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STRACTION CONTROLS

REASONS HOMEMAKERS GIVE FOR USING A COIN-CPERATED LAUNDRY

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by

Martha Kuhn

A Froblem

Submitted to
Michigan State University
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
for the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

General Home Economics

Department of Home Management and Child Development College of Home Economics

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INTRODUCTION

In the days of our grandmothers, the Chinese laundryman succeeded in getting the shirts, as well as detachable collars and cuffs, out of many home wash tubs and into his own store for laundering. Since that time, there have been many changes in the type of laundry services available to the homemaker.

The appearance on the market of shirts with attached collars and cuffs was soon followed by the inauguration of the wet-wash bundle. Succeeding changes in laundry services offered to the homemaker included rough-dry service, the flat work ironers, and automatic laundries with extractors and dryers.

All of these changes in laundering service were followed by the present day unattended, self-service, coin-operated laundry, which has moved rapidly into a self-supporting multimillion dollar industry.

The rapid growth in numbers of coin-operated laundries stems largely since World War II. This rapid growth would seem to indicate that many people are making use of coin-operated facilities and thus, changing from the traditional methods of doing the family laundry.

The question then arises, 'What are the opinions of the users of coin-operated laundries that have been influential in the development of the coin-operated laundry industry?"

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There have been almost no studies to determine the homemaker's opinions which might influence her decision to use a coin-operated laundry. At the beginning of this study, fifteen coin-operated laundry associations were contacted and many trade journals and other publications reviewed in an effort to obtain information relative to this question.

In a letter of reply to the request for information relating to this study, Donald Fequette, Executive Secretary, Coin-Cperated Self-Service Laundry Association, Inc., said, 'I believe you will find that most associations, such as ours, have neither the time, the money or the personnel to conduct the type of research that would be necessary...'

The associations contacted expressed interest in the survey. In their letters, it was common to find such remarks as, "very worth while project," 'delighted in your interest in coin-cp laundries as a subject for your paper." Some associations requested for their use, a copy of the survey when it is completed.

Guestions concerning the advisability of the purchase of home laundry equipment are often asked of a Home Economics Extension Agent. She needs to know about all possible means of getting the family laundry done in order to help her questioner arrive at an intelligent and satisfying decision.

The problem for this study is the analyses, discussion and implications derived from the replies given by 50 women when questioned concerning some of the "Reasons Homemakers Give for Using a Coin-Operated Laundry."

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The study has four major objectives:

- 1. To discover reasons the homemaker gives for her use of the coin-operated laundry.
- 2. To explore the homemakers' attitude toward the convenience of the coin-operated laundry.
- 3. To acquire information concerning the homemakers' evaluation of time management in relation to the use of the coin-operated laundry.
- 4. To discover if the homemaker has made actual comparisons of the cost of using the coin-operated laundry with that of using the home laundry.

This study is important because:

- 1. It will make more material available relating to the homemakers' expressed opinions concerning use of the coin-operated laundry--an area which is dominated by opinions, largely unsubstantiated, of the coin-operated laundry owner.
- 2. The young homemaker and those who work with or advise her need a study of this kind because this period of married life involves the purchase of many expensive pieces of equipment. The adviser needs help in guiding these young people into satisfactory decisions relative to the purchase of equipment.
- 3. The Home Economics Extension Agent has need for this information to help individuals with whom she works to arrive at intelligent and satisfactory decisions relative to methods of doing the laundry.
- 4. The Home Economics Extension Agent needs such information for use in lessons for the Extension groups with whom she works.

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REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Reports of studies to determine some of the opinions of the homemaker which influence her to use the coin-operated laundry are extremely difficult to find.

Although the associations contacted for the type of information needed were very gracious and helpful, with their suggestions of possible sources of information and in sending copies of their trade association publications, little was available on the homemakers' expressed point of view.

According to a 1959 report, many washing machine manufacturers felt that coin-operated laundries served the needs of special groups, such as tourists, transients, traveling salesmen, college students, working women and housewives with heavy wash loads. Some of the women, in an article entitled, 'The A B C's of Coin-Operation,' still feel self-conscious about carrying their wash bundles in public. 2

Mention is made in an article by Dreis of a study conducted by the American Institute of Laundry in which the results showed that 73% of the users of coin-operated laundries were also owners of sutomatic washers.

Norris Willatt, "Barron's Report on: Automatic Laundries," February 1959, reprinted in The Coin-Cp Story, (1959), p. 53.

²No author, "The A B C's of Coin-Creration," July 1956, reprinted in The Coin-Up Story, (1959), p.8.

³D. David Dreis, 'The Big Advantage,' Coin-Cp, III (December, 1962), p.12.

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Norris Willatt reports in his article 'Automatic Laundries,' that in many rural areas, some customers use the coin-operated laundry because it has water-softening equipment they do not have at home. 1

That the housewife may use the coin-operated laurdry to relax tensions and pressures and that it can be a decided force in her health, is a belief of William Nathews, physiologist and bio-chemist at Cornell Medical College as cited in Dreis' article. Dr. Mathews, Dreis reported, believes that the coin-operated laundry relieves tension and pressures the housewife may be under during the day. It is Nathews' opinion, according to Dries, that going to the coin-operated laundry allows release of tension and that the exercise in walking uses every muscle of the body.

weisbord in an issue of the publication, "Today's Health," asked a thought-provoking question when he said, 'what good is an automatic washer if you use it three times a day just because it's handy? You only wear out your clothes and yourself."

Some ccin-operated laundry owners seem to believe that the housewife views her time at the coin-operated laundry as a "coffee clache." 'Women," they say, "like to visit over a

Norris Willatt, 'Barron's Reports on: Automatic Laundries," February 1959, reprinted in The Coin-Court, (1959), p. 50.

D. David Dries, "The Big Advantage," Ccin-Cp, III (Dec-ember, 1962), p. 14.

³Marvin Weisbord, "Do You Overwork Around the house?" Today's Health, January, 1961, p. 48.

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cup of coffee, especially in the morning. There's something homey about coffee which provides a friendly, relaxing acmosphere that customers enjoy.

