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AN INVESTIGATION OF OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES
IN CLOTHING SERVICES AS RELATED TO AVAILABLE
VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE ANN ARBOR AREA

By

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ABSTRACT

AN INVESTIGATION OF OCCUPATIONAL OPPORTUNITIES IN CLOTHING SERVICES AS RELATED TO AVAILABLE VOCATIONAL EDUCATION IN THE ANN ARBOR AREA

By Jane Kulpinski

New dimensions in the employment market have been opened in recent years due to advancements in science and technology. Recent studies of employment needs have prompted legislation which provides reimbursement for vocational education programs to prepare people to assume new occupational roles. Revisions and changes in the educational structure have become necessary to fulfill this function.

This survey is an evaluation of employment opportunities dealing with clothing services in the Ann Arbor area. Inquiries were made to determine whether or not educational opportunities are fulfilling existing needs. An effort was made to determine whether or not prospective students were sufficiently interested in enrolling in clothing services courses to warrant consideration of such courses in curricula of post-high-school institutions.

Findings indicate that a definite market exists in Ann Arbor for persons trained in clothing services in retail-ready-to-wear establishments as well as on a self-employed basis in the design and construction of clothing for a private clientele.

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Although 92 per cent of the prospective student sample indicated an interest in enrolling in clothing services courses, 85 per cent of this group would use the acquired knowledge for the use of their families and themselves, while 15 per cent would seek employment.

Responses of potential students were compared to responses of employers to reveal that current wages paid to fitters in retail establishments coincide with salary expectations of potential students. However, salaries paid to seamstresses fall below the estimate of potential students.

Analysis of responses regarding price ranges for clothing services disclosed that potential students do not anticipate as high a financial gain from the performance of clothing services as the selected group of women are willing to pay. One reason why potential students are not highly motivated to enter the field of clothing services may be a lack of information about the value of clothing services and the possible financial gain from these services.

Employers indicated that skilled help was difficult to find and that, in many cases, the quality of workmanship did not satisfy the standards of the store. Consequently, alterations are discouraged or sent to private seamstresses.

One third of the employers would be willing to finance courses which would enable employees to upgrade their skills if the tuition for the courses was reasonable. Two employers expressed willingness

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to cooperate with a teacher who might wish to observe workroom operations for the purpose of setting up clothing services courses to be taught in educational institutions.

Neither of the two educational institutions surveyed in this study offers clothing services courses which are designed specifically to prepare students for employment. One representative of an educational institution stated that any new course would have to fit into a regular four year program. The representative of the other educational institution stated that an effort is made to achieve a balance between vocational and technical programs, opportunities for both sexes, and for non-white as well as white population. The cost of including a proposed course into the curriculum would need to be justified by its importance to the community.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

Advancements in science and technology have opened new dimensions in the employment market in recent years. One of the functions of education is to prepare people to live in a world of technology and change; therefore, revisions and changes in the educational structure of our society become necessary in order to fulfill this function.

Employment of large numbers of women outside the home, a proportionate decrease in jobs for unskilled workers, the high percentage of unmotivated students who drop out of school, and the increase in demand for service occupations has brought vocational education into prominence.¹ Recent studies of employment needs have prompted legislation which provides reimbursement for vocational education programs throughout the country. As a result, secondary schools, community colleges and adult education programs are including occupational training programs in the curricula.

The scope of this investigation includes an evaluation of employment opportunities dealing with clothing services occupations

¹Elizabeth Simpson, "Selected Issues and Problems in Secondary Education," Journal of Home Economics, Vol. 55, No. 1 (January, 1963).

and the training facilities available to prospective employees in the Ann Arbor area. Employment sources in Ann Arbor and curricula of post-high school institutions were investigated to determine whether or not educational opportunities are fulfilling existing needs.

Review of Literature

The passage of the Vocational Education Act of 1963¹ provided for the continuation of the existing vocational education acts (Smith-Hughes Act and George-Barden Act) and allowed additional funds for vocational education, amounting to \$225 million the fourth year and the same amount each fiscal year thereafter. The act also designated that money in the home economics category be used for home economics training directed not only to home activity, but involving homemaking skills for which employment opportunities are available.²

A recent study of clothing services opportunities in Grand Rapids³ revealed the need for a training program in clothing alteration skills. Such a program was initiated in the adult education program and a manual is being compiled under the guidance of Eleanor Tumeth, Supervisor of Grand Rapids Public Schools.

¹U.S., Congress, House, Vocational Education Act of 1963, 88th Congress, Dec., 1963, H.R. 4955.

²Powell. Report No. 393, 88th Congress, June 18, 1963.

³Patricia Rasch, "An Exploratory Study of the Occupational Opportunities in Selected Clothing Services in the Grand Rapids Area" (unpublished Master's problem, Department of Textiles, Clothing and Related Arts, Michigan State University, May, 1966).

Oklahoma State University conducted a study on vocational education in home economics directed toward gainful employment.¹

Findings related to clothing services were:

- a) A need existed for clothing services.
- b) Available employment in clothing services was indicated upon completion of training.

Directions for construction techniques were geared to student abilities, from simple to complicated, and in order of the most frequent requests.

In 1964, a community survey of five hundred women, store managers, and alteration department personnel in Fargo, North Dakota, indicated that there was a shortage of trained alteration workers. A course² in alteration procedures was designed to alleviate the shortage and is being taught in the Fargo Adult Homemaking Program.

