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Labeling OF READY-MADE STREET DRESSES

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION

Summary

This bulletin reports consumers' interest in and use of label information on ready-made street dresses, the availability of such information and industry practices in the provision of labels. The data were obtained in 1956-57 by interviews with 992 urban women who bought ready-made dresses in the year previous to the interviews. Half of the schedules were obtained in Dallas and equal numbers of the remainder from each of four smaller cities. These were Plainview, Terrell, Nacogdoches and Kingsville. Managers of retail stores where the women purchased their dresses were interviewed and information on dresses in the stores also was obtained. Dress and fabric manufacturers were interviewed in the spring of 1958.

Most of the women interviewed looked for labels when purchasing dresses; more than half made this a usual practice. Only one-fifth indicated they paid little or no attention to labels.

Those who sought label information when buying also made good use of the information they found. There were indications that they would make better use of information if more were available to them on labels.

Eighty-nine percent of the women preferred to get information about dresses at the time of purchase from either the label only (49 percent) or both label and salesperson (40 percent). Eleven percent preferred to get information from only the salesperson.

Sewn labels on dresses in stores provided little information except brand name (57 percent) and size (61 percent). Hang-tag labels provided most of the available information, yet less than half of the dresses had information on whether to dry-clean or wash and only one-fourth had washing instructions. These two items of information were used by the largest number of women. Less than one-third of the dresses had most of the information that the women were interested in and using.

Labels on dresses costing under $20 provided more of the needed information than dresses costing $20 or more.

Both retailers and manufacturers emphasized the importance of label information concerning fiber content and care instructions and the use of this information by consumers.

Changes in fibers and fabrics are made rapidly and the consumer needs specific information on each dress or fabric she buys to care for the fabric properly. The development of new synthetic fibers and blends and the application of new finishes make new kinds of information necessary for the consumer. Fiber content alone is not sufficient information to enable her to care for a fabric.

Dress manufacturers were aware of the profusion of labels and the lack of specific usable information. They recognized the need for brief, clearly stated, reliable instructions for care of fabrics to have satisfied consumers and a minimum of returned merchandise. They favored the elimination of extravagant claims for care or performance features. They also favored fewer labels and less advertising.

The responsibility for effective labeling lies with several groups: (1) with fiber and fabric manufacturers and suppliers for providing specific and clear instructions for the use and care of their fibers and fabrics; (2) with dress manufacturers for obtaining good labels and attaching them to all dresses; (3) with retailers for retaining these labels on dresses so the consumer can read and use the information for each dress she buys; and (4) with consumers for requesting labels with specific information and for using properly the information and instructions on them. Women need to recognize that they must ask consistently for information and that it can be provided.

Labeling of Ready-made Street Dresses

Phyllis Drake and Mary Anna Grimes*

NEW DEVELOPMENTS IN FIBERS AND FINISHES are rapid and most consumers are confronted with the problem of keeping abreast of the changes in textiles and clothing. Problems in the purchase and care of ready-made garments have increased rapidly in recent years. The many new synthetic fibers being used in addition to the familiar manmade and natural fibers, the growing practice of blending two or more fibers within a fabric and the application of new finishes have made the need for a knowledge of care and performance features greater than ever before. This knowledge is particularly necessary for fabrics used in women's street dresses where blends of fibers and new finishes are most common and where changes are most rapid.

Labels on garments are an effective means of conveying needed information to the consumer at the time she needs it. Complaints and dissatisfactions with garments often are caused by a lack of information that could be provided by an adequate label, or by the consumer's failure to read the label and follow recommendations for use and care of the article. Some garments enter the retail store with little or no information on labels other than a brand name. Labels often are removed or lost before garments reach the consumer. Some retail stores remove most or all labels upon receipt of merchandise or they request manufacturers not to attach labels. Retailers, dress manufacturers and fabric suppliers, as well as consumers, are concerned with these problems because of the complexities in the manufacture and retailing of dresses. There are necessarily interrelations and interdependence among all of these groups if satisfaction in the use of ready-made dresses is to be attained and economic waste minimized.

This study reveals the extent to which labels provide information needed by consumers and the extent to which this information is used; it presents some of the attitudes and problems of manufacturers in regard to labels. Some related information pertaining to consumer buying practices also is given.

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Plan of Study

Data were obtained by interviews with 992 urban women in the fall, winter and spring seasons of 1956-57. Approximately half of the schedules were obtained in Dallas; the remainder were distributed about equally among four cities with populations of 10,000 to 25,000. Plainvew, Terrell, Nacogdoches and Kingsville were selected randomly from varied geographical areas to learn if there were differences in consumer opinions and practices because of climate and economic factors. The sample within each of the five cities was selected randomly from city directories.

Clothing inventory and related studies have revealed more similarities than differences in the clothing practices of rural and urban families. Since it was reasonable to expect similarities in attitudes of rural and urban women toward labels and in their use of them, this study was confined to urban women to facilitate sampling and interviewing.

Contents

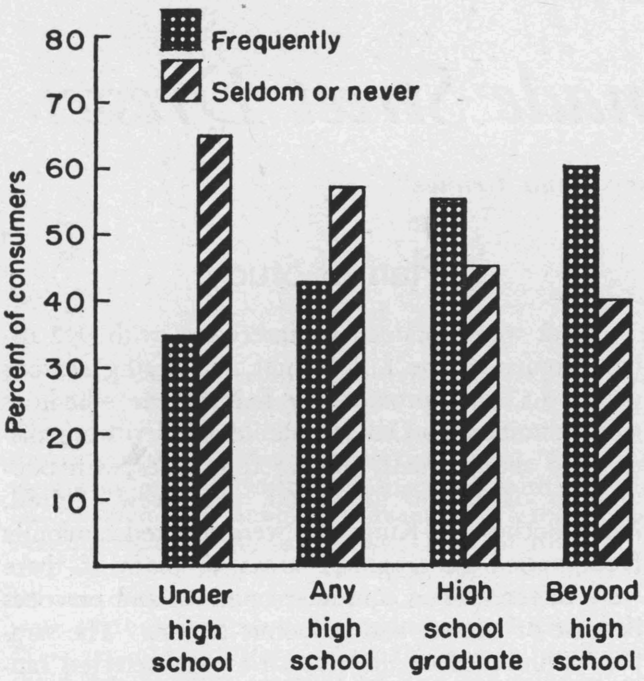


Figure 1. Frequency of looking or asking for labels according to education.

Only women who had purchased at least one street-type dress during the preceding year were interviewed. The definition of a street dress was broad and included most dresses that customarily would be worn for such occasions as shopping, club meetings, church or informal social events. Two-piece dresses and costumes or coordinates were included, but lined suits, cocktail, evening and patio-type dresses were not.

Managers of retail stores where the women purchased most of the dresses they reported buying also were interviewed at the time of the consumer interviews and label information on dresses in stock was recorded. Selected dress manaufacturers in Dallas, Houston and Nacogdoches and one fabric manufacturer contributed information relating to the provision of labels.

Awareness of Labels and Use of Information

Frequency of Looking for Labels

Most of the women interviewed looked for a label of some kind on dresses they purchased. Fifty-three percent always or usually looked for labels and 27 percent sometimes or occasionally looked. Only one-fifth indicated they gave little or no attention to labels. No distinction was made in this question as to whether the label was sewn or hang-tag. Sewn labels, usually attached to the neckline of dresses, are more permanent and most often carry a brand name with little or no other information. Hang-tags may give more detailed information about fiber content, care and performance features of the fabric, as well as advertising.

The proportion of women looking or asking for labels at the time of purchase increased markedly as the level of education increased, Figure 1. Those with more education no doubt more often read for information.

The relationship of the women's educational level and family income is shown in Figure 2. Education and income usually are associated closely. These two factors had a similar relationship to the women's awareness of labels as they also looked for labels more often as income increased.

Women in the lowest (under 30) and the highest (50 and over) age groups looked for labels less often than those in the two intermediate age groups of 30 to 39 and 40 to 49, Figure 3.

