

SEWING AND PURCHASING PRACTICES OF
UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYED WOMEN

By

CYNTHIA ANN SEYMOUR

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Thesis Approved:

Genevieve Stiles

Thesis Adviser

Lana Stufflebean

Elaine Jorgenson

Norman N. Durham

Dean of the Graduate College

1251260

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Purpose and Objectives	3
Hypothesis	4
Limitations	4
Definition of Terms	4
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
Research Related to Home Sewing	6
Working Women	11
Home Sewing	13
Dissatisfaction With Ready-to-Wear	14
Economic Savings of Home Sewing	15
Alternative to Home Sewing	16
Summary	17
III. METHOD AND PROCEDURES	19
Instrument	19
Procedure	20
Sample	21
Statistical Analysis	22
IV. ANALYSIS OF DATA	23
Description of the Participants	23
Characteristics of Participants	24
Age	24
Marital Status	24
Level of Family Income	26
Level of Education	27
Types and Amount of Home Sewing Done by Participants	28
Mending	28
Alterations	29
Remodeling	30
Constructing New Garments	31
Frequency of Garment Construction of Own Clothing	32
Frequency of Construction of Families' Clothing	33
Reasons Given for Sewing	33
Reasons Given for Not Sewing	36

Chapter	Page
Purchasing Practices	38
Price Participants Pay for Fabric	40
Frequency of Fabric Purchases at Various Types of Stores	47
Importance of Certain Factors in Store Selection . . .	49
Discussion	55
 V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	 57
Conclusions	61
Recommendations	62
 BIBLIOGRAPHY	 63
 APPENDIXES	 66
APPENDIX A - QUESTIONNAIRE	67
APPENDIX B - COVER LETTER FIRST MAILING	73
APPENDIX C - POST CARD	75
APPENDIX D - COVER LETTER SECOND MAILING	77

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Employment Status of Participants	24
II. Age of the Respondents	25
III. Marital Status of the Respondents	25
IV. Level of Family Income of the Respondents	26
V. Level of Education of the Respondents	27
VI. Frequency of Mending by Participants	29
VII. Frequency of Alterations by Participants	30
VIII. Frequency of Remodeling by Participants	31
IX. Frequency of Garment Construction by Participants	32
X. Frequency of Construction of Own Clothing	34
XI. Frequency of Construction of Families' Clothing	35
XII. Reasons Given for Sewing	37
XIII. Reasons Given for Not Sewing	39
XIV. Price of Fabric for Work Wardrobe	41
XV. Price of Fabric for Sportswear	42
XVI. Price of Fabric for Evening Wear	43
XVII. Price of Fabric for Outerwear	44
XVIII. Price of Fabric for Lingerie/Swimwear	45
XIX. Price of Fabric for At-home Wear	46
XX. Frequency of Fabric Purchases at Various Types of Stores	48
XXI. Importance of Certain Factors in Store Selection	50
XXII. Purchasing Practices of Unemployed and Employed Women	52

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Consumers have traditionally advocated home sewing as a means of stretching the clothing dollar. Early surveys on home sewing or clothing acquisition indicated that lower costs or saving money was the reason given most often for sewing at home (Conklyn, 1961, McElderry, 1965; Crowder, 1972; Stanforth, 1974; and Bruton, 1976). Recent findings, however, suggest that home sewing may be chosen less frequently as a means of obtaining clothing. Some researchers argue that mass production can provide garments that are competitive with home sewn garments, and also that some consumers would rather purchase ready-to-wear, even of a lesser quality, than sew clothes at home (Ryther, 1982). As more women are entering the workforce they are finding that they have less time to sew or shop for the family's clothing needs. Therefore, it will remain to be seen whether women will spend their diminishing free time sewing for their family.

According to the American Home Sewing Association, 37 percent of all women never sew and an additional 17 percent make only minor sewing repairs (Courtless, 1982). This implies that 63 percent do some sewing and 46 percent identify themselves as home sewers. A nationwide survey reported in 1981 revealed the following characteristics about women who sew (Consumers say they sew for pleasure, 1981). Two-thirds of the women who identified themselves as home sewers were 35 years or older,

had incomes under \$35,000 and some college education; one-third were employed full time outside the home, and another third worked part time; and one half lived in a household with other adults and children.

A number of early surveys on home sewing reported that saving money was cited most often by participants as reasons to sew. More recent surveys report that, although women are aware that some savings could be achieved through sewing at home, they are unlikely to start sewing for economic reasons. They report that women are more likely to sew for reasons such as pleasure, personal satisfaction, creativity, and individuality (Gizzi, 1980; Consumers say they sew for pleasure, 1981; and Ryther, 1982).

The economic savings through home sewing has always been a contributing factor to the increase in home sewing. Simplicity (1982) reported that it is possible to save as much as 65 percent for an average garment sewn at home. Jaffe (1982) reported an increased interest in home sewing, which he attributed to "simple economics." As more women enter the work force they report a need for something to wear on the job with enough style that it will look good for a couple of years and not just one season. Home sewing provides the working woman with the means to meet this need at a reasonable cost.

As the demands on discretionary income increase, the amount of money directed toward clothing diminishes; therefore many women are turning to home sewing as a way to supplement clothing expenses for the family. However, a recent analysis of consumer expenditure survey data indicated that as spending for sewing increased so did spending for ready-to-wear garments. Therefore, it would seem that home sewers are

not substituting home sewn garments for ready-to-wear as would be expected if the motive for sewing was to save money (Courtless, 1982).

Although a majority of women are sewers to some degree, the amount of home sewing had declined as evidenced by the decrease in retail sales of piece goods. The quantity of fabric sold at retail declined one-third, from 1.5 billion square yards in 1976 to 1.0 billion square yards in 1980 (Sew Business, 1981). Fabric retailers also reported a decline in the home sewing industry (Ondovcsik, 1979; Simplicity Pattern Co. Inc. Annual Report, 1982). These retailers attributed this decline to the increased participation of women in the workforce. Another factor that has an impact on the decline in the home sewing industry is the availability of ready-to-wear garments that are competitive in price with home sewn garments (Courtless, 1982; and Ryther, 1982).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to determine and compare the sewing and purchasing practices of unemployed and employed women. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the types and amount of sewing done by the participants.
2. To identify factors considered by participants in determining whether or not to sew at home.
3. To determine purchasing practices of the participants.
4. To compare the responses among unemployed, part time employed and full time employed women.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis tested was that there are no significant differences among responses of unemployed and employed women in regard to sewing and purchasing practices.

Limitations

The following limitations are recognized.

1. The participants were limited to women whose names appeared on the preferred customer mailing lists received from two fabric stores, therefore the results may be somewhat biased and cannot be generalized to a broader population.

2. The mailing list was limited to residents within a 50 mile radius of Stillwater, Oklahoma. Since this is a university area, the income level may not be representative of the general public.

Definition of Terms

Definitions of terms used in the study have been devised from the literature reviewed. The following terms are defined as used in this study:

Home sewing - Making garments in the home, including mending, alterations, and remodeling of garments.

Ready-to-wear - Clothing manufactured by the garment industry.

Sewing and purchasing practices - The repeated performance or systematic exercise of a skill (sewing) or process (purchasing).

Full time employed women - Women working more than 35 hours per week for pay.

Part time employed women - Women working one to 35 hours per week for pay.

Unemployed women - Women who are not employed outside the home for pay.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The review of literature includes various studies relating to home sewing and information pertaining to women in the workforce. An overview of home sewing and reasons why women sew is also included. The review indicated that recent research is lacking in sewing and purchasing practices of employed and unemployed women, therefore demonstrating the need for additional research.

Research Related to Home Sewing

Research studies of recent years have identified many reasons why women sew, including economic savings, creativity, self-expression, enjoyment, better fit, and better quality garments. Still it is difficult to single out the most important factor influencing the increase in home sewing.

Conklyn (1961) studied the sewing practices of 353 homemakers. The women in the Conklyn (1961) study were compared on the basis of whether they were married or unmarried, employed or unemployed, and members of varying social and occupational groups. Seventy-five percent of the participants reported having done some type of sewing during the preceding year. The researcher believed that there was an apparent relationship between the employment status and the amount of sewing done by the participants. Conklyn (1961) found that the

unemployed women did significantly more sewing than women who were employed full time. The participants cited the following reasons for sewing: economy, enjoyment, and aesthetic expression.

The McElderry (1964) study, consisting of 277 participants, examined the differences in sewing practices between those who had taken sewing courses in college and those who had not. McElderry (1964) concluded that women who had received some educational instruction in clothing construction sewed more than women who had not received any instruction. The participants indicated saving money as the main incentive for sewing at home.

Crowder (1972) studied the purchasing and procedural habits of 156 married women who sewed at home. The majority of the participants were in the upper-middle social class. Almost all of the women had finished high school, one-fifth had completed two years of college and one-third had graduated from college. The women doing the largest amount of sewing were between the ages of 30 and 39. The participants cited economy and enjoyment as the two primary reasons for sewing at home, with the lower-middle class group particularly conscious of the economic savings of sewing. Social class had no relationship to the desire to sew. With regard to the procedural habits of the participants, the majority of the women in the Crowder (1972) study purchased a pattern first and then purchased the fabric. The participants cited quality of merchandise offered and convenience of location as the main reason for shopping in a particular store selling fabric.

A study conducted for the United States Department of Agriculture determined consumer reaction to a variety of agricultural products, including clothing acquisition (Kaitz and Stach, 1974). Ninety-nine

percent of the 1,527 respondents in this study were women, with an average age of 38. Of the participants in this study one-third had attended college, 41 percent were high school graduates, and 23 percent had not completed high school. The average annual household income of the participants was \$11,000. The results of this study indicated that 61 percent of the participants purchased their fabric in fabric specialty stores and 18 percent purchased their fabric in chain stores. Sixty-five percent of the participants indicated that it was more economical to sew than to purchase ready-made garments as a means of clothing acquisition. Eighty-five percent made their own clothing rather than having someone make the clothes for them.