One main reason for the coin-operated laundry's value to the housewife is its contribution to her need for recreation, according to Philip Bruce Springer, sociologist, as reported by Dreis in his article entitled 'The Big Advantage.' Springer is quoted as saying he believes:

The housewife feels a need to get out of the house to do her work as a relief from the tediousness and monotony of her day and she justifies using the coinceperated laundry because she is getting her work done while there. Possibly the coin-op plays a part in allowing the housewife a more 'worldly look' since they sig do allow reading to be done, supplying both the magazines and the time. This enhances the housewife's role. At the coin-op she is able to talk to other women, make neighborahood friends, 'break the ice' as it were.'2

The convenience in using a coin-operated laundry may depend upon several things such as: location, time required, accessibility, elimination of hanging up washing, and so on.

Some owners say that a large percentage of their customers use the coin-operated laundry between midnight and morning, the hours

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No Author, 'An Unattended Coin-Operated A-Laundry Makes Cood in Suburbia," June, 1958, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 51.

²D. David Dreis, 'The Big Advantage," <u>Coin-Co</u>, III (Dec-ember, 1962), p. 14.

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some stores are closed. A good many women like to do their washing their own way and at a time convenient to themselves. 2

Because the coin-operated laundry is a self-service place of business, many of the customers remain there until their laundry is done. Therefore, many coin-operated laundry owners believe everything that is possible should be provided for the comfort and convenience of the customer. They recommend chairs for relaxed waiting, magazines, rest rooms, signs to give explicit and complete instructions for machine operation in easy to understand terms, refund tickets for machine failure, folding tables, carts, lost clothes' board, neighborhood bulletin board, starch sink, and a public telephone with pad of paper and pencil handy to the phone.3

Savings in money was one of the main reasons given by some women for using a coin-operated laundry according to another owner of a coin-operated laundry. He said, "Some house-wives, who come to the coin-operated laundry when their machines break down, return as regular customers when they figure out that they can do their laundry at a coin-operated store at a lower cost than at home."

No Author, "The A B C's of Coin-Cperation, June 1958, reprinted in The Coin-Cp Story, (1959), p. 9.

² Ko Author, "To Be or Not to Be...Reslistic," November, 1957, reprinted in The Coin-Cp Story, (1959), p. 7.

No Author, ep. cit., p. 10.

^{*}No Author, FAn Unattended Coin-Operated A-Laundry Makes Good in Suburbia, June, 1958, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 51.

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William Watkins, also a laundry owner, reasoned that, "the woman with the machine in need of repair, finds it more profitable to use the coin-op than her own washer, especially when hers is in need of a big repair job."

Watkins also said, in regard to the influence of cost, that if each housewife would 'do a little honest-to-goodness figuring on her costs of washing at home, we (the coin-operated laundry owners) would have a lot of new customers in the morning. When you pin them down, most agree it costs them more to wash at home. 2

Cost to the customer, as an influencing determinant in using a coin-operated laundry was stated by a Queens, New York laundry owner as, "The coin-op appeals to family people to whom price makes the difference in whether they use laundry facilities or not."

There were some owners, however, who felt the cost to be nearly the same. For example, Dreis, writing in Coin-Op magazine, stated,"...(coin-operated laundry) prices are not more expensive in the long run than doing it (the laundry) at home. It is just half in the direct costs, but the other factors (health, relaxation, relief of tension and pressures, sociability, and time and effort saved) are just as important.

¹William S. Watkins, "Coin Metered Laundry Stores," April, 1958, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 25.

²<u>Ibid.</u>, p. 25.

No Author, "A One-Stop Service Center," March, 1959, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 39.

⁴D. David Dreis, 'The Big Advantage," Coin-Cp, III (Dec-ember, 1962), p. 14.

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In the literature reviewed, reference to cost in one article mentioned the results of a survey in which the house-wife tabulated the costs of doing her laundry. This survey showed that using a coin-operated laundry was usually not much more expensive than using the home washer. 1

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In a study done at Ohio State University, reported by Ruth Deacon, it was found that some people feel the cost of using the coin-operated laundry is more than using the home laundry. The study involved six families who compared the cost of using the coin-operated laundry with the home laundry by actually using the two methods of laundering and then tabulating the costs of each method over a specified period of time. Deacon says, fin relation to loads washed, the launderette's costs were higher...in money. If transportation charges of eight cents a mile had been included, the cost would have increased 40 per cent for those (6) families, if trips to the launderette were not combined with other errands.?²

One of the problems of modern living seems to be finding the time to do the things we need or would like to do.

D. David Dreis states, "The major reason housewives use the coin-operated laundry is to save time. They can save time since it is possible to use several machines at once."³

No Author, "There is a Best Way to Get the Wash Done," Changing Times Magazine, November, 1951, p. 25.

Ruth Deacon, 'Family Laundering at Home and with Commercial Services," Research Bulletin 869, (November 1960), Ohio Agricultural Experiment Station, Wooster, Chio, p. 18.

³D. David Dreis, 'The Big Advantage,' Coin-Op, III (December, 1962), p. 12.

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In his article, 'The Big Advantage,' Dreis reports that Edward Black, a well-known market analyst, made a survey of the popularity of coin-operated laundries. Black reported that his T...data showed that the larger the household, the more important was the coin-op to the housewife. Since the housewife is finding her housekeeping chores more complex, she has considered the time and effort saving of coin-operated laundries on a par with such 'necessary luxuries' as the automobile, which is certainly more convenient, but more expensive than traveling on foot."

According to an article in a special issue of <u>Launder-</u>
<u>Matic Age</u>, there is a large segment of people who prefer to do
their washing without its being handled by attendants.²

In the literature read, there appeared to be six main reasons for customer preference of coin-operated laundry facilities. These reasons are as follows:

- 1. The housewife has a chance and a choice of doing her own laundering.
- 2. Individual machines containing only the user's family clothes are used.
- 3. Coin-operated laundries are timesaving because the user can take advantage of several machines at one time to do a weeks washing in less than one hour.

¹D. David Dreis, "The Big Advantage," Coin-Cp, (December, 1962), p. 14.

²No Author, "To Be or Not to Be...Realistic," November 1957, reprinted in The Coin-Cp Story, (1959), p. 7.

³H. J. Mitchell, "A Fact-Filled Report on Coin-Operated Unattended Laundries," November 1956, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 14.

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4. The coin-operated laundry is available when the customer wants it.

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- 5. The coin-operated laundry is completely self-service.
- 6. Use of the coin-operated laundry is an economy operation for the customer.

