

A STUDY OF THE EFFECTS OF SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS
ON AN IMAGE OF A DEPARTMENT STORE

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PREFACE

This report was written as partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Master of Business Administration degree at Oklahoma State University. The author researched the secondary material under the guidance of Dr. James U. McNeil, a recent professor in the Marketing Department. The conducting of the present survey and actual writing of the report was under the guidance of Dr. Jack Wagle, chairman of the Marketing Department at Oklahoma State University. The report represents the culmination of two semesters' work under both Dr. McNeil and Dr. Wagle.

Several acknowledgements are in order. First, the author acknowledges the help of Dr. Wagle in writing the final draft of the report and, in conjunction with Dr. Hamm, in conducting the survey and the many helpful suggestions and guidance received from both; second, Dr. Hamm for being a constant source of reference; and Sara Millican for the typing of the final copy. A word of thanks also goes out to all who aided in the survey.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

With increasing multiplicity of consumer choice among competitively moted stores, it seems apparent to even the casual observer that selection of a store is often based upon whim, which more sophisticated analysis reveals as a complex subjective process. Store owners and managers are increasingly becoming aware of discovering the factors which influence this process and, likewise, the position they hold in today's competitive markets. The extent to which this holds true for any particular market is not always known. For this reason, increasing emphasis is being placed on the impressions these business establishments reflect to the public. Not only are retailers interested in the type of information yielded in traditional marketing studies (that is, what, when and where consumers purchase), but also in knowing the conjured images of the public toward their particular store (that is, to what extent does the public hold a particular attitude toward a store with regard to one or several particular standards of evaluation).

Purpose of Paper

One term often used to designate the object of concern of the store owner is store "image." It is the purpose of this paper to examine the degree to which different groups identify with a given store's image. More specifically, we will be concerned with the social psychological

act that socioeconomic class has on store appeal. These dynamics of social psychology are not always fully known, but it will be the basic hypothesis of this study that differences in attitudes exist between low and high socioeconomic classes concerning a given store.

The general purpose of the paper is to estimate and investigate these differences in reference to a particular store in Stillwater, Oklahoma. In this analysis it is hoped to learn those factors contributing to these differences and the possible implications that such a study will have for future marketing strategy of the store.

The present study has five main objectives:

- (1) to examine the general nature of store image,
- (2) to investigate the divergence in store appeal for high and low socioeconomic classes for a given store,
- (3) to identify the relevant factors that determine these differences in attitudes (if they exist),
- (4) to investigate the store's image as held by the two groups in terms of specific qualities of the store, and
- (5) to suggest that such information be used as a limiting device for more detailed study.

Review of the Literature

"Enterprise differentiation" as a planned policy is a relatively recent addition to the competitive strategy of the small retailer. Emphasis in the study of store image began in the literature in the mid 1950's with a major contributor being Pierre Martineau.¹ It was he who said

¹Pierre Martineau, Motivations in Advertising (New York, 1957), p. 1

t, "There is no such thing as a store image with equal appeal for all
ome groups, all social classes, all ages, all types."² Also noteworthy
his work on image-motivation analysis.³ Among other writers contrib-
ng to the field are Dr. George Fisk, professor of Marketing at the
versity of Pennsylvania, who developed a model for studying customer
ge,⁴ and Bruce Weale, one of the first to ever try to measure customer
ge.⁵

The use of the semantic differential to study store image was proven
be effective in a survey conducted in the Midwest by Leon Arons, Vice
sident of Research, Television Bureau of Advertising, Incorporated,
York.⁶ More recently, it has been applied to corporate image studies
more specialized research.⁷

In reference to class as a behavioral indicator of shopping patterns,
tineau must again be listed as a main contributor. In regard to the
sent research, he says that all of his studies reveal the close rela-
n between choice of store, patterns of spending, and class membership.⁸

²Pierre Martineau, "The Personality of the Retail Store," Harvard
Business Review, Vol. 36 (January-February, 1958), p. 50.

³Pierre Martineau, "The Public Image-Motivation Analysis for Long-
ge Merchandising Strategy," The Frontiers of Marketing Thought and
ence, AMA, 1957.

⁴George Fisk, "A Conceptual Model for Studying Customer Image," Jour-
of Retailing, Vol. 37, (Winter, 1961-62), pp. 1-8.

⁵Bruce W. Weale, "Measuring the Customer's Image of a Department Store,
37, Journal of Retailing (Summer, 1961), pp. 40-48.

⁶Leon Arons, "Does Television Viewing Influence Store Image and
opping Frequency?" Vol. 37, Journal of Retailing (Fall, 1961), pp. 1-13.

⁷See, for example, William A. Mindak, "Fitting the Semantic Differ-
ial to the Marketing Problem," Journal of Marketing (April 1961), pp. 28

⁸Pierre Martineau, "Social Classes and Spending Behavior," Journal of
keting (October 1958), pp. 121-130.

³ Pierre Martineau, "The Social Psychology of the Retail Store," *Journal of Business Review*, Vol. 1, no. 1, (1950), p. 50. Many other authors in their writings have also stressed social class differences, AHA, 1957.

⁹ factor in consumer behavior. Sociologists, too, have long noted (George Fisi, "A Conceptual Model for Studying Consumer Attitudinal Differences between Classes). Past studies reveal definite

⁵ similarities in shopping attitudes held by various social classes. ¹⁰ Bruce W. Meade, "Shopping Attitudes Held by Various Social Classes," *Journal of Retailing*, (1961), pp. 70-8.

efore, applying this knowledge of class to store image and the semantic differential seems to be a logical extension to the work of these men.

⁷ See, for example, William J. Stanton, "Retailing: The Semantic Differential," *Journal of Retailing*, (1961), pp. 1-11. It offers an effective approach to the study of store

⁸ image, for the degree of divergence in class attitudes will necessarily be different (October 1953), *Journal of Retailing*, (1953), pp. 1-11.

unique for each individual store and locality, due to the unique environment and experiences of the individuals.

Limitations of the Study

This paper was subject to limitations inherent in all such research. Namely, the scope of the investigation, resources, and uniqueness to a particular geographical area. Specifically, major limitations may be listed as follows:

- (1) The study reported herein and the conclusions derived apply to a particular store;
- (2) The study included only high and low socioeconomic classes defined according to house type and area;
- (3) The ultimate intention of the study was to investigate implications rather than make actual decisions concerning the mar-

⁹ For example, see William J. Stanton, Fundamentals of Marketing (New York, 1964), Chapter 4, pp. 75-101; and Edward W. Cundiff and Richard R. Hill, Basic Marketing (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, 1964), pp. 199-202

¹⁰ For example, see Charles J. Collazzo, Jr., "Effects of Income Upon Shopping Attitudes and Frustrations," Journal of Retailing (Spring 1966) pp. 1-7; and Stuart U. Rich and Bernard D. Portis, "The Imageries of Department Stores," Vol. 28, Journal of Marketing (April 1964), pp. 10-1

keting strategy of the store;

- (4) Resources of the author were limited prohibiting a more thorough analysis, and,
- (5) Results apply to a particular geographical area.

Conclusions herein are resultant of the actual tests conducted and possible limitations of the study.

Plan and Development

In studying store image it is first of all desirable to understand something about the image itself and what determines it. Chapter II, therefore, was designed for this purpose. Chapter III will deal with design and methodology of the study including a section of the instrument used and procedures employed. Chapter IV will be a presentation of results followed by an analysis of these results in Chapter V. Chapter VI will be a short discussion on some of the aspects and marketing implications of the study to be followed by a chapter of summary and conclusion.

CHAPTER II.

THE CONCEPT OF STORE IMAGE

This chapter will treat the subject of store image as a concept. Specifically, it will deal with the definition of image, its operation, the factors which determine it, as well as the importance of understanding it.

What is an image? The word "imago" in Latin means likeness, mental picture, conception. It can also mean mask. "Imago" has the same root "imitari," to copy or to counterfeit and both seem to be connected with the Greek word which means striving to equal or rivaling.¹ Thus the term image itself already entails the notion of abstraction, as well as competition.

We form a mental picture of a store's character from its observed behavior; from the products and services it sells, from the people who sell them, from all the relations it develops with its publics--including verbal and nonverbal communications--and the civic and community activities of its members. If a person has knowledge of a store, he necessarily has an image of that store, but knowledge and image should not be looked upon as being synonymous. Knowledge has an implication of validity, of truth. Image, on the other hand, has to do with what a person believes to be true, or subjective knowledge, and it is this image

¹Sir William Smith, Latin--English Dictionary, 3rd edition, (London 1833), p. 428.

largely governs the behavior of people. "Correct" interpretations of sensory impressions is a matter of sensory acuity, intelligence and discrimination. All of us judge by cues and sometimes the tenuous evidence of our feelings. A store is many times evaluated, for instance, on the basis of sales people--how well they perform, by their alertness, by their neatness, by their manners, by their graciousness, by their willingness to serve and by a host of other qualities.

Often the word "image" is used as equivalent to reputation. Daniel Boorstin's, The Image, in effect deplores the apparent current emphasis on reputation, what people believe about a person or institution, versus character, what the person or institution actually is.² This usage of the word to mean reputation tends to focus attention upon the problem of making the outward semblance closer to reality. Knowledge, of course, can and does help to order and clarify our images and, in a sense, moves us closer to reality.

The acceptance of the concept of store image as the objective reality of a store in the minds of the consumer permits further exploitation into a more meaningful meaning and value for marketers. The public's image of a store must sooner or later approach the reality of that store. The image should not be used as a "mask" for this is not only very difficult to promote but the effect would also be short-lived. It may be possible to project and maintain an image that is out of line with reality, but this is likely to hold only for the relatively brief period between illusion and disillusion. Once there is experience concerning the store, the real image will depend upon the consistency of the policies and practices followed by the manager. A store, for example, cannot say one thing in the news-

² Daniel J. Boorstin, The Image; or What Happened to the American Dream (New York, 1962), pp. 255-261.

rs and repudiate it in the store itself, and hope to retain strong
omer loyalty. It cannot one day follow a certain price policy and
he next carry price lines which appeal to a totally different economi
1.

Buying involves, of course, much more than transfer of title and
ange of economic values. In a society characterized by a high style
iving, the acquisition and consumption of goods and services become
olic as well as instrumental acts. Products are bought not only for
tional reasons but also to acquire status, power and beauty. The
eived store image comes to represent these values. People tend to
" not only the physical product but also the perceived reality of
organization which sells it. Perception is woven right into the act
urchase itself with store image being the by-product.

Perhaps a better understanding of the concept of store image could
ad by focusing on the way that image is formed in the minds of the
umers. Each individual is characterized by a complex group of needs,
itudes, beliefs, habits, images, expectations, and values. The total
nization of these within an individual constitutes what psychologists
the latent structure. The latent structure of the individual gives
his own view of the world and strongly influences his customary motor
tudinal and emotional responses. Furthermore, this structure is
stantly being stimulated to produce responses. The individual perceiv
uli (for example, a retail store) according to the composition of his
disposed attitudinal and emotional responses. The responses elicited
he stimuli may be pleasant or unpleasant, depending on their nature
he latent structure.

All the response tendencies in the individual's latent structure

pertain to the same object, person or situation form a concept.

, we can form a concept of a store, which when stimulated, elicits a disposed response toward that store. It should be understood, however individuals have different responses to the same stimulus because of differences in their latent structures. Each person determines his attitudes and behavior on the basis of his own view of the situation, on the basis of facts determined from some objective, external point of view. Therefore, a store manager wanting to satisfy the specific expectations of one customer may create dissatisfaction for another; not use of a difference in basic expectations, but because of a difference in interpretations derived from their different latent structures.

The most important concept in the individual's latent structure is the concept he has of his Self. Each individual has an internal and personal image of himself. Though he may not be adept at verbalizing his self-concept, the individual perceives himself as a certain type of person and, father, friend, group member, neighbor, etc. All of these facts which are personal being constitute the individual's own image of himself.

Every person seeks to protect and enhance this private image of himself. Every goal, every attitude, every act is selected for its anticipated contribution to the individual's effort to deal with each situation in a way he believes will most effectively support his self-concept. This, of course, is a very basic drive and rarely do we find it in its basic form. Usually it is displayed in interactions so complex that differences in their latent structures. Each person determines his self-concept becomes hidden in many subsidiary goals, attitudes and attitudes and behavior on the basis of his own view of the situation. This, however, does not deny the existence of the concept. on the basis of facts determined from some objective, external point of view. Therefore, a store manager wanting to satisfy the specific expectations of one customer may create dissatisfaction for another; not use of a difference in basic expectations, but because of a difference

images of "value."³ Knowing, for example, that a particular store located on California Street is somewhat different from knowing that it is a good place to buy or at least a more favorable place to buy than another store. The image of value is concerned with the rating of the store according to some scale of favorableness or unfavorableness and it is this image with which this paper is mainly interested.