The frequency with which women in the various occupational groups looked for labels was similar. Homemakers with no paid employment outside the home and women in professional, clerical,

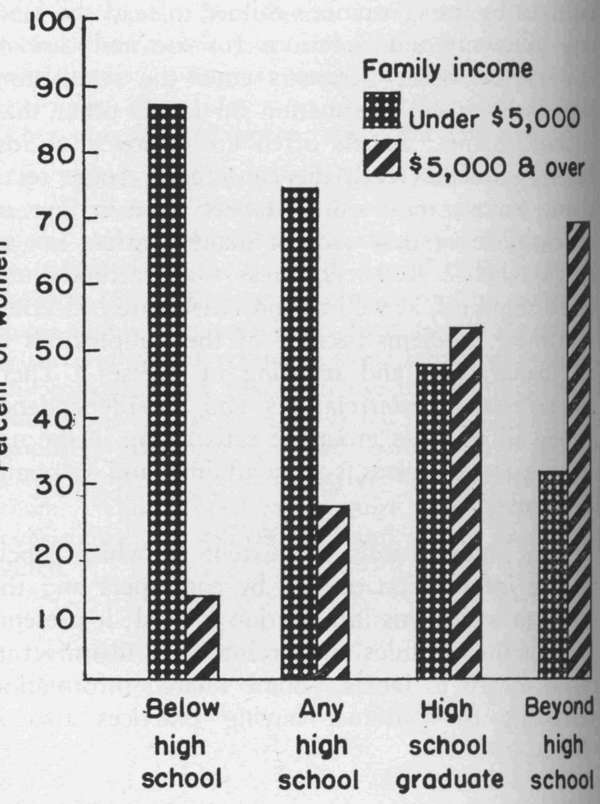


Figure 2. Relation of annual family income and education of respondent.

sales and business occupations looked for labels most frequently. Women in the skilled and unskilled groups looked for labels less frequently. These women often wear uniforms or inexpensive dresses which are more like house dresses than street dresses. Mothers were very conscious of labels in children's wear and in men's wear and for this reason may have looked also for dress labels which would give information about fabric and care. The desire was expressed for more specific information in all garments, especially regarding care.

Women buying dresses costing $20 or more looked for labels more frequently than those buying dresses costing less than $20. Their needs, however, were not being met as well in the higher price ranges as in the lower. In the stores, there was more usable information on dresses costing less than $20.

Women who made a practice of seeking labels often saved them for future reference. Their comments indicated they found it practical to save hangtags so they could refer to cleaning or washing instructions until a dress had been laundered or dry-cleaned at least once or twice.

Information Found Most Helpful

That the women were using much of the information available on labels is shown in Table 1. Consumers are concerned whether garments can be washed or must be dry-cleaned, and 82 percent found this information on labels helpful. Some make a practice of dry-cleaning all dresses except perhaps everyday cottons but many prefer to launder at home any dresses that will retain an attractive appearance with reasonably careful home laundering.

The instructions for laundering were used by 67 percent of the women. Washing instructions may include such things as whether to machine or hand wash, how to drip-dry, use of bleach, whether to machine-dry, whether to avoid wringing or twisting, temperature of water, kind of detergent to use, directions for pressing with steam or dry iron and ironing temperature to use. Labels do not always give complete information about laundering.

Almost half of the women used information on fiber content. Their interest in fiber was related to care of the fabric. Their comments indicated that if they knew what the fabric was made of, they had a better idea of how to care for it and, if launderable, what methods to use. They also believed that the dry-cleaners could do a better job if they knew

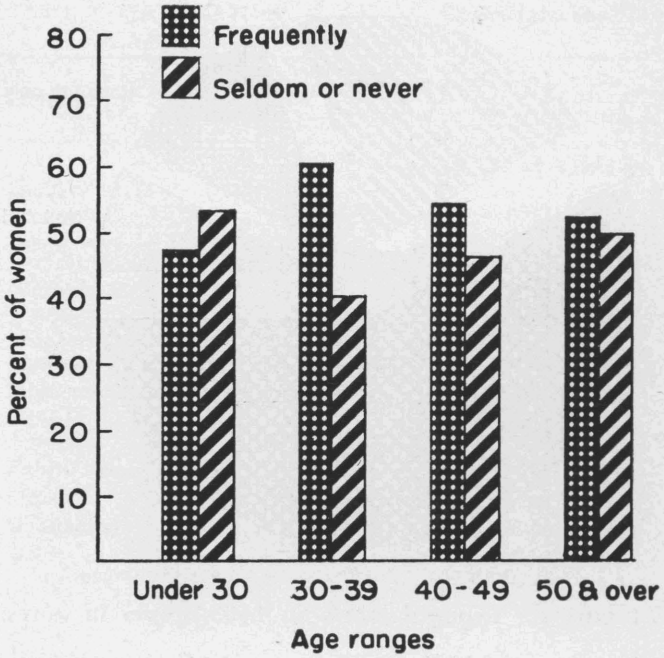


Figure 3. Frequency of looking for labels according to age.

the fiber content. Many thought there would be distinct cleaning advantages if the fiber content were put on the garment on a permanent sewn-in label. The rapid development of new fibers, each with distinct characteristics and properties, and of new finishes and methods of applying them make it essential that specific information about cleaning and washing procedures be provided with each ready-made garment or piece of fabric if the purchaser is to know what methods of care to use. Such things as temperatures for washing, drying and ironing, and the use of bleach may affect fibers and finishes in different and sometimes adverse ways.

The brand name was helpful to 22 percent of the women. They liked to find a brand of dress that generally provided them becoming styles or interesting fabrics or was usually cut along lines that met their particular fitting problems. Some brands

TABLE 1. LABEL INFORMATION CONSIDERED MOST HELPFUL

Information	Percent of women using
Care (dry clean or wash)	82
Washing instructions	67
Fiber content	44
Brand	22
Shrinkage	20
Size	17
Colorfastness	16
Finish	9
Manufacturer's name	7
Miscellaneous	7

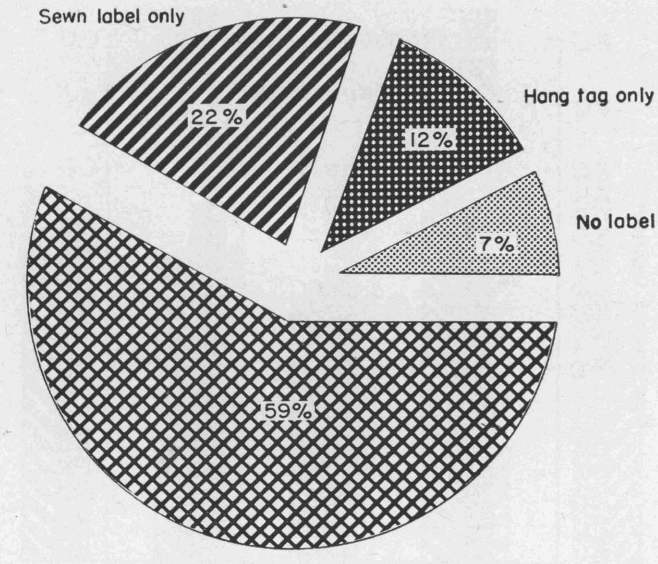


Figure 4. Types of labels on 4,603 dresses in stores.

may be made in half sizes or diminutives or have extra length in the waist.

Fewer women indicated that shrinkage, colorfastness, size and finish were helpful. The low percentage of women (only 9 percent) who said finish was helpful may be due largely to a general lack of knowledge of textile terms and facts. They were enthusiastic about wrinkle resistant fabrics but appeared to have little real knowledge of finishes and what they contributed to performance of fabrics. Finishes other than starch have been used only in recent years and consumers may not be as familiar with these new terms and processes and their application to fabrics as they are with shrinkage and colorfastness.

