability will occur, especially as students grow into their teenage years.

Home Economics in the Middle School

Home Economics Defined

The goal of home economics is to strengthen the individual and the family for better productiveness within

society (Coon, 1964). It has long been recognized that a good way to educate people in areas concerning the family is to start with the youth in the public schools. Home economics has been taught in the secondary schools since the late 1800's and early 1900's. In fact, the promotion of home economics originally began with the concern for women and their education (Coon, 1964). Originally called domestic economy, home economics has evolved from domestic science, or home science in the 1920's, to homemaking, family living, home arts, home living and now home economics (Coon, 1964; Lounsbury et.al., 1961).

The purposes of home economics education, as stated by Coon (1964) are as follows.

1. to understand the importance to society of families in which each individual has an opportunity to develop his [her] optimum potential - physically, socially, intellectually, emotionally,
2. to understand some of the satisfactions and needs the individual has as he [she] participates in the various stages of the family life cycle,
3. to understand and be able to apply some of the important concepts, principles, and generalizations in home economics, in the sciences, and in the arts which are basic to family living,
4. some facility in performing certain tasks necessary for the maintenance of a home and family, and
5. to become more adept at managing one's own and the family's human and material resources so as to attain one's consciously derived goals and values (p. 5).

Home economics is not new to the middle school, junior high or even the elementary school. Hanna (1922) included home economics at the elementary school age, middle school/junior high age, as well as the senior high school.

Lounsbury, Til, and Vars (1961), identify that home economics concepts are needed at all age levels. The inability of the elementary schools to teach home economics had been obvious to educators prior to the establishment of junior high schools. "Bringing together several seventh, eighth, and ninth grades in a new junior high school would create a school large enough to include home economics facilities" (Lounsbury, et al., 1961).

Home Economics - Transescents' Needs

The adolescent needs encountered through accomplishment of the developmental tasks established by Havinghurst (1972) are met through coursework in home economics (see p. 12). Kohlmann & Ericksen (1976) identify four developmental tasks home economics helps early adolescents achieve:

1. developing self,
2. being a family member,
3. being a consumer, and
4. becoming employable (p. 83).

As cited by Southers (1988), the following statement was used as a guide in designing the Oregon middle school/junior high home economics curriculum:

> Home economics fulfills a unique role in the area of personal and social development and encompasses content that contributes more directly to all developmental needs of learners than does any other single discipline (p. 157).

Kohlmann and Ericksen (1976) report,

> Some administrators have recognized the potential home economics has in helping the emerging and early adolescents in their search for self-identity, in

> identifying their strengths and weaknesses, developing basic skills in personal and family life, and in exploring possible career choices in home economics-related areas (p. 82).

According to Kohlmann and Ericksen (1976), introducing early adolescents to clothing, foods, resource management, consumer education, housing, family relations, child development, and health subject areas seem appropriate. Weis (1971) states that home economics offers subject areas that can meet needs by helping transescents' become a more effective family and peer group member, producer and consumer of goods and services, and manager of resources. Weis adds that home economics can also help early adolescents learn to cope with pressures from peers and adults.

Some educators prefer home economics to begin no earlier than the ninth grade. Many of these educators oppose middle school home economics because of repetitious subject matter. But research indicates the original intention of home economics at the middle school level is to introduce an overall view of all home economic subject areas in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades, with specialization beginning at the ninth grade (The Placement of Home economics Content in Junior and Senior High Schools, 1927). Blankenship and Moerchen (1979) suggest home economics for middle and junior high school students should focus more on present concerns than future concerns. An emphasis should be placed on breadth of topics, rather than depth. (Blankenship & Moerchen).

However, Howard & Stoumbis (1970), point out that the broad program lacks depth and leads to duplication. According

to Hansen & Hearn (1971), cooperative planning of home economics teachers at middle school and senior high levels is vitally important in order to prevent repetition of subject matter. Pew (1980) believes that articulation of high school home economics program with the junior high or elementary feeder schools need to take place.

Currently, some educators are concerned with back to the basics - a concentration on core curriculum, with less emphasis placed on those subjects considered "frills". Seymour (1985) states, "It [home economics] repeats and reinforces learning skills taught in the academic curriculum, and provides additional content to help students improve the quality of their lives" (p. 46). Faunce & Clute (1961) state, ". . . the curriculum in homemaking often parallels the units being studied in core classes, and the two areas should be planned in coordination" (p. 113). Faunce & Clute (1961) believe that home economics has much in common with the core curriculum. They add, "It provides an obvious application of principles of art, science, consumer economics, and personal budgeting, which other subject fields seek to teach" (p. 114).

In a description of the home economics middle school program in the Moline, Illinois schools, Adams (1951) states that the home is the most fundamental unit in society on which the democratic way of life is built. It is the family that determines and influences the child's personality and development. Adams further states,

> It is our further belief that while home economics through the very nature of its subject area has many

> unique contributions to make, every subject taught at every level has contributions to make to education for home and family living which should be for all boys as well as girls (p. 220).

With the transition from the junior high school to the middle school, exploratory courses, including home economics, have become a major part of the middle school program (Hansen & Hearn, (1971). Kohlman and Ericksen (1976) describe one exploratory program where the students are able to examine all areas of home economics for brief periods of time. This program is structured in mini-units offering home economics and other subject areas, anywhere from one period a week for six, nine or eighteen weeks, or concentrated courses, meeting one period daily for a limited number of weeks. Some exploratory courses are required, electives, or both. Through exploration in several different subject areas, the transescent is able to discover interests and select a subject for more in-depth study.

Exploratory courses, originally adopted at the junior high level ". . . have great potential for helping the middle school students identify their own interests (and disinterests), to appreciate fine and applied arts, and develop some rudimentary concepts and skills in the areas concerned" (Alexander & George, 1981). Klingele (1979) identified transescents as being lively, energetic, with short attention span and fleeting interests. Studying several different subjects for short periods of time is more adaptable to this age-group than any other age (Alexander & George, 1981).

Transescents begin to understand themselves by studying areas that are of interest (Alexander & George, 1981). A short introduction to home economics at the middle school level can lay the foundation for future study in home economics. In some cases, the middle school or junior high requirement at the exploratory level is the only chance for educating students in home economics (Southers, 1988). As Southers points out, "The importance of the middle school/junior high curriculum is further supported when one considers that parents' perceptions of the home economics profession are often based on their child's first home economics experiences. Without parental support, students are unlikely to take future home economics courses" (p. 156).

The concern for the family and quality of life continues, however families and their problems have changed partly as a result of rapid social and technological development (Blankenship & Moerchen, 1979). Hansen and Hearn (1971) state, "The stability of the home, the basic unit of our society, is essential to the well-being of a democratic nation" (p. 240). Therefore, emphasis in home economics education has shifted to reflect these rapid changes in society (Blankenship & Moerchen, 1979). In agreement, Hansen and Hearn (1971) suggest,

> If the middle school serves a transitional and exploratory function for the pupil, then the home economics program accepts the pupil where he is, fulfills the needs with which he is faced, and establishes a desire for continued growth and development in the field of home and family life (p. 242).

Curriculum guidelines for middle school home economics programs should feature instruction in which the educative processes as well as the course content satisfy meaningful objectives (Weis 1971). Objectives should be appropriate to the physical, social, emotional, and intellectual needs and capabilities of transescent learners, according to Weis. A purpose of middle school home economics curriculum is to introduce transescents to all areas of home economics in a variety of ways that stimulate continued independent exploration (Weis). Some conclusions drawn from a research project on strengthening the curriculum, as cited by Kohlmann and Ericksen (1976) are that curriculum should be flexible, centered on early adolescents' needs and characteristics, and developmental task oriented.

Weis (1971) proposed a plan for the middle school home economics program that is composed of the following areas.

1. Personal development - Provide experiences that promotes understanding of the transescent's social, emotional, and physical growth and development.
2. Curriculum development - Provide education processes that foster skills in self-understanding, allows interaction with others, formulates personal values and standards, and analyzes social attitudes and human behavior.
3. Exploratory studies - Provide learning experiences in the areas of child development, family relationships, consumer education, personal

resource management, foods and nutrition, family health and safety, clothing and textiles, and family housing and home art. The emphasis here is on introducing and stimulating interest in the various areas of the field.

4. Independent studies - Provide experiences that would enable exploration of individual interests and meet remedial needs. Students would be encouraged to assume increasing responsibility for their own learning (p. 586).

Societal Trends Affecting Oklahoma Adolescents

One consideration in developing middle school curriculum is to consider societal issues and trends impacting youth. The following provides an overview of some of the major issues affecting Oklahoma young people.

