

CLOTHING KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED VOCATIONAL
REHABILITATION COUNSELORS IN OKLAHOMA

By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Acquiring clothing to fit physical and psychological needs is a fairly easy task for the majority of persons. Often clothing decisions are made quickly and easily with money and personal preference being the only considerations. However, for the one in approximately eleven physically disabled Americans, even the most simple aspects of clothing and dressing become complex (Hershkowitz, 1975).

Clothing can become an important tool in the rehabilitation process. Wearing attractive and well-fitting clothing can increase self-confidence through appearance. Self-confidence can improve the rehabilitation potential of the individual. Clothing with self-help features can also increase independence by enabling one to dress and undress without help.

Several researchers have shown that physically disabled persons prefer clothing to be durable, to fit properly, to be comfortable, and to permit ease when dressing, but they agreed that these features should not be accomplished by sacrificing the attractiveness of the garment (Brown, 1977; Kernaleguen, 1977; May, Waggoner, Hotte, 1974; and Reich, 1976). Brown (1977) determined through interviews, that many disabled persons fulfilled their clothing needs by a trial and error approach. As a result, principles of clothing and textiles were inefficiently used, if they were used at all.

In a recent report (Goldberg, 1976) which outlined current issues in rehabilitation research, job development and placement were identified as a current need of physically disabled persons. The idea that clothing affects job placement and performance is not a new one. Morton, in an early edition (1943) of The Arts of Costume and Personal Appearance, stated that she believed clothes help us to get and hold jobs or to miss and lose them. In 1918, Dearborn found that the feeling of being well-dressed affected efficiency in work situations (Newton, 1976). Results of a survey conducted in a small Minnesota town indicated that more than half of the participants agreed that one's mode of dress affected his job opportunities (Form and Stone, 1955).

One of the primary objectives of vocational rehabilitation was to restore economic independence to the physically disabled client. Previous research pointed out the positive association between appropriate clothing and job opportunities, placement, and efficiency. Because of the association of clothing and employment, the vocational rehabilitation counselor can be a key person in supplying adequate clothing information to the physically disabled client so that the employment opportunities for the client may be maximized.

Further research in the area of clothing for the physically disabled could determine the amount and kind of clothing information held by vocational rehabilitation counselors. Vocational rehabilitation counselors could benefit their physically disabled clients by becoming more aware of their clothing problems and incorporating solutions to these problems in the rehabilitation program.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of the study was to investigate the knowledge of clothing for physically disabled persons held and used by selected vocational rehabilitation counselors in the state of Oklahoma.

Objectives

The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine and compare the clothing knowledge held by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma with respect to sex, age, personal disability, and length of time in the rehabilitation counseling profession.
2. To determine the clothing knowledge used by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma with respect to sex, age, personal disability, and length of time in the rehabilitation counseling profession.
3. To make recommendations regarding findings so that information could be made available to vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma to enrich and strengthen the rehabilitation program in the clothing area.

Hypotheses

The hypotheses of the study were:

1. There will be no significant differences among clothing knowledge and usage mean scores of the counselors, sex of the counselor and the percent of physically disabled clients in the counselor caseload.

2. There will be no significant differences between the mean scores of the counselor for clothing knowledge and usage and discussion of clothing with clients of the opposite sex.

3. There will be no significant differences among the age of the counselor, the mean scores for clothing knowledge and usage and the percent of physically disabled clients in the current caseload.

4. There will be no significant differences in the length of time the counselor has been employed, the mean score for clothing knowledge and usage, and the percent of physically disabled persons in the caseload.

5. There will be no significant differences in the mean score of male and female counselors for clothing knowledge and usage, the ease with which they discuss clothing with men clients and the percent of physically disabled in the caseload.

6. There will be no significant differences in the mean score of male and female counselors for clothing knowledge held and used, the ease with which they discuss clothing with female clients and the percent of physically disabled clients in the caseload.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of the study the following definitions have been used for these terms:

Paraplegia: Paralysis of the lower portions of the body caused by a lesion involving the spinal cord which may be due to the following: mal-development, epidural abscess, hematomyelia, acute transverse myelitis, spinal neoplasms, multiple sclerosis, syringomyelia, or trauma (Thomas, 1977).

Physical Disability: Lack of ability to perform physical tasks which one can normally do. The term is used in legal medicine to apply especially to the loss of physical powers as a result of injury or disease (Thomas, 1977).

Public Contact Employment: Professional, managerial, clerical, administrative, technical, or sales work involving direct confrontation with people other than co-workers (Brown, 1977).

Quadriplegia: Paralysis affecting all four limbs (Thomas, 1977).

Rehabilitation: Process of restoring to useful life a person who has been ill or handicapped. This is accomplished through education and therapy (Thomas, 1977).

Rehabilitation Counselor: Persons who assist disabled clients in attaining goals of self-realization and productive life (Professional Standards Committee, 1962).

Limitations

This study was limited to vocational rehabilitation counselors working in the state of Oklahoma who counsel physically disabled adults. The term physically disabled was defined for this study as those persons who required a clothing alteration or modification to accommodate the disability. Vocational rehabilitation counselors define physically disabled to also include persons with visual and/or hearing impairments.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature consisted of research in the following areas: demographic characteristics of disabled persons, history of rehabilitation, employment of disabled persons, and self-concept and clothing.

Demographic Characteristics of Disabled Persons

The definition of the term disability according to the Social Security Act is the inability to engage in any substantial gainful activity by reason of any medically determinable physical or mental impairment that can be expected to result in death or has lasted or can be expected to last for a continuous period of not less than 12 months (Allan, 1976). Disability can further be classified according to severity: (a) severely disabled--unable to work or unable to work regularly, (b) occupationally disabled--able to work regularly but unable to work full time, (c) secondary work limitations--able to work full time, regularly, and at the same work, but with limitations in the kind or amount of work that can be performed.

More women than men considered themselves disabled in 1972; 15.2 percent and 14.0 percent respectively (Allan, 1976). The relative number of severely disabled persons increased sharply with age. The proportion of disabled persons who had a severe disability more than

doubled when the 20-34 and 35-44 age groups were compared. Black persons were about one and one-half times more likely to be disabled than were white persons. The black disabled were generally younger, also.

Lack of education was associated with disability. Less than 10 percent of the severely disabled had some college education compared with 70 percent of the non-disabled who had some college education. The nature of the major disabling condition may explain educational differences. Musculoskeletal disorders, which accounted for more than one-third of the causes of disablement, may cause problems in physical ability to attend school (Allan, 1976).

Among both disabled men and women, musculoskeletal disorders were the most frequently named disabling condition, occurring in about 36 percent of the disabled. Among the occupationally disabled, men (51%) were far more likely to report musculoskeletal disorders than were women (36%) (Allan, 1976). The median age at the onset of disability among all persons in 1972 was 41.

The disability rate for Oklahoma according to a survey based on 1970 census data indicated that 1 out of every 12 persons was disabled. The disability rate for the United States was 1 out of every 11 persons (Hershkowitz, 1975). The same survey reported that in Oklahoma 54 percent of disabled persons were male and 46 percent were female. This survey supported the research published by the Social Security Administration indicating that disabled persons in America have had less education and have lower incomes than non-disabled.

Bohleber, in a study in 1967, found that a total of 427,625 persons living in Oklahoma considered themselves disabled. Projections of disabled persons were made for 1970 and 1975 based on the Oklahoma

population projections published by the University of Oklahoma Bureau of Business Research. These projections were 445,941 and 463,142 disabled persons for 1970 and 1975 respectively.

Medical technology has increased the life span of individuals who are physically disabled. During World War I only 10 percent of those who became paraplegic due to an accident or birth defect, were alive a year after the onset (Poor, 1975). However, by World War II, 80 percent of World War II veterans with spinal cord injuries were alive ten years after the injury (Poor, 1975). The primary concern of the physically disabled person had been survival. As the number of persons with spinal cord injuries increased, improved medicines and antibiotics permitted attention to be focused on education and vocational needs of the physically disabled (Poor, 1975).

