

A REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE CONSUMER
STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAMS AND
COURSE OFFERINGS IN
HOME ECONOMICS

By

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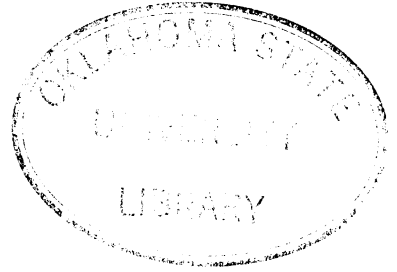
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PREFACE

This study was concerned with the status of consumer studies degree programs in home economics units. The primary objective was to identify and describe the nature of available undergraduate programs.

The author wishes to express her appreciation to her major adviser, Dr. E. Carl Hall, for his unending patience and support throughout this entire process. Sincere appreciation is also expressed to other committee members: Mrs. Bonnie Braun, Dr. Sharon Nickols, and Dr. William L. Johnston. A note of thanks is also extended to Ms. Marion Reid for her assistance in typing the final manuscript. In addition, appreciation is expressed to Ms. Denise Dutt who helped me complete the final draft long-distance.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Consumer studies is emerging as a professional degree program in institutions of higher learning. According to Burton (1976), there is a demand for individuals capable of establishing and implementing consumer affairs programs. An Office of Consumer Affairs report also stressed the need for programs to train consumer affairs specialists (Mohr, 1976).

In response to this need, several academic disciplines including home economics, agricultural economics, sociology and business have implemented consumer studies degree programs (Burton, 1976; Jackson, 1977; McKittrick, 1977; Parker, 1977).

Despite widespread growth and interest in consumer studies degree programs, definition and direction is needed. According to Burton (1975), persons who enter careers in the consumer field have no efficient way of determining which colleges and universities offer consumer studies degree programs. Jackson (1977) stressed that it is not clear what topics of study, cognitive learning behaviors, and program guidelines are best suited to the design and implementation of successful consumer affairs programs. One primary source of information about consumer studies degree programs came from a study commissioned by the Office of Consumer Affairs (Burton, 1975). This study was designed to gather and report available information

about educational and career opportunities in the consumer field. It identified 37 institutions of higher learning offering undergraduate and graduate consumer studies programs. Although this listing is the most comprehensive of its kind, the researcher stressed that further study was needed.

This present study complements previous research by focusing on the contribution of home economics to the consumer field. Home economics since its inception in the late 1800's has evidenced a strong interest in and concern for consumers (Baldwin, 1973). In all areas of home economics, the study of the roles played by consumers are important. Brooks (1973) stressed that home economics had the potential to provide strong leadership in the consumer field. Yet, in order for home economics to reach its leadership potential, its current role must be better understood. It was the lack of comprehensive empirical data concerning consumer studies programs in home economics that provided the basis for this study.

Purpose of the Study

This study was designed to delineate the status of consumer studies degree programs available through undergraduate home economics units in the United States. Specifically this study:

1. Identified and described home economics units that offered consumer studies degree programs;
2. Identified and described consumer studies course offerings within degree programs
3. Analyzed the conceptual content of catalog course descriptions of consumer studies course offerings; and

4. Made recommendations for use of the findings of this study.

Research Questions

The following questions were answered by this study:

1. Which home economics units have consumer studies degree programs?
2. What is the nature of available consumer studies degree programs?
3. What is the nature of consumer studies course offerings within degree programs?
4. What is the nature of the conceptual content of consumer studies course offerings?
5. What recommendations can be made for use of findings of this study?

Assumptions

The following assumptions guided this study:

1. Data found in college catalogs is reasonably accurate. According to Stark (1976), the courts have traditionally viewed the college catalog as a contract. Mancuso (1976) reports that a long line of case law has established that the relationship between a student and his institution of higher learning is primarily contractual in nature and that the college catalog is part of the contract. As a result, institutions recognize their responsibility to provide accurate and reliable data in these publications. According to El Khawas (1976) many institutions have ombudsman systems and statements of student rights and have carefully reviewed the accuracy of college

catalogs. Callen and Jonsen (1976) report that program evaluation and monitoring is a growing activity in several states. Universities, in response to public sensitivity to academic malpractice, have made recommendations to eliminate inequities. For example, one recommendation has been to standardize information in college catalogs. According to Bender (1975), there is also strong evidence to suggest that college catalogs conform to the Federal Trade Commission definition of advertising. Although deviations may be found, it is believed that as a result of increased awareness of the institutions legal responsibility to provide accurate data in college catalogs; the emphasis on educational accountability; and the evidence to support the relationship to the Federal Trade Commission definition of advertising; the catalog provides an accurate, acceptable source of data.

2. Catalog course descriptions provide definition of consumer studies degree programs. The college catalog delineates the institutions legal responsibility to provide the content specified in the course description (Peterson, 1970). Deviations may be found. Yet, catalog course descriptions of consumer studies course offerings should define degree programs.

3. All home economics units were included.

Limitations

The following limitations applied to this study:

1. The study was limited to an examination of data available through the college catalog.

2. This study was limited to an examination of the curricula in home economics units.

Definitions

Definitions that guided this study were:

College catalog: An exposition of the objectives, viewpoint, curricula, tuition and other data concerning an institution of higher learning, usually issued annually; may be limited to a single school of an institution (Good, 1973, p. 81).

Concept: Key ideas identified by each noun and its adjective modifiers found in the course description.

Consumer studies curricula: The course offerings listed in the catalog as offered by the consumer studies degree program unit.

Consumer studies degree program: Concentrated study in: consumer affairs, consumer economics, consumer education, consumer educational services, consumer finance, consumer management, consumer policy, consumer relations, consumer resources, consumer sciences, consumer services, consumer studies, consumer technology, family economics¹, family finance¹, family resources, family resource management, or household economics¹.