Stanforth (1974) examined socio-economic factors, sewing experiences, and creativity levels of 131 women who had taken a sewing course at a local fabric store. Approximately two-thirds of the participants were between the ages of 25 and 49. All women in the study had completed high school while one-third of the participants had completed one to three years of college and almost one-half had completed four or more years of college. Of the 131 participants, slightly fewer than one-half were employed outside the home. Two-thirds of the participants were in the middle-middle social class; all had done some sewing at home. Half of the women indicated that they did a great deal of sewing. The most frequently cited reason for sewing was economy (81%). Self-expression was the second most frequently cited reason for sewing. One-half of the women indicated a lack of time as the reason for not sewing more for themselves or their families.

Bruton (1976) identified sewing habits and purchasing preferences of women for children's clothing. The study consisted of 67 women who

had shopped in one of three retail stores that sold fabric. The majority of the women in the study were between the ages of 25 and 39 (86%) years. Fifty-seven percent of the participants were not employed outside the home; of the 43 percent who worked outside the home, 33 percent were employed full-time and 10 percent were employed part-time. More than half of the women in this study had an annual income of \$10,000 to \$19,999.

The participants in the Bruton (1976) study cited the most conducive reasons to sew as to save money (90%) and for pleasure (73%). Bruton's (1976) study supported previous research findings that saving money is the most frequently cited reason to sew (Conklyn, 1961; McElderry, 1964; Crowder, 1972; and Stanforth, 1974). Participants in the Bruton (1976) study cited lack of time as the main reason for not sewing certain garments for children.

Gizzi (1980) determined sewing practices of full-time working women. The study consisted of 163 members of the Business and Professional Women's organization (BPW). The majority of the participants (70%) were between the ages of 25 and 54. Fifty-three percent of the participants earned an individual yearly income ranging from \$10,000 to \$19,999. Of the 163 participants, 70 percent were married and 30 percent were single. Sixty percent of the respondents indicated they had no children living at home.

Gizzi (1980) found that 63 percent of the participants did some type of sewing while 37 percent indicated that they did not perform any type of sewing. The women in the study performed repairs of clothing more frequently than any other type of sewing. Frequency of sewing repairs was found to have a significant relationship to individual

income. The data indicated that frequency of repairs tended to decrease as professional occupational status increased. Also the frequency of alterations tended to increase with the number of children living at home.

The participants in the Gizzi (1980) study indicated the following reasons to sew: better fit of garments and clothes they liked. The participants placed more importance on the maintenance of their appearance and on convenience with price being the least important factor when considering clothing acquisition. These findings tend to support other findings that working women are not as price conscious as their non-working counterparts (Ettorre, 1979). The women in Gizzi's (1980) study preferred specialty fabric stores and department stores for purchasing fabric. The women indicated that they were willing to spend more per yard on working wardrobe and evening wear fabrics than on sportswear.

Ryther (1982) examined the home sewing market as an economic and social situation and how these factors affect the family clothing acquisition. The researcher examined whether home sewing was considered a viable option in stretching the clothing dollar as it had been in the past. The purpose of the research was to segment the clothing market into groups of consumers who used sewing as a means of obtaining clothing. The participants in the study were segmented into the following groups: frequent sewers, occasional sewers, potential sewers, and non-potential sewers.

The Ryther (1982) study indicated that home sewing was not used as often as a means of supplementing clothing as it had been in the past. Ryther (1982, p. 148) stated, "Apparently, society is more convenience

oriented, meaning that women would rather buy clothes (even of lesser quality) than sew clothes at home." However, Ryther (1982) also found that the more one sews, the less likely she is to choose less expensive ready-to-wear over sewing, indicating that the home sewer may be a more discriminating shopper when it comes to quality or features other than price.

Working Women

Women are entering the workforce for a variety of reasons. Many women work out of economic necessity and the desire to attain a higher standard of living. An increasing number of women are working not just to get away from the limitations and drudgery of the household, but to gain a sense of professional achievement and personal satisfaction.

Researchers report that working women are education-oriented and interested in self improvement, travel, leisure, and their own individualism. Working women also tend to be independent and confident (Lazer and Smallwood, 1977).

The role of the working wife, which is fast becoming the norm, represents a shift in mores and lifestyles. In previous decades if a wife worked, this was interpreted as an indication of the inadequacy of the husband as a provider for his family. Couples worried about what the neighbors would think, and the wife was concerned about the image of not fulfilling her responsibilities as a mother. Now, however, a working wife is considered to be a sign of a liberated woman, with a happy, understanding husband the family. Previously, it was the working wife who tended to justify her position to others. Now, and in the future, it is more likely to be the non-working wife who will feel a

need to defend herself (Lazer and Smallwood, 1977).

Gizzi (1980) reported that the traditional values are still quite strong, but that an increasing number of women are apparently taking on a changed perspective with respect to the home. In effect there seems to be a gradual erosion process of the old values and a simultaneous building and broadening of women's former boundaries. Working women are cutting the frills, keeping the basic fabric of the traditional values of family and home, and adding a career.

Woman's role as housekeeper or paid worker has been dramatically reversed since the early 1960's. In the early 1960's, 56 percent of all women kept house full time while only 37 percent were in the labor force. In 1982 however, Murphy (1982) reported that 53 percent of all women were in the labor force and only 35 percent were in the home full time, a dramatic change since the 1960's (Murphy, 1982).

The increase in the number of working women could not have occurred without a growing occupational demand for females. Yet women's employment opportunities still tend to be concentrated in relatively few occupational categories. In 1970, about 40 percent of all employed women were working in the expanded service sector. The expanded service sector consisted of four categories: clerical, operatives, sales, and service. In 1970 women held 77 percent of these jobs. In 1977, women accounted for over 75 percent of the secretarial and clerical jobs (Lazer and Smallwood, 1977).

The number of working women in the United States has risen by 21 million, or 95 percent, over the last two decades. In 1984 the total of the women in the workforce was 43 million. Payson (1984) estimated

that in 1985 there will be 51 million working women, and by 1990 a total of 56 million women will be in the workforce.

Home Sewing

In the 1960's the home sewing market was one of the top ten fastest growing industries (Ondovcsik, 1979). Customers spent an estimated \$2.5 billion on home sewing-related products in 1968; of the \$2.5 billion, \$1.75 billion was in fabric sales, \$400 million in notion and trim sales, \$150 million in pattern sales, and \$200 million in sewing machine sales (Davenport, 1981). This "boom" in home sewing sales continued to rise until around 1976, when sales began to taper because double knits had fallen out of favor and fashion.

Since 1979, the home sewing industry had experienced a gradual increase in sales. Fabric retailers agreed that the increase was due to a demand for better quality and variety of fabrics (Ondovcsik, 1979). The consumer had expressed the desire for fibers such as silk, wool, linen, and pure cotton as well as crepe de chine and Ultrasuede (Davenport, 1981). Many fabric retailers believed that the working woman was helping to inspire this demand for higher quality and a wider variety of merchandise (Ettorre, 1979). Because the working woman has less time to sew she tends to sew on better quality and more expensive fabrics (Ondovcsik, 1979). In 1982 it was reported that an estimated four million United States home sewers spent approximately \$4 billion on home sewing related products, with \$2.3 billion (58%) spent in fabric sales (Sewing: Sew wars survivors stitch wounds, 1983).

Fabric retailers reported that the increased sales in the home sewing market were due to better quality and variety of fabrics that

are available, the fact that consumers are less-price resistant, the dissatisfaction with ready-made garments that are available, and the economic savings that can be achieved through sewing garments at home (Ettorre, 1979; and Davenport, 1981).

Ondovcsik (1979) reported that fabric stores which are experiencing good business are doing it with better quality, more expensive, and fashionable merchandise. Fabric retailers obtain the newest fabrics for the home sewing market, and the major pattern companies are offering name designer patterns to the woman who sews (Ondovcsik, 1979). These new fabrics and designer patterns have made high fashion and a professional appearance available to the woman who sews at a fraction of the cost of ready-to-wear (Specialty chains sew up pattern sales, 1983).

Retailers have discovered during the last few years that the working woman is less price-resistant than she has been in the past. Fabric retailers agree that the consumer is not reluctant to pay higher prices for fabrics; she is trading up and buying better quality and more expensive merchandise (Imparato, 1979). According to Gizzi (1980), price was consistently mentioned by the women in the sample as one of the least important factors in selecting apparel fabric. Gizzi's (1980) findings support the literature, that working women are less-price resistant, placing more emphasis on their appearance than do their nonworking counterparts (Ettorre, 1979).

Dissatisfaction With Ready-to-Wear

Many factors contribute to the overall consumer satisfaction with a garment purchase both before and after the purchase. Need for a

particular type of garment, selection available to the consumer, aesthetics, acceptable fit, time constraints, social pressures to be stylish, properties of the fabric, and cost are some of the in-store factors that influence the consumer to purchase (Ryther, 1982). The closer the item comes to meeting the consumer's "ideal" need, the more satisfied the consumer will be. Dissatisfaction occurs when the item does not meet the consumer's expectations.

Satisfaction with goodness of fit of ready-to-wear could be an important factor influencing the consumer's decision to sew instead of buying clothing ready-made. Ryther (1982) reported, the trend appears that the more one sews the more likely she sews for reasons of fit and economic savings. Gizzi (1980) also reported that the participants in her study cited better fitting clothing as the most important factor influencing them to sew.

Some women report that they make their own clothes simply because the quality and availability of ready-to-wear items just are not what they used to be. Many women who were discouraged with the high prices, low quality, and lack of selection in ready-to-wear have discovered that sewing can provide a fashionable, better fitting, and less expensive alternative (Pacey, 1973).

Economic Savings of Home Sewing

The spread between the cost of purchasing a ready-made garment and the expense of producing a home-sewn item has widened considerably during the past few years and continues to increase (Robbins, 1973). This fact encourages women to reduce expenses whenever possible, and women are discovering that sewing at home is a good investment of time

and energy for obtaining new apparel items at a more economical price than is available in ready-to-wear. The savings may range up to 65 percent for an average garment. Greater economy may occur as skill level develops (Courtless, 1982; Simplicity Pattern Co. Inc., 1982).

Since home sewing in many cases can be creative as well as economical, families may have more extensive wardrobes than is otherwise possible. Not only are apparel items for women constructed in the home, but the entire family has possibly benefitted from the efforts of a skilled seamstress (Robbins, 1973).