History of Rehabilitation

The need for rehabilitation services in the United States was identified as early as the 1890's. MacDonald (1944, p. 8) pointed out that

. . . for years, social workers had been finding many people dependent upon the community for support because of physical disabilities which prevented them from securing employment, but which did not appear severe enough to prevent them from performing suitable work.

The close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, however, was marked by an indifference toward work with the physically disabled person due to the popularity of the Darwinian survival of the fittest theory (Gellman, 1973). In addition to the Darwinian attitude, approaches in the United States toward the disabled person embodied a wide variety of historical attitudes such as the Greek belief that the

physically impaired were inferior, the early Christian belief that taking care of the disabled person resulted in moral virtue, and pre-World War I faith in the progress of mankind through science and technology (Gellman, 1973).

The first formal rehabilitation program called the Cleveland Rehabilitation Center was established in 1899. The goal of the rehabilitation center was to use all medical measures possible to restore physical impairment (Gellman, 1973).

A turning point in the concept of the medical approach to rehabilitation occurred in 1907. At that time the goal of rehabilitation was expanded to include the development of abilities and skills. The vocational training objective was a result of the initiation of a training school set up by Pasteur in Belgium for people who were too disabled to be admitted to apprenticeship (Gellman, 1973).

The National Rehabilitation Act was passed in 1920 which established the grant-in-aid system for the rehabilitation of civilians (MacDonald, 1944). MacDonald (1944, p. 15) stated that the system for "rehabilitation was so influenced by vocational education that in some cases it has been regarded as an appendage to the vocational education program." An outcome of this influence emphasized vocational training during the rehabilitation process.

The present goals of rehabilitation emphasized an increasing realization that factors such as family, peers, and social groups were important in helping the physically disabled client reshape his perception of himself. A result of this approach was to provide the physically disabled person with a sense of belonging and a feeling that he can be a participant in the work culture and societal groups.

Almost all researchers agreed that independence and self-reliance is the desired outcome of rehabilitation and this independence is usually accomplished through acquiring job skills.

Employment of Disabled Persons

One of the problems facing the physically disabled person may be the difficulty in securing employment due to employer prejudice in hiring the physically disabled. Kessler (1953, p. 128) pointed out that

. . . the only way in which handicapped persons can be made a permanent and respected part of the working force is through education of the employer to the abilities of the disabled, and through adequate training of the handicapped so that he can compete with the non-handicapped in an open labor market.

Therefore, it is important to try to restore the disabled person to a more normal state through rehabilitation. Very often physical disability is not related to occupational ability. In the words of Dr. John Gavin (1975, p. 717) "those who have the ability and possess the desire and will to succeed should have the access to further personal and professional development." In order to accomplish this task, physical and mental barriers to employment must be eliminated. Title V of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 contains five sections, four of which relate to affirmative action for handicapped individuals. Section 503 requires that any organization which receives \$2,500 or more from the federal government for the furnishing of supplies, or services must contain in the contract a provision requiring affirmative action by the contractor to recruit, hire, and advance in employment qualified handicapped individuals (United States Statutes at Large, 1974). This law

is designed to provide job opportunities to physically disabled persons and to require organizations to adapt buildings so that their services are accessible to handicapped individuals.

The rehabilitation counselor is the key person in helping the physically disabled bridge the gap between his disability and potential independence. "Effective rehabilitation requires individualized, comprehensive, and integrated services" (Professional Standards Committee, 1962, p. 70). It is the responsibility of the rehabilitation counselor to integrate all of the necessary services to develop a total plan for the rehabilitation for the physically disabled person. The vocational rehabilitation counselor is the tie between the client and professions and agencies that render services to the physically disabled person (Professional Standards Committee, 1962).

It is the task of the vocational rehabilitation counselor to prepare the client for employment which is no easy task in view of employer prejudice. Kessler (1953) stated that employer prejudice was based on the belief that hiring the handicapped will become an economic liability due to reduced productivity. An extensive study undertaken, at the University of California (Wright and Trotter, 1968) attempted to explore the reasons for unemployment among paraplegics, quadriplegics and triplegics who were willing and able to work. The results indicated that the major factor in unemployment among the physically disabled was not the disability itself but the perceptions of it held by the subjects and by the employers. Myths surrounding the handicapped employee have come under scrutiny since Title V law was enacted. In a study completed by Dupont (Sears, 1974) employers listed the following reasons for not hiring the handicapped:

1. Insurance rates will skyrocket.
2. Work areas will have to be modified.
3. Will have to be given special privileges.
4. Safety record will be jeopardized.
5. Present employees may not accept them.

Through a study of actual experience within the Dupont Company, these myths were dispelled. First of all, Dupont recorded no increase in compensation costs as a result of hiring the handicapped. A Conference Board surveyed 242 firms who had hired the handicapped and reported no increase in compensation costs. A study by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce and National Association of Manufacturers found 90 percent of companies surveyed reported no effect on insurance costs. Second, companies reported that adjustments to work place are minimal. The most common adjustments were lowering the work surface, acquiring a special desk, and building an entrance ramp. Many times the work place required no special adjustment. Third, as far as special privileges, physically disabled persons were emphatic about wanting to be treated as normal employees. Dupont found that they do not want to be singled out by receiving special privileges. Fourth, Dupont's experience with physically disabled workers indicated 96 percent of them had average or better safety records on and off the job. Fifth, in testing the myth that handicapped workers would not be readily accepted by present employees, Dupont found that unimpaired employees are proud of the company for giving handicapped persons an opportunity to work with them. An additional reason given for not hiring the handicapped was mentioned by Wurster (Louvriere, 1976) in which he stated that the psychological effect of seeing someone in a wheelchair was disturbing and prompted

employers to use one of the above mentioned excuses as a reason for passing over the handicapped when hiring. Studies have shown, however, that employers who had dealt with physically disabled persons were more willing to hire them (Wright and Trotter, 1968). Another study indicated that although positive attitudes of employers toward the employment of physically disabled persons did not necessarily result in actual employment of these people, these attitudes did relate significantly to previous experience with the disabled (Lyth, 1973). Lyth (1973) reported that when employers were asked to choose their most successful disabled employee and why, they mentioned their choice was based on the quality of work performance and the attitude of the person toward his disability. This study indicates that a positive self-concept is important in the employability of the physically disabled person.

Self-concept and Clothing

Clothing in today's society has many functions. It is used as protection against weather and environment, for modesty, and for adornment (Kefgen and Touchie-Specht, 1976). One of the most important functions of clothing is to communicate with others. In our highly urbanized and mobile society, accurate first impressions have become increasingly important. The importance of clothing in brief encounters where first impressions are formed has been emphasized.

Your clothes do more than protect you from the weather. They give other people cues to your social status, your occupation, and your destination. In a brief encounter, the first thing most people notice is the sex, age, race, and physical appearance, including clothes, of the other person. These may seem to be superficial qualities, but they are important determinants of one person's reaction to another (Bickman, 1974, p. 4).

The important connection between self-concept and clothing begins in childhood when clothing becomes part of the body image and the same concerns that are attached to the body are often attached to clothes. Horn (1968, p. 90) stated that "at each stage in development, clothing helps to establish the identity of the individual to himself." Clothing helps to establish and maintain one's sex and role identities and it reflects what the individual thinks of himself (Horn, 1968). Since clothing often reflects our self-concept, it is important to dress in such a way that self-esteem and confidence are increased. Wearing clothing which will appropriately fit a role in life and self-image requires a knowledge of clothing and textile principles.

The goal of rehabilitation is to restore, as nearly as possible, the physically disabled person to his or her former physical, emotional, social, and economic state. Since clothing can be used to increase self-confidence, and reflect the self-concept, it is possible for clothing to be used as a tool in the rehabilitation process.