Consumer studies course offering: A course offering that had as a major focus an educational and informational investment in the human agent's capabilities for performing those roles associated with the direction of economic activity, satisfying of public and private wants, and improving economic performance in the marketplace (Uhl, et al, 1970).

Consumer studies degree program unit: A department, college or

¹ These terms refer to a narrower body of subject matter than do other terms. They were included because it is in these areas that preparation for careers in the consumer field has traditionally occurred.

school in the home economics unit where the administration of consumer studies degree programs occurs.

Course offering: Organized support matter in which instruction is offered within a given period of time and for which credit towards graduation is normally given (Good, 1973).

Home economics: A discipline that draws from the biological, social and physical sciences, and the humanities the content needed to help people solve problems of food, clothing, shelter and environment; and that deals with the development of understandings, skills, and attitudes that are essential to the improvement of good ways of living for individuals and families (Good, 1973, p. 440).

Home economics unit: "A department, division, school, or college of home economics" (Johnson and Swope, 1970, p. 4).

Institution of higher learning: A college, university, or similar institution offering suitable instruction for those who have completed secondary school or its equivalent (Good, 1973, p. 46).

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The topic of consumer studies degree programs has not been prevalent in recent research. The limited number of related studies tended to document that more comprehensive data was needed concerning the availability of consumer studies degree programs. Additional historic perspective was added through the review of selected studies conducted in the 1940's.

Surveys of Home Economics Programs

A recent study by the American Home Economics Association (Harper, 1974) reported 363 baccalaureate degree programs in undergraduate home economics units. Barron's Educational Series (1976) identified 369 preprofessional degree programs in home economics. Roth (1976) found 404 institutions of higher learning offering undergraduate home economics degree programs.

Surveys of Consumer Studies Degree Programs

Consumer studies curricula has primarily been analyzed in relation to family economics-home management (Harper, 1974; Roth, 1976; Association of Administrators of Home Economics, 1976; Cass and Birnbaum, 1976. In total these surveys identified 91 consumer economics-home management programs. A multidisciplinary listing of

programs was compiled by the Office of Consumer Affairs (Burton, 1975). The study identified 37 colleges and universities with undergraduate and graduate degree programs in the consumer area.

Surveys of Consumer Studies Course Offerings

In the 1930's and early 1940's a number of studies were conducted to delineate the status of consumer studies course offerings. The most extensive survey in this area was conducted by Marshall (1941). Marshall surveyed college catalogs and identified 920 consumption courses in 451 universities. Courses were found in home economics, economics, business, sociology, agricultural economics, and marketing. The majority of the course offerings were in home economics and were of a practical nature with an emphasis on the techniques of consumption. Identified course offerings were classified into ten major subject matter categories.

Other surveys identified consumer studies course offerings in junior colleges and women's colleges (Marshall, 1941; Miner, 1944). In addition, other research (DeBrum and Mendenhall, 1940; Damon, 1940; and Crew, 1941) focused on consumer studies course offerings in one specific discipline such as business, chemistry and economics. Primarily these studies were conducted with institution administrators in order to identify available course offerings.

Analysis of college level syllabi and textbooks was also the focus of research during this time period (Andrews, 1939; Harap, 1935; Harap, 1938; and Wilhelms, 1943). The general procedures followed in all of these studies was very similar. First, broad categories and narrower concepts which delineated the content were specified. These concepts

and categories were identified through an analysis of current literature in the field and the subject matter under consideration. Following the development of these categories and concept headings, concepts in the textbooks and syllabi were identified and classified by category.

The aforementioned studies served a number of functions for the educational programs of the time period. They stimulated improvements in the consumer studies curricula and generally promoted a better quality of instruction in the consumer field.

Content Analysis

Content analysis is a research technique for making inferences by systematically and objectively identifying the content of communications (Berelson, 1952; Holsti, 1968; and Budd, Thorpe and Donahew, 1967).

According to Nachimas (1976), content analysis procedure involves the interaction of two processes; specification of the content characteristics to be measured and the application of specific criteria for inclusion or exclusion of characteristics of different materials. Content analysis enables different researchers to obtain similar results from the same messages (Nachimas, 1976; and Berelson, 1972).

One of the essentials of a good content analysis study is the development of clearly defined and well adapted categories. According to Berelson (1952, p. 47) "although competent performance on other parts of the analytic process are necessary, the formulation and development of appropriate categories takes on central importance."

Content analysis should employ the most meaningful categories for the problem that is being considered. Relatively specific and concrete categories are the most meaningful. When executed properly and the

categories are well defined, content analysis produces a document that is free from errors, and easily replicable by researchers in other circumstances.

Summary

In completing this study, the researcher first surveyed home economics programs. Surveys concerning the availability of consumer studies and family economics programs in these home economics units were analyzed. The researcher then reviewed studies pertaining to content analysis as a research technique. The literature reviewed in this chapter provided the framework for the design of this research.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH PROCEDURES

This chapter defines research procedures. The first section discusses procedures followed in identifying consumer studies degree programs. Procedures followed in identifying and describing consumer studies course offerings are discussed in the second section. In the third section procedures followed in analyzing the conceptual content of consumer studies course offerings are discussed. Methods used to assure accuracy of data collection are described in the fourth section. The fifth section describes procedures used in analysis.

Consumer Studies Degree Programs

A comprehensive listing of undergraduate home economics units was compiled using the findings of several recent studies (Harper, 1974; Barron's Educational Series, 1976; and Roth, 1976). Each of the aforementioned surveys was designed to produce comprehensive listings of home economics units. However, no two surveys produced identical results. Therefore, no single survey was considered the best authority and it was believed that a comprehensive list of home economics units identified by these surveys would provide a better data base than would have been provided by any one survey. The complete listing of home economics units identified can be found in Appendix A.

