

HOME-BASED SEWING BUSINESS OWNERS:
DEFINITIVE PROFILES AND
SKILL ASSESSMENT

By

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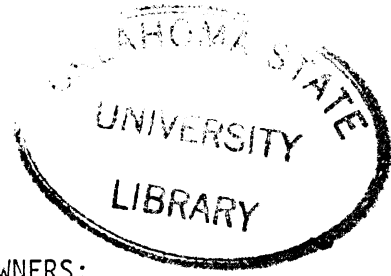
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Small independently owned businesses play a very important role in the national economy. The Small Business Administration considers 9.4 million of the 13.1 million businesses in the United States to be small enterprises. These small businesses employ over half of the non-governmental workers, contribute approximately 48% of the total business output, and account for 43% of the United States gross national product (Furtado & Haines, 1980).

Today experts estimate that approximately 20% of the new small business enterprises started in the United States are operated out of the owners' homes. These rapidly multiplying home-based entrepreneurs are becoming an increasingly important part of the country's future economy

The scope of the work-at-home movement is expanding dramatically. Changing economics and a desire for an alternative lifestyle have contributed to the increasing number of entrepreneurs and the explosive growth of home-based businesses (Feldstein, 1981). Furtado & Haines (1980) noted that opportunities in the future will continue to support an upward trend in entrepreneurial enterprises.

According to Charboneau (1981), America's smallest, but fastest growing, segment of the business economy is women owned enterprises. Since 1972 the number of women entrepreneurs has more than doubled in

size and accounts for almost 7% of small business receipts. In 1978 a federal task force stated that the increase in self-employed women from 1972 to 1977 was three times that of self-employed men (Gumpert, 1982). Couch (1982) predicted an overall increase of 12 million women workers during the next decade. By 1990, 70% of all women will be in the work force making up one half of all the workers in the United States.

The present-day woman is increasingly moving in the direction of financial and emotional independence through the use of previously discredited competencies, talents, and abilities. Women are currently integrating work and commitment to family into profitable home operated businesses (Behr & Lazar, 1983). A popular type of business run by women today is the home sewing operation which may range from design and manufacturing to clothing repair and alteration (Feldstein, 1981).

In addition to substantial incomes, home-based business owners are currently earning respect and recognition for their work. To continue with the positive growth and development of home-based businesses, updated information should be developed and shared (Behr & Lazar, 1983). The Cooperative Extension has recognized this need.

The Cooperative Extension Service is a nationwide, tax supported organization for informal education in cooperative agreement between the land grant colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture ("Cooperative Extension Service," 1976). The Cooperative Extension Service has information and research based knowledge available that can help improve the efficiency and increase the income generated from home-based businesses. Workshops are being developed to supplement the knowledge and previous experience of business owners. Valuable information provided at workshops can be utilized by business owners

to better serve their customers' needs and make their businesses more profitable.

To effectively provide this information, Cooperative Extension must continually assess the needs of home-based sewing businesses in operation. By investigating the needs of these on-going businesses, Extension can more accurately procure information concerning the day to day needs of the owners. This collection of data can then be utilized in developing new and useful programs for those interested or involved in home-based sewing businesses.

Purpose and Objectives

The major purposes of the study were to investigate selected characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses and to assess the skill needs of these business owners. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To identify characteristics of women who own home-based sewing businesses.
2. To identify characteristics of selected home-based sewing businesses.
3. To develop definitive profiles of home-based sewing business owners in regard to selected characteristics.
4. To assess the needs of home-based sewing business owners in regard to business skills and sewing skills.

Assumptions and Limitations

It was assumed that the research sample of home-based sewing business owners was representative of the home-based sewing business

owners in the state. Participants in the study were limited to those home-based sewing business owners identified by the County Home Economists located in the southwest district of Oklahoma, and from telephoning fabric shops listed in telephone directories located in the Oklahoma State University Library.

Definition of Terms

The following terms are defined as they were used in the study.

Cooperative Extension Service - A nationwide, tax-supported organization for informal education in cooperative agreement between the land grant colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture.

Entrepreneur - Organizer of an economic venture; one who organizes, owns, manages, and assumes risk of a business (Webster's Third New International Dictionary, 1976).

Home-based Business - An income producing business operating at home rather than in a traditional business setting.

Home-based Sewing Business - A business which performs one or more of the following types of services from the home: construction of garments for individuals, dressmaking, tailoring, construction of uniforms or costumes, construction of model garments for fabric stores, alteration of ready-to-wear, pattern alterations, or monogramming.

Profiles - A set of data portraying the significant features of home-based sewing businesses and their owners.

Small Business - A business that is independently owned and operated and is not dominant in the field (Small Business Administration, 1980).

Women Owned Business - A business which is at least 51% owned, controlled, and operated by a woman or women (Small Business Administration, 1979).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Home-based businesses are becoming an increasingly important part of the American business system. Today the trend toward home-based enterprises is growing at a phenomenal rate. The revival of the entrepreneurial spirit, extension of life expectancy with better health and early retirement, availability of the personal computer, and advances in telecommunications have increased the popularity of home-based businesses (Freedman, 1985). It is estimated that 20% of all new small business enterprises started in the United States are operated out of the owner's home (Small Business Administration, 1980). Although many new home-business owners possess marketable skills, they may lack the management and business knowledge needed to translate their endeavors into valuable income.

The United States Department of Agriculture Cooperative Extension Service can play a valuable role in the education of business owners. Educational extension programs can assist people in acquiring knowledge and developing sufficient skills needed to make decisions related to home businesses. By assessing the needs of home-based businesses, the Cooperative Extension Service can continue to develop programs and supportive networks used by home businesses in reaching their full potential.

The literature related to the study was organized into the following sections: home-based businesses, entrepreneurship, women in business, business ownership and the Cooperative Extension Service.

Home-based Businesses

Changing economics and unsettling shifts of a changing world have influenced many individuals to combine their living and working environments into one place (Hewes, 1981). Home-based businesses involve individuals and families who work in their homes utilizing skills and knowledge to provide consumer goods and services. A variety of businesses can be run successfully from one's home, either as full-time sole supporting enterprises or as an alternative for generating extra income. These businesses are more likely to succeed if based on the owner's expertise, skill and knowledge of needed products and services ("Running a Business," 1983).

History of Home-based Businesses

The idea of the home-based business is not a new phenomenon. Prior to the Industrial Revolution, home businesses were widespread among the American colonies. These small family-operated businesses produced essential goods and services needed by the isolated colonists. Atkinson (1985) reported that during the Revolutionary War continued economic independence of homes and communities was critical to the freedom of the country. As the Revolutionary War and the English blockade of goods intensified, so too did the will power and resources of the people to produce just about everything they needed within their homes.

These small operations continued to keep Americans well supplied with essential products and services until 1850 when the rise of the Industrial Revolution clearly separated the living and working environment of Americans. Centralized work areas in factories and offices were needed by mass producers in industry. During this period high unemployment forced home business owners to abandon their small operations and take available factory jobs in the larger cities (Atkinson, 1985).

The era of the respectable home industry was over and another form of home business had risen into power. Sweatshops located in city tenements were being used to produce a variety of items, ranging anywhere from clothing and textiles to toys and cigars. These new home businesses were usually found in direct violation of federal and state laws. Low wages and poor working conditions were usually forced onto unemployed individuals who desperately needed work (Atkinson, 1985).

In 1933, the National Recovery Administration passed the National Industrial Recovery Act in an effort to close down tenement sweatshops. Before being declared unconstitutional two years later by the United States Supreme Court, the National Industrial Recovery Act had reportedly eliminated or reduced home businesses in over 20 different industries. In 1943 Congress approved a new section of the Fair Labor Standards Act of 1938 which prohibited home manufacturing in the following industries: women's apparel, knitted outerwear, gloves and mittens, handkerchiefs, buttons and buckles, jewelry and embroideries. Only those individuals unable to work in factories due to age, health, or invalid family members, were allowed to manufacture products in their homes (Atkinson, 1985).

As the new section of the Fair Labor Standards Act was enforced, problems with unlawful home businesses continued to decline. Only in the last two decades have these businesses commenced to resurface, again posing critical questions and issues about home labor to policy makers (Atkinson, 1985).

Today home-based businesses are established under many different circumstances for many different reasons. Personal advantages as well as rising costs and dwindling resources play an increasingly important role in the opening of home-based businesses. Hewes (1981) stated, "In addition to its money saving features, a home-based career offers the individual comfort, freedom from commuting, a sense of independence and the opportunity to be closer to family" (p. 3).

Characteristics of Home-based

Business Owners

Although home-based businesses offer many rewards, not everyone has what it takes to make home operations a success. According to Brabec (1984)

Success in a home business begins with a clear understanding of yourself, your capabilities and your limitations. You must know your strengths so you can build on them, your weaknesses so you can shore them up. (p. 15)

Being your own boss means having to take charge of your life completely. Business owners must be able to make rational decisions in times of stress (Atkinson, 1985). People who can take charge of difficult situations and who can accept responsibility for bad decisions will find themselves better able to handle the day to day pressures of running a business. Confidence and self-discipline are also essential qualities needed by the home business owner (Brabec, 1984).

Types of Business

Home-based businesses fall into one of two separate categories: product-oriented businesses and service-oriented businesses. Businesses that are product-oriented can sell two kinds of goods; those which are self-created or manufactured and those which are purchased from others for resale. Items sold by product-oriented businesses could include crafts or raw materials such as yarns and fabrics. Service-oriented businesses also have two categories, those in which the service is performed in the home, and those performed away from home after the sale is closed. Dressmaking is an example of a service-oriented business. The type of business must be enjoyed by the owner if it is to operate smoothly (Brabec, 1984).

Entrepreneurship

The renaissance of the entrepreneurial spirit has caused many Americans to venture into small business ownership (Freedman, 1985). Webster's Third New International Dictionary (1976) defined an entrepreneur as "a person who organizes, owns, manages, and assumes risk of a business" (p. 759). Entrepreneurs are on the forefront of the times, pointing the way to economic revival and social reform (Hamilton, 1982). In essence, entrepreneurship is the backbone of the capitalist system (Baumback & Macuso, 1975).

Entrepreneurs possess certain common characteristics and patterns of behavior and attitude (Jacobwitz & Vidler, 1982). A profile of individuals who had attended the Laval University entrepreneurship training program was developed by Petrof (1980). A discriminate analysis showed entrepreneurs to be first born children who tended to be

older and to possess a higher level of education. They usually have a high degree of job stability with previous experience in opening new businesses. These entrepreneurs were inclined to be optimistic about the future but had a higher degree of risk sensitivity than non-entrepreneurs. Timmons (1978) and Dickinson (1981) agreed that entrepreneurs are confident, energetic individuals with a strong drive for success. Entrepreneurs tend to be self-reliant, persistent problem solvers, who feel they have a high degree of control over their own destiny.

From the entrepreneur's perspective, the opportunity to achieve economic independence is realized through the ownership of small independent businesses (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980). Although small business owners are not completely independent, they do realize more freedom and control over the management of their skills and ideas. Snyder, Manz, and LaForge (1983) believe that the management of entrepreneurial ventures can be improved through the use of self-management techniques. Douglas (1976) found, in a study relating education to entrepreneurial success, that entrepreneurs have much more formal education than the general population. Douglas' results also noted that the high level of entrepreneurs' formal education does not necessarily contribute directly to business success. While small business owners can learn formal management skills, motivation in these essential skills is the key (Snyder, Manz, & LaForge, 1983).