This means that the experience of the individual does not directly lead to the development of the image but it is first filtered through his own scale of values. Thus, the same experience may be interpreted differently in terms of value by different people and particularly by people from different localities and social classes. What would be considered good or desirable by one may be thought bad by another; and, in consequence, the image would be affected differently.

It is important, therefore, for the retailer interested in promoting a favorable image, to acquire some knowledge as to the exact scale of values that govern his particular set of customers or potential customers. It is in this sense that image creating starts with the management of a store. Only by having a clear idea in its own mind of what store image should be can the manager of a store fully satisfy the potential markets that it purports to serve. People like to choose their associates in the same way they choose their friends; by selecting images that either match in with their own personalities or else complement them in either case, creating an association that satisfies a need.⁴ Only when personalities do not clash are people accepted as friends. This sense

³Kenneth E. Boulding, The Image (Ann Arbor, 1956), p. 11.

⁴Harry Henry, Motivation Research (New York, 1958), pp. 91-92.

identity therefore, will affect the buying, pricing and service functions of the store and would be a mistake for management to try to implement such policies without knowledge of the consumer image of the store as well as the personality of the consumer himself.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This chapter will deal with the design of the study, the selection of subjects, description of the instrument used for the investigation, the procedures for administering the instrument and tabulating the results.

Design of the Study

The research reported herein was conducted in Stillwater, Oklahoma. It began with the selection of a store upon which to base the study and test the hypothesis. The store chosen was a department store dealing primarily in men's and women's clothing and accessories. The store chosen was selected on the basis of familiarity and its long history and good standing in the community.

The tentative hypothesis to be tested is as follows:

There exists a significant difference in the attitudes between members of high and low socioeconomic classes toward any particular store.

Representatives of the two classes were defined and selected, after which a sample of both was obtained using the semantic differential as the measuring instrument. The data obtained were tabulated and analyzed according to income, education, length of residence in the area, and age of respondents. The result was a number of store "profiles" depicting the attitudes of the two classes as well as the attitudes of various

ps within the classes correlated according to the classificatory
ents mentioned above. These profiles were then used for displaying
encies and making inferences. Following will be a discussion of each
these steps.

The descriptive basis for defining the two populations was made up
two components: namely, dwelling areas and type of housing. Although
studies of this type designate areas by income, the above basis
rides startling contrasts between the areas occupied by the richest
the poorest inhabitants of the city. Certain sections of Stillwater
as the Lake Shore Drive Addition, are seen by the residents as repre-
cing pictures of wealth and social distinction. On the other hand,
ases such as "the wrong side of the tracks" denote poverty and social
ymity.

In order to determine with greater precision the location of the
ferent socioeconomic areas of Stillwater, city planners, real estate
raisers and two mortgage loan officers were utilized in making avail-
e the conditions of structures, home values, and land values. The
racteristics which qualify an area as being a high socioeconomic clas-
e those residential areas of highest repute in the community. Homes
these areas are usually larger than utility demands for the average
ily and built upon well kept grounds which afford some privacy. Land
ues range from \$8,000 and up and the prices of the homes from \$17,000
above. The characteristics which qualified an area as being a low
ioeconomic class were those areas classified as "slums" or "blighted.
these areas the majority of the buildings are usually old and dilapi-
ed or need major repairs. As a result, they commanded the lowest lar-
ues and are occupied by the poorest families.

In analyzing the extent of the concentration of high and low socioeconomic classes, the limitations of this survey must be emphasized at outset. The sections defined were not meant to be all inclusive of respective class in the city. Rather, the object was to define a population as being high or low on a socioeconomic scale. Samples were drawn from these populations and inferences made accordingly. The fact that numerous houses fitting the classifications were not included (due to interspersed or fringe locations) should be recognized as resulting in an exclusion from this study. A map of the areas selected is provided in Appendix A.

The areas selected for the high socioeconomic population were as follows: the Lake Shore Drive addition north of the city; the area west of Jefferson Street between Preston Drive and Thomas Avenue; the section of Washington Street between Will Rogers Drive and Knapp Avenue; the block on Main from Georgia Avenue; and north of West Fourth along Western Sherwood Avenue and as far east as Kings Highway.

The area selected for the low socioeconomic population was that block on Eleventh between Lewis Street and Perkins Road.

Selection of Respondents

The respondents chosen from the above populations were selected on a judgment or nonprobability basis. This selection was aided by the use of a guide book published by the Urban Land Institute in Washington, D.C. which depicts pictures of house types applicable to the present study.¹ This technique was adopted mainly because of the reasons outlined in

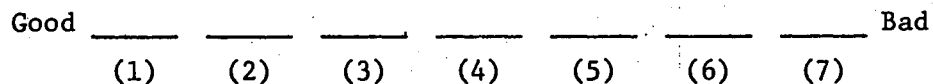
¹Homer Hoyt, Where the Rich and the Poor People Live, Technical Bulletin/55, Urban Land Institute, Washington, D.C., 1966.

ter I as well as the general uncertainty of obtaining respondents in lower socioeconomic group (educationally deficient or uncooperative).

The actual sample consisted of fifty-four respondents, or 22 percent of the population defined as being a high socioeconomic class, and twenty respondents, or 20 percent from the population defined as being a low socioeconomic class. All respondents were housewives and were interviewed personally at their place of residence. The average time for each interview was approximately ten minutes. This allowed sufficient time for the questionnaire to be explained and administered as well as answer questions by the respondents. Total interviewing time encompassed approximately three weeks.

The Instrument

The measurement of store image is of its very nature highly subjective. Images themselves are bound to be "synthetic," because they are put together from numerous sense impressions and not objective fact. To overcome this drawback, many researchers have employed the technique of semantic differential. The semantic differential was conceived as a device for measuring connotative meanings. Specifically, the process of semantic differentiation locates the connotative meanings of a concept on a series of seven-point rating scales representing a continuum between two poles of adjectival opposites. Such a scale is diagrammed below:



Checking the space that best represents the concept being identified, the subject tends to describe the concept as it is perceived by him. The points of the scale are typically quantified as above. A concept

iting a check mark on the scale at the "4" position may be termed
 ral with respect to goodness or badness, or neither good, nor bad.
 of the rating in this context does not mean the same thing as having
 eaning. Rather, it refers to intensity of meaning, with the scale
 d at either extreme possessing the greatest amount. Whatever the
 ng of a person checking the scales, his responses are presumed re-
 entative of the meaning that has been conditioned to the concept bein
 ed. Since this concept can be something as nebulous as a store image
 semantic differential has seen increasing use in this area.² It is
 his way that abstract qualitative data that deal with consumers'
 tions to the image of a store can be quantified.

Osgood describes the rationale of the semantic differential as
 follows:

Through the functioning of a generalization
 principle, the concept will elicit checking of that
 scale position whose dominant mediator component
 most closely matches in intensity the corresponding
 component in the process associated with the concept
 itself. Since the positions checked on the scales
 constitute the coordinates of the concept's location
 in semantic space, we assume that the coordinates in
 the measurement space are functionally equivalent
 with the components of the representational media-
 tion process associated with this concept.³

The semantic differential is a simple technique to apply and has
 advantage of yielding in a single answer an indication of both the
 direction of attitude and the intensity of attitude. On the other hand,

²For example, see J. R. Clegg, Jr., "A Store Image Study Involving
 Factor Analysis," Vol. 10, University of Houston Business Review, (Spring
 1965), 21-31; and Theodore Clevenger, Jr. et al., "Measurement of Corpor-
 ation Images by the Semantic Differential," Journal of Marketing Research,
 February, 1965), pp. 80-82.

³Charles E. Osgood, G. Suci, and P. Tannenbaum, The Measurement of
 Meaning (Urbana, 1957), p. 30.

semantic differential has much the same disadvantage as other rating scales--the meaning of the scale to different individuals is not always the same. This is especially true if polar adjectives are not easily understood or are not clear opposites. In addition, there is some possibility, as on other scales, people tend to provide ratings more toward the middle of the scales and hesitate to express extreme views (or, at least, extreme negative views).

Nevertheless, the following hypotheses have been postulated with reference to the semantic differential as a measuring instrument:

- (1) The process of description or judgment can be conceived as the allocation of a concept to an experiential continuum, definable by a pair of polar terms.
- (2) Many different experiential continua, or ways in which meanings vary, are essentially equivalent and hence may be represented by a single dimension.
- (3) A limited number of such continua can be used to define a semantic space within which the meaning of any concept can be specified.⁴

It seems imperative that if we are to use the semantic differential as a measuring instrument, a closer examination of its characteristics be in order. The criteria for evaluating almost any measuring instrument are basically the same; they include objectivity, reliability, validity, sensitivity, comparability, and utility. In evaluating the semantic differential in light of these criteria, it appears that this differential may be considered a worthwhile measuring instrument. Following is a discussion of how the semantic differential technique may be evaluated in terms of each of the six aforementioned major criteria.⁵

⁴ Ibid., p. 227.

⁵ See also William A. Mindak, pp. 28-29.

Objectivity. Insofar as the procedures of measurement with the semantic differential are clear and can be duplicated, the semantic differential is objective. Two investigators given the same data from semantic differential research and using the same rules of analysis end up with similar meanings and/or profiles for the concepts. Indeed, interpretation of these results may be subjective, but such is the case with nearly all research.

Reliability. This criterion concerns the consistency with which similar results are yielded when research is duplicated under like conditions. Osgood reports several experiments which support the reliability of the semantic differential.⁶ Norman, in a study done involving the conditions of reliability and stability of the semantic differential, states subsequently, "the semantic differential can be recommended for use in investigations where this sort of 'meaning' is to be measured over groups of subjects."⁷

Validity. How well an instrument measures what it is supposed to measure is the concern of this criterion. The semantic differential is designed to measure meaning. Thus, in order to test semantic differential validity, semantic differential scores should be correlated with an independent criterion of meaning. However, since there is no commonly accepted quantitative criterion of meaning, "face validity" (the extent to which an instrument appears to measure what it's supposed to measure)

⁶Osgood, Suci, and Tannenbaum, pp. 126-140.

⁷Warren T. Norman, "Stability Characteristics of the Semantic Differential," Technical Report No. 19, The Role of Language in Behavior, University of Minnesota, 1961.

onsidered in evaluating the semantic differential in terms of a
lity consideration. Therefore, careful selection of scales and con-
s relative to the object to be measured becomes of considerable
stance.

Sensitivity. This criterion deals with the discriminatory ability
measuring instrument. Ideally, an instrument should provide finer
inctions than those which can be made without the use of scientific
uments. The semantic differential has been shown to discriminate
ificantly. Also, the interviewer plays a key role in encouraging
ndents to discriminate on the scales--by being certain the responden
not avoiding the rating task by checking scales in the center. Becau
his sensitivity factor, it has been used to measure changes in consum
tions from year to year.

Comparability. To date, the uses of the semantic differential have
ared to satisfy the criterion of comparability--that criterion which
that the measuring instrument be applicable to a wide range of uses.
concern with comparability of the semantic differential obviously
tes primarily to its uses over a wide range of subjects and concepts.
arch studies utilizing this technique have dealt with broad areas
luding such areas as attitude measurement and communications research
uded a wide variety of subjects (for example, men, women, various
ational levels, etc.); and treated a wide variety of concepts (for
ple, China, Eisenhower, myself, and Church, etc.).

Utility. The semantic differential has been shown to be an efficien
uring technique. It is neither cumbersome nor laborious in its con-

tion and administration. It is economical of time and effort and is relatively free of ambiguity.

A very important element in the design of the study was the selection of terms to be used in evaluating the store. Past research studies utilized the semantic differential and an interview with the manager of the store in question were the means used to arrive at these gradients. In the final analysis, the researcher decided on a list of twenty gradients thought to be appropriate for evaluating the store. It was considered desirable to limit the number of gradients to twenty. This number was considered adequate for reliability of measurement, yet small enough to be manageable. The terms used to evaluate the store are listed in Table I. As shown in Table I, the gradients were divided into three factors: Merchandise, Sales Effort and Store Service, and Congeniality. These gradients were arranged randomly on the questionnaire to eliminate any ordering. The questionnaire used is shown in Appendix B along with the instructions given to the respondents. In certain cases these instructions had to be abandoned for subjects in the low socioeconomic group who found it difficult to think in terms of various continua or to deal with abstractions in general. A factual questionnaire that was also used in collecting data is shown in Appendix C.

