TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED SALESPERSONNEL

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today's consumer is constantly faced with the rising cost of living. The importance of textiles in the consumer's budget is pointed out in several sources. Horn (1974, p. 374) stated, "The United States is both the largest producer and the largest consumer of textiles and clothing in the world market."

The rising cost of living and the large amount of textile consumption make it imperative that consumers continually make each purchase count. Today's consumer finds that textile goods are one of the best buys (Pricing Outlook, 1975). The consumer's attempt to wisely budget his money is reflected in today's fashion. Our society has become conscious of making fashionable items more durable and practical. The throw-away concept is no longer popular (Basic Fabrics, 1975). Today the emphasis must be on quality, basic fabrics, and practical styling.

New textiles are being developed to meet society's current needs. The consumer is constantly being exposed to new types of fabric construction, fibers which require new care methods and a wide variety of fabric finishes. A recent study conducted by Schutz (1976), at the University of California, Davis, indicated that the average consumer is confused by the large array of textile products on the market. The industry is trying to alleviate consumer confusion by supplying care labels and care instructions, but consumers still have many questions.

Part of the role of a salesperson includes answering the consumer's questions and providing information concerning fabrics. Unfortunately, this has rarely been the state of affairs. A study conducted by the editors of Fortune Magazine in 1949 indicated that salesclerks generally were uninformed regarding the merchandise offered (What's the matter with American salesmanship?, 1949). The study was repeated in 1952 and it was estimated that three billion dollars in retail sales were lost annually because of poor salesmanship (What's wrong with retail salesmanship?, 1952). Another article indicated that salesmanship has improved little or not at all (Crisis in selling-1960, 1960).

Sutton (1966) found that a salesperson often did not give specific product information because he or she did not know specific facts about the merchandise. Wingate (1964, p. 4) stated that the consumer has "a right to know what she is buying and what she can expect in service." Today's consumer cannot hope to find all the necessary information printed on the care label or in advertisements. Perhaps Wingate (1964) illustrated the role of the salesperson when she stated:

> Through advertising and labels, manufacturers and distributors provide the facts about their products; through display and sampling, they present the products themselves; and through personal salesmanship, they help the customer to relate these facts about the products to her personal and special needs (p. 2).

If salespersons are expected to give this information to customers, a knowledge of the merchandise they sell is imperative. If a consumer's immediate and prolonged needs are satisfied he will be more likely to return and invest money. Sutton (1966) stated that the average percentage of customers who made weekly returns to a store increased as the salesclerk was able to answer their questions about the merchandise.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to examine the textile knowledge of salespersonnel in selected stores. Specific objectives of the study were to:

1. Test the general textile knowledge of salespersonnel in selected department stores, chain stores and fabric specialty stores.
2. Determine differences in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel based on variations in age, previous education, years of previous work experience and type of store.

Hypotheses

The following hypotheses were tested.

1. There will be no significant difference in the textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to the type of store in which they are employed.
2. There will be no significant difference in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to age.
3. There will be no significant difference in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to previous education.
4. There will be no significant difference in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to previous work experience.

Definition of Terms

The following are definitions of terms as used in this study:

Department Store: A retail establishment employing 25 or more people that handles merchandise in each of three categories; home furnishings, household linens and dry goods, and apparel and accessories for men, women, and children (Troxell and Judelle, 1971).

Specialty store: A retail establishment that handles merchandise within fairly narrow categories, such as women's apparel, men's apparel, women's accessories, home furnishings, shoes, or fabrics (Troxell and Judelle, 1971).

Chain Store: A group of retail stores that handle similar goods, are centrally owned and are merchandised from a national or regional headquarters office (Troxell and Judelle, 1971).

Natural Cellulosic Fibers: Fibers which are obtained from plants. These plant fibers are composed largely of cellulose and, therefore are classified as natural cellulosic fibers (Joseph, 1972).

Natural Protein Fibers: Those fibers which are obtained from animal sources. The majority of protein fibers are the hair covering from selected animals. Secretions from other animals constitute the remaining natural protein fibers (Joseph, 1972).

Man-made Fabrics: Those fibers which have been produced from non-fibrous materials, or, if fibrous to begin with, have somewhere in processing lost their fibrous structure, and must be reformed into fibers from their viscous state (Stout, 1970).

Procedure

A questionnaire was developed to obtain information on textile knowledge of salespersonnel in fabric stores and in the fabric

departments of department stores. Data were obtained through completion of the questionnaires by 100 salespeople in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area of Oklahoma. Data were tabulated using percentages and comparisons were made using the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance.

Limitations

The participants in the study were limited to salespersonnel in fabric stores and in the fabric departments of department stores in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area of Oklahoma.

The textile knowledge tested was limited to certain generic groups selected by the researcher. The selected generic groups were: cotton, linen, wool, nylon, polyester and acrylic. The selected fabric finishes were: sanforization, mercerization, permanent press, sizing or starching, antistatic, water repellent, napping, embossing and fire retardant. The selected methods of fabric construction were: double knit, interlock, plain weave, twill weave, felting, bonding and pile weave. Selected care methods were those dealing with cotton, linen, wool, nylon, polyester and acrylic.

Organization of the Study

The report of the study is organized into five chapters.

Chapter I has presented the problem, purpose and objectives, definition of terms, procedure, limitations of the study, and organization of the study.

In Chapter II a review of the literature relevant to the study is presented.

Chapter III includes the procedure used in developing and conducting the study.

Chapter IV includes the findings and an analysis of the data obtained through questionnaire responses of the 100 participants.

The summary, conclusions, and recommendations for further study are presented in Chapter V.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today the textile industry in the United States is the largest in the world (Horn, 1975). American manufacturers have emphasized textile utility and value from the beginning of this industry. Spinners and weavers were committed to turning out fabrics with broad appeal to the population (Basic Fabrics, 1975).

Textile Market

The textile industry produces fabrics and other items from durable tire cord to artificial parts for the human body. The majority of today's consumers are primarily concerned with the fabrics produced by the textile industry. The scope of the textile market has an influence on today's consumer. The textile market follows economic trends; a lag in the economy affects the textile industry in the same way.

A report on the market in Modern Textiles (November, 1974) indicated that there was a general decrease in the demand for most textile fabrics. Reasons given were the higher cost of money with a resultant drop in housing starts, the curtailment of automobile manufacture with resultant lower consumption of fabric, and lower employment. During this 1974 period of inflation/recession, cost increases in raw materials and energy were passed along to the consumer (Textile Industries, March, 1976). During inflationary periods the disposable income of the

consumer is limited. Because of the increase in cost, fewer pounds of fiber in both apparel and home furnishings were consumed (Textile Industries, March, 1976).

As the inflationary period of 1974 carried over into 1975, consumers gradually started to spend again, but with more caution. Textile World (September, 1975) reported that normal buying patterns were again the order of the day. As consumption increased, there was a general improvement in retail sales (Textile World, September, 1975). Horn (1975) stated that the textile and clothing industries combined to contribute about $16 billion dollars a year to the national income.

In a positive note for 1976, Textile World (May, 1976) reported that shipments of textile mill products would probably reach a high of 39 billion dollars that year. The success of the textile market on a national and international base is not only good for the general state of the economy, but benefits the consumer as well. As the volume increases, the market will have more to offer the consumer. According to Modern Textiles (March, 1976) the growing world population "will present tremendous opportunity for textile manufacturers by significantly increasing textile markets, mainly because of changing standards in living" (p. 10). An indication that textiles must meet the needs of an increasing population and for varying lifestyles is evident. Textile Industries (March, 1976) has indicated that the average American will use 66.1 pounds of fiber in 1980. This represents a total growth in domestic fiber use of all kinds of textiles of 5.4 percent a year from 1975 through 1980.

Textile Fibers

Consumers are faced with new and improved fabrics and fibers as the production rate increases. Many of the complicated processes used in the production of fabrics and textile fibers have completely disguised the original product. The consumer has often adopted the brand name of a fiber as a generic term, and this brand name very often has more meaning to him than the generic name itself (Dunford, 1967). Schutz (1976) illustrated reasons for confusion of the consumer when he stated:

> . . . there were 18 generic fiber classifications for man-made fibers, a great variety among natural fibers and a very large selection of blends. Added to this confusion were the registered trademarks for fibers within each generic group which identified the manufacturer but may not have represented variations among fibers of the same group (p. 2).