Women in Business

It has been predicted that the 1980s will be the decade of the woman entrepreneur ("Women Rise," 1980). Today many women are becoming

business owners to fulfill dreams of independence and self-sufficiency. The number of women entrepreneurs is increasing at a rapid rate with business owners more than doubling since 1972. The census bureau located 702,000 women-owned businesses in 1979, and found that they accounted for approximately 7% of all small business receipts. Charboneau (1981) and Couch (1982) predicted that by 1990, 70% of all women will be in the work force accounting for an increase of 12 million women workers.

In 1975 a pilot study, entitled *The Female Entrepreneur*, showed that men and women entrepreneurs share common characteristics with only a few discrepancies (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980). Welsch and Young (1982) compared women to men entrepreneurs and found that women were younger and more educated, but had less business experience and lower sales volume. Other studies on female entrepreneurs found that women's motivations for starting businesses included the need to achieve, the desire for independence, the need for job satisfaction, and economic necessity (Hisrich & Brush, 1984).

Hisrich and Brush also noted that female entrepreneurs had problems with startup capital due to credit discrimination. Mancuso ("Women Rise," 1980) of the Center for Entrepreneurial Management stated that "the biggest obstacle women entrepreneurs face is dealing with a 99% male banking and financial community" (p. 85). Other problems women owners faced were underestimating operating and marketing costs (Hisrich & Brush, 1984).

Hisrich and Brush (1984) depict the "typical" woman entrepreneur as a first born child of middle class parents. The woman entrepreneur is most likely to obtain a liberal arts degree, marry a college educated

man who works at a professional or technical job, have children, and later work as a teacher, administrator, or secretary. These women are most likely to start a service related business at the age of 40 with their biggest business problem being finance, credit, business training, and financial planning. Most of the businesses owned by these entrepreneurs are new, small and have low profits.

The Small Business Administration noted that most women-owned businesses were clustered in retail trade and services. Seventy percent of the women surveyed were the original founders of their business, with 95% of these owners using less than \$25,000 in initial capital. Eighty-four percent of the business owners had fewer than four paid employees (Charboneau, 1981).

Summary

The results of the study on the owners of home-based sewing businesses revealed that selected characteristics parallel with those of entrepreneurs. Both groups, the owners and the entrepreneurs, tended to be older possessing a higher level of education. The results of the study on the owners of home-based sewing businesses revealed that several characteristics reported in the review of literature parallel with those of entrepreneurs. Both the owners and the entrepreneurs were older possessing a higher level of formal education. They had less business experience and lower sales volume. Both were more likely to be married with dependent children living at home.

Business Ownership

Ownership of a business may take many different legal forms, with

each form carrying distinct rules with regard to taxation, management, liabilities of the owner, and division of profit. Furtado and Haines (1980) stated that approximately 86% of all small businesses are organized as sole-proprietorships or partnerships. Due to their nature, home-based businesses usually start out as sole-proprietorships ("Running a Business," 1983).

Form of Ownership

Legal forms of ownership may range from simple to complex depending on the personal and business goals of the individual. Sole-proprietorship, partnership, corporation, and cooperative are all legal forms of ownership. The sole-proprietorship is the simplest and most commonly used form of organization. The sole-proprietorship is owned by one individual with exclusive title to all assets of the business. This type of organization requires a limited amount of record keeping and is regulated by government less than any other form of business structure. Owners of sole-proprietorships are completely liable for all debts incurred by the business (Mancuso, 1984).

A partnership is between two or more persons who become co-owners of a business by combining capital and management resources. Partnerships can take on two different forms, general partnership and limited partnership. A general partnership is an association of two or more persons acting as co-owners and founders of a business. In this type of structure, authority, power, and financial liabilities are divided equally among owners of the business. In a limited partnership an association is formed by at least one general partner and one or more limited partners. This type of partnership allows a person to provide

capital without assuming liability beyond the amount of capital invested (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980).

Corporations are another form of business structure. A corporation is a legal entity which is separate and distinct from stock holders, employees, and officers. It is recognized by the courts as a legal person and business entity that can sue, be sued, manage its own affairs and sell property (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980).

A cooperative is a business structure similar to that of a corporation. Cooperatives are formed by a group of people who own, finance, and operate a business for their mutual benefit. Limited markets, unaccessible sources of supply, and lack of business training have prompted many home-based businesses to form cooperative organizations (Mancuso, 1984).

Financial Investment

A solid financial foundation is necessary to the development of a successful business (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980). Although close to 400,000 new businesses open each year it is a well-established fact that at least 50% of them fail within the first year of operation (Furtado & Haines, 1980). Even though the best financial planning will not prepare the business owner for all money related problems, a thoroughly developed evaluation of financial needs prior to starting the business will reduce the odds of confronting insurmountable financial problems and potential business failures (Gaedeke & Tootelain, 1980).

Most businesses are generally faced with three types of financial need: initial capital, working capital, and capital for expansion. Initial capital includes the money needed to get the business started

and enough to keep it working until returns of the business meet the normal recurring expenses. As the volume of the business grows, the working capital needed to keep producing will also rise until production reaches a normal level. Depending on the conditions surrounding the business, the capital for expansion could be provided for on the initial business plan or obtained from profits or other sources (Baumbach & Lawyer, 1979).

Once capital requirements have been determined, sources of funding must be evaluated. Potential sources of capital include commercial banks, commercial finance companies, consumer finance companies, the Small Business Administration, and special sources of debt financing including savings and loan companies, insurance companies, factors, and trade credit.

Tax Deductions

Taxes like all other aspects of business vary according to occupation and location. Persons operating businesses out of their homes are allowed to deduct a proportion of their costs for operating and maintaining their home as a business expense (Behr & Lazar, 1983). To take advantage of this deduction, the part of the home set aside must be used exclusively and regularly for business operations. Personal use of this space would prohibit any further business deduction to take place (Hewes, 1981). Other significant tax savings in the form of tax deductions, tax credits, and depreciation allowances may also be taken by the home-based business owner.

Cooperative Extension Service

The Cooperative Extension Service is a nationwide, tax supported organization for informal education in cooperative agreement between the land grant colleges and the United States Department of Agriculture. Practical information on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics is diffused through the Cooperative Extension Service ("Cooperative Extension," 1976).

The Cooperative Extension Service has three major levels designed to include agriculture and home economics education. The national, state, and county levels provide administrative, supervisory, and educational services needed by the people of the United States. Makela (1984) stated that

Cooperative Extension has a role in providing education and information vital to the decision of whether or not a home-based business is an alternative to generate income, create satisfaction, and enhance use of underutilized resources. (p. 3)

Furtado and Haines (1980) stressed the urgency for quality instruction in business and distributive education programs. These authors also noted that there should be an educational thrust in the area of entrepreneurship. An increase in educational information can help make entrepreneurs more competitive. Advice covering finances, management, and other business concerns can assist entrepreneurs who otherwise could not afford large staffs of specialists and expensive outside consultants (Gumpert, 1982). Longenecker and Shoen (1975) observed a need for an educational and developmental emphasis upon motivation and preparation for entrepreneurial careers. Research analyzing the complex relationships between education and success in

entrepreneurial ventures would also prove beneficial to the business owner (Douglas, 1976).

The Cooperative Extension Service is currently assisting individuals through home-based business programs. Knowledge and skills related to home businesses are being emphasized. In 1981 the United States Department of Agriculture funded a special project, Increasing Economic Returns for Rural Women Through Establishment of Small Businesses in Custom Dressmaking. The purpose of the special project included: 1) providing training in sound business practices for prospective and established dressmakers; 2) teaching methodology and skills related to new fabrics, new supplies, time management, and customer needs; and 3) improving economic status of rural families through utilization of profit making activities carried out in the home. Workshops implemented over a two-year period were successful, realizing the following benefits: 1) better business skills, 2) better understanding of steps in establishing home-operated businesses, 3) improved marketing skills, 4) establishment of profitable pricing guidelines, and 5) an increase in the use of professional clothing construction techniques.

Summary

Home-based businesses are becoming an increasingly important part of the American business system. Individuals and families are working in their homes using skills and knowledge to provide consumer goods and services. Personal advantages as well as rising costs and dwindling resources have motivated many individuals to open home-based businesses.

From the entrepreneur's perspective, the opportunity to economic independence is realized through the ownership of small independent businesses. Entrepreneurs are the backbone of the capitalistic system, pointing the way to economic revival and social reform.

The 1980s have been predicted to be the decade of the woman entrepreneur. The number of women entrepreneurs is increasing at a rapid rate. The need to achieve, the desire for independence, the need for job satisfaction, and economic necessity have been noted as motivations for women business owners. Most women-owned businesses are clustered in retail trade and services.

Approximately 86% of all small businesses are operated as sole-proprietorships or partnerships. Due to their nature, home-based businesses usually start out as sole-proprietorships.

There has been a need for quality instruction in business and distributive education programs. The Cooperative Extension Service is able to provide informal education on subjects relating to agriculture and home economics.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The major purposes of the study were to investigate selected characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses and to assess the skills needed by these business owners. The specific objectives of the study were to: 1) identify characteristics of women who own home-based sewing businesses; 2) identify characteristics of selected home-based sewing businesses; 3) develop definitive profiles of home-based sewing business owners in regard to selected characteristics; 4) assess the needs of home-based sewing business owners in regard to business skills and sewing skills. The research procedures are discussed in the following sections: Identifying Characteristics, Developing Definitive Profiles, and Assessing Skill Needs.

Identifying Characteristics

Characteristics related to objectives one and two were identified using the following procedural categories: 1) review of literature; 2) instrument preparation; 3) pretest and revision of instrument; 4) sample selection; 5) collection of data; 6) tabulation of data; and 7) identification of characteristics.

Review of Literature

An extensive library search was conducted to obtain definitive information on home-based sewing businesses. Related areas were also researched due to the limited amount of information found. Current literature was used to establish characteristics of home businesses, small businesses and businesses owned by women. The literature review also included previous studies on characteristics of entrepreneurs and home-based business owners.

Initial direction for the study was obtained by attending Cooperative Extension Service workshops which were designed to provide subject-matter information to people interested in developing necessary skills for a home-based business. Sewing skills and business skills in marketing, record keeping, taxes, pricing, copyrighting and professionalism were included in the workshops.

Instrument Preparation

Based on the review of related literature, a questionnaire was designed to gain information about home-based sewing businesses and their owners. The questionnaire was divided into six major sections: 1) business information; 2) marketing information; 3) skills needs; 4) finances; 5) demographic information; and 6) information about the residence.

Included in the business information section were questions pertaining to type of business, ownership characteristics and source of financial backing. Also included were number of hours worked, number of employees, and wages charged for services.

The second section of the questionnaire contained information on the marketing practices of the home business. Promotions, advertising and advertising media were covered in this section with additional questions on subscriptions to magazines and trade publications.

The third section of the questionnaire was concerned with the skill needs of business owners. This section was divided into two parts with the first part assessing business skills needed by owners. Areas covered were record keeping, financial planning, insurance, taxes, sales planning and licenses. In addition to the business skills, section three assessed sewing skill needs of home-based sewing business owners. Areas covered were garment fit, pattern alteration, alteration of ready-to-wear, men's alterations, fabric treatments, construction techniques and tailoring techniques.

Section four of the questionnaire dealt with the finances of home business owners. Included were items such as annual gross income, net income, and percentage of total family income produced by the business. Insurance coverage and licenses were also investigated in this section.

The fifth section of the questionnaire contained questions concerning background information of the business owners. Sex, age, marital status, education and dependents were all items included in this section.