With only a few exceptions, the literature reviewed seemed to indicate the use of a coin-operated laundry was an advantage to the user because of its low cost compared to the home laundry, its use as a means of saving time, and the convenience of the coin-operated laundry. These three factors were often mentioned as the main reasons for the housewife's preference of a coin-operated laundry.

Since a great deal of the literature was found in coinoperated laundry trade journals, one could safely assume that
the coin-operated laundries would be favor bly portrayed. This
is supported by Fred Dodge in his letter of reply to a request
for information. In reference to a trade magazine he had recommended, Dodge said, "I believe you'll get your best information from the magazine..., bearing in mind that it is prejudiced in favor of coin-operation."²

The few studies that differed from the majority reported in the literature reviewed appeared to indicate that the cost of using the coin-operated laundry was more than using home laundry factilities if both direct and indirect costs were included.

^{10.} G. Andrews, "Neighborhood Laundry Trends Examined," November 1956, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 16.

²Letter from Fred Dodge, Executive Director, North Carolina Association of Launderers and Gleaners, Inc., Haleigh, North Carolina, January, 1963.

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It would appear from some of the literature read that some people feel the greater cost of using the coin-operated laundry is justified because of the social, psychological and physiological benefits derived from its use.

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METHOD

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The town in which the study was conducted is the county seat of a rapidly growing area in Southwestern Michigan. With a population of 6,000, it is the largest town in the county and the shopping center of a typically rural area. It has three fairly large industries. Situated within a 25-to 50-mile radius of four large cities, ranging in population from seven to twenty-seven times its size, and in a county with 327 lakes, the town also serves many tourists.

Like many rural communities, the citizens make changes with some reluctance, as the town emerges from its past rural dominance into a modern industrial and resort area.

The information gathered for this study was obtained through the use of an interview schedule and in conversation with fifty customers of a selected coin-operated laundry.

Customers of the laundry were interviewed while they were doing their laundry. The customers were approached in casual conversation and informed of the method and purpose for conducting the interview. The respondent was assured that in no way would her identity be associated with her answers to the interview.

The only stipulation in the choice of respondents was that each must be a regular user of a coin-operated laundry.

No Author, Annual Report of the Barry County Co-creative Extension Service, (July, 1963), p. 2.

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When those who were not regular users found they would not be interviewed, some of them expressed the wish to read the interview schedule, while others said they wished they could answer the questions too. The respondents were, without exception, gracious and very willing to be interviewed.

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Interviewing was done within a period of six days and evenings. The questions on the schedule were read to the respondent and her answers were recorded on the interview schedule. The only exception was that answers to questions relating to income, employment, family size, and age of respondents were recorded on a different sheet of paper. Answers were recorded by number or letter corresponding to the question so that the respondent would know the recorder had no immediate knowledge of the answers. The sheets were coded to correspond with the interview schedule, upon which the answers were transferred at a later date.

The schedule for the interview covered the following general items of information:

- Reasons for choice of the particular coin-operated laundry the respondents used.
- General opinions of the respondent about the use of a coin-operated laundry.
- Respondents' beliefs concerning cost of using the coin-operated laundry, compared to the investment, maintenance and use of the home laundry.
- 4. Convenience.
- 5. Time utilization.

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6. Cther reasons that influenced the respondent to use a coin-operated laundry.

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7. Ceneral information about the respondent.

The question concerning "weekly family take-home pay" was intended to include the entire amount from all family members who contributed money for the family's support.

Clarification of the term was necessary for some of the respondents.

Frobably the income brackets would have been more meaningful if there had been definite amounts in each bracket-not over or under stated amounts. However, for the purpose of
this study, only a rough estimate was considered necessary.

The question concerning comparison of costs in use of coin-operated and home laundry facilities needed to be clarified for each respondent to indicate that "figuring" meant using paper and pencil and the inclusion of all direct and indirect costs with realistic amounts for every item.

The interview schedule apparently was neither too long to cause uneasiness on the part of the respondent, nor too short to obtain the information needed. The general information gained allowed a composite picture of the average respondent in the study. Questions relative to cost, preference, time utilization and convenience, produced the needed information concerning the respondents' opinions for each item.

The coin-operated laundry at which the interviews were conducted was one of three in the town. It differed to the greatest extent from the others in that the customer had a choice of four types of washing machines and two types of dryers.

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It was the only air-conditioned coin-operated laundry in town, and the owner-operator was svailable during the day if help was needed.

The laundry equipment consisted of the following:

- 2 twenty-five pound automatic, stainless steel washers.
- 2 double-tub washer-rinser-extractor, semiautomatically operated, stainless steel washers.
- 12 side-loading, tumbler type, automatic washers.
- 6 top-loading, agitator type, automatic washers.
- 7 three-to-five load dryers.
- 2 one-to-two load dryers.
- 2 large extractors.

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The laundry was clean and well-lighted and it was located at the city limits on one of the main business routes into town. A pay telephone was provided for the convenience of the customers.

The cwner-operator had a "drop-off" laundry service at the back of the store where he or his employees were available during the day to take care of machine breakdowns or any problem with which the customer needed help. He was constantly making improvements that would be of help to his customers and make things more pleasant for them. He carried heavy bundles to the car for his customers and made it a point to see that all machines were in good working order. All of his morning customers were offered free coffee. Every effort was made to create a pleasant,

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friendly atmosphere. The owner believed in extending every possible service and was on the job, ready at all times, to lend a hand for the convenience of his customers.

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FINDINGS

To obtain a description of the customers of the coin-operated laundry in which the study was made, each respondent was asked to answer a few questions of a personal nature. These questions related to size of the family, total weekly moneys contributed by all members toward the cost of maintaining the household, and the respondent's age and employment status.

Of the 50 respondents, 26 were employed outside the home.

The employed women were asked the nature of their employment and the amount of time involved.

Table I

TYPE AND EXTENT OF EMPLOYMENT AS INDICATED BY 26 RESPONDENTS

| Type of Work | Number | Percent | Time Spent | | |
|---|-----------|--|----------------------------|--------------|----------------|
| | | | ull Time | Half Days | By The Hour |
| Secretary Nurse Factory Teacher Owner of Business Waitress Clerk Custodian Child Care | 544333211 | 19.0 17.0 17.0 11.0 11.0 21.0 3.5 3.5 | 4 4 3 3 1 1 | 1 | 1 1 1 |
| Total | 26 | 100.0 | 20 | 3 | 3 |

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As shown in Table I, 20 of the 25 employed respondents worked full-time in various occupations, the most usual being secretarial, nursing or factory work.