TABLE 2. INFORMATION ON SEWN LABELS ON 4,538 DRESSES IN STORES

Information	Dresses with information		Price of dresses			
			Under $20		$20 and over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Number of dresses	4,538		3,366		1,172	
Brand	2,594	57	1,919	57	675	58
Size	2,740	60	2,370	70	370	32
Dry-clean or wash	23	[1]	17	[1]	6	[1]
Iron temperature	32	[1]	15	[1]	17	1
Fiber name	251	6	195	6	56	5
Fiber percent	92	2	58	2	34	3
Fabric name	19	[1]	12	[1]	7	[1]
Manufacturer's name	136	3	84	2	52	4
Store name	287	6	61	2	226	19

[1]Less than 1 percent.

Availability of Information on Dresses

Labels on Dresses in Stores

Of the dresses observed in the retail stores, only seven percent were found without labels of some kind, Figure 4. Dresses were selected at random for examination of label information from representative price and size ranges. The specific items of information that could be found on the labels were then recorded. There was a profusion of labels but relatively little information of real value in using and caring for the garments.

Brand and size were found on sewn labels on less than two-thirds of the dresses, Table 2; other information was negligible. Fiber name and store name were given for 6 percent. When present, the store name was usually on dresses costing $20 or over. Whether to dry-clean or wash, which the women found important, was on less than one percent of sewn labels.

Although much information was available on hang-tags, Table 3, relatively few dresses had most of the information which women were interested in; the information available was found most frequently on the less expensive dresses. Labels on costlier dresses provided little information about care and performance features of the fabric.

Instructions to dry-clean or wash were on less than one-half of the dresses; 82 percent of the women found this information helpful. Only one-fourth of the dresses had washing instructions for garments that could be laundered, yet two-thirds of the women had found these instructions helpful.

Information on fiber content perhaps more often met consumer's needs as it was on 55 percent of the dresses; 38 percent included percent of the fiber or fibers as well as the name of the fiber. Fiber content information was found more frequently on the dresses costing over $20 than was other information.

The information about finish on 30 percent of the dresses most often pertained to wrinkle resistance or "wrinkle shed."

Shrinkage information was on 18 percent of dresses and used by 20 percent of the women; colorfastness information was on only 8 percent and was used by 16 percent. Brand and manufacturer's name were found frequently on hang-tags, but brand was more often on sewn labels. Construction features were given on very few dresses, but a few labels did call attention to such features as waistline seams that could be let out for added length in the bodice.

Information that was clearly misleading was found on less than 1 percent. However, there was one other distinct problem. Too many labels were "wordy." Some were all advertising and excluded information about care or performance of the fabric or garment. Many labels did not state clearly and accurately the information most desired and needed by the purchaser. Often there were such statements as "dry-clean or wash" with perhaps some washing instructions, followed by the statement "for best results, dry-clean." Such statements on labels are confusing and not very helpful.

Views of Retailers and Manufacturers

One of the complaints of both retail store managers and dress manufacturers was that carefully selected fabrics too often were not cared for properly by the consumer. Iron temperatures that were too hot and improper use of bleach were mentioned frequently as being leading causes of damage to fabrics which resulted in customer complaints and returns of merchandise. Dress manufacturers agreed that care instructions (whether to dry-clean or to wash, and washing instructions), fiber content, iron temperature and directions for use of bleach were important on labels. The women were less concerned about iron temperature and use of bleach than were the manufacturers. This is an area of fabric care that the average consumer needs more information about. Manufacturers attached less importance to such information as shrinkage, colorfastness and finish in which the women were interested.

Hang-tag information considered important by one fabric manufacturer was fiber content and washing instructions including drip-drying. Instructions for washing were considered especially important for fabrics having the new finishes. This mill made only washable fabrics. This manufacturer thought it was particularly important to have the iron temperature given for blends of dacron since the mill received some complaints about fabrics damaged by the use of too high temperatures in ironing. The management of this mill favored the use by dress manufacturers of hang-tags giving explicit instructions for care because this practice seemed to result in fewer complaints and returns.

Hang-tag labels are provided the dress manufacturer by the converter or mill from which he purchases fabrics. Fabric manufacturers and converters are in the best position to know how fabrics should be used and cared for and to supply specific information about fiber content and care instructions since they know what fibers and finishes are used in a fabric. The labels may have to be requested by the manufacturer but usually are supplied voluntarily with each fabric shipment. The converter or mill bears the expense of these tags.

TABLE 3. INFORMATION ON HANG-TAG LABELS ON 4,538 DRESSES IN STORES

Information	Dresses with information		Price of dresses			
			Under $20		$20 and over	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Number of dresses	4,538		3,366		1,172	
Dry-clean or wash	2,036	45	1,825	54	211	18
Washing instructions	1,123	25	1,026	30	97	8
Iron temperature	983	22	867	26	116	10
Fiber name	2,481	55	1,849	55	632	54
Fiber percent	1,702	38	1,215	36	487	42
Fabric name	702	15	508	15	194	16
Finish	1,340	30	1,209	36	131	11
Shrinkage	798	18	768	23	30	2
Colorfastness	364	8	349	10	15	1
Brand	2,190	48	1,834	54	356	30
Manufacturer's name	1,564	34	1,376	41	188	16
Construction	135	3	103	3	32	3
Misleading information	25	[1]	23	[1]	2	[1]

[1]Less than 1 percent.

Sewn labels usually are stitched in the neckline when this seam is finished and before the waistline seam is made. They may be sewn by hand on expensive dresses. Hang-tags are attached after the final inspection of finished dresses and prior to shipping. Dress manufacturers and the one fabric manufacturer considered the expense of providing labels not excessive and well worth what it cost.

Six of the 67 store managers indicated that they usually removed all labels that came on dresses and replaced them with their own. Another eight said they sometimes did. Among these were managers of both large and small stores. Some preferred to attach sewn labels with the name of the store. Some replaced hang-tags with small uniform tags giving a minimum of information such as size, price, lot or stock numbers and perhaps fiber content. Several indicated that hang-tags attached by dress manufacturers resulted in an undesirable cluttered appearance when their stock was displayed. On the other hand, several manufacturers said they made a special effort to attach hang-tags in a uniform manner, as inconspicuously as possible and to use a minimum number of tags that would give the consumer the information she needed. Manufacturers shipped dresses without hang-tags attached when requested to by their customers (the retailers). Thus, there are many factors which prevent either the provision or retention of labels on ready-made dresses until they reach the consumer.

Seventy-nine percent of the retail store managers considered their stocks of street dresses to be labeled adequately. Data obtained from dresses in the stores do not show this to be the case. Of those who thought they were not labeled as well as they could be, half thought fiber content was most lacking. A few thought there were not sufficient instructions about washing.

More than two-thirds of the retailers used label information in various ways to sell dresses. They believed consumers wanted information from labels, particularly for fabric care, so they left the labels on the dresses. They believed their customers relied on label information. One-fourth made an effort to call their customer's attention to label information. Almost as many made use of the brand name in selling.

When asked what use they thought their customers made of labels, nearly two-thirds of the retailers believed consumers made good use of information and emphasized their use of care (to dry-clean or to wash) and washing instructions. Nine

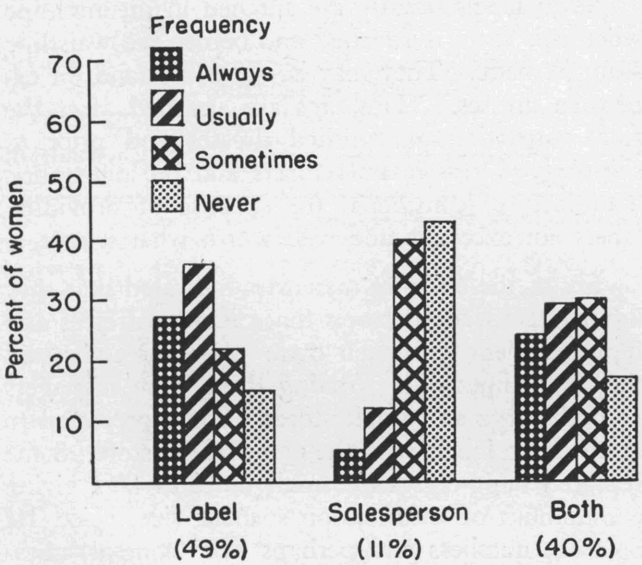


Figure 5. Relation of preferred source of information about dress and frequency of looking for labels.