The sixth and final section dealt with the residence of business owners. Included in this section were questions on the size of dwelling, community and neighborhood in which home-based business owners lived.

The questionnaire was developed in booklet format. The front page of the booklet was used as a cover letter with additional pages for questions. The booklet used was reproduced on white paper with a printing method that provided quality similar to an original typed copy.

Pretest and Revision of Instrument

Content validity of the questionnaire was increased by using the following procedures. Five women who owned home-based sewing businesses were asked to participate in pretesting the questionnaire. The instrument was pretested during a one-hour interview with each of the five women business owners. During the interview respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire, ask questions and make comments and suggestions which would help the researcher make revisions. Based on the responses and suggestions of the five women interviewed, changes were incorporated into the revised questionnaire. Revisions were made to clarify ambiguous questions and unclear instructions. Minor revisions were made in numbering the questions to make data analysis easier. The revised questionnaire and letters of correspondence are included in Appendix A.

Sample Selection

The selection of home-based sewing business owners was based on a sample of convenience for the purposes of the study. A list of 194 Oklahoma home-based sewing business owners was compiled. Initially the sample was to come from Cooperative Extension's southwest district, but due to the low rate of return it was expanded to include all of

the counties in Oklahoma. Flyers and sign up sheets were given to Cooperative Extension County Home Economists to produce the sample, but due to the low number identified in this manner additional owners were identified through referrals from fabric shops across the state. The fabric shops were located through telephone directories found in the Oklahoma State University Library. A list of 194 home-based sewing business owners was compiled from different towns across the state.

Collection of Data

The questionnaire booklets, along with self-addressed stamped envelopes, were mailed to the 194 home-based sewing business owners selected for the sample. Ten days after the initial mailing, a follow-up letter was sent to each of the participants. The follow-up letter was written as a thank you for those who had returned their questionnaires and provided itself as a reminder to those who had not. An additional questionnaire and Cooperative Extension pamphlets, promoting a future home-based business workshop, were included in the envelope.

Tabulation of Data

A total of 57 questionnaires were returned after an initial mailing of 194 questionnaires and a follow-up mailing to each of the sample participants. Returned questionnaires were deleted from the study if the respondent did not own a home-based sewing business that performed one of the specified functions resulting in a sample size of 47. All data were entered onto a computer disc using a PC file system and checked for errors. A frequency count and percentages of the responses were determined for the items on the questionnaire. Mean scores were

determined for the items related to skill needs and the mean number of square feet used by each business was calculated. A computer statistical package (SAS) was used to make calculations.

Identification of Characteristics

Responses from the questionnaire were used to develop 1) characteristics of the women owners of home-based sewing businesses; 2) characteristics of the home-based sewing businesses; 3) characteristics of ownership; and 4) extent of owner involvement in the business. Related questions were grouped together and responses were recorded in the following chapter.

Developing Definitive Profiles

Characteristics identified from objectives one and two were used in developing definitive profiles for objective three. To analyze the data related to objective three, procedures were organized into two steps: 1) selection of definitive characteristics and 2) profile development.

Selecting Definitive Characteristics

Tabulations and percentages of the identified characteristics were used in establishing profiles. Responses from related questions were grouped together into four main categories: 1) characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses; 2) characteristics of the home-based sewing business; 3) characteristics of ownership; and 4) extent of owner involvement in the business.

Characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses were included in the first profile. The characteristics included were education, marital status, age, and number of dependents.

The second profile was composed of characteristics of the home-based sewing business. Characteristics included were type and size of dwelling, type of home ownership, amount of business space needed, type of neighborhood and community, specific type of business, and business income. The number and type of employees and their wage scale were placed in this profile. Also included were business discounts and information on insurance, licensing, advertising, and magazine subscriptions.

The third profile dealt with characteristics of business ownership. The type, length and percent of ownership along with information on the initial investment used to start the business were placed in this profile.

Extent of business involvement of the owner made up the fourth and last profile. Motivation for going into business, reasons for working at home, number of hours worked, additional employment, previous business ownership and desired growth of the business were included in this profile.

Profile Development

Tabulations and percentages of the characteristics identified in objective one were used to develop four profiles. The responses of participants were summarized on bar graphs based on percentages totaling over 50% or on the highest percentage if none of the percentages were over 50. Data regarding characteristics of the owner,

the business operations, and the extent of owner's involvement were included in the four profiles.

Assessing Skill Needs

Procedures used to assess the data related to objective four were organized in the following categories: 1) selecting skills; and 2) assessing skill needs.

Skill Selection

Business skills dealing with home-based businesses were selected for assessment. Business concerns encompassed record keeping, financial planning, insurance, taxes, sales planning and licenses. Business skills were ranked on a five-point scale with needed skills rated as a five and skills not needed rated as a one.

Sewing skills relating to garment fit, pattern alterations, alteration of ready-to-wear, men's alterations, fabric treatments, construction techniques and tailoring techniques were also selected as general areas for need assessment. Each of the general skill areas was further broken down into specific areas of need. Each area of concern provided the participants with one of three options for responding to the skill: no interest, need instruction, or skilled.

Skill Assessment

Business skills were rated according to the overall need for instruction in each of the different categories. The responses were rated on a five-point scale according to the owner's perceived need for instruction. After the responses were tabulated, the average rating

for each statement was obtained by adding the rating indicated by each owner and dividing the sum by the number of owners that responded. The different categories were then ranked according to the assessed level of need.

Individual sewing skills were also rated according to the overall need for instruction in each of the different categories. Sewing techniques were recorded as of no interest, needed or skilled. Frequency counts and percentages of questionnaire responses were then used to compare and rate the general areas of skill needed.

Drawing Implications

The data collected in the research study were categorical and quantitative in nature. A discriminative analysis was therefore used to compile data for the four definitive profiles and for the assessment of needed skills. Recommendations for needed educational assistance to be provided by the Cooperative Extension Service were formulated using the data provided by the study.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The major purposes of the study were to investigate selected characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses and to assess the skill needs of these business owners. The specific objectives of the study were 1) to identify characteristics of women who own home-based sewing businesses and to determine their degree of involvement in the control and operation of the business; 2) to identify characteristics of selected home-based sewing businesses; 3) to develop definitive profiles of home-based sewing business owners in regard to selected characteristics; and 4) to assess the needs of home-based sewing business owners in regard to business skills and sewing skills. The findings of the study were organized and reported according to the following categories: Description of Sample, Entrepreneurship Characteristics, Definitive Profiles, Assessment of Skills, and Implications.

Description of Sample

Questionnaires were sent to 194 owners of home-based sewing businesses located in Oklahoma. After the first mailing a second questionnaire was sent along with a follow-up letter requesting the owner's cooperation. Twenty-nine percent (57) of the questionnaires were returned.

Of the 57 questionnaires returned by the business owners, a total of 47 (24%) were usable for the study. If owners had discontinued their home business, no longer sewed for the public, did not perform any of the required sewing activities, or did not complete the questionnaire properly, they were eliminated from the study. The distribution of owners by town showed that the greatest number of returned questionnaires were from Oklahoma City (14%) and Edmond (7.01%). (See Table I.)

Entrepreneurship Characteristics

Entrepreneurship characteristics of the owners were summarized using frequencies and percentages. The entrepreneurship characteristics were organized into four separate divisions: 1) characteristics of owners; 2) characteristics of businesses; 3) characteristics of ownership; and 4) extent of involvement in the business.

Characteristics of Owners

Characteristics of the home-based business owners were developed from the 47 usable questionnaires that were returned. The owner's characteristics, as noted in Table II, included age, education, marital status, and number of dependents living at home.

Almost three-fourths of the women owners were between the ages of 30 and 49. Approximately 75% had some formal education past high school with 10.6% having gone to trade school and the other 63.8% having some college education. Out of the 47 women business owners, 42 were married with 74.5% having dependent children. Only one elderly person was recorded as being a dependent.

TABLE I
 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY TOWN
 (N=57)

Town	Frequency	Percent
Ada	2	3.51
Altus	1	1.75
Ardmore	1	1.75
Bethany	1	1.75
Broken Arrow	2	3.51
Cache	1	1.75
Claremore	1	1.75
Duke	1	1.75
Edmond	4	7.01
Elgin	1	1.75
Enid	3	5.26
Frederick	1	1.75
Guthrie	1	1.75
Hollis	3	5.26
Kingfisher	1	1.75
Lawton	3	5.26
Loyal	2	3.51
Newcastle	1	1.75
Nicoma Park	1	1.75
Norman	1	1.75
Newalla	1	1.75
Oklahoma City	8	14.00
Ponca City	3	5.26
Purcell	2	3.51
Rose	1	1.75
Stillwater	1	1.75
Tecumsa	1	1.75
Tulsa	1	1.75
Watonga	2	3.51
Weatherford	1	1.75
Yukon	3	5.26
Wayne	1	1.75
Total	57	99.86 ^a

^aResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE II
 DISTRIBUTION OF RESPONDENTS BY AGE, EDUCATION LEVEL,
 MARITAL STATUS AND DEPENDENTS
 (N=47)

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Age (Years)</u>		
Under 20	0	0
20-29	5	10.6
30-39	20	42.6
40-49	14	29.8
50-59	6	12.8
60-69	1	2.1
70 and over	<u>1</u>	<u>2.1</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Education Level</u>		
Elementary school	0	0
Some high school	1	2.1
Completed high school	11	23.4
Trade school	5	10.6
Some college	14	29.8
Completed college	9	19.1
Some graduate school	5	10.6
Graduate degree	<u>2</u>	<u>4.3</u>
Total	47	99.9 ^a
<u>Marital Status</u>		
Single	5	10.6
Married	<u>42</u>	<u>89.4</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Dependents</u>		
Children	35	74.5
Elderly	1	2.1
No dependents	<u>11</u>	<u>23.4</u>
Total	47	100.0

^aResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

Characteristics of Business

Characteristics of dwellings used for home-based sewing businesses were placed in Table III. Over three-fourths of those responding owned their own home. The majority (93.5%) of the owners lived in single family dwellings with over two-thirds of the owners living in homes ranging in size from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet. The average amount of space being used for the sewing business was 192 square feet.

Community and neighborhood characteristics were summarized in Table IV. The majority (31.9%) of the home-based sewing businesses were located in towns or cities with populations ranging from 10,000 to 50,000. Eighty-five percent of the owners responding ran their business from a residential district.

The majority of the owners performed more than one specific activity in their home-based sewing businesses. As shown in Table V, construction of garments for individuals (14.1%), dressmaking (13.1%), and alteration of ready-to-wear (13.1%) were the activities most often performed by the home sewing businesses. Only two owners had individuals other than themselves working in their business.

As shown in Table VI, 51.1% of the business owners charged their customers for home sewing by the garment; 12.8% charged by the task, while 8.2% charged by the hour. Over a fourth of the business owners (27.7%) charged for home sewing using a combination of the methods.

The annual sales volume for the home-based sewing businesses is presented in Table VII. Eighty-five percent of the respondents had a gross income of under \$5,000, with only 13% of the owners grossing more than \$5,000. Ninety-five percent of the business owners had a net income of less than \$5,000.