The issue of saving money by sewing garments is one of the many factors in the decision making process that women consider when they weigh all the choices of clothing acquisition. Research studies of recent years have indicated that the economic savings of sewing is one of the most important reasons to sew garments at home (Bruton, 1976; Conklyn, 1961; Crowder, 1972; McElderry, 1964; and Stanforth, 1974). The inflated price for ready-to-wear and the economic recession of the past few years have caused an increased interest in the home sewing industry.

Alternative to Home Sewing

Consumers continue to have a positive attitude toward home sewing, however, they cite lack of time as the primary reason for sewing less (Bruton, 1976; Stanforth, 1974). Lack of time to sew affects women who stay at home as well as those who are employed outside the home. As more women are entering the workforce, they are experiencing less time to sew or shop for the family's clothing needs. The working woman is

experiencing an increased demand on the time she has to devote to domestic and career related needs (Ryther, 1982).

Economics play an important role in family clothing acquisition. With the advent of the double income family, sewing is no longer the only economical way of clothing one's family. The homemaker may choose to work and use her salary to purchase clothing. Also mass production has made some less-expensive lines available that are competitive with home sewn garments.

The convenience of inexpensive ready-to-wear, combined with the changing life style of the working woman, had contributed to the increasing number of women who consider purchasing ready-to-wear garments as an alternative to sewing at home (Sloan, 1978). Apparently society is more convenience oriented, meaning that women would rather purchase ready-to-wear (even of lesser quality) than sew garments at home (Ryther, 1982).

Summary

A larger percentage of women work, either part time or full time, than in the past. This increase is due to a shift in mores and lifestyles. Women are working not just to get away from the limitations and drudgery of the household, but to gain a sense of professional achievement and personal satisfaction and to help supplement the family income.

In the 1960's the home sewing market was one of the top ten fastest growing industries. Then in 1976 sales began to taper because double knits had fallen out of favor and fashion. Since 1979, the home sewing industry has experienced a gradual increase in sales.

Fabric retailers reported that the increased sales in the home sewing market are due to better quality and variety of fabrics that are available, the fact that consumers are less-price resistant, the dissatisfaction with ready-made garments that are available, and the economic savings that can be achieved through sewing garments at home.

Early surveys on home sewing or clothing acquisition found that lower costs or saving money was the reason given most often for sewing at home. More recent surveys show that, although women are aware that some economic savings could be achieved by home sewing, they are less likely to sew for economic reasons and are more likely to sew for reasons of better fit, creativity, pleasure, and self-expression.

CHAPTER III

METHOD AND PROCEDURE

The study was designed to examine and compare current sewing and purchasing practices of the participants. Differences among unemployed and employed women were determined. A questionnaire was designed to obtain responses from the participants with regard to their sewing and purchasing practices.

Instrument

The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire designed by the researcher to examine and compare selected characteristics of the participants and their sewing and purchasing practices (Appendix A). The questionnaire was derived from questionnaires used in studies by Bruton (1976), Conklyn (1961), Crowder (1972), Gizzi (1980), Ryther (1982), Stanforth (1974), and York (1961).

The following topics were covered in the questionnaire:

1. The frequency of mending, alterations, remodeling, and construction of new garments,
2. The quantity of new garments the participants constructed for themselves and their families,
3. The reasons participants chose to sew or not to sew,
4. The purchasing behavior of the participants, and
5. Personal characteristics of the participants: age, marital

status, income, hours employed, and educational level.

The questions were worded in such a manner that the participants could check (✓) or circle their answers. The format of the questionnaire was designed to reduce the time required by the participants to answer the questions and for ease in assembling and computing the data.

Procedure

A pilot study was conducted to determine the accuracy and clarity of the questionnaire to be used in the research project. The pilot study consisted of eight upper class college students enrolled in an advanced tailoring class and seven women employed by Oklahoma State University. After compiling and analyzing the responses and comments by the participants in the pilot study, appropriate corrections and modifications were made in the questionnaire. Certain questions that the participants found confusing and unclear were re-worded for clarity. Two categories of questions were combined and the format for answering the questions was changed so that answering was simplified. The researcher deleted a few questions that were not directly related to the objectives of the study.

The revised questionnaires were mailed to 742 women. The four-page questionnaire was mailed with a cover letter of explanation and a postpaid return envelope (Appendixes A and B). The questionnaires were numbered to assist the researcher in a second mailing. A total of 379 questionnaires were returned in the first mailing. Two weeks following the designated return date, a postcard was sent to the remaining 363 women to remind them to return their questionnaires (Appendix C). After this reminder, there was a total of 403 responses, representing

54.3 percent of the total sample. A random sample of 50 was selected from the remaining group of women using a table of random numbers, and a second questionnaire was sent to them (Appendix D). From this mailing, a total of 24 (48%) questionnaires were returned, and four were returned to sender. The frequencies and percentages were calculated for the two groups. The initial responses (403) of the participants were compared with the responses of the second mailing (24). Since there were no large differences in the responses between the first and second mailing, the responses were totaled and computed together as one group.

Sample

The sample consisted of women whose names appeared on the preferred customer mailing lists of two stores selling fabric in Stillwater, Oklahoma, during December 1984. The lists contained only the names of those who had shopped in the store during the past year. Both stores were privately owned, one selling relatively expensive merchandise, and the other selling moderately priced to expensive merchandise. The two lists were combined and duplicate names were eliminated. Names of women whose addresses were not within the designated 50 mile radius of Stillwater were deleted from the mailing list. The compiled list consisted of 742 women's names, after all deletions. A total of 742 questionnaires were distributed by the researcher, and a total of 427 (57.5%) usable responses. Only four questionnaires were returned that were unusable and four questionnaires were returned to sender. The sample consisted of unemployed and employed women.

Statistical Analysis

The statistical analysis was processed by computer. Frequencies and percentages were used to compare and study the demographic data, sewing behavior and purchasing practices of the total number of participants (427).

The chi-square (χ^2) statistical technique was used for determining significant differences among unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women's sewing and purchasing practices. Chi-square was selected for use in this study because chi square tests for contingency tables are extremely useful statistical procedures for determining whether nominal measures are related (Roscoe, 1975). "In educational studies the five (.05) percent level of significance is often used as a standard for rejection" (Best, 1977, p. 277). Therefore, the .05 level of significance was selected for use in this study. The Statistical Analysis System (SAS) was used for the data analysis in this study.

CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS OF DATA

The purpose of the study was to examine and compare the sewing and purchasing practices of unemployed and employed women. Information was also obtained concerning demographics, hours employed, and means of clothing acquisition. The specific objectives of the study were:

1. To determine the type and amount of sewing done by the participants,
2. To identify factors considered by participants in determining whether or not to sew at home,
3. To determine purchasing practices of participants,
4. To compare the responses among unemployed women and women employed part-time and full-time.

The analysis of data and discussion of the findings are presented in this chapter.

Description of the Participants

The survey was mailed to 742 women whose names appeared on the compiled mailing list of two fabric stores doing business in Stillwater, Oklahoma, during December 1984. Questionnaires were returned by 427 (57.5%) women. A total of 141 (33.02%) unemployed, 93 (21.78%) part-time employed, and 193 (45.20%) full-time employed women participated in the study (Table I).

TABLE I
EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF PARTICIPANTS

Participants	Frequency	
	N	%
Unemployed	141	33.02
Employed Part-time	93	21.78
Employed Full-time	193	45.20
Total	427	100.00

Characteristics of Participants

The characteristics considered in the study were age, marital status, income level, and educational level.

Age

Approximately three-fourths of the women were between the ages of 25 and 54, with the largest percentage (27.40%) in the 35-44 age group. Slightly under one-fourth (24.12%) of the women were in the 45-54 age group, with 21 percent in the 25-34 age group (Table II).

Marital Status

Three hundred thirty-four (77.75%) of the participants in the study were married. Ninety-five (22.25%) of the participants were single; either never married, divorced, separated, or widowed (Table III).

TABLE II
AGE OF THE RESPONDENTS

Age	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under 25	10	7.09	15	16.13	12	6.74	38	8.90
25-34	21	14.89	15	16.13	54	27.98	90	21.08
35-44	22	15.60	25	26.88	70	36.27	117	27.40
45-54	30	21.28	29	31.18	44	22.80	103	24.12
55-64	25	17.73	4	4.30	11	5.70	40	9.37
Over 65	33	23.40	5	5.38	1	0.52	39	9.13

TABLE III
MARITAL STATUS OF THE RESPONDENTS

Marital Status	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Married	117	82.98	76	81.72	139	72.02	332	77.75
Single	24	17.02	17	18.28	54	27.98	95	22.25

Level of Family Income

The level of family income was distributed across all income levels. Almost two-thirds of the participants had income levels of over \$30,000. The largest percentage (23.89%) fell in the over \$50,000 income level. Twenty-one percent of the participants were in the \$30,000 to \$39,999 income level with 19.67 percent of the participants in the \$40,000 to \$49,999 income level (Table IV). The income level of the participants is much higher than the income levels reported in recent surveys (Bruton, 1976; Gizzi, 1980; Kaitz and Stach, 1974). This may be due to the fact that the respondents were in a city where the university is the major employer.

TABLE IV
LEVEL OF FAMILY INCOME OF THE RESPONDENTS

Family Income	Unemployed (N=141)		Employed Part-time (N=93)		Employed Full-time (N=193)		Total (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Under \$10,000	5	3.55	8	8.60	4	2.07	17	3.98
\$10,000-\$19,999	14	9.93	9	9.68	27	13.99	50	11.71
\$20,000-\$29,999	28	19.86	19	20.43	36	18.65	83	19.44
\$30,000-\$39,999	22	15.60	22	23.66	47	24.35	91	21.31
\$40,000-\$49,999	30	21.28	16	17.20	38	19.69	84	19.67
Over \$50,000	42	29.79	19	20.43	41	21.24	102	23.89

Level of Education

The women in the study represented a high level of education. With the exception of five women, all the participants had completed high school, and only 40 of the participants had not attended college. Approximately 26 percent of the participants reported attending college, but had no degree. Approximately 28 percent of the participants had graduated from college with a bachelor's degree, and 20.61% percent had a master's degree (Table V).