TABLE 4. REASONS FOR PREFERRING INFORMATION FROM LABEL, SALESPERSON OR BOTH

Reasons for preferring	Source of information: Label	Salesperson	Both
	— — — Percent — — —		
Probably more reliable source	65		16
Like to see it myself	22		10
Can save tag to refer to later	9		3
Saves time	2		1
Easier to ask salesperson		34	3
Salesperson may know or give more information		31	18
Salesperson may give firsthand or other information		28	14
More information if from both			31
Other reasons	2	7	4
Total	100	100	100

percent thought their customers wanted fiber content information, and 13 percent indicated customer interest in favorite or preferred brands. Seventeen percent thought their customers paid little or no attention to labels. This is in close agreement with the one-fifth of the women who said they gave little or no attention to labels.

Information Women Considered Desirable

Toward the end of the interview the women were asked what information they would like to have in both sewn and hang-tag labels. Their answers were influenced by previous discussion to the extent that they had some ideas as to what type of information could be included on labels. They concluded that on sewn labels desirable information would be (1) the source of the dress such as brand, manufacturer's name or name of store which could be relied on to supply a satisfactory dress at a future time or to make good if the dress proved defective; (2) information as to whether the dress should be dry-cleaned or washed; (3) fiber content; and (4) the size placed so it could be found readily. The brand name and the size were on 57 and 61 percent, respectively, of the dresses in the stores.

Information considered desirable to have on hang-tag labels was more varied: to dry-clean or wash (65 percent); laundering instructions (90 percent); ironing temperature (80 percent); fiber content (67 percent); colorfastness (81 percent); shrinkage (80 percent); and finish (67 percent). Their interest in instructions to dry-clean or wash on hang-tags depended on whether this information would be included on the sewn label. There is an advantage in having this particular information on a permanent label on the garment. The largest number of women desired laundering instructions which is consistent with the use they were making of this information. They placed more emphasis on iron temperature, colorfastness, shrinkage and finish. Many of the women reported having used a too-hot iron on some fabric and puckering or melting it. There were some complaints about colors fading, especially blues.

Sources of Information about Clothing and Textiles

Preferred Source at Time of Purchase

Several sources of information about fabrics, performance features and styles are available to consumers. Labels and salespeople are the principal sources for information about dresses at the time of purchase. Articles in magazines or newspapers, advertising by various media, courses in clothing or textiles, personal experience or opinions of other people may be sources of more general information.

Almost one-half (49 percent) of the women preferred to get information about a dress at the time of purchase from the label and only 11 percent from the salesperson. Forty percent preferred information from both label and salesperson.

Their reasons for preferring labels related primarily to the reliability of printed information backed up by the manufacturer, Table 4. Convenience and the personal element were important to those preferring to get information from the salesperson. Varied reasons were given for preferring information from both, but it generally was felt that more information was available if it came from the two sources.

Their preferences for these sources were related to their frequency of looking for labels, Figure 5. Those more often looking for labels preferred labels or both label and salesperson as a source of information. Those depending on the salesperson for information were the ones who infrequently or never looked for labels. Women with education below high school preferred labels less frequently and depended on the salesperson more frequently than did those with more education, Figure 6.

Sources of General Information

The women reported frequent use of various sources of general information about clothing and textiles. Seventy-four percent used articles in magazines and newspapers; 28 percent had courses in clothing or textiles, mainly in high school or college; 76 percent learned about clothing and textiles from advertising of various kinds. Practically all (94 percent) learned from their own experience and 80 percent from talking with other people.

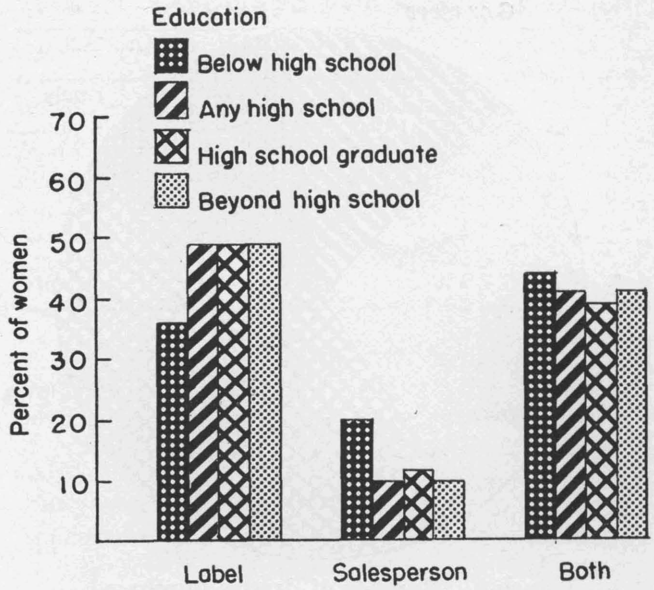


Figure 6. Preferred source of information according to education.

Those who never looked for labels when purchasing used fewer sources of general information than those who looked for labels. This suggests that consumer education programs might make greater use of these and other media in educating consumers in the advantages, to them as well as to retailers and manufacturers, of finding and using the information now available on labels and demanding greater availability of needed information.

At all educational levels, they tended to use their own experience more than the other sources, Figure 7. Those with education below high school

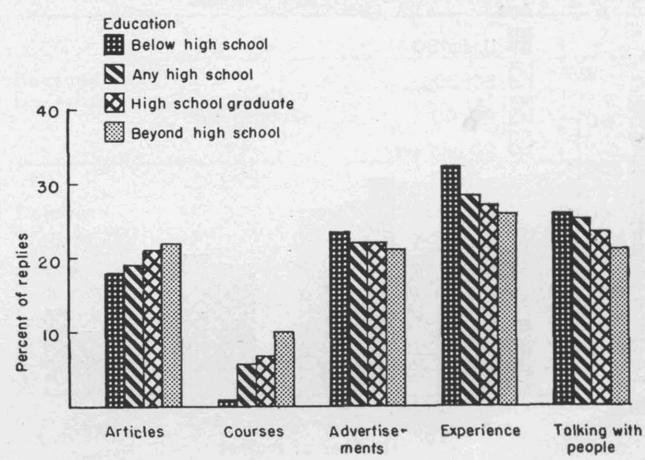


Figure 7. Sources of general information according to educational level.

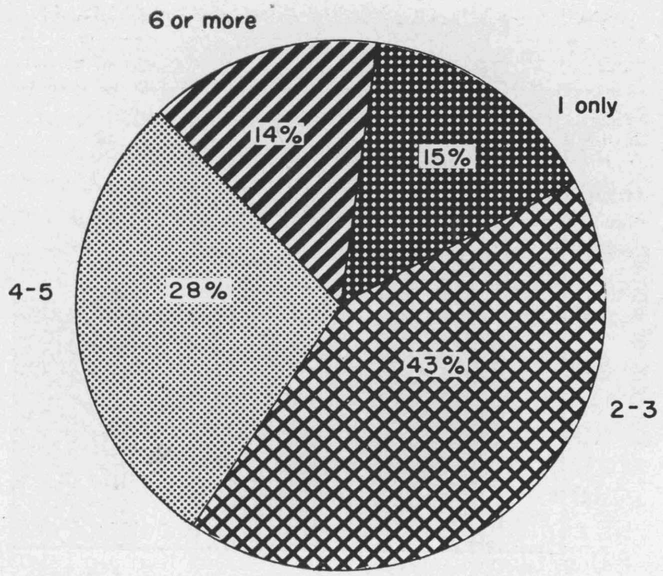


Figure 8. Number of dresses purchased.

used experience the most, apparently learning by trial and error. Learning by talking with others was used next most often by this group. The proportions who had courses of some kind in clothing and textiles were greater as the educational level rose. All educational groups used articles and advertising of various kinds about equally.

Buying Practices of the Women

Number of Dresses Purchased

Women often are credited with buying more dresses annually than they actually buy. The data show that 15 percent bought one and 43 percent bought two or three dresses, Figure 8. This means that more than one-half (58 percent) bought not over three dresses. Twenty-eight percent bought four or five and 14 percent bought six or more. Included in this was one percent who bought ten or more dresses. The average number purchased was 3.45. This number was about the same as in a clothing inventory study[1] in Birmingham, Alabama, but was about 1.5 more dresses than in northern counties and cities in the same study.