If clothing is to be used as an effective tool, a knowledge of certain principles of clothing and textiles is required. As a tool, clothing could be designed for maximum comfort and mobility to meet physical needs, be used to call attention away from the disability, thus meeting emotional needs, and be fashionable yet practical to fit the anticipated job role of the person to meet social and economic needs.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of the research was to investigate the knowledge of clothing for physically disabled adults held and used by selected Oklahoma vocational rehabilitation counselors. The study was part of the research conducted to identify specific clothing problems of physically disabled persons in public contact employment. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine and compare the clothing knowledge held by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma with respect to sex, age, personal disability, and length of time in the rehabilitation counseling profession.

2. To determine the clothing knowledge used by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma with respect to sex, age, personal disability, and length of time in the rehabilitation counseling profession.

3. To make recommendations regarding use of the data so that information could be made available to vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma to enrich and strengthen the rehabilitation program in the clothing area.

Sample

The study sample was comprised of Oklahoma vocational

rehabilitation counselors. Permission was granted by Mr. Lloyd Rader, Director of Public Welfare, Department of Institutions, Social and Rehabilitative Services, to distribute the instrument to the 198 vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma. Portions of the instrument were evaluated to eliminate from the sample those counselors who did not work with physically disabled adults. Some counselors who had been involved in previous research concerning clothing and physically disabled adults, were also eliminated from the sample. A cover letter was mailed with the instrument explaining the purpose of the research (Appendix A).

Instrument

A two-part instrument (Appendix B) was designed to gather data from vocational rehabilitation counselors. Information for the clothing portion of the instrument was derived primarily from the book, Clothes Sense for Handicapped Adults of All Ages, published by the Disabled Living Foundation (Macartney, 1973).

Part I of the instrument was designed to determine the clothing knowledge of vocational rehabilitation counselors. The instrument contained items from the following areas: dressing skills, fasteners, garment fit, fabric and garment selection, physical and psychological comfort, and clothing care. A Likert-type scale (Selltitz, Jahoda, Deutsch, and Cook, 1959) permitted the counselor to choose one of three responses: yes, undecided, or no. Scores were assigned to each response in such a way that the most favorable response was given 3 points, an undecided response, 2 points, and the least favorable response, 1 point. In some instances, questions were phrased negatively

so that the most favorable response might be a no answer, while the least favorable might be a yes answer. Questions were rephrased to obscure obvious answers. Each individual score was computed by adding the item scores.

Part II of the instrument was designed to determine the kinds of clothing information vocational rehabilitation counselors gave to their physically disabled clients. Again, a Likert-type scale was used and the choice of responses were: almost always, sometimes, and no. The responses were assigned points so that the most favorable response received 3 points, an undecided response received 2 points, and the least favorable response received 1 point, thereby producing a score when the responses given by each individual participant were computed.

Demographic questions were included in the instrument to determine from the vocational rehabilitation counselor general information regarding their age and sex, whether they were physically disabled, and the current number of clients they counseled. Additional information obtained from the counselor included their source of clothing information and their discussion of clothing needs and problems with physically disabled clients. The demographic information permitted the elimination of counselors who did not counsel clients with physical disabilities.

The instrument was pilot tested using two rehabilitation counselors who work on the Oklahoma State University campus and two clothing, textiles and merchandising doctoral students. The instrument was administered individually during pilot testing in order to obtain immediate feedback on the clarity and logical order of items contained in the instrument. The instrument and a self-addressed stamped return

envelope were sent to all vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma.

Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the clothing knowledge and usage portion of the instrument were analyzed to determine the degree of clothing knowledge held and the amount of clothing information given to physically disabled persons by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma. High scores denoted a high degree of clothing knowledge held and used, while a low score indicated a low degree of clothing knowledge held and used.

All of the demographic information obtained from the counselors was reported as frequencies and percentages. Demographic information included sex of the counselor, age of the counselor, length of time employed as a rehabilitation counselor, whether the counselor has a physical disability requiring a clothing alteration, whether the counselor discussed clothing with clients of the opposite sex, sources and extent of clothing knowledge, number of clients in the current caseload, age of clients, number of clients who have physical disabilities, number of hours allotted to discussing dressing skills, and the extent to which clients are advised to seek outside help concerning clothing. A t-test and analysis of variance were computed to determine whether a relationship existed between the age of the counselor, number of years employed as a counselor, sex of the counselor and the extent to which clothing knowledge was held and used by the counselor.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the knowledge of clothing for physically disabled persons held and used by selected vocational rehabilitation counselors in the state of Oklahoma. A discussion of the findings is presented in this chapter.

Description of Participants

One hundred eighty-five instruments were sent to vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma. This number included all vocational rehabilitation counselors presently employed by the Department of Social and Rehabilitative Services (DISRS) according to a staff personnel list with the exception of counselors who had previously been involved with the research. The list was obtained from the office of Mr. Lloyd Rader, Director of DISRS. The initial mailing was made in April of 1979 with a second mailing to non-respondents being sent approximately two and one-half weeks after the first mailing. A total of 126 (68.1%) of the instruments were returned after the second mailing.

Sixty-five of the 126 instruments were used in the study. Two criteria were used in selecting participants for the study. Respondents who were selected were those who reported having physically disabled clients in their current caseload and who accurately and

thoroughly completed the instrument. For the study, physically disabled clients were defined as those clients who required a clothing modification or alteration in order to cope with the disability. This limited the definition of the term physical disability to exclude those clients who had visual and hearing impairments. Sixty-one instruments of the 126 returned could not be used. Forty-nine respondents completed the instrument but reported having no physically disabled clients in their caseload. Twelve respondents did not complete the instrument, thus preventing its inclusion in the sample. Reasons for not completing the instrument are listed below:

1. New counselor--information given would be the same as the supervising counselor because new counselor was working with the same caseload.
2. Counselor was no longer with the office to which instrument was sent.
3. Counselor did not carry a caseload (2).
4. Caseload consisted of individuals with mental disabilities and alcoholics, only (2).
5. Counselor had only one wheel-chair client.
6. Instrument was unrelated to clientele.
7. Counselor had never dealt with clothing problems.
8. Counselor worked with prison inmates only (3).

Demographic Information of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

A majority (81.5%) of the participants were male counselors (Table I). More than three-fourths of the counselors (81.3%) were 35 years or

TABLE I
 DEMOGRAPHIC INFORMATION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
 COUNSELOR PARTICIPANTS BY SEX, AGE, LENGTH OF
 EMPLOYMENT, AND PHYSICAL DISABILITIES
 (N=65)

Variable	Number of Counselors	%
<u>Sex</u>		
Male	53	81.5
Female	<u>12</u>	<u>18.5</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Age</u>		
24 and under	2	3.0
25 - 29	4	6.2
30 - 34	6	9.2
35 - 39	12	18.5
40 - 44	14	21.5
45 - 49	12	18.5
50 or over	13	20.0
no response	<u>2</u>	<u>3.0</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Length of employment</u>		
less than 1 year	3	4.6
1 - 4 years	10	15.4
5 - 9 years	21	32.3
10 - 14 years	29	44.6
15 - 19 years	0	0.0
over 20 years	<u>2</u>	<u>3.0</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Physical disability</u>		
Yes	1	1.5
No	<u>64</u>	<u>98.5</u>
Total	65	100.0

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

older. The remaining 15.6 percent were grouped in the 34 and under age range. Two counselors (3.0%) did not respond to the question concerning age. Of the 65 participants only one counselor (1.5%) reported having a physical disability. The disability was described as curvature of the spine.

More than three-quarters of the participants (76.9%) had been employed as vocational rehabilitation counselors between 5 and 14 years (Table I). Only 3 counselors reported counseling less than 1 year, while 2 reported having counseled more than 20 years. It was noted that no counselors reported counseling between 15 and 19 years.

Demographic Information of Vocational Rehabilitation Counselor Clientele

Background information was gathered concerning the counselor and the client caseload. Table II presents the number of male and female clients in the current caseload of the participants. A little more than one-third of the counselors (35.4%) reported between 50 and 99 male clients in their current caseload. The current caseload of 14 counselors (21.5%) contained 100 to 149 male clients. One counselor (1.5%) reported between 300 and 350 male clients and 10 counselors (15.4%) indicated no male clients in their current caseload.