Accidents - Accidents such as, motor vehicle, drowning, fire, suffocation, poisoning and falls, are the leading cause of death for Oklahoma children, with motor vehicles accounting for over one-half. Close to two-thirds of the 168 children who died in 1985 because of accidents, were ages 10-14.

Homicide - Homicide represents the third leading killer of Oklahoma children. In 1985, deaths of 39 children ages 1-19 were reported as homicide. Eight of those children were from 10-14 years old.

Suicide - Suicide represents the fourth leading cause of death among Oklahoma children. In 1985, five suicides

occurred among 10-14 year olds; 32 suicides by 15-19 year olds. White males have accounted for three-fourths of all suicides among 10-19 year olds since 1975 (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 1988, p.1).

Other statistics include:

1. 75 teen drivers ages 16-21 died from alcohol related accidents in 1986.
2. 1,074 teen drivers ages 16-21 were injured from alcohol related accidents in 1986.
3. 347 teens committed suicide in the last ten years (1977-1986).
4. 20,275 teens were seen by the Juvenile Bureau or Court Related and Community Services for initial inquiries resulting in recommendations to court.
5. 8,593 students were reported to have dropped out of school in the 1986-87 school year.
6. 7,894 babies were born to teen mothers in 1986.
7. 5,262 births occurred for every 1000 15-19 year old girls (1984-1986). State rate 66/1000. National rate (1985) 51.3/1000.
8. 3,075 teens (age 10-19) were reported to have gonorrhea in 1987 (Oklahoma State Department of Health, 1988, p.4).

These statistics among Oklahoma young people present the need for home economics education at the middle school and senior high level. Much of the search for identity occurs between the ages 10 to 14. Social experimentation also begins

to take place at these ages. Home economists can a positive impact on youngsters lives, by giving them the tools to make informed decisions for the important issues they face.

Summary

The middle school is an innovative concept for providing variations in instructional patterns aimed at dealing with the preadolescent's-adolescent's needs. It allows for the students' intellectual and social development. The middle school is considered to be a more complete program than the junior high, in that it focuses on the needs and interests of the early adolescent.

In planning curriculum several specific characteristics of middle school curriculum are noted. Middle schools include exploratory classes and allow for individual differences. Middle school programs also include a variety of activities to allow for the energy level of the students.

Research findings indicate that home economics programs can focus on all the developmental tasks of early adolescents. Therefore, beginning home economics courses at the middle school level can help adolescents in transition.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the concerns and interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students. The study also served as a means to make recommendations for future home economics curriculum. To meet the objectives of this research it was necessary to identify students who could represent the interest of the population group. It was also necessary to develop an instrument to be used in obtaining and analyzing data. The purpose of this chapter is to describe ways in which these procedures were accomplished.

Research Design

Descriptive research was identified as the best design for this study. The survey research method was used to collect the data analyzed in this study. Hall (1967) stated that the principal contribution of surveys is in ". . . describing current practices or beliefs with the intent of justifying existing practices or making intelligent plans

for improving educational conditions or processes in a local situation" (p. 61). Best and Kahn (1989) state the purpose of the school survey as, ". . . to gather detailed information to be used as a basis for judging the effectiveness of the instructional facilities, curriculum, teaching and supervisory personnel, and financial resources in terms of best practices and standards in education" (p. 84).

Population and Sample

The population for this study was defined as eighth grade students in Oklahoma enrolled in a required eighth grade science course during the 1989-1990 school year at schools approved for vocational eighth grade home economics in 1988. The sample was selected by simple random sampling, from an accessible population of 71 Oklahoma junior high or middle schools.

Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) method for determining sample size from a given population was used. A sample size of 384 was chosen from Oklahoma's population of 95,700 students ages 13 and 14. One class of eighth grade science students was randomly selected from each school. Science classes were chosen since it is a required eighth grade subject. Schools were randomly selected until the desired sample size of 385 students was met. A telephone call was made to the principal of each school requesting their participation in the study. There was a 100% response from the schools.

Research Instrument

Data were collected by a survey mailed to each randomly selected school that agreed to participate. The instrument consisted of an introductory paragraph explaining the purpose of the survey and the directions for completing it (Appendix B). The researcher developed the survey following the format of the instrument designed by Crawford (1985). The objectives for the current Oklahoma eighth grade home economics curriculum were used in developing the survey. The instrument included 31 topic statements related to the five major subject areas. These subject areas were: personal management, resource management, parenting education, clothing management, and food and nutrition. Student concerns were categorized by subject area because teaching curriculum is organized in this manner. The participating students responded to whether each statement listed was concern to them.

Students responded to questions 32 through 36 by interest in future study of a subject area. Each of the 31 concern statements were categorized by placing them into one of the five subject areas for comparison of students' concerns and interest in future study. Student responses to the 31 statements were used to measure student concerns, and student responses to the five subject areas were used to measure student interests in future study of home economics. Therefore, for the purpose of this study, concerns refers to

31 statements, and interests refers to five home economics subject areas.

The students were asked to supply demographic information about their age, sex, and race. Information concerning involvement in home economics was also requested of the students. A Likert three point Scale was used from which the students chose which statements were a concern to them: "yes", "unsure ", and "no".

Validity and Reliability

The survey was checked for validity by pretesting it with 30 eighth grade students in a local school. The original survey was three pages in length and contained 46 topic statements and six demographic questions. A five point Likert Scale was used as follows: a) Definitely yes! This is a BIG concern for me! b) Yes. This is a concern for me. c) Undecided. I'm not sure if this is a concern for me. d) No. I'm not very concerned about this. e) Definitely no! This is not a concern of mine!

The average length of time for completion was ten minutes. The survey was checked for clarity and understanding of directions, and suitability of length and time involved to complete the instrument. The survey was also examined for appropriateness of subject content to eighth grade level. Several changes were made in the original instrument. A three point Likert Scale was determined to be more appropriate and

less confusing for eighth graders. Several questions were combined and some eliminated bringing the total topic questions to 31 and demographic questions to four. Survey length was reduced from three to two pages. Survey format was changed to make it look less like a test.

Data Collection

Upon receiving names of principals who agreed to participate, a packet was mailed to each school. The packet included copies of the survey for each student, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study, and instructions for administering the survey, and a self-addressed postage paid return envelope.

Analysis of the Data

Upon return of all surveys, responses were hand tabulated and coded onto computer paper. Data was entered on computer using P C File computer program. Percentages and frequencies were used to determine the "yes", "unsure", or "no" concern to each statement. Tables were developed to present the comparison of percentage responses between males and females. Responses were ranked by order of importance for students. Responses were considered the majority if the percentages were 51% or above.

The analysis of variance test was used to compare students' concerns and interests in subject areas to the following variables: age, race, comparison of schools, district location, and school size. The t-test was used to compare interest subject areas by sex and enrollment in home economics. The chi square statistical test was used to determine student's interest in subject areas by sex, race, district location, school size.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to determine the concerns and interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students. The study also served as a means to make recommendations for future home economics curriculum.

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were formulated:

1. to identify the concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size,
2. to identify the interests in future study of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size,
3. to determine the relationship between student concerns and student interests in future study of home economics, and

4. to make recommendations for home economics curriculum at the eighth grade level.

The findings in this study are presented in three main sections. The first section deals with the concerns of students revealed by analysis of survey statements. Stated concerns were computed as frequencies, percentages, and means, and were ranked according to percentages. Results were analyzed using one-way chi-squares. Significance was identified as $<.05$.

The second section presents the interests of students in future study of home economics subject areas as related to the following variables: age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state and school district size. The stated interests of future study were also computed using frequencies, percentages, means, analysis of variance, t-test, and one-way chi square at the $<.05$ level of significance.

The third section deals with the relationship between student concerns and student interests. Frequencies, percentages, means, and one-way chi-squares at the 0.05 level of significance were calculated for these data as well. The figures resulting from all calculations were rounded to the nearest hundredth. Therefore, when totals were computed a slight variances from 100% occurred in some cases due to rounding error.

A description of the subjects who responded precedes the three sections mentioned above. Information includes

supervisory districts, school district enrollment size, and age and race of students.

Description of Sample

The study involved a sample of 385 students in 22 school districts from four Oklahoma State Department of Vocational Technical Education supervisory districts throughout Oklahoma. The distribution of supervisory districts by schools and students are reported in Table 1.