To find the "spendable" income of the 50 families, the respondents were asked to identify the income brackets that most closely represented the weekly family "take-home" pay.

Table II

AFPROXIMATE WELKLY FAMILY "TAKE-HOME" FAY OF 50 RESPONDENTS

| Weekly Family "Take-Home" Fay | Number Families | Percent of Families | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--|
| Under \$40 | 3 | . 6 | |
| \$40-\$59 | 10 | 20 | |
| \$6C-\$79 | 18 | 36 | |
| \$80-\$99 | 10 | 20 | |
| \$100 and over | 9 | 18 | |
| Total | 50 | , 100 | |

Table II shows that the largest number of families (36%) were found in the \$60-\$79 per week bracket. The number of families in the next highest (\$80-\$99) and the next lowest (\$40-\$59) brackets were the same with 20% of the families in each bracket.

To determine the size of family of each respondent, she was asked, "Do you have a family?" If the answer was

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Table III
SIDE OF FAMILIES /S INDIGATED BY 50 RESIGNERATE

| Number of Members in Family | Fumber of Families in Each Category | Fercent of Finilies in Lach Category |
|--------------------------------|---|--|
| 1 | 2 | 4 |
| 2 | 10 | 20 |
| 3 | 7 | 14 |
| 4 | 15 | 30 |
| 5 | 8 | 16 |
| 6 | 5 | 10 |
| 7 | 3 | 6 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

Of the 50 respondents as shown in Table III, 70% had 3 or more family members. The average number of persons per family in the sample was 3.9. The average membership of the 38 families having 3 or more members was 4.5.

To relate income ranges with size of household, the 38 respondents with more than 2 members were grouped according to income bracket.

Table IV shows that of the 38 families, over a third (36.8%) were in the \$60-79 a week bracket and had an average of 4.3 members.

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Table IV

AVERAGE SIZE OF 38 FAMILIES ACCORDING TO INCOME BRACKET

| Incomet whi | Number in Each Income Bracket | | | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|----------------------|-----------|--|---|---------------------------------|
| Bracket | Pamilies No. % | | Total No. | | Average No. of Persons per household | |
| Under 40 88 40-59 60-79 larly 80-99 100 or Over | 14 | 18.4 36.8 23.7 | 32 | | | 7.0 4.6 4.3 4.1 5.1 |
| Total | 1 | 100.0 | 172 | | | 4.5 |

To find the age of each respondent, she was asked to indicate in which bracket her age would fall. See Table V

Table V

AGE OF HOMEMAKERS IN SAMPLE

| Age | Number | Percent |
|--|--------------------|---------------------|
| Under 25 25 to 40 40 to 65 65 or over | 8 16 25 1 | 16 32 50 2 |
| Total | 50 | 100 |

One-half of the respondents were from 40 to 65 years of age, and nearly one-third were 25 to 40.

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To find if each respondent made a practice of using the same coin-operated laundry regularly, she was asked, "Is this the laundry you usually come to?"

Of the 50 respondents, 47 were regular users of the laundry at which the interviews were conducted. Two respondents said they were regular users of another laundry because it was near home, but at that particular time all machines were in use. One respondent was a visitor from another state but did use regularly a coin-operated laundry near her home.

The 47 regular users were asked why they washed at this particular laundry regularly.

Table VI

REASONS GIVEN BY 47 RESPONDENTS FOR THEIR REGULAR USE OF
A PARTICULAR COIN-OPERATED LAUNDRY

| Used Same Laundry Regularly | Number 47 | Percent 94 |
|---------------------------------|--------------|---------------|
| Reasons Given:* | | |
| Choice of 4 types of machines | 35 | 70 |
| Cheerful Atmosphere | 30 | 60 |
| Friendly, helpful management | 27 | 54 |
| Clean Store | 20 | 40 |
| Near Home | 14 | 28 |
| Good, well-maintained equipment | 11 | 22 |
| Air-Conditioned Store | 5 | 10 |
| Free Coffee | 5 | 10 |

^{*}Since more than one reason was given, totals exceed 100%.

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As shown in Table VI, the reasons most frequently given for choice of the particular laundry were choice of four types of washing machines, cheerful atmosphere, friendly, helpful management, cleanliness of store, location near home, and well-maintained equipment.

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Opinions of the customers about their use of the coinoperated laundry were obtained during the interviews. To find
which type of laundry facilities she preferred and what determined her preference, each respondent was asked if she preferred
the coin-operated laundry to home laundry facilities and why.
These preferences are indicated in rank order in Table VII.

Table VII

REASONS GIVEN BY 50 WOMEN FOR PREFERENCE
OR NON-PREFERENCE OF THE COIN-OPERATED LAUNDRY

| Preferred | 10. | - | Did Net Prefer | INO. | 1 4 |
|--------------------------|-----|----|---|------|-----|
| Coin-Operated Laundry | 28 | 56 | Coin-Operated Laundry | 22 | 44 |
| Reasons given:* | | | Reasons given: | | |
| Seves time | 25 | 89 | Inconvenient | 15 | 68 |
| Convenient | 24 | 86 | Takes More time | 11 | 50 |
| Low Cost | 11 | 40 | Costly | 7 | 32 |
| Sociability | 11 | 40 | Noisy | 2 | 9 |
| Faster | 5 | 17 | Slower | 1 | 4.5 |
| Nothing to clean | 2 | 7 | Need Babysitter | 1 | 4.5 |
| | | | Can't Change Cy- cles on Mach- ines | 1 | 4.5 |
| ; ; | | | Nusiance in Bad Weather | 1 | 4.5 |

^{*}Since more than one reason was given, totals exceed 100%.

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Preference for the coin-operated laundry was indicated by 55% of the respondents. Of the respondents who preferred the coin-operated laundry, 85% felt that in using it they saved time while 50% of the respondents who did not prefer the coin-operated laundry felt that it took more time. The convenience of the coin-operated laundry was mentioned by 86% of the respondents who preferred it, while 68% who did not, gave inconvenience as one of their reasons.