A trend away from vocational education in recent years may have been responsible for shortages of skilled personnel in this and other areas. However, vocational-occupational education concerns itself with intellectual, manipulative, social and creative capacities of an individual and should be part of the entire process of education.³

¹June Cozine, Project Director, "Certain Factors to be Considered in Offering Home Economics Courses Preparing for Gainful Employment," (Stillwater, Okla.: Oklahoma State University, Research Foundation, March, 1966).

²Beverly K. Slotten, Alterations of Ready-to-Wear, (Fargo, N. Dakota: Fargo Adult Homemaking Program, April-May, 1965).

³Cynthia Parsons, "Education for Tomorrow's Jobs," The Christian Science Monitor, Tuesday, July 18, 1967, p. 9.

The Michigan Manpower Study¹ labels the present time as the Human Resources Era. The employment structure in the United States is shifting from a manufacturing to a services orientation. In forecasting the characteristics of Michigan's labor force for the next fifteen years, the findings indicate that development of human resources is necessary for continued economic growth. Although clothing services were not included among the occupations researched, a significant increase in the service occupations, as compared to goods-producing occupations, would tend to indicate that the demand for clothing services will increase along with the demand for other services.

A panel of consultants on vocational education concluded that vocational education must be made available to all people who have the need, the desire, and the ability to benefit from it, and that education for occupational competency should be correlated with the possibility of employment.²

Since the strength of job training programs depends on the total preparation of the student for job entry, a course in personal improvement involving attitudes, appearance, manner, physical and

¹The Michigan Manpower Study, Battelle Memorial Institute, Columbus Laboratories, Columbus, Ohio, November, 1966.

²Education for a Changing World of Work, Superintendent of Documents Catalog No. F S 5.280: 80021, (Washington, D. C.: U. S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, 1963).

mental health would greatly improve the competencies of students to enter into the world of work.¹

Definition of Terms

Throughout this study the term "clothing services" refers to the design and construction of clothing and the alteration of ready-to-wear for gainful employment.

"Gainful employment" refers to a wage-earning occupation.

"Vocational education" refers to that facet of education which prepares individuals for gainful employment.

Importance of the Study

In a discussion of vocational education training programs, Houle² stated that three elements must be present:

- a) A body of skills, information, attitudes and understandings to be transmitted.
- b) A group of people who have a real need to acquire the specialized training and education.
- c) A medium through which training can be transmitted.

¹Dorothy S. Lawson, "Education for Homemaking and for Employment," Contemporary Issues in Home Economics, A Conference Report, University of Illinois, 1965.

²Cyril Houle, "Opportunities for the Professional Study of Adult Education," Adult Education Bulletin, Vol. VII, No. 4 (April, 1943), p. 104.

Reinwald¹ suggests that the school administrator and his staff become acquainted with local employment needs as the first step in initiating a Home Economics for Employment Program. If evidence shows that sufficient job opportunities are available, training programs can be established. Development of job analysis, curriculum, learning experiences, resources, facilities, budget, and a program for evaluation are subsequent steps to be considered.

This study, "An Investigation of Occupational Opportunities in Clothing Services as Related to Available Vocational Education in the Ann Arbor Area," has a threefold purpose:

- a) To evaluate employment opportunities dealing with clothing services.
- b) To determine whether or not training facilities are available to prospective employees in the Ann Arbor area.
- c) To determine whether or not the prospective students are interested in availing themselves of such courses.

This initial study of clothing services occupations in the Ann Arbor area should be useful to the community in establishing guidelines for an educational program dealing with clothing services occupations. It is hoped that the study can serve as a basis for alerting other areas to the need for vocational training possibilities.

¹Cleo Reinwald, "Education for Employment," The Bulletin of the National Association of Secondary School Principals, Vol. 48, No. 296 (December, 1964), pp. 31-32.

CHAPTER II

METHODOLOGY

Selection of the Method

According to Kerlinger, the structured interview, including a schedule with open-end, closed, and scale items, is the best instrument available to secure information.¹ The direct interview was chosen to obtain information from employers and representatives of educational institutions because it offers more flexibility in clarifying responses than does the mailed questionnaire. The interview also provides an opportunity for sounding out ideas that can be used for further research or that may give additional information.

The mailed questionnaire was used to survey the selected group of women and prospective students because the number of persons involved was too great to survey by direct interview.

Development of the Instrument

Two structured interview schedules and two questionnaires were developed for this study (see Appendices A, B, C and D). Each instrument contained specific, fixed-alternative and open-end questions

¹Fred N. Kerlinger, Foundations of Behavioral Research, New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965, p. 476.

for the selected group of women, prospective students, employers and representatives of educational institutions. General, open-end questions were included in the mailed questionnaires and in the interview schedule for prospective employers in order to permit comparison. Most of the questions were pre-coded to expedite tabulation.

The interview schedules and questionnaires were developed and submitted to faculty and graduate assistants for criticism. Suggested changes were made in the instruments where there was a need for refinement or clarification. Goode and Hatt suggest that in order to increase the reliability of the instruments it is necessary to select respondents with a strong interest in the subject matter of the survey.¹ Otherwise, the sample is apt to be biased.

The interview schedule for prospective employers was pre-tested on two retailers in Ann Arbor. As a result of the pretest, the writer assumed that the instrument was valid.

Selection and Description of the Sample

The interview sample of prospective employers was composed of all the personnel in charge of seventeen women's ready-to-wear stores that offer alteration services to their clientele (see Appendix E).