The greatest number of women clients in the current caseload as reported by the counselors ranged from 50 to 99 (36.9%) and 100 to 149 (35.4%). The total number of male and female clients in the current caseloads of the participants was 3,983.

Most of the clients (27.0%) reported in the current caseloads of the participants were between 20 and 24 years (Table III). Clients

TABLE II
 NUMBER OF MALE AND FEMALE CLIENTS REPORTED
 IN THE CURRENT CASELOAD OF COUNSELORS
 (N=65)

Number of Clients	Number of Counselors	%
<u>Male</u>		
1 - 49	11	16.9
50 - 99	23	35.4
100 - 149	14	21.5
150 - 199	5	7.7
200 - 249	1	1.5
250 - 299	0	0.0
300 - 350	1	1.5
None	<u>10</u>	<u>15.4</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Female</u>		
1 - 49	4	6.2
50 - 99	24	36.9
100 - 149	23	35.4
150 - 199	3	4.6
200 - 249	1	1.5
250 - 299	0	0.0
300 - 350	1	1.5
None	<u>9</u>	<u>13.8</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

between the ages of 25 and 29 (18.7%) and 30 and 34 (18.0%) accounted for the next greatest portion of the reported caseload. Clients 35 years and older made up a little more than one third (36.3%) of the caseload.

TABLE III
AGE OF CLIENTS REPORTED IN CURRENT CASELOAD
OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
COUNSELOR PARTICIPANTS
(N=65)

Client Age	Number of Clients	%
20 - 24	1,076	27.0
25 - 29	745	18.7
30 - 34	717	18.0
35 - 39	413	10.4
40 - 44	299	7.5
45 - 49	217	5.4
50 and over	<u>516</u>	<u>13.0</u>
Total	3,983	100.0

Number of Clients Requiring Clothing

Alterations or Modifications

As previously mentioned, the study was concerned with those counselors who had physically disabled clients. The term physically disabled was limited to include only those disabilities which required a clothing modification or alteration. Table IV indicates the number of

clients requiring a clothing modification or alteration. The number of clients requiring clothing modifications ranged from 1 to 200. Three counselors reported having 50 or more clients who required clothing modifications. Of the three, one counselor reported having 50 clients; another reported having 60 and the third counselor reported having 200 clients who needed clothing alterations or modifications. More than two-thirds of the counselors (66.8%) reported having between 1 and 10 clients who required some clothing modifications. According to the data, 554 clients were reported as requiring clothing alterations which is 13.9 percent of the total clientele caseload of the 65 vocational rehabilitation counselors.

Clothing Knowledge Information Held and Used

by Vocational Rehabilitation Counselors

A portion of the instrument was used to determine the sources of clothing information to which vocational rehabilitation counselors had been exposed (Table V). The sources included were: Elementary school, high school, Jr. college, 4-H, scouting, and commercial. The respondents were also given an opportunity to identify other sources of clothing construction and selection information. In each case, between 80 and 86 percent of the participants reported that they had not been exposed to clothing construction and/or clothing selection information. Other sources of exposure to clothing construction and/or selection identified by the participants were as follows:

1. Sewing for self (2)
2. Workshops (2)
3. In-service training

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED CLIENTS REQUIRING CLOTHING
ALTERATIONS OR MODIFICATIONS AS REPORTED BY
VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS
(N=65)

Number of Clients	Number of Counselors	%
1	7	10.8
2	7	10.8
3	5	7.7
4	3	4.6
5	10	15.4
6	2	3.0
8	2	3.0
9	1	1.5
10	7	10.8
11	1	1.5
15	2	3.0
20	6	9.2
25	3	4.6
27	1	1.5
30	3	4.6
32	1	1.5
36	1	1.5
50	1	1.5
60	1	1.5
<u>200</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1.5</u>
Total 554	65	99.5 ^a

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE V

SOURCES OF EXPOSURE TO CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION AND/OR CLOTHING
SELECTION OF VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS
(N=65)

Sources	Frequency	%
<u>Elementary school</u>		
Yes	4	6.2
No	56	86.2
Did not respond	<u>5</u>	<u>7.7</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>High school</u>		
Yes	9	13.8
No	52	80.0
Did not respond	<u>4</u>	<u>6.2</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Junior college</u>		
Yes	2	3.0
No	56	86.2
Did not respond	<u>7</u>	<u>10.8</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>4-H</u>		
Yes	6	9.2
No	53	81.5
Did not respond	<u>6</u>	<u>9.2</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Scouting</u>		
Yes	4	6.1
No	53	81.5
Did not respond	<u>8</u>	<u>12.3</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Commercial</u>		
Yes	3	4.6
No	53	81.5
Did not respond	<u>9</u>	<u>13.8</u>
Total	65	99.9 ^a
<u>Other</u>		
Yes	12	18.5
No	42	64.6
Did not respond	<u>11</u>	<u>16.9</u>
Total	65	100.0

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

4. Literature gathered during graduate work
5. Discussions with clients (2)
6. Rehabilitation counseling at Oklahoma State University
7. Special teachers
8. U.S. Army
9. Observation
10. Goodwill Industry
11. College

Most of the participants who reported having been exposed to clothing selection and/or construction information (13.8%) had received instruction in high school. The second most often mentioned source of clothing information was 4-H (9.2%).

Participants were also asked to explain the extent to which they had been exposed to each of the sources (Table VI). Most of the participants indicated the length of the training or course, only. The most extensive exposure to clothing selection and/or construction was during high school; eight participants reported having had from 1 semester to 4 years of instruction in clothing skills.

Almost half of the counselors (49.2%) reported that they generally discussed dressing skills with their clients less than one hour in a single counseling session (Table VII). Fifty percent of the counselors reported that they advised their clients to seek outside help concerning clothing (Table VIII). Twenty-nine counselors (44.6%) reported that they did not advise clients to seek outside help. Three counselors did not respond to the question.

TABLE VI
 EXTENT TO WHICH VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS
 REPORTED HAVING BEEN EXPOSED TO CLOTHING
 CONSTRUCTION AND/OR SELECTION
 (N=35)

Source	Number of Counselors	%
<u>High school</u>		
1 semester	2	5.7
1 year	2	5.7
3 years	1	2.9
4 years	2	5.7
Biology and homemaking	1	2.8
<u>4-H</u>		
3-4 years	2	5.7
Clothing construction	1	2.9
<u>Scouting</u>		
4 years	1	2.9
11 years	1	2.9
Basic sewing	1	2.9
<u>Commercial</u>		
2 years	2	5.7
7 years	1	2.9
<u>Elementary school</u>		
Health and hygiene	1	2.9
<u>Other sources</u>		
Sewing for self	2	5.7
Workshops	2	5.7
In-service training	1	2.9
Literature from graduate work	1	2.9
Discussions with clients	2	5.7
Rehabilitation training--		
Oklahoma State University	1	2.9
Special teachers	1	2.9
U.S. Army	2	5.7
Observations	1	2.9
Goodwill Industries	1	2.9
College	<u>3</u>	<u>8.6</u>
Total	35	100.5 ^a

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE VII
 REPORTED NUMBER OF HOURS ALLOTTED TO DISCUSSION
 OF DRESSING SKILLS DURING A SINGLE
 COUNSELING SESSION
 (N=65)

Number of Hours	Number of Counselors	%
Less than 1 hour	32	49.2
1 - 4 hours	8	12.3
Not discussed	<u>25</u>	<u>38.5</u>
Total	65	100.1 ^a

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

TABLE VIII
 NUMBER OF COUNSELORS WHO ADVISE CLIENTS TO
 SEEK OUTSIDE HELP CONCERNING CLOTHING
 (N=65)

Advise To Seek Outside Help	Number of Counselors	%
Yes	33	50.8
No	29	44.6
Did not respond	<u>3</u>	<u>4.6</u>
Total	65	100.0