Treatment of the Data

When collected, the data were tabulated according to four characteristics of the respondents; namely, age, income, education, and length of residence in the community. Family size was also obtained for each but was considered insignificant based upon the low frequency distribution in each class interval (the intervals being too precise for the size of the sample).

TABLE II

A FACTUAL QUESTIONNAIRE OF THE BREAKDOWN OF VARIABLES
 ACCORDING TO AGE, INCOME, EDUCATION AND
 LENGTH OF RESIDENCE

Instructions given to respondents were as follows:

Please fill out the factual questionnaire. This information is only needed in order to describe generally the subjects of this survey and will not be associated with you personally. Please know that your name is not required.

What is your total family income (before taxes)?

Please check one

Less than \$3,000 _____
 \$3,000 - \$4,999 _____
 \$5,000 - \$7,999 _____
 \$8,000 - \$9,999 _____
 \$10,000 - \$14,999 _____
 \$15,000 and over _____

State the amount of formal education you've completed by checking one of the following:

Grade school or less _____
 Some high school _____
 Graduated high school _____
 Some college _____
 Graduated College _____

How long have you lived in Stillwater?

Less than 3 years? _____
 3 - 9 years? _____
 10 - 19 years? _____
 20 years or more? _____

What is your age group?

34 or younger _____
 35 - 49 _____
 50 - 64 _____
 65 and over _____

*The question of age was not included on the actual questionnaire.

this estimate. Although the method did not offer complete reliabilities thought to be the most expedient. With regard to income, only of the respondents fell in the middle categories (\$5,000 - \$9,999) of the nature of the study. Therefore, no correlations were made with respect to these. Primary correlations concerned common variables of two populations as well as correlations within each socioeconomic class. All data were tabulated by hand with mean ratings calculated from absolute values assigned to each scale. These values, beginning on the left-hand side of the scales, range from one through seven--the number of responses provided. Profiles and factor scores were derived from these data. Chapter IV will deal with the results of the survey.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

The analysis of store profiles and factor scores were the main tool used in testing the effects of socioeconomic class on store image. The profiles that follow were taken from matrices used in tabulating the data. Actual numerical figures are not included in this report.

At the bottom of each profile is provided a key to distinguish the items indicated. The terms on the left-hand side of the differential are generally thought to be "good" qualities (excluding price) and the terms on the right "bad" qualities. This arrangement is normal for a study of this nature and was used here for interviewing efficiency (i.e. ease and effort--especially for those in the lower socioeconomic class who exhibited educational deficiencies). The space between the profiles as shown in the following figures indicates differences in attitudes toward the store in question for those subjects concerned.

Figure 1 depicts the total store image of the two main groups of concern in this study; that is, the high socioeconomic group and the low socioeconomic group, as defined in Chapter III. This division, due to the nature of the groups, is basically one of income and house type. The low socioeconomic group was classified in the income category of \$0 - 999 per year. The high socioeconomic subjects were all found to have incomes of over \$10,000 per year. No further breakdown by income was made.

Figure 2 is a repeat of Figure 1 but with an "In-Store" image imposed on it. This "In-Store" image is that image the store has of itself. It was obtained by administering the same semantic differential to the managers and various employees of the store. Ideally, the resulting profile should represent the image the store feels it is projecting to the public.

Figures 3 through 11 are profiles obtained from various demographic segments of the two populations based on the characteristics outlined in Table II of the previous chapter. Figure 3 combines all the education levels and was so arranged due to the failure of the high socioeconomic class to fall within the lower categories as well as the high correlation among those with higher education within each group. The figures 4 through 11 are self-explanatory.

Figure 12 was shown to display the differences between various geographical sections within the high socioeconomic class. It contains two of the five sections outlined as being representative of that group.

The recent Lake Shore Drive addition is located two miles north of the city limits (comprising 13 percent of the total sample) whereas the West University section is an older section within the city limits (comprising 10 percent of the sample).

Following will be a presentation of these twelve profiles with analysis and interpretations being reserved for later chapters.

Figure 1

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER,
OKLAHOMA FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH
SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES

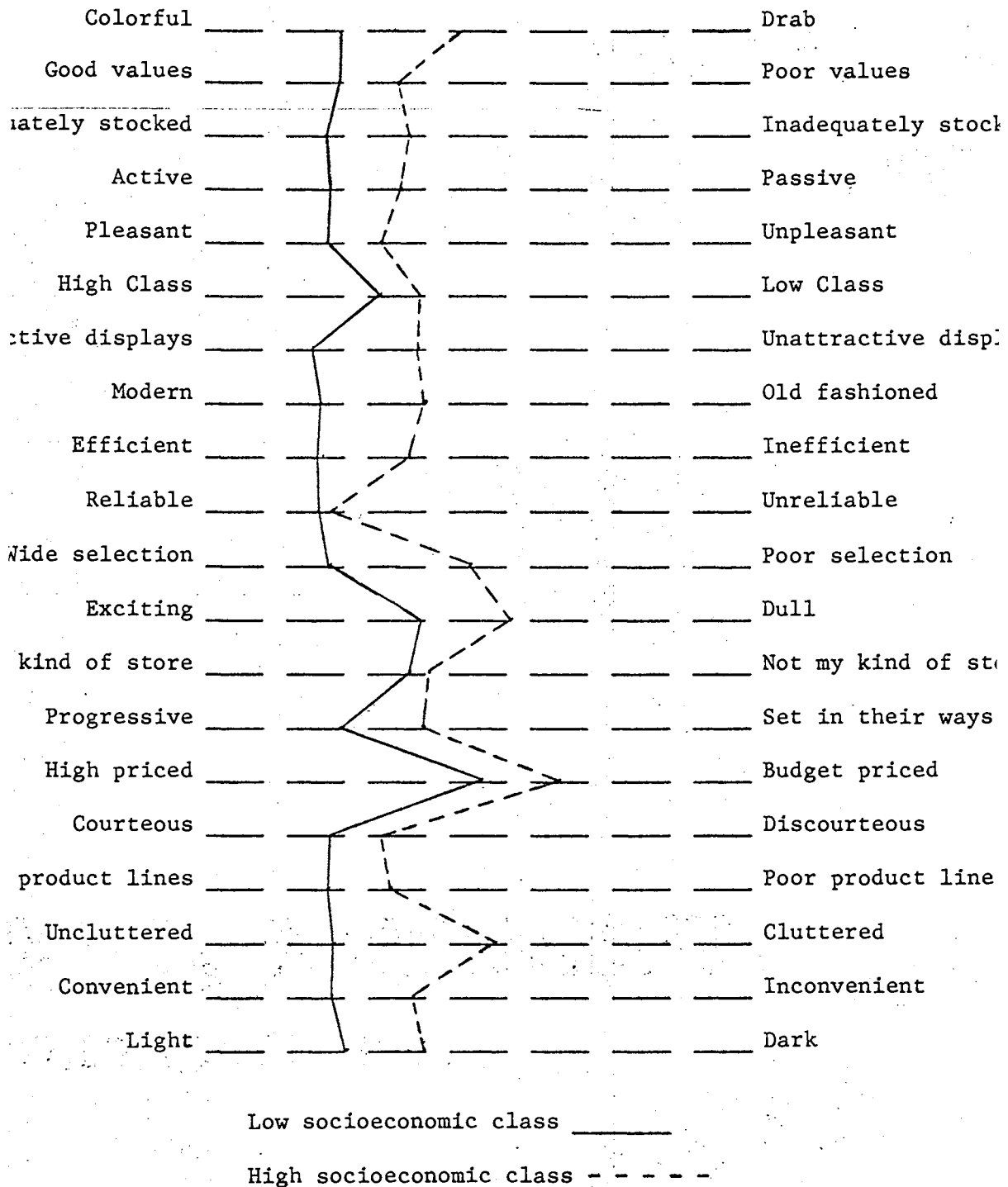


Figure 2

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA FOR MEMBERS OF THE LOWER SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, THE HIGHER SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS, AND THE STORE ITSELF

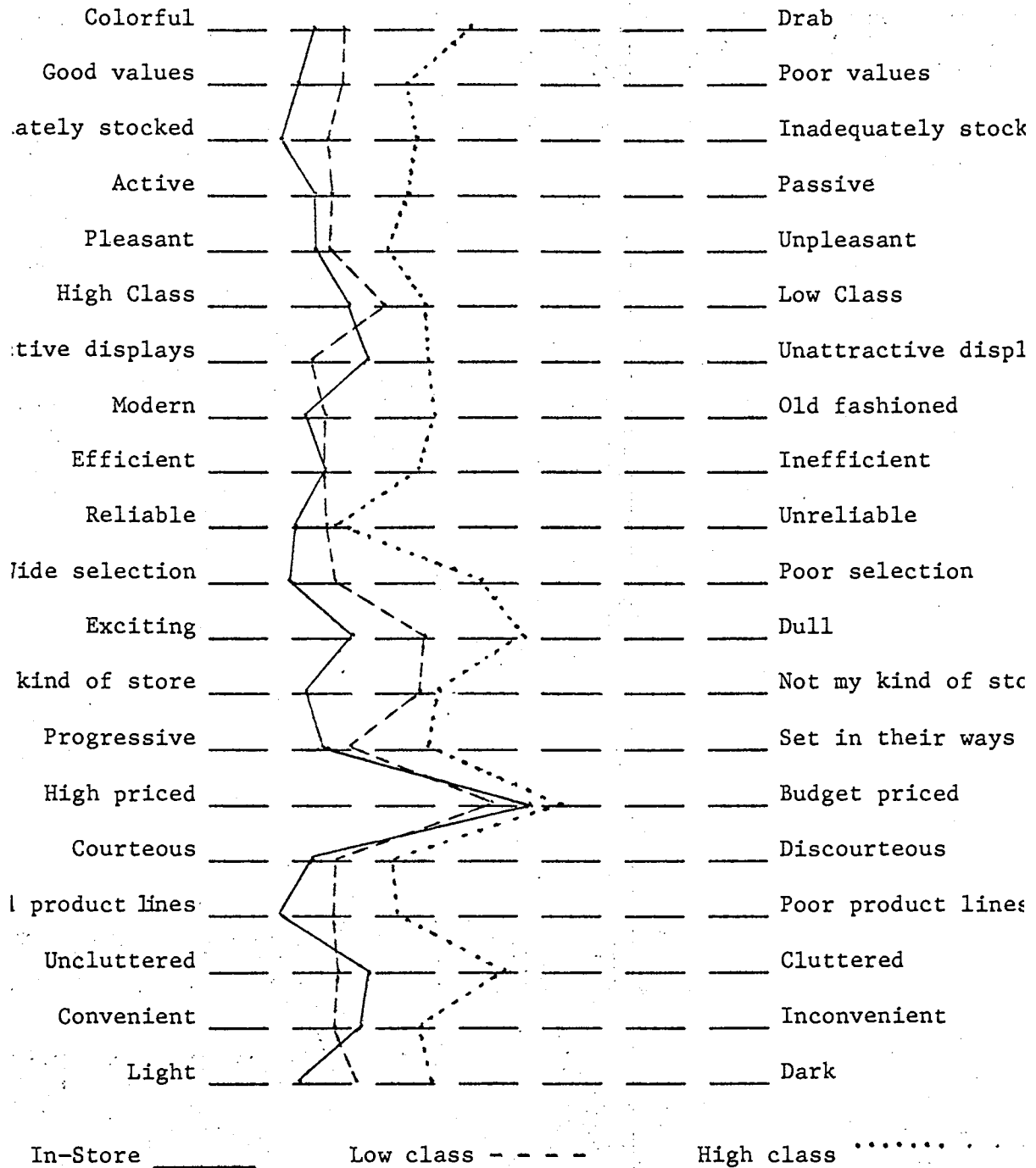
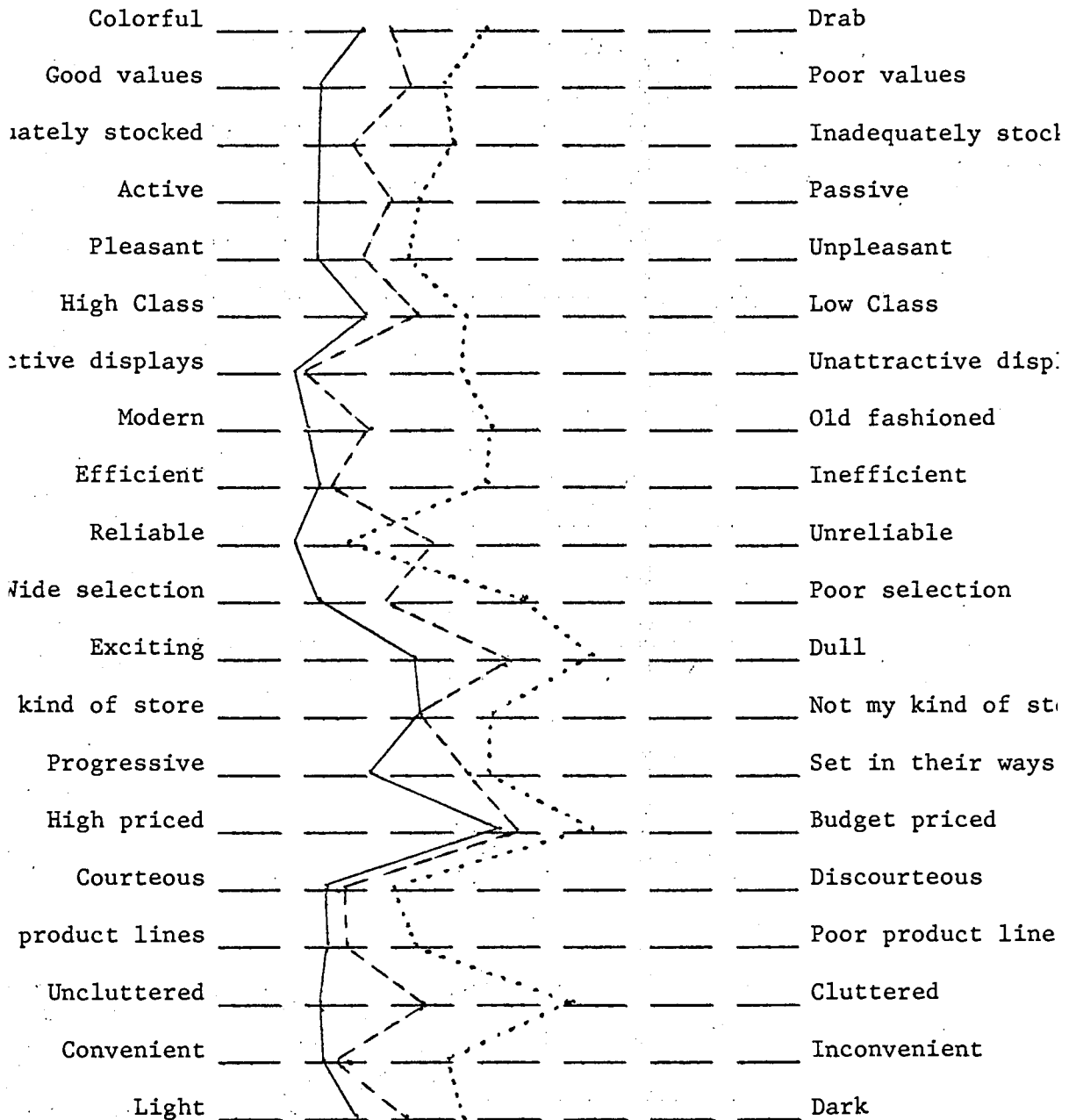