¹William J. Goode and Paul K. Hatt, Methods in Social Research (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., Inc., 1952), p. 182.

The selected group of one hundred ninety women was drawn from among members of Women's City Club in Ann Arbor and from the ranks of professional women, as well as wives of professional men in Ann Arbor. The writer's professional experience in clothing design and construction indicated that this group would have a strong interest in the survey because of their demand for the particular skills required in clothing construction and alteration.

One hundred ninety prospective students were drawn from the clothing construction class files of the Ann Arbor Adult Education Department and from among recent graduates of home economics programs in high schools, because the orientation of these former students to education and clothing courses suggested a receptive sample.

Since this investigation was directed toward clothing services courses on a post-high school level, Washtenaw Community College and Eastern Michigan University were the two educational institutions interviewed.

Letters stating the nature of the investigation and requesting an appointment for an interview were sent in advance to the educational institutions and to the employers (see Appendices F, G, H, and I). These letters were followed up with telephone calls to arrange a time for the interview.

Questionnaires for the selected group of women and prospective students were accompanied by cover letters which explained the survey and asked for the respondents' cooperation. One hundred thirteen prospective students and one hundred eight of the selected group of women responded.

Method of Presentation

The compiled information was based on the results of the data tabulation. The findings were summarized into four categories:

- a) Prospective employment opportunities in retail establishments.
- b) Self-employment opportunities.
- c) Interest in learning clothing services skills for gainful employment or use of family and self.
- d) Availability of clothing services courses in post-high school institutions in the Ann Arbor area.

Opinions and ideas of representatives of educational institutions and employers were analyzed to determine opportunities for education and for employment in the field of clothing services. Responses of prospective students were analyzed to determine the degree of interest in course offerings in clothing services. Information was compiled into tables for ease in visual review.

CHAPTER III

EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES IN CLOTHING SERVICES

Employment Opportunities in Retail Ready-to-wear Stores

One of the main objectives of the study was to determine the extent to which opportunities in clothing services exist in Ann Arbor. Interviews with prospective employers indicated that alteration departments are shorthanded. There is a need at present for three full-time and several part-time employees in alteration workrooms. Stores with projected expansion plans foresee a greater need in the future. Several employers who have sufficient help at the present time stated that competent help is difficult to find when needed. One employer stated that he waited three months to hire a skilled seamstress. Only eleven or two-thirds of the employers felt that the quality of workmanship performed by present employers satisfies the standards of the store.

Five or one-third of the employers indicated they would be willing to finance courses which would enable their employees to upgrade their skills if the tuition for the courses was reasonable.

Three employers paid private seamstresses to alter garments in their homes for these reasons:

- a) Skilled help is not readily available in this area.
- b) Store space is not adequate to provide for an alteration workroom.

- c) A workroom is too expensive to set up and maintain.
- d) Communication is difficult since many alteration workers are foreign born.
- e) Seamstresses cannot handle fittings because of a language barrier.
- f) Alteration workrooms do not support themselves.

Self-employment Opportunities

The survey of a selected group of women indicated a definite market in custom clothing construction and alteration services if seamstresses with a high degree of skill were available in the area (see Appendix A). A large number of women customers in this sample (89 per cent) required alteration services at some time but were often dissatisfied with the quality of workmanship performed on garments.

TABLE 1.--Responses of the selected group of women regarding demand for clothing services and satisfaction with the workmanship rendered

| Demand and Satisfaction | Responses * | | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------|----|-------|----|-----------|----|-------|----|
| | Always | | Often | | Sometimes | | Never | |
| | N | % | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Require alterations on ready-to-wear | 17 | 16 | 30 | 28 | 49 | 45 | 12 | 11 |
| Satisfaction with quality | 24 | 22 | 31 | 29 | 32 | 30 | 4 | 4 |

*108 responses

Women in this sample indicated they would avail themselves of clothing services more often if the quality of services were improved.

TABLE 2.--Responses of the selected group of women concerning the need for clothing services courses

| Need for Clothing Services Courses | Responses | |
|--|-----------|---------|
| | Yes % | No % |
| Feel a need exists for upgrading clothing services skills | 53 | 47 |
| Would hire competent clothing services employees more often if they were available | 73 | 27 |

Salaries and Benefits Offered to Employees

Results of a survey of salaries and benefits offered by the stores to potential employees, and prices the selected group of women are willing to pay for clothing services were compared with employee estimates of fair salaries to reveal possible causes of interest, or lack of interest, in working in clothing services occupations.

Prices which the selected group of women are willing to pay for clothing services are considerably higher than wages regarded as fair by the sample of potential students. A well-paid market exists for self-employed seamstresses who possess a high degree of skill.

The rate of \$2.00 per hour for fitters and \$1.75 per hour for seamstresses is the current average wage that employees in

clothing services occupations can expect in Ann Arbor. Wages varied greatly between stores, ranging from \$1.25 to \$2.25 per hour. Two stores pay a straight salary based upon a 38-hour week. The writer converted these figures into an hourly rate for clarification and to obtain the rate included in the report.