While the consumer is faced with the wide variety of generic fiber classifications he is also confronted with many unique fabrics. A lack of knowledge of the correct fiber content of the fabric can contribute to the consumer's care problems. Peterson (1967) stated:

> The great variety of textiles produced offers the consumer wide choices in clothing, draperies, and carpeting, but at the same time the buying decision itself becomes more complicated. It is difficult for the consumer to evaluate all the different fibers and combinations of fibers in use (p. 38).

It is important that the consumer be aware of proper care techniques to realize the maximum value of a fabric.

The average consumer is not really interested in the fiber itself, but rather in what effect the different fibers will have on the use and care of a fabric (Wingate, 1970). A great many consumers think they are informed about textiles, but in many cases this

is actually misinformation. In a survey of fabric customers in Vancouver, British Columbia, McEachran (1962) reported:

> For the natural fibers a greater percentage of incorrect responses than 'don't know' responses and the reverse for the synthetic fiber fabrics indicates that the consumers assumed that they knew more about the natural fabrics than the synthetics, even though much of their knowledge was incorrect (p. 35).

It is not surprising that consumers assume they know more about natural fiber fabrics than synthetic fiber fabrics. The natural fiber fabrics have been on the market longer, and the consumer has had time to become familiar with the care of them. Horn (1975) stated that cotton was the leading fiber in the United States prior to the 1960's. Since the mid-sixties less cotton and wool have been consumed each year. Horn further stated:

> The 1973 figures, for example, showed cotton's share of the market as 29 percent, compared with almost 70 percent taken over by the man-made fibers. Wool constitutes less than 2 percent of all fibers consumed, while silk and linen combined probably account for less than 0.006 percent (p. 346).

Many people in the textile industry believe that "before the acceptance of volume synthetic fibers, it can be said that the textile industry existed in name only" (Modern Textiles, July, 1975, p. 27). Today the consumer is using less natural fiber fabrics and more synthetic fiber fabrics or blends. The increased use of synthetic fibers dates back to the ending of World War I. A rapid growth in the man-made fiber field shifted the emphasis in fiber production from agriculture to the giant chemical corporations (Horn, 1975). In recent years, fiber producers operating at only 50 percent capacity in the beginning of the year were functioning at 80-85 percent by the end of the year (Textile World, September 1975). The use of synthetic filament yarns

will increase with the increase in fiber consumption (Textile Industries, March, 1976). Thus it is important that consumers become informed about new fibers.

Textile fibers are generally divided into two categories, natural and man-made (manufactured). The Textile Fiber Products Identification Act represents an attempt to organize fiber classifications and better inform the consumer. "Under the federal law, the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act, the tag or label must give the name of the raw material (fiber content) of which the fabric is made" (Wingate, 1970, p. 11). The act became effective March 3, 1960 and required that the label include not only the fiber content but also the percentage by weight, in order of importance, of each fiber used in the article.

Charts have been devised to help the consumer understand the various groupings and classifications of fibers. Wingate constructed the following chart (Wingate, 1970, p. 39).

Natural Fibers

I. Animal

silk
wool
hair

II. Vegetable

cotton	hemp	grass
linen	paper	straw
ramie	sisal	rush
jute	coir	kapok

III. Mineral

asbestos

Man-Made or Manufactured Fibers

I. Fibers derived from a Cellulosic Base

rayon and modified fibers
acetate and modified fibers

II. Fibers derived from a Noncellulosic Base (from Synthetic Polymers)

nylon
acrylic
modacrylic
polyester
spandex
anidex
vinyon, saran
olefin
synthetic rubber-based fibers
metallic-based fibers
glass
protein-based fibers

Most consumers never deal with all of the specific categories mentioned in the above chart. For simplification, the more common fibers have been selected and defined (Textile Handbook, 1974).

Cotton: Cotton fibers grow in the boll or seed pod of cotton plants which are grown in warm climates. Long fibers are used in high quality fabrics because they can be spun into fine, smooth, lustrous, and comparatively strong yarns. Short fibers produce coarser yarns which can be made into fabrics that are durable but less fine and lustrous.

Linen: Flax fibers surround the woody core of the flax plant, a tall thin stalk, grown in cool, damp climates. Long fibers are used to make quality linen fabrics. Tow fibers are used in novelty, homespun, and textured yarns.

Wool: Wool is the fiber from the fleece of the sheep or lamb. Hair of certain goats or camels may be classified as wool under the Wool

Products Labeling Act (1939). The better quality wool is clipped annually from live sheep. A poorer quality (pulled wool) is removed from the hide of slaughtered sheep. Yarns made of wool may be classified as woolen or worsted, depending upon the manufacturing process used. Short fibers, which may be two inches or less in length, are made into soft, fuzzy woolen yarns. Long wool fibers which may be two to eight inches, are used for worsted yarns, which are smoother and firmer than woolen yarns.

Nylon: The definition of the nylon generic group was revised by the Federal Trade Commission under the rules and regulations of the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act and became effective January 11, 1974. Nylon 66 is produced chemically from starting materials which include benzene or phenol, hydrogen, ammonia, and caustic soda. These products are derived from coal, gas, and sea water. When the filaments are cooled they are stretched to make them strong and fine. They can be used as filaments or chopped into staple fibers. Nylon 6 differs from nylon 66 in that slightly different materials and chemical processing are used. Modification of nylon fibers has resulted in anti-cling, anti-static characteristics for wearing apparel and home furnishings.

Polyester: Polyester fibers are produced by the polymerization of the product formed when an alcohol and organic acid react. After processing, either hot or cold filaments are stretched. They can be used as filaments or chopped into staple fibers. Outstanding characteristics of polyester are their ability to resist wrinkling and to spring back into shape when creased. They also have good dimensional stability, can be washed and dried quickly, and have

excellent minimum-care characteristics.

Acrylic: Acrylic fibers are made from a special group of vinyl compounds, primarily acrylonitrile. Acrylic fibers are thermoplastic, they have low moisture regain, are low in density, and can be made into bulky fabrics. They wash and dry easily and are dimensionally stable. Some representative acrylic fibers and yarns are Creslan, Acrilan, Zefran, and Orlon.

A bicomponent Orlon fiber is also produced. In bicomponent fibers, two acrylic polymers which differ slightly are joined to form a single fiber. One side of the fiber will shrink more with heat than the other. Garments made from this Orlon bicomponent should be either dried flat or tumble-dried to keep the garment from stretching. Trademark names of Orlon bicomponent acrylic fibers are Wintuk and Sayelle.

Fabric Construction

The consumer should be able to identify various types of fibers in making a choice of fabric. He should also consider other factors such as fabric weave or construction of the fabric.

Wingate (1970) stated that fabric may be constructed in eight different ways:

1. Weaving - the interlacing of two sets of yarns at right angles.
2. Knitting - construction of an elastic, porous fabric by means of needles. One or more yarns from a series of connecting loops that support one another like a chain.
3. Crocheting - a construction made with just one hook or needle.
4. Felting - process of matting fibers together by heat, steam and pressure to form a fabric.

5. Knotting - a process of forming an openwork fabric on net by tying yarns together where they cross one another.

6. Braiding (or plaiting) - an interlacing of three or more yarns or strips of cloth over and under one another to form a narrow flat tubular fabric.

7. Bonding - a process of pressing fibers into thin sheets or webs that are held together by adhesive, plastic, or self-bonding. Fabrics so constructed are referred to as non-woven textiles.

8. Laminating - the joining of two or more layers of material by the use of either a binding agent or heat. Laminated cloths are fabrics composed of layers of material including foam joined together by an adhesive, a binding agent, or heat (p. 29).

With all the variations in construction of fabric the consumer is most often faced with two basic categories, woven or knit. According to Wingate (1970) there are three basic kinds of weave to be considered; plain, twill and satin.