For all home economics units identified, a college catalog for

the 1977-1978 academic year was procured. A number of these catalogs were available from the National Microfilm Library, a service that makes microfiche copies of college catalogs available to interested groups. Three hundred and eighty-four (384) catalogs, 81.2 percent of the population, were available from this source.

When catalogs were unavailable from the National Microfilm Library, form letters were sent to the Admissions Office of each institution, requesting a catalog. These requests resulted in the procurement of 73 catalogs or an additional 15.4 percent of the population. Appendix B includes copies of letters sent to institutions requesting current catalogs.

After catalogs were procured, the next step was to determine which institutions had consumer studies degree programs. The researcher reviewed each catalog index, searched the table of contents or scanned the catalog thoroughly until relevant information about home economics programs was identified. Home economics or human ecology were the key words in the catalog which identified such programs. The researcher then read information provided about available degree programs to determine if consumer studies degree programs were included. No further study of the catalog was made unless a consumer studies degree program was identified. Institutions with consumer studies degree programs were studied further. The catalogs of these institutions provided the data base for the rest of this study.

After consumer studies degree programs were identified, the researcher collected data about each institution on an instrument developed for this study. The instrument had four parts.

Part 1: to record data about the characteristics of the program including geographic location, contact person, title of degree program(s), title of the degree program unit(s), and a listing of available consumer studies course offerings.

Part 2: to record the concepts that were identified in each course offering.

Part 3: to record by categories, concepts identified in consumer studies course offerings.

Part 4: to record by category the frequency with which concepts were found in each course offering. A copy of this instrument can be found in Appendix C.

Data descriptive of the characteristics of each institution with a consumer studies degree program was procured through a thorough search of the catalog. Regardless of the catalog's organization, every attempt was made to secure needed data about institutions with degree programs. The researcher transferred all data about consumer studies programs from the catalog to the data collection instrument.

Consumer Studies Course Offerings

For each course offering in a degree program, the following procedure was implemented to identify consumer studies concepts. Each noun and their adjective modifiers (excluding "the", "an", and "a") were identified and recorded. For example, the following is a course description for Consumer Problems:

Consumer Problems: the study of the economic problems and responsibilities of consumers. Guides for developing good buymanship for individual and household use.

A listing of the concepts that were identified for this course include:

Study	Guides
Economic Problems	Good Buymanship
Responsibilities	Individual and Household Use
Consumers	

To identify concepts in course descriptions the same procedure was followed each time. After concepts were identified, they were classified into one of nine subject matter categories. These categories were developed by the researcher in close consultation with the graduate committee. The nine categories were as follows:

1. Types and Sources of Consumer Resources - human and non-human factors which enable consumers to manage their affairs and effectively achieve their goals.
2. Consumer Behavior and the Decision-Making Process - a) factors and forces which affect the ability of consumers to make choices and behavior patterns in the allocation of resources; b) decision-making as a process of needs assessment, value clarification, goal setting, information gathering and evaluation, and the consideration of alternatives in the implementation of consumer decisions.
3. Family Finance - a) principles of individual and/or family financial planning; b) buymanship, shopping skills, and buying aids; c) management and evaluation as it relates to expenditures for consumer goods and services.
4. Consumer Resource Management - management principles, procedures, and approaches relating to the acquisition and allocation of human and non-human resources.
5. Economic and Consumption Theory - a) theories and principles

relating to economics and consumption; b) theories of markets; c) exchanges between producers and consumers; d) cost benefit analysis; e) monetary and fiscal policies; and f) comparative economic systems.

6. Consumer Issues and Problems - marketplace, family financial, economic and environmental issues and/or problems confronted by consumers.

7. Consumer Education Curriculum Development - the principles, theories, and components involved in the design and implementation of consumer education curricula.

8. Consumer Counseling - principles and techniques of consumer counseling.

9. Business, Government, and Consumer Affairs and Public Policy - a) the historical foundations of the consumer movement; b) consumer rights, roles and responsibilities; c) federal, state, and local laws and public policy; d) public policy concerns; e) the implementation of business government and consumer related programs with an impact on the consumer's interest.

A miscellaneous category was also provided for those concepts that did not logically fit into one of the other categories. Whenever possible like concepts were grouped together to facilitate the reporting of the data.

After all the concepts were identified and categorized, a table was constructed that included all course offerings and the concepts that could be identified. Concepts were grouped alphabetically by category.

Accuracy of Data Collection

To assure accuracy of data collection, ten percent of the catalogs were recoded six months after the original data collection. Each catalog was assigned a number and ten percent of the numbers were drawn at random from a pool. Catalogs corresponding to the numbers drawn were recoded and a comparison was made between the second and the original coding to determine accuracy. The percentage agreement between the original coding and the coding check was then computed. In all cases the percentage agreement was greater than 95 percent.

Analysis

Frequency distribution tables were used to report the data. According to Parsons (1974, p. 8), a frequency distribution table is one "in which observed numerical values of a variable are grouped or classified according to their numerical magnitude with respect to the trait under consideration." According to Fox (1972), the use of these procedures is beneficial because there is ease of communication without lack of information. Through these procedures, large masses of data can be condensed and restructured so that the basic characteristics are clearly evident. In all cases, analysis was a process of computing percentages.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Discussion of findings is divided into four major sections. In the first, consumer studies degree programs are described. The survey of course offerings is presented in the second section. The conceptual focus of consumer studies course offerings as an aggregate is defined in the third section. In the fourth section, findings are summarized as they relate to the research questions.

Consumer Studies Degree Programs

As noted in the previous chapter, the first step in this project was to identify home economics units. These units are listed in Appendix A. Those home economics units having consumer studies programs were identified; these units are listed in Table 1, pages 18 to 21. Current data were available for all but two institutions (CUNY-Brooklyn College, West Virginia State College). In these cases either an older catalog or personal contact established the existence of a program. Eighty-eight (88) or 18.6 percent of the home economics units reviewed had degree programs in consumer studies. This represents a sizable increase over the number of programs identified by previous researchers (Burton, 1975; Harper, 1974; Roth, 1976; Association of Administrators of Home Economics, 1976; Cass and Birnbaum, 1976).