TABLE 1

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF PARTICIPATING SCHOOLS BY DISTRICT

Districts	Schools n	Students n	Students Percent
North District	5	97	25.2
Northeast District	4	80	20.8
Southeast District	6	89	23.1
Southwest District	7	119	30.9
Total	22	385	100.0

The number and size of school districts are reported in Table 2. There were 20 small school districts and two large

TABLE 2

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF SCHOOL SIZE BY DISTRICT

Size of Schools	Schools n	Percent
Large		
1,501 - 3,000	2	9.00
Small		
501 - 1,500	4	18.00
401 - 500	7	32.00
301 - 400	2	9.00
201 - 300	3	14.00
100 - 200	4	18.00
Total	22	100.00

school districts represented in this study. Large school districts were defined as those with 1,500 total students. Small school districts were defined as any school district with less than 1,500 students. The school district size ranged from less than than 150 to not more than 3,000 students enrolled. The two largest school districts in Oklahoma, Tulsa and Oklahoma City, were not represented in this study because not all of those schools have home economics programs receiving vocational funding. The central district was eliminated from the study because only one school in that district was vocationally certified for an eighth grade program.

At the conclusion of data gathering period, 100% schools responded. The distribution of males and females who

responded by age, are presented in Table 3. There were 196 males and 187 females. Two students did not report their sex. The majority of respondents, 58 percent, were 13 years old. According to M. Banister, Deputy Superintendent of Stillwater Public Schools, (personal communication, January 12, 1990), 13 is the average age of eighth graders in Oklahoma and throughout the United States.

TABLE 3

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF SUBJECTS BY AGE AND GENDER

Ages of Students	Males	Percent	Females	Percent
12 years old	1	.26	10	2.63
13 years old	106	27.68	117	30.55
14 years old	68	17.75	53	13.84
15 years old or older	21	5.48	7	1.83
Total	196	51.17	187	48.85

Note. Two students did not report their age.

The distribution of males and females by race are presented in Table 4. There were 251 Caucasian students (65 percent), 90 American Indians (23 percent), 26 Blacks (7 percent), 8 Hispanics (2 percent), and 8 "Others" (2 percent). There were no Asian students. Two students did not report their race. Compared to the 1980 Oklahoma Census

TABLE 4

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF RACE
OF SUBJECTS BY GENDER

Race of Students	Males	Percent	Females	Percent
Hispanic	3	.78	5	1.31
Black	13	3.39	13	3.39
Caucasian	129	33.68	122	31.85
American Indian	46	12.01	44	11.49
Other	5	1.31	3	.78
Total	196[a]	51.17	187[a]	48.83

Note. Other indicates race or mixture of two or more races not listed on survey.
[a]Two students did not report their race.

data, the sample population has 18 percent less Caucasian white, 15 percent more American Indian, two percent less Black and one percent less Hispanic students.

The percentage of race by district is presented in Table 5. The race of respondents in the north district is 74

TABLE 5

DISTRIBUTION BY RACE OF SUBJECTS

District	Caucasian Percent	American Indian Percent	Black Percent	Other Percent
North	74	18	4	0
Northeast[a]	40	25	11	3
Southeast[a]	61	21	5	1
Southwest[a]	74	27	7	3

[a]One student did not respond

percent Caucasian, 18 percent American Indian, 4 percent Black and 1 percent Hispanic. The northeast district has a 40 percent Caucasian, 25 percent American Indian, 11 percent Black, and 3 percent "Other". The southeast district is 61 percent Caucasian, 21 percent American Indian, 5 percent Black and 1 percent "Other". The race of respondents in the southwest district is 74 percent Caucasian, 27 percent American Indian, 7 percent Black, 7 percent Hispanic, and 3 percent "Other". One student from northeast, southeast, and southwest districts did not respond to question on race.

The district having the largest percentage of minority students was the northeast district with 25 percent American Indian, 11 percent Black, and 3 percent Other. Both north and southwest districts had the least minority students with responding students being 75 percent Caucasian. However, 27 percent of students in the southwest district were American Indian, which was the highest percentage of American Indians responding within a district.

Student Concerns

Table 6 identifies the total student concerns in descending rank order. Twenty-three concern statements received a 'yes' response of more than 50 percent of students. Students were most concerned with doing well in school (80.52 percent). Students were also concerned about making

TABLE 6

RANK ORDER 'YES' RESPONSES TO STUDENT CONCERNS

Student Concerns	Students N[a]	Percent	Rank
Do well in school	307	30.52	1
Make decisions	267	69.89	2
Look my best	265	69.19	3
Understand self	255	67.10	4
Understand friends	243	64.29	5
Have own room	245	64.14	6
Get a job	243	63.95	7
Proper way to talk	244	63.71	8
Do things for myself	240	63.00	9
Learn to say "no"	235	62.01	10
Exercise/eat healthy	235	61.36	11
Family Problems	229	60.26	12
Improve personality	225	59.21	13
Learn about drugs	215	59.01	14
Find help for self	225	58.75	15
Develop spending plan	220	57.44	16
Understand family	221	57.70	17.5
Make friends	211	57.70	17.5
Use time wisely	205	53.95	19
Develop hobbies	200	53.19	20
Lose/gain weight	199	52.37	21
Understand elderly	200	52.36	22
Find bargains	196	51.58	23
Get others to listen	189	49.35	24
Learn about dating	188	49.08	25
Care for clothes	186	48.56	26
Know body changes	184	48.16	27
Understand children	184	48.04	28
Understand pregnancy	177	46.46	29
Care of children	174	45.55	30
Make own clothes	92	24.21	31

Note. See survey entitled "What Are My Concerns?" in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

decisions, looking my best and understanding self. Students were least concerned (24.21 percent) with making own clothes. Students also showed little concern with care of children, understanding pregnancy and understanding children.

Results of student concerns are presented in Tables 7 and 8 in descending rank order for males and females. Bot males and females were most concerned about topic statement doing well in school, and were least concerned with learning how to make my own clothes. Females were more likely than males to say "yes" on all statements except the following: get a job, develop hobbies, do things for myself, use time wisely, learn about dating, improve personality, develop spending plan and understand elderly. Responses of males and females ranked the same on the topic statement doing well in school.

Males and females differed most on topic statement learning how to care for children, with females more likely to say "yes" by 12.05 per cent. Over 51 percent of females (58.82 percent) responded positively to this statement, whereas considerably less than 51 percent of males (32.82 percent) were concerned about how to care for children. "Undecided" responses of the students are recorded in Table 9 (See Appendix B).

TABLE 7

RANK ORDER OF 'YES' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY MALES

Student Concerns	N[a]	Percent	Rank
Do well in school	153	78.87	1
Look my best	128	65.31	2
Get a job	126	64.95	3
Understand self	125	64.43	4
Make decisions	125	64.10	5
Do things for myself	124	63.27	6
Have my own room	123	63.08	7
Develop spending plan	121	61.73	8
Improve personality	117	60.00	9
Proper way to talk	116	59.18	10
Learn to say "no"	111	57.51	11
Develop hobbies	108	56.25	12
Exercise/eat healthy	110	56.12	13
Use time wisely	108	55.38	14
Understand elderly	106	54.36	15
Find help for self	106	54.08	16
Understand friends	103	53.37	17
Family problems	102	52.85	18
Understand family	101	51.53	19
Make friends	99	50.51	20
Learn about drugs	98	50.00	21
Learn about dating	95	48.47	22
Get others to listen	89	45.41	23
Know body changes	86	43.88	24
Understand children	85	43.37	25
Care for clothes	83	42.35	26
Find bargains	79	40.93	27
Lose/gain weight	77	39.69	28
Understand pregnancy	68	35.05	29
Care of children	64	32.82	30
Make own clothes	34	17.53	31

Note. See survey entitled "What Are My Concerns?" in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

TABLE 8

RANK ORDER OF 'YES' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY FEMALES

Student Concerns	N[a]	Percent	Rank
Do well in school	153	82.26	1
Make decisions	142	75.94	2
Understand friends	140	75.68	3
Look my best	137	73.26	4
Understand self	130	69.89	5
Proper way to talk	128	68.45	6
Family problems	127	67.91	7
Exercise/eat healthy	125	66.84	8
Learn to say "no"	124	66.67	9
Lose/gain weight	122	65.59	10
Have own room	122	65.24	11
Understand family	120	64.17	12
Find help for self	119	63.64	13
Get a job	117	62.90	14
Do things for myself	116	62.70	15
Learn about drugs	117	62.57	16.5
Find bargains	117	62.57	16.5
Make friends	112	61.54	18
Care of children	110	58.82	19
Improve personality	108	58.38	20
Understand pregnancy	109	58.29	21
Care for clothes	103	55.08	22
Get others to listen	100	53.48	23
Develop spending plan	99	52.94	24.5
Understand children	99	52.94	24.5
Know body changes	98	52.69	26
Use time wisely	97	52.43	27
Understand elderly	94	50.27	28
Develop hobbies	92	50.00	29
Learn about dating	93	49.73	30
Make own clothes	58	31.18	31

Note. See survey entitled "What Are My Concerns?" in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

Table 10 presents the "no" responses on student concerns of males and females. The topic statement make my own clothes received a 63.40% "no" response from males, and a 46.77% from females. All other topic statements received a "no" response of less than 50% of students. On the average, males showed less concern than females on all but five questions. Responses of males and females differed (18.76%) the most on losing or gaining weight, with males (39.69%) showing considerably less concern than females (69.59%). Additional information on the comparison of "yes", "undecided" and "no" responses are recorded in Tables 11 and 12 in Appendix B.