TABLE III
 CHARACTERISTICS OF DWELLINGS USED FOR
 HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Item	<u>Frequency</u>	<u>Percent</u>
<u>Home Ownership</u>		
Own	36	76.6
Rent	<u>11</u>	<u>23.4</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Type of Dwelling</u>		
Single family	43	93.5
Multi family	<u>3</u>	<u>6.5</u>
Total	46	100.0
<u>Size of Dwelling</u>		
Under 1,000 sq. ft.	2	4.3
1,001 - 1,500 sq. ft.	19	41.3
1,501 - 2,000 sq. ft.	15	32.6
2,000 - 2,500 sq. ft.	5	10.9
Over 2,500 sq. ft.	<u>5</u>	<u>10.9</u>
Total	46	100.0
<u>Square Feet Used for Business</u>		
Minimum	Maximum	Mean
28	1,000	192

TABLE IV
LOCATION OF HOME-BASED BUSINESSES

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Type of Community</u>		
Farm/ranch	7	14.9
Town under 10,000 population or rural nonfarm	7	14.9
Town or city 10,000 to 50,000 population	15	31.9
Suburb of city or over 50,000 population	7	14.9
City of over 50,000 population	<u>11</u>	<u>23.4</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Type of Neighborhood</u>		
Residential	40	85.1
Commercial	1	2.1
Industrial	0	0
Rural	<u>6</u>	<u>12.8</u>
Total	47	100.0

TABLE V
ACTIVITIES PERFORMED BY BUSINESSES

Activity	Frequency	Percent
Construction of garments for individuals	40	14.1
Dressmaking	37	13.1
Alteration of ready-to-wear	37	13.1
Construction of wedding or special occasion garments	36	12.7
Construction of uniforms or costumes	31	10.9
Pattern alterations	31	10.9
Tailoring	27	9.5
Construction of model garments for fabric store	14	4.9
Monogramming	14	4.9
Other ^a	<u>15</u>	<u>5.3</u>
Total	282 ^b	99.4 ^c

^aResponses to other included: machine quilting, sewing of crafts and gift items, sewing house furnishings, dolls, applique, construction of outerwear, and sleepwear.

^bResponses total more than 47 because most owners performed more than one activity.

^cResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE VI
METHOD OF CHARGING FOR HOME SEWING

Method	Frequency	Percent
By the garment	24	51.1
By the task	6	12.8
By the hour	4	8.2
Combination of methods	<u>13</u>	<u>27.7</u>
Total	47	99.8 ^a

^aResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE VII
ANNUAL SALES VOLUME OF BUSINESSES

Income	Frequency	Percent
<u>Gross Income</u>		
Under \$5,000	36	85.7
\$5,000-\$9,999	4	9.5
\$10,000-\$14,999	1	2.4
\$15,000-\$19,999	0	0
\$20,000-\$24,999	1	2.4
\$25,000 and over	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	42	100.0
<u>Net Income</u>		
\$0	3	7.1
\$1-\$,999	37	88.1
\$5,000-\$14,999	2	4.8
\$15,000 and over	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	42	100.0

As noted in Table VIII, the vast majority of owners (93.5%) did not have insurance coverage specifically related to their home business. Only 12.8% of the owners had licensed their business.

Most of the sewing business owners noted that word of mouth was the most often used way for customers to find out about their business. As noted in Table IX calling cards and newspapers were the most often used form of advertising. Sew News and Vogue Pattern Magazines were the magazines most often subscribed to; however, many of the respondents indicated that they really did not have much time to read.

Characteristics of Business Ownership

The respondents were asked to provide information about the ownership characteristics of their home-based sewing businesses. The ownership characteristics, which include type of ownership, length of ownership, and total amount of ownership are contained in Table X.

All of the home-based sewing businesses were sole-proprietorships with each of the owners having full ownership of their businesses. The largest number (36%) of the businesses had been in operation between one and three years.

Table XI shows the number of respondents who needed start up capital and their sources of financing. Only 27% of the respondents needed start up capital to open their businesses. Personal savings (38.5%) and spouses (30.8%) were the two most widely used sources of initial investment.

TABLE VIII
INSURANCE COVERAGE AND LICENSING OF BUSINESSES

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Insurance</u>		
Yes	3	6.5
No	<u>43</u>	<u>93.5</u>
Total	46	100.0
<u>License</u>		
Yes	6	12.8
No	<u>41</u>	<u>87.2</u>
Total	47	100.0

TABLE IX
WAYS OF PROMOTING BUSINESS

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Customers learn about business through</u>		
Word of mouth	47	35.3
Flyers/brochures	44	33.1
Similar businesses	10	7.5
Store displays	10	7.5
Craft fairs	6	4.5
Phone book listing	4	3.0
Flea markets	1	.8
Other	11	8.3
Total	133 ^a	100.0
<u>Types of advertising used</u>		
Calling cards	21	33.9
Newspapers	15	24.2
Craft fairs	9	14.5
Signs outside businesses	5	8.1
Yellow pages	3	4.8
Trade shows	3	4.8
Direct mail	2	3.2
Flea markets	2	3.2
Trade magazines	1	1.6
Brochures	1	1.6
Total	62 ^a	99.9 ^b

^aResponses total more than 47 because some owners marked more than one.

^bResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE X
 TYPE, LENGTH AND PERCENT OF OWNERSHIP OF BUSINESSES
 (N=47)

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Type of ownership</u>		
Sole-proprietorship	47	100.0
Partnership	0	0
Corporation	0	0
Cooperative	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Length of ownership</u>		
Less than 1 year	9	19.1
1-2 years, 11 months	17	36.2
3-4 years, 11 months	3	6.4
5-9 years, 11 months	9	19.1
10-14 years, 11 months	4	8.5
15 years or more	<u>5</u>	<u>10.6</u>
Total	47	99.9 ^a
<u>Percent of business ownership</u>		
100%	47	100.0
75-99%	0	0
50-74%	0	0
25-49%	0	0
Less than 25%	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	47	100.0

^aResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE XI
NEED AND SOURCE OF FUNDING FOR BUSINESS

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Needed start up capital</u>		
Yes	13	27.7
No	<u>34</u>	<u>72.3</u>
Total	47	100.0
<u>Sources of initial investment</u>		
Personal savings	5	38.5
Spouse	4	30.8
Bank	2	15.4
Retirement fund	1	7.7
Friends and relatives	1	7.7
Partner's money	0	0
Small Business Administration	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>
Total	13	100.1 ^a

^aResponses total more than 100% due to rounding.

Extent of Owner's Involvement
in the Business

Responses to the questionnaire were used to determine the extent of the owner's involvement in the business. Items considered in determining this included reasons for the business, whether or not the home-based business was the owner's first business venture, why the owners worked at home, whether the owners liked working at home, and whether the owners would move the business out of the home if they could. The number of hours the owners worked per week and whether they had other employment were also considered.

As noted in Table XII, 89% of the respondents had not previously owned a home-based business. Most of the women business owners stated that they went into business to make a profit (44.7%). Self-fulfillment was also a major reason for going into business (39.5%).

Table XII also shows that women in the survey worked in the home because of its convenience and flexibility. Low overhead, independence, and children at home were also frequently cited as reasons for working at home. Over three-fourths (85.1%) of the owners said they enjoyed having their business in their home. The majority of the owners said they would not want to move their business out of their home even if circumstances allowed it. Over 82% of the respondents wanted their business to grow.

The number of hours worked by the owner per week is shown in Table XIII. Over half of the business owners (53%) worked in their business an average of 20 to 40 hours a week. Actual hours worked tended to vary according to seasonal demand. Table XIII also indicates the number of owners who worked in additional jobs outside the home.

TABLE XII
EXTENT OF OWNER INVOLVEMENT IN BUSINESS

Item	Frequency ^a	Percent ^b
<u>Previous owner</u>		
Yes	5	10.9
No	41	89.1
Total	<u>46</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Business is primarily</u>		
Profit oriented	17	44.7
For self-fulfillment	15	39.5
For creative expression	4	10.5
As a hobby	1	2.6
Total	<u>38</u>	<u>99.9</u>
<u>Reasons for working at home</u>		
Convenience	39	20.1
Flexibility	38	19.6
Low overhead	30	15.5
Independence	30	15.5
Children at home	22	11.3
Location	17	8.8
Tax break	12	6.2
Elderly at home	1	0.5
Other	5	2.5
Total	<u>194</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Like working at home</u>		
Yes	40	85.1
No	3	6.4
Total	<u>43</u>	<u>99.9</u>
<u>Move business</u>		
Yes	13	28.3
No	33	71.7
Total	<u>46</u>	<u>100.0</u>
<u>Desired size</u>		
Grow	37	82.2
Remain stable	8	17.8
Total	<u>45</u>	<u>100.0</u>

^aResponses may total more or less than 47 due to more than one answer or no response.

^bResponses total less than 100% due to rounding.

TABLE XIII
AVERAGE NUMBER OF HOURS WORKED PER WEEK

Item	Frequency	Percent
<u>Average hours worked per week</u>		
Under 10 hours	6	12.8
10-19 hours	7	14.9
20-29 hours	12	25.5
30-39 hours	13	27.7
40-49 hours	4	8.5
50-59 hours	2	4.3
60 hours or more	<u>3</u>	<u>6.4</u>
Total	47	100.1 ^a
<u>Additional employment</u>		
Yes, full time (at least 35 hours per week)	4	8.7
Yes, part time (less than 35 hours per week)	4	8.7
No	<u>38</u>	<u>82.6</u>
Total	46 ^b	100.0

^aResponses total more than 100% due to rounding.

^bResponses total less than 47 because some owners did not respond.

The majority of the business owners (82.6%) did not have other employment. Eight business owners were employed outside the home with only half of these working over 35 hours per week.

Definitive Profiles

The percentages and averages tabulated for the various characteristics previously discussed were used in the development of the definitive profiles. As previously described, percentages of 50% or more, or the highest percentage of responses if none were over 50%, were used to establish the profile characteristics of the home-based sewing business owners included in the study. The definitive profiles were presented in four sections, as detailed in the diagram in Figure 1. Included were: profile of women owners, profile of home-based sewing businesses, profile of business ownership and profile of owner's business involvement.

Profile of Women Owners

The profile of women owners of home-based sewing businesses was depicted in Figure 2. Approximately three-fourths of the women owners were between the ages of 30 and 49. Seventy-five percent had extended their formal education beyond high school. A large majority (89.4%) of the women were married and 75% had dependent children living at home.