TABLE I
HOME ECONOMICS UNITS WITH CONSUMER
STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAMS

State	Univeristy
Alabama	Auburn University
	University of Alabama-Tuscaloosa
Arizona	University of Arizona
California	California Polytechnic State University-Pomona
	California State University- Fresno
	California State University- Northridge
	California State University- Sacramento
	California State University- San Diego (San Diego State University)
	Mount Saint Mary's College- Los Angeles
Colorado	Colorado State University
Conneticut	Saint Joseph College
	University of Conneticut
Delaware	University of Delaware
Florida	Florida International University
Georgia	Georgia College
	Georgia Southern College
	University of Georgia
Idaho	Idaho State University
Illinois	Illinois State University

TABLE I (Continued)

State	University
Illionis	Southern Illinois University
Indiana	Indiana State University
	Indiana University
	Purde University
	Purdue University- North Central Campus
Iowa	Central College
	Iowa State University
Kansas	Bethel College
	Kansas State University
	Pittsburg State University
Kentucky	University of Kentucky
Louisiana	Louisiana Tech University
	University of Southwestern Louisiana
Maryland	Hood College
	University of Maryland-College Park
Michigan	Andrews University
	Central Michigan University
	Eastern Michigan University
	Mercy College
	Michigan University
Mississippi	Wayne University
	Mississippi State University

TABLE I (Continued)

State	University
Missouri	Northeast Missouri State University
	University of Missouri
Montana	University of Montana
Nebraska	University of Nebraska-Lincoln
	University of Nebraska-Omaha
New Hampshire	Keene State College
	University of New Hampshire
New Jersey	Montclair State College
New Mexico	New Mexico State University
New York	City University of New York- Brooklyn College
	City University of New York- Herbert H. Lehman College
	Cornell University
	State University of New York- Buffalo
	State University of New York- Oneonta
	Syracuse University
	University of North Carolina
North Carolina	University of North Carolina
North Dakota	North Dakota State University
Ohio	College of Mount Saint Joseph on the Ohio
	Kent State University
	Miami University
	Ohio State University

TABLE I (Continued)

State	University
Ohio	Ohio University
	Ohio Wesleyan University
Oklahoma	Oklahoma State University
	University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma
Oregon	Oregon State University
Pennsylvania	Mansfield College
	Seton Hill College
South Carolina	Winthrop College
Texas	Texas Tech University
	Texas Women's University
	University of Houston
Utah	Brigham Young University
	University of Utah
Vermont	University of Vermont
Virginia	Norfolk State College
	Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Washington	Washington State University
West Virginia	West Virginia State College
Wisconsin	University of Wisconsin
Wyoming	University of Wyoming

Approximately one-third (29.5 percent) of the programs were concentrated in California, seven programs; Michigan, six programs; New York, six programs; and Ohio, seven programs. Nine states and the District of Columbia had no identifiable programs: Arkansas, Alaska, Hawaii, Maine, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Rhode Island and Tennessee.

The titles of the home economics units hosting consumer studies degree programs varied greatly. In total there were 44 different titles for this unit. These ranged from the most common of Home Economics to one of the least common which included industrial technology.

Of greater importance was the wide variance in titles which appeared for degree programs. One hundred and nine (109) different programs were offered by the 86 reported consumer studies degree program units. It should be noted that more than one consumer studies program was identifiable at a number of the reported host institutions. Interpolation of the data defines 23 units that had more than one degree program. The mean number of programs per consumer studies degree program unit was 1.3 ($\bar{x} = 1.3$). The most common title given to a consumer studies degree program was an "option in consumer studies" which occurred in nine cases (8.25 percent). Another commonly used title was "option in consumer economics" in four cases (3.7 percent). All other titles occurred three or fewer times. Forty-four (44) of the degree programs combined content in the consumer area with other subject matter. For example, programs were combined with home management, family services, equipment and public policy. However, over 40 percent of the programs included management or home

management in their titles. A total of 16 other titles were used.

Field experience, independent study and seminar course offerings were also identified. Thirty-three (33) experiences were identified. This course offering was most commonly titled "Field Experience", in 12 cases. Other titles ranged from "Practicum" and "Internship" to "Field Training" and "Work Experience". Forty-four (44) independent study course offerings were found. The most common title for this course was "Independent Study" in 16 cases, 32.7 percent. Other common titles of this type of course offering included "Special Problems" in 12 cases, 28 percent; and "Special Topics" in eight (8) cases, 18.6 percent. Twenty-four (24) seminar course offerings were identified.

Content of Course Offerings

A result of the analysis of consumer studies course offerings was a complete listing of consumer studies concepts. All concepts identified in course offerings were classified into one of nine subject matter categories. The conceptual listing that evolved provided a framework from which generalizations about course offerings can be made. Course offerings exhibited the following patterns:

1. Types and Sources of Resources - Courses in the consumer area include the study of three major types of resources; human resources, natural resources and material resources. General concepts related to the study of resources were also included. These terms encompassed one or more of the aforementioned types of resources, i.e., family resources, basic resources, consumer resources.
2. Consumer Behavior and the Decision-Making Process - Concepts

related to consumer behavior, particularly how consumers make decisions were included in catalog course descriptions. Also included were concepts related to the study of values, goals, needs, and wants. Factors that influence consumer decision-making were also included; such as psychological factors, socioeconomic background, lifestyle and life cycle stages.