Categories of Student Concerns

For the purpose of this study, concern is defined as a blending of apprehension and interest about a particular area (Woolf, 1976). Interest is defined as a feeling of excitement about studying a particular subject area (Woolf, 1976). Students' responses to the 31 statements on the survey instrument served as a measurement of students' concerns. Students' responses to the five subject areas served as a measurement of students' interest in future study of these subject areas. For clarification on the uses of 'concern' and 'interest' in this study, the researcher wishes to reiterate the following definitions:

TABLE 10

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF 'NO' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY SEX

Student Concerns	Males		Females	
	N	Percent	N	Percent
Have my own room	57	29.23	55	29.41
Make decisions	38	19.49	25	13.37
Get a job	28	14.43	37	19.89
Do well in school	24	12.37	19	10.22
Find bargains	58	30.05	36	19.25
Care of children	77	39.49	45	24.06
Develop hobbies	51	26.56	59	32.07
Lose/gain weight	80	41.24	42	22.58
Do things for myself	44	22.45	47	25.41
Use time wisely	42	21.54	47	25.41
Exercise/eat healthy	51	26.02	29	15.51
Look my best	29	19.90	16	18.18
Understand self	38	19.59	27	14.52
Learn about dating	50	25.51	47	25.13
Understand friends	50	25.91	27	14.59
Get others to listen	64	32.65	43	22.99
Improve personality	49	25.13	39	21.08
Make own clothes	123	63.40	87	46.77
Make friends	63	32.14	53	29.12
Learn to say "no"	63	32.64	52	27.96
Know body changes	75	38.27	55	29.57
Understand pregnancy	78	40.21	53	28.34
Develop spending plan	47	23.98	56	29.95
Understand family	51	26.02	39	20.86
Care for clothes	77	39.29	66	35.29
Understand children	70	35.71	57	30.48
Understand elderly	51	26.15	50	26.74
Family problems	54	27.98	39	20.86
Finding help for self	52	26.53	36	19.25
Proper way to talk	55	28.06	34	18.18
Learn about drugs	70	35.71	49	26.20

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

concern - refers to student response to 31 statements from survey; interest - refers to student response to future study of five subject areas.

Chi Square was used to analyze student concerns as categorized by subject areas of interest. The comparison of males and females "yes" response to concerns by subject area is presented in Table 13. The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with sex of student was not accepted. The Chi Square probability of students' "yes" response to concerns is demonstrated in Table 14. The following five sections by subject area is data presented in Tables 13 and 14.

Food Preparation and Physical Fitness for Better Health - Students were significantly more concerned than could be expected with statements, lose/gain weight, and exercise/eat healthy. Females were more likely than males to say yes to both questions in this subject area. Students were more concerned with exercising and eating healthy, than with losing and gaining weight.

Communicating With Family and Friends - Students were significantly more concerned than could be expected with the topic statements make decisions and understand friends. Students were also significantly concerned with family problems, understand family, and make friends. Over half the females were more likely to say "yes" than males on all statements except, learning more about dating.

TABLE 13

PERCENT OF CONCERNS OF SUBJECTS
ACCORDING TO SUBJECT AREAS

Subject Areas	Student Concerns	Males Yes Percent	Females Yes Percent
Food Preparation	Exercise/eat healthy	56.12	66.84
	Lose/gain weight	39.69	65.59
Communications	Make decisions	64.10	75.94
	Understand friends	53.37	75.68
	Learn to say "no"	57.51	66.67
	Family problems	52.85	67.91
	Understand family	51.53	64.17
	Make friends	50.51	61.54
	Get others to listen	45.41	53.48
	Learn about dating	48.47	49.73
Understand self	Understand self	64.43	69.89
	Proper way to talk	59.18	68.45
	Improve personality	60.00	58.38
	Learn about drugs	50.00	62.57
	Find help for self	54.08	63.64
	Understand elderly	54.36	50.27
	Know body changes	43.88	52.69
	Understand children	43.37	52.94
	Understand pregnancy	35.05	58.29
	Care of children	32.82	58.82
Making clothes	Look my best	65.31	73.26
	Have own room	63.08	65.24
	Find bargains	40.93	62.57
	Care for clothes	42.35	55.08
	Make own clothes	17.53	31.18
Career	Do well in school	78.87	82.26
	Get a job	64.95	62.90
	Do things for myself	63.27	62.70
	Develop spending plan	61.73	52.94
	Use time wisely	55.38	52.43
	Develop hobbies	56.25	50.00

Note. See "What Are My Concern?" survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

TABLE 14

CHI SQUARE PROBABILITY OF STUDENT CONCERNS

Student Concerns	Chi Square Probability Yes
Exercise/eat healthy	0.032[a]
Lose/gain weight	0.000[a]
Make decisions	0.041[a]
Understand friends	0.000[a]
Learn to say "no"	0.109
Family problems	0.009[a]
Understand family	0.037[a]
Make friends	0.033[a]
Get others to listen	0.102
Learn about dating	0.968
Understand self	0.395
Proper way to talk	0.069
Improve personality	0.295
Learn about drugs	0.046[a]
Find help for self	0.138
Understand elderly	0.647
Know body changes	0.160
Understand children	0.167
Understand pregnancy	0.000[a]
Care of children	0.000[a]
Look my best	0.123
Have own room	0.646
Find bargains	0.000[a]
Care for clothes	0.012[a]
Make own clothes	0.002[a]
Do well in school	0.703
Get a job	0.316
Do things for myself	0.681
Develop spending plan	0.218
Use time wisely	0.672
Develop hobbies	0.429

Note. See "What Are My Concern?" survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a]$p =< .05$.

Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop - Students were significantly more concerned than could be expected about the topic statement learn about drugs. Students were significantly unconcerned about the topics understand pregnancy and care of children.

Students were most concerned (64.43 percent-males; 69.89 percent- females) about understanding themselves. Males were least concerned (32.82 percent) with caring for children, whereas females were least concerned (50.27) about understanding the elderly. Females were more concerned than males on topics in this subject area of Understanding Self and Others. See Table 14.

Making my Own Clothes, Crafts, and Items for my Room - Students were most concerned (65.31 percent-males; 73.26 percent-females) about knowing how to look their best. Students were least concerned (17.55 percent-males; 31.18 percent) about learning to make own clothes. Less than half of males were concerned about caring for their clothes and making their own clothes, whereas more than half of females were concerned about all statements except making their own clothes. Females were more concerned than males on topics in this subject area. (See Tab;e 13.

Career Exploration - Doing well in school, was of most concern to both males and females (80.52 percent). The least concern (56.25 percent-males; 50.00 percent-females) for the students was developing hobbies or interests. Males were more concerned than females in this subject matter area with one

exception. Females (82.26 percent) were more concerned with doing well in school.

Student Interest

Age

Analysis of variance was used to determine the difference between interest in subject areas and age. Age was not significant for any subject area, as demonstrated in Table 15. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between subject matter

TABLE 15

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS ACCORDING TO AGE

Subject Areas	df	MS	MSE	F value	Prob.> F
Food Prep	3, 376	1.22	1.81	0.07	0.57
Communications	3, 361	2.15	17.84	0.12	0.95
Understanding Self	3, 366	17.27	30.18	0.47	0.70
Making own Clothes	3, 373	5.76	6.02	0.96	0.41
Career	3, 363	11.96	9.98	1.20	0.31

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated by age was accepted.

Sex

Male and female responses to interest in subject area is presented in Table 16. Males were most interested in subject area career exploration, whereas females were most interested in communicating with family and friends. Males and females were least interested in making clothes, crafts, and items for room, and understanding self.

TABLE 16

INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS ACCORDING TO SEX

Subject Areas	Interests			
	Males		Females	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Food Preparation	108	55.10	107	57.22
Communications	106	54.64	127	67.91
Understand self	69	35.57	83	44.62
Make clothes, etc.	54	27.98	83	44.39
Career exploration	127	65.13	119	63.64

Note. *See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

Data in Table 17 identifies the differences in the t-distribution of males and females for each subject area.