Plain weave is the simplest type of weave and is sometimes referred to as cotton, taffeta, or tabby weave. The cloth is generally within a reasonable price range to the consumer because production costs are fairly inexpensive. Depending on fiber content, this fabric is easily cleaned and wears well when it is firmly woven.

Twill weave is considered the most durable weave. Sometimes the consumer may see it referred to as the serge or diagonal weave. Twills are suitable for men's clothing because they are closer in texture, heavier and stronger than the plain weave. The consumer finds a twill weave desirable because it does not show dirt as quickly as a plain weave. Once twills are dirty, however, they are more difficult to clean than other fabrics.

Satin weave is produced on basically the same principal as the twill weave and is sometimes referred to as sateen. This type of

construction produces a smooth, rich-looking fabric, which is usually serviceable if not subjected to a great amount of wear. The knowledgeable salesperson might recommend a satin weave to the customer wanting lining for a coat, because satin has a smooth surface which allows the wearer to slip it on and off easily. Heavier weight satin is often used for formal wear. These fabrics generally shed the dirt well.

The second basic category of fabric construction is knit. Wingate (1970) stated that there are two basic methods of producing knitted fabrics. Weft knitting is done by hand and forms loops running crosswise on the fabric which link each loop into the one of the preceding row.

Warp knitting cannot be done by hand. The machine required for this is a chain loom which produces flat or tubular fabrics. Warp knitted fabrics are usually stronger and more closely constructed than weft-knitted fabrics. Fabrics and articles available to the consumer in the form of warp knits include fabric gloves, tricot, and underwear.

Double knits are also on the market. They are defined in the Textile Handbook as "a type of knitting using two sets of needles. These fabrics have more body and durability than single knits and are less likely to sag or lose shape" (p. 46).

Textile Finishes

Another factor affecting consumer decision is fabric finishes. The consumer who understands end-use requirements of a fabric and is knowledgeable about special finishes is able to successfully match end-use and finish. Schutz (1976) stated: "The consumer's alternatives increased with fiber treatment and fabric finishes. She must

choose among them on the basis of what she knows or thinks she knows" (p. 2).

Three basic types of finishes available today are shrink resistant, wrinkle resistant and flame retardant. These finishes may be either permanent or temporary. The Textile Handbook classifies a finish as permanent when "it will successfully withstand normal wear and care for the expected life of the product" (p. 57).

Shrinkage of fabrics can be regulated by a chemical or mechanical method. With chemical methods, resins are used to provide shrinkage control for the cellulosic fibers. Controlled compression forces are applied parallel to the surface of the fabric, pushing the warp yarns together as a mechanical means of shrinkage control. The term "Sanforized" is sometimes used to describe this process. Heat-setting is used on fabric made from thermoplastic fibers.

Wrinkle resistant finishes are usually applied to fabrics made from fibers which have poor elastic recovery, low resilience and which wrinkle easily. These finishes have been developed for application to cotton, linen and rayon fabrics as well as to blends of these fibers with nylon, acrylic, polyester, or triacetate.

The flame-retardant finish is described in the Textile Handbook:

> Fabrics or articles that are usually flammable are treated in such a way as to render them incapable of supporting combustion when the original source of flame is no longer in contact with the treated material (p. 52).

The original Flammable Fabrics Act was approved in 1953 and has been amended several times, the last time in 1967. These new amendments have increased the consumer's protection against "potentially unsafe fabrics in the specific end-use items of carpets and rugs, children's

sleepwear, and mattresses" (Textile Handbook, p. 104).

Many consumers are misinformed about the flame retardant finish. This finish does not render the fabric completely flameproof, it may be temporary, and it also may cause the garment to be uncomfortable. An article in Textile World (September, 1975) reported that a harsh hand and stiffness brought objections from consumer advocates when purchasing flame retardant fabrics.

Textile Care Knowledge

The many facets of the textile market have created a need for the consumer to become better informed. He has come to rely heavily on the salesperson. Only a few researchers have questioned the ability of the salesperson to assimilate all of the new knowledge (Good, 1972). The consumer needs further information in assisting him to care for fabrics so that he can obtain optimum use of the product (Manhart, 1964). The consumer is often unhappy when the information received is insufficient or faulty and as a result, problems usually develop (Good, 1972).

Many sources of information are used in an attempt to provide textile care knowledge. Textile care labels are provided for the consumer; however many consumers need supplementary information in addition to the label (Lamb, 1970). In many cases the consumer looks to the salesperson as a source of information. A study conducted by Wells (1960) revealed that only nine percent of the customers tested read the labels on the fabric. Approximately 85 percent of these customers purchased the fabrics.

The salesperson has a limited number of sources from which textile

care knowledge can be obtained. An article in Printer's Ink reported that most product knowledge was limited to personal experience and hearsay (Crisis in Selling, 1960). The salesperson can take advantage of instructions provided by the manufacturer and not rely on hearsay. Good (1972) investigated reasons for returns of ready-to-wear garments and found that the most frequently cited source of information was the hangtag. Sixty-four percent of the salespersonnel in participating stores relied on the hangtag.

The fact that the salespeople are reading the labels is good, but the problem lies in how to use that information to advise the consumer. If the consumer receives poor advice, dissatisfaction occurs and this can result in loss of future sales and in returned merchandise. Good (1972) found that failure of the textile to meet the customer's expectations was the cause of 22 of the 185 garments returned in a clothing department. Reasons given for the returns were that the salesperson had given misinformation on proper textile care, or she had simply failed to advise the customer in any way.

Manufacturers and retailers may need to put forth a greater effort to train salespeople in textile care knowledge. An article in Sales Management (1966, p. 76) reported that manufacturers were putting forth an effort toward increased training. They were hoping to ultimately educate the consumer through the educated salesperson. The merchandiser would also benefit by employing better informed salespersonnel. Good (1972) also indicated that salespersonnel who scored well on her measure of textile product knowledge had a lower rate of garment returns. This indicated that salespersons with greater knowledge of textiles were better able to advise their customers in textile

care procedures. Studies have shown that better informed shoppers are better consumers (Sales Management, 1966). Satisfied customers tend to return to the store in the future.

Consumerism and the Salesperson

In 1973, Horn (1975) reported that consumers spent over 69 billion dollars to buy clothing and shoes. This was an increase of almost eight billion over the 1972 figures for money allocated for the clothing budget.

A closer look at the amount of money devoted to the consumer's clothing budget revealed the amount spent on the purchase of fabric. According to the report of McCall's National Piece Goods Sales Survey, the American seamstress bought $1.76 billion dollars worth of fabric from retail stores during 1968. Chain stores like Sears and J. C. Penney accounted for an estimated 28 to 30 percent of this amount. An even larger portion of the total sales, 40-45 percent, was credited to the specialty fabric store. These specialty stores included new shop chains as well as the Singer Co., which operated 935 fabric stores coast-to-coast. Department stores received 20-25 percent of the total sales (American Fabrics, Winter, 1969-70).

Since such a large amount of the consumer's income is devoted to clothing, it is important that the money be wisely spent. In an effort to help consumers become more informed as to what they were buying, the Textile Fiber Products Identification Act was passed in 1958 and amended in 1969. The act required that all textile fiber products be labeled as to fiber content (Textile Handbook, 1974).

Once the act was passed, it became evident to the public that something needed to be done to allow the consumer to apply this information. Studies have shown that consumers desired and would use more information than is presently given on labels or required by the Textile Products Identification Act (Wells, 1960).

Supplying care information simply does not seem to be adequate. There is an increasing awareness that something is still lacking in the way of education. An article in Printer's Ink (1960) pointed out that the majority of salespeople contacted were either poorly informed about their merchandise or did not want to talk about it.

Another factor contributing to consumer problems is a major breakdown in communication between the manufacturer and the ultimate consumer (Canoyer, 1966). The salesperson, a vital part in this link, is often asked to provide information about the care and performance qualities of the items which are sold (Good, p. 1). A well educated salesperson can aid the merchandiser to have a more informed and satisfied public, as well as to maintain the quality standards of the merchandise they sell.