The most used source (47.7%) of clothing information recommended to clients by vocational rehabilitation counselors was other disabled persons (Table IX). Family members (30.8%) were recommended almost a third of the time. Home economics teachers (15.4%), extension home economists (7.8%), and fabric store personnel (4.6%) were the least used sources of clothing information for physically disabled persons. Slightly over one quarter (27.7%) of the participants reported using "other" sources of clothing information than the sources listed. Other sources used included:

1. Special magazines (Paraplegia News, Rehabilitation Journal)
2. Supervisor
3. Medical professor
4. Okmulgee Rehabilitation Center social worker
5. Alterations seamstress
6. Clients
7. Special teachers

Comparison of Scores of Part I and II of the Instrument With Variables

The data were analyzed with a t-test to determine if a significant relationship existed among the sex of the counselor and whether clothing skills were discussed with clients of the opposite sex and the mean scores on the clothing knowledge and usage section of the instrument. It was assumed that a high score on the clothing knowledge section of the instrument would denote a somewhat high level of clothing knowledge, while a high score on the clothing usage section of the instrument would denote an extensive use of clothing information by

TABLE IX
 SOURCE OF CLOTHING INFORMATION USED BY
 VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION COUNSELORS
 (N=65)

Sources of Advice	Number of Counselors	%
<u>Home economics teacher</u>		
Yes	10	15.4
No	<u>55</u>	<u>84.6</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Family members</u>		
Yes	20	30.8
No	<u>45</u>	<u>69.2</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Fashion magazine</u>		
Yes	2	3.0
No	<u>63</u>	<u>96.9</u>
Total	65	<u>99.9^a</u>
<u>Another agency</u>		
Yes	2	3.0
No	<u>63</u>	<u>96.9</u>
Total	65	<u>99.9^a</u>
<u>Extension home economist</u>		
Yes	5	7.8
No	<u>60</u>	<u>92.2</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Other physically disabled persons</u>		
Yes	31	47.7
No	<u>34</u>	<u>52.3</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Fabric store personnel</u>		
Yes	3	4.6
No	<u>62</u>	<u>95.3</u>
Total	65	<u>99.9^a</u>
<u>Clothing store</u>		
Yes	14	21.5
No	<u>51</u>	<u>78.5</u>
Total	65	100.0
<u>Other</u>		
Yes	18	27.7
No	<u>47</u>	<u>72.3</u>
Total	65	100.0

^aPercentage does not total 100 due to rounding.

counselors during counseling sessions with clients.

Analysis of variance was used to compare the age of the counselor, the percent of disabled clients in the caseload, length of employment as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, and the feeling of ease when discussing clothing skills with men and women clients, with the mean score of the clothing knowledge and usage section of the instrument.

The t-test was used to examine hypothesis I: There will be no significant differences among clothing knowledge and usage mean scores of the counselors, sex of the counselor and the percent of physically disabled clients in the counselor caseload. As illustrated in Table X, the sex of the counselor as it related to the total score was significant at the .024 level for the mean scores of the clothing knowledge section. As a result, the null hypothesis was rejected. Part I attempted to assess the knowledge of clothing for physically disabled adults held by vocational rehabilitation counselors. The mean score out of a possible score of 126 for men counselors was 107.3; the mean score for women was 112.1. According to the analysis of the data, female counselors had a tendency toward having higher scores on the clothing knowledge section. This tendency supports the traditional roles of women; women have been in charge of acquisition of and care for family clothing. Also, previous data (Table V) indicated that the most frequent source of instruction in clothing selection and other skills was in high school. Until the last few years, high school home economics programs have enrolled only female students, therefore, giving women an edge regarding a source of instruction in clothing skills. The sex of the counselor, however, was not a significant factor on the frequency with which clothing knowledge information was

TABLE X
 COMPARISON OF CLOTHING KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE MEAN
 SCORES, THE PERCENTAGE OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED
 CLIENTS IN A CASELOAD, AND THE
 SEX OF THE COUNSELOR
 (N=65)

Variable	N ^a	Mean Score	t-score	Level of Significance
<u>Clothing knowledge</u>				
Male	52	107.3	-2.30	.024
Female	12	112.1		
<u>Clothing usage</u>				
Male	51	31.6	- .08	n.s.
Female	12	31.9		
<u>Percent of disabled clientele</u>				
Male	50	7%	.72	n.s.
Female	11	10%		

^aNumber does not equal 65 since all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

used (Part II of the instrument) in counseling (Table X). The mean score for male and female counselors was 31.6 and 31.9 respectively, out of a possible 45 points.

The t-test was used to examine hypothesis II: There will be no significant differences between the mean scores of the counselor for clothing knowledge and usage and discussion of clothing with clients of the opposite sex. As illustrated in Table XI, no significant differences at the .05 level were found between the mean scores for clothing knowledge and usage and the discussion of clothing with clients of the opposite sex, therefore, the null hypothesis for the variables was not rejected.

An analysis of variance was used to test hypothesis III: There will be no significant differences among the age of the counselor, the mean scores for clothing knowledge and usage and the percent of physically disabled clients in the current caseload. The mean scores for clothing knowledge and usage for age groups are given in Table XII. The age of the counselor was not significantly related to mean score for clothing knowledge and usage or to the percent of physically disabled clients in the caseload, therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected (Table XIII).

An analysis of variance was used to test hypothesis IV: There will be no significant differences in the length of time the counselor has been employed, the mean score for clothing knowledge and usage, and the percent of physically disabled persons in the caseload. Table XIV indicates the mean scores for clothing knowledge held and used by the counselor, the length of time the counselor had been employed in vocational rehabilitation and the percent of physically disabled clients in

TABLE XI
 COMPARISON OF CLOTHING KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE MEAN
 SCORES, THE PERCENTAGE OF DISABLED CLIENTS
 IN A CASELOAD, AND WHETHER CLOTHING
 SKILLS ARE DISCUSSED WITH CLIENTS
 OF THE OPPOSITE SEX
 (N=65)

Variable	N ^a	Mean Score	t-score	Level of Significance
<u>Clothing knowledge</u>				
Yes--clothing discussed	45	108.0	-.39	n.s.
No--clothing not discussed	19	108.7		
<u>Clothing usage</u>				
Yes--clothing discussed	44	31.8	.16	n.s.
No--clothing not discussed	19	31.2		
<u>Percent of disabled clientele</u>				
Male	44	6%	-.89	n.s.
Female	17	11%		

^aNumber does not equal 65 since all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

TABLE XII

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES WITH AGE OF THE COUNSELOR
AND PERCENTAGE OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED CLIENTS

Ages	N=64 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Knowledge	N=63 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Usage	N=61 ^a	% Disabled
24 and under	1	113.0	1	31.0	1	17
25 - 29	4	107.2	4	27.0	3	1
30 - 34	4	111.7	4	36.0	5	19
35 - 39	13	108.6	13	28.3	12	10
40 - 44	15	106.8	15	38.1	14	4
45 - 49	12	107.2	11	27.8	12	6
50 and over	13	109.2	13	34.0	12	6
Did not respond	2	109.5	2	27.0	2	10

^aNumber does not total 65 because all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

TABLE XIII

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR AGE OF COUNSELOR, MEAN
SCORE FOR CLOTHING KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE AND
THE PERCENTAGE OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED
CLIENTS IN A CASELOAD

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Squares	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Clothing knowl- edge	133.5	7	19.1	.40	n.s.
Clothing usage	879.2	7	125.6	1.03	n.s.
Percent physical- ly disabled	.1	7	.02	1.30	n.s.