These data indicate that sex of students significantly affects student interest in the following subject areas: Food Preparation and Physical Fitness for Better Health, Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How

TABLE 17

T TESTS FOR DIFFERENCES IN SUBJECT AREA FACTOR MEANS BETWEEN MALES AND FEMALES

Subject Areas	Means Yes Response		df	t value	Prob.> F
	Males	Females			
Food Prep	3.71	3.05	193, 185	.0001*	.0073
Communications	13.97	12.57	185, 178	.0013*	.2236
Understanding self, others	16.24	14.86	186, 182	.0154*	.6391
Making clothes, crafts, items	9.52	8.61	185, 190	.0003*	.6728
Careers	9.37	9.80	186, 179	.1976	.8389

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
*p.< .05.

Self and Others Grow and Develop, Making Clothes, Crafts and Items for Room.

Data indicates that that females were more likely than males to show interest in all subject areas, except Career Exploration. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is

no significant difference between concerns and interests of Oklahoma eighth graders as associated with sex was rejected.

Race

Analysis of variance statistical test was used to test the significance of the races of students. The Post Hoc T-Test or Duncan's Multiple Range Test was used to determine the significant differences between subject area mean scores according to race. The subject area mean scores according to race is presented in Table 18. Results showed a significant

TABLE 18

MEAN SCORES IN THE SUBJECT AREAS BY RACE

Subject Area	Race				
	Hisp.[a] Mean score	Black[a] Mean score	Cauc.[a] Mean score	Am. In.[a] Mean score	Other[a] Mean score
Food prep.	3.13 A[b]	3.27 A[b]	3.42 A[b]	3.33 A[b]	4.00 A[b]
Communic.	16.13 A	12.48 B	13.10 A,B	13.60 A	15.25 A,B
Und. self.	22.00 A	16.76 B	19.02 A,B	18.99 A,B	23.00 A
Clothing	6.75 B	6.23 B	7.46 A,B	7.28 B	8.86 A
Career	10.00 A	9.08 A	9.64 A	9.45 A	10.63 A

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a]Unabbreviated names of races are as follows: Hispanic, Black, Caucasian, American Indian, and Other.
[b]Means with different letters are significantly different.

between Blacks and Hispanics in subject area Communicating with Family and Friends. Blacks had significantly more interest in learning more about Communicating with Family and Friends, whereas, Hispanics had significantly less interest in future study of this area. Caucasians and American Indians were the next most likely groups to show an interest in future study of Communicating with Family and Friends.

There was a significant difference in mean scores between Hispanics, Blacks and the "other" group in the subject area: Understanding Self and Others. Blacks were significantly more interested in future study of this subject area than any other group, whereas the "other" group and the Hispanics were the least interested in future study in this area.

A significant difference in mean scores was shown between Blacks and the "other" group in subject area, Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room. Blacks were significantly more interested in future study of this subject area than any other group. The "other" group was significantly less interested in future study of this subject area.

Black students were more likely than any other race to say "yes" to future study in all five subject areas. The "other" group was less likely than any other race to show interest in future study of all five subject areas, except for Hispanics who showed the least interest in communicating with family and friends. Caucasian students showed the most interest in future study of Communicating with Family and Friends. They were undecided on future study of Exploring

Careers, and Understanding Self. The least amount of interest for Caucasians was shown in Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, and they were twice as likely than any other race to answer "no" to Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room.

The null hypothesis stating that there is no significant difference between interest in subject matter according to race of the student was rejected. Data in Table 19 demonstrates that race was significantly related to

TABLE 19

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUBJECT AREAS BY RACE

Subject Areas	df	MS	MSE	F value	Prob.> F
Food Prep	4, 375	1.118	1.808	0.62	0.6496
Communicating	4, 360	31.849	17.549	1.81	0.1253
Understanding self	4, 365	99.377	29.286	3.39	0.0531[a]
Making clothes crafts, items	4, 372	13.356	5.939	2.25	0.0119[a]
Careers	4, 362	4.622	10.057	0.46	0.7654

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a] $p =< .05$.

students' interest in the subject areas, Understanding How Myself and Others Grow and Develop, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room.

Enrollment in Home Economics

Results of t-test for differences in enrollment in home economics as related to students' interest in future study of subject areas is presented in Table 20. These data indicate that enrollment in home economics significantly affects students' interest in future study in two of the

TABLE 20

RESULTS OF ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR SUBJECT AREAS BY ENROLLMENT IN HOME ECONOMICS

Subject Areas	Enrolled in HE Mean scores Yes	No	df	t value	Prob.> F
Food Prep	3.28	3.59	133, 242	.0357[a]	.1756
Communicating	12.98	13.76	230, 130	.0872	.7184
Understanding Self	15.43	15.71	238, 127	.6422	.9204
Make clothes, crafts, items	8.77	9.60	239, 133	.0016[a]	.6644
Career	9.51	9.65	128, 234	.6949	.7668

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a] $p. =< .05$.

five subject areas, Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room. All students reporting previous or current enrollment in home economics were more likely to say "yes" to interest in all five subject areas. Therefore, the null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference between concern and interests of Oklahoma eighth graders as associated with enrollment in home economics was rejected.

District Location in State

The null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference between subject matter interest of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with district location in the state was rejected. The results of analysis of variance of students' interest in the five subject areas according to district is presented in Table 21. The district in which students taking the survey lived was significantly related to interest in the following subject areas: Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Myself and Others Grow and Develop, Making My Own Clothes, Crafts, and Items for my Room, and Career Exploration.

TABLE 21

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS BY DISTRICT LOCATION

Subject Areas*	df	MS	MSE	F value	Prob.> F
1. Food Prep	3, 378	2.87	1.793	1.60	.1883
2. Communicating	3, 363	129.09	16.723	7.72	.0001[a]
3. Understanding Self	3, 366	145.70	29.093	5.01	.0021[a]
4. Making own Clothes	3, 375	53.52	5.605	9.55	.0001[a]
5. Careers	3, 365	80.36	9.451	8.50	.0001[a]

Note. *See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a]p. <.05.

The significant differences between districts is presented in Table 22. Students in the north district were more likely than those in any other district to answer "yes" to future study in all five subject areas. Responses were significantly different between the north and southwest districts, in that students of the north district were more likely than those in any other district to be interested in future study of subject area Communicating with Family and Friends. Students in the north district were significantly more interested than those in the southeast district, in

TABLE 22

DUNCAN GROUPING OF MEAN SCORES FOR DIFFERENCES BETWEEN DISTRICTS BY INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS

Subject Areas	District			
	North Mean Score	Northeast Mean Score	Southeast Mean Score	Southwest Mean Score
Food prep.	3.16 A[a]	3.50 A[a]	3.56 A[a]	3.36 A[a]
Communic.	11.86 C	12.72 B,C	13.88 A,B	14.40 A
Und. self.	13.77 B	15.73 A	16.61 A	16.14 A
Clothing	8.21 B	8.66 B	9.90 A	9.44 A
Career	8.31 C	9.43 B	10.42 A	10.10 A,B

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a]Means with different letters are significantly different.

subject areas Understanding Self and Others and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room. There was a significant difference in responses between the north, northeast and southeast districts in relation to the subject area Career Exploration. Students in the north district were more likely to answer "yes" to future study of this subject area.

School District Size

The significant differences between large and small school is presented in Table 23. Data indicates that students

TABLE 23

MEAN SCORES OF INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS ACCORDING TO SIZE OF SCHOOL

Student Interests Subject Areas	School Size Mean Scores Large Mean[a]	Small Mean[b]
Food prep.	3.36	3.39
Communic.	13.26	13.29
Und. self.	19.13	18.99
Clothing	7.25	7.35
Career	9.80	9.57

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a]Mean scores are the average of all large schools.
[b]Mean scores are the averages of all small schools.

in both large and small schools showed an interest in future study of all five subject areas. However, students in small schools were more likely than those in large schools to say "yes" to interest in the following subject areas: Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, Communicating with Family and Friends, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room.

The null hypothesis stating there is no significant difference between interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students

as associated with school size was rejected. Results of analysis of variance by school size as related to subject areas are presented in Table 24. Data indicates that school size significantly affects the following four subject areas: Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop, and Career Exploration.

TABLE 24

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS BY SCHOOL SIZE

Subject Areas	df	MS	MSE	F value	Prob.> F
Food Prep.	21, 360	2.623	1.753	1.50	0.0752
Communicating	21, 345	49.525	15.703	3.15	0.0001[a]
Understand self, others	21, 348	91.460	31.189	2.94	0.0001[a]
Make clothes, crafts, items	21, 359	10.679	3.875	2.76	0.0001[a]
Careers	21, 347	29.264	8.865	3.30	0.0001a

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.
[a] p.=< .05.

