

AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

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Title: Home Sewers' and Fabric Store Managers'
Expectations of Fabric Store Sales Personnel's Product
Knowledge, Education, and Experience

Abstract approved: Redacted for privacy
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Previous research suggests that fabric store customers are not satisfied with the service provided in fabric stores. According to the EBM consumer behavior model (Engle, Blackwell, Miniard, 1986) and Oliver's consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction model (1981), fabric store customers' dissatisfaction may be a result of their unfulfilled service expectations. The purpose of the present study was to investigate the expectations Oregon home sewers and managers of Oregon fabric stores have of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. Two facets of the term "expectation" were investigated: 1) what was considered probable or certain and 2) what was considered reasonable, due or necessary (Webster, 1977, p. 402).

The two samples used in the present study were home sewers and fabric store managers. Home sewer subjects were systematically drawn from a list of recipients of "Oregon

Extension Homemakers Council News" in Oregon (n=502). The fabric store manager sample was all fabric stores listed in the yellow pages under the heading of "fabric shops" in Oregon telephone directories (n=195). Self administered questionnaires for the two samples were developed, pretested, and implemented following a modification of the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978).

Questions in the home sewer questionnaire asked respondents about the service they received on their last visit to a fabric store; their estimations of the average fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, sewing and sales experience, and sewing and textile related education; their desired product knowledge and sewing and sales experience for fabric sales personnel; the sources of education related to sewing and textile they considered important for sales personnel; and their demographic characteristics. A total of 379 questionnaires were returned for a response rate of 79 percent. Of the questionnaires received, 258 were completed by home sewers and included in the analysis.

The questions in the fabric store managers questionnaire corresponded to the questions in the home sewers questionnaire, as well as including questions regarding the demographic characteristics of the store. Eighty-two questionnaires were completed and returned by the fabric store managers, resulting in a response rate of 66 percent.

The data gathered using these questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics. A consumer expectation matrix was developed and used to estimate percentages of home sewers who had desires greater than, less than, or equal to the characteristics home sewers considered probable for fabric store sales personnel.

It was found that home sewers in the present sample believed that fabric store sales personnel did not have the characteristics they desired. When comparing the characteristics home sewers considered probable and desirable of fabric store sales personnel to managers' estimations of fabric store sales personnel's characteristics, it was shown that sales personnel, according to their managers, have higher levels of sewing and sales experience and product knowledge than home sewers expect. Fabric sales personnel's sewing and sales experience and product knowledge also fulfilled management expectations. The consumer and management desires that sales personnel could not meet were sources of education related to sewing and textiles utilized.

Home Sewers' and Fabric Store Managers'
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HOME SEWERS' AND FABRIC STORE MANAGERS' EXPECTATIONS
OF FABRIC STORE SALES PERSONNEL'S PRODUCT KNOWLEDGE,
EDUCATION AND EXPERIENCE

CHAPTER I

Introduction

Webster's dictionary defines a market as "a meeting together of people for the purpose of trade by private purchase and sale" and as "the extent of demand" (1977, p. 704). The present study dealt with the retail fabric market; the purchase and sale of fabric to the ultimate consumer. Because the consumer of fabrics sold in a fabric store is often the home sewer, the retail fabric market is also referred to as the home sewing market. Fabric stores, whether independent or a part of a chain of stores, usually stock fabric, notions, crafts, patterns, as well as a variety of other products related to the home sewing of clothing, accessories, home furnishings and crafts.

In the late 1970's the retail fabric market sharply declined (Robbins, 1973; Williams, 1988). Forty-four percent of households in 1973 reported purchases of sewing related items whereas only thirteen percent reported having these expenditures in 1985 (Ambry, 1988). Two reasons given for the decline in the home-sewing market were inexpensive ready-to-wear clothing and the decrease in enrollment in sewing courses at the high school level (Holmes, 1987). A change in the life-styles of women was

also a factor in the decline (Schone, 1987). The consumer of fabric and home sewing supplies 15 years ago was typically a housewife who was sewing clothes for her family to save money. Currently, with more women in the workforce, there have been fewer women sewing for the family and the home (Ambry, 1988).

It is still estimated that one in four adult women are home sewers in the United States (Ambry, 1988). More women today are sewing for a creative outlet rather than for purely economic reasons (Todd, 1989a). People are sewing in order to make things they can not find in ready-to-wear. Women today are also sewing to express their individuality (Todd, 1989b). Susan Jones, a fabric store owner in California, stated, "the sewing industry could see the best years it's ever seen, but we have to reach the market" (Pang, 1989, p. 47). Today the average home sewer is educated, between the ages of 25 and 44, and has an annual household income between \$35,000 and \$40,000. The 1985 Consumer Expenditure Survey reported that households with incomes of \$40,000 or more with householders aged 45 to 54 spent more on patterns, notions, and other home sewing products than other groups of consumers (as cited in Ambry, 1988). The group that spent the second highest amount on home sewing products included individuals aged 35 to 44, in households with incomes of \$30,000 to \$40,000. These two groups of consumers will be growing in size and purchasing power in the near future. In order for fabric stores to

tap this growth possibility, owners and managers of these stores must direct their marketing strategies to target the needs of these customers.

Market segmentation is one strategy for creating profit opportunities for fabric retailers and suppliers (Todd, 1989a). Carving out specific market segments is a recognized road to success. Two types of fabric stores, super chains and independents, have successfully defined their segments of the market (Ennis, 1989). The super chains, such as So-Fro Fabrics/House of Fabrics, offer a wide variety of merchandise at fairly low prices but very little personal attention. The smaller independent fabric stores tend to carry more specialized fabrics at higher prices with personalized service and sewing classes. Each can be very successful with the right product mix, the right location, and the right personnel.

It appears that successful stores emphasize customer service, classes, and specialization. Customer service has been cited as the most important difference between profits and losses in revenue (Holmes, 1989; Moodie, 1987; Schone, 1987; Todd, 1989b; Todd, 1989c; White, 1989). A customer oriented store draws more customers and keeps them coming back. Even a super chain that gives customers very little attention can have excellent customer service. When customers ask for service, service needs to be available. There are many fabric stores that people drive hours to shop because they know they can get what they need. For

example, Susan Jones, a fabric store owner in California, has customers that drive two to three hours to shop at her fabric store where she offers fast, easy to sew and fit patterns (Pang, 1989). A fabric store in Baltimore, Maryland, grosses \$2.8 million without advertising (Moodie, 1987). Their customers have been coming to them for years. The customers tell their friends about the store and the store's clientele is still growing. This family run store's profitability is due to its strong customer service. The owners place much value on each person and treat each customer individually. They look at the project being made and make suggestions to help the customer complete the final product successfully.

Because one reason for the decline in the home sewing market is that the potential consumer does not know how to sew, sewing classes have the potential for increasing the demand for home sewing products. Goldhar, executive vice president of Burda Patterns, Inc., noted an "industry wide trend" of "grass-roots efforts in education" (Todd, 1989a, p. 20). Norma Slocum, owner of Stretch & Sew Fabrics in Arlington, Texas, feels her classes draw more customers than any other aspect of her store (White, 1989). It seems that more stores are realizing the need for classes. A survey of fabric stores conducted by the trade publication Sew Business found that in the North Central states 73.5% of the respondents offered classes (Washnick, 1987).

A necessary component of class offerings is qualified teachers. The Hobby Industries of America developed a Certified Professional Demonstrators program and has set standards for professional demonstrators of crafts (Polk, 1987). This program should help the instructors be perceived as professionals and help the industry by insuring the quality of the instruction.

It appears that the retail fabric market has stopped declining and is starting to grow again (Todd, 1989a). Research is needed on the retail fabric market to facilitate the growth. Therefore, the present study will investigate two important elements of the retail fabric market, fabric store managers' expectations of retail fabric store personnel and home sewers' expectations of retail fabric store sales personnel.

Sales Personnel

Peters and Waterman (1982) studied successful businesses in general and found that a key to success was good sales people. The sales person is the first person that the customer meets and can determine the impression the customer has of the store. If that first impression is good the customer will probably return; if it is bad, the customer is not likely to return and may tell others not to patronize the store. How the customer perceives the employee's service affects how the customer perceives the entire business.

One problem companies, in general, have with getting the consumer into the store to make their purchases is that store employees are not satisfying consumer needs. The Wall Street Journal (Schwadel, 1989) surveyed consumers and found that consumers were unhappy with the service received from retail sales personnel as well as the knowledge of sales personnel. Consumers felt that sales people were "obnoxious and poorly trained" (p. B1). In this same poll six out of ten subjects noted that they would boycott stores because of bad service.

Good sales people need several attributes in order to fulfill their role in sales and customer service. Gulledge (1988) identified several attributes of sales people that may influence customer satisfaction: appearance, honesty, creativity, flexibility, consistency, understanding of wants and needs, product/service knowledge, friendliness, courtesy, competence, reliability, professionalism, concern for the customer, and responsiveness. Comiskey (as cited in Todd, 1989c) suggested that sales people in the fabric business should possess "good communication skills, an ability to listen, a potential for developing sales abilities and a willingness to learn" (p. 49). Managers often hire and evaluate sales people based upon their expectations of these traits in their employees. To date no research has examined fabric store managers' expectations of attributes possessed by sales personnel. Therefore, the present study investigated fabric store

managers' expectations of average retail fabric store sales personnel.

Fabric Store Sales Personnel

Unlike a ready-to-wear store, in a fabric or crafts store the customer rarely leaves with a finished product (Holmes, 1989). A sales person in a fabric store may need to help the customer find everything the customer needs for making a complete product. A project such as a dress may include fabric, thread, interfacing, a zipper, and hem lace. The fabric sales person needs to be knowledgeable of the products available, have an educational background involving textiles, and experience using the products in order to effectively help the customer. Several studies have investigated the extent to which fabric store sales personnel have these characteristics.

Product knowledge. Cary & Zylla (1981) found 68 percent of their fabric store customer sample did not feel that the average fabric store provided enough information about its fabrics through displays, promotions, or pamphlets. Therefore, customers in fabric stores might use fabric sales personnel as sources of information to compensate for this lack of written information. In the same study it was also found that 14 percent of all complaints made to fabric specialty stores concerned a sales person's lack of product knowledge. This study revealed that consumers are likely to turn to sales personnel for information even though many consumers are

dissatisfied with fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge.

Education. Research has found fabric store sales persons to have varying degrees of education. Davis (1978) found that 20 percent of the sales people studied had not finished high school, 42 percent graduated from high school, and 38 percent had some college education. Lamb (1970) found that the largest proportion of the sales people she surveyed had graduated from high school (47 %). Eighteen percent had attended high school and 29 percent had attended college. One subject had graduated from eighth grade and one had attended only grade school. Lamb also found that of these sales people the majority had received their textiles and clothing training in high school. Only one respondent had taken a college course, six had taken adult courses, and five had received training from other sources. Six of the respondents had no courses in textiles and clothing.

Experience. Of the sales people she surveyed, Lamb (1970) found that 20 percent had less than 1 year of job experience, 35 percent had 1 to 5 years experience, 9 percent had 5 to 10 years, 24 percent had 10 to 15 years, and 9 percent had 15 or more years of job experience. Of these same respondents 9 percent did little or no sewing, 15 percent did some sewing, and 76 percent did a great deal of sewing.

Davis (1978) found significant relationships between the quality of answers given by fabric sales personnel pertaining to fiber content, construction techniques, and amount of fabric needed and the sewing experience of those sales personnel in the last three years. Of the sales personnel studied, the personnel that had more sewing experience in the last three years gave higher quality answers.

These past studies indicate that fabric sales personnel are not well educated and may not have extensive sewing experience, and thus may not be knowledgeable of products. However, past research has not investigated consumers' expectations of these characteristics for fabric store sales personnel. Therefore, the present study also investigated the expectations consumers hold of fabric store sales personnel in the areas of product knowledge, education, and experience. Other studies have grouped sewing and textile related education in one category (Davis, 1978; Lamb, 1970). In the present study sewing and textile related education were studied as two separate categories. By investigating consumer expectations, a better understanding of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with fabric store sales personnel can be achieved.

Consumer Expectations and Satisfaction

Webster defined the verb "expect" as 1) "to consider probable or certain" and 2) "to consider reasonable, due or necessary" (1977, p. 402). The present study investigated both facets of the term "expectation."

According to the expectation-disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction, consumer satisfaction depends on the fulfillment of expectations (Oliver, 1980). Consumers will be satisfied with store services and products if their prior expectations of the services or products are met (Engel, Blackwell, Miniard, 1986). The importance of knowing the expectations of the consumer is exemplified in Gulledge's (1988) study on consumer disconfirmed expectations, or dissatisfaction. According to the study, more than 90 percent of unhappy customers did not let the retailer know of their dissatisfaction. Instead, consumers took their business to the competitors and told other consumers about their dissatisfaction. Gulledge also revealed that eighty percent of a retailer's sales came from twenty percent of a retailer's customers. In order to increase profits the retailer needs to satisfy the consumer by fulfilling his/her expectations.

Cary and Zylla (1981) found that fabric store customers were not satisfied with the service they received from fabric store sales personnel. Thirty-six percent of all complaints made to the fabric specialty stores in the study were concerning sales personnel's poor service or

lack of product knowledge. If consumers are not satisfied, then based on the disconfirmation model, it could be that expectations are not being met (Oliver, 1980). However, because retail fabric store employee wages often start at minimum wage, fabric store managers may have a problem recruiting knowledgeable, educated, and experienced employees.

Therefore, the present study also compared home sewers' expectations to fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience.

Summary

Fabric stores have had economic problems due to factors such as the changing life-style of women and the increase in inexpensive ready-to-wear. Successful independent and chain fabric stores have looked at the market and captured a segment of it. They have done this by emphasizing customer service, classes, and specialization.

Sales personnel in general need to have certain attributes to insure the success of a retail store as well as to insure customer satisfaction. Fabric sales personnel need to have specific attributes related to clothing and textiles, which include product knowledge, education, and experience.

Consumers look to a variety of outside information sources, one of which is the sales person. In order for the consumer to be satisfied with the service received from that sales person the consumer's expectations of that sales person must be fulfilled.

Statement of Purpose

The purpose of this study was to investigate the expectations Oregon home sewers and managers of Oregon fabric stores have of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience.

With the possible growth in the home sewing market, important information about fabric consumers and their expectations is needed. It is also important to evaluate the extent to which these expectations are being met. The present study will help describe the retail fabric market by examining consumer expectations of fabric store sales personnel and the extent to which fabric store managers meet consumer expectations.

Operational Definitions

Home sewers - Oregon recipients of "Oregon Extension Homemakers Council News", excluding Home Economics Extension agents.

Expectations - 1) current fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience considered probable by home sewers and fabric store managers; and 2)

current fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge and sewing and sales experience considered necessary or desired and education related to sewing and textiles considered important by home sewers and fabric store managers.

Retail fabric stores - retail stores that advertise in the yellow pages of Oregon telephone directories under the fabric listings that are not drug or variety stores.

Fabric store sales personnel - sales personnel in retail fabric stores located in Oregon.

Product knowledge - knowledge of specific uses of different fabrics, needles, threads and interfacing.

Sewing education - having taken junior high, high school, 4-H (or other club), private, retailer sponsored, college, and/or university classes relating to sewing.

Textile education - having taken junior high, high school, 4-H (or other club), private, retailer sponsored, college, and/or university classes relating to textiles.

Sewing experience - number of years sewn as well as skill level as indicated by patterns and fabrics used.

Sales experience - number of years employed as a salesperson.

Objectives and Hypotheses

It has been argued that fabric sales personnel are not well educated and may not have extensive experience and therefore may not be knowledgeable of products. It has also been argued that the fabric store customer is not

satisfied with service received from fabric store sales personnel, and that this dissatisfaction may be a result of disconfirmed expectations.