TABLE 3.--Comparison of the opinions of potential students and selected group of women regarding wages considered desirable with wages paid by employers in Ann Arbor for clothing services positions

| Clothing Services Positions | Average Hourly Wages | | |
|-----------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|
| | Opinions of | | Wages Paid By Employers |
| | Potential Students | Selected Group of Women | |
| Fitter | \$2.00 | \$ -- | \$2.00 |
| Alteration seamstress | 2.20 | 3.50 | 1.75 |
| Dressmaker | 2.70 | 3.50 | -- |

Employee benefits which are presently in effect compare favorably with the benefits desired by the potential group of students, with the exception of profit-sharing and sick leave. In the case of part-time employees, benefits include only work breaks and discount on merchandise. Some employers did not wish to make a definite commitment about sick leave; they reported that store policy did not provide sick leave for part-time employees but that sick leave might be extended, to a limited extent, to deserving employees at the discretion of the employer.

TABLE 4.--Responses of potential students and employers concerning employee benefits

| Employee Benefits | Responses* | | Offered by | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|----|------------|----|
| | Desired by Potential Students | | Employers | |
| | N | % | N | % |
| Bonus | 30 | 27 | 3 | 20 |
| Hospitalization | 66 | 55 | 10 | 60 |
| Life Insurance | 36 | 32 | 7 | 40 |
| Paid Vacation | 62 | 55 | 12 | 72 |
| Sick Leave | 62 | 55 | 7 | 40 |
| Discount on Merchandise | 42 | 37 | 12 | 72 |
| Work Breaks | 42 | 37 | 8 | 50 |
| Profit Sharing | 30 | 27 | | 0 |
| Other - Free Parking | | 0 | 3 | 20 |

*Multiple responses of 113 potential students and 17 employees

Price Ranges for Clothing Services

Analysis of responses regarding price ranges for clothing services disclosed that potential students do not anticipate as high a financial gain from the performance of clothing services as the selected group of women are willing to pay. One reason why potential students are not highly motivated to enter the field of clothing services may be a lack of information about the value of clothing services and the possible financial gain. The women in this sample,

who hire seamstresses to sew or alter clothing, apparently are willing to pay a fair price for quality workmanship.

Retail ready-to-wear stores offered clothing services at a much lower rate than considered fair by the selected group of women and potential students. Several employers stated that customers are reluctant to pay alteration charges on a ready-made garment; therefore prices are kept to a minimum. Employers feel that, in some cases, alteration charges make the difference between gaining or losing a sale. Low rates charged by retail establishments may explain, in part, why alteration workrooms rarely show a profit.

TABLE 5.--Comparison of the opinions of the selected group of women, potential students, and employers regarding fair prices for clothing services

| Clothing Services | Price Range for Services | Opinions | | | | | |
|--|--------------------------|-------------------------|----|--------------------|----|-----------|-----|
| | | Selected Group of Women | | Potential Students | | Employers | |
| | | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Tailoring a woman's lined suit | \$ 75- 99 | 50 | 46 | 10 | 49 | | |
| | 100-149 | 44 | 41 | 10 | 49 | | |
| | 150-200 | 14 | 13 | 2 | 2 | | |
| Sewing a lined, sleeveless sheath | 25- 49 | 79 | 73 | 97 | 86 | | |
| | 50- 69 | 28 | 26 | 16 | 14 | | |
| | 70-100 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | | |
| Sewing an unlined, straight skirt | 7- 10 | 67 | 62 | 99 | 88 | | |
| | 11- 15 | 25 | 23 | 14 | 12 | | |
| | 16- 25 | 16 | 15 | | 0 | | |
| Sewing a lined, straight skirt | 10- 14 | 54 | 50 | 87 | 77 | | |
| | 15- 19 | 35 | 32 | 26 | 23 | | |
| | 20- 30 | 19 | 18 | | 0 | | |
| Shortening a bodice at the waist (no zipper) | 3- 4 | 68 | 63 | 72 | 62 | 17 | 100 |
| | 5- 9 | 39 | 36 | 42 | 38 | | 0 |
| | 10- 15 | 1 | 1 | | 0 | | 0 |
| Hemming a straight skirt (unlined) | 2- 3 | 81 | 75 | 97 | 86 | 17 | 100 |
| | 4- 5 | 24 | 22 | 16 | 14 | | 0 |
| | 6- 8 | 3 | 3 | | 0 | | 0 |
| Hemming a straight skirt (lined) | 3- 4 | 66 | 61 | 61 | 54 | 8 | 50 |
| | 5- 7 | 37 | 34 | 52 | 46 | 8 | 50 |
| | 8- 9 | 5 | 5 | | 0 | | 0 |
| Replacing a zipper | 2- 3 | 81 | 75 | 61 | 54 | 17 | 100 |
| | 4- 6 | 21 | 20 | 52 | 46 | | 0 |
| | 7- 10 | 5 | 5 | | 0 | | 0 |
| Re-setting sleeves in a lined garment | 5- 7 | 62 | 57 | 51 | 45 | 17 | 100 |
| | 8- 12 | 30 | 28 | 51 | 45 | | 0 |
| | 13- 20 | 16 | 15 | 11 | 10 | | 0 |
| Re-setting sleeves in unlined garment | 3- 5 | 78 | 72 | 73 | 65 | 17 | 100 |
| | 6- 10 | 24 | 22 | 40 | 35 | | 0 |
| | 11- 15 | 6 | 6 | | 0 | | 0 |

Workroom Operations in Retail Ready-to-wear Stores

One employer suggested a coordinated effort among retail stores to organize and patronize a workroom which would perform alteration services for all stores. Seamstresses would develop expertise in special phases of alteration work through repeated performance. A uniform pay scale could be established which would allow for periodic raises commensurate with the abilities and seniority of employees. The employer felt this system would result in more efficient, less expensive alterations and fewer responsibilities for store managers.