An analysis of preferences for type of laundry in relation to ownership or non-ownership of home laundry facilities was made.

Table VIII

PREFERENCE OR NONPREFERENCE

OF 50 RESPONDENTS FOR THE COIN-OFERATED LAUNDRY
IN RELATION TO CWNERSHIP OF HOME LAUNDRY FACILITIES

| Preferred | no. % | | Did Not | NC. | % |
|---------------------------|-------|----|--------------------------|-------------|----|
| | 28 | 56 | Frefer | 22 | 44 |
| Lacked Home Facilities | 15 | 57 | Lacked Home Facilitie | s 12 | 55 |
| Had Home Facilities | 12 | 43 | Had Home Facilitie | s 10 | 45 |

Table VIII shows that slightly more than half (28) of the respondents preferred the coin-operated laundry. Although this was the same number who lacked home laundry facilities, the personnel of the two groups was not the same. Regardless of preference or nonpreference, there were over 40% who had home laundry facilities.

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To see if employment of the homemaker might have a relationship to preference for the coin-operated as contrasted to the home laundry, comparisons of the preferences of the employed and non-employed respondents were made.

Graph I

PREFERENCE FOR TYPE OF LAUNDRY FACILITIES ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF 50 RESPONDENTS

| Employed | | Non | -Employed | |
|-----------------|-------------|------------|-------------|----------------|
| (26) | Tel | de IX | (24) | |
| OF HOME LAUNDRY | | | ARED TO USA | igen grad s |
| 54% | NC. | 62% | Nada ND. | 5 |
| Cost Comparison | 40% | Harris Par | 38% | 112960 |
| Coat Comparass | 12 Women | 15 | 38% | Total |

T Preferred Coin-Operated Laundry

Preferred Home Laundry

Although preference for the coin-operated laundry, as shown in Graph I, was greater for both employed and non-employed women, the difference in preference was greater (24%) in the non-employed as contrasted to the employed group (8%).

Nearly all of the literature reviewed had emphasized the lower cost of using the coin-operated as compared to the home laundry. (a) The second of the secon

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en de la companya de la co To find the opinions of the respondents in regard to cost, they were asked, "Have you ever compared the cost of using a coin-operated laundry with the cost of buying, maintaining and using home laundry equipment? What did you decide?"

of the 50 respondents, only 18% said they had made actual comparisons. When the others were asked, "What do you think the results of such comparisons would be?" about two-thirds of them believed that the cost of using the coin-operated laundry would be less or the same as doing the laundry at home. See Table IX.

Table IX

COST OF USE OF A COIN-OPERATED COMPARED TO USE OF HOME LAUNDRY FACILITIES AS INDICATED BY 50 RESPONDENTS

| Which would be spe- Had Made CostTGomparisons | NO. | % | Had Not Made Cost Comparisons | NO. | % 82 |
|---|-----|-------|-------------------------------------|--------|---------|
| Felt Coin-Operated Laundry Costtheir | | | Felt Coin-Operated Laundry Cost: | sional | analy |
| More | 4 | 44.5 | Less | 22 | 53 |
| Less | 3 | 33.3 | More | 13 | 32 |
| Same COMPARAT. | | | ISC Same CA-CASEATE | 6 | 15 |
| Total | 9 | 100.0 | | 41 | 100 |

Of the 18% who had figured actual costs, slightly more than half said that the cost was less or the same. Over two-thirds of those who had not made cost comparisons also believed that the cost would be less or the same.

The reason given by the eight respondents who said that the cost would be the same was that hidden costs had to be included

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| 4.1 % 2 | i x | | **; | ì | 8.60 | | Ţ, | ecei |
| e e | 3 | | s i più | : | 1.51 | | 3 | |
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for a fair comparison. They spoke of these costs as: initial cost of equipment; depreciation; repairs; cost of electricity, hot water, water softener, insurance and the like.

The 25 who said the cost would be less reasoned that they didn't have service calls and repairs to pay for, not as much water and electricity were used at home; that without a home water softener more soap was needed, and the septic tank required more frequent cleaning.

The 17 respondents who said the cost would be more reasoned that cost allowance had to be made for a babysitter; added the cost of transportation to and from the laundry; said they used more washer loads at the coin-operated laundry than at home; and that at home they hung up the clothes to dry and thus saved money which would be spent on clothes dryers at the laundry.

To gain an insight into the beliefs of the 38 homemakers with families regarding comparative costs, an additional analysis was made of their responses. See Table X.

COMPARATIVE COST OF USING A COIN-CHERATED
RATHER THAN A HOME LAUNDRY AS STATED BY 38 WOMEN WITH FAMILIES

| Use of a Coin-Operated | NG. | % | Average Number of |
|------------------------|-----|----|---------------------|
| Laundry Would Cost: | 38 | 76 | Children per Family |
| Nore | 12 | 32 | 4.3 |
| Less | 19 | 50 | 4.8 |
| Same | 7 | 18 | 3.8 |

The town in which the survey was taken has several lakes bordering it. Many people live at the lakes the year round and have their own water and sewer systems.

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The 19 homemakers who said that the cost of using a coinoperated would be less than using the home laundry were those with
the largest average families--4.8 members. This finding agrees
with a statement made in an article cited in the review of literature.

In many of the articles reviewed, convenience was mentioned as an element contributing to preference for coin-operated laundry facilities. In this study all respondents were asked, 'Do you think using the coin-operated laundry is more or less convenient than using home laundry facilities? Why?" See Table XI.

HOMEMAKERS OFINIONS RELATIVE TO CONVENIENCE OF USING A COIN-CPERATED LAUNDRY

| Convenient | NO. % Inconvenient 54 | | NO. 23 | 46 | |
|--|-----------------------|----------|-------------------|-----|----------|
| easons:* | | | Reasons:* | | |
| Faster | 27 | 100 | Takes more time | 23 | 100 |
| More time saved | 24 | 90 | Too much to carry | 14 | 61 |
| Less lifting | 22 | 81 | Loading and un- | _ , | |
| <i>y</i> - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - 1 - | | | loading car | 10 | 43 |
| No stairs to | | | Spilling in ear | ç | 43 39 |
| climb | 18 | 67 | | • | |
| Clothes lighter | | • | Cut in bad wea- | | |
| to handle | 9 | 33 | ther | 3 | 13 |
| Husband babysits | 9 | 33 18 | | - | |
| No need to clean | _ | | | | |
| up | 4 | 15 | | | 1 |

^{*}Since more than one reason was often given, responses total more than 100%.