3. Family Finance - Another focus of consumer studies course offerings related to the allocation of material resources in the marketplace. Included in this category were concepts related to the buying of consumer goods and services. Concepts related to financial security such as savings, insurance, investment, estate and retirement planning, and credit were also included in the descriptions of consumer studies course offerings.

4. Consumer Resource Management - The descriptions of consumer studies course offerings also incorporated concepts related to management, systems and the management process. In addition, concepts related to household operations and work simplification were also included. Planning, particularly as it related to the management of finances was also included.

5. Economic and Consumption Theory - The economy, consumption and economics were concepts found in consumer studies course descriptions. Specific concepts such as markets, production, supply, demand, monetary policy, fiscal policy, production and price were also included.

6. Consumer Issues and Problems - A number of consumer issues and problems were included in consumer studies course offerings. The changing roles of consumers and the competencies they require in order to function in the marketplace were concepts mentioned. Day-to-day

issues including drugs, health care, poverty and inflation were also included.

7. Consumer Education Curriculum Development - Only a few very general concepts were identified relating to consumer education, i.e., consumer education curriculum, consumer education techniques.

8. Consumer Counseling - Only three concepts were found that related to the category consumer counseling. They were family financial counseling, financial security education and financial counseling.

9. Business, Government, and Consumer Affairs and Public Policy - The rights and responsibilities of consumers in the marketplace were another focus of consumer studies course descriptions. Agencies that protect consumers were also included in the concepts identified. In a few cases, concepts were identified that related to business, government, family and consumer interests and programs.

It is also beneficial to examine the frequency with which concepts were mentioned in various course offerings. In examining the frequency with which concepts were covered, the impression that emerges is that consumer studies course offerings vary greatly. This is evidenced by the fact that a large number of concepts, 474, occurred only one time in a course description. The five most frequently mentioned concepts in each category are detailed in Table II, pages 26-28. It should be noted that coverage given to the five most frequently mentioned concepts in the category Consumer Behavior and the Decision-Making Process appeared to be more frequently mentioned in consumer studies course offerings than any other category. It is also interesting to note that under the category Consumer Resource Management, management as a concept appears more frequently than even the second or the third

TABLE II
 FIVE MOST FREQUENTLY MENTIONED
 CONSUMER STUDIES CONCEPTS

Category/ Concept	No. of Times Mentioned	Percentage of All Concepts Mentioned
<u>Types and Sources of Resources</u>		
Income	33	1.51
Time	26	1.19
Goods	24	1.10
Human Resources	19	.87
Material Resources	14	.64
<u>Consumer Behavior and the Decision-making Process</u>		
Goals	72	3.30
Decision-making	53	2.43
Values	39	1.78
Needs	35	1.60
Decisions	29	1.32
<u>Consumer Resource Management</u>		
Management	148	6.78
Planning	27	1.24
Systems	18	.83
Work Simplification	16	.73
Budgets	13	.56

TABLE II (Continued)

Category/ Concept	No. of Times Mentioned	Percentage of All Concepts Mentioned
<u>Family Finance</u>		
Insurance	27	1.24
Credit	24	1.10
Investments	22	1.00
Housing	21	.96
Taxes	14	.64
<u>Economic and Consumption Theory</u>		
Economics	37	1.69
Consumption	21	.96
Economy	19	.87
Choices	13	.59
Prices	8	.36
<u>Ongoing Consumer Issues and Problems</u>		
Problems	73	3.35
Health	19	.87
Roles	14	.64
Issues	13	.59
Competencies	8	.36
<u>Business, Government, and Consumer Interests and Public Policy</u>		
Rights	35	1.60

TABLE II (Continued)

Category/ Concept	No. of Times Mentioned	Percentage of All Concepts Mentioned
Legislation	25	1.14
Programs	25	1.14
Consumer Protection	23	1.05
Regulations	17	.77
<u>Consumer Education Curriculum Development</u>		
Consumer Education Techniques	1	.04
School-Community Consumer Education Programs	1	.04
<u>Consumer Counseling</u>		
Family Financial Counseling	3	.13
Financial Security Education	2	.09
Financial Counseling	2	.09

most frequently mentioned concepts. This seems to indicate that the category, Consumer Resource Management, in consumer studies degree programs is primarily focused on management principles and procedures.

It should also be noted that the coverage of concepts under the categories of Consumer Education Curriculum Development and Consumer Counseling are almost nonexistent. This is evidenced by the limited number of concepts that were found in each of these categories.

Depth and intensity may vary. However, it is appropriate to assume that as a result of enrollment in a consumer studies degree program, learning would occur in one of the nine aforementioned areas.

Summary

At the onset of this study five questions were posed. They can now be answered:

1. Which home economics units have consumer studies degree programs?

Eighty-eight (88) institutions offered degree programs in consumer studies. A concentration of programs seems to be in four states: California, New York, Michigan, and Ohio. A complete listing of identified programs is found in Table I, pages 18-21.

2. What is the nature of available consumer studies degree programs?

Forty-four (44) different titles were used to identify consumer studies degree programs. Titles of available programs varied greatly with the most common title being an option in consumer studies. Forty-four programs were combined with other subject matter concentration. Management and home management were the most common areas to be combined with consumer studies degree programs.

3. What is the nature of consumer studies course offerings within

degree programs? Anywhere from zero (0) to 20 course offerings were found in the curricula of consumer studies degree programs. The average number of course offerings per program was 5.12.

4. What is the nature of the conceptual content of consumer studies course offerings? A wide range of consumer studies concepts are covered in course offerings, but few, with the exception of management are covered often. Coverage given to concepts relating to consumer education curriculum development and consumer counseling are almost nonexistent.

5. What recommendations can be made for use of the findings of this study? Discussion of ways to use the findings of this research are found in Chapter V, Conclusions and Recommendations.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

In this chapter conclusions that can be drawn as a result of this research are summarized. Recommendations for further study are made.