Two members of chain retail establishments transport clothes into a Detroit workroom which serves all the stores in the chain.

Reasons given for this procedure were:

- a) Less expensive.
- b) More efficient.
- c) Fewer problems in obtaining skilled help in a large, metropolitan area.

One workroom manager delegates the work to seamstresses. Three employers send alteration work out to private seamstresses who are paid by the piece for clothing services. One owner of a small shop performs the necessary alterations herself, at no charge to the customer. Several employers felt that a qualified fitter who is able to establish good rapport and to communicate freely with the customer,

as well as the seamstresses in the workroom, is invaluable to the store. They felt that such a person is important in helping to sell a garment as well as in establishing a reputation for fine service.

Summary

Prices the selected group of women indicated they are willing to pay for clothing services indicate that financial gain from the performance of these services on a self-employed basis is greater than potential students have estimated. In retail ready-to-wear stores fitters' salaries coincide with salary expectations of potential students. However, salaries paid to alteration seamstresses fall below the estimates of potential students.

Employers and the selected group of women feel a definite need for upgrading skills presently available in the Ann Arbor area. Several employers indicated that they would be willing to increase salaries of employees if a proportionate increase in skill was demonstrated.

Stores in the sample employ different methods of handling alterations. Two members of chain retail establishments transport clothes into Detroit alteration workrooms; the majority take care of clothing services on the premises; three retailers send clothes to homes of local seamstresses to be altered.

CHAPTER IV

INTEREST IN COURSES INVOLVING CLOTHING SERVICES SKILLS

Interest of Potential Students

One of the elements necessary for a vocational training program is that a group of people have the need or desire to acquire the specialized training.¹ In this study the need or desire for knowledge was categorized as follows:

- a) To secure employment.
- b) For the use of self and family.

One hundred one (85 per cent) of the potential student group indicated that they would use acquired knowledge to sew for themselves and their families; seventeen (15 per cent) would use the knowledge to seek employment.

Previous training in clothing construction skills was indicated by 93 per cent of the sample of potential students. Only 16 per cent of this group felt qualified to accept positions requiring clothing construction skills and 91 per cent expressed a desire to enroll in clothing services courses. Several were concerned about the cost of

¹Houle, op. cit., p. 104.

the course and a few mentioned that they could take advantage of such a course only if it coincided with homemaking and family activities scheduled during the day. Table 6 shows answers of potential students to questions regarding previous training and interest in clothing services courses.

TABLE 6.--Responses of prospective students regarding previous training and interest in clothing services courses

| Previous Training and Interest | Responses* | | | |
|--|------------|----------|----|---------|
| | N | Yes % | N | No % |
| Have had training in clothing construction skills | 104 | 93 | 8 | 7 |
| Feel competent to qualify for positions requiring clothing construction skills | 18 | 16 | 95 | 84 |
| Interest in acquiring clothing construction skills | 104 | 92 | 9 | 8 |
| Would enroll in courses if such were offered in the Ann Arbor area | 103 | 91 | 10 | 9 |
| Would use acquired knowledge in seeking employment | 17 | 15 | 96 | 85 |
| Would use acquired knowledge for self and/or family | 101 | 89 | 12 | 11 |

*Multiple responses of 115 prospective students

In indicating preferences for the courses listed in the questionnaire, the group of potential students selected from one to three of the courses. The highest preference, 88 per cent, was shown for the clothing construction course; there was 51 per cent preference

shown for the alteration course, and 40 per cent for a course in pattern making (see Table 7).

TABLE 7.--Responses of potential students indicating preferences in clothing services courses

| Courses | Responses* | |
|-----------------------|------------|----|
| | N | % |
| Clothing Construction | 99 | 88 |
| Alterations | 58 | 51 |
| Pattern Making | 45 | 40 |

*Multiple responses of 115 potential students

Interest of Employers

Employers expressed the following opinions regarding the adoption of clothing services courses into curricula of educational institutions in the Ann Arbor area:

- a) Training would be helpful and necessary in order to upgrade salaries and status of persons employed in alteration departments.
- b) Skilled help would add to the prestige of the store in terms of excellence of service.

Two employers expressed willingness to cooperate with a teacher who might wish to set up courses in clothing services. Observation of the workroom operation would be necessary. Methods considered efficient, in the teacher's opinion, could be adopted

into a course of study.

Three employers stated that they would consider serving on an advisory committee which would meet with school personnel to discuss the feasibility of including such courses in school curricula in the interests of the community.

Summary

Degree of interest in clothing services courses among the sample of potential students is high. Acquired knowledge would be used for themselves and their families by 85 per cent of the sample. Employment would be sought by 15 per cent of the sample.

Employers felt that an upgrading of skills would be necessary in order to make salary increases possible in clothing services occupations. Several stated that they would be willing to cooperate in a community-oriented course in clothing services by allowing a teacher who is experienced in clothing services to observe the work-room operation for the purpose of planning an effective course in clothing services.

CHAPTER V

AVAILABILITY OF CLOTHING SERVICES COURSES

Criteria Used in Selection of Courses

Representatives of the two educational institutions interviewed explained school policies regarding the criteria used in the adoption of new courses into the existing curriculum.

Eastern Michigan University does not offer courses in the field of clothing services which are specifically designed for wage-earning. The curriculum does include courses in clothing construction, pattern design and retailing, which prepare students for occupations in these areas upon completion of a four year program. One of the criteria used in the adoption of new courses into the curriculum is that they must fit into a regular four year program of study.