No Author, "A One-Stop Service Center," March 1959, reprinted in The Coin-Op Story, (1959), p. 39.

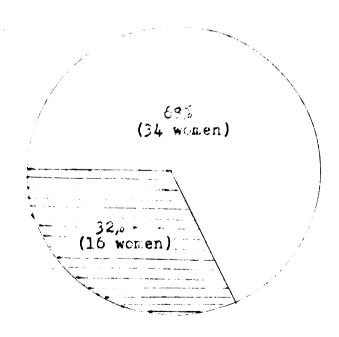
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The 27 women who preferred the coin-operated rather than the home laundry because of its convenience most frequently responded that it was faster, saved time, demanded less lifting, and eliminated climbing basement stairs. It is interesting to note that 24 of the 27 women who felt that the coin-operated laundry was more convenient believed they saved time by using it whereas all 23 of the women who felt the coin-operated laundry was inconvenient believed it took more time than the home laundry.

To learn their opinions regarding the use of a coin-operated laundry as a time-saving device, all respondents were asked, "Do you believe you save time by using a coin-operated laundry?"

Craph II

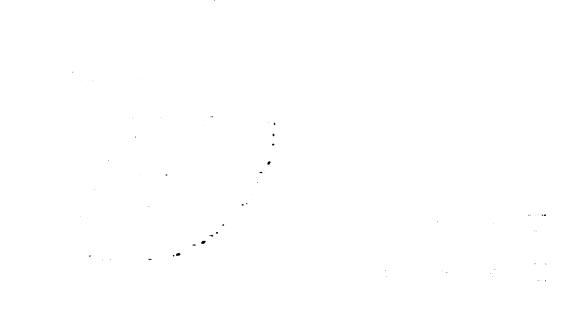
CPINIONS OF 50 WOMEN CONCERNING
USE OF THE COIN-CLERATED LAUNDRY AS A TIME-SAVING DEVICE



- Time Saved
- No Time Saved

Discrepancies in response in Graph II and Table VII relating to time are due to free responses.

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Graph II shows that in the entire group of 50 respondents, over two-thirds of the women believed they saved time by using a coin-operated laundry. This finding agrees with the authors of various articles reviewed who reasoned that the simultaneous use of several machines allows the homemaker to do all of her washing in the length of time it would take to do one load at home.

Comparison of the opinions of the employed and non-employed homemakers in regard to time saved were made to discover if employment might be an influencing factor in the decision to use a coin-operated laundry.

Graph III

A COMPARISON OF
THE OPINIONS OF EMPLOYED AND NON-EMPLOYED
HOMEMAKERS AS TO TIME SAVED BY USE OF THE COIN-OPERATED LAUNDRY

| 3. Was Employed working | Non-Employed (24) | 12 |
|--|--|---|
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| Wilder was the | A STATE OF THE PROPERTY OF THE | 400000000000000000000000000000000000000 |
| han 100gy | | on a graph of |
| to thousan Tablacity, as | 58% | 42% |
| | 58% | 42% |

_ Felt they saved time

Graph II indicates that although the greater number of both employed and full-time homemakers believed they saved time by using a coin-operated laundry, the difference in percentage was

Felt no time was saved

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greater for the employed (54%) than for the non-employed home-maker (16%). That the reason for the variance may be due to the push and pressure of the work-a-day world and the desire to complete the job in a short time rather than to have it spread cut through most of the day, was indicated by three respondents.

To discover why 16 respondents did not feel time was saved by use of a ccin-operated laundry, they were asked to give their reasons.

REASONS CIVEN BY 16 WOMEN FOR THEIR
BELIEF THAT TIME IS NOT SAVED BY THE USE OF A COIN-OFERATED LAUNDRY

Table XII

| | Reasons* | NC. | * |
|----|--|-----|-----|
| 1. | Can do other things at home | 16 | 100 |
| 2. | Emergency load takes longer | 11 | 69 |
| 3. | waste time waiting | 2 | 12 |
| 4. | Have to change clothing to go to coin-operated laundry | 1 | 6 |

*Since more than one reason was often given, responses total more than 100%.

As shown in Table III, all 16 of the respondents said that they could do other things at home while they were using home laundry facilities. Many of the respondents did not like to load and unload the car to go to the coin-operated laundry and said they disliked it even more for an emergency washing. Two believed it was a waste of time waiting for the machines when the laundry

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was crowded and also waiting for the machines to complete the eycle. One respondent mentioned that she could wash at home without changing her clothing but felt she ought to change if she went to the coin-operated laundry.

The 34 respondents who believed they saved time by using a coin-operated laundry were asked to tell how they used the time they saved.

USE OF TIME SAVED AS INDICATED BY 34 RESPONDENTS WHO BELIEVED THEY SAVED TIME BY USING A COIN-OPERATED LAUNDRY

| Believed Use of Coin-Operated Laundry Saved Time | NO. | - (68) |
|---|-----|--------|
| Use of time saved:* | | |
| 1. Spent time with family | 20 | 59 |
| 2. Worked outside the home | 18. | 52 |
| 3. Cleaned house more thoroughly | 8 | 24 |
| 4. Rested (ha what halman him a sa | 4 | 12 |

*Since more than one use of time was often given, responses total more than 100%.

The mest common response given in Table IIII, as to use of time saved was, "It gives me more time with my family." The mext most usual response was that some of the time saved allowed the respondent to be employed outside the home.

Other ways mentioned by one or two respondents were, more time for community work, such as nurses side; work in the garden and yard; more time with friends.

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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study indicates some factors that influenced homemakers' opinions regarding the use of coin-operated laundry facilities. As they did their washing in a small town coin-operated
laundry, 50 homemakers were interviewed to determine their opinions
about the use of coin-operated as compared to home laundry facilities. Since the town was located in a largely rural area,
the sample was not typical of the country as a whole, but was
sufficient for this study.

Preference for the coin-operated rather than the home laundry was given a narrow margin by the respondents. This preference was apparently not influenced by the ownership of home laundry equipment. Similarly, employment outside the home did not seem to determine preference, although there was less variance among the employed than among the non-employed homemakers.