The salesperson needs additional sources of information, other than the care label. One trend is for the salesperson to look to someone in a higher position for advice. In many cases this has not been the solution, it only served to make the situation worse. An article in Printer's Ink (1960) reported that, "many buyers tell salespeople to ignore merchandise instructions as merely confusing" (p. 29).

The need for more education of the salesperson is evident in order to inform the consumer. According to one source, "In too many cases, our students are being educated by uneducated people--the salespeople

in the stores. Resources [colleges] should send trained people into the stores to train the salespeople" (Uneducated salespeople, 1974). Perhaps Manhart (1964) best summarized the need for consumer education when she stated:

> The amount of information which would be of interest to the consumer is too great to be included on the hang tag by the manufacturer. The ideal situation is to have educated and informed salespersons prepared to answer consumer questions and serve as consumer educators (p. 1).

Retailers have gradually accepted this concept. A recent article in Sales Management reported, "because of the technological advances in fibers store supervisors are asking for help in educating both their salespeople and customers" (p. 76). Unfortunately this is not happening in the majority of retail establishments and there is still a need to better educate salespersonnel.

Summary

The textile market is constantly growing and plays a vital part in the national income. A portion of the consumer's income is spent on some product of the textile industry. During inflationary periods it is important that every spendable dollar count.

With the growing textile industry, consumer awareness is developing and quality has become more important to the consumer. The consumer must have adequate knowledge of the product in order to choose wisely. Manufacturers and legislators are making an effort to provide product information.

Even with legislation, however, consumers encounter problems interpreting textile information. The salesperson has the potential to serve as a link between the manufacturer and consumer. The

salespersonnel are in the stores, selling to the consumer and promoting merchandise, but somehow consumer product dissatisfaction still remains.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

A review of literature revealed that advice given to customers in retail establishments was not always correct and dissatisfaction with performance of the textile product occurred. The purpose of the study was to examine the textile knowledge of salespersonnel in selected stores to determine whether or not there is a need for education of salespeople so that they will be able to furnish consumers with accurate information. To accomplish this objective data were collected by means of a questionnaire.

Description of Sample

Participants in the study were 100 salespeople employed in stores in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area of Oklahoma. The stores included chain stores, department stores and specialty fabric stores selected from the Tulsa telephone directory. The researcher also consulted the Tulsa City Directory for listings that may not have been included in the telephone directory.

Since the category chain stores can include both department stores and fabric stores the cooperating stores were separated into two groups: department and fabric stores. The participating salespeople in the department stores were those working in the fabric department.

Development of Instrument

A review of research which had been conducted in related areas revealed that there was no instrument designed to accomplish the objectives of the study, so the researcher developed a suitable questionnaire. Questions were formulated based on the review of literature and textile examinations available in the department of clothing, textiles and merchandising.

A table of specifications was constructed to identify areas of textile knowledge considered necessary to a salesperson working in a fabric department. Fibers, finishes, fabric construction and care were identified as major categories. Each of the major categories was further divided into sub-categories. The table of specifications also allowed for an indication of which questions tested textile knowledge dealing with identification of facts, understanding of principles and application of knowledge. Upon completion of this table the original questions were reviewed and organized according to the sub-categories. An evaluation was made to determine whether any area had been overlooked or unduly emphasized. Upon completion of this analysis the textile knowledge instrument was developed.

The questionnaire was pre-tested with salespersonnel in fabric departments in Stillwater, Oklahoma. It was administered in two department stores and one fabric specialty store. A total of ten salespeople completed the questionnaire, five from the department stores and five from the fabric store. Salespeople were encouraged to offer suggestions and criticism.

The questionnaires were collected and scored by the researcher.

Suggestions and criticism given by the salespeople were noted. The questionnaire was also reviewed by graduate students and professors in the Clothing, Textile and Merchandising Department at Oklahoma State University. Suggestions of salespeople and reviewers were used as a basis for revision of the questionnaire.

Several changes were made. One question was a combination multiple choice-fill in the blank item. This was confusing, so it was reworded as a multiple choice item. Two questions appeared to cover the same subject matter; therefore one of them was eliminated. One question was shortened and clarified due to the confusion it created on the part of the participant. Options on responses were changed in three questions for clarity. A revised copy of the questionnaire was then made and used in the study. (See Appendix A, p. 44.)

Collection of Data

A cover letter and a preliminary information form with self-addressed stamped envelope were mailed to each of the 75 stores selected for the study. (See Appendix B, p. 52.) The cover letter described the study to the store manager and asked for permission to administer the questionnaire to his salespersonnel. The preliminary information form was used to determine the (1) classification of the store, (2) approximate number of full-time and part-time salespersonnel employed in the fabric department, and (3) name to whom any further contacts might be made.

Twenty-seven stores agreed to participate. Thirteen stores responded negatively and indicated that they were going out of business, they no longer carried fabrics, they had complications with

their legal department allowing information in the questionnaire to be released or lack of interest in the study. Thirty-five stores failed to respond due to address change, no longer in business, change in store management personnel or loss of envelopes in the mail. Some of these stores were contacted by phone in an attempt to obtain additional participants for the study.

One hundred seventy-five questionnaires were distributed to 27 stores in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area. Each questionnaire had an accompanying envelope to assure anonymity of the salesperson filling it out. The questionnaires were left in the stores for one week to be filled out at the convenience of the salesperson.

Six trips to the Tulsa and Sand Springs area were necessary to collect the questionnaires. Several store managers preferred to mail the responses back after they had determined the correct and incorrect responses of their salespeople. Phone calls were necessary to remind store managers to mail the questionnaires.

A total of 156 questionnaires were collected; 70 from department stores and 86 from fabric stores. Incomplete questionnaires were omitted, leaving a total of 100 questionnaires which were used in analyzing the data.

Analysis of Data

Percentages were used to analyze various background characteristics of the respondents, such as age, work experience and educational level. The Mann-Whitney U test was used to test the hypothesis: there will be no significant difference in the textile knowledge scores of the salespersonnel according to the type of store in which they

are employed.

The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine the following hypotheses: there will be no significant difference in the textile knowledge scores of the salespeople according to age, there will be no significant difference in textile knowledge scores of the salespeople according to previous education, and there will be no significant difference in textile knowledge scores according to previous work experience.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to test the general textile knowledge of salespersonnel in selected fabric and department stores and to determine differences in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel based on variations in age, previous education, years of previous work experience and type of store.

Description of Participants

Participants in the study were 100 salespersons (all women) who were working in fabric departments of department stores or in fabric stores in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area of Oklahoma in May, 1977. The 100 participants completed the questionnaire and results were tabulated. Background data and the score on the Textile Knowledge Instrument for each participant appear in Appendix C, p. 55.

A tabulation of background information for the 100 participants is presented in Table I. The greatest proportion of salespersonnal (66%) had a high school education. Sixteen percent had attended college but had no degree, while 12 percent had attended college and obtained a degree.

A majority of the participants (58%) were aged 30 and under. The remaining participants were almost evenly divided between the other two categories: 31-49 (20%) and 50 and over (22%).

TABLE I

CHARACTERISTICS OF THE PARTICIPANTS
(N=100)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percent
Type of store	Fabric store	50	50
	Department store	50	50
Educational background	High school	66	66
	Vocational or trade school	4	4
	Some college, but no degree	16	16
	College degree	12	12
	Other	2	2
Age	30 and under	58	58
	31-49	20	20
	50 and over	22	22
Work experience	Less than 1 year	37	37
	1 to 4 years	40	40
	5 to 10 years	15	15
	11 or more years	8	8
Amount of sewing participant does	Little or none (1 to 2 garments per year)	9	9
	Some (5 or 6 garments per year)	20	20
	Great deal (10 or more garments per year)	71	71
Employer requires previous knowledge of sewing	Yes	64	64
	No	36	36
Formal training in clothing and textiles	Yes	22	22
	No	78	78
Sources participant relied on for advice to customers*	Labels on end of bolt	94	94
	Personal sewing experience	87	87
	Previous textile knowledge	59	59
	Past experience with customers	55	55
	What others have said	43	43
	Other	11	11

*Number of responses in this category do not total 100 because participants could make several choices.