Conclusions

General conclusions that can be drawn from the findings are:

1. Consumer studies degree programs appear to play an active role in home economics units nationwide.
2. Consumer studies course offerings are strong in their coverage of concepts relating to management and decision-making processes. Coverage of concepts relating to consumer education curriculum development and consumer counseling are almost non-existent.
3. The study of consumer behavior and the decision-making process is an integral component of consumer studies degree programs in home economics units. This includes the study of consumer needs, wants, values, and goals.
4. Burton (1975) and Saint Marie (1978) stressed that field experiences are needed in consumer studies degree programs. The presence of a number of these course offerings seem to indicate that curriculum developers are responding to this perceived need.
5. A number of independent study course offerings were identified. When present in a program, flexibility is offered which could fill gaps that exist in curricula.

6. There is great variation in consumer studies degree programs. No two institutions gave the same coverage to concepts. Similar kinds of course offerings were found, but no two programs offered identical course offerings.

7. By studying undergraduate college catalogs, a researcher can obtain a status picture of consumer studies degree programs. Available course offerings can be identified and through the content analysis of course descriptions, inferences about available programs can be made.

Recommendations

A number of recommendations can be made which may be useful to those interested in consumer studies degree programs:

To prospective students - Consumer studies degree programs vary. When considering programs, students need to maintain critical questioning attitudes. Career objectives need to be assessed, and programs chosen to correspond with the individual's goals and needs.

To students in consumer studies degree programs - Students in programs also need to maintain critical questioning attitudes, and consider programs in the perspective of career objectives. When course offerings are not providing the needed training, one should consider using independent study options to develop the competencies desired.

To the curriculum developer - Unusual as well as common course offerings are available through existing consumer studies degree programs. Before developing new courses or revising old ones these already existing resources need to be considered. Much can be gained

from the experience of other educators. As a result of interactions among those who develop consumer studies course offerings, a more cohesive curricula can evolve.

To consumer affairs professionals - When considering inservice training in undergraduate consumer studies degree programs, the wide variation in programs should be considered. A number of programs should be considered before any course offering or program is chosen for study.

To those who hire consumer affairs professionals - Academic credentials of prospective employees trained in consumer studies degree programs will vary. An employer needs to be aware of this and make no assumptions about the academic credentials of job candidates.

To university faculty - Because of the perceived need to provide accurate data in college catalogs, and the fact that images are conveyed through these documents, the instructor needs to consider if actual course content is reflected in course descriptions.

Inferences about consumer studies degree programs can be made by studying college catalogs. The catalog writer needs to consider if the image projected is an accurate reflection of the existing program.

To those who undertake similar research - As this study is being completed it is already out of date. Therefore, it is urged that before further research is undertaken, this study be updated.

If the study is replicated, the researcher recommends that a machine method rather than a manual method be used to tally and record the data. This would have greatly facilitated all steps entailed in the data collection and analysis process.

Although there is strong evidence to support that data provided in

college catalogs is accurate, the question remains, "Is the catalog indicative of actual classroom practices?" To compare the data generated by college catalogs with actual classroom practices would be an interesting and relevant topic for research.

This study was limited to an explanation of the home economics curricula. However, other disciplines have consumer studies degree programs. The researcher suggests that research be undertaken to explore the nature, scope, and focus of consumer studies degree programs in other disciplines.

There is perceived need for field experiences to be included in consumer studies degree programs. This study simply identified their presence or absence. Other research could be undertaken to explore the nature of such course offerings.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

HOME ECONOMICS UNITS SURVEYED

Home Economics Units Surveyed

On the following pages is a listing of all the home economics units from which the sample for this study was drawn. The institutions are listed alphabetically by state.

ALABAMA

Alabama A and M University
 Auburn University
 Jacksonville State University
 Judson College
 Oakwood College
 Samford University
 Southern Benedictine College
 Troy State College
 Tuskegee Institute
 University of Alabama
 University of Montevallo
 University of North Alabama
 (Florence State University)

ALASKA

University of Alaska

ARIZONA

Arizona State University
 Northern Arizona University
 University of Arizona

ARKANSAS

Harding College
 Henderson State University
 John Brown University
 University of Central Arkansas
 Ouachita Baptist University
 Philander Smith College
 Southern Arkansas University
 University of Arkansas,
 Fayetteville
 University of Arkansas,
 Little Rock
 University of Arkansas,
 Pine Bluff
 University of Central Arkansas

CALIFORNIA

Ambassador College
 California Polytechnic State
 University, Pomona
 California Polytechnic State
 University, San Luis Obispo
 California State University,
 Chico

California State University,
Fresno

California State University,
Arcata (Humboldt State
University)

California State University,
Long Beach

California State University,
Los Angeles

California State University,
Northridge

California State University,
Sacramento

California State University,
San Francisco (San Francisco
State University)

Chapman College

Christian Heritage College

Scripps College

Notre Dame College

Loma Linda University

Lone Mountain College

Mount Saint Mary's College

Pacific Union College

Pepperdine University,
Malibu

Pepperdine University
Los Angeles

Point Loma College

San Diego State University
(California State University)

San Jose State University

University of California,
Berkeley

University of California,
Davis

University of California,
Santa Barbara

Whittier College

COLORADO

Colorado State University

Mesa College

University of Northern Colorado

CONNECTICUT

Post College

Saint Joseph College

University of Connecticut

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

Galludet College

Howard University

Washington International College

DELAWARE

Delaware State College

University of Delaware

Barry College

Florida A & M University

Florida International University

Florida State University

Pensacola Christian College

GEORGIA

Augusta College

Berry College

Paine College
 Savannah State College
 Southern Technical Institute
 Spelman College
 University of Georgia