TABLE V
LEVEL OF EDUCATION OF THE RESPONDENTS

Education	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
8th grade	4	2.84	1	0.23	0	0.00	5	1.17
High school	11	7.80	5	5.38	19	9.84	35	8.20
Some college	38	26.95	32	34.41	42	21.76	112	26.23
Associate degree	6	4.26	3	3.23	9	4.66	18	4.22
Bachelor's degree	53	37.59	23	24.73	42	21.76	118	27.63
Professional cert.	8	5.67	4	4.30	14	7.25	26	6.09
Master's degree	20	14.18	20	21.51	48	24.87	88	20.61
Doctor's degree	1	0.71	5	5.38	19	9.84	25	5.85

Types and Amount of Home Sewing

Done by Participants

The first objective of the study was to determine the types and amount of sewing done by the participants in the past year. The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency with which they had mended, altered, remodeled, and constructed garments for themselves. The respondents were also asked to indicate the approximate proportion of their wardrobe they had constructed for themselves and their families.

The chi-square (X^2) statistical technique was used in the study to determine significant differences between unemployed and employed women's sewing and purchasing practices.

Mending

Slightly more than one-half (56.67%) of the participants indicated that they mended garments occasionally. Thirty-eight percent indicated that they mended frequently and only five percent of the participants indicated that they never mended garments for themselves and their families. The majority (94.74%) of the participants indicated that they either occasionally or frequently mended garments for themselves and their families (Table VI). This finding supports Gizzi (1980) study that women perform repairs more frequently than any other type of sewing. No significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women with regards to the amount of mending.

TABLE VI
 FREQUENCY OF MENDING BY PARTICIPANTS

Frequency	Unemployed (N=141)		Employed Part-time (N=93)		Employed Full-time (N=193)		Total (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	10	7.09	2	2.15	10	5.15	22	5.15
Occasionally	71	50.35	50	53.76	121	62.69	242	56.67
Frequently	60	42.55	41	44.09	62	32.12	163	38.17

Chi-square = 8.434, Level of Significance = 0.0769, df = 4

Alterations

The majority (57.61%) of the participants occasionally altered garments for themselves and their families. Approximately 25 percent of the participants frequently altered garments for themselves or their families. Approximately 18 percent of the participants indicated that they never did any alterations for themselves or their families (Table VII). No significant differences were found among the employed and unemployed women with regard to extent of alterations.

TABLE VII
 FREQUENCY OF ALTERATIONS BY PARTICIPANTS

Frequency	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	20	14.18	14	15.05	41	21.24	75	17.56
Occasionally	80	56.74	51	54.84	115	59.59	246	57.61
Frequently	41	29.08	28	30.11	37	19.17	106	24.82

Chi-square = 7.570, Level of Significance = 0.1087, df = 4

Remodeling

Almost two-thirds of the participants indicated that they never did any remodeling for themselves or their families. About 31 percent of the participants indicated that they occasionally remodeled garments for themselves and their families. Only 8.9 percent of the participants indicated that they frequently remodeled garments. A slightly larger percentage of unemployed women than either of the other groups indicated that they often or frequently remodeled garments, but no statistically significant differences were indicated (Table VIII).

TABLE VIII
 FREQUENCY OF REMODELING BY PARTICIPANTS

Frequency	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	77	54.61	57	61.29	123	63.73	257	60.19
Occasionally	48	34.04	27	29.03	27	29.53	132	30.91
Frequently	16	11.35	9	9.68	13	6.74	38	8.90

Chi-square = 3.850, Level of Significance = 0.4267, df = 4

Constructing New Garments

Approximately half (49.41%) of the total group of participants indicated that they frequently constructed new garments for themselves and their families. Thirty-eight percent of the participants indicated that they occasionally constructed new garments for themselves and their families. Of the total group, only twelve percent indicated that they never constructed new garments for themselves and their families (Table IX).

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference between the unemployed, part-time employed and full-time employed women ($p < .0281$) with regard to the frequency of new garments constructed. The largest percentage of unemployed women (56.74%) frequently constructed new garments for themselves and their families, compared to 41.45 percent of the full-time employed women who indicated that they frequently

construct new garments. A larger percentage (16.06%) of the full-time employed women indicated that they never constructed new garments for themselves or their families than either the part-time employed or unemployed women.

TABLE IX
FREQUENCY OF GARMENT CONSTRUCTION
BY PARTICIPANTS

Frequency	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Never	11	7.80	10	10.75	31	16.06	52	12.18
Occasionally	50	34.46	32	34.41	82	42.49	164	38.41
Frequently	80	56.74	51	54.84	80	41.45	211	49.41

Chi-square = 14.700, Level of Significance = 0.0281, df = 4

Frequency of Construction of Own Clothing

The participants were asked to indicate the proportion of new garments that they constructed for themselves. Approximately half (45.67%) of the participants indicated that they constructed some but less than half of their own wardrobe. Approximately 23 percent of the participants indicated that they made more than half of their own wardrobe. Fifteen percent of the participants indicated that they did not

make any of their own wardrobe (Table X). A slightly larger percentage of the full-time employed (19.69%) women indicated that they never made new garments for themselves, however no significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women.

Frequency of Construction of Families' Clothing

Approximately 44 percent of the respondents indicated that they made some, but less than half of their families' wardrobe. About 43 percent indicated that they did not make any of their families' wardrobe. Only 13.82 percent of the participants indicated that they made approximately half or more than half of their families' wardrobe (Table XI). A slightly larger percentage of the full-time employed (47.15%) women indicated that they never made garments for their family, however no significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women.

Reasons Given for Sewing

Approximately three-fourths (77.05%) of the participants indicated that they sewed garments at home to save money. This finding supports recent surveys (Bruton, 1976; Conklyn, 1961; Crowder, 1972; McElderry, 1964; and Stanforth, 1974) that the most conducive reason to sew is to save money. Almost two-thirds (65.57%) of the participants indicated that they sewed for pleasure. The participants in the Bruton (1976) study also support the finding that they sew garments for pleasure. Approximately half of the participants indicated that they sewed for reasons of better fit (53.16%), better construction (51.29%), and better quality (51.05%). About 47 percent indicated that they sewed for

TABLE X
 FREQUENCY OF CONSTRUCTION
 OF OWN CLOTHING

Frequency	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	14	9.93	12	12.90	38	19.69	64	14.99
Some, but less than half	64	45.39	41	44.09	90	46.63	195	45.67
Approximately half	25	17.73	13	13.98	32	16.58	70	16.39
More than half	38	26.95	27	29.03	33	17.10	98	22.95

Chi-square = 11.446, Level of Significance = 0.0750, df = 6

TABLE XI
 FREQUENCY OF CONSTRUCTION
 OF FAMILIES' CLOTHING

Frequency	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed Part-time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed Full-time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
None	52	36.88	39	41.94	91	47.15	182	42.62
Some, but less than half	65	46.10	38	40.86	83	43.01	186	43.56
Approximately half	17	12.06	9	9.68	12	6.22	38	8.90
More than half	7	4.96	7	7.53	7	3.63	21	4.92

Chi-square = 7.552, Level of Significance = 0.2728, df = 6

a sense of individuality. Other reasons for sewing as mentioned by the participants were to make money by sewing for others, for relaxation, and as a satisfying accomplishment (Table XII).

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women for the reason of better construction ($p < .0206$). A larger percentage of unemployed women (58.87%) and women employed part-time (54.84%) sewed for the reason of better construction than women employed full-time (44.04%).

The chi-square test also revealed a significant difference between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women for the reason of better quality ($p < .0305$). More unemployed women (57.45%) and women employed part-time (55.91%) sewed for the reason of better quality than women employed full-time (44.04%).

The chi-square test also revealed a significant difference between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women for the reason of individuality ($p < .0176$). A larger percentage of unemployed women (56.03%) sewed for the reason of individuality than women employed part-time (45.16%) and women employed full-time (40.41%).

Reasons Given For Not Sewing

Since a large majority of the women did some type of sewing, only a small percentage checked reasons for not sewing garments in the home. Approximately 58 percent of the women indicated lack of time as a reason for not sewing. This finding supports recent surveys (Bruton, 1976; Stanforth, 1974) that lack of time was indicated most as the reason not to sew garments at home. Approximately 16 to 13 percent of

TABLE XII
REASONS GIVEN FOR SEWING

Reason	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=141)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part time</u> (N=93)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full time</u> (N=193)		<u>Total</u> (N=427)		Level of Signif- icance
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Better Fit									
Yes	85	60.28	49	52.69	93	48.19	227	53.16	NS
No	56	39.72	44	47.31	100	51.81	200	46.84	
Better Construction									
Yes	83	58.87	51	54.84	85	44.04	219	51.29	.0206
No	58	41.13	42	45.16	108	55.96	208	48.71	
Better Quality									
Yes	81	57.45	52	55.91	85	44.04	218	51.05	.0305
No	60	42.55	41	44.09	108	55.96	209	48.95	
To Save Money									
Yes	108	76.60	79	84.95	142	73.58	329	77.05	NS
No	33	23.40	14	15.05	51	26.42	98	22.95	
Opportunity To Create Own Designs									
Yes	56	39.72	35	37.63	55	28.50	146	34.19	NS
No	85	60.28	58	62.37	138	71.50	281	65.81	
Pleasure									
Yes	95	67.38	62	66.67	123	63.73	280	65.57	NS
No	46	32.62	31	33.33	70	36.27	147	34.43	
Individuality									
Yes	79	56.03	42	45.16	78	40.41	199	46.60	.0176
No	62	43.97	51	54.84	115	59.59	228	53.40	
Ability To Combine Fabric, Style, and Color									
Yes	62	43.97	45	48.39	75	38.86	182	42.62	NS
No	79	56.03	48	51.61	118	61.14	245	57.38	
Wider Selection of Color, Fiber, and Fabrics									
Yes	61	43.26	35	37.63	69	35.75	165	38.64	NS
No	80	56.74	58	62.37	124	64.25	262	61.36	

the participants indicated the following reasons for not sewing garments at home: difficulty in fitting garments (16.16%), lack of skills (14.05%), satisfaction with ready-made garments that are available (14.05%), and not pleased with end results (13.35%).