Thirty-seven percent of the participants had worked less than one year and another 40 percent had worked no more than four years. Only eight percent had worked more than 10 years.

Most of the participants (71%) indicated that they did a great deal of sewing each year. Only a few (9%) reported that they did little or none each year. Sixty-four of the participants reported that their employers required that the salespersonnel have some previous knowledge of sewing; however only 22 percent indicated that they had formal training in clothing and textiles.

When asked to indicate the sources relied on for advice to customers, the greatest proportion of respondents (94%) selected labels on the end of bolt. The second most frequently chosen response was personal sewing experience (87%). Approximately one-half the respondents indicated that previous textile knowledge (59%) and past experience with customers (55%) were utilized as sources of advice.

In an attempt to further analyze the background information of participants similar tables were constructed for fabric store personnel (Table II) and department store personnel (Table III). The majority of salespersonnal in both fabric and department stores indicated that they had a high school education. Twenty-two percent of the personnel in fabric stores had some college but no degree, while only 10 percent of the salespersonnel in department stores fell into this category. Twelve percent of the salespersonnel in each of the two types of stores had a college degree.

More than half of the participants in both fabric and department stores were in the 30 and under category. The department stores had almost twice as many (26%) salespersonnel in the 31-49 age category

TABLE II

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN FABRIC STORES
(N=50)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percent
Educational background	High school	29	58
	Vocational or trade school	2	4
	Some college, but no degree	11	22
	College degree	6	12
	Other	2	4
Age	30 and under	31	62
	31-49	7	14
	50 and over	12	24
Work experience	Less than 1 year	18	36
	1 to 4 years	16	32
	t to 10 years	12	24
	11 or more years	4	8
Amount of sewing participant does	Little or none (1 to 2 garments per year)	3	6
	Some (5 or 6 garments per year)	10	20
	Great deal (10 or more garments per year)	37	74
Employer requires previous knowledge of sewing	Yes	40	80
	No	10	20
Formal training in clothing and textiles	Yes	14	28
	No	36	72
Sources participant relied on for advice to customers*	Labels on end of bolt	47	94
	Previous textile knowledge	32	64
	Personal sewing experience	44	88
	Past experience with customers	28	56
	What others have said	18	36
	Other	6	12

*Number of responses in this category do not total 50 because participants could make several choices.

TABLE III

CHARACTERISTICS OF PARTICIPANTS IN DEPARTMENT STORES (N=50)

Variable	Classification	Number	Percent
Educational background	High school	37	74
	Vocational or trade school	2	4
	Some college, but no degree	5	10
	College degree	6	12
	Other	--	--
Age	30 and under	27	54
	31-49	13	26
	50 and over	10	20
Work experience	Less than 1 year	19	38
	1 to 4 years	24	48
	5 to 10 years	3	6
	11 or more years	4	8
Amount of sewing participant does	Little or none (1 to 2 garments per year)	6	12
	Some (5 or 6 garments per year)	10	20
	Great deal (10 or more garments per year)	34	68
Employer requires previous knowledge of sewing	Yes	24	48
	No	26	52
Formal training in clothing and textiles	Yes	7	14
	No	43	86
Sources participant relied on for advice to customers*	Labels on end of bolt	48	96
	Previous textile knowledge	27	54
	Personal sewing experience	44	88
	Past experience with customers	28	56
	What others have said	26	52
	Other	5	10

*Number of responses in this category do not total 50 because participants could make several choices.

as did the fabric stores (14%).

The years of work experience for salespersonnel were similar; however in fabric stores almost one-third had five or more years of experience. Only 14 percent of the participants in department stores had five or more years of experience.

Almost twice as many salespersonnel in fabric stores (80%) as in department stores (48%) indicated that their employer required previous knowledge of sewing. Twice as many salespersonnel in fabric stores (28%) had formal training in clothing and textiles than did those salespersonnel in department stores (14%).

When asked to indicate sources relied on for advice to customers, responses from salespersonnel in both types of stores were evenly distributed. It did appear that more salespersonnel in department stores (52%) relied on what others have said, than did the salespersonnel in fabric stores (36%).

The range of scores on the textile knowledge questionnaire for the tested group were 19-42 out of a total possible 45. The mean score for the entire group was 31.45 (69.88%) and the median was 32 (71.11%). This is considered a very low score, indicating the average level of textile knowledge of the participants was low.

Participants could choose a "don't know" response or guess at the correct answer. In the section labeled "fibers" on the textile knowledge questionnaire the majority of participants thought they knew or attempted to guess at the correct answers. Only on two of the questions, both concerned with wool, did large percentages respond with 'don't know' (24% and 40%). (See item analysis, Appendix D, p. 60.) The section labeled "finishes" contained four questions for which a

large number of respondents indicated they did not know the correct response. The "fabric construction" section contained only one question for which almost half the participants (42%) indicated they did not know the correct answer. This was a question concerning felt fabric. The "care" section contained three questions for which large numbers of respondents indicated they did not know the correct response. These three questions dealt with the type of fabric which would not mildew in storage (30% don't know); proper laundering techniques for the care of white nylon (22% don't know); and the correct method for removing oily stains from polyester (21% don't know).

Examination of Hypotheses

The Mann-Whitney U Test was used to test Hypothesis I and the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine Hypotheses II, III and IV.

Hypothesis I

There will be no significant difference in the textile knowledge scores of the salespersonnel according to type of store in which they are employed. As Table IV indicated a Z-score of -0.77 was obtained, which revealed that no significant difference existed in the textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to the type of store in which they were employed.

TABLE IV

DIFFERENCES IN TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE SCORES ACCORDING TO TYPE OF STORE IN WHICH SALESPERSONNEL WERE EMPLOYED (N=100)

Variable	Number	Mean Score	Z-score	Level of Significance
Fabric store	50	31.80	-0.77	n.s.
Department store	50	31.82		

Hypothesis II

There will be no significant difference in the textile knowledge scores of the salespersonnel according to age. The Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance indicated that a significant relationship did exist between textile knowledge scores and the age of the salespersonnel. Table V illustrates, an H-score of 14.618 was obtained which was significant at the 0.01 level. A positive relationship existed between the age of the respondent and total scores on the textile knowledge test. Respondents in the 50 and over age category obtained the highest mean scores while those in the 30 and under age category obtained the lowest mean scores.

TABLE V

DIFFERENCES IN TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE SCORES OF SALESPERSONNEL ACCORDING TO AGE (N=100)

Variable	Number	Mean Score	H-score	Level of Significance
30 and under	58	41.25		
31-49	20	59.70	14.618	0.01
50 and over	22	66.52		

Hypothesis III

There will be no significant difference in the scores of the salespersonnel according to previous education. When the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance was used to examine this hypothesis, an H-score of 0.605 was obtained. As Table VI illustrates, no significant difference existed in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to previous education.

TABLE VI

DIFFERENCES IN TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE SCORES OF SALESPERSONNEL ACCORDING TO EDUCATION (N=100)

Variable	Number	Mean Score	H-score	Level of Significance
Education Level				
High school	66	51.49		
Vocational or trade school	4	54.12		
Some college, but no degree	16	45.56	0.605	n.s.
College degree	12	50.58		
Other	2	49.50		

Hypothesis IV

There will be no significant difference in scores of the salespersonnel according to previous work experience. As Table VII illustrates, the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance produced an H-score of 6.802. This value indicated that there was no significant difference in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel according to previous work experience.

TABLE VII

DIFFERENCES IN TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE SCORES
OF SALESPERSONNEL ACCORDING TO
PREVIOUS WORK EXPERIENCE
(N=100)

Variable	Number	Mean Score	H-score	Level of Significance
Years of Work Experience				
Less than 1 year	37	40.90		
1 to 4 years	40	54.70	6.802	n.s.
5 to 10 years	15	60.10		
11 or more years	8	55.87		

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to test the general textile knowledge of salespersonnel in department and fabric stores and to determine the differences in textile knowledge scores of salespersonnel based on variations in age, previous education, years of work experience and type of store. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to salespersonnel employed in the Tulsa and Sand Springs area of Oklahoma. Data were analyzed and comparisons were made using frequency and percentages, the Mann-Whitney U test and the Kruskal-Wallis one-way analysis of variance.