The most common reasons given by those respondents who preferred the coin-operated laundry were that it saved time and was convenient. On the other hand, the most common reasons given by those who did not prefer the coin-operated laundry were that no time was saved, and two-thirds believed that it was inconvenient.

When questioned specifically about convenience, however, slightly more than half of the homemakers indicated convenience as a determinant in the use of the coin-operated laundry. The main reasons given for its being more convenient than the home

 laundry were that it was faster, saved time, and required less lifting and climbing. The main reasons given by homemakers who said the coin-operated laundry was not convenient were that it took more time, there was too much to carry, and they disliked loading and unleading the car.

Of the respondents who believed they saved time by use of the coin-operated laundry, the greater number said it gave them more time with their family, and/or allowed them to work outside the home.

Comparisons of actual cost of using coin-operated and home laundry facilities had been made by only nine of the 50 home-makers. Two-thirds of the entire sample thought the cost of using the coin-operated laundry would be the same or less than the home laundry. Respondents with larger families, in general, thought that the cost of using the coin-operated laundry was less than doing the laundry at home.

Thus, the results of this study indicated that the greater number of homemakers who preferred to use a coin-operated laundry used the same one regularly, believed it saved time, was convenient, and cost less then using home laundry facilities. They were from the larger families, lacked home laundry facilities, and had made no actual comparitive figuring of costs.

The greater number of homemakers who did not prefer to use a coin-operated laundry believed it was more time consuming, less convenient, and cost more than using home laundry facilities.

They, too, lacked home facilities and had not figured actual costs in comparing each method of laundering.

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From the findings of this study, the following conclusions were drawn:

- 1. Homemakers usually patronize the same coin-operated laundry.
- Neither ownership of home-laundry equipment nor employment outside the home appears to influence the preference for use of either type of laundry equipment.
- 3. The majority of the homemskers who prefer coin-operated laundry facilities believe that time is saved by doing the laundry there.
- 4. The majority of coin-operated laundry users do not make actual cost comparisons of coin-operated versus home laundry use, but believe the cost to be less or the same.
- 5. The coin-operated laundry users with the larger families are most apt to believe the coin-operated laundry costs less to use than home facilities.

The interview was planned to give information on the opinions of homemakers regarding the cost, time spent, and convenience of coin-operated laundries. When it was administered, a few weaknesses appeared. Questions concerning "weekly-family-take-home pay" and "figuring costs" needed clarification for most of the respondents before they could reply. It is also possible that income data would have been more meaningful if the income range had been smaller. However, for the purposes of this study, only a rough estimate was considered necessary.

The interview schedule was apparently neither too long to cause uneasiness on the part of the respondent, nor too short to obtain the information needed. It allowed a composite picture of the average respondent of the study.

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Sources of information, upon which the study was based, were very limited. They included trade journals, magazines, one Agricultural Experiment Station research bulletin, correspondence with trade associations, and conversation with coin-operated laundry users and owners.

One of the unexpected findings was that among the employed homemakers, the preference for coin-operated laundry facilities exceeded by only 8% those who did not prefer it; and yet, those homemakers who believed time was saved exceeded by 54% those who did not.

Another surprising result was that the homemakers with larger families believed the cost of using the coin-operated was less than using the home laundry facilities.

The opportunity to use one or more of four types of washing machines was mentioned most frequently by (70%) the regular users as a reason for preference for the particular coin-operated laundry in which the study was conducted.

It was interesting to note that the most common reasons for preference expressed by respondents who preferred the coin-operated laundry were convenience and saving of time. In direct opposition, those who did not prefer the coin-operated laundry said it was inconvenient and took more time.

The findings in this study should be useful to:

- 1. Cwners of coin-operated laundries to know that choice of type of washing machines influences preference of some homemakers for use of coin-operated laundry facilities.
- 2. Coin-operated laundry owners to know that some homewakers prefer to have an attendant on duty to help them.

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- 3. Homemakers who need help in arriving at a decision concerning the best method of washing for her own situation.
- 4. The Home Economics Extension Agent as background material for advising individuals on all aspects of laundering methods, and to prepare lessons to help the groups with which she works become better informed.

As a result of this study it is recommended that:

- 1. Home Economists, Extension Agents and others in a position to give edvice on methods of laundering become better informed in order to give significant help leading to decisions on laundering methods and available facilities.
- 2. Additional studies of this kind be made to obtain more widespread coverage of homemakers opinions concerning the use of coin-operated laundries.
- 3. Studies be made of young married couples, in a period involving the purchase of large equipment, relating to their decision to purchase or not to purchase home-laundry equipment.
- 4. Studies of actual cost comparisons for use of coin-operated and home-laundry facilities be made, both for the city resident who uses municipal services, and for the rural resident who has his own water and sewer systems.

Because of the dearth of substantiated material relative to benefits the homemaker receives from using the coin-operated as contrasted to the home laundry, there is a great need for more research to be done in this area. This would be of advantage not only to the homemaker, but to those who act with her in an advisory capacity, and to the coin-operated laundry owner who is in business to offer services that are in keeping with the desires of his customers.

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Interview Schedule

"Reasons Homemakers Give For Use of a Coin - Operated Laundry"

| YesNo | |
|--|------------------------|
| How often do you use the | coin-operated laundry? |
| Twice a week Once each week Once in 2 weeks | Once per month |
| Is this the laundry you us | sually come to? |
| Yes No | |
| A. If "yes": Why do you | a come here? |
| 1 | 5 |
| 2 | 6 |
| 3 | 7• |
| | |
| B. If "no": Where do you | 8 |
| | 8 8 1 go other times? |
| B. If "no": Where do you C. Why do you go there? There are a number of conv you use any of these other | 8 8 1 go other times? |
| B. If "no": Where do you C. Why do you go there? There are a number of convergence. | 8 |