Washtenaw Community College does not offer courses in clothing services at the present time. Criteria used in the selection of courses to include in the curriculum are:

- a) A balance between vocational and technical programs.
- b) A balance of one year programs and two year programs.
- c) Training opportunities offered to both sexes.
- d) Focus upon opportunities which the non-white, as well as the white, population can move into and benefit from.

- e) Justification for cost of programs based on course offerings which accommodate as many people as possible and on ~~course~~ offerings which accommodate a limited number of people in badly needed programs.

Summary

Neither of the two educational institutions offers courses in clothing services, which prepare students for employment. One institution would require such courses to be part of a four year program. Among ~~criteria~~ used in selection of courses to include in the curriculum of the other educational institution are the cost of the program, a balance between technical and vocational programs, and training opportunities for both sexes and for the white and non-white population.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Recent legislation supporting vocational education prompted this study of the employment opportunities in clothing services in the Ann Arbor area.

In addition to evaluating employment opportunities, inquiries were made to determine if training facilities are available to prospective students of clothing services courses. Finally, an effort was made to determine if prospective students are interested in enrolling in courses in clothing services.

A structured interview schedule was administered to 17 employers and 2 representatives of educational institutions and questionnaires were mailed to 190 potential students and 190 selected women.

The interview schedule for employers dealt with employment opportunities for persons trained in clothing services skills, and with salaries and benefits offered to employees. The interview schedule for educational institutions investigated the possibilities for consideration of adding clothing services courses to the curricula of their schools. Questionnaires sent to potential students were designed to determine their interest in clothing services courses and opinions

regarding wages and benefits. Finally, the questionnaires sent to a selected group of women investigated a potential market for self-employed seamstresses.

Data collected revealed that potential students are interested in availing themselves of clothing services courses mainly to use the acquired knowledge for their families and themselves. Fifteen per cent of this group would use the acquired knowledge to seek employment. Employers and the selected group of women feel a need exists for upgrading clothing services skills.

Potential students underestimated the financial gain in clothing services occupations when salary estimates made by these women were compared with prices the selected group of women were willing to pay for these services. Salaries offered to fitters in retail ready-to-wear establishments coincide with salary expectations of potential students. However, salaries paid to alteration seamstresses fall below the estimate of potential students.

Employers were cooperative in answering questions and ventured several valuable suggestions for designing a course in clothing services to be used in schools. Two employers were willing to have an observer in their workrooms to study alteration methods used for adoption into a course of study and to have constructive criticism of methods and facilities.

Problems encountered in maintaining an alteration workroom were identified by several employers as follows:

- a) Scarcity of skilled help.

- b) Inadequate facilities.
- c) High cost of maintaining an alteration workroom.

Neither of the two educational institutions surveyed in this study offers courses in clothing services which are designed specifically to prepare students for employment. One representative of an educational institution stated that any new course would have to fit into a regular four year program. The representative of the other educational institution stated that several criteria are used. An effort is made to achieve a balance between vocational and technical programs, and between one year programs and two year programs. Training opportunities for both sexes, and for the white and non-white population should be emphasized. The importance of a proposed course should justify the cost of including it in the curriculum.

Recommendations

This investigation of employment opportunities in clothing services in Ann Arbor is an initial effort to determine the need for clothing services courses in educational institutions in the Ann Arbor area.

The writer hopes that this report can serve as an initial step in launching and initiating clothing services courses into the curricula of the educational institutions involved. Such courses would provide a vocational outlet for women; because the major concentration in vocational education has been on the male sex, an important segment of

the population has been overlooked.

Replication of this study in other areas of Washtenaw County utilizing the instruments developed, would yield more conclusive evidence on a broader scale.

A similar study in other areas of the state could reveal a potential student population in need of clothing services courses.

A resource guide could be developed, through the cooperative effort of educators who are engaged in teaching clothing services courses, for the use of teachers who are planning courses in clothing services. The resource guide might be incorporated into a course of study for all phases of clothing services, from which teachers could choose the concepts that relate to the job opportunity profile of the community in which they work.

APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR SELECTED GROUP OF WOMEN

Instructions:

Read each question carefully.

In the space provided, check the answer which best expresses your opinion or answers the question most accurately.

1. Do you require alteration services when you purchase ready-to-wear clothing?

always _____
often _____
sometimes _____
never _____

2. Are you satisfied with the quality of workmanship in the alteration of ready-to-wear?

always _____
often _____
sometimes _____
never _____

3. Do you feel that most fitters and seamstresses who have performed clothing services for you need additional training?

yes _____
no _____

4. If you have some of your clothing custom made, to what extent do you avail yourself of clothing construction services?

1 to 3 garments per year _____
4 to 6 garments per year _____
7 to 10 garments per year _____

5. Would you avail yourself of clothing construction services more often if competent services were available?

yes _____
no _____

6. Do you have your clothing custom made?

always _____
often _____
sometimes _____
never _____

7. Prices charged in Ann Arbor for dressmaking and alterations on a wool garment are listed in three columns showing a range of prices for these services. Please check the price range you would be willing to pay for each service rendered on a wool garment.