There were surprisingly small differences by age in the number purchased, Figure 9. There was a trend for those under 40 more often to buy two or three dresses and those 40 and over more frequently to buy six or more. In all age group, few (between 10 and 20 percent) bought only one dress or more than five. Forty to 47 percent in all ages bought two or three and 25 to 30 percent bought four or five.

Money available to spend for clothing appeared to be a decisive factor influencing the number of dresses purchased, Figure 10. There were distinct differences in the number purchased by women with incomes under $5,000 and those $5,000 and over. Those under $5,000 more frequently bought one, two or three dresses. With higher incomes, they more often bought four or more. In general, the number of dresses was in direct ratio to income—women with lower incomes bought fewer dresses and as incomes rose they bought more.

Approximately one-fourth of the women were in each of the four age groups under 30, 30 to 39, 40 to 49 and 50 and over. The relation of income and age is shown in Figure 11. Those under 30, or 50 and over, accounted for most of the 13 percent who had incomes under $3,000. The varia-

[1]Family Clothing Inventories and Purchases, Agricultural Information Bulletin No. 148, U. S. Department of Agriculture.

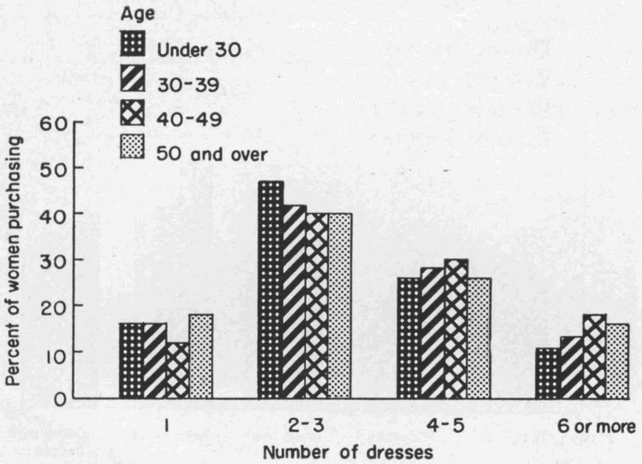


Figure 9. Proportion of women by age who bought the indicated number of dresses.

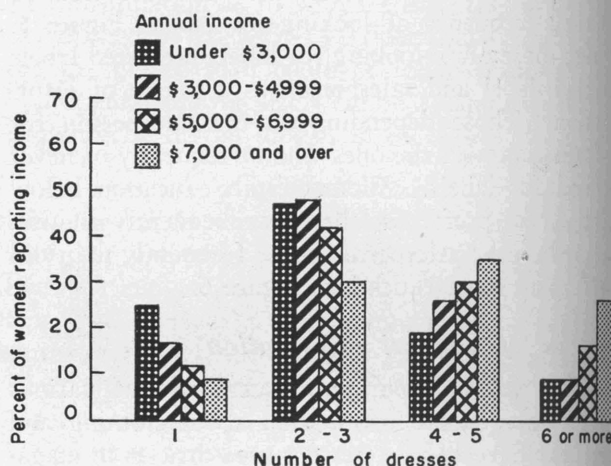


Figure 10. Proportion of women by income who bought the indicated number of dresses.

tions in income leveled off at age 40 and over. The incomes of 13 percent were under $3,000; 35 percent were $3,000 to $4,999 and 31 percent were $5,000 to $6,999. Twenty-one percent had incomes of $7,000 or over.

Fiber Content

The fiber content of the dresses purchased during the year was determined insofar as possible by subjective means — that is, by observation or by known label information. Some fabrics were identified readily by either the person interviewed or the interviewer. Often the respondent had labels from the dress or remembered what fiber the label had indicated. It was felt that fiber content was fairly accurately determined according to the classification in Table 5 with the possible exception of the wool, silk or linen blends. Fabrics of all or nearly all one fiber were more readily identifiable by observation or feel. Many of the synthetics and blends of synthetics so closely resemble natural fibers that it would be difficult for experts to identify them accurately without laboratory means.

Cotton led in popularity with more than one-half of the dresses made either of cotton or blends of cotton as might be expected in Texas' generally mild climate. Wool, of which only 6 percent of the dresses were made, would doubtless claim a much larger proportion in a clothing inventory study including suits, sweaters, skirts and coats which account for much more wool fiber than dresses. Wool dresses are often too warm in the mild climate prevailing in much of Texas. Also, women are much interested in washable fabrics and many of the synthetics provide washability as well as warmth. The development of washable characteristics for wool or wool blends may increase the demand for wool dresses.

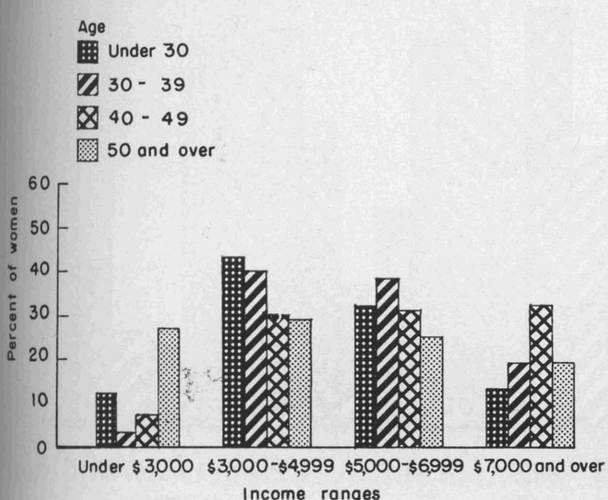


Figure 11. **Relation of annual family income and age of respondent.**

TABLE 5. FIBER CONTENT OF DRESSES PURCHASED

Fiber	Percent of dresses
Cotton	41
Cotton blends	14
Wool	6
Silk or linen	11
Wool, silk, linen blends	4
Manmade fibers or blends of manmade fibers	24
Total	100

Cotton was preferred primarily because of washability and comfort, Table 6. Appearance and washability were important in the choice of cotton blends. Appearance also was important in the preference for silk and linen while both comfort and appearance determined preferences for wool. Serviceability and durability were considered important in the choice of most fibers.

Dress manufacturers indicated that cotton was the fiber most widely used by them with the manmade fibers next. Many acetates, silks and wools were used. Although much of their market is Texas and the Southwest region, most of the manufacturers contacted also have national distribution where dresses of heavier and warmer fabrics are in demand. About 80 percent of all the fabrics made by the one mill were cotton and the only blends were with dacron.

Cost of Dresses Purchased

Nearly one-half of the dresses purchased by the women cost under $15 and 69 percent were under $20, Figure 12. The remainder were about equally

TABLE 6. REASONS FOR PREFERRING FIBERS

Reasons for preferring	Fiber						
	Cotton	Cotton blends	Wool	Silk and linen	Man-made fibers	Blends other than cotton	Total
	Percent						
Comfort	41	4	22	9	16	8	100
Washability	49	11		6	30	4	100
Appearance	13	10	14	29	27	7	100
Practical, economical	26	8	9	23	30	4	100
Serviceable, durable	25	7	21	19	19	9	100
Miscellaneous reasons (Cleaning or pressing advantages, blends, etc.)	10	12	31	11	31	5	100

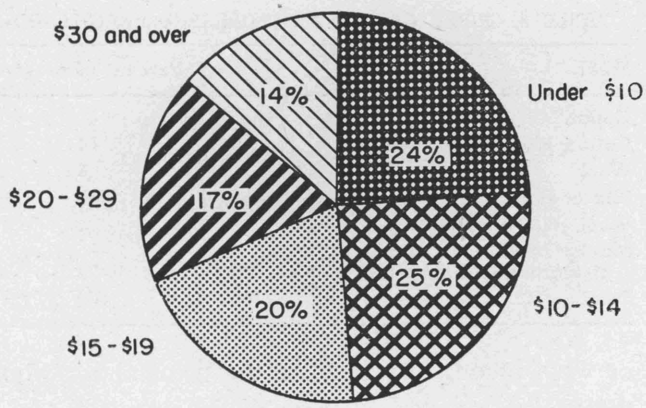


Figure 12. Percentage of dresses in each price range.

divided between those costing $20 to $29 and those $30 or more.