Figure 3

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
WITH EDUCATION AS A VARIABLE



Grade school or some high school (lower) _____
 Some college or graduated college (lower) - - - - -
 Some college or graduated college (higher)

Figure 4

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
 WITH LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY OF
 THREE YEARS OR LESS

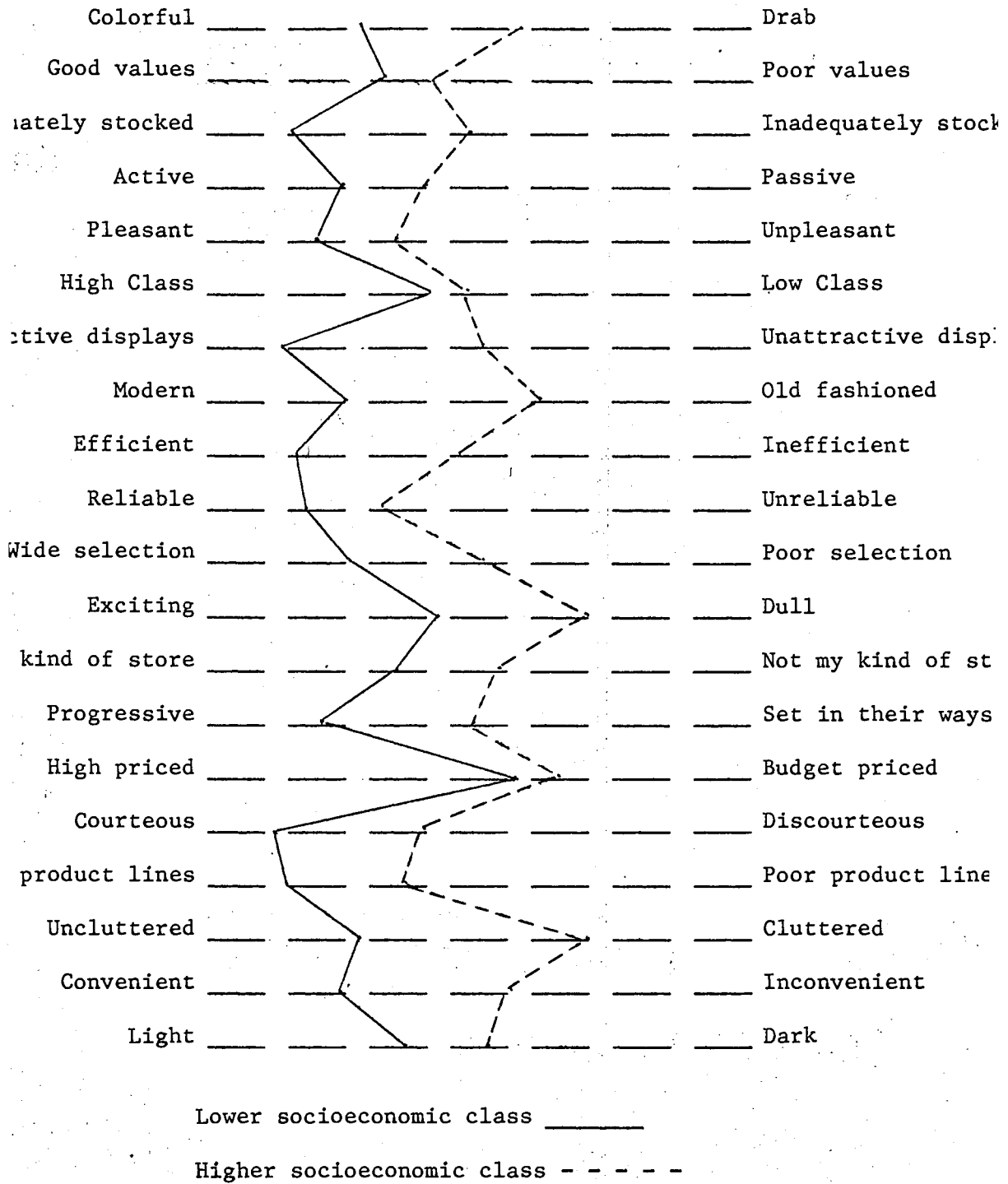


Figure 5

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
 WITH LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY
 FROM THREE TO NINE YEARS

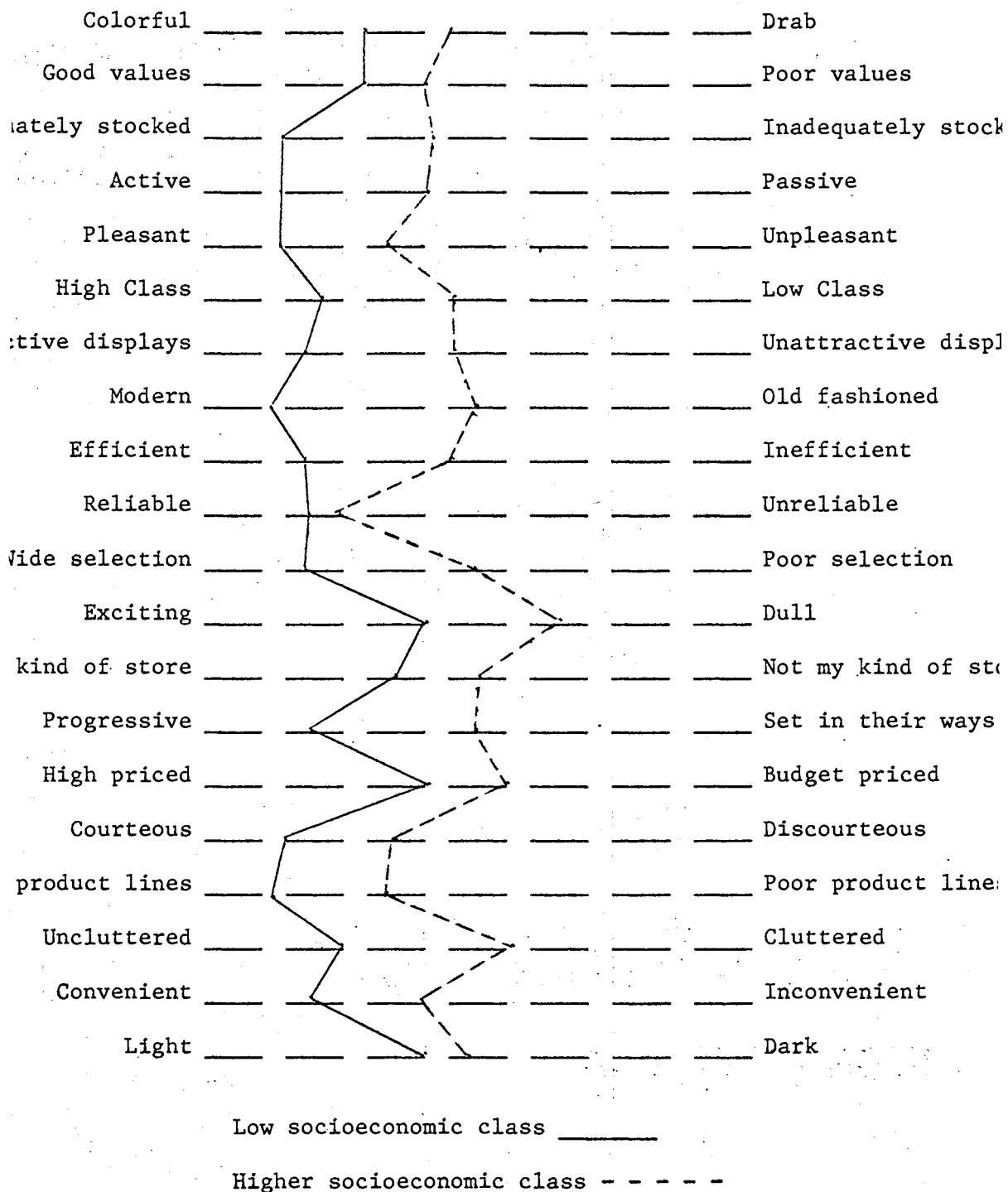
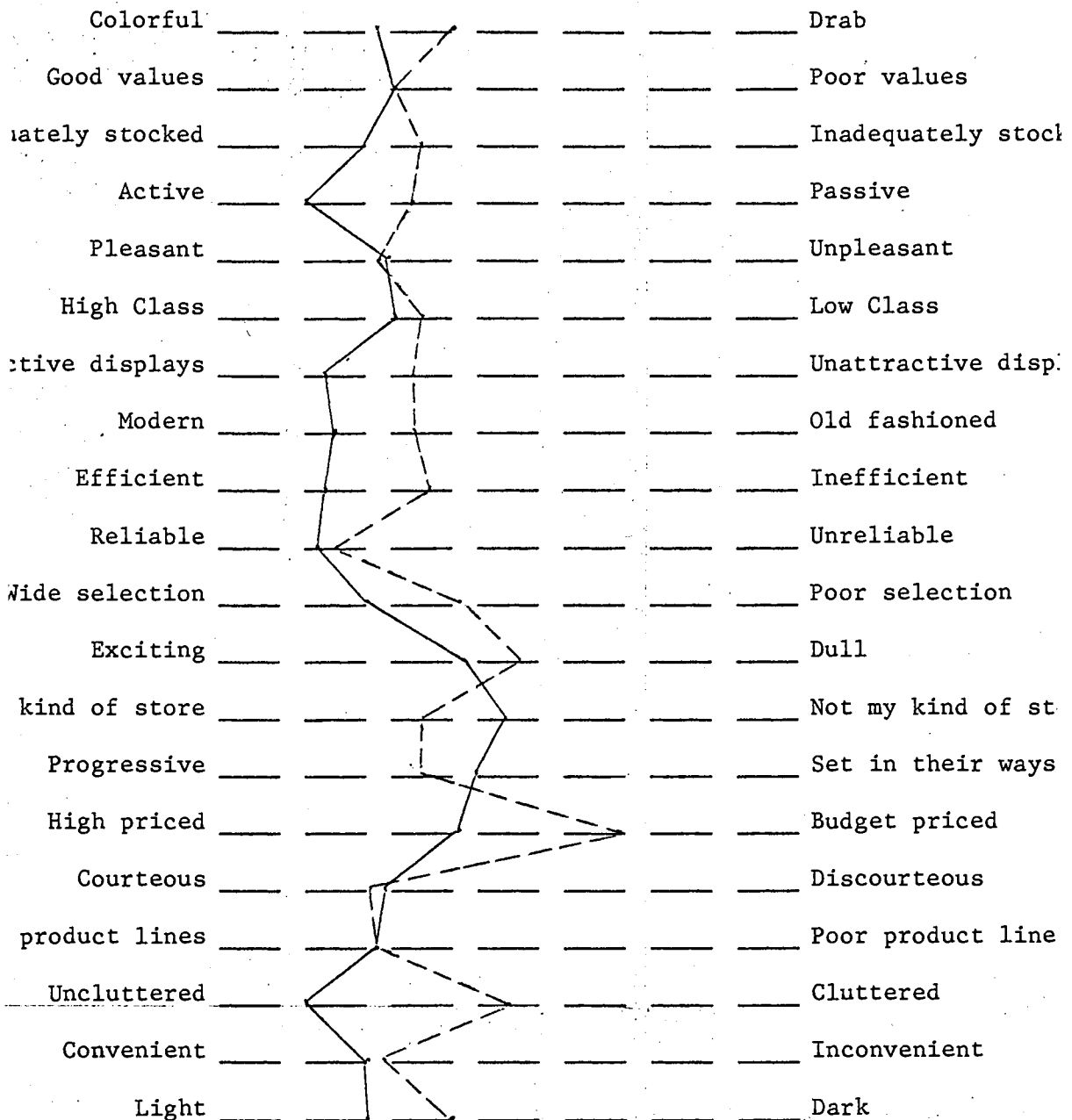