The first objective of the present study was to investigate home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles. The two facets of the term "expectation" were compared. Based upon previous studies (Cary & Hatfield-Bellinger, 1988; Cary & Zylla, 1981; Davis, 1977; McEachran, 1962) it was predicted that home sewers would believe current sales personnel have less product knowledge, education, and experience than what they desired. The hypotheses tested under this first objective were:

1. The number of years of sewing experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the number of years of sewing experience home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.
2. The level of sewing ability home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the level of sewing ability home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.
3. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to

sewing home sewers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

4. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

5. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of fabrics home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

6. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

7. The knowledge level of threads home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of threads home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

8. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of interfacing home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

9. The number of years of sales experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the number of years of sales experience home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The second objective of the present study was to compare home sewers' and fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. It has been argued that home sewers are dissatisfied with fabric store sales personnel's knowledge, education and experience. It has also been noted that fabric store managers may not be able to recruit sales people who can satisfy management expectations. The two facets of home sewers' expectations were compared with fabric store managers' estimations of current fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. Therefore, the hypotheses tested under this second objective were as follows:

1. The number of years of sewing experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years of sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.
2. The level of sewing ability home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the level of sewing ability fabric store

managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

3. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

4. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

5. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

6. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

7. The knowledge level of threads home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

8. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

9. The number of years of sales experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years of sales experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

10. The number of years of sewing experience home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years of sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

11. The level of sewing ability home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the level of sewing ability fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

12. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider important for current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

13. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider important for current fabric store sales

personnel will be different than the education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

14. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

15. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

16. The knowledge level of threads home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

17. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

18. The number of years sales experience home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years sales

experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The third objective of the present study was to investigate fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles. It has been argued that managers need to have expectations of their sales people similar to those of their customers in order to satisfy customers' expectations. It has also been noted that since fabric store sales personnel's wages often start at minimum wage, fabric store managers may have problems recruiting and keeping knowledgeable, educated and experienced employees. There has been no previous research investigating fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel, therefore this objective was exploratory in nature. The sub-objectives investigated under this third objective were as follows:

1. Compare the number of years of sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the number of years of sewing experience fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.
2. Compare the level of sewing ability fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the level of sewing ability fabric store

managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

3. Compare the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

4. Compare the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

5. Compare the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

6. Compare the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

7. Compare the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of threads fabric store

managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

8. Compare the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

9. Compare the number of years sales experience fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the number of years sales experience fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

CHAPTER II

Review of Literature

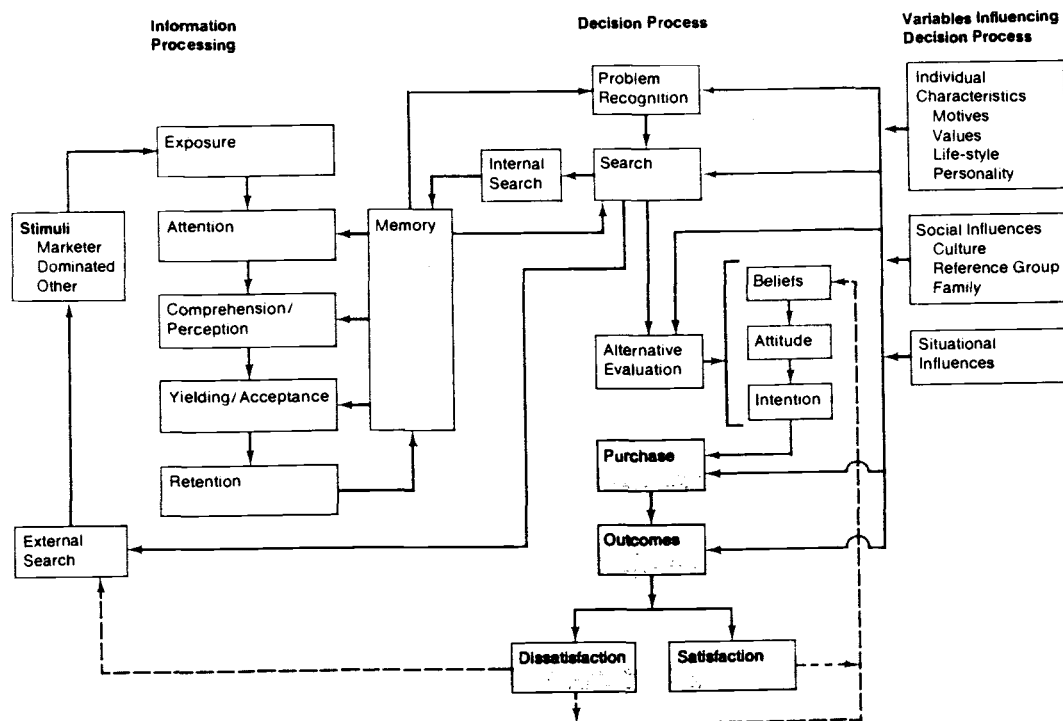
The first section of this chapter will discuss the consumer decision process as explored by the EBM decision process model (Engel, Blackwell, Miniard, 1986). Specifically, it will discuss the relationship between consumer expectations and consumer satisfaction. The second part of this chapter will discuss management's and consumers' expectations of sales personnel. The third section will cover the economic outlook for fabric stores and look at the fabric store customer. The final section covers specific attributes needed by fabric store sales personnel. The attributes discussed are product knowledge, education, and sewing and sales experience.

Consumer Behavior Model

The study of consumer behavior investigates how and why a consumer reacts with the environment with the result of purchasing a product or service. The present study dealt with one aspect of consumer behavior, consumer expectations. Figure 1 (Engel, et al, 1986) outlines the decision process of the consumer. The consumer recognizes a problem and searches for information to solve that problem either internally or externally. Internal searches include memory recall. External searches include obtaining information from outside stimuli such as advertising or opinions from friends. These outside stimuli are then

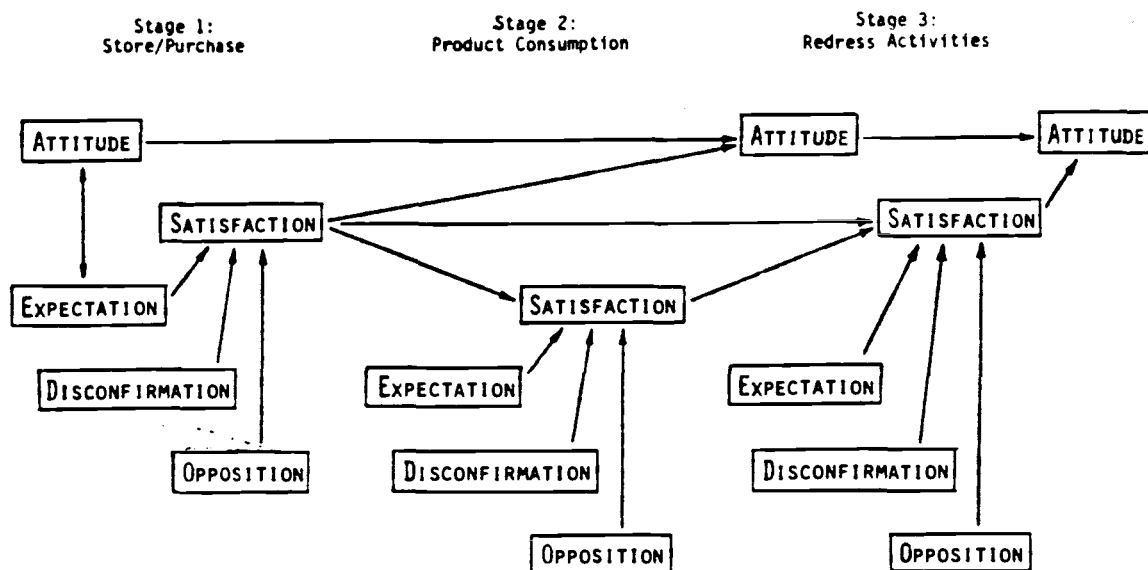
processed and put into memory. An evaluation of the information takes place. The consumer's expectations -- beliefs, attitudes, and intentions -- determine the decision to purchase a product. Individual characteristics and social and situational influences also affect the decision process. After purchasing the product the consumer can either have fulfilled expectations leading to satisfaction or unfulfilled expectations leading to dissatisfaction. The satisfaction or dissatisfaction is then remembered for future reference and recalled the next time the problem is recognized.

Figure 1. The EBM decision process model. (Engel, et al, 1986, p.35)



Consumer satisfaction. Oliver (1981) defined consumer satisfaction as "the summary psychological state resulting when the emotion surrounding disconfirmed expectations is coupled with the consumer's prior feelings about the consumption experience" (p. 27). Figure 2 outlines his model of retail satisfaction management. This model shows how attitude affects expectations in the store/purchase stage. Expectation, disconfirmation and opposition affect satisfaction in all three stages: store/purchase, product consumption, and redress activities. Satisfaction in each stage affects future satisfaction and future attitudes. Each time a consumer makes a purchase, past attitudes will affect present expectations and either result in satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

Figure 2. Model of retail satisfaction management.
(Oliver, 1981, p.32).



Consumer satisfaction has several determinants, many of which are related to previous experiences and expectations. In order to achieve the end result of a satisfied customer, the expectations of that customer must be known and met. Anderson (1973) studied four psychological theories to determine the effects of disconfirmed expectations on perceived product performance and consumer satisfaction. The four theories studied were cognitive dissonance (Festinger, 1957), contrast (Hovland, Harvey, Sherif, 1957), generalized negativity (Carlsmith & Aronson, 1963), and assimilation-contrast (Hovland, et al, 1957). Dissonance theory suggests that a customer will adjust his perception of a product to make it compatible with his expectation of the product. Contrast theory proposes that the consumer will magnify the difference between the expectations held of the product and the actual performance of that product, be it good or bad. The thesis that the consumer will have negative feelings about the product if the actual performance of the product is either above or below his expectations is referred to as the generalized-negativity theory. The final theory analyzed was assimilation-contrast. This theory combines the findings of the dissonance theory and the contrast theory by hypothesizing that the consumer will react differently depending on the amount of discrepancy between the consumers expectations and the product's performance.

In order to compare these theories Anderson conducted a study in which 144 subjects were given different levels of expectation about the product, a ball point pen. From this information they completed questionnaires evaluating the actual performance of the ball point pens. It was found that the assimilation-contrast theory was the only theory supported by the results of this study. This study can be related to services as well by suggesting that service received by the consumer needs to be close to their expectations or it is found unsatisfactory.

Swan and Trawick (1981) examined the suitability of the disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (Oliver, 1980) in a retail service setting. The disconfirmation model assumes that the consumer goes through a four step process that determines satisfaction or dissatisfaction. The first step, prepurchase expectations, establishes the important attributes the store or service must have in order to satisfy the customer. The customer then shops and forms perceptions of store performance and compares the expectations to perceptions. The outcome of this comparison is a perceived level of disconfirmation. The third step in this model is determining the satisfaction from the perceived disconfirmation. The final step determines intentions to be a repeat customer.

In Swan and Trawick's study the disconfirmation model was tested in a restaurant setting. Customers filled out

questionnaires before and after eating in order to confirm the theory. It was found that this theory was supported in a retail service setting.

Anderson (1973) found that consumers are usually satisfied if the product performance is close to their expectations and Swan and Trawick (1981) found the disconfirmation model of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction to be applicable to retail service. These findings support the need for further research in consumer expectations in other retail service areas.

The disconfirmation model of satisfaction/dissatisfaction has been applied to the study of satisfaction with clothing and textile products. Previous studies have looked at consumer satisfaction with ready-to-wear clothing. In their study of women's satisfaction of purchases of dresses, Francis and Dickey (1982) found previous shopping experience to be more important than purchase planning in determining consumer satisfaction. It was suggested that the experienced consumer would have important information readily available in memory and therefore would not need to look externally for additional information.

Satisfaction also has been found to affect the willingness to use time and money on future purchases. Wright and Francis (1988) researched the "effect of women's satisfaction with career dress on willingness to make trade-offs for more sizing options" (p. 69). Women

indicated in this study that if they were satisfied with their career dress they were not as willing to spend additional time and money to find more sizing options.

The prior performance of ready-to-wear garments has also been linked to consumer satisfaction. Wall, Dickey and Talarzyk's study (1978) looked at predicting consumer satisfaction with clothing performance by prior clothing performance problems; demographic information; activities, interests, and opinions; and textile product knowledge. The hypothesis that consumers with fewer clothing performance problems were more satisfied with the performance of their clothing was supported as well as the hypothesis that age, as a demographic factor, could predict satisfaction. Older consumers were found to be more satisfied with the performance of their clothing. Social class, education level, textile knowledge, and income level were not found to predict satisfaction for this sample.

Few studies have investigated consumer satisfaction of clothing or textile products. The studies by Francis and Dickey (1982) and Wright and Francis (1988) dealt with consumer satisfaction with ready-to-wear garments. Wall, Dickey and Talarzyk (1978) found previous positive experiences and the consumer's age contributed to consumer satisfaction of clothing. The present study expanded this research on consumer satisfaction by investigating consumers' expectations of the service provided in fabric stores.

Management's and Consumers' Expectations of Sales Personnel

The present study compared consumers' and managements' expectations of specific characteristics of fabric store sales personnel. Managers hold certain expectations of employees and hire employees who will fulfill their expectations. Store employees should be the manifestation of the manager's expectations. However, because retail fabric store employee wages often start at minimum wage, fabric store managers may have a problem recruiting knowledgeable, educated, and experienced employees.

Management's expectations of sales personnel. For many employees, management's expectations of their performance are written in the form of a job description. DeLapa (1989) described successful job descriptions. They must include detailed descriptions of duties and responsibilities and required education and competency for the position. This description is used for hiring new employees and also for evaluating existing employees. The present study used management indications of employees' attributes as an indicator of managements' expectations of employees.

In Management World, Batten (1988) explained the difference between managing by objectives and managing by expectations. The difference between the two management styles consisted of the involvement of the employee. Employees needed to have a commitment to their goals in order for the goals to be effectively fulfilled. An

emphasis on the employee's strengths and building those strengths was needed in managing by expectation. When the strengths of the employee were known, management had expectations of the employee on which to base his/her performance.

Because sales personnel represent the store to the customer, management should have expectations of sales personnel that reflect the expectations consumers have of sales personnel. The present study investigated fabric store managers' expectations and compared these expectations with home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel.

Consumers' expectations of sales personnel. Little research has been conducted on consumers' expectations of sales personnel. A study by Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan (1986) suggested that a consumer's prior expectations of sales personnel affects how that consumer processes information received from that sales person. The schema-triggered affect model or "category-based affect" model used assumed that a subject first categorizes an individual and then evaluates that categorization. If the individual categorized by the subject behaves like he fits into the given category, the subject accepts the categorization of the individual. If the individual does not behave the way the subject expected, the subject must re-evaluate the categorization and look at specific attributes of that individual. In this study it was found that when the

salesperson did not fit into the category, or stereotype, into which the consumer had placed him, it was easier to influence the consumer on his product judgment and the consumer thought more about the product and less about the salesperson. If the salesperson did fit into the category (stereotype) the consumer had of sales people, the consumer was affected less by the salesperson's product information and did not think about the product as much.

Although few studies have investigated consumers' expectations of sales personnel per se, several studies have examined the use of sales personnel as sources of information by consumers. In using sales personnel as information sources, it may be assumed that consumers expect sales personnel to have helpful and accurate information.

In order to serve the market successfully the information consumers look for needs to be available and accurate. Several studies have investigated factors that determine the consumer's use of sales people as sources of information. For example, McEachran (1962) studied information use in a study of consumers' source of fabric information. It was found that the fabric store customer looked to the following information sources: training (practical experience, high school home economics, sewing machine company classes, and university home economics); newspapers; magazines; salespersons; display signs; and labels. When questioned about information given by sales

people, only eight percent of the customers felt that salespeople could always give helpful and reliable information, thirty-nine percent thought the information given by salespersons aided them frequently, and forty-seven percent thought that they were only occasionally of any real assistance. Five percent of the customers questioned felt that fabric sales personnel were never good information sources.

Part of Orsini's (1971) study investigated whether the confidence consumers had in information received from sales personnel influenced the use of sales personnel as an information source. Through questioning both home economists and consumers it was found that the information source that consumers had most confidence in was looked to most frequently for information. Sales personnel were seen to be less reliable information sources due to the sales personnel's deficient knowledge. This study suggested that the sales person would have a difficult time influencing a sale because the consumer does not have confidence in the information given by the sales person. The present study is narrower in scope and will look more closely at the expectations of consumers and compare them to the extent to which the salesperson fulfill those expectations.

Sales personnel were cited as the second most consulted information source for home sewers in Spero's (1974) study. Bolt ends were used most by experienced sewers for information concerning fiber care and

performance. Sales personnel were consulted more for information about interfacing and were expected to know how to sew and to be aware of the new products and textiles. The study was performed to determine relationships between a home sewer's textile knowledge and information sources used most frequently, emphasis on fabric performance criteria, and demographic information.

Whereas McEachran (1962), Orsini (1971), and Spero (1974) looked at the information used by the customer, other studies have investigated the accuracy of the information provided to the consumer. Good (1972) studied the relationship between textile knowledge of garment sales personnel and ratio of garment returns to sales. The study was conducted in a large metropolitan department store and three of its branches. A random sample of return records was selected. The sales personnel selected included individuals from twelve departments. A Textile Product Knowledge measure was developed and administered to the sales personnel. The results, though not significant, indicated an additional need for textile training for garment salespeople, as well as a relationship between salespersons' Textile Product Knowledge scores and percentage of garment returns. This study supported the need for further study of the differences between consumers' expectations and satisfaction and sales personnel's product knowledge. The present study

investigated consumers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's attributes.

The Retail Fabric Market

Changes in the economic outlook and changes in the customer can indicate needed changes in the market. The retail fabric market economic outlook was very grim a few years ago but today it shows signs of growth. The fabric store customer has also changed in the last fifteen years. Both of these changes need to be taken into consideration when planning for growth in the market.