Conclusions

The mean score on the Textile Knowledge Instrument was 69.88 percent. This indicated that the overall knowledge of textiles was not high and that further education might be desirable.

Statistical analysis of the data indicated that age was the only variable that was significantly related to textile knowledge scores. The older age groups received significantly higher scores. This would tend to indicate that textile knowledge may be acquired by experience and exposure to textiles over a long period of time.

Findings from the study indicated that educational background, work experience and type of store had no significant relationship to

knowledge of textiles, however, some trends were indicated when the age groups were examined separately. The range of textile knowledge scores was much wider within the 30 and under category than for the other age categories. Closer inspection indicated that young people with some college education scored higher than did those with no college work. Also young people with more work experience obtained higher scores than those with less experience. This effect was hidden when data for the whole group was examined.

Recommendations

The study dealt with salespersonnel in only one area of Oklahoma and is not necessarily representative of all salespersonnel in the United States. The study should be replicated in various areas of the country.

As indicated above it appeared that there might be some differences within age groups in regard to previous education and work experience. It is recommended that a more extensive study be conducted to determine whether significant differences exist among work experience, education and textile knowledge scores within the various age groups.

It is also recommended that the item analysis data be used to revise the questionnaire before it is used in another study.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

PLEASE COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING

A. Name of Store _____

Type of Store _____ fabric store
_____ department store

B. Educational Background (check one)

_____ High School
_____ Vocational or trade school
_____ some college, but no degree
_____ College Degree
_____ other (please specify)

C. Age

_____ 30 and under
_____ 31 - 49
_____ 50 and over

D. Work experience, related to present position

_____ less than 1 year
_____ 1 to 4 years
_____ 5 to 10 years
_____ 11 or more years

E. Amount of sewing you do

_____ little or none (1 to 2 garments per year)
_____ some (5 or 6 garments per year)
_____ great deal (10 or more garments per year)

F. Does the employer require that you have any previous knowledge of fabrics?

_____ yes
_____ no

G. Have you had formal training in Clothing and Textiles?

_____ yes
_____ no

H. Please select sources you rely on for advice to customers.

_____ labels on the end of bolt
_____ previous textile knowledge
_____ personal sewing experience
_____ past experience with customers
_____ what others have said
_____ other (please explain)

General Textile Knowledge Instrument

In responding to this questionnaire please do not guess at the answer. If you are not sure, do not hesitate to select the "don't know" choice.

Fibers

Which answer would you recommend for each of the following problems?

1. Mrs. Smith would like some fabric. She is planning to make trousers for her little boy to play in.

a. _____ rayon
b. __X__ cotton/polyester
c. _____ wool
d. _____ don't know

2. Mrs. Jones has to make pleated skirts for her two daughter's cheerleading outfits. She would like a fabric which would hold a pressed pleat.

a. _____ rayon
b. _____ cotton
c. __X__ polyester
d. _____ don't know

3. Johnny needs a new winter jacket. His home is in North Dakota where winters are extremely cold. What is the warmest choice of fabric?

a. __X__ wool
b. _____ polyester
c. _____ acrylic
d. _____ don't know

4. Sarah will be working in a hot humid climate this summer. She would like to make a dress which would assure comfort and coolness for all occasions.

a. _____ polyester
b. __X__ linen
c. _____ acetate
d. _____ don't know

5. Susan and her brother are going to need some new school clothes for this winter. Their mother wants the garments to be warm, but she is also concerned about practicality. What should she choose?

a. _____ wool
b. __X__ acrylic
c. _____ cotton/polyester
d. _____ don't know

Please select the best response for each of the following situations.

6. Assuming three fabrics are similar, which of the fibers has the most resistance to wear?

a. __X__ nylon
b. _____ cotton
c. _____ wool
d. _____ don't know

7. Connie wants a new wardrobe for her freshman year. She is concerned about a static problem, and wants to make sure her new clothes don't cling. Which fabric should she avoid?

a. _____ wool
b. _____ cotton
c. __X__ nylon
d. _____ don't know

8. Jamie is making her first jumper out of a heavy texturized polyester double knit fabric. She wants to avoid bulk around the armholes. She chooses to make the facings out of:

   a. X light weight polyester fabric
   b. _____ same as jumper fabric
   c. _____ light weight cotton fabric
   d. _____ don't know

9. Your customer would like fabric for a sheer dressy blouse, but wants something she can launder with few problems. What fiber content would you recommend?

   a. _____ silk organza
   b. X cotton/polyester voil
   c. _____ acetate chiffon
   d. _____ don't know

10. A customer is looking for fabric for a cool inexpensive shift that she can wear around the house in the summer, for cleaning and gardening. She expects to launder it frequently and does not want to be bothered with static build up. Which fabric should she choose?

    a. X cotton
    b. _____ acrylic
    c. _____ polyester
    d. _____ don't know

11. How would you respond to a customer who reads the label on the end of a wool bolt and asks, "What does 'virgin wool' mean?"

    a. _____ The wool is from the fleece of lambs.
    b. _____ A finish has been applied to make the fabric soft.
    c. X The fiber has not been used in a fabric previously.
    d. _____ don't know.

12. "I like this fabric, can you tell me what this symbol on the label means?"

    

    a. _____ It is the insignia of the I.L.G.W.U.
    b. _____ It is the sign of fair price dealing.
    c. X It is a mark of quality tested, pure wool.
    d. _____ don't know

Finishes

13. Anti-static finishes are desirable for most fabrics made from which fibers?

    a. X polyester
    b. _____ cotton
    c. _____ 50/50 cotton - polyester
    d. _____ don't know

14. Which of the following finishes increases the ability of a fabric to hold the heat?

    a. _____ embossing
    b. X napping
    c. _____ don't know

On the following questions, select the response you would choose when giving advice to a customer.

15. Jane has become very irritated because the bathroom towels aren't absorbing water. What may be the problem?

    a. _____ not enough detergent added to laundry.
    b. X too much fabric softner added to the wash.
    c. _____ too much bleach added to the wash.
    d. _____ don't know

16. Ted would like to make sure his shirts have a crisp finish for his job interviews. With what should this garment be treated?

a. _____ bleach
b. X starch
c. _____ softner
d. _____ don't know

17. Connie wants to make some flannel pajamas for her two year old nephew. Which finish is required by law?

a. _____ durable press
b. _____ anti-static
c. X flame retardant
d. _____ don't know

18. Embossing can be used on a fabric to:

a. _____ increase shine.
b. _____ increase the life of the fabric.
c. X achieve a raised, textured effect.
d. _____ don't know

19. If the fabric label says "Crease-Resistant" what can we expect from that fabric?

a. _____ It means that fabric so treated will not crease, crush, or wrinkle.
b. X It means that if wrinkles do appear, the fabric can be shaken out or hung out in the air and the wrinkles will fall out.
c. _____ don't know

20. "The label indicates that the fabric is Sanforized. What does that mean?"

a. X The fabric has been treated to control shrinkage.
b. _____ The fabric has been treated to make it lustrous.
c. _____ The fabric has been treated to control fading.
d. _____ don't know

21. "The label on this fabric indicates the fabric is Scotchgard finished." What does that mean?

a. _____ The fabric will resist stains and spots for the life of the garment.
b. _____ The fabric will resist shrinkage for the life of the garment.
c. X The fabric will repel stains until the finish wears off.
d. _____ don't know.

22. Your regular customer comes in complaining that the cotton/ polyester fabric you mailed out to her has a "fishy" odor. What would you tell her?

a. _____ Let the fabric air out, the odor will disappear.
b. X The odor will disappear after the first few times the fabric is laundered.
c. _____ The fabric finish is defective; return the fabric.
d. _____ don't know.