Clothing Construction
(not including fabric)

Price Ranges for Services

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| tailoring a woman's lined suit | \$75-99 | \$100-149 | \$150-200 |
| sewing a lined, sleeveless sheath | 25-49 | 50- 69 | 70-100 |
| sewing a lined, straight skirt | 10-14 | 15- 19 | 20- 30 |
| sewing an unlined, straight skirt | 7-10 | 11- 15 | 15- 25 |

Alterations

(not including cost of notions)

| | | | |
|---|------|-------|--------|
| shortening a bodice at the waist (no zipper) | 3- 4 | 5- 9 | 10- 15 |
| hemming a straight skirt (unlined) | 2- 3 | 4- 5 | 6- 8 |
| hemming a straight skirt (lined) | 3- 4 | 5- 7 | 6- 8 |
| replacing a zipper | 2- 3 | 4- 6 | 7- 10 |
| re-setting sleeves in lined garment | 5- 7 | 8- 12 | 13- 20 |
| re-setting sleeves in unlined garment | 3- 5 | 6- 10 | 11- 15 |

8. What would you consider a fair hourly wage to pay a skilled seamstress?

\$1.50 to \$1.99 per hour _____
 2.00 to 2.99 per hour _____
 3.00 to 3.99 per hour _____
 4.00 or more per hour _____

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR PERSONS INTERESTED IN
CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION COURSES

Instructions:

Read each question carefully.

In the space provided, check the answer which best expresses your opinion or answers the question most accurately.

1. Have you ever had training in clothing construction skills?

yes _____
no _____

If Yes, what kind? _____

2. Do you possess sufficient competency in clothing construction techniques to qualify for a position in this field?

yes _____
no _____

3. Are you interested in acquiring skills in clothing construction?

yes _____
no _____

4. If courses in clothing services skills were offered in the Ann Arbor area, would you enroll in them?

yes _____
no _____

5. If your answer to the above question is Yes, please check the course or courses in which you would be interested.

alterations _____
clothing construction _____
pattern making _____

6. Would you use the knowledge and skills acquired in these courses in seeking employment?

yes _____
no _____

7. Do you sew and alter clothes for yourself and your family?

Self

yes _____
no _____

Family

yes _____
no _____

Other

yes _____
no _____

8. Would you use the knowledge and skills acquired in these courses for yourself and your family?

SelfFamilyOther
 yes _____
 no _____

 yes _____
 no _____

 yes _____
 no _____

9. What would you consider a fair wage in the following categories?

 fitter _____
 alteration seamstress _____
 dressmaker _____

10. Please check the employee benefits important to you.

| | Yes | No |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| bonus | _____ | _____ |
| hospitalization | _____ | _____ |
| life insurance | _____ | _____ |
| paid vacation | _____ | _____ |
| sick leave | _____ | _____ |
| discount on merchandise | _____ | _____ |
| work breaks | _____ | _____ |
| profit sharing | _____ | _____ |
| other _____ | _____ | _____ |

11. If you plan to use the knowledge and skills acquired in clothing services courses for self-employment, what would you consider a fair price for the following services?

Clothing Construction
 (not including fabric)

Price Ranges for Services

| | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|-----------------|-----------------|
| tailoring a woman's lined suit | \$75-99 _____ | \$100-149 _____ | \$150-200 _____ |
| sewing a lined, sleeveless sheath | 25-49 _____ | 50- 69 _____ | 70-100 _____ |
| sewing a lined, straight skirt | 10-14 _____ | 15- 19 _____ | 20- 30 _____ |
| sewing an unlined, straight skirt | 7-10 _____ | 11- 15 _____ | 15- 25 _____ |

Alterations

(not including cost of notions)

| | | | |
|---|------------|-------------|--------------|
| shortening a bodice at the waist (no zipper) | 3- 4 _____ | 5- 9 _____ | 10- 15 _____ |
| hemming a straight skirt (unlined) | 2- 3 _____ | 4- 5 _____ | 6- 8 _____ |
| hemming a straight skirt (lined) | 3- 4 _____ | 5- 7 _____ | 5- 10 _____ |
| replacing a zipper | 2- 3 _____ | 4- 6 _____ | 7- 10 _____ |
| re-setting sleeves in lined garment | 5- 7 _____ | 8- 12 _____ | 13- 20 _____ |
| re-setting sleeves in unlined garment | 3- 5 _____ | 6- 10 _____ | 11- 15 _____ |

APPENDIX C

EMPLOYERS INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

Name of store:

Name of interviewee:

Address: ,

Date:

Type of store:

1. How many persons do you employ in your alteration department?

fitters _____
seamstresses _____
other _____

2. Would you hire more skilled alteration workers if they were available?

yes _____
no _____

3. Have your fitters and seamstresses taken courses or apprentice training to prepare them for their occupations?

yes _____
no _____

4. Does the performance of the fitters and seamstresses satisfy the standards of your store?

always _____
often _____
sometimes _____
never _____

5. Would you encourage your employees to take courses in clothing services in order to upgrade their skills if such courses were available in the Ann Arbor area?

yes _____
no _____

6. Would you be willing to absorb the cost of fees for such courses?

yes _____
no _____

7. Approximately how much of the alteration work which needs to be done for customers is provided by your alteration department?

one-third _____
two-thirds _____
all _____

8. What wages do you pay in the following categories?

fitter _____
 alteration seamstress _____

9. Would you be willing to pay more if employees were more skilled?

yes _____
 no _____

10. Do you provide the following employee benefits?

| | Yes | No |
|-------------------------|-------|-------|
| bonus | _____ | _____ |
| hospitalization | _____ | _____ |
| life insurance | _____ | _____ |
| paid vacation | _____ | _____ |
| sick leave | _____ | _____ |
| discount on merchandise | _____ | _____ |
| work breaks | _____ | _____ |
| profit sharing | _____ | _____ |
| other _____ | _____ | _____ |