TABLE XIV
 COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES AS RELATED TO LENGTH
 OF EMPLOYMENT OF COUNSELORS AND PERCENTAGE
 OF PHYSICALLY DISABLED CLIENTS

Length of Employment	N=64 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Knowledge	N=63 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Usage	N=61 ^a	% Disabled
Less than 1 year	5	108.0	5	31.0	5	7.0
1-4 years	9	110.8	9	29.2	8	14.0
5-9 years	19	106.0	19	30.6	18	7.0
10-14 years	29	109.3	28	32.0	29	7.2
15-19 years	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0
20 years or more	2	104.5	2	51.0	1	4.4

^aNumber does not total 65 because all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

the current caseload. As shown in Table XV, no significant differences were found for the length of time the counselor had been employed in counseling, the mean score for clothing knowledge and usage, and the percent of physically disabled in the current caseload, therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

TABLE XV
ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR LENGTH OF COUNSELOR
EMPLOYMENT, MEAN SCORE ON CLOTHING
KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE, AND
PERCENTAGE OF DISABLED
CLIENTS IN CASELOAD

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Sum of Squares	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Clothing knowl- edge	208.1	4	52.0	1.2	n.s.
Clothing usage	828.5	4	207.1	1.8	n.s.
Percent physical- ly disabled	.04	4	.008	.6	n.s.

An analysis of variance was used to test hypothesis V: There will be no significant differences in the mean score of male and female counselors for clothing knowledge and usage, the ease with which they discuss clothing with men clients and the percentage of physically disabled in the caseload. Table XVI indicates the mean scores for clothing knowledge held and used by the counselor, the ease when discussing

clothing with clients and the percent of disabled in the caseload. Table XVII illustrates that there were no significant differences in the mean scores for clothing knowledge held and used by the counselor, the ease with which they discussed clothing with male clients, and the percent of physically disabled clients in the caseload, therefore, the null hypothesis could not be rejected.

Analysis of variance was used to test hypothesis VI: There will be no significant differences in the mean score of male and female counselors for clothing knowledge held and used, the ease with which they discussed clothing with female clients and the percent of physically disabled clients in the caseload. Table XVIII lists the mean scores for clothing knowledge and usage according to the degree that counselors feel at ease when discussing clothing with female clients. A significant difference does exist at the .01 level in the mean scores of male and female counselors for clothing knowledge held and the feeling of ease with which they discuss clothing with female clients (Table XIX). Eight counselors responded that they did not feel at ease or felt only somewhat at ease when discussing clothing with female clients. The scores for clothing knowledge held were 3 - 13 points lower than those who responded yes; indicating that they did feel at ease when discussing clothing with female clients. There are two possible explanations why the score and the feeling of ease with which the counselor discussed clothing with female clients was significant. Male counselors, who made up 52 of the 65 participants, may possibly feel some timidity when giving advice concerning the intimacies of female dress. In giving advice concerning clothing selection and care they would be moving into roles which were traditionally held by women.

TABLE XVI

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES AS RELATED TO COUNSELORS
FEELING OF EASE WHEN DISCUSSING CLOTHING WITH
MEN CLIENTS AND PERCENTAGE OF
PHYSICALLY DISABLED CLIENTS

Degree of Feeling at Ease	N=45 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Knowledge	N=44 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Usage	N=44 ^a	% Disabled
Yes	39	109.0	38	32.0	40	6.6
Somewhat	2	106.0	2	35.0	1	14.7
No	1	96.0	1	31.0	0	0.0
Did not respond	3	101.0	3	27.3	3	4.3

^aNumber does not total 65 because all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

TABLE XVII

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FEELING OF EASE WHEN
DISCUSSING CLOTHING WITH MEN CLIENTS, MEAN
SCORES OF COUNSELORS FOR CLOTHING
KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE, AND
PERCENTAGE OF DISABLED
IN CASELOAD

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Sum of Squares	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Clothing knowledge	339.8	3	113.3	2.4	n.s.
Clothing usage	83.7	3	27.9	.3	n.s.
Percent physically disabled	.008	2	.004	1.0	n.s.

TABLE XVIII

COMPARISON OF MEAN SCORES WITH COUNSELORS FEELING
OF EASE WHEN DISCUSSING CLOTHING WITH FEMALE
CLIENTS AND PERCENTAGE OF PHYSICALLY
DISABLED CLIENTS

Degree of Feeling at Ease	N=45 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Knowledge	N=44 ^a	Mean Score Clothing Usage	N=61 ^a	% Disabled
Yes	36	109.2	35	32.1	37	6.9
Somewhat	7	106.7	7	32.6	6	5.4
No	1	96.0	1	31.0	0	0.0
Did not respond	1	90.0	1	19.0	1	5.6

^aNumber does not total 65 because all counselors did not respond to all statements on the instrument.

TABLE XIX

ANALYSIS OF VARIANCE FOR FEELING OF EASE WHEN
DISCUSSING CLOTHING WITH WOMEN CLIENTS, MEAN
SCORES OF COUNSELORS FOR CLOTHING
KNOWLEDGE AND USAGE, AND
PERCENTAGE OF DISABLED
IN CASELOAD

Variable	Sum of Squares	df	Sum of Squares	F-ratio	Level of Significance
Clothing knowledge	528.4	3	176.1	4.2	.01
Clothing usage	171.9	3	57.3	.6	n.s.
Percent physically disabled	.001	2	.0007	.2	n.s.

Second, since only 8 counselors responded to the question of whether they felt at ease when discussing clothing with women, the sample size may not have been adequate to produce a fair mean score of the clothing knowledge and usage section of the questionnaire.

Although a substantial number of instruments were returned (68.1%), only about half were usable. Many instruments were returned from counselors who work with a large clientele of emotionally disturbed clients or with clients in correctional institutions and few physically disabled clients. It is also suspected that the professional rehabilitation counselors held a different opinion of the term physically disabled than the researcher intended, even though the definition was included in the instrument. The term was limited to include only persons who must learn to adapt and continue to adapt their clothing to accommodate a physical handicap. This definition excluded all other physically disabled people whose handicap was not as obvious such as hearing or sight disabilities. Vocational rehabilitation counselors may have felt that even though a person initially had to cope with a clothing problem due to a physical disability, if he had successfully coped with the problem, he was no longer considered disabled from the rehabilitation counselor's point of view.

On a percentage basis, the mean scores for men and women counselors for clothing knowledge held were 84.8 percent and 88.8 percent, respectively. Mean scores for clothing usage for men and women counselors were 68.2 percent.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to investigate the knowledge of clothing for physically disabled persons held and used by selected vocational rehabilitation counselors in the state of Oklahoma. A discussion of the procedures, findings, conclusions, and recommendations is presented in this chapter.

Summary of Procedures

The study sample was comprised of Oklahoma vocational rehabilitation counselors. A self-administered instrument was designed by the researcher and mailed to 185 counselors. The instrument was derived primarily from the book, Clothes Sense for Handicapped Adults of All Ages, published by the Disabled Living Foundation (Macartney, 1973). In addition to gathering demographic data, the instrument attempted to measure the clothing knowledge held and used by vocational rehabilitation counselors. In scoring the clothing knowledge and usage portion of the instrument, scores were tabulated so that counselors possessing a high level of clothing knowledge would receive a high score and counselors sharing clothing information with clients (clothing usage) would receive a high score.

Percentages and frequencies were computed to describe characteristics of the counselor and the caseload of the counselor. Information

regarding the length of employment as a vocational rehabilitation counselor, age and sex of the counselor was gathered as well as whether they were physically disabled, and the number of clients in their current caseload, their source of clothing information, if any, age of their clients, and whether they advise clients to seek outside help regarding clothing.

A t-test was used to compare sex, age of counselor and number of physically disabled in caseload with the mean score on the clothing knowledge and usage portion of the instrument. Analysis of variance was used to compare the percentage of physically disabled in the caseload, length of employment as a rehabilitation counselor, and the feeling of ease when discussing clothing with clients of the opposite sex.