Figure 6

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
 WITH LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY
 FROM TEN TO NINETEEN YEARS

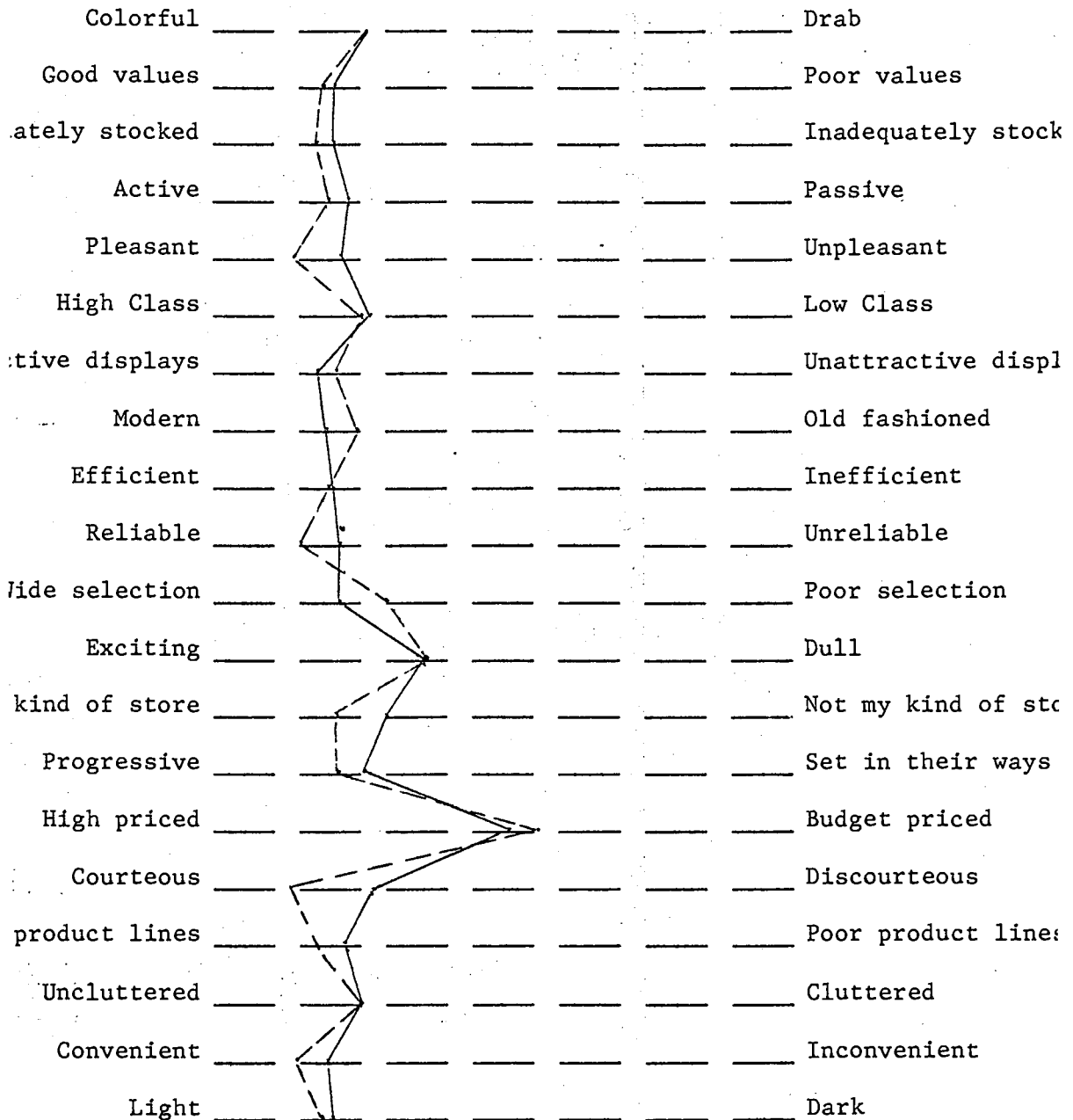


Lower socioeconomic class _____

Higher socioeconomic class - - - - -

Figure 7

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
 WITH LENGTH OF RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY OF
 TWENTY YEARS OR MORE