Comparison of Student Concerns with Student Interests

Data in Table 25 compares student concerns with student interest in the five subject areas. Students who indicated a concern about a statement on the survey, also showed an

interest in future learning about that subject area. Students showed concern for Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, with slightly less interest in future study. Concern was shown for statements in the following subject areas: Communicating with Family and Friends and Career Exploration, with students showing slightly more interest than concern.

TABLE 25

COMPARISON OF STUDENT INTERESTS AND STUDENT CONCERNS BY SUBJECT AREA

Subject Area	Concerns Yes %	Interests Yes %
Food Preparation	57.07	56.14
Communications	58.68	61.15
Understand self	54.66	40.00
Make clothes, etc.	51.66	36.05
Career exploration	61.98	64.40

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

Understanding Self, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Rooms, were two subject areas in which concern was shown but little interest in future study of subject area was reported. There was a 15 percent difference between students' concerns and interests on subject areas, Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room.

A comparison of the concerns and interests between males and females is reported in Table 26. Males showed more interest than concern in future study of Food Preparation, whereas females showed less interest than concern in this subject area. Males and females showed nearly equal interest with concern in subject areas, Communications, and Career Exploration. Males and females were less interested than concerned with future study of subject areas, Understand Self and Make Clothes, etc.

TABLE 26

COMPARISON OF MALES AND FEMALES CONCERNS WITH INTEREST IN SUBJECT AREAS

Subject Area	Concerns		Interests	
	Males	Females	Males	Females
	Yes %	Yes %	Yes %	Yes %
Food Preparation	47.91	66.22	55.10	57.22
Communications	52.97	64.39	54.64	67.91
Understand self	49.72	59.59	35.57	44.62
Make clothes, etc.	45.84	57.47	27.98	44.39
Career exploration	63.41	60.54	65.13	63.64

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

When comparing student concerns to subject areas, males were more concerned with Career Exploration. In agreement with their concerns, males were also more interested in future study of Career Exploration than any other subject area. Although males were secondly most concerned with Communicating

with Family and Friends, they were secondly most interested in Food Preparation and Physical Fitness.

Females were most concerned about the statements under subject area Food Preparation and Physical Fitness. They were secondly most concerned about Communicating with Family and Friends. When comparing concerns to interests, females were most interested in future study of Communicating with Family and Friends, and secondly Career Exploration.

Summary

The data provide a survey of eighth grade students' concerns and interests regarding home economics subject matter. Data indicate that Oklahoma eighth graders are concerned with the majority of the statements as presented in the survey.

Students were most concerned with subject areas, Career Exploration, and Communicating with Family and Friends. Males were most concerned about Career Exploration and were also most interested in future study of Career Exploration. Females were most concerned with Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, but were most interested in future study of Communicating with Family and Friends. In general, students that showed concern about a statement tended to show interest in future study of that subject area.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of this study was to determine the concerns and interests of Oklahoma eighth grade students. The study also served as a means to make recommendations for future home economics curriculum.

To accomplish this purpose, the following objectives were formulated:

1. to identify the concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size,
2. to identify the interests in future study of Oklahoma eighth grade students as associated with age, sex, race, enrollment in home economics, district location in the state, and school district size,
3. to determine the relationship between student concerns and student interests in future study of home economics, and
4. to make recommendations for home economics curriculum at the eighth grade level.

The study involved a survey instrument distributed to 22 school districts from four Oklahoma State Department of Vocational Technical Education supervisory districts throughout Oklahoma. There was 100% response from the schools, with 385 students participating.

The instrument used was constructed in two parts. The first part of the survey consisted of 31 statements pertaining to the subject areas, Food Preparation and Physical Fitness for Better Health, Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop, Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room, and Career Exploration. In the second part of the survey, students indicated by interest in home economics subject area.

Upon return of the interest surveys, responses were hand tabulated and then entered into computer using the computer P C File program. Frequencies and percentages were used in determining the concerns and interests for each statement.

The analysis of variance test was used to compare subject areas to the following variables: age, race, district location, and school size. The t-test was used to compare subject areas by sex and enrollment in home economics. The chi square statistical test was used to determine student's interest in subject areas by sex, race, district location and school size.

Findings and Conclusions

Based on the data gathered in this study, it was determined that students are concerned about topics related to home economics, and are interested in further study. For clarification on the uses of 'concern' and 'interest' in this study, the researcher wishes to reiterate the following definitions: concern - refers to student response to 31 statements from survey; interest - refers to student response to future study of five subject areas.

Student Concerns and Interests

Students were most concerned with "doing well in school", at 80.52%. The second highest concern for females was "making decisions about what is right and wrong", whereas males were more concerned with "looking my best". Students were least concerned with "learning to make my own clothes". Females were more likely than males to say "yes" on all statements except "get a job", "develop hobbies", "do things for myself, " use time wisely", "learn about dating", "improve personality", "develop spending plan", and "understand elderly".

Data indicate there was a relationship between sex of students and interest in the following subject areas: Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Self and Others Develop, and

Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room. Males were most interested in subject area Career Exploration, whereas females were most interested in Communicating with Family and Friends. Males and females were least interested in Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room, and Understanding Self and Others. Females were more likely than males to show an interest in four of the five subject areas. Males showed more interest in Carer Exploration.

Race was significantly related to students' interest in subject area, Understanding Self and Others and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items. Black students were more interested than any other race in future study of all five subject areas. The "other" group was the least likely to show interest in all subject areas except Communicating with Family and Friends, in which Hispanics showed the least interest. Caucasian students showed the most interest in future study of Communicating with Family and Friends. They were undecided on future study of Career Exploartion and Understanding Self. The least amount of interest for whites was shown in Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, and Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room.

Student enrollment in home economics significantly affected students' interest in future study in the following subject areas: food preparation and physical fitness, and making clothes, crafts, and items for room. All students reporting previous or current enrollment in home economics were interested in all five subject areas.

There was a significant relationship between the district in which students lived and students' interest in the following subject areas: Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop, Making Own Clothes, Crafts, Items for Room, and Career Exploration. Students in the north district were more interested in all subject areas than students in any other district.

School size was significantly related to interest of students in the following subject areas: Communicating with Family and Friends, Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop, Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room, and Career Exploration. Data indicated that students in both large and small schools showed an interest in future study of all five subject areas. However, students in small schools were more interested than students in large schools in learning more about the following subject areas: Food Preparation and Physical Fitness, Communicating with Family and Friends, and Making Clothes, Crafts and Items for Room. Students in large schools were more likely than students in small schools to be interested in future study of the subject areas, Understanding Self and Others, and Exploring Careers.

Conclusions

Based on the data gathered in this study, the following conclusions were determined:

1. Females were more concerned than males about 29 out of 31 topic statements.
2. Females were more interested than males in future study of four out of five subject areas.
3. Students previously enrolled in home economics were more likely to show interest in future study of all five subject areas, especially Food Preparation and Making Clothes, Crafts and Items for Room.
4. The district location, race of students, and school district size were significantly related to students' concerns and interests.

Implications and Discussion

Results from this study have implications for future home economics curriculum development. Based on the data from this study, implications have been made regarding the impact of the results on curriculum. Discussion of these implications will be also be presented in this section.

Implications on Curriculum

Student concerns were analyzed and compared with stu-dent interests in subject areas to determine future curri-culum development. Emphasis could be placed on the following subject areas which had 70 percent and above student response: Communicating with Family and Friends, Looking My Best, and Career Exploration. Using a majority "yes" response of 51

percent and above of students, data results indicate that home economics curriculum could include the following.

Food Preparation and Physical Fitness For Better Health

1. Exercising and eating healthy.
2. Losing or gaining weight.****

Communicating With Family and Friends

1. Making decisions about what is right and wrong.*#
2. Understanding friends.*
3. Learning to say "no" to things that are harmful.
4. Dealing with family problems.
5. Understanding family.****
6. Making friends.

Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop

1. Understanding self.
2. Learning the proper way to talk and handle self.
3. Improving personality.
4. Learning more about drugs, alcohol and diseases.****
5. Learning to find help for self or others in trouble.
6. Understanding elderly.**

Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items For Room

1. Learning how to look my best.*
2. Having own room or space.
3. Finding bargains and still having things that are "in".****

Career Exploration

1. Doing well in school.*#
2. Getting a job.
3. Doing things for self.
4. Developing own spending plan.
5. Using time wisely.
6. Developing hobbies.**

NOTE:
- * Indicates 70% or above response by females.
- ** Indicates a 50% or below response by females.
- *** Indicates a 70% or above response by males.
- **** Indicates a 50% or below response by males.
- *# Indicates a 70% or above response of males and females.

Discussion

The responses of the majority of students seem to indicate that early adolescents are concerned about many of the personal, social and family issues which are contained within the subject areas of home economics. Data suggest that students are interested in learning more about those areas that concern them.