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| 5. | Do you have any suggestions for equipment or other things that would make your work easier or more pleasant here? |
|----|--|
| 6. | Do you do anything to the clothes before you put them in the machine? |
| | A. Check pockets At Home At Laundry B. Sorting C. Pretreating D. Soaking E. Bleaching |
| 7. | Do you have laundry equipment and facilities at home? |
| | YesNo |
| | A. If "yes": What do you have? |
| | 1. Washer 5. Clothespins 6. Sorting Table 7. Rinse Tubs 8. Other 9. |
| | 4. Line 10. |
| 8. | Do you prefer the coin-op laundry to the home laundry? |
| | YesNo |
| | A. If "yes": Why? |
| | 1. Saves time 4. Enjoy sociability 5. Other 6. |
| | B. If "no": Why not? |
| | 1. Takes more time 3. Costly 2. Inconvenient 4. Noisy 5. Other |
| 9• | Have you ever compared the cost of using a coin-op laundry with the cost of buying and maintaining home equipment? |
| | YesNo |
| | A. If "yes": What did you decide? |
| | 1. Costs more 3. Cost less 4. Other |
| | B. If "no": Do you believe there would be a difference in cost? |
| | YesNo |

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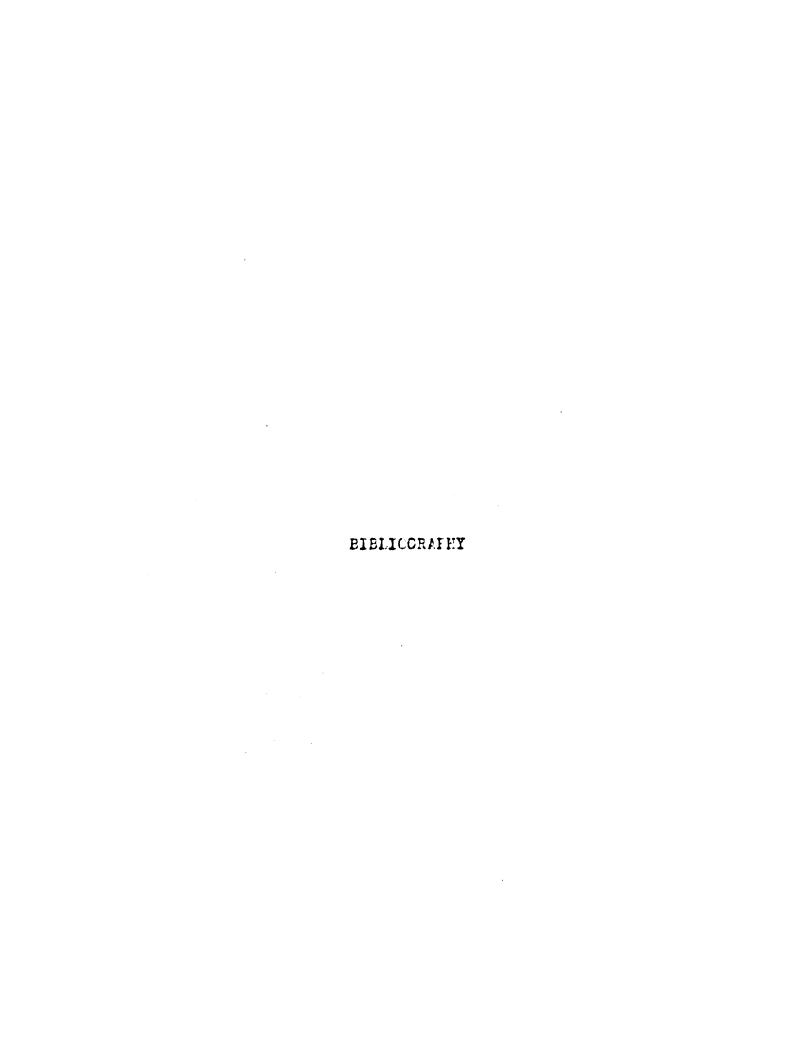
| | 1. If "yes": what would the difference be: |
|-----|---|
| | a. More c. Less b. Same d. Other |
| | 2. If "no": Why do you think there would be no difference? |
| | |
| 10. | Do you think using the coin-op laundry is more or less convenient than doing the washing at heme? |
| | More Less |
| | MOLE Dess |
| | A. If "more": Why? |
| | 1. More time saved 2. No basement steps to climb 3. Less lifting 4. Dry clothes lighter to handle 5. Husband babysits 6. Other |
| | B. If "Less": Why? |
| | 1. Takes more time 4. Need babysitter 2. Toting clothes back & forth 5. Too many things to carry 3. Carrying to and from car 6. Other |
| 11. | |
| | YesNo |
| | A. If "yes": What do you do with the time you "save"? |
| | 1. Rest More 5. Others |
| | 2. Work outside home |
| | 3. Can clean house more throughly 6. |
| | 4. More time with family |
| | B. If "no": Why? |
| | 1. At home, can do other things while washing |
| | 2. Can do one load if I need something quickly |
| | |
| 12. | Are you employed outside your home? |
| | YesNo |
| | A. If "yes": How much of the time? |
| | 1. Full time Days Nights |
| | 2. Half-days |
| | 3. Evenings |
| | 4. Hours per week |
| | 5. Irregular |
| | D UTDAM |

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| | B. What sort of work do yo | | |
|-----|---|---|--------|
| | 1. Secretarial | 5.wartress | |
| | 2. Nursing | 5.Waitress 6.Teacher 7.Cashier 8.Other | |
| | 3. Factory | 8 Other | |
| | 4. Clerk | 0.0 dier_ | |
| 13. | Would you mind telling me you "take-home" pay? | our approximate total weekly | family |
| | 4. Under \$10.00 | C. \$60 to \$79 | |
| | B. \$10 to \$59 | D. \$80 to \$99 | |
| | A. Under \$40.00 B. \$40 to \$59 E. \$100 | or over | |
| | 21 4200 | | |
| 14. | Do you have a family? | | |
| | YesNo | | |
| | A. If "yes": How large a fa | mily do you have? | |
| | Number in the Family | | |
| | B. Who are they? | | |
| | 1. Husband | | |
| | 2. Wife | | |
| | 3. Boys Age | | |
| | h. Girls Age | | |
| | 3. Boys Age 4. Girls Age 5. Others | | |
| | enterphysion-couples | | |
| 15. | Would you mind telling me ap | proximately how old you are | ? |
| | A. Under 25 | | |
| | | | |
| | C • 40 to 05 | | |
| | D. Cver 65 | | |
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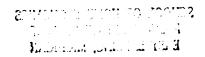
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