Profile of Home-based Sewing Business

The definitive profile presenting characteristics of the home-based sewing businesses is noted in Figure 3. Three-fourths of the businesses were operated in homes owned by the business owners. The majority of the

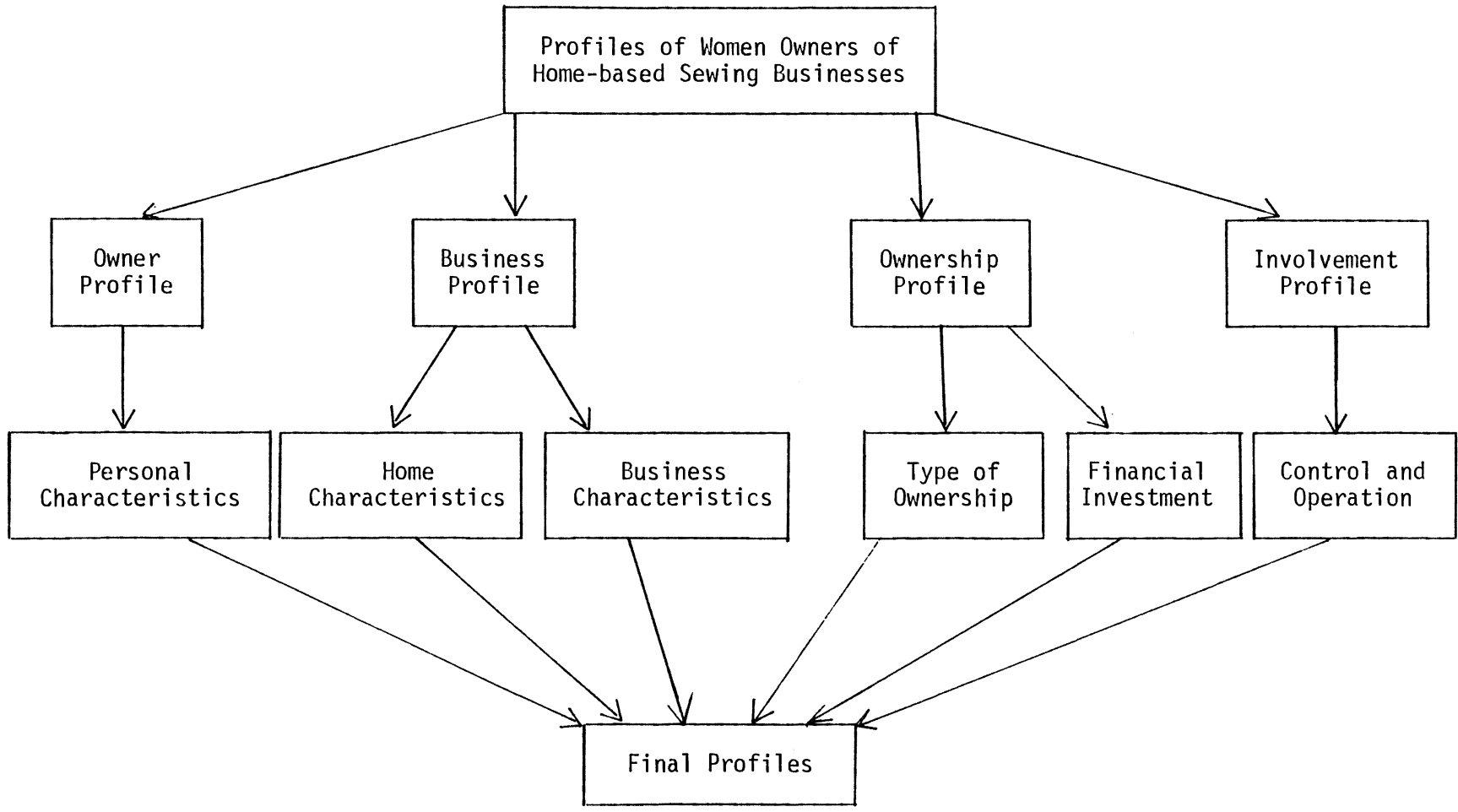


Figure 1. Diagram of Profiles of Women Owners of Home-based Sewing Businesses

Characteristics of Women

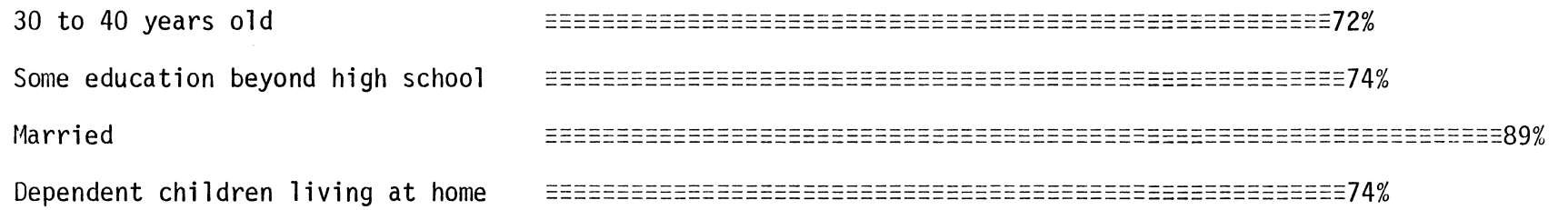


Figure 2. Profile of Owners of Home-based Sewing Businesses

Characteristics of Homes

Homes owned	=====76%
Single family dwelling	=====93%
1,000 to 2,000 sq. ft. in size	=====74%
Located in residential district	=====85%
Located in cities with 10,000 to 50,000 population	=====32%

Characteristics of Businesses

Gross income under \$5,000	=====85%
Net income under \$5,000	=====95%
No insurance coverage	=====93%
No business license	=====87%

Figure 3. Profile of Home-based Sewing Businesses

women lived in single family dwellings with over two-thirds having homes from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet in size. Over 85% of the sewing businesses were located in residential districts. The largest number (31.9%) of the businesses were in towns or cities with populations ranging from 10,000 to 50,000.

Eighty-six percent of the businesses grossed income of under \$5,000. The vast majority of the businesses had a net income of less than \$5,000. Ninety-three percent of the businesses did not have insurance coverage specifically related to their business, and only 12.8% of the owners had a business license.

Profile of Business Ownership

Figure 4 depicts the definitive profile regarding characteristics of business ownership. All of the home-based sewing businesses were sole-proprietorships. Each of the respondents owned 100% of their business. Slightly over one-third of the businesses had been in operation between one and three years. Start up capital was needed by only 27% of the respondents. Personal savings (38.5%) was the most widely used source of initial investment.

Profile of Extent of Owner's

Involvement in the Business

The profile of the extent of the owner's involvement in the business is depicted in Figure 5. The majority (89%) of the respondents had not previously owned a home-based business. The main motive for going into business was profit (44.7%). Convenience (83%) was the most often cited reason for having the business located in the home. Eighty-five percent of the respondents enjoyed having their businesses

Characteristics of Ownership

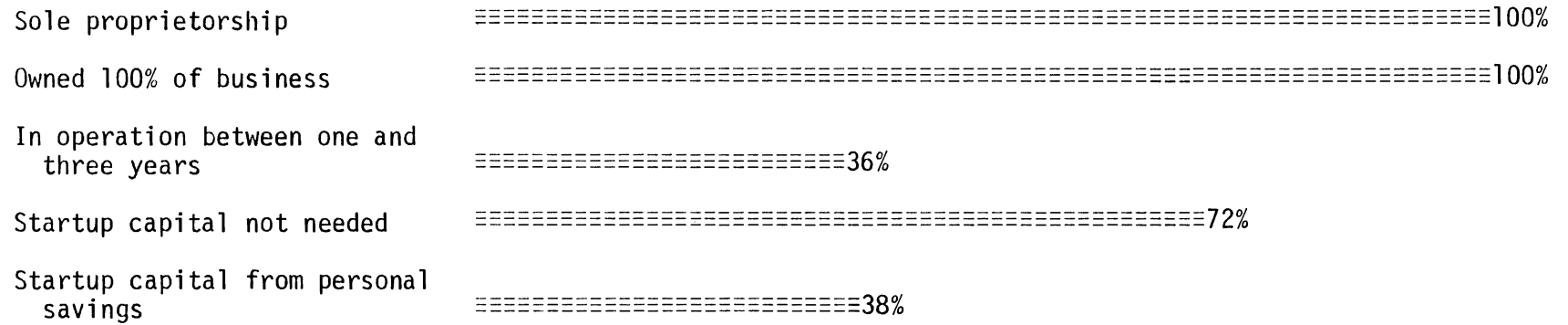


Figure 4. Profile of Business Ownership

Involvement Characteristics

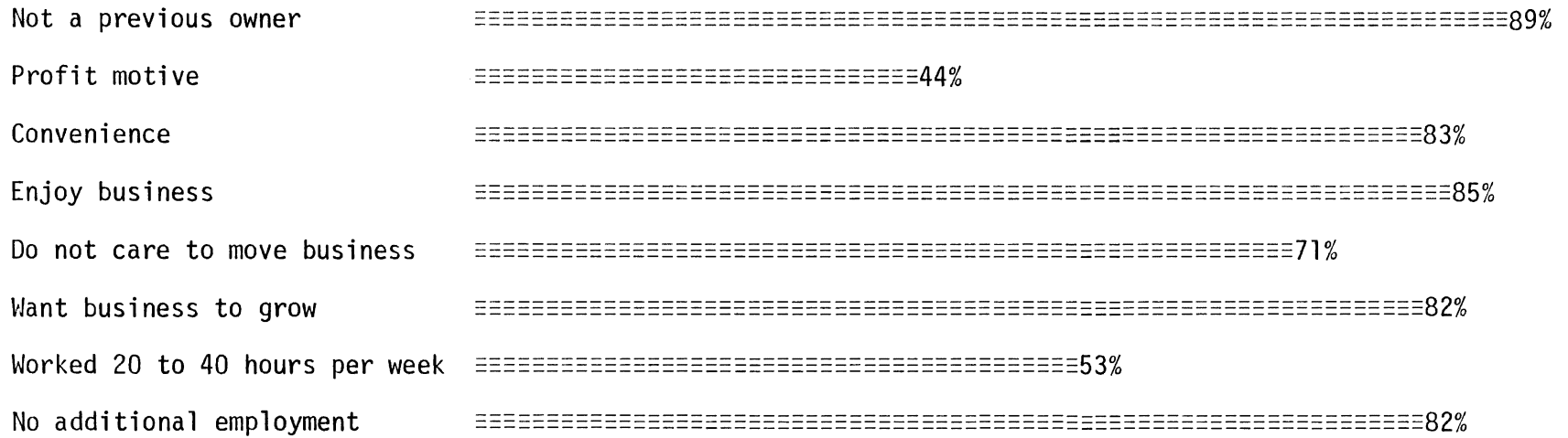


Figure 5. Profile of Extent of Owner's Involvement in the Business

in their home, and 71.7% did not want to move them. Eighty-two percent of the owners wanted their business to increase in size and profitability. Over half (53%) of the business owners worked 20 to 40 hours per week. Eighty-two percent of the owners were not employed outside the home.

Assessment of Skills

Business skills were rated according to the overall need for instruction in each of the different categories. Business concerns encompassed record keeping, financial planning, insurance, taxes, sales planning and licenses. The responses were rated on a five-point scale according to the owner's perceived need for instruction. After the responses were tabulated, the average score for each statement was obtained by adding the rating indicated by each owner and dividing the sum by the number of owners that responded. The different categories were then ranked according to the assessed level of need.

Sewing skills relating to garment fit, pattern alterations, alteration of ready-to-wear, men's alterations, fabric treatments, construction techniques and tailoring techniques were also rated according to need. After the responses were tabulated, the average score for each different category was obtained by adding the rating indicated by each owner and dividing the sum by the number of owners that responded. The different categories of sewing skills were then ranked as a group according to the overall assessed level of skill need.

Business Skills

A visual presentation of the mean values of business needs of the owners of home-based sewing businesses is depicted in Figure 6. A five-point scale was used to rate the needed skills, with five indicating needed skills and one indicating skills not needed. Home-based sewing business owners in the study appeared to need business information concerning record keeping (3.2) and taxes (3.3). Financial planning (2.7), insurance (2.02), sales planning (2.8) and licensing (2.5) were not needed as badly by the home-based sewing business owners. Overall, business skills were not perceived as being badly needed by the business owners.

Sewing Skills

A visual presentation of the needed sewing skills according to specific areas is depicted in Figure 7. A tabulation of individual items within each specific area is included in Table XIV in Appendix B.

The general areas of construction techniques (39.4) and tailoring techniques (38.3) were most widely needed by the home-based sewing business owners. Men's alterations (31.5) and garment fit (30.6) were also techniques that were frequently needed. Pattern alteration (26.4), alteration of ready-to-wear (26.4) and fabric treatments (24.6) were needed less by those operating home-sewing businesses.