Economic outlook of fabric stores. In 1974 a major decline in the retail fabric market was detected. This decline continued until 1986. According to Ambry's (1988) demographic study of the home sewing market, the market has stopped declining and has stabilized. In fact, in households headed by 45-54 year olds the purchases for fabric, patterns and notions could increase 70 percent by the year 2000. Many specialty stores closed with the decline in the industry in the late 70's, but some of the fabric store chains have prospered by changing their product mix. Craft departments have been added to many stores. For example, in 1976 sixty percent of the sales of So-Fro Fabrics/House of Fabrics, the largest home-sewing products retailer in the U.S., was in fabrics while today it is only 25 percent. Some of the smaller stores were closed to open larger ones that had room to offer classes. The president of the company, Gary Larkin, stated that the

seven biggest fabric chains grew in the recent decline in the market because they catered to crafts and decorating (as cited in Ambry, 1988).

The direct-mail fabric and notion market is also currently prospering according to Ambry (1988). Today's customer needs specialty items that would have been available at the independent specialty fabric stores. Catalog sales have increased with the closing of many of these stores.

Sewing equipment also has changed with the times. Among other technological advances, the consumer can now purchase a "serger" machine. The market for these machines reached its peak in 1983-84 and has since remained flat (Ambry, 1988).

Fabric Store Customers. The home sewer has changed with the changing life style of Americans. Ambry (1988) investigated characteristics of home sewers using information from the 1985 Consumer Expenditure Survey (1985) and Current Population Reports (1986). According to Ambry (1988), today the typical home sewer is between the ages of 25 to 44, works at least part time, and lives in a household with an annual income between \$35,000 and \$40,000. If a woman has a college degree she is 29 percent more likely to sew than other women. The home sewer is not necessarily sewing to save money. Sewing is now more of a creative outlet than a money saver. The consumer who is 45 to 54 and has an annual income of \$40,000 or more spends

more money on home-sewing products than those consumers in other categories. The second highest group is consumers between 35 and 44 with annual incomes of \$30,000 to \$40,000. These groups are expected to be growing in size in the next several years and therefore the demand for sewing products will continue to increase (Ambry, 1988).

Cranor (1974) investigated how differences in home sewers' location in metropolitan or rural areas contributed to differences in fabric consumption behavior. Rural fabric consumers were more likely to order fabric from a catalog and traveled longer distances to purchase fabric than urban fabric consumers. Also employed rural fabric consumers enjoyed shopping for fabric more than employed urban consumers. At the income level of \$15,000 to \$19,000 urban consumers relied significantly more on label information and a sales person's comments than did rural consumers. In the age group 30 to 49, urban consumers were more likely to be concerned with fiber content than were rural consumers. These differences could be very important for market segmentation. The present study looked generally at demographic characteristics of Oregon home sewers and specifically at these home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel.

Characteristics of Fabric Sales Personnel

The customer in a fabric store may need many different products to complete one project; the customer may need techniques used on special fabrics explained; or the customer may need advice on coordinating a fabric with a pattern. For these reasons fabric sales personnel need product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience.

Product knowledge. Cary and Hatfield-Bellinger (1988) found that of the 250 consumers questioned in their study of distances traveled to fabric stores, 32 percent would travel six or more miles farther than they usually drove if the farther fabric store had sales people who were more helpful and knowledgeable. Although this percentage is not a majority, it indicates the importance consumers place on the knowledge of fabric sales personnel.

Cary and Zylla (1981) found that consumers had complained about sales personnel's lack of product knowledge. In their study they found that 14 percent of all complaints made to fabric specialty stores concerned the lack of product knowledge of the sales personnel.

McEachran (1962) found that if a sales person was asked a question that he/she did not know, one third would guess at the answer while only four percent would admit they did not know. This behavior could seriously affect the reliability of the information received from fabric sales personnel.

Although William's (1971) and Bensman's (1975) studies concerning the need for more textile training for sales personnel were conducted with the ready-to-wear market, the findings from these studies are applicable to the retail fabric market. Williams (1971) found that retail sales personnel need more information concerning the limitations and undesirable properties of fibers and finishes.

Researchers questioned sales personnel in independent specialty stores and chain department stores about the properties of cotton and polyester fibers, permanent press and soil release finishes, and their relationship to fabric performance and care. It was found that sales personnel were informed about the properties and performance of cotton and the desirable effects of polyester-cotton blends, but sales personnel were less knowledgeable in the areas of properties of polyester, permanent press and soil release.

Bensman's (1975) study implied that sales personnel are aware of the care of fabrics but not well informed on textile performance and textile legislation. The sales personnel studied felt they were capable of answering most questions but scores from the textile product knowledge test indicate they might not be a reliable source of information. Over ninety percent of these sales people were questioned about textiles by customers.

Lamb (1970) found that fabric sales personnel felt that instructional programs relating to product knowledge

were worth their time and helpful in their job. In this study thirty-four fabric sales people were asked to rate how often customers asked thirty-nine preselected questions; to give some questions asked that are most difficult to answer; and to answer questions regarding care and performance of textiles. A one hour instructional program was developed from the results of the survey, dealing with fabric characteristics; end-use, findings, and care procedures for knits and durable press; and the need for textile information.

Fabric store customers expect store sales personnel to have product knowledge (Cary & Hatfield-Bellinger, 1988; Cary & Zylla, 1981), but it also has been indicated that if sales people do not know the answer to a customer's question, they may guess at the answer (McEachran, 1962). More textile training is needed for sales personnel (Bensman, 1975; William, 1971). Sales personnel realize their need for information about products and have felt that instructional programs relating to product knowledge are helpful (Lamb, 1970). The present study further investigated the expectations consumers have of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge.

Education. McEachran's research also investigated the education of fabric store sales personnel (1962). Of the seventy fabric sales people studied by McEachran (1962) none had received training in home economics at a university. High school home economics courses were taken by less than twenty percent of those questioned. Over five percent of the sales people had no training.

Forty-seven percent of the 34 fabric store sales people surveyed by Lamb (1970) had graduated from high school. Eighteen percent had attended high school and 29 percent had attended college. The majority of the sales people had received their textiles and clothing training in high school. Six of the 34 sales people had not had any courses in textiles and clothing.

The sample in Davis' (1977) study was twenty-four fabric sales people from eight independent fabric stores, six department stores with fabric departments and ten chain fabric stores. From tape recorded responses to consumer questions and data collected from questionnaires, it was found that there was a significant relationship between the quality of answers pertaining to fiber content, construction techniques and the sewing experience within the last three years. It was also found that there was a significant relationship between the quality of answers on the amount of fabric needed and classes taken in college, universities, or other sources in clothing and textiles. Answers to questions pertaining to notions had a

significant relationship with educational background and classes in clothing and textiles taken in various settings ranging from junior high school to community college and 4-H.

Previous studies have indicated that education of fabric sales personnel is important to the quality of information received by the customer. Whereas some studies have looked at the general education of fabric store sales personnel, the present study investigated how much education related to sewing and textiles fabric store customers and fabric store managers expect fabric store sales people to have. Sewing and textiles related education has been looked at as one topic by other studies (Davis, 1977; Lamb, 1970). In the present study sewing and textile related education was studied as two separate categories.

Sewing and sales experience. McEachran (1962) found the fabric sales people in her study were most likely to have received their knowledge of fabrics by practical experience. Sixty percent cited this source while forty percent cited selling experience. McEachran noted that it seemed unlikely that selling experience would necessarily give the salesperson knowledge of the product and that customer satisfaction could only be determined after the fabric had been put to use. These observations suggest that sewing experience is important for fabric sales

personnel and that selling experience may not substitute for sewing experience.

Cary and Zylla (1981) noted that most of the complaints made to fabric store managers were about poor fabric quality and poor service. The complaints that directly related to the sales personnel equaled 53 percent. This included complaints of poor service, incorrectly cut fabric, and lack of product knowledge. These dissatisfactions, as disconfirmed expectations, are indicators of expectations held by home sewers.

Previous studies have indicated that in a retail fabric store, sales experience may not be sufficient to enable the sales person to meet the service expectations of the customer. As in other businesses, poor service is a consumer complaint in the home sewing market. The present study looked at the expectations consumers have of sewing and sales experience of fabric store sales personnel and compared these expectations to the fabric store managers' expectations of the fabric store sales personnel. This was accomplished in order to help the industry realize the characteristics/qualifications of sales personnel expected by consumers and management.

Summary

Two aspects of consumer behavior are consumer expectation and satisfaction. In the research discussed it was found that age, few clothing performance problems (Wall, et al, 1978); previous shopping experiences (Francis

& Dickey, 1982); and information received from sales personnel can affect consumer satisfaction. In order for consumers to be satisfied their expectations of the product or service purchased need to be met (Engel, et al, 1986; Oliver, 1981). Of the four different psychological theories used to explain disconfirmed expectations it was found that the assimilation-contrast theory was most likely supported (Anderson, 1973). The application of the disconfirmation model was found to be suitable for testing in the retail service setting. One retail service setting that has not been investigated is fabric stores. The retail fabric market, after being in decline for several years, has stabilized and now has possibility for growth. In order for growth to occur the market must understand the expectations of their consumers.

Management's expectations of sales personnel should be manifested in the abilities of the current sales personnel. The expectations management holds of sales personnel need to be aligned with the expectations held by consumers if management expects to maximize profit. Consumers may have preconceived ideas of how sales personnel will perform. If sales personnel do not perform according to these preconceived ideas, sales personnel will influence the consumer's product judgment more easily (Sujan, Bettman, & Sujan, 1986).

The consumer in the retail environment deals directly with the sales person. The sales person is one source of

information for the consumer in making purchase decisions. If the consumer does not feel confident in an information source that source is not looked to for information as frequently (Orsini, 1971).

Fabric sales personnel need to have specific textile related knowledge and experience. Consumers felt that textile knowledge was important for the sales person to have (Bensman, 1974; Good, 1972; Williams, 1971). Customers traveled farther to go to fabric stores that had knowledgeable sales personnel (Cary & Hatfield-Bellinger, 1988). Fabric sales personnel, as the second most used information source for home sewers, are expected to have information concerning interfacing and new products and textiles (Spero, 1974). Fabric sales personnel felt that instructional programs relating to product knowledge were helpful (Lamb, 1970). This becomes important when the fact that one third of the fabric sales personnel in one study guessed when asked a question requiring information they did not possess (McEachran, 1962).

Education and sewing and sales experience is also important for fabric sales personnel. Education can occur in schools from the junior high to the university level as well as in the private sector. Sewing experience can be a significant source of fabric knowledge (McEachran, 1962). Sales experience alone will not be effective in the retail fabric market but it is important. Complaints made to

fabric stores included poor service, incorrectly cut fabric and lack of product knowledge (Cary & Zylla, 1981).

Therefore, the present study investigated the expectations that home sewers and fabric store managers have of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. Home sewers' and fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience were also compared.

CHAPTER III

Method

The purpose of the present study was to investigate home sewers' and fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. The two facets of the term "expectation", what is considered probable and what is considered necessary, were investigated and compared.

The method used to conduct this research is described under the following headings: questionnaire development, sample design, questionnaire implementation, and data analysis.

Questionnaire Development

The questionnaire development and implementation for the present study were modifications of the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978). These modifications included sending only three mailings instead of the suggested five and the absence of pretesting by potential users. Two questionnaires were developed, pretested, and administered; one for the sample of home sewers and one for the sample of fabric store managers.

The home sewer questionnaire. The questionnaire for the sample of home sewers was titled "Fabric Store Customer Service: Are You Getting What You Want?" The questions asked respondents about the service they received on their last visit to a fabric store; their estimations of the

average fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, sewing and sales experience, and sewing and textile related education; their desired product knowledge and sewing and sales experience for fabric sales personnel; their ratings of importance for levels of sewing and textile related education sources for sales personnel; and their demographic characteristics (see Appendix A).

The first two questions of this questionnaire were designed to screen respondents for their inclusion in the home sewer sample. If subjects did not sew for themselves, their family, or their friends, or if they had never shopped at a fabric store they were asked to discontinue filling out the questionnaire, and to return the questionnaire.

The third question inquired about the subjects' last visit to a fabric store and the help they received from sales people. They were asked if they had been helped by a sales person and then asked to rate that help as very good, good, poor, or very poor.

The next set of questions measured home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sales experience. Each question had two parts corresponding to the two operational definitions of "expectations". The first part of each question asked subjects to indicate what level or category of the characteristic they thought an average fabric store sales

person would be classified. This part of the question was the operationalization of the "what is considered probable or certain" component of the term "expectation". The second part of each question asked what level or category of the characteristics the subjects desired the average fabric store sales person to be classified. This part of the question was the operationalization of the "what is considered reasonable, due, or necessary" component of the term "expectation".

Sewing experience was operationally defined as years of sewing experience and level of sewing skill. Separate questions were developed for each of the two operational definitions. Eight levels of sewing experience ranging from "no experience" to "over 10 years experience" were given as levels of experience. An option for indecision was also included.

Five levels of sewing ability were listed: beginner, beginner intermediate, intermediate, intermediate expert, and expert. Definitions of the sewing ability levels were developed by a content analysis of the responses given on a pretest questionnaire asking for descriptions of patterns and fabrics used by sewers at the different sewing ability levels. The 37 pretest questionnaires were completed by college students in a lower division textile class at Oregon State University. Student received extra credit for completing the questionnaire. (See Sewing Ability Pretest Questionnaire in appendix C.)

The next set of questions measured home sewers' expectations of sewing and textile related education of fabric store sales personnel. Subjects were first asked if they thought (or wanted) the average fabric store sales person to have taken sewing or textile classes/courses. If the subject indicated "no" to the screening questions she/he was instructed to go to the next section of each question. The subjects that answered "yes" to the screening questions were instructed to indicate if they thought the average sales person had taken courses/classes from the following sources: junior high school, high school, community college, university, 4-H (or other club), private classes, classes given by fabric stores, and/or on the job training; and/or to indicate the importance of each of the above sources of education. The levels of importance ranged from "not at all important" to "very important".

Questions about product knowledge expected of fabric store sales personnel asked about their knowledge of four products sold by fabric stores: fabrics, sewing machine and hand needles, thread, and interfacing. These four products were selected because they were identified as the products customers most often asked questions about (J. Schellinger, personal communication, November, 1989). Knowledge levels for all four products were designated as high, medium, low, or no knowledge. An option for "do not know" was also included. High product knowledge was

defined as knowledge of a wide variety or knowledge of all types of the product. Medium product knowledge was defined as a basic knowledge or knowledge of most frequently used products. Low knowledge was defined as very little knowledge of the product.

Sales experience was operationally defined as the number of years of sales experience. The levels of sales experience ranged from "no experience" to "over 9 years experience". An option for indecision was also included.

Questions asking about home sewers demographic characteristics included questions on the respondent's sewing ability; total combined income for the household in 1989; highest level of education completed; age; ethnicity; employment; and marital status.

At the end of the questionnaire the home sewer subjects were asked to "indicate anything else they would like to contribute about the service they receive or would like to get from fabric sales people."

The fabric store manager questionnaire. The questionnaire for the store managers, titled "Fabric Stores: Sales People and Customer Service", was comprised of questions that corresponded to the questions in the home sewers' questionnaire. It also included questions regarding demographic characteristics of the store.

The first question in the managers' questionnaire asked the subjects to indicate how many sales people currently worked in their store. They were also asked to

break down this number into full time and part time employees.

The next set of questions measured managers' expectations of their sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sales experience. Managers were first asked to indicate the number of their employees in each category or level of the characteristics. Percentages of total sales personnel in each level or category were later figured. The second section of each question, indicating the desired product knowledge and sewing and sales experience and the importance of sources of education, were essentially identical to the corresponding questions in the home sewers' questionnaire. The question relating to the sewing education source of "on the job training" managers considered probable for sales personnel was inadvertently ommited. Results for this question were listed as "not available" or "n/a".

After answering the questions about their expectations of their sales personnel, managers were asked if the actual characteristics of their current sales people were consistent with the characteristics they would like the average sales person to have. If the manager answered "no", she/he was asked to explain the reason for the differences.

The section of the questionnaire on store demographic information included questions on the type of store

ownership; the number of years the store had operated; the number of years the store had been under the current management; the store's class offerings; the store's average monthly sales; estimated starting wage in 1989; and location of college or university offering clothing and/or textile related classes within thirty miles of the store. At the end of the questionnaire the respondents were provided space to indicate anything else they wanted to contribute about fabric stores and fabric store employees.

Pretesting. The two questionnaires were reviewed by three faculty members in the department of Apparel, Interiors, Housing and Merchandising and one faculty member in the department of Business Administration at Oregon State University and by potential subjects. The faculty members had expertise in questionnaire construction and had prior knowledge of the objectives of the study. They evaluated both questionnaires on format and on the basis of the questionnaires' capability to meet the objectives of the study.