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed for lack of time ($p < .0001$) as a reason for not sewing garments at home. Seventy-four percent of the full-time employed women and 60 percent of the part-time employed women indicated that they do not sew garments at home because of a lack of time. Only one-third of the unemployed women indicated lack of time as a reason for not sewing garments at home.

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women for preference for the appearance of ready-made garments ($p < .0283$) as a reason for not sewing garments at home. A larger percentage of unemployed women (16.31%) than full-time (10.88%) and part-time employed (5.38%) women indicated that they did not sew because they preferred the appearance of ready-made garments.

Other reasons for not sewing garments at home as indicated by the participants were too many interruptions, lack of patience, more interest in craft type items, have someone sew for them, and lack the desire to sew. (Table XIII).

Purchasing Practices

One of the objectives of the study was to determine and compare the differences between unemployed women, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to types of purchasing practices.

TABLE XIII
REASONS GIVEN FOR NOT SEWING

Reason	Unemployed (N=141)		Employed Part-time (N=93)		Employed Full time N=193)		Total (N=427)		Level of Signif- icance
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Lack of Confidence									
Yes	15	10.64	7	7.53	15	7.77	37	7.77	NS
No	126	89.36	86	92.47	178	92.23	390	91.33	
Lack of Skills									
Yes	20	14.18	13	13.98	29	15.03	62	14.52	NS
No	121	85.82	80	86.02	164	84.97	365	85.48	
Lack of Time									
Yes	48	34.04	56	60.22	143	74.09	247	57.85	.0001
No	93	65.96	37	39.78	50	25.91	180	42.15	
Not Pleased With End Results									
Yes	20	14.18	16	17.20	21	10.88	57	13.35	NS
No	121	85.82	77	82.80	172	89.12	370	86.65	
Suitable Fabric Not Available									
Yes	16	11.35	9	9.68	22	11.40	47	11.01	NS
No	125	88.65	84	90.32	171	88.60	380	88.99	
No Access to a Sewing Machine									
Yes	1	0.71	0	0.00	5	2.59	6	1.41	NS
No	140	99.29	93	100.00	188	97.41	421	98.59	
No Convenient Place to Sew									
Yes	8	5.67	6	6.45	19	9.84	33	7.73	NS
No	133	94.33	87	93.55	174	90.16	394	92.27	
Insufficient Equipment									
Yes	2	1.42	1	1.08	7	3.63	10	2.34	NS
No	139	98.58	92	98.92	186	96.37	417	97.66	
Preference for Appearance of Ready-Made Garments									
Yes	23	16.31	5	5.38	21	10.88	49	11.48	.0283
No	118	83.69	88	94.62	172	89.12	378	88.52	
Difficulty in Fitting Garments									
Yes	29	20.57	13	13.98	27	13.99	69	16.16	NS
No	112	79.43	80	86.02	166	86.01	358	83.84	
Satisfied With Ready-Made Garments That Are Available									
Yes	21	14.89	10	10.75	29	15.03	60	14.05	NS
No	120	85.11	83	89.25	164	84.97	367	85.95	

The next four sections deal with the price participants are willing to pay for fabric, where the participants purchase fabric, factors the participants consider important when shopping in a particular store, and the purchasing practices of the participants.

Price Participants Pay for Fabric

Three hundred seventy-four of the women indicated that they purchased work wardrobe fabric. Approximately 43 percent of the participants were willing to pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for their work wardrobe fabric. Twenty-five percent of the participants were willing to pay \$5.01 to \$10.00, with another 17.38 percent indicating that they were willing to pay \$15.01 to \$20.00 per yard for work wardrobe fabric. Only 7.49 percent indicated that they were willing to pay over \$20.00 per yard for their work wardrobe fabric (Table XIV). No significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women.

Three hundred eighty-nine of the participants indicated that they purchase sportswear fabric. The majority (82.01%) of the participants were willing to pay between \$5.01 and \$15.00 per yard for sportswear fabric. Approximately 39 percent of the participants indicated that they would pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for sportswear fabric. Another 43.19 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$5.01 to \$10.00 per yard for sportswear fabric (Table XV). A larger percentage (46.51%) of the unemployed women than the employed part-time (39.08%) and employed full-time (32.95%) indicated that they were willing to pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for sportswear fabric, however, no significant differences were indicated.

TABLE XIV
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR WORK WARDROBE

Price	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=109)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=89)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=176)		<u>Total</u> (N=374)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	5	4.59	1	1.12	4	2.27	10	2.67
\$5.01-\$10.00	30	27.40	22	24.72	42	23.86	94	25.13
\$10.01-\$15.00	45	41.28	38	42.70	77	43.75	160	42.78
\$15.01-\$20.00	16	14.68	18	20.22	31	17.61	65	17.38
\$20.01-\$25.00	7	6.42	6	6.74	15	8.52	28	7.49
Over \$25.00	6	5.50	4	4.49	7	3.98	17	4.55

Chi-square = 4.586, Level of Significance = 0.9181, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five; therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

Three hundred sixteen of the women indicated that they purchase evening wear fabric. Approximately 30 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$15.01 to \$20.00 per yard for evening wear fabric. Another 28.80 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for evening wear fabric (Table XVI). No significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women. However, a much larger percentage of the unemployed (24.51) and the part-time employed (23.53) than the full-time employed (13.01) indicated that they were willing to pay from \$20.01 to \$25.00 per yard for evening wear fabric.

TABLE XV
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR SPORTSWEAR

Price	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=129)		<u>Employed Part-time</u> (N=87)		<u>Employed Full-time</u> (N=173)		<u>Total</u> (N=389)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	4	3.10	0	0.00	6	3.47	10	2.57
\$5.01-\$10.00	40	31.01	42	48.28	86	49.71	168	43.19
\$10.01-\$15.00	60	46.51	34	39.08	57	32.95	151	38.82
\$15.01-\$20.00	15	11.63	8	9.20	17	9.83	40	10.28
\$20.01-\$25.00	7	5.43	3	3.45	5	2.89	15	3.86
Over \$25.00	3	2.33	0	0.00	2	1.16	5	1.29

Chi-square = 16.951, Level of Significance = 0.0755, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five; therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

TABLE XVI
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR EVENING WEAR

Price	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=102)		<u>Employed Part-time</u> (N=68)		<u>Employed Full-time</u> (N=146)		<u>Total</u> (N=316)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.68	1	0.32
\$5.01-\$10.00	9	8.82	3	4.41	14	9.59	26	8.23
\$10.01-\$15.00	22	21.57	18	26.47	51	34.93	91	28.80
\$15.01-\$20.00	28	27.45	22	32.35	44	30.14	94	29.75
\$20.01-\$25.00	25	24.51	16	23.53	19	13.01	60	18.99
Over \$25.00	18	17.65	9	13.24	17	11.64	44	13.92

Chi-square = 13.675, Level of Significance = 0.1883, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five; therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

Two hundred seventy-two of the women indicated that they purchase outerwear fabric. Approximately 32 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay over \$25.00 per yard for outerwear fabric. Another 29.41 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$20.01 to \$25.00 per yard for outerwear fabric. One-fourth of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$15.01 to \$20.00 per yard for outerwear fabric (Table XVII). A larger percentage (42.71%) of the unemployed women than the employed part-time (33.90%) and the employed full-time (23.08%) indicated that they were willing to pay over \$25.00 per yard for outerwear fabric, however, no significant differences were indicated.

TABLE XVII
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR OUTERWEAR

Price	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=96)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=59)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=117)		<u>Total</u> (N=272)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.85	1	0.37
\$5.01-\$10.00	0	0.00	2	3.39	2	1.71	4	1.47
\$10.01-\$15.00	8	8.33	3	5.08	20	17.09	31	11.40
\$15.01-\$20.00	22	22.92	15	25.42	31	26.50	68	25.00
\$20.01-\$25.00	25	26.04	19	32.20	36	30.77	80	29.41
Over \$25.00	41	42.71	20	33.90	27	23.08	88	32.35

Chi-square = 17.685, Level of Significance = 0.0610, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five, therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

Only one hundred eighty of the participants indicated that they purchased lingerie/swimwear fabric. Approximately 45 percent of the participants reported that they were willing to pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for lingerie/swimwear fabric, with another 39.44 percent of the participants indicating that they were willing to pay \$5.01 to \$10.00 per yard for lingerie/swimwear fabric (Table XVIII). No significant differences were found among the unemployed and employed women.

TABLE XVIII
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR LINGERIE/SWIMWEAR

Price	<u>Unemployed</u> (N=52)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Part-time</u> (N=37)		<u>Employed</u> <u>Full-time</u> (N=91)		<u>Total</u> (N=180)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	1	1.92	1	2.70	7	7.69	9	5.00
\$5.01-\$10.00	19	36.54	13	35.14	39	42.86	71	39.44
\$10.01-\$15.00	24	46.15	20	54.05	36	39.56	80	44.44
\$15.01-\$20.00	5	9.62	2	5.41	8	8.79	15	8.33
\$20.01-\$25.00	2	3.85	0	0.00	0	0.00	2	1.11
Over \$25.00	1	1.92	1	2.70	1	1.10	3	1.67

Chi-square = 10.404, Level of Significance = 0.4058, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five; therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

Three hundred fifty-three of the participants indicated that they purchased at-home wear fabric. Approximately 56 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay \$5.01 to \$10.00 per yard for at-home wear. Almost one-third of the participants indicated they were willing to pay \$10.01 to \$15.00 per yard for at-home wear fabric (Table XIX).

TABLE XIX
PRICE OF FABRIC FOR AT-HOME WEAR

Price	Unemployed (N=119)		Employed Part-time (N=84)		Employed Full-time (N=150)		Total (N=353)	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
\$2.00-\$5.00	6	5.04	4	4.76	22	14.67	32	9.07
\$5.01-\$10.00	59	49.58	50	59.52	86	57.33	195	55.24
\$10.01-\$15.00	45	37.82	27	32.14	35	23.33	107	30.31
\$15.01-\$20.00	6	5.04	3	3.57	6	4.00	15	4.25
\$20.01-\$25.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00	0	0.00
Over \$25.00	3	2.52	0	0.00	1	0.67	4	1.13

Chi-square = 18.385, Level of Significance = 0.0185, df = 10. (Note: Over 20 percent of the cells have counts of less than five; therefore, chi-square may not have been a valid test.)