Fabric Construction

23. Mrs. Jackson is going on a European tour this summer. She plans to buy alot of souvenirs and bring them back in her luggage. Since space is important, she wants to take one basic suit. What type of fabric would you suggest?

a. _____ acrylic bonded knit
b. _____ cotton twill weave
c. X polyester double knit
d. _____ don't know

24. Mrs. Jennings would like to make a durable winter coat. Which type of fabric construction would you suggest as being the most durable for that type of garment?

a. _____ plain
b. X twill
c. _____ satin
d. _____ don't know

25. The method used to form fabric by interconnecting loops is:

a. _____ weave
b. _____ braid
c. X knit
d. _____ don't know

26. In a woven fabric, which has most give and does not ravel?

a. _____ selvage edge
b. X bias edge
c. _____ crosswise edge
d. _____ don't know

27. Don wants a new bathrobe. His only requirement is that, "It must be soft, warm and absorbent." What type of fabric would you suggest?

a. _____ twill weave
b. _____ plain weave
c. X pile weave
d. _____ don't know

28. On which grainline must you lay the pattern piece to get the best hang and drape of a garment?

a. X lengthwise
b. _____ crosswise
c. _____ both of the above
d. _____ don't know

29. To which edge of the fabric should the customer pay attention when placing her pattern piece on the straight grain?

a. _____ bias edge
b. X selvage edge
c. _____ crosswise edge
d. _____ all of the above
e. _____ don't know

30. Which phrase describes the fabric selvage?

a. _____ The tightly woven crosswise fabric edge
b. _____ The fabric bias
c. X The tightly woven lenthwise fabric edge
d. _____ don't know

31. Adel's boyfriend is complaining about a run in the shirt she made him. Which of the following would you guess she has used for the shirt.

a. _____ tricot
b. _____ mesh knit jersey
c. X interlock
d. _____ don't know

32. Compared to woven fabrics, knit fabrics:

a. X are more flexible
b. _____ hold their shape better and longer
c. _____ always absorb more moisture
d. _____ all of the above
e. _____ don't know

33. Mrs. Jones has her heart set on making a shirt and jacket out of bonded fabric. Which problem(s) might she encounter?

a. _____ fabric bulk
b. _____ fabric layer separation
c. _____ fabric shrinkage
d. X all of the above
e. _____ don't know

34. Susan wants to make a jumpsuit for her ten year old daughter. Which type of fabric should she select for comfort and stability?

a. _____ wool felt
b. X cotton/polyester twill
c. _____ cotton interlock knit
d. _____ don't know

35. Which type of fabric would most easily fall apart?

a. _____ bonded web
b. _____ needle punch
c. X felt
d. _____ don't know

36. A husband and wife team are going on a tennis tour of the Southern United States. They would like their outfits to provide for the maximum amount of activity. Which type of fabric construction would you suggest?

a. _____ plain weave
b. _____ twill weave
c. X double knit
d. _____ don't know

Care

37. Which fabrics below can withstand the highest heat?

a. _____ cotton and wool
b. _____ wool and polyester
c. X cotton and linen
d. _____ don't know

38. If you wash a wool fabric you should use:

a. _____ hot water
b. X cold water
c. _____ warm water
d. _____ don't know

39. The best choice of heat pressing wool is:

a. _____ high heat
b. _____ dry heat
c. X steam heat
d. _____ don't know

40. To prevent mildew one should store clean fabrics in a:

a. X dry, cool, light place
b. _____ humid, warm, dark place
c. _____ humid, cool, light place
d. _____ dry, warm, dark place
e. _____ don't know

41. Permanent care instructions must be included with fabric as a result of a Federal Trade Commission ruling.

a. X true
b. _____ false
c. _____ don't know

42. A customer reports that dampness in her basement has caused many of her clean clothes in storage to mildew. She wants fabric for a summer dress that will resist mildew. What fiber content would you suggest she look for?

a. _____ linen
b. __X__ polyester
c. _____ cotton
d. _____ don't know

43. A customer wants to make a blouse that she can launder with the family wash. Why might you discourage her from buying white nylon?

a. __X__ nylon attracts color and soil from other garments
b. _____ nylon is not machine washable
c. _____ nylon cannot be washed in all purpose soaps
d. _____ don't know

44. A customer wants to know why the iron sticks to and ripples the nylon fabric she bought in your department. What would you tell her?

a. _____ The fabric is defective and should be returned.
b. __X__ The temperature of your iron is probably too high.
c. _____ The temperature of your iron is probably too low.
d. _____ don't know

45. "Unless you can tell me what to do, I'm going to return this polyester crepe dress. When I launder it, it doesn't come clean. Just look at the soil line around the collar and cuffs!"

a. _____ The fabric is defective, please let me exchange it for you.
b. _____ You'll need to dryclean the dress occasionally if you wish to eliminate the soil areas.
c. _____ Try washing it in warm water and adding mild bleach.
d. __X__ Try rubbing an enzyme presoak detergent into the soiled area before laundering.
e. _____ don't know

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER AND PRELIMINARY INFORMATION FORM

Oklahoma State University

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING, TEXTILES & MERCHANDISING

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

March 23, 1977

Dear Sir:

As a retail store manager you are probably alert to the fact that consumer awareness is increasing. One way to provide information to the consumer is through retail sales personnel.

In a research study at Oklahoma State University we are attempting to identify textile product information possessed by sales personnel in fabric departments. A questionnaire, taking aproximately 30 minutes, will be distributed in the Tulsa area to retail sales personnel in fabric departments who agree to participate in the study. Responses from participants will be analyzed statistically and identification of individual respondents will not be revealed. The results of the study will be used to identify needs as a basis for preparation of workshops and short courses.

If you will allow me to administer the questionnaire to sales personnel in your fabric department or store, please complete the attached form and return in the enclosed, self-addressed, stamped envelope by _____. I will contact you or the person you designate and arrange for a convenient time. Thank you for your time. If you have questions, I may be reached by telephone: 624-0673 or 624-5036.

Sincerely,

Michele Caldwell

Michele Caldwell

Graduate assistant

Preliminary Information Form

1. Name of store _____

2. Circle the response that is most characteristic of your store.
   Store Classification:

   a. department store
   b. chain store
   c. specialty store
   d. other _____

3. Approximate number of sales personnel employed in your store or fabric department.

   a. full-time_____
   b. part-time_____

4. Do you want a copy of the results of this study?

   a. yes
   b. no

5. To whom should I make further contacts regarding this study?

   Name_____

   Position_____

   Address_____

   _____

   _____

   Phone No._____

6. Person completing this questionnaire (if different from person listed in question #5).

   Name_____

APPENDIX C

RAW DATA

Respondent	Type of Store[a]	Educational Background[b]	Age[c]	Work Experience Related to Position[d]	Amount of Sewing Done[e]	Employer Requires Previous Knowledge of Fabrics[f]	Formal Training in Clothing & Textiles[g]	Total Score[h]
1	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	42
2	2	1	2	2	3	1	2	42
3	2	1	3	4	2	1	2	40
4	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	39
5	2	1	3	2	3	1	2	39
6	2	1	3	4	2	1	2	39
7	1	1	3	1	3	1	2	39
8	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	38
9	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	38
10	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	38
11	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	38
12	1	4	3	4	3	1	2	38
13	1	2	1	2	3	1	2	38
14	2	1	2	3	3	1	1	37
15	2	1	2	3	3	1	1	37
16	2	1	2	3	1	2	2	37
17	2	1	3	1	3	1	2	37
18	2	1	3	1	3	2	2	37
19	1	3	1	2	3	2	2	37
20	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	37
21	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	36
22	2	3	1	2	3	1	2	36
23	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	36
24	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	36
25	1	4	1	2	3	1	2	36
26	1	1	2	3	3	1	2	35
27	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	35
28	1	1	1	2	2	1	1	35
29	1	5	2	2	2	1	1	35
30	1	1	3	3	2	2	2	35