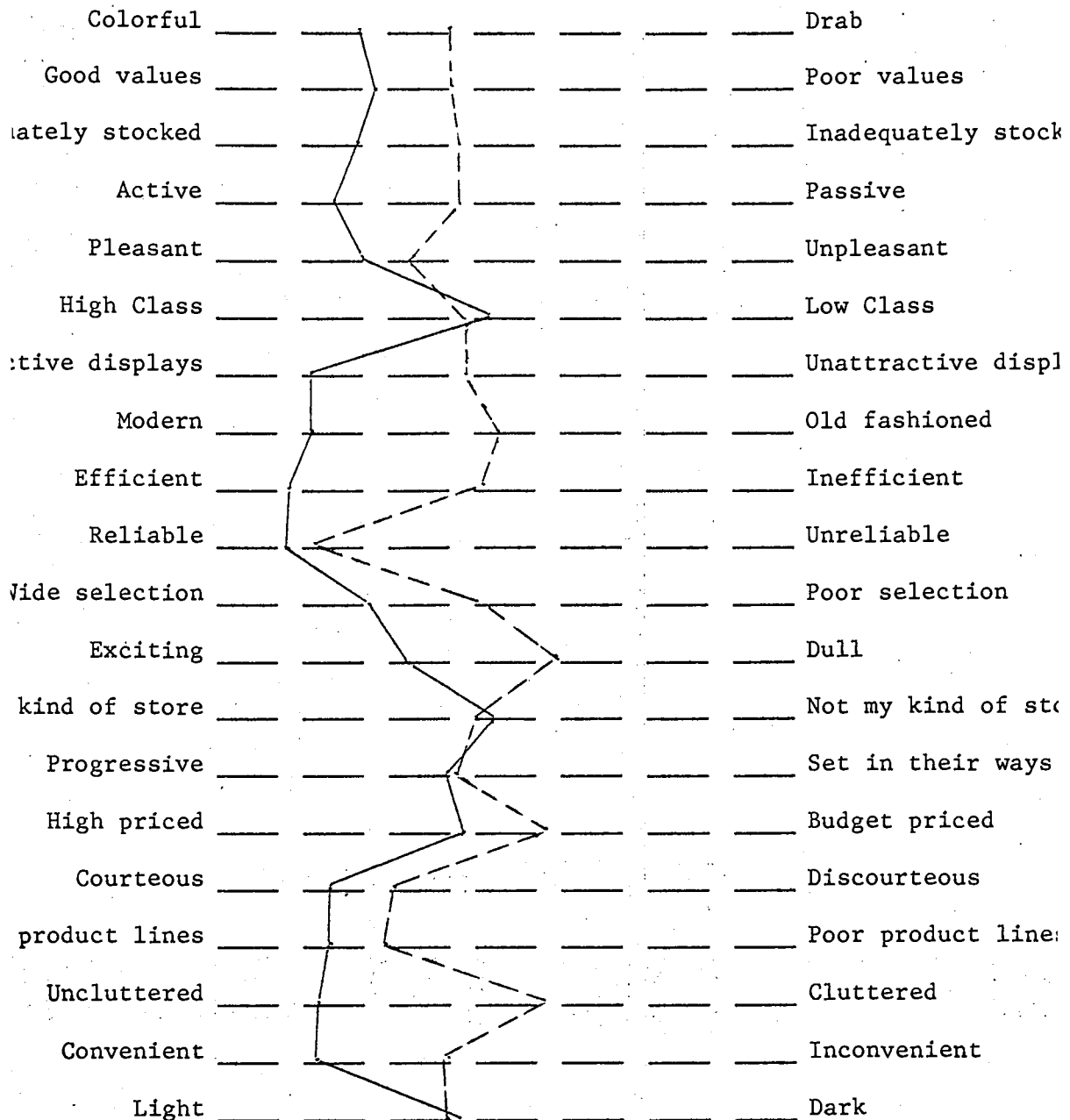


Lower socioeconomic class _____

Higher socioeconomic class - - - - -

Figure 8

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES
 WHOSE AGES ARE THIRTY-FOUR YEARS OR YOUNGER



Low socioeconomic class _____

High socioeconomic class - - - - -

Figure 9

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES WHOSE
AGES RANGE FROM THIRTY-FIVE TO FORTY-NINE YEARS

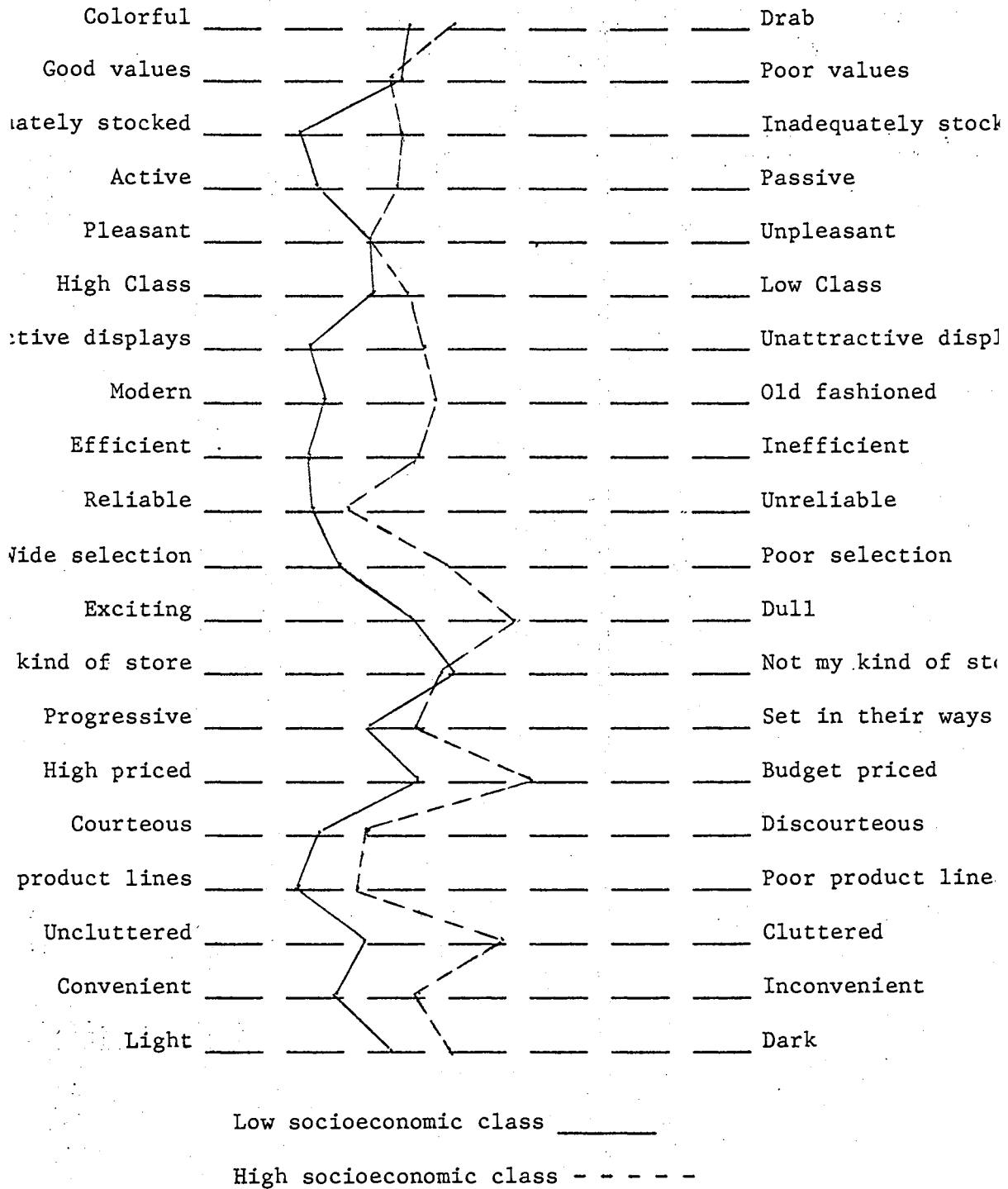


Figure 10

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
 FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES WHOSE
 AGES RANGE FROM FIFTY TO SIXTY-FOUR YEARS

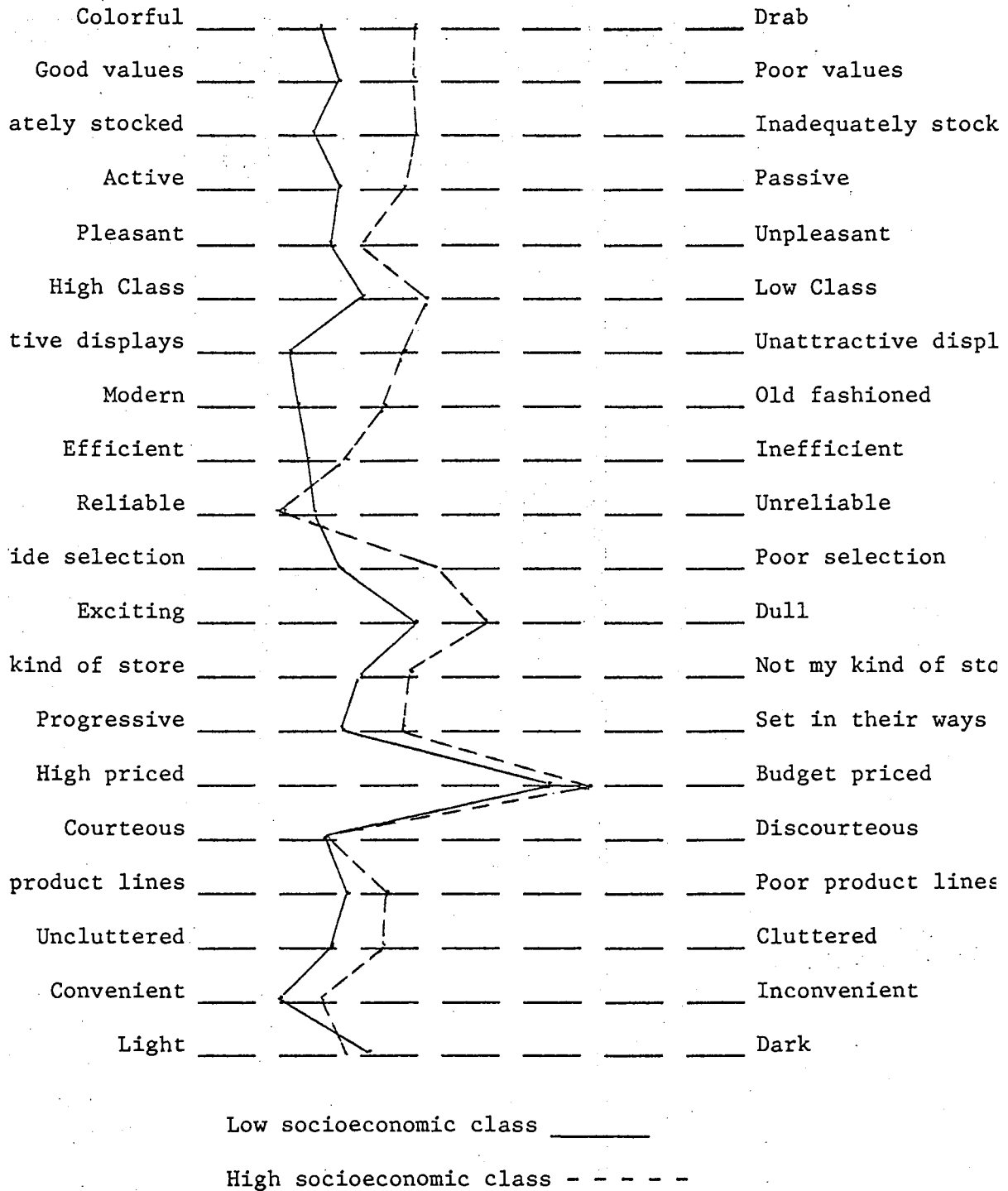
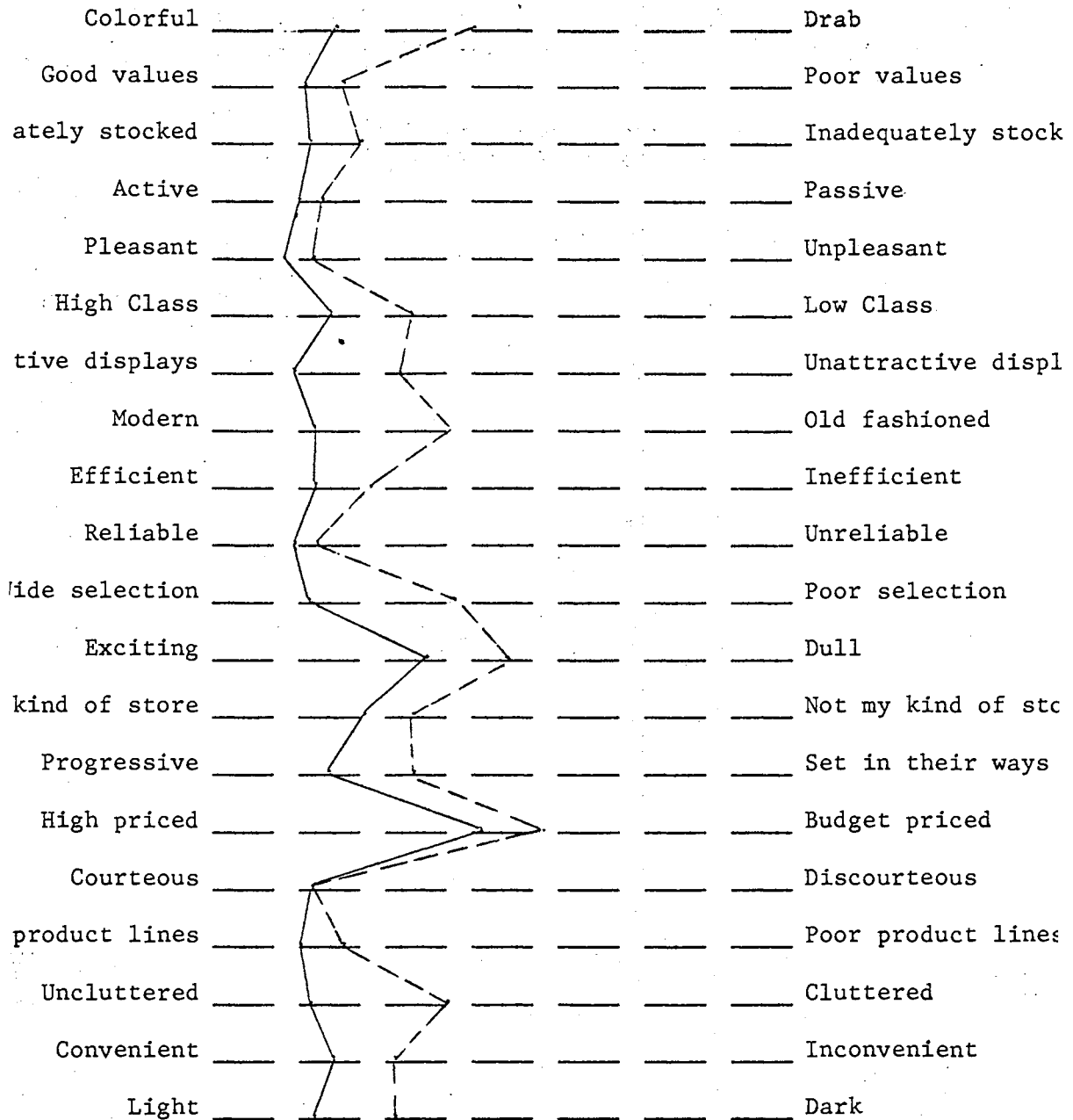


Figure 11

IMAGE PROFILES FOR A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
FOR MEMBERS OF LOW AND HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASSES WHOSE
AGES ARE SIXTY-FIVE YEARS AND OVER