11. Are advancement opportunities possible in these categories?

| | Yes | No |
|--------------|-------|-------|
| fitters | _____ | _____ |
| seamstresses | _____ | _____ |

If Yes, in what way? _____

12. What prices do you charge your customers for the following services on wool garments?

| | |
|--|-------|
| shortening bodice at the waist (no zipper) | _____ |
| replacing a zipper | _____ |
| hemming a straight skirt (lined) | _____ |
| hemming a straight skirt (unlined) | _____ |
| resetting sleeves in lined garments | _____ |
| resetting sleeves in unlined garments | _____ |

APPENDIX D

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE FOR EDUCATIONAL INSTITUTIONS

Name of school:

Name of interviewee:

Address:

Date:

-
1. Does your vocational program offer courses that deal with clothing services?

yes _____
no _____

2. If your answer is Yes, which of the following are included?

clothing design _____
clothing construction _____
fitting and alterations _____
other _____

3. Are any of these courses planned to train persons for gainful employment?

yes _____
no _____

4. If your answer to question 1 is No, would you consider adding any of these courses to your curriculum if a proven need in your community was established?

yes _____
no _____

If Yes, please list courses _____

5. When vocational courses are introduced into the curriculum at your school, what criteria are used in selecting them?

APPENDIX E

List of Cooperating Retail Establishments

Collins Shop

Goodyear's Department Store

Grahm's Suburban Casuals

Hartman's, Inc.

Hutzel Shops

Hughes-Hatcher-Sufferin

Jacobson's

Kay Baum

Kay-Jay Shop

Kessel's Fashion Shop

Lormarlyn Bridal Shop

Marilyn Shoppe

Marti Walker

Saks Fifth Avenue

Village Store

Wagner's Clothing

Winkleman Brothers Apparel, Inc.

APPENDIX F

May 12, 1967

Dear Madam:

In an effort to determine the need for personnel trained in clothing construction and alteration skills, I have undertaken a study of current employment opportunities in Ann Arbor. The investigation is part of my master's degree program in Textiles and Clothing at Michigan State University.

You have been selected to assist in this study because, as a member of the community, you may wish to avail yourself of clothing services. The results should be of value to you in the future in securing more efficient and higher quality clothing services.

The purposes of the attached questionnaire are to:

- 1) determine the extent to which you might employ individuals in clothing service occupations.
- 2) gather information that educational institutions in the Ann Arbor area will be able to use in determining the need for clothing service courses.

Will you please answer each question in the questionnaire and return in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope at your earliest convenience? Your replies will be kept confidential.

I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



(Mrs.) Jane Kulpinski

JK/ab

APPENDIX G

May 5, 1967

Dear Madam:

The need for persons trained in clothing construction and alteration skills has prompted this study of current employment opportunities in Ann Arbor. The investigation is part of my master's degree program in Textiles and Clothing at Michigan State University.

As a member of the community who might be interested in availing herself of such courses, your help in compiling information dealing with clothing service courses will be appreciated. The results of this investigation should be of value to you, as a potential student, and to the business and educational institutions in your community.

The purposes of the attached questionnaire are to:

- 1) determine if you are interested in taking courses in clothing construction which would prepare you for gainful employment in clothing construction and alterations.
- 2) determine if you are interested in taking courses in clothing construction for personal and family use.
- 3) gather information that educational institutions in the Ann Arbor area will be able to use in determining the need for clothing service courses.

Will you please answer each question in the questionnaire and return in the enclosed, self-addressed envelope at your earliest convenience? Your replies will be kept confidential.

I thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,



(Mrs.) Jane Kulpinski

APPENDIX H

May 19, 1967

Dear Sir:

The need for personnel trained in clothing construction and alteration skills has prompted this study of current employment opportunities in Ann Arbor. The investigation is part of my master's degree program in Textiles and Clothing at Michigan State University.

As an influential member of the business community in Ann Arbor, your help in compiling information dealing with clothing service opportunities will be appreciated. The results of this investigation should be of value to you, as an employer, and to your employees and potential employees in upgrading clothing construction and alteration skills.

This study is designed to:

- 1) determine employment opportunities in clothing construction and alterations in Ann Arbor.
- 2) gather information to present to educational institutions in the Ann Arbor area regarding the need for clothing services courses.

I would like to have a conference with you during the week of June 12, at a convenient time for you. May I contact you for an appointment in a few days?

I thank you for your cooperation and look forward to our meeting.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Jane Kulpinski

APPENDIX I

June 8, 1967

Dear

The need for persons trained in clothing construction and alteration skills has prompted this study of current employment opportunities in Ann Arbor.

As the director of the vocational education program in your school, your help in compiling information dealing with clothing service courses will be appreciated. The results of this investigation should be of value to you, as an educator, and to persons in the community who wish to train or upgrade their skills in clothing construction and alterations.

This study is designed to determine if curriculum adjustments or additions could be made to provide persons in the Ann Arbor area with the necessary training in clothing services to qualify them to take advantage of existing employment opportunities in the community. The investigation is a part of my master's degree program in Textiles and Clothing at Michigan State University.

I would like to have a conference with you during the week of June 12, at a convenient time for you. I will contact you for an appointment.

I am looking forward to talking with you about a clothing service course in your institution.

Sincerely,

(Mrs.) Jane Kulpinski

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