Four home sewers from California pretested the home sewer's questionnaire. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher in order to get verbal feedback on potential problems with understanding the questionnaire. The researcher also observed how the questionnaires were completed in order to assess any problems the individuals may have had in completing the questionnaires.

The fabric store manager questionnaire was pretested by a manager of a chain fabric store as well as an owner of an independent fabric store. The chain store manager was from California and the independent store manager was from Oregon. The latter was not included in the final fabric store manager sample. The questionnaires were completed in the presence of the researcher in order to identify any problems with the content or completion of the questionnaire. Revisions were made in the questionnaire content and format following the pretest.

Sample Design

The sampling procedure was designed so that the researcher could estimate responses of home sewers living in Oregon and managers of fabric stores in Oregon.

Home sewer sample. Recipients of "Oregon Extension Homemakers Council News" served as the sampling frame for the home sewer sample.

A systematic random sample was drawn from the list of names and addresses of newsletter recipients provided by the Oregon Home Economics Extension Office. A total of 503 subjects were included in the sample. Not all recipients of the survey were actually home sewers. The first question on the home sewers' questionnaire indicated that only persons that sewed for themselves, family, or their home were to fill out the questionnaire, all other recipients were instructed to send in the questionnaire without filling it out. The second question further

defined the sample by asking those subjects who had never shopped in a fabric store not to complete the questionnaire.

A total of 379 questionnaires were returned by respondents in the home sewer sample. Response rate was determined using the formula suggested by Dillman (1978, p.50). The response rate using this formula is calculated by dividing the number of returned questionnaires by the number in the sample minus the number of noneligible and non-reachable subjects. This number is then multiplied by 100 to get a percentage. The response rate for the home sewer sample was of 79 percent. Of the questionnaires received, 258 were filled out by home sewers and included in the final analysis.

Fabric store manager sample. The sample of retail fabric store managers that was used in the present study included all managers of fabric stores advertising in Oregon telephone directories in the yellow pages under the heading "fabric shops".

Telephone directories no more than four years old were used in obtaining addresses for the fabric stores. A telephone directory order sheet (used by Oregon State University to order telephone books) was utilized to ensure the most complete compilation of fabric store addresses. This resulted in a sample of 195 fabric stores. Of the 195 managers of fabric stores included in the sample and sent questionnaires, 82 questionnaires were returned. The final

sample size was 146, resulting in a response rate of 66 percent.

Questionnaire Implementation

The initial mailing of the questionnaires was sent to the sample of home sewers (n=503) and fabric store managers (n=195) the fourth Wednesday of January, 1990.

The first mailing included a letter explaining the purpose of the study, how the subjects had been chosen, and the importance of each response; the questionnaire; and a business reply envelope. Two subsequent mailings comprised the follow-up sequence. Postcard reminders were sent one week after the initial mailing. The third mailing was comprised of a second cover letter, the questionnaire, and a business reply envelope. These were sent to subjects who had not responded three weeks after the initial mailing. Examples of the cover letters and post card reminders sent to each sample can be found in appendix D. The fabric store managers questionnaires received within five weeks of the initial mailing were included in the final fabric store manager sample. The home sewers questionnaires received within six weeks of the initial mailing were included in the final home sewer sample.

Data Analysis

Because nominal and categorical data were collected, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The hypotheses for the first objective that did not deal with education were tested with a matrix, similar to that used

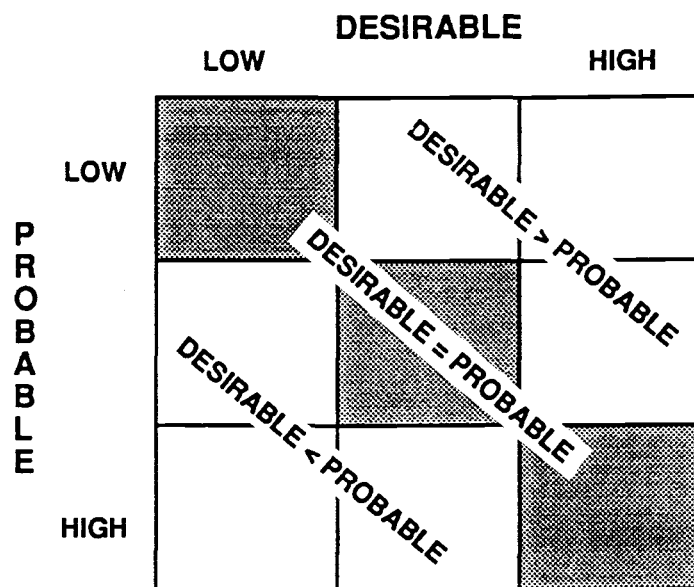
for the computation of chi-square. This matrix facilitated the calculations of percentages of home sewers who had desires greater than what they considered probable; home sewers who had desires that equaled what they considered probable; and home sewers who had desires less than they considered probable. The numbers of home sewers in the cells corresponding to each category were added and then divided by the total number of home sewers included in the matrix (see Figure 3). Percentages and frequencies were used to provide further information. Differences in percentages indicated support of the hypothesis.

The hypotheses of the first objective that dealt with education were tested by comparing the percentage of home sewers who considered the utilization of certain sources of education by fabric sales personnel probable to the percentage of home sewers who considered the utilization of certain sources of education important for fabric store sales personnel.

The hypotheses for the second objective were tested by comparing the percentage of home sewers to the percentage of probable fabric store sales personnel (as indicated by fabric store managers) for each category in each characteristic. Actual and proportional differences in percentages for each category contributed to the support of the hypothesis. Percentages were considered to be different if the actual difference was ten percentage points or more or if the proportional difference was 1.5

greater. Proportional differences were calculated by dividing the larger percentage by the smaller. All categories with values of zero were considered to have values of one for calculation purposes for proportional differences.

Figure 3. Consumer expectation matrix.



The third objective was to investigate the fabric store manager sample. This was accomplished through the use of descriptive statistics including frequencies and percentages.

Summary

The questionnaires were developed and implemented using a modification of the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978). The home sewer subjects were recipients of the Oregon Home Economics Extension newsletter. The fabric store managers were managers of fabric stores advertising in the yellow pages of Oregon telephone directories. A total of three mailings were mailed for each sample. The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

CHAPTER IV

Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the expectations Oregon home sewers and managers of Oregon fabric stores have of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. The objectives of this study were 1. to investigate home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles; 2. to compare home sewers' expectations with fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience; and 3. to investigate fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles.

This chapter includes presentation and discussion of the results of data analysis. The characteristics of the home sewer sample and the fabric store manager sample are described. Results of the data analysis for the three objectives are also presented and discussed.

The Home Sewer Sample

From the information received from the home sewer sample, this sample was described in terms of the following traits: sewing level, income distribution, education, age, ethnic identity, marital status, and employment status. The characteristics of the sample should be taken into account when interpreting the results of the present study.

Sewing level of the respondents. Almost half of the respondents (47.1 %) categorized themselves in the intermediate sewing ability category. The intermediate expert and the beginner intermediate categories were the next two largest categories with 18.1 and 15.1 percent respectively. Thirty-two home sewers (12.4%) categorized themselves in the expert category (see Table 1).

Income distribution of respondents. The majority of the respondents indicated that their total combined income for their household in 1989 was between \$10,000 and \$40,000. Approximately nine percent of the respondents had incomes under \$10,000 while almost seventeen and a half percent of the sample had an income of \$40,000 or over (see Table 2).

Table 1

Sewing Ability Level of Oregon Home Sewers

<u>Sewing Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Beginner	10	3.9
Beginner Intermediate	39	15.1
Intermediate	122	47.1
Intermediate Expert	49	18.1
Expert	32	12.4
Did not know	1	0.4
Missing Data	5	2.3
Total	258	100.0

Table 2

Income Distribution of Oregon Home Sewers

<u>Income level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under \$10,000	24	9.3
\$10,000 to \$14,999	35	13.5
\$15,000 to \$19,999	37	14.3
\$20,000 to \$29,999	42	16.2
\$30,000 to \$39,999	44	17.0
\$40,000 to \$49,999	16	6.2
\$50,000 to \$59,999	15	5.8
\$60,000 to \$69,999	6	2.3
\$70,000 or More	8	3.1
Missing Data	31	12.4
Total	258	100.0

Education level of respondents. The sample varied greatly in terms of education level. Five percent of the sample had not finished high school, including 1.5 percent of the sample that did not go past the eighth grade. More than one-fourth of the sample had a high school degree. Forty-three of the respondents (16.6%) had some community college education, and 38 respondents (14.7%) had some four year college or university education. Almost eleven percent of the subjects had received bachelors degrees, five percent had some graduate school education, and 3.9 percent had graduate degrees (see Table 3). In American Demographics, Ambry reported that women with more education were more likely to sew (1988). Specifically, "women with college degrees are 29 percent more likely" to sew than other women (p. 36). In the present study 57.9 percent of the home sewers had received some college education.

Age distribution. The majority of the respondents in this study were over 55, with 25.9 percent in the 55 to 64 years group and 38.2 percent in the 65 years and older group. There were no respondent under the age of 25 and only ten respondents (3.9%) who were 25 to 34 years old. Thirty-three respondents (12.7%) were in the 35 to 44 years old group and 42 respondents (16.2%) were in the 45 to 54 years old group (see Table 4). In Ambry's article on home

Table 3

Highest Level of Education Completed by
Oregon Home Sewers

<u>Education Level</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
8th Grade or Less	4	1.5
Grades 9 through 11	9	3.5
High School Graduate or Equivalent	68	26.3
Technical Trade School Beyond High School	15	5.8
Some Community College	43	16.6
Community (Two-Year) Degree or Certificate	18	6.9
Some Four-Year College or University	38	14.7
College or University Degree (Bachelors)	28	10.8
Some Graduate School	13	5.0
Graduate or Professional Degree	10	3.9
Other	3	1.2
Missing Data	9	3.9
Total	258	100.0

Table 4

Age Distribution of Oregon Home Sewers

<u>Age Group</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Under 25 years	0	0.0
25 to 34 years	10	3.9
35 to 44 years	33	12.7
45 to 54 years	42	16.2
55 to 64 years	67	25.9
65 years and older	99	38.2
Missing Data	7	3.1
Total	258	100.0

sewers, it was reported that the average home sewer was between the ages of 25 and 44 (1988). It was also reported that the home sewers who spent the most on fabric, patterns, and other sewing necessities, were in the 45 to 55 year old age group. The average age of the home sewer sample for the present study was higher than Ambry's national home sewer information.

Ethnic identity. The overwhelming majority of this sample indicated their ethnic identification as white (94.6%). Two subjects (0.8%) indicated a Hispanic identification and one subject (0.4%) indicated an Oriental identification.

Employment status. Almost three fourths (72.6%) of the sample indicated they were not employed. Of the entire sample 7.7 percent were employed full time and 17.0 percent were employed part time. Sew News reported that 60 percent "of the most active home sewers are employed at least part-time" (as indicated by Ambry, 1988,p. 36). The sample for the present study was not similar to the national information for employment status.

Marital status. The majority of the respondents were married (76.8%) with the second largest group being widowed (16.1%). Almost four percent (3.9%) of the sample indicated divorced/separated as present marital status. Four respondents (1.5%) indicated they were living with a partner (see Table 5).

Spouse/Partner employment status. Those subjects who indicated they were presently married or living with a partner were asked to specify the employment status of their spouse/partner. The largest group of respondents (36.3%) indicated their spouse/partner did not work while almost the same proportion of respondents (35.9%) indicated their spouse/partner worked full time. Sixteen of the spouses/partners (6.2%) worked part time.

Table 5

Marital Status of Oregon Home Sewers

<u>Marital Status</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Percent</u>
Single, never married	0	0.0
Divorced/Separated	10	3.9
Widowed	41	15.8
Living with a Partner	4	1.5
Married	199	76.8
Missing Data	4	1.9
Total	258	100.0

The Fabric Store Manager Sample

The respondents in the fabric store manager sample were asked to complete questions indicating store demographic characteristics including number of sales employees, type of ownership, number of years in operation, number of years under current management, class offerings, monthly sales, average starting wage, and the proximity of colleges or universities offering clothing and/or textile related classes.

Number of sales employees. In the present study the average number of sales employees in a fabric store in Oregon is 9.7. Chain stores have an average of 14.4 employees, with 3.6 full-time and 10.8 part-time. Independent fabric stores have an average of 5.2 employees, with 1.5 full time and 3.7 part-time (see Table 6). Nine stores had only one employee whereas one store had 61 employees. A plurality of stores had four employees (see Table 7).

Table 6

Number of Sales Employees in Oregon Fabric Stores

	Average number of employees per store		
	<u>Chain</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Combined</u>
Full-time employees	3.6	1.5	2.5
Part-time employees	10.8	3.7	7.1
Both full & part time	14.4	5.2	9.7

Table 7

Frequency Table of Sales Employees in Oregon Fabric Stores

<u>Number of Stores</u>	<u>Number of Sales Employees</u>
1	9
2	6
3	7
4	13
5	6
6	3
7	6
8	3
9	5
10	3
11	1
12	1
14	1
17	1
18	2
20	2
22	2
23	1
24	2
25	2
28	1
30	2
32	1
35	1
61	1

Type of ownership. There were slightly more managers of independent stores (51.2%) who participated in the present study than there were managers of chain stores (48.8%).

Years in operation. The average number of years a fabric store was in operation was fifteen years. Thirty-three stores (40%) had been open ten years or less. Thirty-five stores (43%) had been open between eleven and twenty years. Only fourteen stores had been open over twenty years, with ninety years being the highest number of years open (see Table 8). The average number of years chain stores had been open was 13.2 years, whereas independent stores had been open for an average of 17 years.

Years under current management. The average fabric store manager had been managing his/her present store for seven years. The independent fabric store manager had managed his/her store for 10.1 years and the chain store manager for 3.6 years.

Over half of the fabric store managers had been managing their stores for five years or less. Twenty-nine managers (35.4%) had been managing between six and fifteen years. Only ten managers (12.1%) included in the sample had managed their store for over fifteen years (see Table 9).

Table 8

Oregon Fabric Stores Years in Operation

<u>Years</u>	<u>Number of stores</u>	<u>Percent</u>
10 years and under	33	40.2
11 to 20 years	35	42.7
21 to 30 years	9	11.0
Over 30 years	5	6.1

Note: n=82

Table 9

Number of years of current management of Oregon fabric stores

<u>Years of Management</u>	<u>Number of Managers</u>	<u>Percent</u>
5 years and under	43	52.4
6 to 10 years	19	23.2
11 to 15 years	10	12.2
16 to 20 years	7	8.5
21 to 25 years	2	2.4
Over 25 years	1	1.2

Note: n=82

Class offerings. A large percentage of fabric stores (70.7%) offered classes. Of the independent fabric stores, 90.5 percent offered classes. Only 50 percent of the chain stores offered classes.

Monthly sales. Figure 4 illustrates the differences between chain store and independent store monthly sales. Chain store sales were fairly evenly distributed throughout the sales categories. All of the independent stores except one, had sales of under \$50,000. Table 10 lists numbers of stores in each category.

Figure 4. Line graph of differences in independent and chain fabric store monthly sales



Table 10

Monthly Sales of Oregon Fabric Stores

<u>Sales</u>	Number of Stores (%)		<u>Combined</u>
	<u>Chain</u>	<u>Independent</u>	
Under \$10,000	3	20	23(29.9)
\$10,000 to \$29,999	9	17	26(33.8)
\$30,000 to \$49,999	9	2	11(13.4)
\$50,000 to \$69,999	6		6(7.3)
\$70,000 to \$89,999	3		3(3.7)
\$90,000 to \$100,000	5		5(6.1)
Over \$100,000	2	1	3(3.7)
Missing Data			5(6.1)

Note: n=82

Average starting wage. The minimum wage for Oregon changed three times in 1989, causing inaccurate information for this demographic characteristic. The most current minimum wage rate is \$4.25 per hour, whereas other rates have been \$3.85 and \$3.35 per hour. As shown in Table 10 the majority of the respondents (75.5%) indicated the starting wage for their store was under \$4.40, with the largest percentage indicating the \$4.21 to \$4.40 wage rate (28.0%). Eleven percent of the sample indicated a starting wage rate of \$4.41 to \$4.60, whereas 12.3 percent indicated starting wages \$4.61 or over. In a breakdown of starting wages for chain and independent fabric stores (see Table 11) it was revealed that more independent fabric stores have higher starting wages than chain stores.

College/university proximity. Fifty-six (68.3%) of the fabric store managers who responded to the survey indicated that there was a college or university within 30 miles of their store that offered clothing and/or textile related classes. Twenty managers (24.4%) indicated there was not a college or university within 30 miles of their store that offered such classes. Eighty-seven percent of the chain stores were located near colleges or universities as compared to 52.5 percent of the independent stores that were located near colleges or universities.