Summary of Findings

Based on the findings of the study, several statements can be made with regard to clothing knowledge held and used by vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma. Eighty-one percent of the respondents in the study were men, while women comprised only 18.4 percent. Approximately 82 percent of the counselors were 35 years or older and almost 50 percent had been employed between 5 and 14 years as a vocational rehabilitation counselor. Only one participant reported having a physical disability. Two-thirds (63.7%) of the counselors caseload was comprised of clients between the ages of 20 and 34. Two factors were found to be statistically significant: In comparing the clothing knowledge and usage scores, the percent of physically disabled clients, and the sex of the counselor, women counselors tended to receive higher scores on the section of the instrument dealing with clothing

knowledge. In comparing the feeling of ease when discussing clothing with clients, it was statistically significant at the .01 level that male counselors felt ill at ease or only somewhat at ease when discussing clothing with female clients. Although physically disabled clients comprised only 13.9 percent of the participants current caseload, 67.6 percent of the counselors reported having from 1 to 10 clients who needed clothing modifications or alterations while 3 counselors reported having 50 or more clients who required special clothing alterations. Because two-thirds of the counselors have at least one person or more who require special clothing alterations it would seem that some clothing information resource would be needed. However, no previous exposure to clothing construction or clothing selection information was reported by 80-86 percent of the counselors.

Over one-third (38.4%) of the counselors reported that they did not discuss clothing selection and dressing skills with their clients. Several counselors did, however, give unsolicited responses on questions concerning dissemination of clothing information to clients. Five counselors stated that dressing skills and clothing selection have been taught immediately following the initial injury of a client or during the period spent in rehabilitation centers, so that problems with dress were worked out before the client reached the vocational rehabilitation counselor. Five counselors also stated that the percentage of physically disabled persons in their caseload did not justify time spent in teaching clothing selection and dressing skills to clients. Four counselors indicated that they gave instruction in clothing selection and dressing skills on a one to one basis to clients, depending on the particular needs of the client.

Forty-four (67.7%) of the participants in the sample reported that they would like to have more information concerning clothing and physically disabled persons. Fourteen participants (21.5%) reported that they did not wish to receive further information concerning clothing and physically disabled persons and 7 participants (10.8%) did not respond. Close to one-half of the counselors (44.6%) reported they did not advise clients to seek outside help concerning clothing. Based on information reported in Chapter IV, of those counselors who did recommend outside sources for clothing information, two sources of information were overlooked. Home economics teachers (15.3%) and extension home economists (7.6%) were among the least used sources of outside clothing information.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

1. It is realized that many aspects of dressing skills and clothing selection are coped with during activities for daily living sessions in rehabilitation centers long before the client reaches the rehabilitation counselor. However, time spent instructing clients in wearing appropriate attire for an interview, gaining and keeping a job can be justified in view of the importance of economic independence for physically disabled persons.

2. Vocational rehabilitation counselors are generally unaware of available resources for obtaining information concerning clothing.

3. Sixty-three percent of the clients were between the ages of 20 and 34 years old. These are years in which young persons launch a career and establish their financial independence. Appropriate

clothing plays a large part in determining a favorable first impression during the interview stage of job hunting and helps maintain a high self-esteem in individuals throughout the employment period.

4. Even though the mean scores for clothing knowledge for male and female counselors were fairly high (84-88%) indicating a high degree of clothing knowledge, the mean scores for clothing usage (68%) seem to imply that counselors were not furnishing their clients with clothing information.

5. Although there was no evidence from the study, it seems that vocational rehabilitation counselors tend to downplay or are unaware of the important role which clothing can play in the rehabilitation of an individual.

Recommendations

Based upon research presented in these chapters, it is recommended that:

1. Vocational rehabilitation counselors be encouraged to stress the personal appearance aspect of preparing for interviews, which includes clothing selection and dressing skills, in helping clients search for employment.

2. Extension home economists and home economics teachers contact vocational rehabilitation counselors in their area to give counselors information and an awareness of their knowledge and skills in the clothing field.

3. Home economics teachers take advantage of opportunities to demonstrate ways to adapt clothing for persons with physical disabilities.

4. Extension home economists cooperate with vocational rehabilitation counselors in the community to conduct seminars, workshops, or shortcourses to demonstrate the importance of appropriate attire as well as teach ways to modify clothing to fit special needs.

5. A compilation of resources of clothing information for physically disabled persons be made available to vocational rehabilitation counselors in Oklahoma for use during counseling sessions.

The following recommendations are suggestions for further research.

1. Develop a clothing information packet for vocational rehabilitation counselors for use during counseling sessions and evaluate its use.

2. Perform an item analysis to determine the content for a clothing information packet.

3. Survey persons in the clothing field to determine the percentage of physically disabled persons who request assistance in coping with clothing problems and the most common types of problems encountered.

4. Develop a means of locating physically disabled persons across the state of Oklahoma and survey them to determine whether the viewpoints concerning clothing which have been expressed in previous research, hold true for a larger sample of persons.

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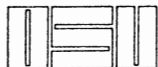
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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

COVER LETTER FOR INSTRUMENT



Oklahoma State University

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING, TEXTILES & MERCHANDISING

STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA 74074
HOME ECONOMICS WEST 312
(405) 624-5034

April 16, 1979

Research is currently being conducted through the Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising Department of Oklahoma State University to identify clothing problems and needs of physically disabled adults. We need your help in obtaining certain information so that we may continue this research effort. Permission to distribute questionnaires to vocational rehabilitation counselors was obtained from Mr. Lloyd Rader, Director of Public Welfare, Department of Institutions, Social and Rehabilitative Services. All names and addresses of the counselors will remain confidential.

Data obtained from the questionnaire will be reported by numbers and statistical results and will be available for your review. Information gained from the study may also be used as a basis in preparing instructional materials in clothing for physically disabled adults.

Please help us obtain the needed information by completing and returning the enclosed questionnaire by Friday April 27, 1979, in the self-addressed envelope. The questionnaire will take only a few minutes of your time. Your assistance in this matter is greatly appreciated. I will look forward to receiving your questionnaire by Friday April 27, 1979. Again, thanks, for your help.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Lavonne Matern".

Lavonne Matern, Ph. D.
Assistant Professor

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Sharon Holder".

Sharon Holder
Graduate Assistant

LM/SH/skh
Enc.

APPENDIX B

INSTRUMENT

CLOTHING QUESTIONNAIRE FOR VOCATIONAL

REHABILITATION COUNSELORS

1. Please check those items which apply to you:
- a. Sex: Male _____ Female _____
- b. Age group : 24 and under _____ 30 - 34 _____ 40 - 44 _____
 25 - 29 _____ 35 - 39 _____ 45 - 49 _____
 50 or over _____
2. Do you have a physical disability which requires a clothing alteration or modification?
 yes _____ No _____
 If yes, please describe.
3. Indicate the length of time you have been employed in rehabilitation on a full time basis.
 If less than a year, how many months? _____
 1 - 4 years _____ 10 - 14 years _____ 20 years or over _____
 5 - 9 years _____ 15 - 19 years _____
4. Do you discuss clothing with the clients of the opposite sex? yes _____ no _____
 If so, do you feel at ease when discussing clothing problems with:
 men clients yes _____ somewhat _____ no _____
 women clients yes _____ somewhat _____ no _____
5. Please check (A) whether or not you have been exposed to clothing construction and/or clothing selection from each of the following sources and (B) to what degree of exposure you had. For example, a semester course, one hour workshop, in-service training meeting, etc.
- | | <u>yes</u> | <u>no</u> | <u>How much?</u> |
|-------------------|------------|-----------|------------------|
| Elementary school | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| High school | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Jr. college | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 4-H | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Scouting | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Commercial | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| Other (specify) | _____ | _____ | _____ |
6. What is the approximate number of clients in your current caseload in the following groups?
- a. Sex: men _____ women _____
- b. Age group: 19 and under _____ 30 - 34 _____ 45 - 49 _____
 20 - 24 _____ 35 - 39 _____ 50 or over _____
 25 - 29 _____ 40 - 44 _____

7. Indicate the approximate number of clients in your caseload who have physical disabilities which require clothing alterations or modifications.