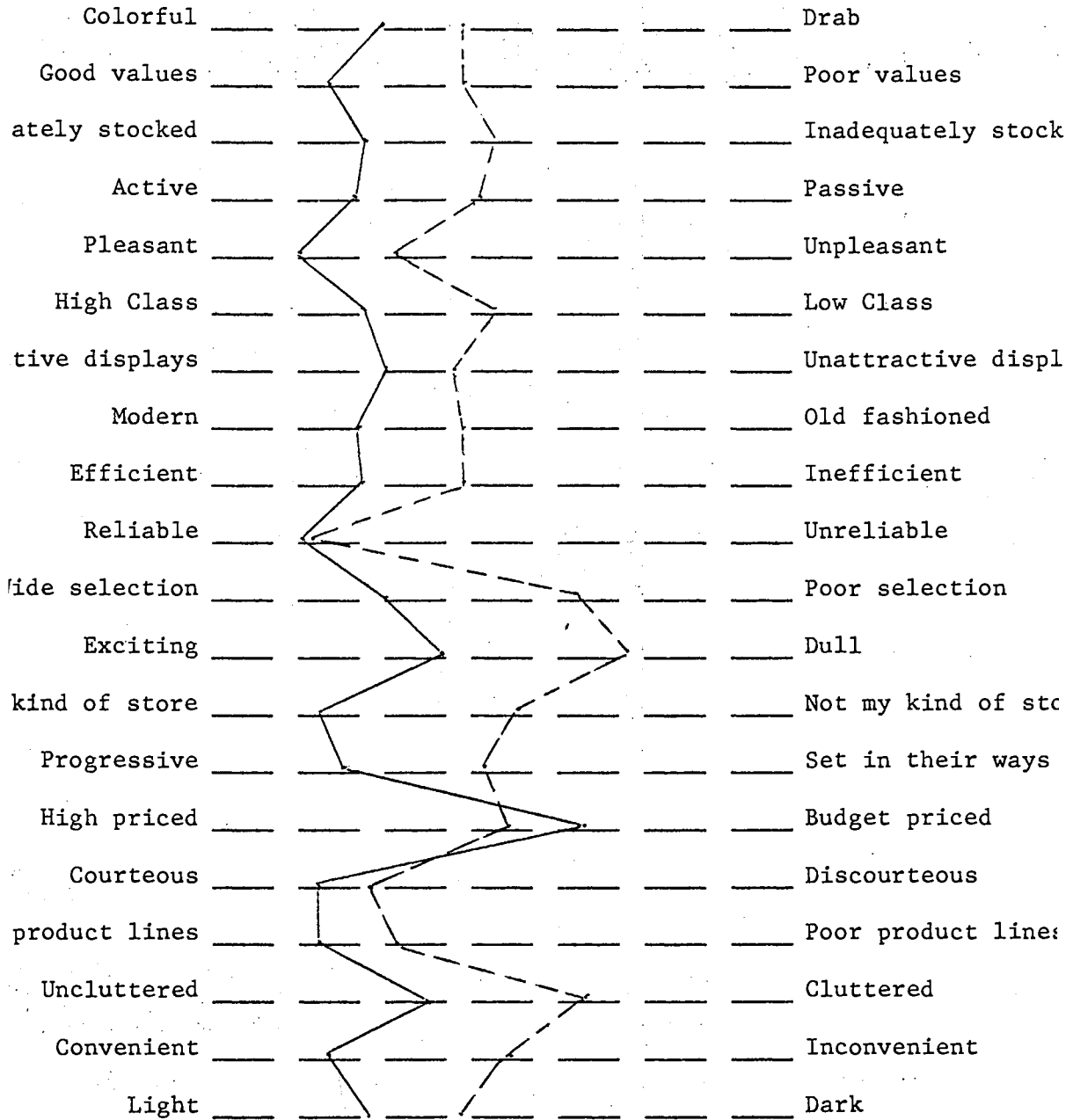


Low socioeconomic class _____

High socioeconomic class - - - - -

Figure 12

IMAGE PROFILES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE IN STILLWATER, OKLAHOMA
FOR DIFFERENT SECTIONS OF THE CITY WITHIN
THE HIGH SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS



West University section _____

Lake Shore Drive section - - - - -

In order to determine with greater precision the effect of socioeconomic standing on specific aspects of the store in question, factor scores were derived for those items dealing with merchandise, sales effort, store service, and congeniality as listed in Table I of the previous chapter. These factor scores were calculated by averaging the means of the items within the respective categories for each of the variables. They are presented in Table III on the following page. A high factor score would indicate negative attitudes about the store (i.e., respondents checked closer to the right-hand side of the differential) and a low factor score a more positive attitude. The highest possible score is 7.0 with the midpoint or "neutral" score being 3.5. Therefore, negative qualities would be indicated by factor scores greater than 3.5 and positive qualities by scores less than 3.5. By using this analysis, we are able to compare the various factor scores, not only between factors, high and low socioeconomic class variables as well. Thus, a 1.6 ranking of congeniality by those respondents sixty-five years and over from the lower socioeconomic group is directly comparable to a 1.2 ranking of merchandise and service by that same group of respondents. Both of these rankings, in turn, may be compared with the high socioeconomic group rankings for each.

TABLE III

FACTOR SCORES OF A DEPARTMENT STORE'S IMAGE CHARACTERISTICS
AS SEEN BY HIGH AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS OF
STILLWATER ACCORDING TO EDUCATION, LENGTH OF
RESIDENCE IN THE COMMUNITY, AGE, AND
A TOTAL SCORE OF THE TWO GROUPS

	<u>MERCHANDISE*</u>		<u>SALES AND SERVICE</u>		<u>CONGENIALITY</u>	
	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>LOW</u>	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>LOW</u>	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>LOW</u>
EDUCATION						
Some or graduated college.	2.9	1.9	2.5	1.9	3.4	2.2
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE						
Less than 3 years.	3.1	1.6	2.8	1.4	4.0	2.2
3 - 9 years.	2.9	1.4	2.7	1.3	3.4	2.0
10 - 19 years	2.4	2.0	2.1	1.9	2.7	2.0
20 years or more	1.5	1.6	1.3	1.7	1.7	1.8
AGE						
14 years and younger.	2.8	1.8	2.5	1.6	2.5	2.2
15 - 49.	2.6	1.8	2.4	1.7	3.2	2.2
50 - 64.	2.8	1.9	2.1	1.8	2.6	1.8
65 and over.	2.0	1.3	1.6	1.2	2.7	1.8
TOTAL SCORE OF HIGH AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS						
AVERAGE	2.6	1.6	2.3	1.6	3.0	1.8

*The polar terms of HIGH PRICED-BUDGET PRICED were excluded in determining factor scores for "Merchandise" in order to make the data more comparable with other factors.

CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

It was hypothesized in this study that differences in socioeconomic status might logically be expected to affect the way individuals perceive a store's image. The findings of this study tentatively affirm such a prediction. Results revealed that the low socioeconomic class consistently rated the store higher than the upper socioeconomic group as shown by the preference profiles of Chapter IV. In Figure 1, for example, a definite difference is maintained between the lines of the two classes and will be taken to be statistically significant for the purposes of this study.

One possible explanation of this observed phenomenon is that members of the upper income groups are apt to be more discriminating in their selections of what constitutes an efficient store, a reliable store, etc. (such factors as education, shopping experience, and feelings of self-esteem). C. J. Collazzo, in a recent National Retail Merchants Association study of consumer frustrations, reported that members of the upper income groups tend to be more experienced in shopping and therefore more discriminating in their desires, more definite as to their needs, more independent, and less loyal to the merchant or to a particular brand of merchandise.¹ This seems to imply that it is natural for a person of a lower socioeconomic group to be more particular than would a person from

¹Collazzo, pp. 1-7.

w socioeconomic group, irregardless of the store in question. On the r hand, the individual store's qualities may well be the basis for differences in results of the two groups. The author feels that both these explanations should be considered, and, as far as this investi- r could ascertain, there is no available research to structure the ussion of the latter explanation. Therefore, the nature of any obser- on or explanation offered here must be largely ad hoc.

One problem in the interpretation of these findings is apparent when considers what is meant by a lower rating on the semantic scales. If group tended to rate the store at the "7" end of a semantic scale and her at the "4" or neutral point on the scale, the former indicates a ference for a strongly negative connotation of the store. The latter, er than indicating the opposite (as would be the case if the rating e at the "1" end of the scale), may really indicate neutrality or mean- lessness with respect to the semantic scale. In other words, the store be rated at the "7" end of the Pleasant-Unpleasant scale, indicating inite unpleasantness associated with the store. However, if rated at "4" point, the indication might not necessarily be one of less unpleasa s but merely one indicating that the store is neither pleasant nor leasant. This result of the relativity of scale ratings must be kept mind in the interpretation of the profiles and factor scores.

In view of this relativity, it may be said of the first findings t the lower socioeconomic group, in rating the store higher on the antic scales, apparently either saw more color, pleasantness, reliable- s, progressiveness, etc., in the store or were less uncertain about the lities of the store than the high socioeconomic group. This latter rea- ing seems to tie in with the earlier discussion of the discriminating

encies of the high socioeconomic group, due to their more complex definition of the qualities used to describe the store.

Figure 2 was designed to show how the image that the store feels it projecting (the "In-Store" image) compares with the profiles of Figure 1 high and low socioeconomic classes. Again it appears logical that there would be a fairly close agreement between this "In-Store" image and the customers to which the store currently appeals. As shown in this file, however, there is an extreme danger of bias affecting the "In-Store" image. The majority of points lie to the left of even the lower socioeconomic group and some points are significantly so. The implications of these high ratings leads one to infer that the store is not evaluating qualities realistically. Perhaps a more objective viewpoint of the store by the management would be helpful.

The factor of Education is the concern of Figure 3. Results seem to support the earlier discussion of discrimination characteristic of lower education. Members of the lower socioeconomic class with less than high school education rated the store consistently higher than those of the lower group with a college education. These ratings in turn were higher than those members of the high socioeconomic group who had some college or were graduated from college. It is important to note that education appears to be a significant factor as seen by the differences within socioeconomic class.

The effects of length of residence upon store image, as seen by the various classes, is especially interesting. Figures 4, 5, 6, and 7 show profiles for the various categories concerning this variable. Relatively large differences were exhibited between the two groups for members living in or around the city for less than three years. This same phenomena was

played between members whose residence has been three to nine years in
 ation. For residence between ten and nineteen years, however, this
 seems to be disappearing and in Figure 7, for residence of more than
 ty years, there appeared to be no significant difference between lower
 higher socioeconomic class! This finding was highly unexpected and
 erts on social stratification have been amazed.²

There are three possible explanations of such a development. First,
 s argued by some that with increasing length of residence, community
 tudes (shared without regard to class) come to be more important than
 s attitudes.³ Thus, an immigrant to the community would see the store
 in relation to another set of values (past knowledge of other stores)
 er than sharing a common attitude with its more permanent members.
 ndly, it could be argued the "Oklahomaness" (the spirit of the frontier,
) is more characteristic of long-term residents than of short term
 contains a classless, homegeneous, attitudinal component. The investi-
 r finds no evidence to support this explanation but feels that this
 should not discount the plausibleness of such a case. A third possi-
 explanation is that historical events of the store in question are
 central in attitude formation than class of the observer (internal
 al psychological factors). This history, it could be argued, is only
 n to long-term residents.

The author feels there may be an element of each of these explanations

²These views were presented in a discussion on February 3, 1967 with Benjamin Gorman, professor of sociology at Oklahoma State University (specialization in social stratification) and Dr. Solomon Sutker, head of department of sociology, also at Oklahoma State.

³For example, see Arthur J. Vidich and Joseph Bensman, Small Town in Society (Princeton, New Jersey, 1958), pp. 285-314.

ating within these groups of long-term residents. The first and third red, however, seem to bear more weight when analyzed in conjunction Figure 11, where no such close correlation is observed for those dents sixty-five years and older.

With regard to age, however, we find a similar converging of profiles he age level increases. Even with this convergency, however, there l seemed to be indicated a significant difference between socioeconomic s members sixty-five years and over.

Another aspect of the community factor mentioned above is shown in re 12. It was included to emphasize the differences that exist within igh socioeconomic groups with regard to geographical sections of the . The two sections selected were chosen for their obvious differences engh of time established in the community. The section around West ersity has long been established and exhibits much higher ratings er rankings) than that of Lake Shore Drive which lies well on the out- s of town and is relatively new. This finding also seems to give ort to the fact that community attitudes, given sufficient time, become geneous. At least it tends to indicate the differences within socio- omic class at any particular point in time.

Another form of analysis using factor scores was employed and is 1 in Table III of the previous chapter. The three factors of merchan- , sales and service, and congeniality were separated and the respective s were averaged to arrive at a unique score for each factor as well as demographic variable. One common characteristic is the consistently : scores dealing with sales and service for both of the groups across variables (with a minor exception of those members of the low socio- mic group with residence over twenty years). To be noted also is

consistent lower rankings given the store by members of the lower socioeconomic group in general. Here again, residence of over twenty years nullifies this tendency, and even reverses it! Another interesting fact is the relatively low ranking of all the factor scores. The highest ranking was 4.0 for store congeniality by new immigrants to the community. In fact, congeniality received the highest over-all scores on all the factors but can be considered relatively low on a one-to-seven scale.

One further result should be noted. With regard to the factor scores for sales and service as it varies with length of residence, the trend is upward for the higher socioeconomic group as residence increases and downward, or at least fairly constant, for the lower socioeconomic group. An explanation of this could be the shift in emphasis by the store owners in an attempt to better reach the higher class market. If this is the case, it can also be said that it was accomplished only by alienating a small portion of the lower class. This conclusion, however, is not supported by this study.

In interpreting this data, caution is needed in making value judgments on the optimal scale and factor ratings. This is not the purpose of the semantic differential as used in this study. Who, for instance, is to say whether it is a good attribute of a department store to be uncluttered, modern, progressive, or any of the characteristics tested, given a definite locality. It may be that an optimal score for sales effort and service is lower than the score of congeniality as displayed in Table III. It is the purpose of the differential to merely position an attribute on a scale of betterness or worseness--not to infer that any particular aspect is, in fact, better or worse.