A visual presentation of the mean values of the sewing techniques that the owners indicated they were skilled in is presented in Figure 8. As noted, the owners believed they were skilled at most of the techniques, with men's alteration (35.3) and tailoring techniques (40.7) having the lowest values.

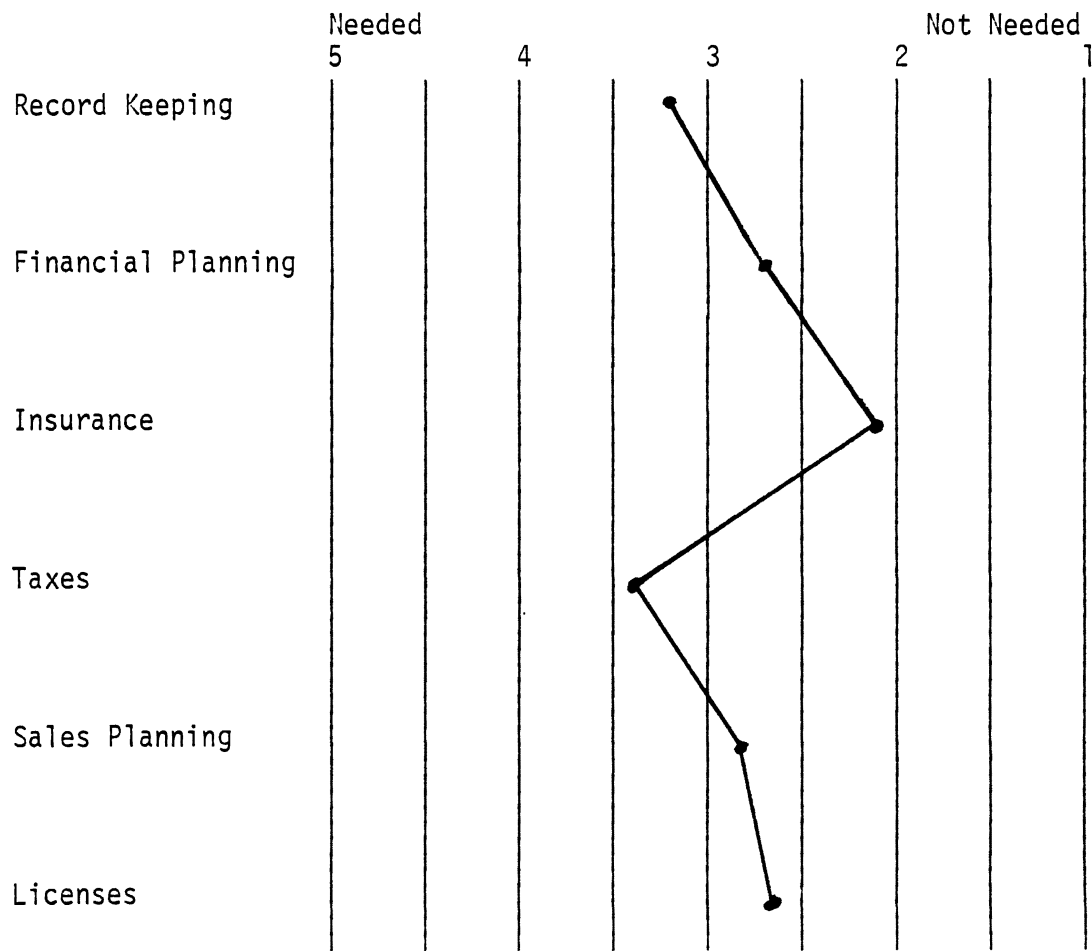


Figure 6. Business Related Skills Needed by Home-Based Sewing Business Owners

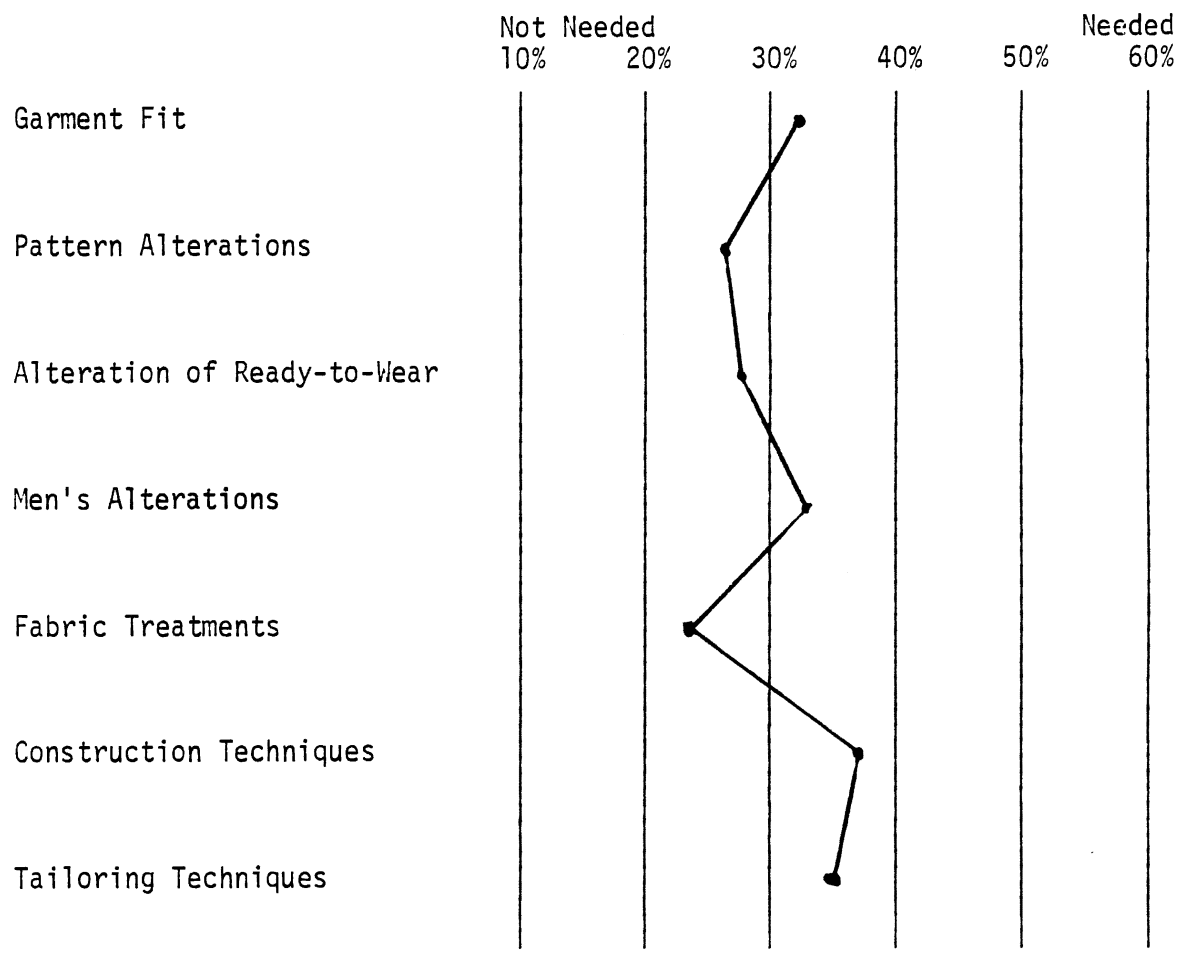


Figure 7. Sewing Skills Needed by Home-Based Sewing Business Owners

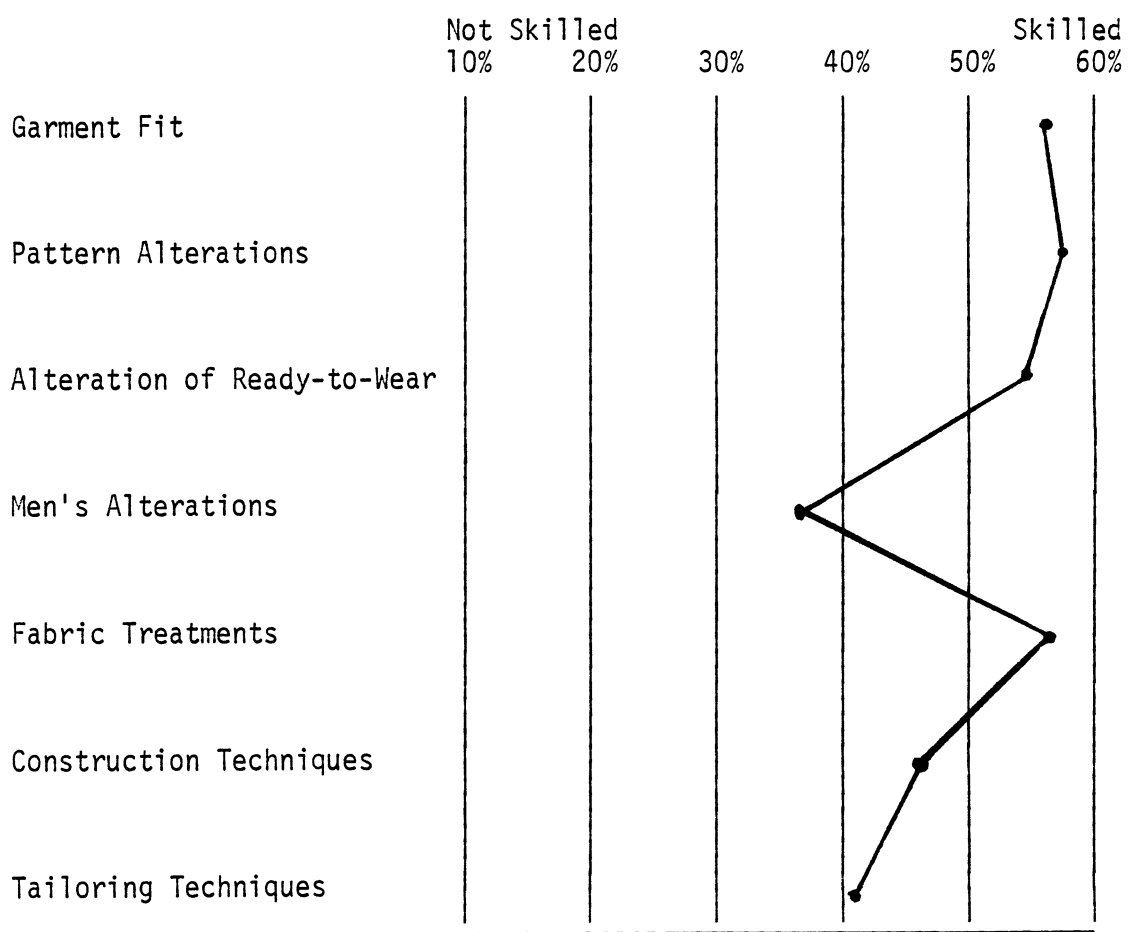


Figure 8. Skills of Home-Based Sewing Business Owners in Sewing Techniques

The business owners also had little interest in several of the techniques as noted in Figure 9. Men's alterations were of little interest to those participating in the study.

Discussion

The results of the study on the owners of home-based sewing businesses revealed that several characteristics parallel with those of entrepreneurs reviewed in the Review of Literature. Both the owners and the entrepreneurs were more likely to be married with dependent children living at home. They both tended to be older with a higher level of formal education. Little business experience and low sales volume were also common.