Developing a curriculum focusing on adolescents' concerns and interests will help meet their needs as well as motivate students to study and learn about important areas. Adolescents, at this age, are more concerned about areas that focus on themselves (looking their best, doing well in school, getting along with family) as opposed to areas that focus on others or other things (understanding and caring for children, making and caring for clothes).

Students were concerned and interested in Food Preparation and Physical Fitness. This should be included in the curriculum, along with information about exercise and keeping fit. Using foods and nutrition as a tool to gain a healthy complexion, control weight, and make friends by entertaining and having parties, could be several approaches to students' concerns about health and fitness. Females were highly concerned about Foods and Food Preparation but showed less interest in future study, whereas males showed little concern with more interest in this subject area. This could

be an opportunity for individualized instruction and extra curricular projects.

Students were concerned with subject area, Communicating with Family and Friends, especially making decisions about what is right and wrong. Students also showed considerable interest in future learning about this area (see Table 25). Not only should values be promoted, but decision making skills should emphasized throughout the course. The unit could cover dealing with conflict, and using conflict appropriately. This could apply not only to family, but to understanding and making friends. The importance of, and the role of the family could be covered when discussing the kinds of families and the make-up of our society. A unit on family problems such as, divorce, separation, remarriage, death, illness, and loss of a job, could be covered to help students learn to deal with family crises.

Students are concerned about Understanding How Self and Others Grow and Develop. However, little interest in future learning of this area is revealed, especially in the areas of care of children and pregnancy. In order to understand themselves, the study of children and child behavior helps adolescents recognize their own behaviors. Child development could be touched on lightly, moving on to adolescent behavior, and pubescent changes. At this age, discussing proper etiquette and manners as a way of improving personality could be an interest approach to this unit, as early adolescents are concerned about the proper way to act and behave.

Students were least concerned and interested in Making Clothes, Crafts, and Items for Room. However, students showed more concern than interest in future learning. When comparing students' concerns and interests to previous enrollment in home economics, students were more likely to be interested in future study if they had been enrolled in home economics. Therefore, eliminating the clothing construction section completely may not necessarily be the right option. Students were significantly concerned with "looking my best", and "finding bargains". The importance of keeping buttons sewed on a shirt, and the skirt properly hemmed could be discussed as part of good grooming habits. Students could also be taught to take old or used garments and add accessories or make them into other garments to teach creativity and recycling. Constructing pillows or other items by hand or machine could be included in the section, "having my room or space the way I want it", to teach decorating techniques using craft construction and individual creativity.

Subject area, Career Exploration was of high concern and interest to students. Males tended to show more interest than females in all areas. This could be an excellent area to stress individualized instruction for males and females. Students could explore careers within home economics as well as what it takes to get a job, and hold a job (using time wisely, budgeting, developing independence).

Recommendations

Findings in this study indicate a need for home economics at the eighth grade level. Therefore, the researcher wishes to offer the following recommendations for consideration by those responsible for planning curriculum within Oklahoma.

1. Identify and consider students' concerns and interests in the planning of curriculum. Emphasize the areas of highest concern and interest to the students.
2. Consider the race of students when planning curriculum. Each subject matter area should be applicable to minorities as well as Caucasians. For example, minority students may show more interest than Caucasians in learning about certain subject matter areas of home economics.
3. Consider location in state, and size of school when planning curriculum. Interest and concerns of students can differ according to family composition, local and societal needs in the community and economic level of family community.
4. Plan home economics curriculum to meet the needs of males and females.
5. Plan instruction in the "traditional" areas of home economics to meet the needs of contemporary families and societies. (i.e. saving the environment [food, waste], weight management, health and

fitness, how to get along with my brothers and sisters, how to make and keep friends, babysitting survival skills, and choosing food for parties).

6. Promote home economics as personal, social, and family oriented, rather as foods and clothing oriented.

Recommendations For Further Research

1. Additional research be initiated to survey sixth and seventh graders for recommendations for curriculum development.
2. Additional research be initiated to identify reasons for differences in district location, school size, race, and sex of students.
3. Conduct experimental research on different teaching methods to determine their effectiveness on learning at the 8th grade level.

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APPENDIX A

STUDENT CONCERNS SURVEY

WHAT ARE MY CONCERNS?

The following statements are areas which may concern you as an eighth grade student. Please indicate whether the following statements are a concern to you by circling the answer that best describes how you feel. There are no right or wrong answers. Answer as honestly as you can. You do not need to sign your name.

There are three choices for each statement: "yes" (Y), "unsure" (U), and "no" (N). Circle the letter that best describes how you feel about each statement.

Y - Yes this is a concern or problem for me.
U - I am unsure if this is a concern or problem.
N - No this is not a concern or problem for me.

Ask yourself the following question as you read each statement: IS THIS A CONCERN FOR ME?

Y	U	N	1. Having my own room or space the way I want it.
Y	U	N	2. Making decisions about what is right or wrong.
Y	U	N	3. Getting a job.
Y	U	N	4. Doing well in school.
Y	U	N	5. Finding bargains and still having things that are "in".
Y	U	N	6. Learning how to take care of children.
Y	U	N	7. Developing hobbies or interests.
Y	U	N	8. Losing or gaining weight.
Y	U	N	9. Doing things for myself.
Y	U	N	10. Using time wisely.
Y	U	N	11. Learning to exercise and eat the right foods so I can look and feel good.
Y	U	N	12. Knowing how to look my best.
Y	U	N	13. Understanding myself (my personality, my behavior, my looks, how I feel inside).
Y	U	N	14. Learning more about dating.
Y	U	N	15. Understanding my friends (the way they treat me, how they are different from me).
Y	U	N	16. Getting others to listen to me.
Y	U	N	17. Improving my personality.
Y	U	N	18. Learning how to make my own clothes.
Y	U	N	19. Learning to make friends.
Y	U	N	20. Learning how to say "no" to things that are harmful or that I am not ready for.
Y	U	N	21. Understanding and recognizing the changes my body is going through.
Y	U	N	22. Understanding pregnancy (of self or someone close to me).
Y	U	N	23. Developing my own spending plan (how I am going to spend my money).
Y	U	N	24. Understanding other family members (parents/step-parents, sister, brother).
Y	U	N	25. Learning how to care for my clothes (washing, ironing, mending, storage).
Y	U	N	26. Understanding children.

Y	U	N	27. Understanding elderly people.
Y	U	N	28. Dealing with family problems (divorce, handicaps or disabilities, death, etc.).
Y	U	N	29. Learning how to find help for myself or someone else in trouble (child abuse, date-rape, alcohol or drug addiction, other crime, etc.).
Y	U	N	30. Learning the proper way to talk and handle myself in front of others in order to make the right impression.
Y	U	N	31. Learning more about smoking, drugs, alcohol and diseases such as AIDS and Herpes.
			I am interested in learning more about the following areas:
Y	U	N	32. Food preparation and physical fitness for better health
Y	U	N	33. Communicating with family and friends
Y	U	N	34. Understanding how myself and others grow and develop
Y	U	N	35. Making my own clothes, crafts, and items for my room.
Y	U	N	36. Career exploration

The following section is information regarding your personal history. Please answer each question as best as you can. Again, all information is confidential, and there is no need to sign your name.

___ 1. How old are you?

a. 12 b. 13 c. 14 d. Other _____

___ 2. I am ?

a. male b. female

___ 3. My racial background is: (optional)

a. Hispanic
b. Black
c. White
d. American Indian
e. Asian oriental
f. Other _____

___ 4. I am enrolled in or have taken home economics.

a. yes b. no

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION!