Table 11

Average Starting Wage in Oregon Fabric Stores

<u>Wage Rate</u>	<u>Number of Stores (%)</u>		
	<u>Chain</u>	<u>Independent</u>	<u>Combined</u>
\$3.35 and under	10(25.0)	5(12.2)	15(18.3)
\$3.40 to \$3.60	3(7.5)	3(7.3)	6(7.3)
\$3.61 to \$3.80		2(4.9)	2(2.4)
\$3.81 to \$4.00	2(5.0)	5(12.2)	7(8.5)
\$4.01 to \$4.20	3(7.5)	6(14.6)	9(11.0)
\$4.21 to \$4.40	17(42.5)	6(14.6)	23(28.0)
\$4.41 to \$4.60	2(5.0)	7(17.1)	9(11.0)
\$4.61 to \$4.80	2(5.0)	2(4.9)	4(4.9)
\$4.81 to \$5.00		3(7.3)	3(3.7)
Over \$5.00	1(2.5)	2(4.9)	3(3.7)
Missing Data			1(1.2)
Total			82(100.0)

Objective 1

The first objective of the present study was to investigate home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles. The two facets of the term "expectation" were compared.

Hypothesis 1. The number of years sewing experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the number of years sewing experience home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

In an investigation of the percentages of home sewers desiring or considering probable each category of years sewing experience, it was found that home sewers desired a larger number of years sewing experience than they thought fabric store sales personnel currently had. The largest percentages (not including the "do not know" category) for both what was considered probable and what was desired was at the "at least 2 years" category with 27.5 percent of the home sewer sample considering it probable and 34.1 percent of the home sewer sample desiring this category. At the "at least four years" level the difference is more pronounced with 11.7 percent of the home sewer sample considering it probable and 28.9 percent desiring at least four years sewing experience. Over six years sewing experience was not viewed by large percentages of the

sample as either probable or desired. These differences are illustrated in Table 12.

In further analysis of individual responses it was found that 59 percent of home sewers who responded to both the probability and desirability sections of the question relating to this hypothesis, and excluding those respondents who marked "I do not know", had desires for sales personnel that were greater than they felt were probable. Approximately ten percent had desires that were less than what they considered probable and 32.9 percent considered sewing experience equally probable and desirable. The matrix in Figure 5 illustrates this point. With these results Hypothesis 1 of the first objective was supported.

Table 12

Fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience considered probable and sewing experience desired by home sewers

<u>Sewing Experience</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>	
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
No experience	2.0	0.0
Less than 1 year	19.4	6.5
At least 2 years	27.5	34.1
At least 4 years	11.7	28.9
At least 6 years	4.0	11.8
At least 8 years	2.0	2.9
At least 10 years	1.2	6.9
Over 10 years	2.4	2.8
Do not know	29.6	6.1

Note: Probable n=247; Desired n=246

Figure 5. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's years sewing experience.

		DESIRED							
		Low							High
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
P R O B A B L E	Low 1	0	1	1	3	0	0	0	0
	2	0	5	18	14	2	1	3	3
	3	0	1	26	21	13	1	3	0
	4	0	0	5	14	4	3	2	1
	5	0	0	2	3	2	0	1	1
	6	0	0	0	0	1	1	2	1
	7	0	0	0	2	0	0	1	0
	High 8	0	0	2	1	1	0	2	0

Hypothesis 2. The level of sewing ability home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the level of sewing ability home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

A plurality of home sewers both considered probable (32.8%) and desired (41.1%) an intermediate sewing ability for fabric store sales personnel. The major differences in distribution occurred above and below this level. Whereas 31.6 percent of the home sewer sample considered it probable for fabric store sales personnel to have a beginner intermediate sewing ability, only 9.7 percent desired fabric store sales personnel to have this level of ability. At the intermediate expert level 4.0 percent of the sample considered this level probable and 28.6 percent desired this level (see Table 13).

In an analysis of individual home sewers expectations through the use of a matrix such as used for the first hypothesis, it was found that the majority of home sewers (68.0%) had desires of fabric store sales personnel's sewing ability that were greater than what they thought probable. Of those indicating certain levels of ability 28.4 percent of the sample indicated their desire were equal to what they considered probable. Approximately three percent had desires that were less than what they considered probable. Figure 6 diagrams these differences. Hypothesis 2 was supported with this evidence.

Table 13

Fabric store sales personnel's sewing ability considered probable and sewing ability desired by home sewers

<u>Sewing Ability</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>	
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
Beginner	10.5	1.6
Beginner Intermediate	31.6	9.7
Intermediate	32.8	41.7
Intermediate Expert	4.0	28.6
Expert	0.8	14.9
Do not know	20.2	4.0

Note: Probable n=247; Desired n=248

Figure 6. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing ability level.

		DESIRE				
		Low		High		
		1	2	3	4	5
P R O B A B L E	Low 1	1	2	13	5	3
	2	0	8	30	25	11
	3	0	3	32	31	10
	4	0	0	3	3	3
	High 5	0	0	0	0	1

		n=169				

Desire > Probable - 68.0% of home sewer sample

Desire = Probable - 28.4% of home sewer sample

Desire < Probable - 3.6% of home sewer sample

Key: 1 - BEGINNER, 2 - BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE,
3 - INTERMEDIATE, 4 - INTERMEDIATE EXPERT,
5 - EXPERT

Hypothesis 3. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

Descriptive statistics were used to investigate actual and proportional differences between the percentages of home sewers who considered sources of education related to sewing to be probable and of home sewers who considered sources of education related to sewing to be important or very important for fabric store sales personnel. As indicated in Table 14 (p. 83) there were differences between the percentages of home sewers who considered certain education sources probable and home sewers who considered certain sources important.

Over thirty percent (32.0%) of the home sewer sample believed that fabric store sales personnel had no sewing education. This was nine times the percent of home sewers who did not desire fabric sales personnel to have sewing education (3.5%).

Other than the "no sewing education" category, the largest actual differences occurred in the "classes given by fabric stores" (26.2) and "on the job training" (27.0) categories. The proportional differences for both of these categories was 1.7.

The largest proportional difference between the percentages of home sewers who considered a source of

education probable and home sewers who considered a source of education important occurred at the "university" education source (12.9).

At the "junior high", "high school", and "4-H (or other club)" sources of sewing education home sewers' estimations of fabric sales personnel's educations were very similar to the education sources home sewers' felt were important for fabric sales personnel.

Only two of the education source categories had higher percentages for the home sewers who considered the sources probable. In contrast, seven of the education source categories had higher percentages for the home sewers who considered the sources important. These differences supported Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

Descriptive statistics were used to investigate the actual and proportional differences between the percentages of home sewers who considered sources of education related to textiles to be probable and of home sewers who considered sources of education related to textiles to be important or very important for fabric store sales personnel. Table 15 (p. 83) indicates the differences in the percentages of home sewers who considered sources of

education related to textiles probable and of home home sewers who considered sources of education related to textiles desirable.

The largest differences occurred between percentages at the "no textile education," "classes given by fabric stores," and "on the job training" levels. Over 65 percent of the home sewer sample indicated that current fabric store sales personnel probably did not have education related to textiles and 5.8 percent did not feel education related to textiles was important for fabric sales personnel. For the education sources provided by fabric stores, 15.4 percent of home sewers considered it probable that sales people had classes given by fabric stores and 20.1 percent considered it probable that sales people had job training on the subject of textiles. These percentages compare to the over sixty percent of home sewers who consider it important or very important for fabric store sales personnel to have had education at these two sources.

Only one of the education source categories had higher percentages for the home sewers who considered the sources probable, compared to seven of the education source categories which had higher percentages for the home sewers who considered the sources important. These differences supported Hypothesis 4.

Table 14

Education sources related to sewing considered probable and considered important or very important by home sewers for fabric store sales personnel

<u>Sewing Education Sources</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>		
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Important</u>
No sewing education	32.0	28.5/9.1	3.5
Junior High	34.0	10.4/1.4	23.6
High School	42.5	0.8/1.0	43.3
Community College	6.6	22.0/4.3	28.6
University	1.5	17.8/12.9	19.3
4-H (or other club)	27.8	5.1/1.2	32.9
Private classes	17.4	16.6/1.9	34.0
Classes given by fabric stores	38.6	26.2/1.7	64.8
On the job training	36.3	27.0/1.7	63.3

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 15

Education sources related to textiles considered probable and education sources related to textiles considered important or very important by home sewers for fabric store sales personnel

<u>Textiles Education Sources</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>		
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Important</u>
No textile education	66.4	60.6/11.4	5.8
Junior High	6.9	7.0/2.0	13.9
High School	13.5	18.1/2.3	31.6
Community College	3.9	24.3/7.2	28.2
University	2.7	20.1/8.4	22.8
4-H (or other club)	10.8	14.3/2.3	25.1
Private classes	7.3	23.9/4.3	31.2
Classes given by fabric stores	15.4	48.3/4.1	63.7
On the job training	20.1	44.4/3.2	64.5

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 5. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of fabrics home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

In a comparison of what home sewers consider probable with what home sewers desire in regard to the fabric knowledge level of fabric sales personnel, results indicated that home sewers desired a higher knowledge level than they considered probable. Over seventy percent of the home sewer sample desired a high knowledge level of fabric among fabric store sales personnel, whereas only 3.6 percent considered this knowledge level probable. At the medium level of fabric knowledge 66.0 percent of the sample considered the level probable and 29.0 percent desired this level (see Table 16).

In analysis of individual home sewer expectations, it was found that 77.6% of the sample desired higher fabric knowledge of fabric store sales personnel than they considered probable of sales personnel. Though none of the sample had lower desires than was considered probable, 22.4 percent of the sample indicated that their desires equaled what they considered probable. A matrix illustrating these differences is illustrated in Figure 7. These results supported Hypothesis 5.

Table 16

Fabric sales personnel's knowledge level of fabric considered probable and desired by home sewers

<u>Fabric Knowledge Level</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>	
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
High	3.6	70.2
Medium	66.0	29.0
Low	23.6	0.0
No knowledge	0.8	0.4
Do not know	6.0	0.4

Note: Probable n=250; Desired n=248

Figure 7. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's fabric knowledge.

		DESIRED			
		High			Low
		1	2	3	4
P R O B A B L E	High 1	9	0	0	0
	2	120	42	0	0
	3	33	25	0	1
	Low 4	2	0	0	0
		n=232			

Desire > Probable - 77.6% of home sewer sample

Desire = Probable - 22.4% of home sewer sample

Desire < Probable - 0.0% of home sewer sample

Key: 1 - HIGH, 2 - MEDIUM, 3 - LOW, 4 - NO KNOWLEDGE

Hypothesis 6. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Similar to their expectations of fabric store sales personnel's fabric knowledge, the majority of home sewers desired a high level of knowledge concerning sewing machine and hand needles and considered the medium knowledge level probable. Of the home sewer sample 61.0 percent desired the high knowledge level while only 8.0 percent considered this level probable. At the medium knowledge level there was a smaller difference with 53.6 percent of the sample considering this level probable and 36.3 percent desiring this level of knowledge (see Table 17).

Analysis of individual expectations of home sewers indicated that 68.6% of home sewers had higher desires for fabric store sales personnel's sewing machine and hand needles than they considered probable, though 30.1 percent of the sample indicated their desires and what they considered probable were equal. Only 1.3 percent of the sample indicated lower desires than what they considered probable (see Figure 8). These results supported Hypothesis 6.

Table 17

Fabric sales personnel's knowledge level of needles
considered probable and desired by home sewers

<u>Needles</u> <u>Knowledge Level</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>	
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
High	8.0	61.0
Medium	53.6	36.3
Low	26.8	1.2
No knowledge	2.0	0.0
Do not know	9.6	1.6

Note: Probable n=250; Desired n=251

Figure 8. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing machine and hand needle knowledge.

		DESIRED			
		High			Low
		1	2	3	4
P R O B A B L E	High 1	18	2	0	0
	2	84	49	1	0
	3	39	28	0	0
	Low 4	4	0	1	0
		n=226			

Desire > Probable - 68.6% of home sewer sample

Desire = Probable - 30.1% of home sewer sample

Desire < Probable - 1.3% of home sewer sample

Key: 1 - HIGH, 2 - MEDIUM, 3 - LOW, 4 - NO KNOWLEDGE

Hypothesis 7. The knowledge level of threads home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of threads home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Table 18 indicates over sixty percent more home sewers desired a high knowledge of thread (69.7%) than considered this level probable (7.1%). Conversely, 64.7 percent of the home sewer sample considered a medium thread knowledge probable while 28.7 percent of the sample desired this level.

Of the home sewers indicating both a desire and what they considered probable or fabric store sales personnel's knowledge level of threads 73.9 percent indicated they had higher desires of sale personnel than what they considered probable, 25.7% had desires that equaled what they considered probable, and 0.4 percent had desires that were lower than what they considered probable (see Figure 9). These results supported Hypothesis 7.

Hypothesis 8. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the knowledge level of interfacing home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

At the high interfacing knowledge level 6.3 percent of the home sewer sample considered this level probable

Table 18

Fabric sales personnel's knowledge level of thread considered probable and desired by home sewers

<u>Thread Knowledge Level</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers</u>	
	<u>Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
High	7.1	69.7
Medium	64.7	28.7
Low	21.0	0.0
No knowledge	0.8	0.0
Do not know	6.3	1.6

Note: Probable n=252; Desired n=251

Figure 9. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's thread knowledge.

		DESIRED			
		High 1	2	3	Low 4
P R O B A B L E	High 1	17	1	0	0
	2	119	43	0	0
	3	29	23	0	0
	Low 4	1	1	0	0

		n=234			

Desire > Probable - 73.9% of home sewer sample

Desire = Probable - 25.7% of home sewer sample

Desire < Probable - 0.4% of home sewer sample

Key: 1 - HIGH, 2 - MEDIUM, 3 - LOW, 4 - NO KNOWLEDGE

and 64.3 percent desired this knowledge level for fabric store sales personnel. Twenty-seven percent of the sample considered the low level of interfacing knowledge probable compared to 0.8 percent of the sample that desired this level. A smaller difference was found at the medium knowledge level with 55.2 percent of the sample considering this level probable and 34.1 percent desiring this level (see Table 19).

Through individual analysis of home sewers expectations of fabric store sales personnel's interfacing it was found that 70.1 percent of the home sewers indicated that their desires of sales personnel's interfacing knowledge was greater than the probable knowledge. Approximately 30 percent indicated that their desires equaled what they considered probable, and 0.4 percent indicated lower desires than what they considered probable. Figure 10 illustrates these differences. From these results Hypothesis 8 was supported.

Table 19

Fabric sales personnel's knowledge level of interfacing considered probable and desired by home sewers

<u>Interfacing Knowledge Level</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
High	6.3	64.3
Medium	55.2	34.1
Low	27.0	0.8
No knowledge	2.0	0.0
Do not know	9.5	0.8

Note: Probable n=252; Desired n=249

Figure 10. Matrix of home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's interfacing knowledge.

		DESIRED			
		High			Low
		1	2	3	4
P R O B A B L E	High 1	16	0	0	0
	2	86	50	1	0
	3	45	21	0	1
	Low 4	2	3	0	0
		n=224			

Desire > Probable - 70.1% of home sewer sample

Desire = Probable - 29.5% of home sewer sample

Desire < Probable - 0.4% of home sewer sample

Key: 1 - HIGH, 2 - MEDIUM, 3 - LOW, 4 - NO KNOWLEDGE

Hypothesis 9. The number of years sales experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be less than the number of years sales experience home sewers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

In comparison of the percentages of the home sewer sample who considered probable and desired certain numbers of years sales experience it was found there were more similarities than differences. The largest difference was in the "I do not know" category with 34.0 percent of the sample indicating this as probable and 16.6 percent indicating this level as desired. Only a relatively small difference was found between the percentages of home sewers who considered number of years sales experience probable and desirable (within the categories indicating specific years of sales experience). The largest difference in percentages was 11.0 at the "up to and including 6 years" category (see Table 20).

In the analysis of individual home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sales experience it was found that the largest percentage (46.1%) of home sewers indicated that the experience they desired equaled what they considered probable of sales personnel. A similar but lower percentage of home sewers (42.1%) indicated that their desires of sales personnel were greater than what they considered probable of sales personnel. Approximately seven percent indicated they had

lower desires of sales personnel than what they considered probable (see Figure 11). From these results Hypothesis 9 was not supported.

Table 20

Fabric sales personnel's years sales experience considered probable and desired by home sewers

<u>Years Sales Experience</u>	<u>Percent of Home Sewers Probable</u>	<u>Desired</u>
No Experience	15.6	10.1
Up to and including 3 yrs.	42.8	52.6
Up to and including 6 yrs.	6.4	17.4
Up to and including 9 yrs.	0.8	1.2
Over 9 years	0.4	2.0
Do not know	34.0	16.6

Note: Probable n=250; Desired n=247

Objective 2

The second objective of the present study was to compare home sewers' expectations with fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. The two facets of home sewers' expectations were compared with fabric store managers estimations of current fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience.