Although 44% of the owners who went into the sewing business went into it to make a profit, 95% of them had a net income of under \$5,000. Over half of those owners surveyed worked from 20 to 40 hours a week. This breakdown seems to show that for the number of hours worked there is an extremely low rate of return. Many of the home-based business owners indicated that they had little need for information on business skills. Since profits were low and most of the owners lacked previous business experience, they may have been unaware of some of the business skills which could have helped them to be more successful.

Based on the responses received several changes in the questionnaire should be made if it is to be used again. Question 10 under Business Information should be rethought. Many of the owners both liked and disliked working in their home. The question should be restructured to determine what they liked and what they disliked about working in their home. Question 14 on how owners charged for their work should

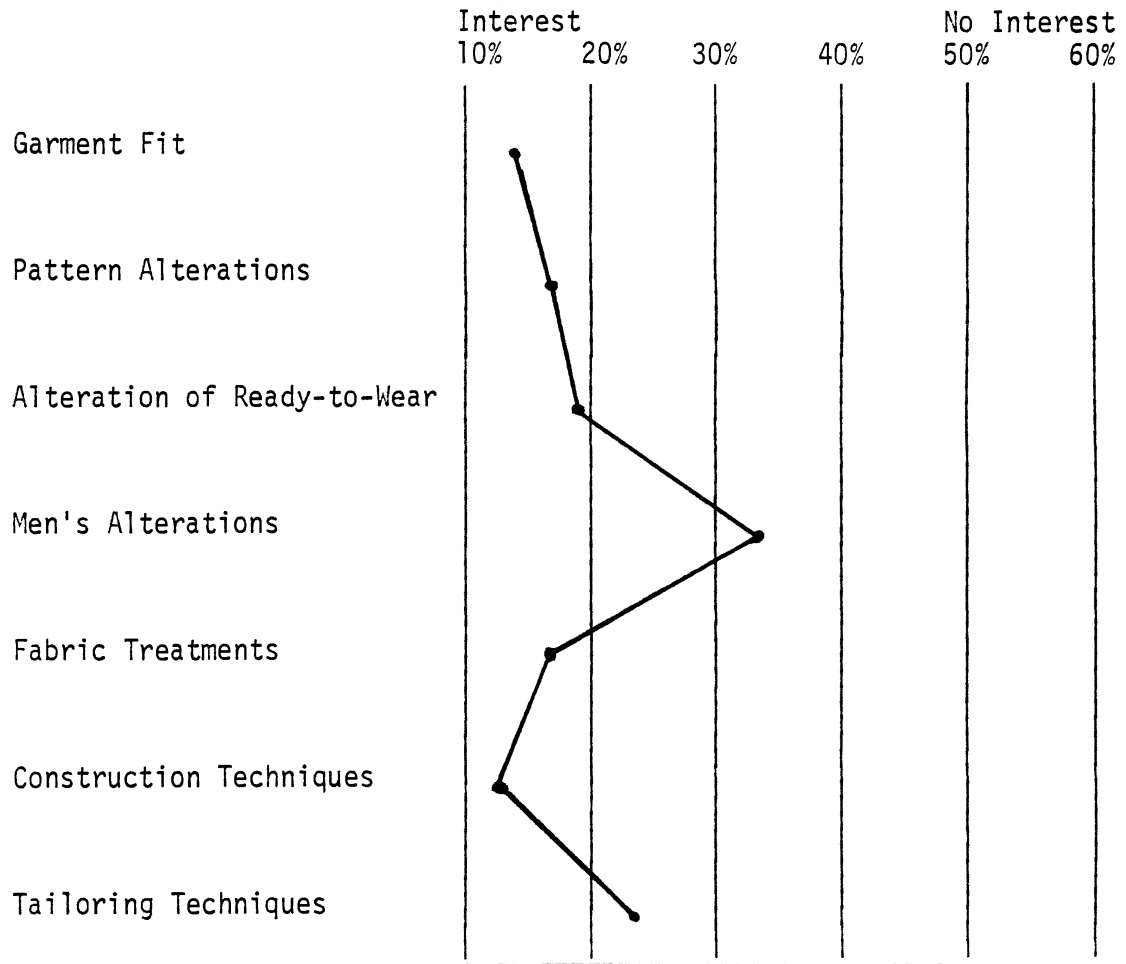


Figure 9. Interest of Home-Based Sewing Business Owners in Sewing Techniques

also be restructured to be more clear. Many owners checked more than one method of charging and accurate tabulation was very difficult. The two questions concerning income should also be changed by breaking down the amounts into smaller dollar amounts, since such a large number were under \$5,000.

Recommendations for the Cooperative

Extension Service

Several suggestions based on the findings of the research study were formulated for the Cooperative Extension Service in regard to instruction in home-based business ownership. The researcher proposed the following:

1. Continue emphasizing educational assistance programs for the owners of home-based sewing businesses. Use the data collected from the study to better understand the owners of home-based sewing businesses and their specialized needs.

2. Emphasize business skills in relation to the owners' needs. Sewing skills should also be emphasized with special care given to those skills most often needed. Time should not be spent on subjects that are of little interest to the business owners.

3. Focus on educational strategies which are most appropriate for the business owner. The women in the study were typically between the ages of 30 and 49, with the majority of them having had some formal education past high school. Most of the women had dependent children at home. Therefore, educational materials should be geared toward more educated individuals and should be presented in a manner and at a time that would be convenient for home-based business owners with children.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher investigated characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses and assessed the skill needs of the business owners. The specific objectives of the study were: 1) to identify characteristics of women who own home-based sewing businesses and to determine their degree of involvement in the control and operation of the business; 2) to identify characteristics of selected home-based sewing businesses; 3) to develop definitive profiles of home-based sewing business owners in regard to selected characteristics; and 4) to assess the needs of home-based sewing business owners in regard to business skills and sewing skills.

The researcher was aided in the study by a review of literature on home-based businesses, entrepreneurship, women in business, business ownership, and the Cooperative Extension Service. Initial direction for the study was obtained by attending Cooperative Extension Service Workshops.

Based on a review of related literature, a questionnaire was developed to gain information about home-based sewing businesses and their owners. The questionnaire contained six major sections: business information, marketing information, skill needs, finances, demographic information, and residence. A list of 194 home-based sewing business owners was compiled and a total of 47 usable questionnaires (24%) were returned.

Frequency counts and percentages were calculated for items on the returned questionnaires. Mean scores were calculated for the square footage of the business and for business and sewing skill needs. Characteristics identified in objectives one and two were used in developing the following four definitive profiles (objective three): characteristics of women owners of home-based sewing businesses; business characteristics; characteristics of business ownership; and extent of owner's business involvement.

The fourth objective was to assess the needs of home-based sewing business owners in regard to business skills and sewing skills. Conclusions were drawn and recommendations formulated from the findings of the study were made for the Cooperative Extension Service.

Summary of Findings

Findings of the study were based on characteristics of home-based business owners identified from the questionnaire responses and the summaries were presented in the definitive profiles. The results related to the study indicate that approximately three-fourths of the women owners were between the ages of 30 and 49. Seventy-five percent had extended their formal education beyond high school. The majority of the women were married and had dependent children living at home.

Three-fourths of the home-based sewing businesses were operated out of homes owned by the business owners. The majority of the businesses were in single family dwellings which ranged from 1,000 to 2,000 square feet in size. Eighty-five percent of the businesses were located in residential districts, with the majority of the businesses in towns or cities with populations of 10,000 to 50,000.

The activity performed most by the home-sewing businesses was construction of garments for individuals. Eighty-six percent of the businesses grossed under \$5,000 while the vast majority netted income of less than \$5,000. The largest number of the businesses did not have insurance specifically related to the business, and only 12.8% had a business license.

Word of mouth was the most often used method for informing customers about the sewing business, and calling cards and newspapers were the media most often used for advertising. Sew News was the magazine most often subscribed to.

All of the home-based sewing businesses were sole-proprietorships and the majority had been in business for between one and three years. Start up capital was needed by only a fourth of the respondents. Personal savings was the most widely used source of initial capital.

The majority of the respondents had not previously owned a home-based business and the main reason for opening the business was to make a profit. The most often cited reason for working at home was convenience, and 85% of the respondents enjoyed working in their home and opposed moving the business. Eighty-two percent of the owners wanted their businesses to increase in size and profitability. Over half of the business owners worked in their home 20 to 40 hours per week. Only 17% of the owners were employed at an additional job, with only two respondents having additional employees working in their business.

Business skills were rated according to the overall need for instruction in each of the different categories. The results showed little variation in the different business needs of owners. Record

keeping skills and information on taxes were recorded as needed most by business owners. Information on insurance was needed least of all. None of the business skills were heavily emphasized as needed by the business owners.

Sewing skills were also rated according to the overall need for instruction in each of the different categories. Construction techniques, tailoring techniques, and techniques on men's alterations were the most common areas in which instruction was needed. The ratings of the sewing skills were also very close with no certain technique standing out as needed by a majority of the owners. The women owners of the home-based sewing businesses rated themselves least skilled at men's alterations. Men's alterations were also rated as the sewing task of least interest.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the research, the researcher formulated the following recommendations:

1. Initiate additional research to determine the reliability of the questionnaire developed by the researcher.
2. Conduct further research on home-based sewing businesses throughout the United States to compare similarities and differences.
3. Conduct further research on different types of home-based businesses, comparing similarities and differences.
4. Replicate the study with a sample composed of both men and women home-based business owners to compare similarities and differences.
5. Conduct a statistical analysis of characteristics of home-based business owners, such as a discriminant analysis to differentiate between characteristics of successful and unsuccessful owners.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A
QUESTIONNAIRE

COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
HOME ECONOMICS PROGRAMS



COLLEGE OF HOME ECONOMICS
STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74078

Dear Home-Based Seamstress:

Home Economics Cooperative Extension is developing a new program for individuals involved in home-based sewing businesses. Included in this program will be information on business management and skill techniques required for sewing professionals. A network of owners will be organized to provide additional information and support to the owners of home-based sewing businesses.

In order to provide this information, Cooperative Extension is requesting that you complete and return the enclosed survey concerned with your business. The information gathered from your returned survey will be used in the development of this new and beneficial program. All information will remain completely confidential.

Please return the completed survey in the enclosed envelope by October 3rd. Your response is vital if the program is to meet your individual needs. Your cooperation will be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Kandy Widney

Kandy Widney
Graduate Assistant

Marilyn Burns

Marilyn Burns, Ph.D.
Extension Clothing Specialist

Please READ CAREFULLY each question on the survey and answer ALL questions to the best of your knowledge.

BUSINESS INFORMATION

1. What activities does your home-based sewing business perform? (Check as many as apply)

- 1. Construction of garments for individuals
- 2. Dressmaking
- 3. Tailoring
- 4. Construction of wedding or special occasion garments
- 5. Construction of uniforms or costumes
- 6. Construction of model garments for fabric stores
- 7. Alteration of ready-to-wear
- 8. Pattern alterations
- 9. Monogramming
- 10. Other (specify) _____

If your business does not perform any of the above services, please return the survey uncompleted. Thank you.