The price paid for dresses was directly related to family income, Figure 13. Women in the two income groups under $5,000 bought about the same proportions of dresses in each of the five price ranges. Two-thirds of the dresses these women bought cost under $15 with relatively few in the $20 and over price brackets. The cost of the dresses bought by women in the $5,000 to $6,999 incomes was rather evenly distributed in the lower price ranges but dropped sharply at $20. The popular price for this group was the $15 to $19 dresses. For those with incomes $7,000 and over there was a noticeable increase in the proportion of dresses $20 and over and a decrease in those under $20 and especially in those under $10.

Of the 34 women who did not answer the question on family income, 25 were homemakers with no paid employment outside the home. The income question was not asked directly. Respondents were handed printed cards showing income ranges and were asked to check one that most nearly corresponded to her family's income for the past year.

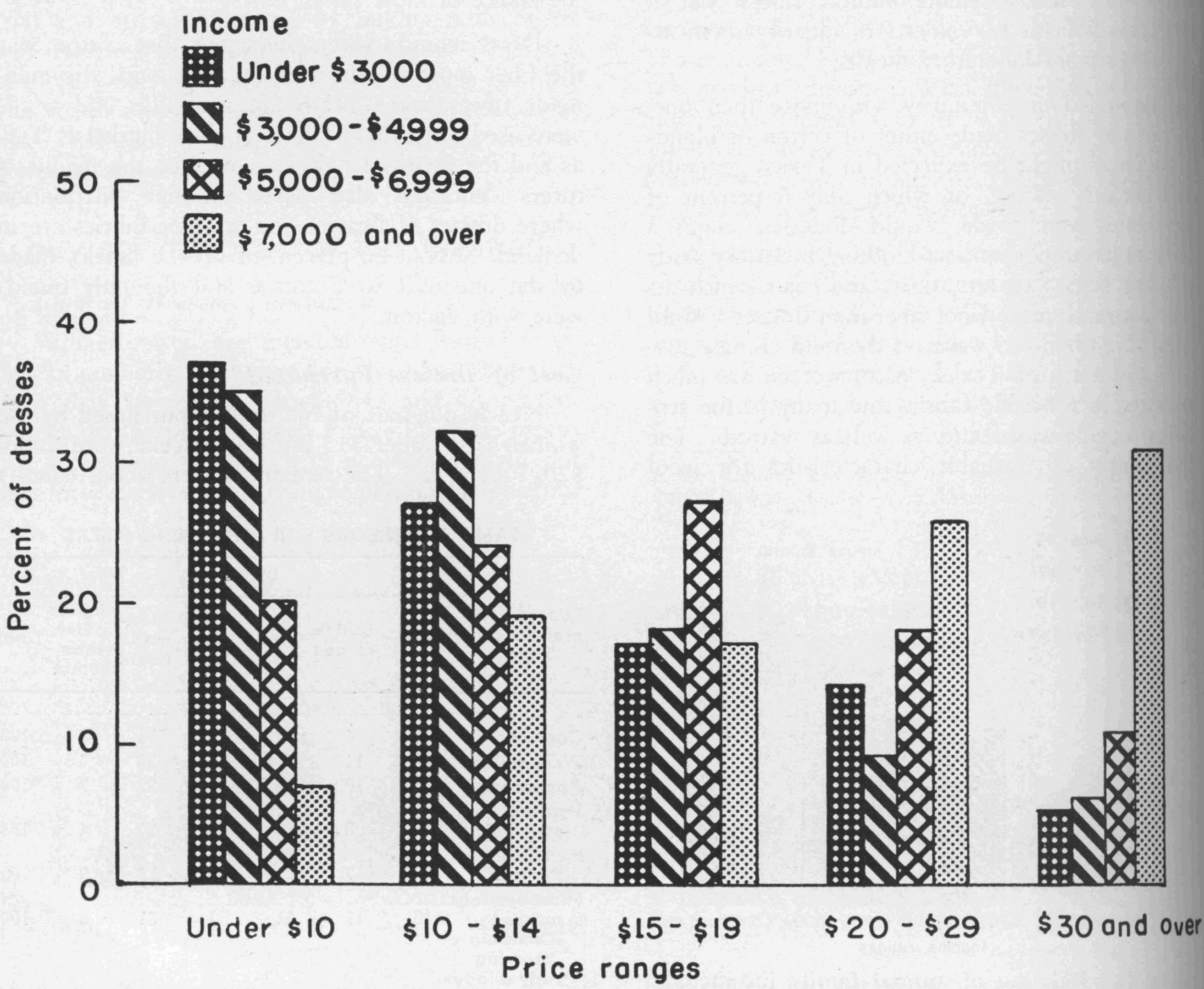


Figure 13. Relation of cost of dresses and family income.

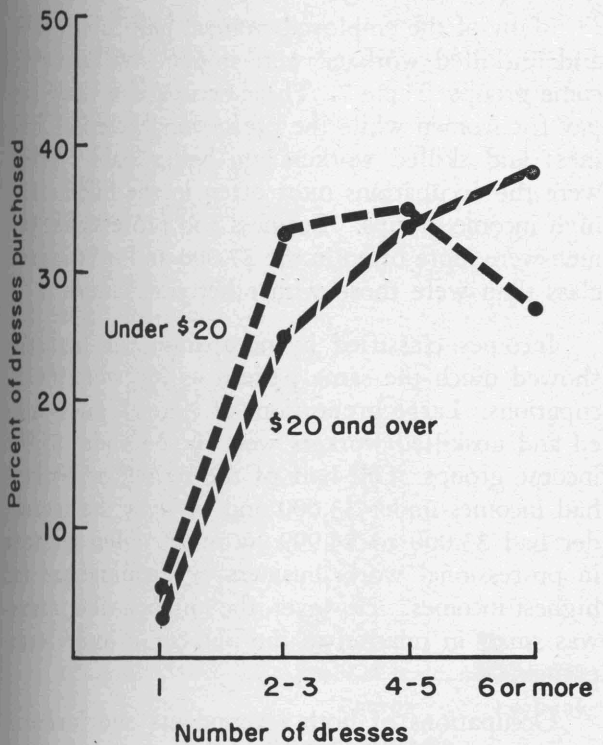


Figure 14. Relation of cost of dresses to number purchased.

There was little difference in cost when one dress only and when four or five were bought, Figure 14. When two or three dresses were bought, they usually cost under $20, but if six or more were purchased, they often cost $20 or over.

There were only small differences in prices paid for dresses by women of different ages, Figure 15. Not only did women 40 and over buy more dresses (Figure 9) but they also tended to pay a little more for them.

Sixty-nine percent of the women had no paid employment outside their homes. Although those employed were also homemakers, they were not included with the 69 percent who were counted as homemakers only. The 31 percent who were employed was about the same as in a USDA clothing inventory study[2] and close to recent Department of Labor figures[3] which show that 35 percent of all women are employed and 33 percent of all workers are women. Of the 310 women with paid employ-

[2]Ibid.

[3]What's New About Women Workers? Leaflet 18, Women's Bureau, U. S. Department of Labor.