Hypothesis 1. The number of years sewing experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Over sixty percent of the home sewer sample indicated that they considered it probable that fabric sales personnel had four years of sewing experience or less. However, fabric store managers reported that 76.6 percent of the fabric store sales people had at least eight years of experience or more. It appears that home sewers considered it probable that fabric sales personnel had fewer years of sewing experience than the number of years of sewing experience fabric store managers estimated sales personnel to have (see Table 21, p. 97). These differences supported Hypothesis 1 of Objective 2.

Hypothesis 2. The level of sewing ability home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the level of sewing ability fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

At the intermediate sewing ability level, there was no proportional difference between the percent of home sewers who considered sales personnel's ability at this level probable and the percent of sales personnel who managers indicated had this ability level. Above and below this level there were differences in home sewers' and fabric store managers' estimations of sales personnel. The greatest difference occurred in the "expert" category. Less than one percent of the home sewers considered it probable for fabric store sales personnel to have an "expert" sewing ability and over 35 percent of the sales personnel, according to the fabric store managers, had an "expert" sewing ability. The "intermediate expert" category of sewing ability also had a larger percentage of sales personnel than home sewers, with an actual difference of 26.4 percentage points and a proportional difference in the percentages of 7.6. The "beginner" and "beginner intermediate" categories had somewhat smaller actual and proportional differences than the "intermediate expert" and "expert" categories. These results supported Hypothesis 2 (see Table 22).

Table 21

Fabric store sales personnel's years sewing experience considered probable by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Years Sewing Experience</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No experience	2.0	1.9/2.0	0.9
1 year or less	19.4	17.4/9.7	2.0
At least 2 years	27.5	21.6/4.7	5.9
At least 4 years	11.7	3.3/1.4	8.4
At least 6 years	4.0	1.1/1.3	5.1
At least 8 years	2.0	8.5/5.5	10.5
At least 10 years	1.2	7.1/6.9	8.3
Over 10 years	2.4	55.4/24.1	57.8
Do not know	29.6		1.1

Note: Sewers n=247; Personnel n=784

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 22

Fabric store sales personnel's level of sewing ability considered probable by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Sewing Ability</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
Beginner	10.5	6.8/2.8	3.7
Beginner Intermediate	31.6	25.4/5.1	6.2
Intermediate	32.8	9.2/1.4	23.6
Intermediate Expert	4.0	26.4/7.6	30.4
Expert	0.8	34.7/35.5	35.5
Do not know	20.2		0.8

Note: Sewers n=247; Personnel n=764

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 3. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

The largest difference between percentages of home sewers who considered a source of education to be probable and the percentage of sales personnel who probably have had sewing education at that source was for the "no sewing education" category. Thirty-two percent of home sewers considered it probable that fabric store sales personnel had no sewing experience whereas only 5.9 percent of fabric store sales personnel were reported as having no sewing experience. Actual or proportional differences also occurred at the "high school," "university," and "4-H (or other club)" categories (see Table 23, p. 100). These differences in percentages supported Hypothesis 3.

Hypothesis 4. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

The trends for textile education sources considered probable by home sewers and managers were similar to the trends for sewing education. There was a large difference between the percent of home sewers who did not consider it probable that sales personnel had textile education and the

percentage of sales personnel that, according to store managers, did not have textile education. There were also proportional differences in the "university" and "classes given by fabric store" categories. For the "on the job training" category there were actual and proportional differences with approximately twenty percent of home sewers considering it probable that sales personnel had classes at this education source and 38.7 percent of sales personnel being reported as having this source (see Table 24). These differences supported Hypothesis 4.

Hypothesis 5. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Although the percentages of sales personnel indicated by fabric store managers are fairly evenly distributed at the high and medium knowledge levels, home sewers indicated they considered it probable for sales personnel to have medium and low levels of fabric knowledge. The largest actual (42.2 percentage points) and proportional (12.7) differences in the percentages occurred at the high knowledge level. At the medium knowledge level,

Table 23

Sewing education sources considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Sewing Education Source</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No sewing education	32.0	26.1/5.4	5.9
Junior high	34.0	8.0/1.2	42.0
High school	42.5	17.2/1.4	59.7
Community College	6.6	2.3/1.3	8.9
University	1.5	7.1/5.7	8.6
4-H (or other club)	27.8	11.3/1.7	16.5
Private classes	17.4	2.9/1.2	14.5
Classes given by fabric stores	38.6	5.5/1.2	33.1
On the job training	36.3	n/a	

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 24

Textile education sources considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Textile Education Source</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No textile education	66.4	53.9/5.3	12.5
Junior high	6.9	0.4/1.1	7.3
High school	13.5	4.6/1.2	18.1
Community College	3.9	0.8/1.2	4.7
University	2.7	5.2/2.9	7.9
4-H (or other club)	10.8	4.3/1.7	6.5
Private classes	7.3	0.2/1.0	7.1
Classes given by fabric stores	15.4	8.6/2.3	6.8
On the job training	20.1	18.6/1.9	38.7

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

there was not a proportional difference but there was an actual difference of 19.5 percentage points. At the low knowledge level, both actual (16.9) and proportional (3.5) differences occurred. Table 25 illustrates these differences. The differences between the percentages supported Hypothesis 5.

Hypothesis 6. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Home sewers estimated fabric store sales personnel's sewing machine and hand needle knowledge to be at the medium and low levels whereas fabric store managers estimated it to be at the high and medium levels. There were actual and proportional differences in percentages for the high and low needle knowledge categories but no differences in percentages for the medium category (see Table 26). These differences supported Hypothesis 6.

Table 25

Fabric knowledge level considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Fabric Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	3.6	42.2/12.7	45.8
Medium	66.0	19.5/1.4	46.5
Low	23.6	16.9/3.5	6.7
No knowledge	0.8	0.3/1.0	0.5
Do not know	6.0		0.0

Note: Sewers n=250; Personnel n=746

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 26

Sewing machine and hand needle knowledge level considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Needle Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	8.0	35.1/5.4	43.1
Medium	53.6	9.4/1.2	44.2
Low	26.8	16.2/2.5	10.6
No knowledge	2.0	0.0/0.0	2.0
Do not know	9.6		0.0

Note: Sewers n=250; Personnel n=742

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 7. The knowledge level of threads home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The majority of fabric store managers estimated that their sales personnel had high or medium thread knowledge whereas the majority of home sewers considered medium and low thread knowledge probable of sales personnel. The largest actual and proportional differences occurred in the high knowledge category. At the medium knowledge category, there were actual differences in the percentages but no proportional differences, and at the low knowledge category there were had proportional differences in the percentages but no actual differences (see Table 27). Based on these results Hypothesis 7 was supported.

Table 27

Thread knowledge level considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Thread Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	7.1	34.0/5.8	41.1
Medium	64.7	19.2/1.4	45.5
Low	21.0	9.0/1.8	12.0
No knowledge	0.8	0.5/1.3	1.3
Do not know	6.3		0.0

Note: Sewers n=252; Personnel n=749

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 8. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Similar to other estimations of product knowledge, the fabric store managers estimated the majority of their sales personnel as having high or medium interfacing knowledge. The majority of home sewers estimated sales personnel to have medium and low interfacing knowledge. Unlike other products, there was a difference in percentages for the "no knowledge" category (see Table 28). These results supported Hypothesis 8.

Table 28

Interfacing knowledge level considered probable for fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric store managers

<u>Interfacing Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	6.3	34.9/6.5	41.2
Medium	55.2	12.7/1.3	42.5
Low	27.0	11.4/1.7	15.6
No knowledge	2.0	1.3/2.0	0.7
Do not know	9.5		0.0

Note: Sewers n=252; Personnel n=743

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 9. The number of years sales experience home sewers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years sales experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

A larger percentage of home sewer than sales personnel, as indicated by managers, considered sales personnel to have "no experience" in terms of sales experience. For this category there was an actual difference of 11.5 percentage points and proportional difference in the percentages of 3.8. There were no differences between home sewers and sales personnel in the percentages for the "up to and including 3 years" sales experience category. For the "6 years," "9 years" and "over 9 years" sales experience categories the percentages of probable sales personnel was larger than the percentages of home sewers considering the categories probable for sales personnel. All three of these categories had actual and proportional percentage differences (see Table 29). These results supported Hypothesis 9.

Table 29

Number of years sales experience considered probable for
fabric store sales personnel by home sewers and fabric
store managers

<u>Years Sales Experience</u>	<u>% Sewers: Probable Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No experience	15.6	11.5/3.8	4.1
Up to & incl 3 yrs	42.8	6.7/1.2	36.1
Up to & incl 6 yrs	6.4	18.3/3.9	24.7
Up to & incl 9 yrs	0.8	10.6/11.4	11.4
Over 9 years	0.4	21.7/22.1	22.1
Do not know	34.0		1.7

Note: Sewers n=250; Personnel n=757

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 10. The number of years sewing experience home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The greatest difference between fabric sales personnel's number of years of sewing experience desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers was in the "over 10 years" category. In this category there was an actual difference of 55 percentage points and a proportional difference in the percentages of 20.6. A larger percentage of sales personnel, according to fabric store managers, had over ten years of sewing experience than the percentage of home sewers who desired this number of years of sewing experience for fabric store sales personnel. The second largest percentage difference with percentage of home sewers being larger than percentage of sales personnel, occurred in the "at least 2 years" category. For this category there was an actual difference of 28.2 percentage points and a proportional difference in the percentages of 3.4. These differences are shown in Table 30 (p. 109). Hypothesis 10 was supported.

Hypothesis 11. The level of sewing ability home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the level of sewing ability fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

For the "beginner intermediate," "intermediate," and "expert" categories, there were larger percentages of home sewers desiring these levels of sewing ability than percentages of sales personnel who, according to the fabric store managers, had these levels of sewing ability. The largest difference occurred in the "expert" category with an actual difference of 20.6 percentage points and a proportional difference in percentages of 2.4. The only category that had a larger percentage of personnel than home sewers was the "beginner" category. In the "intermediate expert" category there was no difference between the percentages of home sewers and sales personnel (see Table 31). The differences in percentages supported Hypothesis 11.

Hypothesis 12. The sources of education related to sewing home sewers consider important for current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

The education sources related to sewing that the largest percentage of home sewers considered important for

Table 30

Years sewing experience of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Years Sewing Experience</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No experience	0.0	0.9/1.0	0.9
1 year or less	6.5	4.5/3.3	2.0
At least 2 years	34.1	28.2/5.8	5.9
At least 4 years	28.9	20.5/3.4	8.4
At least 6 years	11.8	6.7/2.3	5.1
At least 8 years	2.8	7.7/3.8	10.5
At least 10 years	6.9	1.4/1.2	8.3
Over 10 years	2.8	55.0/20.6	57.8
Do not know	6.1		1.1

Note: Sewers n=246; Personnel n=784

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 31

Sewing ability level of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Sewing Ability</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
Beginner	1.6	2.1/2.3	3.7
Beginner Intermediate	9.7	3.5/1.6	6.2
Intermediate	41.1	17.5/1.7	23.6
Intermediate Expert	28.6	1.8/1.1	30.4
Expert	14.9	20.6/2.4	35.5
Do not know	4.0		0.8

Note: Sewers n=248; Personnel n=764

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

fabric sales personnel were the sources provided by the fabric stores. The sources sales personnel were most likely to have had sewing education from were the junior high (42.0%) and high school (59.7%) sources. Larger percentages of sales personnel were considered to probably have had classes related to sewing at junior high and high school than the percentage of home sewers who considered these sewing education sources important. The largest proportional difference in the percentages occurred for the "community college" category (3.2), with 28.6 percent of home sewers considering this education source important and fabric store managers estimating that 8.9 percent of their employees have utilized this education source (see Table 32). These differences supported Hypothesis 12.

Hypothesis 13. The sources of education related to textiles home sewers consider important for current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel.

For each source of textile education a larger percent of home sewers considered the source important than the percentage of sales personnel who had (as indicated by managers) textile education from that source. The sources that the largest percentage of home sewers considered important for textile education for sales personnel were classes given by fabric stores (63.7%) and on the job training (64.5%). The largest percentage of sales

Table 32

Sewing education sources of fabric sales personnel
important to home sewers and considered probable by fabric
store managers

<u>Sewing</u> <u>Education Source</u>	<u>% Sewers:</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif</u> ^a	<u>Managers:</u> <u>% Personnel</u> <u>Probable</u>
No sewing education	3.5	2.4/1.7	5.9
Junior high	23.6	18.4/1.8	42.0
High school	43.3	16.4/1.4	59.7
Community College	28.6	19.7/3.2	8.9
University	19.3	10.7/2.2	8.6
4-H (or other club)	32.9	16.4/2.0	16.5
Private classes	34.0	19.5/2.3	14.5
Classes given by fabric stores	64.8	31.7/2.0	33.1
On the job training	63.3		n/a

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 33

Textile education sources of fabric sales personnel
important to home sewers and considered probable by fabric
store managers

<u>Textiles</u> <u>Education Source</u>	<u>% Sewers:</u> <u>Important</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif</u> ^a	<u>Managers:</u> <u>% Personnel</u> <u>Probable</u>
No textile education	5.8	6.7/2.2	12.5
Junior high	13.9	6.6/2.1	7.3
High school	31.6	13.5/1.7	18.1
Community College	28.2	23.5/6.0	4.7
University	22.8	14.9/2.9	7.9
4-H (or other club)	25.1	18.6/3.9	6.5
Private classes	31.2	24.1/4.4	7.1
Classes given by fabric stores	63.7	56.9/9.4	6.8
On the job training	64.5	25.8/1.7	38.7

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

personnel who had a source of textile education was 38.7 percent for on the job training (see Table 33). These differences supported Hypothesis 13.

Hypothesis 14. The knowledge level of fabrics home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The majority of the home sewer sample (70.2%) desired fabric store sales personnel to have a high fabric knowledge level. The sales personnel, reported on by store managers, were fairly evenly distributed between the high (45.8%) and medium (46.5%) knowledge levels. The largest actual difference in the percentages, therefore, occurred in the high knowledge category. The largest proportional difference in the percentages occurred in the low knowledge category. In this category, no home sewers indicated desiring this knowledge level whereas managers indicated that 6.7 percent of sales personnel had a low knowledge level of fabrics. Hypothesis 14 was supported (see Table 34, p. 114).

Hypothesis 15. The knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Hypothesis 15 was supported. The majority of home sewers desired sales personnel to have high knowledge levels of sewing machine and hand needles. Similar to the distribution of percentages used to test Hypothesis 14, the majority of sales personnel fell into the high and medium needle knowledge levels. A higher percentage of home sewers (61.0%) desired the high knowledge level of needles than the percentage of sales personnel who were reported as probably having a high knowledge level (43.1%) (see Table 35). There was no difference in the percentages at the medium knowledge level.

Hypothesis 16. The knowledge level of threads home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Almost 70 percent of the home sewer sample indicated a high thread knowledge level was desired of fabric store sales personnel. Approximately 41 percent of the sales personnel reported by fabric store managers had a high thread knowledge. The largest proportional difference in

Table 34

Fabric knowledge level of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Fabric Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	70.2	24.4/1.5	45.8
Medium	29.0	17.5/1.6	46.5
Low	0.0	6.7/6.7	6.7
No knowledge	0.4	0.1/1.0	0.5
Do not know	0.4		0.0

Note: Sewers n=248; Personnel n=746

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 35

Needle knowledge level of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Needle Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	61.0	17.9/1.4	43.1
Medium	36.3	7.9/1.2	44.2
Low	1.2	9.4/8.8	10.6
No knowledge	1.1	0.9/1.8	2.0
Do not know	1.6		0.0

Note: Sewers n=251; Personnel n=742

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

the percentages occurred in the low knowledge category. There were no home sewers that indicated they desired fabric store sales personnel to have a low knowledge level of thread whereas twelve percent of the sales personnel, according to fabric store managers, had a low knowledge level. Therefore, Hypothesis 16 was supported (see Table 36).

Hypothesis 17. The knowledge level of interfacing home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Interfacing knowledge levels considered desirable by home sewers and probable by fabric store managers for sales personnel followed a percentage distribution similar to other product knowledge categories. A higher percentage of home sewers considered the high knowledge level desirable than the percentage of personnel considered to have this interfacing knowledge level. Two home sewers (0.8%) considered the low level of interfacing knowledge desirable for fabric store sales personnel to have and 15.6 percent of the fabric store sales personnel had this level of interfacing knowledge (see Table 37). These results indicate that Hypothesis 17 was supported.