What, then, can be said about specific qualities of the store as measured by this survey technique? The author feels that certain qualities lend themselves more readily to objective evaluation given the limitations mentioned above. For example, it can easily be stated that the store is rated as being uncluttered to a certain degree, but the optimality of this degree is unknown. Certain of the items, however, can be looked upon as being desirable for any department store such as the one studied. One such item is shown in the scale, "My kind of store--Not my kind of store." It represents the general over-all favorableness of the store. Results of this scale's rating are shown in Table IV.

In reference to this scale, it was not uncommon for a respondent from a lower socioeconomic class to exhibit an extreme left-hand bias on the semantic differential and yet record the store as being definitely not my kind of store. When questioned concerning this attitude, high prices were found to be characteristic of the store, were found to be the determinant. This fact tends to throw light on the entire differential as a function of buying habits. A discussion of this will be covered in the next chapter.

Some opposite tendencies to the one mentioned above were displayed by members of the lower socioeconomic group. That is, the respondent would check the store as definitely being her kind of store (give it a high ranking) but will still say the store was high priced. There are two possible reasons for this. The first could be due to the respondent's general image of all stores being high priced (image strengthened, perhaps by current news articles). The second possibility is that the respondent considered the store a very favorable place to shop--if she could afford it. This latter explanation would indicate a breakdown in the validity

he semantic differential but no such general tendency was experienced

TABLE IV

MEAN RESPONSES ON THE SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL FOR THE
SCALE "MY KIND OF STORE--NOT MY KIND OF STORE"
FOR HIGH AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS

	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>LOW</u>
EDUCATION		
Some or graduated college	3.3	2.5
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE		
Less than 3 years	3.7	2.5
3 - 9 years	3.5	2.5
10 - 19 years	2.5	3.4
20 years or more.	2.1	1.6
AGE		
34 years and younger.	3.2	3.3
35 - 49 years	3.1	3.2
50 - 64 years	2.8	2.2
65 and over	2.5	1.9
TOTAL SCORE FOR HIGH AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS.	2.9	2.7

In analyzing the scale of "High price--Budget priced" (omitted from factor scores) a close correlation was found between this factor and one mentioned above for people in the low socioeconomic group. That if the person viewed the store as being relatively budget priced, there was a tendency for that person to rate the store higher as being my kind of store, and vice versa. This fact seems to give weight to the importance of price for that group of respondents. No such tendencies were seen in the high socioeconomic sample. Table V is a summary of the mean scores for the scale "High priced--Budget priced." One can readily

that the lower group views the store as being more expensive than the higher group. This result was to be expected and undoubtedly is from the differences in income for the two groups and relativeness of price.

TABLE V

MEAN RESPONSES ON THE SEMANTIC DIFFERENTIAL
FOR THE SCALE "HIGH PRICED--BUDGET
PRICED" FOR HIGH AND LOW
SOCIOECONOMIC GROUPS

	<u>HIGH</u>	<u>LOW</u>
EDUCATION		
Some or graduated college	4.4	3.6
LENGTH OF RESIDENCE		
Less than 3 years	4.4	4.0
3 - 9 years	3.8	2.9
10 - 19 years	4.7	3.0
20 years or more	3.7	3.9
AGE		
34 years and younger	4.0	3.0
35 - 49 years	4.2	2.8
50 - 64 years	5.0	4.2
65 years and over	4.0	3.3
TOTAL SCORE FOR HIGH AND LOW SOCIOECONOMIC CLASS		
	4.3	3.5

This does not exhaust the knowledge that can be gained from this research although no further analysis will be made here of specific characteristics. A more detailed study of results would be expected on the part of the store's manager. In summary, it was found that "sales effort" and "store service" were the strongest factors (although no actual factor

ysis in the strict sense was performed), indicating that respondents rated them more favorably than the other factors. "Merchandise" was rated as being the second strongest factor with "congeniality" ranking third. Above all, it was found that members of homogeneous groups based on socioeconomic characteristics react similarly to the store's image, and the attitudes of these groups toward the store in question differ according to whether they are high or low socioeconomic class.

The next chapter will be a discussion of some general aspects affecting the study not covered thus far, as well as an evaluation of the findings.

CHAPTER VI

MARKETING AND RESEARCH IMPLICATIONS

In addition to the conclusions relative to the hypothesis already discussed, it might be interesting to point up other aspects of the study. First of all, any conclusions drawn about the data presented should not be extended indiscriminately beyond types of conditions that prevailed herein. It is hoped that those conclusions may have implications for other situations. Such extended interpretations, however, should be made only with caution. Conclusions herein are made only in light of the acts conducted and the possible limitations of the study.

In drawing inferences from results, one needs to take into account the properties of the measuring instrument used and to consider carefully the relevance of the measure to the particular objective. Although several writers on the subject of the semantic differential have pointed out weaknesses over time, the instrument is still being used extensively in the field of psychology. The fact that one word may have various meanings to different people or that the word's position as opposite may not be unique (two commonly argued points) does not refute the idea behind the semantic differential. One would speculate whether even those who find conflict in a semantic differential concerning the validity of this tool should go so far as to discredit its basic and rather rough indicative abilities. This fact merely points to the need of further research.

The indicative ability of the semantic differential can benefit a

il establishment such as the one reported here. What is hoped to be ned by this analysis is basically the answer to two questions: "To does the store currently appeal?" and "To whom should the store appeal in the future?" Answers to these questions are important for the simple on they tend to keep the customer viewpoint in mind and enable the ilder to better plan his marketing strategy. This customer viewpoint not be based upon merchandising facts, but it is what the customer ks that determines buying attitudes and habits. Therefore, as mentio er, it is important that the retailer at least attempt, to the best ability, to align the image of his store to that of his customers.

To overcome this difficulty, a multistage research design is suggest first stage would include analysis of factors similar to the one re- ed here. It is also possible that two or three competitive stores d be analyzed along with the store in question and the results placed a scale to show the relative position of each. This would result, for second stage, in a more systematic choice of attitude dimensions whic d be most pertinent to the populations and product categories under estigation. Areas of special interest could be defined and investiga a carried out in a more sophisticated manner. This research will be essful to the degree that it increases customer participation within store. Indeed, this is the ultimate test of all such research.

This leads to another interesting question. Can the technique de- ibed here reflect the buying habits of consumers? A common criticism attitude scales of all types could be that they do not allow us to pre t actual behavior in real-life situations. But like most such argumen s one is not well founded. Most proponents of attitude measurement e agreed that attitude scores indicate only a disposition toward certa

uses of behaviors broadly defined, and that overt response in real-life situations depends also upon the context provided by that situation. One may say, for example, that a person with an extremely unfavorable attitude toward a store may be expected to exhibit negative responses toward that store (infrequent shopping habits, downgrading it to friends, etc.), but the person does not anticipate ill effects from such an attitude. It can be said that attitudinal disposition itself provides for only part of the information needed for prediction, although perhaps the dominant part. A fuller understanding can be obtained, and prediction presumably improved, by noting individual profiles and the relationship of various responses to each other. For example, one subject may rate the store as favorable, but also as cluttered and being low class; another subject may rate the store as equally unfavorable, but also as uncluttered and high class. It seems likely that the former subject would behave differently in real-life situations than the latter. Therefore, it is not true that the same attitude automatically implies the same behaviors. This should be noted in the profiles where both classes share a common point on a particular scale.

Obviously, store image is not the sole determinant of patronage. There are many other factors involved, but fitting the store to the consumer's value system cannot be viewed as unprofitable effort. It is within this aspect that the study of store image has a decided role to play. One should do more than merely concentrate on the various factors that influence what people buy. Basically there are four stages: (1) Research, (2) Policy formulation, (3) Implementation and (4) Review. In practice, of

¹Osgood, et al, pp. 198-99.

These, experienced retailers find no difficulty in following policies which are at least highly consistent--as, indeed, it is not too difficult for a small store policy to be. The problem is in most cases, however, not so simple; not only is it impossible to judge, upon instinct, what particular line of policy is likely to be most profitable, but it is equally possible to guess quite what forms of activity will fit in with a given line of policy. It is in this area that the methods and concepts described in this paper can serve to provide the necessary background not only for making policy decisions but also as a frame of reference for more detailed study.

Unlike most present research instruments in the social sciences, the semantic differential is amenable to standardized application in studies of store image. Furthermore, such material can be assembled without special projects or great expense if the investigators using this instrument expend their efforts only slightly. The author proposes, however, that interpretations of results obtained thereby should be made with full knowledge of its possible arbitrary and artificial character.

CHAPTER VII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The basic research in this paper concerns image as it applies to the mail store. The primary inquiry is centered around the extent to which individuals of high and low socioeconomic class differ as to their perception of a particular store's image. The study described tends to support a tentative hypothesis that there is a significant difference between low and high socioeconomic groups and the image they have of a store. Another objective associated with the paper concerns the derivation and analysis of image profiles as they relate to the store in question.

Significant differences were found to exist between the two classes rather than make reference to the possible psychological implications, emphasis was placed upon the demographic aspects used as variables to predict patterns in attitudes held by each group. It was found that generally the lower socioeconomic group held a more favorable attitude of the store. The least favorable attitudes were held by those members of the high socioeconomic class having college degrees and a limited term of residence in the community. No significant difference in attitude was found to exist between members of the two classes with a period of residence exceeding twenty years. The most likely explanations offered for this latter finding were the convergence of community attitudes over time--independent of class differences--and the similarity of convictions based upon the past history of the store.

With regard to specific qualities of the store, those dealing with products and service seemed to be its most dominant and worthy aspects. Cleanliness, neatness, and courtesy appeared to be especially pronounced. Despite overall low rankings (i.e., unfavorableness) of factor scores, there was exhibited a hesitancy to rate the store high on the critical scale. "My kind of store--Not my kind of store." Among the possible explanations for this occurrence, high prices, lack of excitement, and poor selection could be likely avenues of investigation. One cannot for long remain unaware, however, of the multiplicity of image-determining factors that affect a particular store. Conscious efforts to decipher these factors very quickly lead to frustration. In fact, it is not uncommon for men to exaggerate the complexities of human behavior. There is reason to believe that, although the total variability in behavior may be very great, the large majority of external responses by the great majority of people will follow a few broad paths that can be well delimited. Measurement, then, should not entail the prediction of individual actions; instead, it involves simply the detection, understanding and measurement of basic regularities and patterns.

The differential here presented was designed to do nothing more. It is a simple technique to apply and has the advantage of yielding an indication of both the direction and the intensity of attitude. Furthermore, differential profiles serve as useful directional indicators for further and more intensive investigation using many of the qualitative projective techniques. This information can be very useful in spotting major strengths, weaknesses and consistencies of the store as well as offering suggestions for corrective action.

Indeed, a store's image is an intangible product, an abstraction

he human mind, defying precise measurement. And, although the possibility of error confronts a project such as the one reported here, the results of this research may well warrant the consideration of management serving the public that sustains it.

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APPENDIX B

DIRECTIONS

Each of the items on the questionnaire is composed of two opposite words and a seven point scale between them.

For example:

Good _____ Bad

The spaces between these words represent degrees of feeling to be used by you in describing Katz Store, 7th and Main, in Stillwater. That is, if you feel the store is very good you would mark the space closest to the word "Good" or if you feel the store is very bad you would mark the space closest to the word "Bad." Between these two extremes are other degrees becoming less extreme as the middle position is approached. Look at BOTH words in each pair. Then mark (X) the space that, TO YOU, best describes Katz Store.

Some of the items may seem to have little relation to the store, so think about each one and give your answer. Judge each item by yourself.

Please mark the items as fast as you can. Record your first impression. Be sure to mark a space for each of the items listed.

APPENDIX C

FACTUAL QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN SURVEY

PLEASE FILL OUT THE FACTUAL QUESTIONNAIRE. THIS INFORMATION IS ONLY NEEDED IN ORDER TO DESCRIBE GENERALLY THE SUBJECTS OF THIS SURVEY AND WILL NOT BE ASSOCIATED WITH YOU PERSONALLY. PLEASE KNOW THAT YOUR NAME IS NOT REQUIRED.

State the number of your children in each age group:

under 2	2 to 5	6 to 11	12 to 17	over 17

What is your total family income? (before taxes)

Please check one

- Less than \$3,000 _____
- \$3,000 - \$4,999 _____
- \$5,000 - \$7,999 _____
- \$8,000 - \$9,999 _____
- \$10,000 - \$14,000 _____
- \$15,000 and over _____

Indicate the amount of formal education you've completed by checking one of the following:

- Grade school or less _____
- Some high school _____
- Graduated high school _____
- Some college _____
- Graduated college _____

How long have you lived in Stillwater? _____

VITA

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