Number _____

8. Please indicate the approximate number of hours allotted to discussing dressing skills with each client.

not discussed _____

5 - 9 hours _____

less than one hour _____

10 or more hours _____

1 - 4 hours _____

9. Do you advise clients to seek outside help concerning clothing?

yes _____

no _____

10. Which of the following sources have you used in seeking information concerning clothing?

Home Economics teacher _____

Another agency (specify) _____

Fabric Store personnel _____

Family members _____

Extension home economist _____

Clothing store _____

Fashion magazine _____

Other physically disabled persons _____

Other (specify) _____

(continued)

CLOTHING QUESTIONNAIRE

Directions: The questionnaire consists of two parts. The purpose of Part I is to determine the clothing information held by vocational rehabilitation counselors. The purpose of Part II is to determine the kind of clothing information vocational rehabilitation counselors give their clients.

Part I

The following statements refer to clothing and physically disabled persons. For the purpose of the study, the term physically disabled is limited to describe only those persons for whom a clothing alteration or modification must be made. Please put a check (✓) in the blank beside each statement to indicate whether you feel the statement is generally true, generally false, or you are undecided.

	<u>True</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>False</u>
1. Large armholes, wide sleeves, and wide trouser legs make dressing more difficult for the physically disabled person than for the non-disabled.	___	___	___
2. Pull on styles make dressing more difficult for physically disabled persons than for non-disabled persons.	___	___	___
3. When one arm or leg is weaker than the other, it should be put in the garment last and removed last.	___	___	___
4. A bra with elastic straps makes dressing more difficult than with straps that do not stretch.	___	___	___
5. Men may find stretch briefs are difficult to put on when dressing is done in bed.	___	___	___
6. Pressure sensitive "velcro" fasteners are helpful for people who have limited mobility.	___	___	___
7. Many physically disabled people can dress without difficulty or assistance if careful thought is given to the type and position of clothes fasteners.	___	___	___
8. Snap fasteners are suitable to use in places where there is tension.	___	___	___
9. Large trouser hooks and bars may be easier to handle on waistbands than buttons.	___	___	___
10. A button sewn with a long shank or elastic thread is easier to handle than a button without a shank.	___	___	___
11. When zippers are next to the skin they should be backed with a strong fabric shield.	___	___	___
12. "Velcro" is a touch and close fastener which is helpful for use with physically disabled persons who have a severe loss of movement in the arms.	___	___	___
13. Fasteners should be placed where they can be easily seen if the physically disabled person dresses himself.	___	___	___
14. In fitting clothes, body measurements should be taken in a sitting position when the person is wheelchair bound.	___	___	___
15. A diamond shaped gusset at the underarm permits greater freedom of movement and reduces strain on the armhole seams.	___	___	___
16. Elastic waistbands may prevent tucked in blouses and shirts from riding up.	___	___	___

(continued)

	<u>True</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>False</u>
17. In buying ready to wear garments to fit a particular disability, it is best to buy a size which will fit the largest figure dimension.	___	___	___
18. Folds of fabric which lay across the stomach of those persons who are wheelchair bound can be eliminated through alteration.	___	___	___
19. A jacket can give greater freedom of movement by altering the center back.	___	___	___
20. The trouser leg can be altered behind the knee, resulting in leveling the bottom of the pants leg for persons confined to the wheelchair.	___	___	___
21. For wheelchair users, jackets can be altered so that they reach to the top of the seat in back and do not have excess folds of fabric in front.	___	___	___
22. Several layers of lightweight clothing are warmer than one layer of heavyweight clothing.	___	___	___
23. A low neckline will tend to gape if worn by wheelchair or crutch users.	___	___	___
24. Raglan sleeves are one of the simplest sleeves to slip on, therefore, they are a good choice for some physically disabled persons.	___	___	___
25. Blouses and skirts or shirts and trousers may be easier to put on than one-piece garments when body movement is limited.	___	___	___
26. Well chosen separates may be less restricting to movement than one-piece garments.	___	___	___
27. A woman confined to a wheelchair will find that a slightly flared skirt is less likely than a full skirt to become twisted when moving around.	___	___	___
28. Many physically disabled persons perspire heavily, therefore, find garments made of synthetic fibers more comfortable.	___	___	___
29. A shiny fabric emphasizes curves and prominent parts of the body.	___	___	___
30. A stretch fabric will help prevent seams from ripping out.	___	___	___
31. Natural and synthetic fibers can be combined to yield a fabric with the best qualities of both fibers.	___	___	___
32. A stretch front panel, inserted in pants made of woven fabric, allows a snug yet comfortable fit.	___	___	___
33. Physically disabled persons usually feel more need to put in more effort on their appearance than non-disabled persons.	___	___	___
34. Lining will strengthen a garment.	___	___	___
35. Attention can be focused away from the disability of the wearer by using color, line, and design.	___	___	___
36. Wearing clothes which are comfortable and attractive creates a feeling of self-confidence.	___	___	___
37. Fabric tape can be used to strengthen a curved seam.	___	___	___
38. Pockets sewn on the outside of a garment can be reinforced at the upper corners of the pocket.	___	___	___
39. Adhesive foam can be used to protect clothes from spinal support appliances.	___	___	___

(continued)

	<u>True</u>	<u>Undecided</u>	<u>False</u>
40. Pants can be invisibly reinforced at points of maximum wear.	___	___	___
41. A skirt made of strong fabric will not protect outer clothes from calipers, braces, and artificial limbs as well as a skirt made of loosely woven, lightweight fabric.	___	___	___
42. Washing instructions must be followed in order for finishes on fabric to remain effective.	___	___	___

Part II

Please put a check (✓) in the blank beside the statement that most nearly represents your answer to the statement when dealing with physically disabled clients. For the study the term physically disabled refers to those persons for whom a clothing alteration or modification must be made.

	<u>Almost Always</u>	<u>Some- times</u>	<u>No</u>
1. To simplify dressing, I instruct my clients to put clothes in an accessible position.	___	___	___
2. I mention that pull on styles without fasteners will make dressing easier.	___	___	___
3. I mention to my clients that large fasteners are easier to manipulate than small ones.	___	___	___
4. I instruct my clients to take body measurements in a sitting position if they are wheelchair bound.	___	___	___
5. I mention to my clients that longer length trousers or pants may be needed if they are wheelchair bound so that pants or trousers will not appear too short.	___	___	___
6. To insure mobility, I suggest that it may be necessary to buy clothes one size larger.	___	___	___
7. I mention that cuffs should be wide enough to permit the use of a helper's hand when it is difficult to pull a coat sleeve over a jacket.	___	___	___
8. I mention to my clients that a low neckline will tend to gape if worn by wheelchair or crutch users.	___	___	___
9. I suggest to my clients that well chosen separates may be less restricting than one-piece garments.	___	___	___
10. I emphasize that seams should not be uncomfortable to sit or lie on.	___	___	___
11. I suggest wearing stretch fabrics when patients have difficulty getting arms into garments.	___	___	___
12. I point out that by wearing fabrics of natural and synthetic blends combines the best qualities of both fabrics.	___	___	___
13. I mention to my physically disabled clients that wearing clothes which are comfortable and attractive may create a feeling of self-confidence.	___	___	___
14. I show my clients how attention can be focused away from their disability through the use of color, line, and design.	___	___	___

(continued)

- | | <u>Almost
Always</u> | <u>Some-
times</u> | <u>No</u> |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------|
| 15. I tell my clients that reinforcing garments when they are new will prolong the life of a garment and I demonstrate types of reinforcement. | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 16. I would like information regarding clothing for physically disabled persons. | | | |
| yes _____ | | no _____ | |
| 17. I would attend a workshop for the purpose of obtaining instructional materials concerning clothing and physically disabled persons: | | | |
| On Saturday _____ | | During the week _____ | |
| During a state convention _____ | | Would not be interested _____ | |

VITA²

Sharon K. Holder

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: CLOTHING KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED VOCATIONAL REHABILITATION
COUNSELORS IN OKLAHOMA

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