Table 36

Thread knowledge level of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Thread Knowledge Level</u>	<u>Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	69.7	28.6/1.7	41.1
Medium	28.7	16.8/1.6	45.5
Low	0.0	12.0/12.0	12.0
No knowledge	0.0	1.3/1.3	1.3
Do not know	1.6		0.0

Note: Sewers n=251; Personnel n=749

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Table 37

Interfacing knowledge level of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Interfacing Knowledge Level</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
High	64.3	23.1/1.6	41.2
Medium	34.1	8.4/1.2	42.5
Low	0.8	14.8/15.6	15.6
No knowledge	0.0	0.7/1.0	0.7
Do not know	0.8		0.0

Note: Sewers n=249; Personnel n=743

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Hypothesis 18. The number of years sales experience home sewers desire or consider necessary of current fabric store sales personnel will be different than the number of years sales experience fabric store managers consider probable for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Interestingly, approximately ten percent of the home sewer sample indicated that they desired fabric sales personnel to have no sales experience. Four percent of fabric store sales personnel, according to their managers, did not have any sales experience. There was also a larger percentage of home sewers desiring "up to and including 3 years" of sales experience than the percentage of sales personnel who probably had this amount of sales experience. There was no difference in percentages in the "6 years" category, but there were larger percentages of sales personnel in the "up to and including 9 years" and "over 9 years" categories (see Table 38). These differences supported Hypothesis 18.

Table 38

Years sewing experience of fabric sales personnel desired by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers

<u>Years Sales Experience</u>	<u>% Sewers: Desired Personnel</u>	<u>Act/Prop Dif^a</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>
No experience	10.1	6.0/2.5	4.1
Up to & incl 3 yrs	52.6	16.5/1.5	36.1
Up to & incl 6 yrs	17.6	7.1/1.4	24.7
Up to & incl 9 yrs	1.2	10.2/9.5	11.4
Over 9 years	2.0	20.1/11.1	22.1
Do not know	16.6		1.7

Note: Sewers n=247; Personnel n=757

^aActual/proportional differences in percentages.

Objective 3

The third objective of the present study was to investigate fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's sewing experience, product knowledge, sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles.

Sub-objective 1. Compare the number of years sewing experience fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the number of years sewing experience fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The majority of the fabric store manager sample (83.7%) indicated that they desired at least two to six years of sewing experience for their sales personnel. Of the personnel the managers reported, the majority had at least eight to over ten years of sewing experience, with the largest percentage (57.8%) in the over ten years category. Table 39 further illustrates these differences.

Sub-objective 2. Compare the level of sewing ability fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the level of sewing ability fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Both the percentage of probable personnel and the percentage of fabric store managers desiring sewing ability of sales personnel are concentrated within the intermediate to expert sewing ability levels. The largest percentage of

Table 39

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's years of sewing experience to years of sewing experience desired by fabric store managers

<u>Years Sewing Experience</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>	<u>% Managers: Desired</u>
No experience	0.9	0.0
1 year or less	2.0	0.0
At least 2 years	5.9	22.5
At least 4 years	8.4	40.0
At least 6 years	5.1	21.2
At least 8 years	10.5	5.0
At least 10 years	8.3	2.5
Over 10 years	57.8	7.5
Do not know	1.1	1.2

Note: Personnel n=784; Managers n=80

managers desiring a specific sewing ability level are those desiring the intermediate sewing ability for their sales personnel (40.7%). This compares with the 23.6 percent of sales personnel who were reported having an intermediate sewing ability level. At the expert level managers indicated that 35.5 percent of the personnel had this level but only 14.8 percent of the managers desired this level (see Table 40).

Table 40

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's sewing ability to sewing ability desired by fabric store managers

<u>Sewing Ability</u>	Managers: % Personnel <u>Probable</u>	% Managers: <u>Desired</u>
Beginner	3.7	0.0
Beginner Intermediate	6.2	7.4
Intermediate	23.6	40.7
Intermediate Expert	30.4	35.8
Expert	35.5	14.8
Do not know	0.8	1.2

Note: Personnel n=764; Managers n=81

Sub-objective 3. Compare the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the sources of education related to sewing fabric store managers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

The percentage of sales personnel who were reported as having no sewing education (5.9%) were fairly close to the percentage of managers who did not feel sewing education was important for fabric sales personnel (7.3%). At the high school level the percentages were also relatively similar. At the junior high source of sewing education a larger percentage of sales personnel were thought to have had education from this source (42.0%) than the percentage of store managers who considered sewing education from this source important (30.5%). For the community college and university sewing education sources managers reported that less than ten percent of the sales personnel had received sewing education from these sources. Twenty-four percent of the fabric store manager sample indicated the community college as an important source of sewing education and 19.5 percent indicated the university as an important source of sewing education. Within the 4-H (or other club) and the private classes education source categories a larger percentage of managers considered important the source of education for their sales personnel than the percentage of sales personnel for whom managers reported these sources of education were probable. For the education sources that

were provided for sales personnel by fabric stores 52.4 percent of the managers considered classes given by fabric stores important and 69.5 percent considered on the job training important. Although the percentage of sales personnel who had education related to sewing from the on the job training education source was not available, 33.1 percent of the sales personnel had received education from classes given by fabric stores (see Table 41).

Table 41

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's sewing education sources to sewing education sources considered important by fabric store managers

<u>Sewing Education Source</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>	<u>% Managers: Importance</u>
No sewing education	5.9	7.3
Junior high	42.0	30.5
High school	59.7	54.9
Community College	8.9	24.4
University	8.6	19.5
4-H (or other club)	16.5	34.1
Private classes	14.5	34.2
Classes given by fabric stores	33.1	52.4
On the job training	n/a	69.5

Sub-objective 4. Compare the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the sources of education related to textiles fabric store managers consider important for fabric store sales personnel.

Although 23.2 percent of the fabric store managers indicated they did not want their sales personnel to have education related to textiles, the percentage of managers who did feel textile education was important was higher than the percentage of sales personnel who had textile education for each source of education included in the present study. Table 42 indicates these differences.

Table 42

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's textile education sources to textile education sources considered important by fabric store managers

<u>Textiles Education Source</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>	<u>% Managers: Importance</u>
No textile education	12.5	23.2
Junior high	7.3	13.5
High school	18.1	34.2
Community College	4.7	24.4
University	7.9	19.5
4-H (or other club)	6.5	23.2
Private classes	7.1	35.4
Classes given by fabric stores	6.8	34.2
On the job training	38.7	51.2

Sub-objective 5. Compare the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of fabrics fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

A majority of fabric store managers (65.4%) desired a high level of fabric knowledge for their sales personnel. The percentage of sales personnel who were indicated as probably having a high fabric knowledge was 45.8 percent. Although there was this difference in percentages, when the percentages for the high and medium knowledge levels were combined there was very little difference. Over 90 percent of the sales personnel had high or medium fabric knowledge levels and over 95 percent of the managers desired these levels. Over seven percent of the sales personnel had low or no knowledge of fabrics. There were no fabric store managers indicating they desired these knowledge levels (see Table 43).

Sub-objective 6. Compare the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of sewing machine and hand needles fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Similar to fabric knowledge considered probable and desirable, 87.3 percent of the reported sales personnel had high or medium sewing machine or hand needle knowledge and

Table 43

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's fabric knowledge to fabric knowledge desired by fabric store managers

<u>Fabric Knowledge Level</u>	Managers: % Personnel <u>Probable</u>	% Managers: <u>Desired</u>
High	45.8	65.4
Medium	46.5	33.3
Low	6.7	0.0
No knowledge	0.5	0.0
Do not know	0.0	1.2

Note: Personnel n=746; Managers n=81

Table 44

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's needle knowledge to needle knowledge desired by fabric store managers

<u>Needle Knowledge Level</u>	Managers: % Personnel <u>Probable</u>	% Managers: <u>Desired</u>
High	43.1	57.5
Medium	44.2	41.2
Low	10.6	0.0
No knowledge	2.0	0.0
Do not know	0.0	1.2

Note: Personnel n=742; Managers n=80

over 95 percent of fabric store managers desired these knowledge levels for their sales personnel. Over 12 percent of the sales personnel were indicated as having low or no knowledge of needles, although none of the managers indicated desiring these levels of needle knowledge for their sales personnel (see Table 44).

Sub-objective 7. Compare the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of threads fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Over 98 percent of the fabric store managers desired high or medium thread knowledge levels for their sales personnel. This is similar to the 86.6 percent of the sales personnel who were indicated by managers as having these levels of thread knowledge. Although none of the managers indicated they desired low or no knowledge of thread for their sales personnel, 13.3 percent of the sales personnel were reported as having these thread knowledge levels (see Table 45).

Sub-objective 8. Compare the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the knowledge level of interfacing fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

Ninety-five percent of the manager sample indicated a high or medium interfacing knowledge level was desired for

Table 45

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's thread knowledge to thread knowledge desired by fabric store managers

<u>Thread Knowledge Level</u>	Managers: % Personnel <u>Probable</u>	% Managers: <u>Desired</u>
High	41.1	50.0
Medium	45.5	48.7
Low	12.0	0.0
No knowledge	1.3	0.0
Do not know	0.0	1.2

Note: Personnel n=749; Managers n=80

Table 46

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's interfacing knowledge to interfacing knowledge desired by fabric store managers

<u>Interfacing Knowledge Level</u>	Managers: % Personnel <u>Probable</u>	% Managers: <u>Desired</u>
High	41.2	56.3
Medium	42.5	38.7
Low	15.6	3.7
No knowledge	0.7	0.0
Do not know	0.0	1.2

Note: Personnel n=743; Managers n=80

fabric store sales personnel, and 83.7 percent of the reported sales personnel had these knowledge levels. Almost four percent of the manager sample desired a low knowledge of interfacing for fabric sales personnel; 15.6 percent of the sales personnel had this knowledge level (see Table 46).

Sub-objective 9. Compare the number of years sales experience fabric store managers consider probable of current fabric store sales personnel to the number of years sales experience fabric store managers desire or consider necessary for fabric store sales personnel to have.

The largest percentage of fabric store managers desiring one category of sales experience occurred at the "up to and including 3 years" category (57.5%). The largest percentage of sales personnel in one category (36.1%) occurred in the "3 years" category also. A majority of the sales personnel were indicated by fabric store managers as having over three years of sales experience (58.2%), compared to the under twenty percent (18.6%) of managers desiring these levels. Approximately twenty-two percent of the managers desired no sales experience for their sales personnel (see Table 47).

Table 47

Comparison of probable fabric store sales personnel's years of sales experience to years of experience desired by fabric store managers

<u>Years Sales Experience</u>	<u>Managers: % Personnel Probable</u>	<u>% Managers: Desired</u>
No experience	4.1	22.5
Up to & including 3 years	36.1	57.5
Up to & including 6 years	24.7	13.7
Up to & including 9 years	11.4	1.2
Over 9 years	22.1	3.7
Do not know	1.7	1.2

Note: Personnel n=757; Managers n=80

CHAPTER V

Summary, Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of the present study was to investigate home sewers' and fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. This purpose was achieved by three objectives. The first objective was to investigate home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. The second objective was to compare home sewers' expectations of fabric sales personnel's characteristics with fabric store managers' expectations of sales personnel's characteristics. The last objective was to investigate fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. Two facets of the term "expectation", what was considered necessary or desirable and what was considered probable, were investigated and compared.

Summary

The present study was based upon two models: the consumer expectation aspect of the EBM decision process model (Engel, Blackwell, Miniard, 1986); and Oliver's consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction model. Oliver's model was previously tested in the retail service setting by Swan and Trawick (1981). The present study investigated

consumer satisfaction of the service aspect of a retail fabric store.

Previous studies on management expectations of sales personnel were not found. The literature supporting management expectations included articles on management styles and the importance of the sales employee. The present study included an objective for an exploration of management expectations of sales personnel.

Consumer expectations of sales personnel had been more widely researched. Previous studies have indicated fabric store customers expect fabric store sales personnel to have product knowledge (Cary & Hatfield-Bellinger, 1988; Cary & Zylla, 1981), although they have also indicated that sales personnel need more textile training (Bensman, 1975; William, 1971). Education of fabric store sales personnel was found to be important to the quality of the information received by the customer (Davis, 1977). In Cary and Zylla's study over fifty percent of complaints made to fabric stores directly related to service received from fabric sales personnel (1981).

In order to fulfill the objectives of the present study two questionnaires, one for home sewers (n=502) and one for fabric store managers (n=195), were constructed, pretested, and implemented using a modification of the Total Design Method (Dillman, 1978). A total of three mailings were mailed to each sample. The home sewer subjects were recipients of "Oregon Extension Homemakers

Council News." A total of 379 questionnaires were returned from the home sewer sample, for a response rate of 79 percent. The fabric store managers were managers of fabric stores advertising in the yellow pages, under the heading "fabric shops", in Oregon telephone directories. Eighty-two questionnaires were completed and returned by the fabric store managers, resulting in a response rate of 66 percent.

Questions in the home sewer questionnaire asked respondents about the service they received on the last visit to a fabric store; their estimations of the average fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, sewing and sales experience, and sewing and textile related education; their desired product knowledge and sewing and sales experience for fabric sales personnel; the sources of education related to sewing and textiles they considered important for sales personnel; and their demographic characteristics. The questions in the fabric store managers questionnaire corresponded to the questions in the home sewers questionnaire, as well as including questions regarding demographic characteristics of the store. The data gathered through these questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics.

The first objective of the present study was to investigate home sewers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, sewing and sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles. It was predicted that the characteristics home sewers considered

probable for fabric store sales personnel in terms of product knowledge and sewing and sales experience would be less than the characteristics home sewers considered necessary or desirable. A consumer expectation matrix was used to calculate the percentage of home sewers whose considerations of fabric store sales personnel's probable characteristics were greater than, equal to, or less than those characteristics desired by home sewers. The hypotheses regarding product knowledge and sewing experience were supported. The hypothesis regarding sales experience was not supported. It was also predicted that the sources of education home sewers considered probable for fabric sales personnel would be different than the sources considered important by home sewers. These hypotheses were tested by comparing frequencies and percentages. Both hypotheses were supported.

The second objective of the present study was to compare home sewers' expectations with fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience. The two facets of home sewers' expectations were compared with fabric store managers estimations of current fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. The first nine hypotheses predicted differences between the characteristics home sewers and fabric store managers considered probable of fabric store sales personnel. The

next nine hypotheses predicted differences between the characteristics home sewers considered desirable and the characteristics fabric store managers considered probable for fabric store sales personnel.

The first nine hypotheses of the second objective, analyzed using actual and proportional differences in percentages, were all supported. Differences were found between the product knowledge, education sources related to sewing and textiles, and sewing and sales experience of fabric store sales personnel considered probable by home sewers and considered probable by fabric store managers.

The next nine hypotheses of the second objective were also analyzed using actual and proportional differences in percentages. Results indicated there were differences in the sewing and sales experience and product knowledge home sewers considered desirable and managers considered probable. There were also differences in the ratings of importance home sewers gave to education sources related to sewing and textiles and the sources of education fabric store managers considered probable for fabric store sales personnel. All nine hypotheses were supported.

The final objective of the present study was to fulfill an exploratory investigation of fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's product knowledge, sewing and sales experience, and education related to sewing and textiles. Through this investigation it was found that fabric store sales

personnel's sewing and sales experience and product knowledge, according to fabric store managers, was generally equal to or greater than the sewing and sales experience and product knowledge fabric store managers desired for sales personnel. The percentage of sales personnel that had sewing classes/courses at junior high and high school was approximately equal to the percentage of managers who considered these sources of education important for fabric sales personnel. For all other education sources related to sewing a larger percentage of managers considered the source important than the percentage of sales personnel who were estimated as having that education source. Although almost 25 percent of the fabric store managers did not feel education related to textiles was necessary for their sales personnel, of the managers who did feel it was important, a larger percentage considered education sources related to textiles important at each education source than the percentage of fabric store sales personnel who had received education related to textiles from that source.

Interpretation of Results and Conclusions

Objective 1. Past research indicated home sewers were not satisfied with fabric store sales personnel's sewing and sales experience (Cary & Zylla, 1981), education related to sewing and textiles (Davis, 1977), and product knowledge (Cary & Hatfield-Bellinger, 1988; Cary & Zylla, 1981). According to the EBM model of the decision process

(Engle, et al, 1986) and Oliver's consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction model (1981), this dissatisfaction may be due to disconfirmed expectations. Through investigating and comparing two facets of consumer expectation the results of the present study generally support this supposition. Home sewers considered lower levels of sewing experience and product knowledge probable for fabric store sales personnel although they desired higher levels of sewing experience and product knowledge. In general, more home sewers considered sewing and textile education important for fabric store sales personnel than home sewers who believed fabric store sales personnel probably had this education.