Respondent	Type of Store[a]	Educational Background[b]	Age[c]	Work Experience Related to Position[d]	Amount of Sewing Done[e]	Employer Requires Previous Knowledge of Fabrics[f]	Formal Training in Clothing & Textiles[g]	Total Score[h]
31	1	1	3	1	3	2	2	35
32	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	35
33	2	1	1	2	3	1	1	35
34	2	4	1	1	3	2	2	35
35	2	4	1	1	3	2	2	35
36	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	35
37	1	4	2	3	3	1	1	34
38	1	1	1	1	1	1	2	33
39	1	2	3	3	3	2	2	33
40	1	3	2	3	3	1	1	33
41	1	3	3	2	2	1	2	33
42	1	4	1	2	1	2	2	33
43	2	1	3	1	3	2	2	33
44	2	1	3	1	3	2	2	33
45	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	32
46	1	1	3	4	1	1	2	32
47	1	1	1	3	2	2	2	32
48	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	32
49	1	3	1	1	3	1	1	32
50	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	32
51	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	32
52	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	32
53	1	4	1	2	3	1	1	31
54	2	4	3	2	3	1	2	31
55	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	31
56	2	1	1	2	3	1	2	31
57	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	31
58	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	31
59	2	2	2	1	3	1	1	31
60	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	30

Respondent	Type of Store[a]	Educational Background[b]	Age[c]	Work Experience Related to Position[d]	Amount of Sewing Done[e]	Employer Requires Previous Knowledge of Fabrics[f]	Formal Training in Clothing & Textiles[g]	Total Score[h]
61	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	30
62	1	3	2	4	3	1	2	30
63	2	3	1	2	2	2	1	30
64	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	29
65	1	3	1	1	2	1	1	29
66	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	29
67	1	1	2	2	3	1	1	29
68	2	1	2	1	3	2	2	29
69	1	1	1	1	2	1	2	28
70	1	3	1	2	3	1	1	28
71	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	28
72	1	1	1	1	3	2	1	28
73	1	4	1	3	3	1	1	28
74	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	28
75	1	5	3	4	2	1	2	28
76	2	1	1	1	1	2	2	27
77	2	1	2	4	1	2	2	27
78	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	27
79	2	1	1	1	3	2	1	27
80	2	2	1	1	2	2	2	27
81	2	1	2	4	1	2	2	27
82	1	1	1	1	2	1	1	27
83	1	1	1	1	3	2	2	27
84	1	3	1	2	3	1	2	27
85	2	3	1	1	3	1	2	26
86	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	26
87	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	25
88	2	1	2	2	2	1	2	25
89	2	1	1	1	3	2	2	25
90	2	1	2	2	3	2	2	24

Respondent	Type of Store[a]	Educational Background[b]	Age[c]	Work Experience Related to Position[d]	Amount of Sewing Done[e]	Employer Requires Previous Knowledge of Fabrics[f]	Formal Training in Clothing & Textiles[g]	Total Score[h]
91	2	3	1	2	3	2	2	24
92	1	3	1	1	3	1	2	23
93	1	1	1	1	3	1	2	23
94	2	1	1	2	2	2	2	23
95	2	1	1	1	2	2	2	23
96	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	22
97	1	1	3	3	3	1	2	22
98	1	1	1	2	3	1	2	22
99	2	4	1	2	3	1	2	19
100	2	4	1	2	3	1	2	19

[a] 1-fabric store; 2-department store.

[b] 1-high school; 2-vocational or trade school; 3-some college but no degree; 4-college degree; 5-other.

[c] 1-30 and under; 2-31-49; 3-50 and over.

[d] 1-less than 1 year; 2-1 to 4 years; 3-5 to 10 years; 4-11 or more years.

[e] 1-1 to 2 garments per year; 2-5 or 6 garments per year; 3-10 or more garments per year.

[f] 1-year; 2-no.

[g] 1-yes; 2-no.

[h] Score on Textile Knowledge Instrument.

APPENDIX D

ITEM ANALYSIS AND FREQUENCY TABLE

Question No.	Frequency	
Fibers		
Q 1.	1.	0
	2.	100
	3.	0
	4.	0
Q 2	1.	9
	2.	35
	3.	44
	4.	12
Q 3.	1.	96
	2.	2
	3.	0
	4.	2
Q 4.	1.	11
	2.	77
	3.	3
	4.	9
Q 5.	1.	3
	2.	21
	3.	66
	4.	10
Q 6.	1.	43
	2.	19
	3.	25
	4.	13
Q 7.	1.	3
	2.	6
	3.	90
	4.	1
Q 8.	1.	83
	2.	1
	3.	15
	4.	1
Q 9.	1.	0
	2.	86
	3.	6
	4.	8
Q 10.	1.	93
	2.	0
	3.	4
	4.	3
Q 11.	1.	22
	2.	1
	3.	53
	4.	24
Q 12.	1.	4
	2.	2
	3.	54
	4.	40
Finishes		
Q 13.	1.	60
	2.	1
	3.	17
	4.	22
Q 14.	1.	12
	2.	53
	3.	32
	4.	3
Q 15.	1.	1
	2.	62
	3.	8
	4.	29
Q 16.	1.	0
	2.	99
	3.	1
	4.	0
Q 17.	1.	0
	2.	0
	3.	99
	4.	1
Q 18.	1.	2
	2.	2
	3.	74
	4.	22
Q 19.	1.	33
	2.	61
	3.	5
	4.	1
Q 20.	1.	73
	2.	4
	3.	5
	4.	18

Question No.	Frequency	
Q 21.	1.	33
	2.	61
	3.	5
	4.	1
Q 22.	1.	11
	2.	46
	3.	16
	4.	27
Fabric Construction		
Q 23.	1.	2
	2.	6
	3.	82
	4.	10
Q 24.	1.	22
	2.	63
	3.	0
	4.	15
Q 25.	1.	8
	2.	2
	3.	77
	4.	13
Q 26.	1.	23
	2.	58
	3.	10
	4.	9
Q 27.	1.	1
	2.	2
	3.	86
	4.	11
Q 28.	1.	79
	2.	0
	3.	17
	4.	4
Q 29.	1.	0
	2.	78
	3.	18
	4.	3
Q 30.	1.	7
	2.	0
	3.	85
	4.	8

Question No.	Frequency	
Q 31.	1.	23
	2.	24
	3.	45
	4.	8
Q 32.	1.	56
	2.	15
	3.	2
	4.	23
	5.	4
Q 33.	1.	17
	2.	14
	3.	2
	4.	53
	5.	14
Q 34.	1.	1
	2.	83
	3.	14
	4.	2
Q 35.	1.	22
	2.	5
	3.	31
	4.	42
Q 36.	1.	11
	2.	10
	3.	69
	4.	10
Care		
Q 37.	1.	12
	2.	2
	3.	72
	4.	14
Q 38.	1.	0
	2.	81
	3.	13
	4.	6
Q 39.	1.	2
	2.	22
	3.	66
	4.	10

Question No.	Frequency	
Q 40.	1.	75
	2.	1
	3.	0
	4.	21
	5.	3
Q 41.	1.	82
	2.	3
	3.	14
	4.	1
Q 42.	1.	6
	2.	41
	3.	23
	4.	30
Q 43.	1.	61
	2.	2
	3.	15
	4.	22
Q 44.	1.	0
	2.	98
	3.	0
	4.	2
Q 45.	1.	0
	2.	11
	3.	2
	4.	66
	5.	21

Frequency Table

Total Scores	Frequency
19	2
22	3
23	4
24	2
25	3
26	2
27	9
28	7
29	5
30	4
31	7
32	8
33	7
34	1
35	11
36	5
37	7
38	6
39	4
40	1
42	2

VITA

Michele Ann Caldwell

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: TEXTILE KNOWLEDGE OF SELECTED SALESPERSONNEL

Major Field: Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Richmond, California, March 21, 1952, the daughter of Mr. and Mrs. Harold W. Caldwell.

Education: Graduated from De Anza High School, Richmond, California, in June, 1970; received Associate of Arts degree in Apparel Design from Diablo Valley College in July, 1972; received Bachelor of Science degree in Consumer Textiles from the University of California, Davis, in June, 1975; enrolled in the graduate program at Oklahoma State University in the fall, 1975; completed requirements for the Master of Science degree at Oklahoma State University in July, 1977.

Professional Experience: Graduate assistant in the Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising Department, Oklahoma State University, January, 1976 - May, 1977.

Professional Organizations: Omicron Nu, Association College Professors Textiles and Clothing, American Home Economics Association.