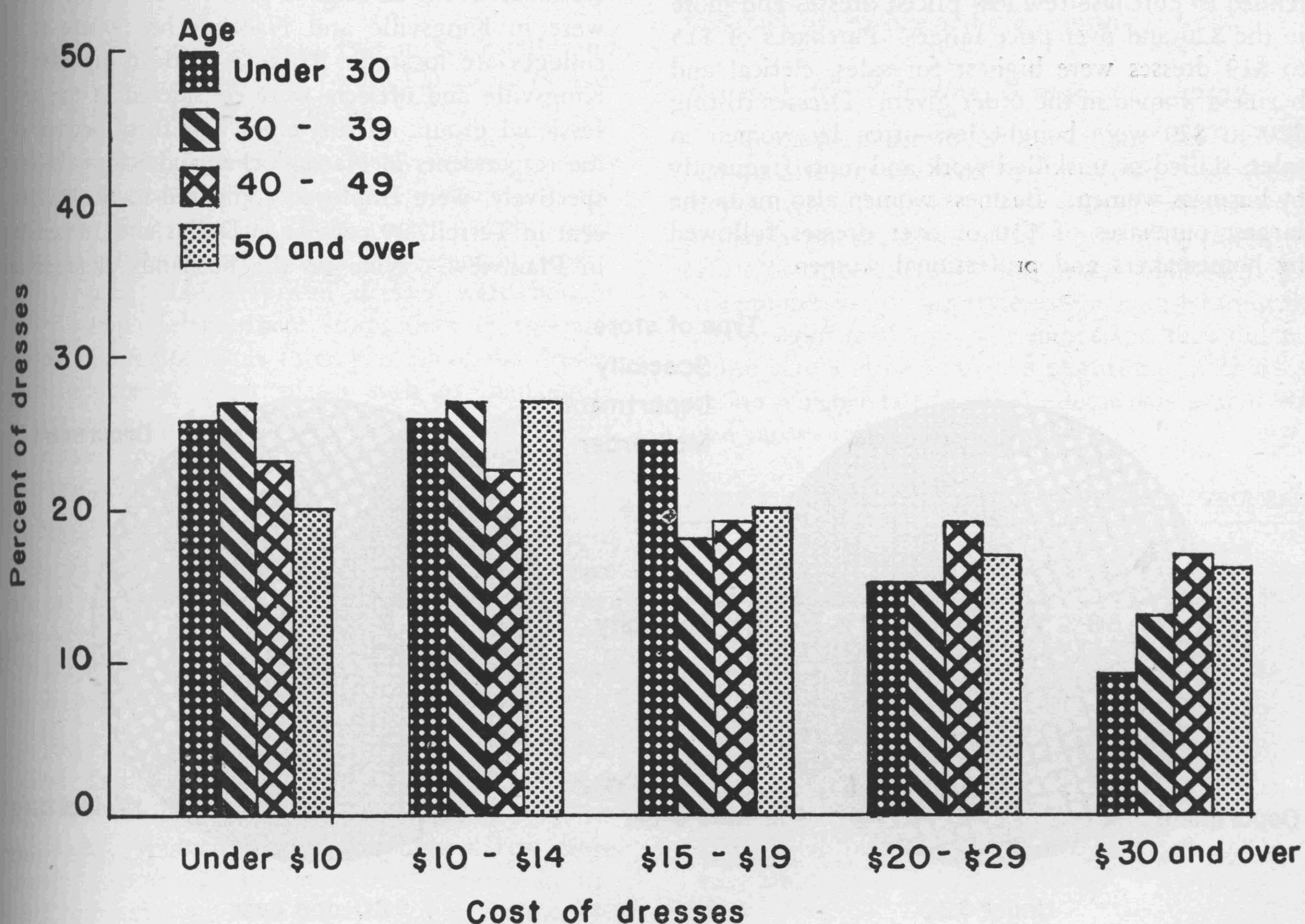


Figure 15. Relationship between cost of dresses andage of women purchasing.

TABLE 7. DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATION OF RESPONDENTS AMONG INCOME GROUPS

Occupation of respondent	Number of replies	Income range				
		Under $3,000	$3,000-4,999	$5,000-6,999	$7,000 and over	Total %
		— — — — — Percent — — — — —				
Homemaker only	657	12	37	30	21	100
Professional	67	12	24	31	33	100
Clerical	117	12	29	40	19	100
Sales	20	25	35	25	15	100
Business	19	16	16	26	42	100
Skilled	60	15	47	28	10	100
Unskilled	18	33	39	28	0	100

ment, 39 percent were clerical, 22 percent professional and 20 percent skilled workers. Six percent each were in sales, business or unskilled employment. Seventy percent were employed full time.

Unskilled and skilled workers, homemakers and saleswomen purchased, in the order given, the largest proportions of dresses costing under $10. Purchases of $10 to $14 dresses were similar for all occupational groups except business; these women tended to purchase few low priced dresses and more in the $20 and over price ranges. Purchases of $15 to $19 dresses were highest for sales, clerical and business women in the order given. Dresses costing $20 to $29 were bought less often by women in sales, skilled or unskilled work and most frequently by business women. Business women also made the largest purchases of $30 or over dresses followed by homemakers and professional women.

Many of the employed women, particularly sales and unskilled workers, were in the low family income groups, Table 7. These occupations draw low pay for women while the professional, clerical, business and skilled workers are better paid. These were the occupations most often in the middle and high income groups. Business and professional women were more often in the $7,000 and over income class than were those with other occupations.

Incomes classified by occupations of husbands showed much the same pattern as for women's occupations. Large proportions of clerical, sales, skilled and unskilled workers were in the under $5,000 income groups. One-half of the retired or disabled had incomes under $3,000 and most of the remainder had $3,000 to $4,999 incomes. Men engaged in professional work, business or farming had the highest incomes. However, the number who farmed was small in relation to the number in other occupations.

Occupations of both respondents and husbands were rather equally distributed between the four small cities and Dallas except in the case of professional workers. Higher proportions of the latter were in Kingsville and Nacogdoches where state colleges are located. There is also an air base at Kingsville and officers were considered in the professional group. Thirty-eight and forty percent of the respondents in Nacogdoches and Kingsville, respectively, were employed compared to the 25 percent in Terrell, 29 percent in Dallas and 30 percent in Plainview. Nine of the husbands engaged in

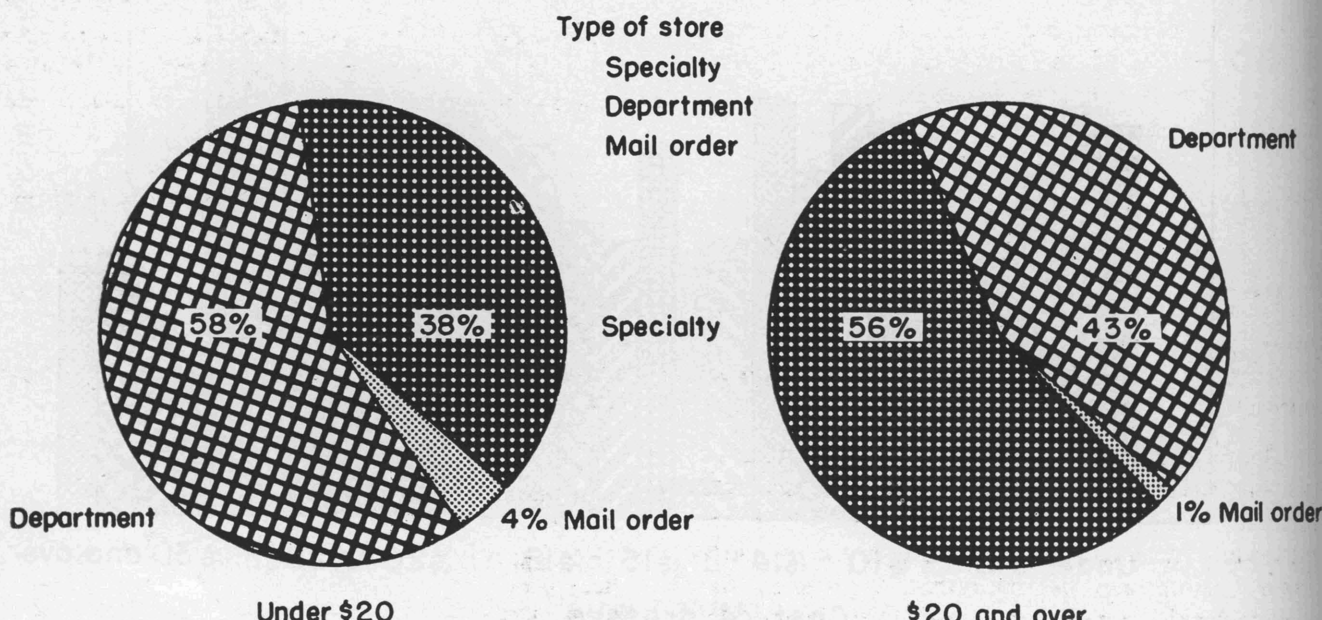


Figure 16. Relation of cost of dresses to type of store where purchased.