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference between the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to the amount they were willing to pay per yard for at-home wear fabric ($p = .0185$). A larger percentage of the unemployed women indicated that they were willing to pay more per yard for at-home wear than either the part-time employed and full-time employed women.

Frequency of Fabric Purchases at Various Types of Stores

Participants were asked to indicate the frequency of fabric purchases at various types of stores. Approximately 50 percent of the participants indicated that they sometimes purchased fabric in a fabric specialty store, another 46.49 percent of the participants indicated that they often purchased fabric in a fabric specialty store (Table XX). Approximately 70 percent of the participants indicated that they sometimes purchased fabric in a chain store. The majority (59.80%) of the participants indicated that they sometimes purchased fabric in the fabric department of a variety or discount store, with another 23.12 percent of the participants indicating that they often purchased fabric in a fabric department of a variety or discount store. The majority (56.58%) of the participants also indicated that they sometimes purchased fabric in a fabric outlet, however, almost one-third of the participants indicated that they never purchased fabric in a fabric outlet. Approximately 95 percent of the participants indicated that they sometimes (50.13%) or never (44.62%) purchased fabric in a sewing center featuring sewing equipment. Approximately 96 percent of the participants indicated that they never purchased fabric by mail order,

TABLE XX
 FREQUENCY OF FABRIC PURCHASES
 AT VARIOUS TYPES OF STORES

Type Store	Unemployed (N=141) ^a		Employed Part-time (N=93) ^a		Employed Full-time (N=193) ^a		Total (N=427) ^a		Level of Signif- icance
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Specialty store									
Never	3	2.22	3	3.33	7	3.72	13	3.15	NS
Sometimes	69	51.11	41	45.56	98	52.13	208	50.36	
Often	63	46.67	46	51.11	83	44.15	192	46.49	
Total	135		90		188		413		
Chain store									
Never	23	18.55	15	17.24	34	18.89	72	18.41	NS
Sometimes	89	71.77	62	71.26	124	68.89	275	70.33	
Often	12	9.68	10	11.49	22	12.22	44	11.25	
Total	127		87		180		391		
Fabric department of variety or discount store									
Never	24	18.90	14	16.28	30	16.22	68	17.09	NS
Sometimes	76	59.84	50	58.14	112	60.54	238	59.80	
Often	27	21.26	22	25.58	43	23.24	92	23.12	
Total	127		86		185		398		
Fabric outlet									
Never	43	34.68	22	27.16	49	28.00	114	30.00	NS
Sometimes	68	54.84	41	50.62	106	60.57	215	56.58	
Often	13	10.48	18	22.22	20	11.43	51	13.42	
Total	124		81		175		380		
Sewing center featuring sewing equipment									
Never	54	44.63	34	39.53	82	47.13	170	44.62	NS
Sometimes	58	47.93	46	53.49	87	50.00	191	50.13	
Often	9	7.44	6	6.98	5	2.87	20	5.25	
Total	121		86		174		381		
Mail order									
Never	111	94.87	78	96.30	165	96.30	354	95.93	NS
Sometimes	5	4.27	3	3.70	4	2.34	12	3.25	
Often	1	0.85	0	0.00	2	1.17	3	0.81	
Total	117		81		171		369		
Representative in home sales									
Never	104	88.14	75	93.75	159	92.44	338	91.35	NS
Sometimes	13	11.02	4	5.00	11	6.40	28	7.57	
Often	1	0.85	1	1.25	2	1.16	4	1.08	
Total	118		80		172		370		

^aNot every participant indicated fabric purchases at each type of store selling fabric.

with another 91.35 percent of the participants indicating that they also never purchased fabric from a representative in home sales.

Other comments of the participants indicated that some of them purchased fabric directly from the factory, from ordering services in New York City, and from fabric shops in other countries. No significant differences were found among the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to the type of store in which they purchased fabric.

Importance of Certain Factors in Store Selection

Participants were asked to indicate the importance of certain factors when they shop in a particular fabric store. Quality of fabric offered was selected most often as the most important factor and special services offered was indicated as the least important factor (Table XXI).

More than 85 percent of the participants considered the following either somewhat or very important: quality of fabric, quantity of fabric, patterns carried by the store, notions carried by the store, helpful salespeople, atmosphere of the store, and price ranges of fabrics. Approximately 71 percent of the participants considered store hours to be somewhat or very important. The majority (53.57%) of the participants indicated that model garments suggesting pattern and fabric combinations was not important.

Only two significant differences were determined between the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women. The chi-square test revealed a significant difference ($p < .0296$) among the

TABLE XXI
 IMPORTANCE OF CERTAIN FACTORS
 IN STORE SELECTION

Factor	Unemployed (N=141) ^a		Employed Part-time (N=93) ^a		Employed Full-time (N=193) ^a		Total (N=427) ^a		Level of Signif- icance
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Quality of fabric									
Not Important	0	0.00	0	0.00	1	0.53	1	0.24	.0296
Somewhat	4	2.94	11	12.09	23	12.30	38	9.18	
Very	132	97.06	80	87.91	163	87.17	375	90.58	
Total	136		91		187		414		
Quantity of fabric									
Not Important	16	12.90	16	18.39	17	9.60	49	12.63	NS
Somewhat	60	48.39	43	49.43	87	49.15	190	48.97	
Very	48	38.71	28	32.18	73	41.24	149	38.40	
Total	124		87		177		388		
Patterns carried by the store									
Not Important	17	12.88	15	16.67	20	10.93	52	12.84	NS
Somewhat	59	44.70	39	43.33	76	41.53	174	42.96	
Very	56	42.42	36	40.00	87	47.54	179	44.20	
Total	132		90		183		405		
Notions carried by the store									
Not Important	14	10.69	10	11.11	13	7.10	37	9.16	NS
Somewhat	52	39.69	43	47.78	81	44.26	176	43.56	
Very	65	49.62	37	41.11	89	48.63	191	47.28	
Total	131		90		183		404		
Helpful salespeople									
Not Important	11	8.40	12	13.33	15	8.06	38	9.34	NS
Somewhat	35	26.72	29	32.22	68	36.56	132	32.43	
Very	85	64.89	49	54.44	103	55.38	237	58.23	
Total	131		90		186		407		
Atmosphere of the store									
Not Important	16	12.31	12	13.33	27	14.75	55	13.65	NS
Somewhat	47	36.15	42	46.67	82	44.81	171	42.43	
Very	67	51.54	36	40.00	74	40.44	177	43.92	
Total	130		90		183		403		
Special services offered									
Not Important	80	65.04	68	75.56	132	74.16	280	71.61	NS
Somewhat	30	24.39	15	16.67	32	17.98	77	19.69	
Very	13	10.57	7	7.78	14	7.87	34	8.70	
Total	123		90		178		391		
Price range of fabrics									
Not Important	10	7.63	8	8.89	16	8.74	34	8.42	NS
Somewhat	71	54.20	51	56.67	78	42.62	200	49.50	
Very	50	38.17	31	34.44	89	48.63	170	42.08	
Total	131		90		183		404		
Model garments suggesting pattern and fabric combinations									
Not Important	55	45.08	53	58.89	102	56.67	210	53.57	NS
Somewhat	54	44.26	30	33.33	56	31.11	140	35.71	
Very	13	10.66	7	7.78	22	12.22	42	10.71	
Total	122		90		180		392		
Store hours									
Not Important	49	38.58	35	38.89	30	16.76	114	28.79	.0001
Somewhat	56	44.09	38	42.22	78	43.58	172	43.43	
Very	22	17.32	17	18.89	71	39.66	110	27.78	

^a Not every participant indicated in-store factors which were important in selection of stores.

unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to the importance of quality of fabric carried by the store. A much larger percentage of the unemployed (97.06%) than either the part-time employed (87.91%) and the full-time employed (87.17%) considered quality of fabric carried by the store to be very important.

The chi-square test also revealed a significant difference ($p < .0001$) among the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to store hours. Approximately 43 percent of the participants in all three employment levels considered stores' hours to be somewhat important. A larger percentage of both the unemployed (38.58%) and part-time employed (38.89%) than the full-time employed (16.76%) considered store hours unimportant. Approximately 40 percent of the full-time employed women, however, considered store hours to be very important.

There were no significant differences among the unemployed, part-time employed, and the full-time employed women with regard to the importance of the following factors: quantity of fabric, patterns carried by the store, notions carried by the store, helpful salespeople, atmosphere of the store, special services offered, price range of fabrics, and model garment suggesting pattern and fabric combinations.

Other factors indicated by the participants as important in store selections were availability of new and unusual fabrics, location of the store, comfortable and lighted place to look at patterns, good lighting throughout the store, and the appearance of the store and how they display their fabrics.