HAWAII

Brigham Young University-
 Hawaii
 University of Hawaii

IDAHO

Idaho State University
 Northwest Nazarene College
 University of Idaho

ILLINOIS

Art Institute of Chicago
 Bradley University
 Mundelein College
 Chicago State University
 Eastern Illinois University
 Illinois College
 Illinois State University
 Illinois Wesleyan University
 Northern Illinois University
 Olivet Nazarene College
 Principia College
 Rosary College
 Sangamon State University
 Southern Illinois University

University of Illinois
 Medical Center
 University of Illinois
 Western Illinois University

INDIANA

Ball State University
 Butler University
 Depauw University
 Goshen College
 Indiana State University
 Indiana University,
 Bloomington
 Indiana University,
 Kokomo
 Indiana University,
 South Bend
 Manchester College
 Marion College
 Purdue University
 Purdue University-North
 Central
 Saint-Mary-of-the-Woods
 College
 University of Evansville
 Valparasio University

IOWA

Central College
 Clarke College
 Dordt College
 Iowa State University

Iowa Wesleyan College

Marycrest College

Simpson College

University of Dubuque

University of Iowa

University of Northern Iowa

Westmar College

William Penn College

KANSAS

Baker University

Benedictine College

Bethel College

Emporia State University

Fort Hays University

Friends University

Kansas State Teachers College
(Pittsburg State University)

Kansas State University

Kansas Wesleyan University

McPherson College

Manhattan Christian College

Ottawa University

Southwestern College

Sterling College

St. Mary College

University of Kansas

Washburn University

Way College of Emporia

KENTUCKY

Berea College

Cumberland College

Eastern Kentucky University

Georgetown College

Kentucky Christian College

Kentucky State University

Morehead State University

Murray State University

Spalding College

Union College

University of Kentucky

University of Louisville

Western Kentucky University

LOUISIANA

Grambling State University

Louisiana State University

Louisiana Tech University

McNeese State University

Nicholls State University

Northeast Louisiana University

Northwestern State University

Southeastern Louisiana State
University

Southern University A & M
College

St. Mary's Dominican College

University of Southwestern
Louisiana

Xavier University of Louisiana

MAINE

University of Maine,
Farmington

University of Maine, Orono

MARYLAND

Broadfording Christian College

Columbia Union College

Hood College

Morgan State University

University of Maryland,
College Park

University of Maryland,
Eastern Shore-Princess Anne

University of Maryland, College
Park (University College)