2. How long have you been in business?

- 1. Less than 1 year
- 2. 1-2 years, 11 months
- 3. 3-4 years, 11 months
- 4. 5-9 years, 11 months
- 5. 10-14 years, 11 months
- 6. 15 years or more

3. Was startup capital needed to start your business?

- 1. Yes, Amount needed _____
- 2. No

4. If yes, where did you get the initial investment/financing?

- 1. Personal savings
- 2. Retirement fund
- 3. Spouse
- 4. Friends and relatives
- 5. Partner's money
- 6. Bank
- 7. Small Business Administration
- 8. Other (specify) _____

5. Is your home-based sewing business a

- 1. Sole ownership
- 2. Partnership
- 3. Corporation
- 4. Cooperative
- 5. Other (specify) _____

6. How much of the business do you own?

- 1. 100%
- 2. 75-99%
- 3. 50-74%
- 4. 25-49%
- 5. less than 25%

7. Is your present home-based business the first business you have ever owned?

- 1. Yes
- 2. No

8. Is your present home-based sewing business primarily (check one)

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Profit oriented | <input type="checkbox"/> 4. For creative expression |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Career oriented | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. As a hobby |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. For self-fulfillment | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Other (specify) _____ |

9. Why do you work in your home? (check all that apply)

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Tax break | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. Independence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Low overhead | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Children at home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. Convenience | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Elderly parents at home |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Flexibility | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. Other (specify) _____ |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Location (transportation) | |

10. Do you like working in your home?

1. Yes
 2. No
 Why? _____

11. Would you move the business out of your home if you could?

1. Yes
 2. No
 Why? _____

12. On the average, how many hours a week do you work in your home-based business?

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Under 10 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 40-49 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 10-19 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. 50-59 hours |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 20-29 hours | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. 60 hours or more |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 30-39 hours | |

13. How much do you earn per hour of work? _____

14. Do you charge

1. By the garment
 a. set amount for dress, shirt, etc.
 b. varies by fabric, pattern, design
 2. By the hour
 3. By the task
 4. Other (specify) _____

15. Do you give quantity discounts to your customers?

1. Yes
 2. No

16. In addition to your sewing business, do you work outside your home for wages?

1. Yes, full time (at least 35 hours per week)
 2. Yes, part time (less than 35 hours per week)
 3. No

17. How many family members (other than yourself) work in your home-based sewing business?

_____ (number) _____ (ages)

The average number of hours worked per person _____
(average number of hours)

18. How many paid employees (other than family) do you have?

_____ What is the average number of hours worked per person?
(number) _____ (average number of hours worked)

MARKETING INFORMATION

1. How do clients and customers find out about your business?

- | | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Word of mouth | _____ 5. Similar businesses |
| _____ 2. Craft fairs | _____ 6. Phone book listing |
| _____ 3. Flea markets | _____ 7. Store displays |
| _____ 4. Flyers/brochures | _____ 8. Other (specify) _____ |

2. What types of advertising have you used?

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| _____ 1. Yellow pages | _____ 8. Trade shows |
| _____ 2. Newspapers | _____ 9. Flea markets |
| _____ 3. Trade magazines | _____ 10. Craft fairs |
| _____ 4. General magazines | _____ 11. Catalogs |
| _____ 5. Direct mail | _____ 12. Calling cards |
| _____ 6. Brochures | _____ 13. Other (specify) _____ |
| _____ 7. Signs outside business | |

3. Which have been most beneficial? _____

4. What magazines or trade publications do you subscribe to? _____

SKILL NEEDS

1. Indicate which of the following areas of business information are needed in your home-based sewing business by circling the degree of need.

	Needed			Not Needed	
1. Record keeping	5	4	3	2	1
2. Financial planning	5	4	3	2	1
3. Insurance	5	4	3	2	1
4. Taxes	5	4	3	2	1
5. Sales planning	5	4	3	2	1
6. Licenses	5	4	3	2	1

2. Please check (✓) each item in each section below according to your interests, needs for instruction, and skill level.

A. Garment Fit (Women's)

	No Interest	Need Instruction	Skilled
1. General indicators of ill fit			
2. Specific adjustments for ill fit:			
a. Armhole/sleeve			
b. Bust			
c. Shoulders			
d. Upper back			
e. Waist			
f. Hip			
3. How to pin fit			
4. Other, please list _____			

B. Pattern Alteration (Women's)

1. When to adjust sides of the pattern . . .			
2. Bust			
3. Bodice			
4. Shoulders			
5. Sleeve			
6. Skirt			
7. Pants			
8. Other, please list _____			

C. Alteration of Ready-to-Wear

1. Bodice			
2. Darts			
3. Shoulders			
4. Sleeve			
5. Waistline			
6. Skirt			
7. Pants			
8. Other, please list _____			

D. Men's Alterations

1. Trouser's:			
a. Rise			
b. Waistline			
c. Replacing zippers			
2. Jacket:			
a. Sloping shoulder			
b. Pulling across back			
3. Other, please list _____			

No Need
Interest Instruction Skilled

E. Fabric Treatments

1. Techniques on how to sew and/or alter:			
a. Knits			
b. Stretch knits			
c. Wovens			
d. Nap of pile			
e. Wool or wool blends			
f. Sheers			
g. Textured			
h. Plaids/checks/striped/one-way design.			
i. Featherweight fabrics			
2. Other, please list _____			

F. Construction Techniques

1. Timesaving shortcuts			
2. Pressing techniques			
3. Seam finishes			
4. Machine tension adjustment			
5. Other, please list _____			

G. Tailoring Techniques

1. Interfacing:			
a. Sew in			
b. Fusible			
c. Where to interface			
2. Lapels:			
a. Machine method			
b. Fused method			
c. Hand method			
3. Undercollar:			
a. Machine method			
b. Fusible method			
c. Hand method			
4. Other, please list _____			

FINANCES

1. What percent of total family income comes from your business?

- | | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| ___ 1. 10% or less | ___ 6. 51 to 60% |
| ___ 2. 11 to 20% | ___ 7. 61 to 70% |
| ___ 3. 21 to 30% | ___ 8. 71 to 80% |
| ___ 4. 31 to 40% | ___ 9. 81 to 90% |
| ___ 5. 41 to 50% | ___ 10. 91 to 100% |

2. Do you desire that amount to

1. Grow
 2. Remain stable
 3. Decline

3. Gross income last year from home-based sewing business:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Under \$5,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. \$25,000 - \$ 29,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. \$ 5,000 - \$ 9,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. \$30,000 - \$ 49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. \$10,000 - \$14,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. \$50,000 - \$ 74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. \$15,000 - \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. \$75,000 - \$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. \$20,000 - \$24,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. Over \$100,000 |

4. Net income last year from home-based sewing business:

- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. \$0 | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. \$25,000 - \$ 29,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. \$ 1 - \$ 4,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. \$30,000 - \$ 49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. \$ 5,000 - \$14,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 9. \$50,000 - \$ 74,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. \$10,000 - \$14,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 10. \$75,000 - \$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 5. \$15,000 - \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> 11. Over \$100,000 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 6. \$20,000 - \$24,999 | |

5. Do you have insurance coverage specifically related to your home-based business?

1. Yes
 2. No

6. Do you have any type of license for your business?

1. Yes, please list _____
 2. No

DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION

1. Sex:

1. Male
 2. Female

2. Age:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Under 20 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. 50-59 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. 20-29 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. 60-69 years |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. 30-39 years | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. 70 and over |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. 40-49 years | |

3. Marital Status:

1. Single
 2. Married

4. Education: (Check highest level completed)

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1. Elementary school | <input type="checkbox"/> 5. Some college |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 2. Some high school | <input type="checkbox"/> 6. College |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 3. High school | <input type="checkbox"/> 7. Some graduate school |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 4. Trade School | <input type="checkbox"/> 8. Graduate degree |

5. Dependents at Home:

1. Children _____ Number _____ Ages _____
 2. Elderly _____ Number _____
 3. Other (specify) _____

RESIDENCE

1. Home: 2. Dwelling:
1. Own 1. Single family
2. Rent 2. Multi family
3. Size of Dwelling: 4. Approximate number of square feet used
for sewing business
1. Under 1,000 sq. ft. _____
2. 1,001 - 1,500 sq. ft.
3. 1,501 - 2,000 sq. ft.
4. 2,000 - 25,000 sq. ft.
5. Over 2,500 sq. ft.
5. Community:
1. Farm/Ranch
2. Town under 10,000 population or rural nonfarm
3. Town or city 10,000 to 50,000 population
4. Suburb of city of over 50,000 population
5. City of over 50,000 population
6. Neighborhood: (zoning)
1. Residential
2. Commercial
3. Industrial
4. Rural
5. Other (specify) _____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Please return survey in the enclosed envelope to:

Dr. Marilyn Burns, State Clothing Specialist
 College of Home Economics
 HEW 209, Oklahoma State University
 Stillwater, OK 74078-0337

_____ This number is for follow-up
 purposes only.

APPENDIX B
TABULATION OF SPECIFIC
SEWING TECHNIQUES

TABLE XIV
 INTEREST, NEED FOR INSTRUCTION AND SKILL LEVEL
 IN SPECIFIC SEWING TECHNIQUES

Skills	No Interest % ^a	Need Instruction % ^a	Skilled % ^a
A. <u>Garment Fit (Women's)</u>			
1. General indicators of ill fit	13	26	62
2. Specific adjustments for ill fit			
a. Armhole/sleeve	15	40	45
b. Bust	15	36	49
c. Shoulders	13	38	49
d. Upper back	13	38	49
e. Waist	13	21	66
f. Hip	13	21	66
3. How to pin fit	15	23	62
B. <u>Pattern Alteration (Women's)</u>			
1. When to adjust sides of the pattern	13	21	66
2. Bust	13	30	57
3. Bodice	15	23	62
4. Shoulders	15	28	57
5. Sleeve	15	30	55
6. Skirt	15	17	68
7. Pants	15	37	49
C. <u>Alteration of Ready-to-Wear</u>			
1. Bodice	19	32	49
2. Darts	19	26	55
3. Shoulders	19	32	49
4. Sleeve	19	23	57
5. Waistline	19	21	60
6. Skirt	19	19	62
7. Pants	15	32	53
D. <u>Men's Alterations</u>			
1. Trouser's:			
a. Rise	34	38	28
b. Waistline	30	19	51
c. Replacing zippers	30	19	51
2. Jacket:			
a. Sloping shoulder	36	40	23
b. Pulling across back	36	40	23
E. <u>Fabric Treatments</u>			
1. Techniques on how to sew and/or alter:			
a. Knits	21	23	55
b. Stretch knits	19	32	49
c. Wovens	17	17	66
d. Nap of pile	19	21	60
e. Wool or wool blends	19	17	64
f. Sheers	17	30	53
g. Textured	19	21	60
h. Plaids/checks/striped/one-way design	17	21	62
i. Featherweight fabrics	15	38	47

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Skills	No Interest % ^a	Need Instruction % ^a	Skilled % ^a
F. <u>Construction Techniques</u>			
1. Timesaving shortcuts	9	60	32
2. Pressing techniques	13	36	51
3. Seam finishes	11	30	60
4. Machine tension adjustment	15	32	53
G. <u>Tailoring Techniques</u>			
1. Interfacing:			
a. Sew in	19	21	60
b. Fusible	19	21	60
c. Where to interface	19	28	53
2. Lapels:			
a. Machine method	19	45	36
b. Fused method	21	43	36
c. Hand method	26	47	28
3. Undercollar:			
a. Machine method	19	47	34
b. Fusible method	21	45	34
c. Hand method	26	49	26

^aPercent of response rounded to nearest whole number.

VITA

Kandy Renee Widney

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: HOME-BASED SEWING BUSINESS OWNERS: DEFINITIVE PROFILES
AND SKILL ASSESSMENT

Major Field: Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Watonga, Oklahoma, September 29, 1963;
the daughter of Wilford and Darlene Widney.

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