The participants were asked to react to nine statements regarding their purchasing practices (Table XXII). The participants were asked

TABLE XXII
PURCHASING PRACTICES OF UNEMPLOYED
AND EMPLOYED WOMEN

Practices	Unemployed (N=141)		Employed Part-time (N=93)		Employed Full-time (N=193)		Total (N=427)		Level of Signif- icance
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Willing to purchase ready-to-wear of a lesser quality									
Strongly A.	6	4.26	3	3.23	12	6.22	21	4.82	
Agree	24	17.02	23	24.73	51	26.42	98	22.95	
Undecided	22	15.60	10	10.75	19	9.84	51	11.94	
Disagree	55	39.01	32	34.41	71	36.79	158	37.00	
Strongly Dis.	34	24.11	25	26.88	40	20.73	99	23.19	NS
Price is least important									
Strongly A.	8	5.67	5	5.38	11	5.70	24	5.62	
Agree	45	31.91	20	21.51	40	20.73	105	24.59	
Undecided	15	10.64	16	17.20	18	9.33	49	11.48	
Disagree	66	46.81	46	49.46	103	53.37	215	50.35	
Strongly Dis.	7	4.96	6	6.45	21	10.88	34	7.96	NS
Label information is important									
Strongly A.	60	42.55	48	51.61	87	45.08	195	45.67	
Agree	68	48.23	37	39.78	88	45.60	193	45.20	
Undecided	8	5.67	2	2.15	11	5.70	21	4.92	
Disagree	4	2.84	5	5.38	5	2.59	14	3.28	
Strongly Dis.	1	0.71	1	1.08	2	1.04	4	0.94	NS
Convenience of purchasing is important									
Strongly A.	8	5.67	5	5.38	20	10.36	33	7.73	
Agree	38	26.95	21	22.58	69	35.75	128	29.98	
Undecided	28	19.86	24	25.81	28	14.51	80	18.74	
Disagree	43	30.50	26	27.96	55	28.50	124	29.04	
Strongly Dis.	24	17.02	17	18.28	21	10.88	62	14.52	NS
Bargain shopper									
Strongly A.	30	21.28	31	33.33	48	24.87	109	25.53	
Agree	58	41.13	28	30.11	83	43.01	169	39.58	
Undecided	17	12.06	10	10.75	23	11.92	50	11.71	
Disagree	28	19.86	19	20.43	31	16.06	78	18.27	
Strongly Dis.	8	5.67	5	5.38	8	4.15	21	4.92	NS
Factors more important than price									
Strongly A.	36	25.53	17	18.28	58	30.05	111	26.00	
Agree	88	62.41	53	56.99	106	54.92	247	57.85	
Undecided	13	9.22	10	10.75	11	5.70	34	7.96	
Disagree	4	2.84	11	11.83	15	7.77	30	7.03	
Strongly Dis.	0	0.00	2	2.15	3	1.55	5	1.17	.0426
Comfort-related fibers									
Strongly A.	29	20.57	24	25.81	42	21.76	95	22.25	
Agree	66	46.81	43	36.56	98	50.78	198	46.37	
Undecided	16	11.35	11	11.83	14	7.25	41	9.60	
Disagree	25	17.73	19	20.43	29	15.03	73	17.10	
Strongly Dis.	5	3.55	5	5.33	10	5.18	20	4.68	NS
Have garment under construction									
Strongly A.	33	23.40	20	21.51	33	17.10	86	20.14	
Agree	52	36.88	37	39.78	73	37.82	162	37.94	
Undecided	9	6.38	2	2.15	8	4.15	19	4.45	
Disagree	33	23.40	23	24.73	55	28.50	111	26.00	
Strongly Dis.	14	9.93	11	11.83	24	12.44	49	11.48	NS
Compare price of ready-made garment with home-made									
Strongly A.	21	14.89	25	26.88	39	20.21	85	19.91	
Agree	74	52.48	37	39.78	74	38.34	185	43.33	
Undecided	13	9.22	10	10.75	18	9.33	41	9.60	
Disagree	23	16.31	16	17.20	43	22.28	82	19.20	
Strongly Dis.	10	7.09	5	5.38	19	9.84	34	7.96	NS

whether or not they were willing to purchase ready-to-wear, even of a lesser quality, over sewing the garment at home. Approximately 28 percent of the participants either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement, indicating that they would purchase a garment, of lesser quality, over sewing the garment at home. Sixty percent of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating that they consider the quality of the home sewn garment more important than the convenience of a lesser quality ready-made garment. This finding does not support the finding of Ryther (1982). The majority of the Ryther (1982) participants indicated that they were willing to purchase a lesser quality ready-to-wear garment over sewing the garment at home.

Participants were asked whether price was the least important factor when purchasing fabric. Approximately 58 percent of the participants disagreed or strongly disagreed with this statement, indicating that they consider price an important factor when they purchase fabric.

The participants were asked whether they were interested in label information pertaining to care and fiber when purchasing fabric. The majority (90.87%) of the participants agreed (45.67%) or strongly agreed (45.20%) indicating that they consider care and fiber information important when purchasing fabric.

The participants were asked whether the convenience of purchasing ready-to-wear was more important than saving money through sewing the garment at home. The responses were divided on this practice, with approximately 38 percent agreeing and 43 percent disagreeing.

The participants were asked whether they considered themselves bargain shoppers concerning clothing purchases. Approximately 65

percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The participants were asked whether some factors were more important than price when purchasing a garment ready-made. Approximately 84 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The participants were asked whether they choose comfort-related fibers (cotton, wool, linen, or silk) even if the garment will need ironing. Approximately 69 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The participants were asked whether they usually have a garment under construction. Approximately 58 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The participants were asked whether they usually compare the price of a ready-made garment with the price of a similar garment made at home. Approximately 63 percent of the participants agreed or strongly agreed with this statement.

The chi-square test revealed a significant difference among the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to only one purchasing practice: there are some factors more important than price when purchasing a garment ready-made ($p < .0426$). A larger percentage of the unemployed (62.41%) women than the part-time employed (56.99%) and full-time employed (54.92%) women indicated that they agreed with this statement. A much larger percentage of the full-time employed (30.05%) than either the part-time employed (18.28%) or the unemployed (25.53%) strongly agreed with this statement.

Discussion

The income levels of the participants in this study were considerably higher than the income levels of the participants in previous studies (Bruton, 1976; Gizzi, 1980; and Kaitz, 1974). The participants in this study also had higher levels of education; 91 percent had attended some college with 60.18 percent having at least a bachelor's degree or more. These factors might be attributed to the fact that this study was conducted in a city in which a major university was located.

The findings indicated that a large percentage of the women were using home sewing as a means of clothing acquisition, but were not constructing their entire wardrobes. The majority (94.74%) of the participants indicated that they either occasionally or frequently mended garments. This supports findings from the Gizzi (1980) study that repairs are performed more often than any other type of sewing activity.

Approximately 77 percent of the participants indicated that they sewed garments at home to save money. This finding supports findings from a large majority of the recent surveys (Bruton, 1976; Conklyn, 1961; Crowder, 1972; McElderry, 1964; and Stanforth, 1974) that the participants sew garments at home to save money. Approximately 58 percent of the participants indicated lack of time as a reason for not sewing garments at home. This supports recent surveys (Bruton, 1976; Stanforth, 1974) which have shown that lack of time was indicated most often as the reason not to sew garments at home.

The majority of the participants indicated that they purchase their fabric in fabric specialty store (96.85%), chain stores (81.58%), and fabric department of variety or discount store (82.92%). This supports the findings of Kaitz and Stach (1974) and Gizzi (1980) that the majority of the participants purchase their fabric in fabric specialty stores. Almost all the participants in this study considered the quality of fabric carried by the store to be somewhat to very important. This supports the finding of the Crowder (1972) study that quality of merchandise was the most important in-store factor when shopping in a particular store.

Sixty percent of the participants consider the quality of the home sewn garment more important than the convenience of a lesser quality ready-made garment. This does not support the findings of the Ryther (1982) study. The participants in her study considered the convenience of the lesser quality ready-made garment more important than choosing the option of sewing the garment at home. Ninety-one percent of the participants consider care and fiber information important when they purchase fabric. Approximately 65 percent of the participants consider themselves bargain shoppers concerning clothing purchases. Eighty-four percent of the participants consider some other factors more important than price when purchasing a garment ready-made. Sixty-nine percent of the participants would choose comfort-related fibers (cotton, wool, linen, or silk) even if the garment will need ironing. Approximately 63 percent of the participants have compared the price of a ready-made garment with the price of a similar garment made at home.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Consumers have traditionally advocated home sewing as a means of stretching the clothing dollar. The purpose of the study was to determine and compare the sewing and purchasing practices of unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women.

The instrument used in the study was a questionnaire designed by the researcher to examine and compare selected characteristics of the participants and their sewing and purchasing practices. The questionnaire was mailed to 742 women whose names appeared on a compiled mailing list of two stores selling fabric in Stillwater.

A total of 427 (57.5%) completed questionnaires were returned. A total of 141 unemployed, 93 part-time employed, and 193 full-time employed women responded to the survey. Approximately three-fourths of the women were between the ages of 25 and 54. Seventy-eight percent of the participants were married. Almost two-thirds of the participants had income levels of more than \$30,000, with the largest percentage (23.89%) in the over \$50,000 income level. The women in the study represented a high level of education, with approximately 91 percent attending some college or more.

The first objective of the study was to determine the types and amount of sewing done by the participants in the past year. The majority (94.74%) of the respondents indicated that they either occasionally

or frequently mended garments for themselves and their families. Approximately 58 percent of the participants occasionally altered garments for themselves and their families. Almost two-thirds of the participants indicated that they never did any remodeling for themselves or their families.

Approximately half (49.41%) of the participants indicated that they frequently constructed new garments for themselves and their families, another 39 percent of the participants indicated that they occasionally constructed new garments for themselves and their families.

The majority (60.66%) of the participants indicated that they made less than half of their own wardrobe. Approximately 86 percent of the participants indicated that they made less than half of their families' wardrobe.

The second objective of the study was to determine the factors considered by the participants in determining whether or not to sew at home. Approximately three-fourths of the participants indicated that they sewed garments at home in order to save money. Two-thirds of the participants indicated that they sewed garments at home for pleasure.

Since a large majority of the women did some type of sewing, only a small percentage indicated reasons for not sewing at home. The majority of those listing reasons for not sewing indicated lack of time as a reason not to sew garments at home. Other reasons for not sewing were difficulty in fitting garments, lack of skills, satisfaction with ready-made garments that are available, and not pleased with end results.

The third objective of the study was to determine the purchasing practices of the participants. The majority of the participants

indicated that they were willing to pay more than \$5.01 per yard for fabric. The majority (72.20%) of the participants were willing to pay over \$10.01 per yard for work wardrobe fabric. Approximately 82 percent of the participants were willing to pay between \$5.01 and \$15.00 per yard for sportswear fabric. Almost 92 percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay over \$10.01 per yard for evening wear fabric. Eighty-seven percent of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay more than \$15.01 per yard for outer wear fabric. The majority (83.88%) of the participants indicated that they were willing to pay between \$5.01 and \$15.00 per yard for lingerie/swimwear fabric. Approximately 86 percent of the participants were willing to pay between \$5.01 and \$15.00 for at-home wear fabric.