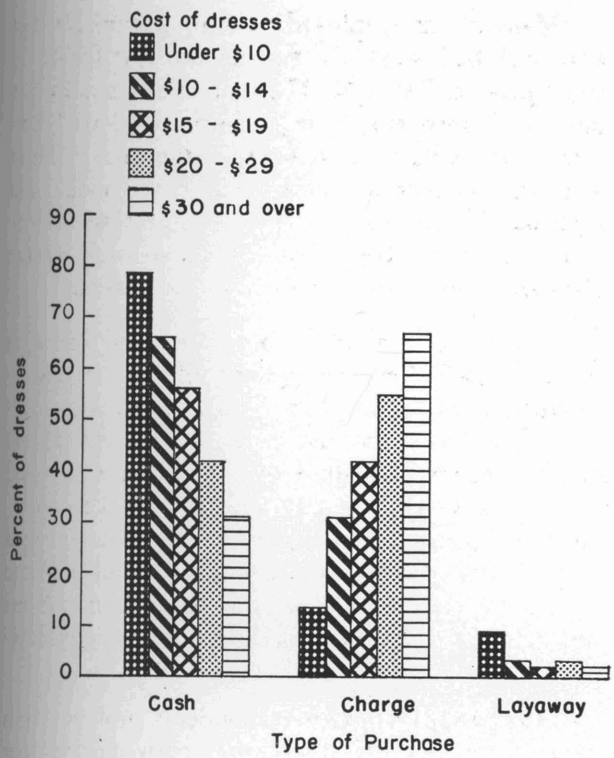


Figure 17. Relation of cost of dresses to type of purchase.

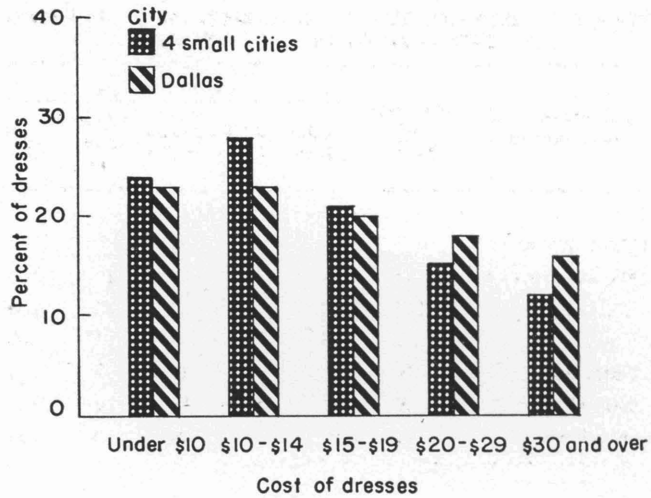


Figure 18. Cost of dresses purchased by women in four small cities and Dallas.

farming were in Plainview, two in Kingsville and one in Dallas. The few (only 12) who farmed were in the high income groups.

The cost of dresses was closely related to both type of store where purchases were made and the type of the purchase. Forty-three percent were bought in specialty shops and 54 percent in department stores. Lower priced dresses were bought more often in department stores than in specialty shops, Figure 16. Only three percent of the dresses were bought at other places such as mail order houses or manufacturer's outlet stores; practically no dresses costing $15 or more were purchased in this manner.

Fifty-eight percent were cash and 38 percent were charge purchases; only four percent were bought on a layaway plan, Figure 17. The less expensive dresses were cash purchases and as price increased more were charged. Of the few layaway purchases, most cost less than $10.

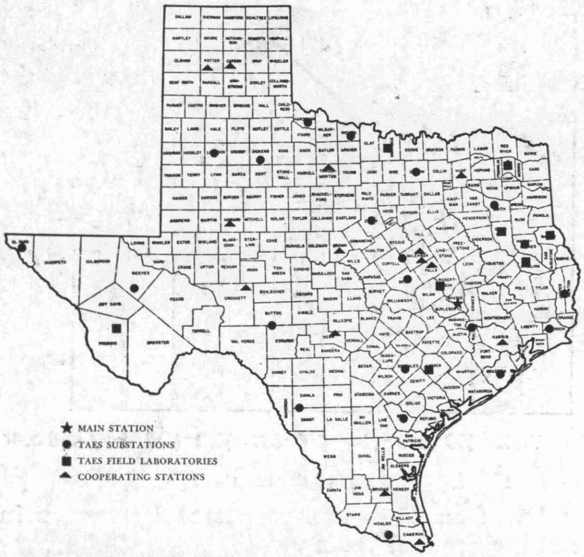
The total number of dresses bought by 502 women in Dallas and 490 in four smaller cities was about the same—an average of 3.35 and 3.54, respectively. Women in Dallas bought a few more dresses costing $20 or more than women in the other four cities who bought a few more in the $10 to $14 range than Dallas women, Figure 18. Purchase of dresses costing $10 or less and $15 to $19 were approximately the same for the five cities. Women in Terrell and Kingsville had the highest average number of dresses per person and also the highest percentage of dresses costing under $15. Kingsville and Nacogdoches had the greatest proportion of employed respondents. Most were professional or, in Nacogdoches, business women.

Reasons for Selecting Dresses Purchased

Appearance accounted for almost half of the reasons given by the women for selecting the dresses they bought, Table 8. Their selections were made primarily on the basis of how well they liked the effect or appearance of the dress. Although this first impression of the style, color or interesting details of trim or design was important, they did not ignore care and performance features. Label information which related to these items was sought and used most often by the women.

TABLE 8. REASONS FOR SELECTING DRESSES PURCHASED

Reason		Percent
Appearance		48
Style, trim	30	
Color	18	
Fit and usefulness		25
Fit	13	
Comfortable	4	
Versatile	4	
Need	4	
Fabric and care		25
Fabric	9	
Practical	7	
Washable	5	
Easy care	4	
Gift or other		2
Total		100



Location of field research units of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station and cooperating agencies

State-wide Research

★

The Texas Agricultural Experiment Station is the public agricultural research agency of the State of Texas, and is one of ten parts of the Texas A&M College System

ORGANIZATION

IN THE MAIN STATION, with headquarters at College Station, are 16 subject-matter departments, 2 service departments, 3 regulatory services and the administrative staff. Located out in the major agricultural areas of Texas are 21 substations and 9 field laboratories. In addition, there are 14 cooperating stations owned by other agencies. Cooperating agencies include the Texas Forest Service, Game and Fish Commission of Texas, Texas Prison System, U. S. Department of Agriculture, University of Texas, Texas Technological College, Texas College of Arts and Industries and the King Ranch. Some experiments are conducted on farms and ranches and in rural homes.

OPERATION

THE TEXAS STATION is conducting about 400 active research projects, grouped in 25 programs, which include all phases of agriculture in Texas. Among these are:

- Conservation and improvement of soil
- Conservation and use of water
- Grasses and legumes
- Grain crops
- Cotton and other fiber crops
- Vegetable crops
- Citrus and other subtropical fruits
- Fruits and nuts
- Oil seed crops
- Ornamental plants
- Brush and weeds
- Insects
- Beef cattle
- Dairy cattle
- Sheep and goats
- Swine
- Chickens and turkeys
- Animal diseases and parasites
- Fish and game
- Farm and ranch engineering
- Farm and ranch business
- Marketing agricultural products
- Rural home economics
- Rural agricultural economics
- Plant diseases

Two additional programs are maintenance and upkeep, and central services.

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AGRICULTURAL RESEARCH seeks the WHATS, the WHYS, the WHENS, the WHERES and the HOWS of hundreds of problems which confront operators of farms and ranches, and the many industries depending on or serving agriculture. Workers of the Main Station and the field units of the Texas Agricultural Experiment Station seek diligently to find solutions to these problems.

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