APPENDIX B

STATISTICAL TABLES

TABLE 9

FREQUENCY AND PERCENT OF 'UNDECIDED' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY SEX

Student Concerns	Males N	Males Percent	Females N	Females Percent
Have my own room	15	7.69	10	5.35
Make decisions	32	16.41	20	10.70
Get a job	40	20.62	32	17.20
Do well in school	17	8.76	14	7.53
Find bargains	56	29.02	34	18.18
Care of children	54	27.69	32	17.11
Develop hobbies	33	17.19	33	17.93
Lose/gain weight	37	19.07	22	11.83
Do things for self	28	14.29	22	11.89
Use time wisely	45	23.08	41	22.16
Exercise/eat healthy	35	17.86	33	17.65
Look my best	29	14.80	16	8.56
Understand self	31	15.98	29	15.59
Learn about dating	51	26.02	47	25.13
Understand friends	40	20.73	18	9.73
Get others to listen	43	21.94	44	23.53
Improve personality	29	14.87	38	20.54
Make own clothes	37	19.07	41	22.04
Make friends	34	17.35	17	9.34
Learn to say "no"	19	9.84	10	5.38
Know body changes	35	17.86	33	17.74
Understand pregnancy	48	24.74	25	13.37
Develop spending plan	28	14.29	32	17.11
Understand family	44	22.45	28	14.97
Care for clothes	36	18.37	18	9.63
Understand children	41	20.92	31	16.58
Understand elderly	38	19.49	43	22.99
Family problems	37	19.17	21	11.23
Finding help for self	38	19.39	32	17.11
Proper way to talk	25	12.76	25	13.37
Learn about drugs	28	14.29	21	11.23

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

TABLE 11

PERCENT OF 'YES', 'UNDECIDED', AND 'NO' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY MALES

Student Concerns	Yes	Undecided	No
Have my own room	63.08	7.69	29.23
Make decisions	64.10	16.41	19.49
Get a job	64.95	20.62	14.43
Do well in school	78.87	8.76	12.37
Find bargains	40.93	29.02	30.05
Care of children	32.82	27.69	39.49
Develop hobbies	56.25	17.19	26.56
Lose/gain weight	39.69	19.07	22.58
Do things for myself	63.27	14.29	22.45
Use time wisely	55.38	23.08	21.54
Exercise/eat healthy	56.12	17.86	26.02
Look my best	65.31	14.80	19.90
Understand self	64.43	15.98	19.59
Learn about dating	48.47	26.02	25.51
Understand friends	53.37	20.73	25.91
Get others to listen	45.41	21.94	32.65
Improve personality	60.00	14.87	25.13
Make own clothes	17.53	19.07	63.40
Make friends	50.51	17.35	32.14
Learn to say "no"	57.51	9.84	32.64
Know body changes	43.88	17.86	38.27
Understand pregnancy	35.05	24.74	40.21
Develop spending plan	61.73	14.29	23.98
Understand family	51.53	22.45	26.02
Care for clothes	42.35	18.37	39.29
Understand children	43.37	20.92	35.71
Understand elderly	54.36	19.49	26.15
Family problems	52.85	19.17	27.98
Finding help for self	54.08	19.39	26.53
Proper way to talk	59.18	12.76	28.06
Learn about drugs	50.00	14.29	35.71

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

TABLE 12

PERCENT OF 'YES', 'UNDECIDED', AND 'NO' RESPONSES TO CONCERNS BY FEMALES

Student Concerns	Yes	Undecided	No
Have my own room	65.24	5.35	29.41
Make decisions	75.94	10.70	13.37
Get a job	62.90	17.20	19.89
Do well in school	82.26	7.53	10.22
Find bargains	62.57	18.18	19.25
Care of children	58.82	17.11	24.06
Develop hobbies	50.00	17.93	32.07
Lose/gain weight	65.59	11.83	22.58
Do things for myself	62.70	11.89	25.41
Use time wisely	52.43	22.16	25.41
Exercise/eat healthy	66.84	17.65	15.51
Look my best	73.26	8.56	18.18
Understand self	69.89	15.59	14.52
Learn about dating	49.73	25.13	25.13
Understand friends	75.68	9.73	14.59
Get others to listen	53.48	23.53	22.99
Improve personality	58.38	20.54	21.08
Make own clothes	31.18	22.04	46.77
Make friends	61.54	9.35	29.12
Learn to say "no"	66.67	5.38	27.96
Know body changes	52.69	17.74	29.57
Understand pregnancy	58.29	13.37	28.34
Develop spending plan	52.94	17.11	29.95
Understand family	64.17	14.97	20.86
Care for clothes	55.08	9.63	35.29
Understand children	52.94	16.58	30.48
Understand elderly	50.27	22.99	26.74
Family problems	67.91	11.23	20.86
Finding help for self	63.64	17.11	19.25
Proper way to talk	68.45	13.37	18.18
Learn about drugs	62.57	11.23	26.20

Note. See "What Are My Concerns?" Survey in Appendix A for unabbreviated list of subject areas and student concerns.

APPENDIX C

CORRESPONDENCE

UNIVERSITY OF UND NORTH DAKOTA

DEPARTMENT OF HOME ECONOMICS & NUTRITION
BOX 8273 UNIVERSITY STATION
GRAND FORKS NORTH DAKOTA 58202
701) 777-2539

March 7, 1989

Veronica Worley
3602 North Washington, Apt. #A-5
Stillwater, OK 74075

Dear Ms. Worley,

I have received your letter regarding Oklahoma's 8th grade curriculum project. The North Dakota "Life Skills" curriculum is available for purchase for $10.00 through the address enclosed. The curriculum describes the answers to many of the questions that you have listed. If more detail is needed feel free to contact me. (If purchase is a problem, let me know).

Although I would like more information on your proposed study, you may have permission to use the instrument provided that proper acknowledgment of the source is given. (Crawford, et al. Life Skills: A Concerns Approach. Bismarck, North Dakota: State Board for Vocational Education, 1985).

I am pleased that you see the North Dakota curriculum as helpful in meeting your needs. I will be most interested in the progress and outcome of your study.

Best wishes for success in completing your degree program.

Sincerely,

Glinda B. Crawford
Associate Professor

GBC/sw

Enclosure

October 13, 1989

Principal
School address

Dear (Principal's name),

Per our recent phone conversation, you agreed to participate in my study on the interests and concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students. Enclosed in this packet are all the materials you will need for your involvement.

I am completing my Master's degree in Home Economics Education and Community Services at Oklahoma State University. The purpose of this study is to determine the interests and concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students for future curriculum development.

I have randomly selected 22 schools throughout Oklahoma from a list of schools that were approved for vocational home economics in 1988-1989. Your school was one of those selected.

Enclosed are the number of surveys you requested. The survey is two pages in length and should take from 5-10 minutes for the students to complete. The survey is to be administered to **one** class of **science** students, boys and girls. Using science students will provide a more representative sample size.

Enclosed is a set of instructions for the teacher. After the **surveys** have been completed by the students, they are to be **returned** to me in the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope **within two weeks**, by October 27, 1989. No names of students or of your school will be recorded or used in any way in the study.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the address and phone number below. Thank you so much for your time and the class time of the teacher and students.

Sincerely,

Veronica Worley
3602 N. Washington, #A-5
Stillwater, OK 74075
(405) 743-2421

INSTRUCTIONS FOR TEACHER

Dear Teacher,

The purpose of this study is to determine the interests and concerns of Oklahoma eighth grade students for future curriculum development. This set of instructions is for your information about the study, and to help you answer any questions the students may have.

The survey is two pages in length and should take 5-10 minutes for the students to complete. The survey contains statements that may or may not concern the students. They are to circle the response that best describes their feelings about each statement. They are to circle "Y" for yes, "U" for unsure, and "N" for no. Question numer three on page two may have more than one answer. If they choose "other", they are to write in which racial background they have, if they know what it is. If there are students who can not read, you or someone else may read the questions to them. Taking the survey is optional and any students who do not want to take it should not be required to do so.

After you have read these instructions to yourself, and passed the surveys face down to the students, you may read the paragraph below entitled, INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS, to the students, and answer any questions they may have.

INSTRUCTIONS TO STUDENTS:

The survey you are about to take contains some areas that may or may not be a concern to you. By filling out this two-page survey we will get a better idea of what things are of concern to you. We will take the information you give us and build school programs that are useful to future eighth grade students.

Students may then turn surveys face up and you may read the instructions at the beginning of the survey while the students follow along. Please stress that students are not to put their names on the survey and that all information is confidential.

Please **return completed surveys to me in the enclosed self-addressed and stamped envelope within two weeks**, by October 27, 1989. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at the address and phone number below. Thank you so much for your time and and class time of your students.

Veronica Worley
3602 N. Washington, #A-5
Stillwater, OK 74075
(405) 743-2421

VITA

Veronica Joy Worley

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CONCERNS AND INTERESTS OF OKLAHOMA EIGHTH GRADE STUDENTS WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR HOME ECONOMICS CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT

Major Field: Home Economics Education and Community Services

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Newton, Kansas, January 10, 1960, the daughter of James and Ethel Posar. married B. Keith Worley on December 20, 1986.

Education: Graduated from Putnam City West High School, Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, in May, 1978. Received an Associates of Business Degree from Hillsdale Free Will Baptist College, May, 1981. Received a Bachelor of Science degree from Oklahoma State University, July 1985. Completed requirements for the Master of Science degree in December, 1990.

Professional Experience: Home economics teacher at Cleveland Middle School in Cleveland, Oklahoma from August 1985 until May 1986. Credit manager for Stillwater Designs, from July 1986 until May 1988. Home economics teacher from February 1990 until June 1990 at Stedman Junior High, in Stedman North Carolina.

Professional Organizations: Phi Upsilon Omicron; Omicron Nu, American Home Economics Association