Participants were asked to indicate the frequency of fabric purchases at various types of stores. Almost all (97.36%) of the participants indicated that they often or sometimes purchase fabric in a fabric specialty store. Approximately 70 percent of the participants indicated that they often or sometimes purchase fabric in a chain store. Sixty percent of the participants indicated that they often or sometimes purchase fabric in a fabric department of a variety or discount store. Most of the participants indicated that they never purchase fabric by mail order or through a representative in home sales. Indications were that the majority of the participants preferred to shop in a specialty or chain store.

Participants were asked to indicate the importance of certain factors when they shop in a particular fabric store. A large majority (90.58%) of the participants indicated that the quality of fabric carried by the store was a very important factor when they shop in a

particular store. Fifty-eight percent of the participants considered helpful salespeople very important when they shop in a particular store.

The participants were asked to read nine statements and indicate their feelings or reactions to each statement. Approximately 60 percent of the participants indicated that they would choose to sew a garment over purchasing a garment of lesser quality. Approximately 58 percent of the participants indicated that they considered price an important factor when they purchase fabric. A large majority of the participants consider care information and fiber content information very important when purchasing fabric. The participants were asked whether the convenience of purchasing ready-to-wear was more important than saving money through sewing the garment at home. The respondents were divided on this practice, with approximately 38 percent agreeing and 43 percent disagreeing. Sixty-five percent of the participants considered themselves bargain shoppers when they purchase clothing. Approximately 69 percent of the participants indicated that they choose comfort-related fibers (cotton, wool, linen, or silk) even if they will need ironing. The majority (58.08%) of the participants indicated that they usually have a garment under construction. Approximately 63 percent of the participants indicated that they compare the price of a ready-made garment with the price of a similar garment made at home.

The hypothesis tested was that there are no significant differences among the responses of unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women in regard to sewing practices. Significant differences were determined between unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to frequency of new garments

constructed; sewing for better construction, better quality, and individuality; not sewing because of lack of time; and the preference for the appearance of ready-made garments. Significant differences were also found among the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to the price they were willing to pay for at-home wear fabric. Significant differences were found between the purchasing practices of the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to the in-store factors of quality of fabric, and store hours. Significant differences were also found between the purchasing practices of the unemployed, part-time employed, and full-time employed women with regard to their attitude that other factors are more than price when they consider purchasing a garment ready-made.

Conclusions

The following conclusions can be drawn from the study:

1. The unemployed women tended to construct more new garments for themselves and their families than did their working counterparts.
2. The unemployed and part-time employed women sewed for reasons of better construction and better quality than the full-time working women. A larger percentage of the unemployed women sewed for the reason of individuality than did their working counterparts.
3. The participants in this study tended to indicate that they are discriminating shoppers when it comes to quality of fabrics and ready-made garments.
4. The participants in this study tended to indicate that they are price conscious concerning the purchasing of fabric and aware of

the economic savings of home sewing.

The participants in this study sewed garments at home for the reasons of saving money and for pleasure. This changing attitude could be associated with the changing economic conditions of the past few years.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further study include the following:

1. Replicate the study in other locations to determine whether the high level of income and education had an effect on the responses.
2. Conduct a longitudinal survey to determine the changing attitudes of women toward home sewn clothes over a decade. Determine if these changes can be associated with social and economic conditions.

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APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

SEWING INFORMATION

The purpose of this questionnaire is to determine the sewing and purchasing practices of working and non-working women. Please answer the questions as truthfully as possible. If you do not do any type of home sewing, answer only the questions that apply to your purchasing practices.

Please check (✓) the answer which best applies to you.

1. How often have you done sewing for yourself and for your family during the past year?

Mending never occasionally frequently

Alterations never occasionally frequently

Remodeling never occasionally frequently

Constructing new garments never occasionally frequently

2. Approximately how much of your own wardrobe and your family's wardrobe do you make?

	Your own	Your family's
None at all		
Some, but less than half		
Approximately half		
More than half		

3. My reason(s) for sewing garments at home are: (Check ✓ those that apply)

Better fit

Better construction

Better quality

To save money

Opportunity to create own designs

Pleasure

Individuality

Ability to combine fabric, style, and color

Wider selection of color, fiber, and fabrics

Other (Please list)

4. My reason(s) for NOT sewing garments at home are: (Check ✓ those that apply)

- _____ Lack of confidence
- _____ Lack of skills
- _____ Lack of time
- _____ Not pleased with end results
- _____ Suitable fabric not available
- _____ No access to a sewing machine
- _____ No convenient place to sew
- _____ Insufficient equipment
- _____ Preference for appearance of ready-made garments
- _____ Difficulty in fitting garments
- _____ Satisfied with the ready-made garments that are available
- _____ Other (Please list)

For question 5, please use the following price scale, and place a letter (one letter only) in the blank provided.

Price scale:

- A. under \$2 a yard
- B. \$2 - \$5 a yard
- C. \$5.01 - \$10 a yard
- D. \$10.01 - \$15 a yard
- E. \$15.01 - \$20 a yard
- F. Over \$20 a yard
- G. Do not sew in this category

5. What is the price you would be willing to pay for fabric in this category?

- | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------------|
| _____ Work wardrobe | _____ Outer wear (coats, etc.) |
| _____ Sportswear | _____ Lingerie/swimwear |
| _____ Evening wear | _____ At-home wear |

6. Indicate where you usually purchase fabric by checking (✓) the appropriate column.

	Never	Sometimes	Often
a. Specialty fabric store (e.g. Pincushion II, Pins & Needles)			
b. Chain store (e.g. Needlewoman Fabrics)			
c. Fabric department of variety or discount store (e.g. Wal-Mart)			
d. Fabric outlet (e.g. Hancock's)			
e. Sewing center featuring sewing equipment (e.g. Creative Sewing)			
f. Mail order (e.g. Sears)			
g. Representative in home sales (e.g. Leiters)			
h. Others (Please list)			

7. How important are the following factors when you shop in a particular fabric store?

	Not Important	Somewhat Important	Very Important
Quality of fabric			
Quantity of fabric			
Patterns carried by the store			
Notions carried by the store			
Helpful salespeople			
Atmosphere of the store			
Special services offered (Sewing classes, fitting, etc.)			
Price range of fabrics			
Model garments suggesting pattern and fabric combinations			
Store hours			
Others (Please list)			

Directions: Read each statement carefully. Indicate your feelings or reactions to the statement by checking (✓) the appropriate column.

	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	UNDECIDED	DISAGREE	STRONGLY DISAGREE
8. I am willing to purchase ready-to-wear, even of a lesser quality, over sewing the garment at home.					
9. Price is the least important factor when I am purchasing fabric.					
10. I am interested in label information pertaining to care and fiber when I purchase fabric.					
11. The convenience of purchasing ready-to-wear is more important than saving money through sewing the garment at home.					
12. I am a bargain shopper concerning clothing purchases.					
13. Some factors are more important than price when I am purchasing a garment ready-made.					
14. I choose comfort-related fibers (cotton, wool, linen, silk) even if they will need ironing.					
15. I usually have a garment under construction.					
16. I usually compare the price of a ready-made garment with the price of a similar garment made at home.					

PERSONAL DATA

17. Indicate your age group by checking (✓) one of the following:
- | | |
|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> 24 and under | <input type="checkbox"/> 45-54 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 25-34 | <input type="checkbox"/> 55-64 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 35-44 | <input type="checkbox"/> 65 and over |
18. What is your marital status? Married Single
(Single applies to never married, divorced, separated, or widowed)
19. Indicate your family's total yearly income by checking (✓) one of the following:
- | | |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> under \$10,000 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$30,000 to \$39,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$10,000 to \$19,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> \$40,000 to \$49,999 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> \$20,000 to \$29,999 | <input type="checkbox"/> over \$50,000 |
20. On the average, how many hours per week are you employed for pay (Circle one)?
- | | | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> none | <input type="checkbox"/> 1-19 | <input type="checkbox"/> 20-35 | <input type="checkbox"/> over 35 |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
21. Indicate the level of education you have completed:
- 8th grade
- high school
- some college, but no degree
- associate (2 year) degree
- bachelor's degree
- professional certification (R.N., etc.)
- master's degree
- doctor's degree

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER FIRST MAILING

November 15, 1984

I am studying reasons why women do or do not sew and the types of sewing done in the home. The information that you give is vitally important in helping retailers better serve their customers. This information will be kept strictly confidential. The questionnaires are numbered only in order for me to know which questionnaires have been returned for follow-up purposes. Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at home (405-372-1219).

Please read all directions carefully and answer the questions as best you can. Return the questionnaire in the enclosed envelope by December 7, 1984 (no postage is required). I appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Seymour
Graduate Student

Lynn Sisler, Professor
and Head of Department

APPENDIX C

POST CARD

December 9, 1984

This is just a reminder to remind you to return the questionnaire you received some time ago. The information that you will give is vitally important. Your responses will be kept strictly confidential. It is important that you return your questionnaire as soon as possible.

I appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Seymour
Graduate Student

APPENDIX D

COVER LETTER SECOND MAILING

January 15, 1985

Some time ago you received a questionnaire dealing with home sewing practices of women. We have not yet received your questionnaire. The information that you will give can be vitally important in helping retailers better serve their customers. The questionnaires are numbered only in order for me to know which questionnaires have been returned for follow-up purposes. Should you have any questions please feel free to contact me at home (405-372-1219).

Please read all directions carefully and answer the questions as best you can. Return the questionnaire in the enclosed post-paid envelope by January 31, 1985. I appreciate your cooperation in completing this questionnaire.

Sincerely,

Cynthia Seymour
Graduate Student

Lynn Sisler, Professor
and Head of Department

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VITA

Cynthia Ann Seymour

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: SEWING AND PURCHASING PRACTICES OF UNEMPLOYED AND EMPLOYED
WOMEN

Major Field: Clothing, Textiles, and Merchandising

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Enid, Oklahoma, April 11, 1960, the
daughter of Herman C. and Jo Ann Seymour.

Education: Graduated from Sayre High School, Sayre, Oklahoma, in
May, 1978; received the Bachelor of Science in Home Economics
degree with a major in Clothing, Textiles, and Merchandising
from Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma, in
May, 1982; completed requirements for the Master of Science
degree at Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma,
in May, 1986.

Employment: Employed by OSU as Extension Home Economist for
Okfuskee County, from May 20, 1985 to present.