MASSACHUSETTS

Atlantic Union College

Framingham College

Lesley College

Massachusetts Institute of
Technology

Simmons College

Southeastern Massachusetts
University

University of Massachusetts

Wheelock College

MICHIGAN

Adrian College

Albion College

Andrews University

Central Michigan University

Eastern Michigan University

Jordan College

Madonna College

Marygrove College

Mercy College

Michigan State University

Northern Michigan University

Siena Heights College

Wayne State University

Western Michigan University

MINNESOTA

Bemidji State University

College of Saint Joseph

College of Saint Catherine

College of Saint Scholastica

College of Saint Teresa

College of Saint Thomas

Concordia College

Mankato State University

Moorehead State University

Saint Cloud University

Saint John's University

Saint Olaf College

Southwest State University

University of Minnesota,
Duluth

University of Minnesota, Morris

University of Minnesota,
Minneapolis

MISSISSIPPI

Alcorn A & M College

Blue Mountain State College

Delta State University

Mississippi College

Mississippi State University

Mississippi University for Women

University of Mississippi,
Oxford

University of Mississippi,
Hattiesburg

USM Natchez

MISSOURI

Central Missouri State
University

Culver Stockton College

Drury College

Fontbonne College

Lincoln University

Northeast Missouri State
University

Northwest Missouri State
University

School of the Ozarks

Southeast Missouri State
University

Southwest Baptist College

Southwest Missouri State
University

Stephens College

Tarkio College

University of Missouri

William Woods College

William Jewell College

MONTANA

Montana State University

University of Montana

NEBRASKA

Chadron State College

College of St. Mary

Kearney State College

Midland Lutheran College

Peru State College

Union College

University of Nebraska,
Lincoln

University of Nebraska,
Omaha

Wayne State College

NEVADA

University of Nevada

NEW HAMPSHIRE

Keene State College

Mount Saint Mary College

Rivier College

University of New Hampshire

NEW JERSEY

Centenary College for Women

College of Saint Elizabeth

Glassboro State College

Montclair State College

Rutgers University-Douglass
College

NEW MEXICO

Eastern New Mexico State
University

New Mexico Highlands
University

New Mexico State University

University of New Mexico

Western New Mexico State
University

NEW YORK

CUNY-Brooklyn College

CUNY-Herbert H. Lehman College

CUNY-Hunter College

CUNY-Queens College

Cornell University

Marymount College

New York University

Pratt Institute

Rochester Institute of
Technology

Southampton College

SUNY-Buffalo

SUNY-Oneonta

SUNY-Plattsburgh

Syracuse University

NORTH CAROLINA

Appalachian State University

Bennett College

Campbell College

East Carolina University

Mars Hill College

Meredith College

North Carolina Agricultural
and Technical University

Pembroke State University

Salem College

University of North Carolina

Western Carolina University

NORTH DAKOTA

Minot State College

North Dakota State University

University of North Dakota

OHIO

Ashland College

Baldwin-Wallace College

Bluffton College

Bowling Green State University

Case Western Reserve University

Central State University

College of Mount Saint Joseph
on the Ohio

Edgecliff College

Kent State University

Miami University of Ohio

Notre Dame College of Ohio

Ohio Dominican College

Ohio State University

Ohio University

Ohio Wesleyan University

Otterbein College

University of Akron

University of Cincinnati

University of Dayton

Ursuline College

Wittenberg College

Youngstown State University

OKLAHOMA

Bethany Nazarene College

Cameron University

Central State University

East Central Oklahoma State
University

Langston University

Northeastern Oklahoma State
University

Northwestern Oklahoma State
University

Oklahoma Baptist University

Oklahoma Christian University

Oklahoma State University

Panhandle State University

Southeastern Oklahoma State
University

Southwestern Oklahoma State
University

University of Sciences and
Arts of Oklahoma

University of Oklahoma

University of Oklahoma-
Health Sciences Center

OREGON

Columbia Christian College

East Oregon State College

George Fox College

Linfield College

Marylhurst College

Oregon State University

PENNSYLVANIA

Albright College

Carnegie-Mellon University

Cheyney State College

College of Misericordia

Drexel University

Immaculata College

Indiana University of
Pennsylvania

Juniata College

LaRoche College

Mansfield College

Marywood College

Mercyhurst College

Messiah College

Pennsylvania State University,
Beaver-Monaca

Pennsylvania State University,
University Park

Philadelphia College of Textiles
and Sciences

Saint Vincent College

Seton Hill College

Villa Maria College

RHODE ISLAND

University of Rhode Island

SOUTH CAROLINA

Bob Jones University

Erskine College

Lander College

South Carolina State College

Winthrop College

SOUTH DAKOTA

Mount Marty College

South Dakota State University

University of South Dakota

TENNESSEE

Austin Peay State University

Belmont College

Carson-Newman College

David Lipscomb College

East Tennessee University

Freed-Hardemann College

George Peabody College for
Teachers

Lambuth College

Memphis State University

Middle State Tennessee University

Southern Missionary College

Tennessee State University

Tennessee Technological
University

Tennessee Wesleyan College

University of Tennessee-
Chattanooga

University of Tennessee-
Knoxville

University of Tennessee-Martin

TEXAS

Abilene Christian College

Austin College

Baylor University

East Texas State University

Huston-Tillotson College

Incarnate Word College

LaMar University

Lubbock Christian College

Mary Hardin-Baylor College

North Texas State University

Our-Lady-of-the-Lake
University of San Antonio

Prairie View A & M University

Sam Houston State University

Southwestern Texas University

Southwestern Union College

Southwestern University

Stephen F. Austin State
University

Tarelton State University

Texas A & I University

Texas Christian University

Texas Eastern University

Texas Southern University

Texas Tech University

Texas Wesleyan College

Texas Women's University

Trinity University

University of Houston

University of Texas

UTAH

Brigham Young University

Southern Utah State University

University of Utah

Weber State College

VERMONT

Bennington College

University of Vermont

Vermont Institute for
Community Involvement

VIRGINIA

Bridgewater College

Eastern Mennonite College

Hampton Institute

Longwood College

James Madison University

Marymount College

Norfolk State College

Radford College

Roanoke College

Virginia State College

WASHINGTON

Central Washington State College

Eastern Washington State College

The Evergreen State College

Seattle Pacific College

The University of Puget Sound

University of Washington

Walla Walla College

Washington State University

Western Washington State
University

Whitworth College

WEST VIRGINIA

Concord College

Fairmont State College

Glenville State College

Marshall University

Shepherd College

West Liberty State College

West Virginia State College

West Virginia University

West Virginia Wesleyan
University

WISCONSIN

Cardinal Stritch College

Mount Mary College

Silver Lake College of the
Holy Family

University of Wisconsin,
Green Bay

University of Wisconsin,
Madison

University of Wisconsin,
Oskosh

University of Wisconsin,
Stevens Point

University of Wisconsin, Stout

Viterbo College

WYOMING

University of Wyoming

APPENDIX B

LETTERS SENT TO INSTITUTIONS

Apartment 222
222 North Duck Street
Stillwater, OK 74074
July 15, 1978

Admissions Office
University
City, State Zip Code

Dear Sir:

Please send me a copy of your current undergraduate college catalog and information about your undergraduate degree programs in home economics.

Sincerely yours,

Nancy Nolf

Apartment 222
222 North Duck Street
Stillwater, OK 74074
August 15, 1978

Admissions Office
University
City, State Zip Code

Dear Sir:

On July 15, I wrote to you requesting your current undergraduate college catalog and information about your undergraduate degree programs in home economics. To date I have still not received these materials. Your prompt attention to this matter would be greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Nancy Nolf

APPENDIX D

DATA COLLECTION INSTRUMENT

CONSUMER STUDIES PROGRAMS
IN HOME ECONOMICS UNITS

PART 1.

Institution

City

Contact Person

Position of Contact Person

Degree Program Unit(s): _____

Degree Program(s): _____

Course Offering(s): _____

Course Offerings (Continued):

PART 2.

Course Offering

1.	7.
2.	8.
3.	9.
4.	10.
5.	11.
6.	12.

Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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Course Offering

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6.	12.

Course Offering

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6.	12.

PART 3:

Types and Sources of Consumer Resources:

Consumer Behavior and the Decision-making Process:

Consumer Resource Management:

Family Finance:

Economics and Consumption Theory:

Ongoing Consumer Issues and Problems:

Consumer Education Curriculum Development:

Business, Government, and Consumer Interests and Public Policy:

Miscellaneous:

PART 4: (See next pages)

VITA ²

Nancy Ellen Nolf

Candidate for the Degree of
Master of Science

Thesis: A REVIEW OF UNDERGRADUATE CONSUMER STUDIES DEGREE PROGRAMS
AND COURSE OFFERINGS IN HOME ECONOMICS

Major: Housing, Design, and Consumer Resources

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, October 18,
1954, the daughter of Kyle A. and Katherine B. Nolf.

Education: Graduated from Carlynton High School, Rosslyn Farms,
Pennsylvania, in June, 1972; received Bachelor of Science
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Professional Organizations: American Council on Consumer In-
terests.

Professional Experience: Assistant to the Family Page Editor,
Frederick News-Post, Frederick, Maryland, 1976; Public
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tant, Appalachian Community Service Network, 1979; Materials
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