These results can be related to the EBM decision process model (Engel, et al, 1986) (Figure 1, p. 24). The consumer expectation aspect of the EBM model involves the satisfaction and dissatisfaction consumers have after a purchase is made and the effects of that satisfaction or dissatisfaction on attitudes, beliefs, and intentions for repeat purchases. In the present study the characteristics home sewers considered probable were factors of the dissatisfaction and satisfaction of previous experience. The characteristics home sewers considered desirable were factors of the beliefs, attitudes and intentions home sewers held before the purchase. The difference in what the home sewers considered probable and desirable indicated disconfirmed expectations, or dissatisfaction. The results

of the present study also support Oliver's model of retail satisfaction management (1981) (Figure 2, p. 25). In this model the attitudes of disconfirmed expectations of the home sewers at the time of purchase apparently results in dissatisfaction with service.

Although past research has indicated that fabric store consumers were dissatisfied, and therefore assumed to have disconfirmed expectations, with fabric store sales personnel's sales experience (Cary & Zylla, 1981), the results of present study did not support a disconfirmed expectation explanation for the dissatisfaction. A larger percent of the home sewers in the present study considered the desirable level of fabric store sales personnel's sales experience equal to the level of fabric store sales personnel's probable sales experience. A smaller percentage of home sewers had desires that were greater than what they considered probable. One possible reason the results of the present study do not agree with past research is the home sewer sample used in the present study may have defined the term "sales experience" differently than subjects in previous studies.

Objective 2. Although past research investigated consumers' expectations of different sales personnel characteristics, comparison of these expectations with management estimations of sales personnel's characteristics had not previously been examined. The hypotheses of the second objective of the present study compared two facets of consumer expectation of sales personnel (what was considered probable and desirable) with one facet of management expectation of sales personnel (what was considered probable).

When comparing the characteristics home sewers considered probable of fabric store sales personnel with the characteristics fabric store managers considered probable of sales personnel, differences were found. In general, home sewers considered probable lower sewing and sales experience and product knowledge for sales personnel than levels fabric store managers considered probable.

There also were differences between the sources of education related to sewing and textiles home sewers and fabric store managers considered probable of sales people. Almost one third of the home sewers (32.0%) felt sales personnel did not have any education related to sewing and two-thirds (66.4%) felt that sales personnel did not have any education related to textiles. Managers indicated that less than six percent of their fabric sales personnel had no sewing education and 12.5 percent of their sales personnel had no textile education.

Results indicated that, according to fabric store managers, fabric sales personnel had characteristics equal to or exceeding the characteristics home sewers desired for them for product knowledge and sewing and sales experience. The product knowledge held by fabric store sales personnel, as indicated by fabric store managers, was comparable to the knowledge home sewers desired. Sales personnel had more or higher levels of sewing and sales experience than home sewers desired.

Differences were also found between the sewing and textile education sources home sewers considered important for sales personnel and the percentage of sales personnel who had received education from that source. For education related to sewing, a larger percentage of home sewers felt education at sources other than junior high and high school was important for sales personnel than the percentage of sales personnel who had education from these sources. There were larger percentages of home sewers desiring education sources related to textiles than percentages of sales personnel for each category given.

These results can be related to the consumer expectation study conducted by Sujan, Bettman, and Sujan (1986). In their study consumers were found to categorize or stereotype sales personnel. If the sales personnel exhibited characteristics that were similar to the stereotypic characteristics the consumer had attributed to them, the consumer did not reclassify the sales person and

accepted the existing stereotype. If this occurred the sales persons were not as effective in influencing purchases as when the consumer was forced to reevaluate the stereotypic characteristics attributed to the sales person. Home sewers are not accurately estimating sales personnel's product knowledge, education, and experience. They have disconfirmed expectations although their expectations are, for the most part, being met. It may be that home sewers' prior expectations of fabric sales personnel's characteristics (what they considered probable) and the information home sewers receive from sales personnel when involved in a purchase decision, do not differ enough for home sewers to re-evaluate the sales personnel's characteristics.

Objective 3. In the exploration of fabric store managers' expectations of fabric store sales personnel's characteristics, it was found that sales personnel met or exceeded their managers' expectations for product knowledge and sewing and sales experience. In general, fabric store sales personnel did not have education related to sewing and textiles that corresponded to the education sources their managers considered important.

Summary of conclusions. Home sewers in the present study generally believed that fabric store sales personnel did not have the characteristics they desired. When comparing the characteristics home sewers considered probable and desirable to managers' estimations of fabric

store sales personnel's characteristics, it was shown that sales personnel had higher levels of sewing and sales experience and product knowledge than home sewers expected. Fabric sales personnel's sewing and sales experience and product knowledge also fulfilled management expectations. The only characteristics that sales personnel did not meet consumer and management desires were sources of education related to sewing and textiles utilized.

Implications

Theoretical implications. The present research expands upon previous research and supports previous models of consumer expectation and satisfaction. Previous research has been conducted on consumer expectations but the definition of the term "expectation" has been ambiguous. Expectation, as a construct, has previously not been defined. In the present study two facets of consumer expectation (what was considered probable and considered desirable) were investigated and compared. These consumer expectations were also compared to managements estimations of their sales personnel's characteristics. This research opens a new door to the exploration of consumer behavior. More research is needed for the possible development of a model which incorporates the different facets of expectation.

The consumer expectation matrix used in the present study for data analysis holds implications for theoretical research. This matrix is similar to the matrix used for

calculating chi-square and was used to facilitate the calculations of percentages of home sewers who had desires that equaled what they considered probable; home sewers who had desires greater than they considered probable; and home sewers who had desires less than they considered probable. Fulfillment of consumer expectation is equated to having desires that are equal to or less than what is considered probable.

Applied implications. The results of the present study can be applied by owners and managers of fabric stores to improve their customer service. The results of the present research indicated that fabric store sales personnel have the product knowledge and sewing and sales experience they need to fulfill the expectations home sewers have of them. Unfortunately, home sewers do not see their expectations being met.

One reason this may be occurring in the large chain fabric stores, with an average of fourteen employees, is the adoption of policies that require sales personnel to wear aprons similar to those worn by clerks in super markets and drug stores. It may be that this visual presentation fabric store sales personnel are projecting to their customers is influencing the image customers have of the sales personnel's sewing and sales experience and product knowledge.

Another reason consumers may have a negative image of fabric store sales personnel is a lack of communication

between sales person and customer. Although home sewers believed fabric sales personnel had sufficient sales experience, sales experience may still be a problem. Sales personnel may need to have better communication skills in order to project an accurate image to the customer.

The results of the present study also indicated that fabric store sales personnel may need more education to meet home sewers' and managers' expectations. Larger percentages of home sewers and fabric store managers desired specific sources of sewing and textile education for sales personnel than the percentage of sales personnel who had utilized those sources of sewing and textile education. The fabric store as a source of education itself was seen as very important and may need to be utilized by sales personnel and managers.

Limitations

When interpreting and generalizing the results of the present study to the general population there are many limitations. Although every effort was made to obtain an accurate sampling of Oregon home sewers, the home sewer sample results for the present study should only be generalized to recipients of the Oregon Home Economics Extension newsletter. The fabric store sample included all fabric stores advertising in the yellow pages of Oregon telephone directories. Therefore, the fabric store information can only be generalized to Oregon retail fabric stores.

Other limitations of the study included a problem with postage due on a few mailings to recipients. This problem could have decreased the response rate of recipients in both samples.

The questionnaire formats were also limitations of the study. Since previous research had not compared the two facets of expectation, there were no previously tested questions or questionnaires to incorporate for the purpose of the present study. The questionnaire for the fabric store managers also was more detailed and time consuming to fill out than the questionnaire for the home sewers. The data received from the questionnaires were also limiting. Because of the nominal and categorical data received, statistical tests confirming significant differences could not be used.

Recommendations for Further Research

A need exists for additional studies to be conducted concerning consumer expectation and the retail fabric market. Based on the results of the present study the following suggestions are presented.

1. Further research on the two facets of expectation is needed in order to develop a more comprehensive consumer expectation model.
2. Demographic characteristics of chain and independent fabric stores indicate several differences. These differences need to be researched in order to understand the current growth in the retail fabric market.

3. Consumers' perception of the image of fabric store sales personnel was given as a possible reason for the results of the present study. Further research is needed to investigate this hypothesis.

4. The characteristics of fabric store sales personnel in the present study were management estimations. A case study involving the comparison of customers' expectations and sales personnel's characteristics for one retail fabric store would compare actual characteristics with expectations.

5. A need was shown by the present study for a more accurate presentation of skill by fabric store sales personnel to influence home sewers image of sales personnel. A suggestion for further research would be the experimentation with fabric store sales personnel's clothing and the effect it has consumer attitudes toward sales personnel's characteristics.

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Appendices

Appendix A - Home Sewer Questionnaire

**FABRIC STORE
CUSTOMER SERVICE****ARE YOU
GETTING****WHAT YOU
WANT?**

Heidi Hughes
Department of Apparel,
Interiors and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall 224
Corvallis, OR 97331



1. Do you sew for yourself, your family, and/or your friends? *(Circle one number)*

1 YES

2 NO ———> Thank you for your time. You do not need to answer any other questions. Please mail the questionnaire using the enclosed postage paid envelope.

2. As best as you can remember, when was the most recent time you shopped at a fabric store? *(Circle one number).*

1 WITHIN THE PAST MONTH

2 WITHIN THE PAST 3 MONTHS

3 WITHIN THE PAST 6 MONTHS

4 WITHIN THE PAST 9 MONTHS

5 WITHIN THE PAST 12 MONTHS

6 OVER 1 YEAR AGO

7 NEVER —————> Thank you for your time. You do not need to answer any other questions. Please mail the questionnaire using the enclosed postage paid envelope.

3. During your last visit to a fabric store, were you helped by a sales person?
(Circle one number)

1 YES

2 NO

→ If YES — Please rate the service you received from the sales person.
(Circle one number)

1 VERY GOOD SERVICE

2 GOOD SERVICE

3 POOR SERVICE

4 VERY POOR SERVICE

Please go to the next page

The following questions will deal with your thoughts and preferences regarding characteristics of fabric store salespeople.

4. Sewing experience.

A. How many years of sewing experience do you think the average fabric store sales person has had? (*Circle one number*)

- 1 NO EXPERIENCE
- 2 1 YEAR OR LESS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 3 AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 4 AT LEAST 4 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 5 AT LEAST 6 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 6 AT LEAST 8 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 7 AT LEAST 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 8 OVER 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 9 I DO NOT KNOW

B. How many years of sewing experience would you like the average fabric store sales person to have? (*Circle one number*)

- 1 NO EXPERIENCE
- 2 1 YEAR OR LESS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 3 AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 4 AT LEAST 4 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 5 AT LEAST 6 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 6 AT LEAST 8 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 7 AT LEAST 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 8 OVER 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
- 9 I DO NOT KNOW

5. Sewing ability.

A. What level of sewing ability do you think the average fabric store sales person has? (*Circle one number*)

- 1 BEGINNER - sews from simple patterns such as elastic waist skirts and uses basic fabrics such as cotton broadcloth.
- 2 BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE - sews from somewhat difficult patterns such as loose fitting pants and shirts and uses somewhat difficult fabrics such as knits.
- 3 INTERMEDIATE - sews from difficult patterns such as pants with a fly zipper and shirts with buttons and uses difficult fabrics such as corduroy and plaids.
- 4 INTERMEDIATE EXPERT - sews from more difficult patterns such as swimsuits and fitted garments and uses more difficult fabric such as spandex and silk.
- 5 EXPERT - sews from the most difficult patterns such as detailed or tailored garments or self-designed patterns and uses any type of fabric.
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

Please turn the page

B. What level of sewing ability would you like the average fabric store sales person to have? (Circle one number)

- 1 BEGINNER - sews from simple patterns such as elastic waist skirts and uses basic fabrics such as cotton broadcloth.
- 2 BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE - sews from somewhat difficult patterns such as loose fitting pants and shirts and uses somewhat difficult fabrics such as knits.
- 3 INTERMEDIATE - sews from difficult patterns such as pants with a fly zipper and shirts with buttons and uses difficult fabrics such as corduroy and plaids.
- 4 INTERMEDIATE EXPERT - sews from more difficult patterns such as swimsuits and fitted garments and uses more difficult fabric such as spandex and silk.
- 5 EXPERT - sews from the most difficult patterns such as detailed or tailored garments or self-designed patterns and uses any type of fabric.
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

6. **Classes on sewing.**

A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has had classes/courses related to sewing? (Circle one number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO — GO TO QUESTION 6B

→ If YES, do you think the average fabric store sales person has had classes/courses related to sewing at each of the following sources of education? (Circle one number for each.)

	YES	NO
a. Junior High School	1	2
b. High School	1	2
c. Community College	1	2
d. University	1	2
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2
f. Private Classes	1	2
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2
h. On the job training	1	2

Please go to the next page

- B. Would you like the average fabric store sales person to have had classes/courses related to textiles (fibers and fabrics)? (Circle one number)

- 1 YES
2 NO — GO TO QUESTION 8

→ If YES, how important do you feel it is for the average sales person to have had textiles classes/courses at each of the following sources of education? (Circle one number for each)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Junior High School	1	2	3	4
b. High School	1	2	3	4
c. Community College	1	2	3	4
d. University	1	2	3	4
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2	3	4
f. Private Classes	1	2	3	4
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2	3	4
h. On the job training	1	2	3	4

8. Knowledge about fabrics.

- A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about fabrics (fabric structure and care)? (Circle one number)

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the care, handling, and construction of a wide variety of fibers and fabrics.
2 MEDIUM - basic knowledge of fabric types and fabric care.
3 LOW - very little knowledge of fabrics or fabric care.
4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF FABRICS
5 I DO NOT KNOW

- B. Would you like for the average fabric store sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about fabrics (fabric structure and care)? (Circle one number)

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the care, handling, and construction of a wide variety of fibers and fabrics.
2 MEDIUM - basic knowledge of fabric types and fabric care.
3 LOW - very little knowledge of fabrics or fabric care.
4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF FABRICS
5 I DO NOT KNOW

Please go to the next page

B. Would you like average fabric store sales person to have had classes/courses related to sewing? (Circle one number)

- 1 YES
2 NO — GO TO QUESTION 7

→ If YES, how important do you feel it is for the average sales person to have had sewing classes/courses at each of the following sources of education? (Circle one number for each)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Junior High School	1	2	3	4
b. High School	1	2	3	4
c. Community College	1	2	3	4
d. University	1	2	3	4
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2	3	4
f. Private Classes	1	2	3	4
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2	3	4
h. On the job training	1	2	3	4

7. Classes on textiles.

A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has had classes/courses related to textiles (fibers and fabrics)? (Circle one number)

- 1 YES
2 NO — GO TO QUESTION 7B

→ If YES, do you think the average fabric store sales person has had classes/courses related to textiles at each of the following sources of education? (Circle one number for each)

	YES	NO
a. Junior High School	1	2
b. High School	1	2
c. Community College	1	2
d. University	1	2
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2
f. Private Classes	1	2
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2
h. On the job training	1	2

Please turn the page

9. Knowledge about sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles.

A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about the types of sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of needles.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used needles.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of needle types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF NEEDLES
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

B. Would you like the average fabric store sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about the types of sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of needles.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used needles.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of needle types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF NEEDLES
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

10. Knowledge about thread.

A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about threads? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of threads.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used threads.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of thread types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF THREADS
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

B. Would you like the average fabric store sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about threads? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of threads.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used threads.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of thread types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF THREADS
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

Please turn the page

11. Knowledge about interfacing.

A. Do you think the average fabric store sales person has HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about interfacings? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the types and uses of interfacing.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of types and uses of the most frequently used interfacing.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of interfacing types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF INTERFACINGS
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

B. Would you like the average fabric store sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about interfacing? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the types and uses of interfacing.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of types and uses of the most frequently used interfacing.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of interfacing types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF INTERFACINGS
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

12. Sales experience.

A. How many years do you think the average fabric store sales person has worked in sales? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
- 2 UP TO AND INCLUDING 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 3 UP TO AND INCLUDING 6 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 4 UP TO AND INCLUDING 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 5 OVER 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

B. How many years would you like the average fabric store sales person to have worked in sales? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
- 2 UP TO AND INCLUDING 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 3 UP TO AND INCLUDING 6 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 4 UP TO AND INCLUDING 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 5 OVER 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

Please go to the next page

The next few questions will help us interpret sewers' needs accurately.
All answers will be kept confidential.

13. What level of sewer do you consider yourself to be? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 BEGINNER - sews from simple patterns such as elastic waist skirts and uses basic fabrics such as cotton broadcloth.
- 2 BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE - sews from somewhat difficult patterns such as loose fitting pants and shirts and uses somewhat difficult fabrics such as knits.
- 3 INTERMEDIATE - sews from difficult patterns such as pants with a fly zipper and shirts with buttons and uses difficult fabrics such as corduroy and plaids.
- 4 INTERMEDIATE EXPERT - sews from more difficult patterns such as swimsuits and fitted garments and uses more difficult fabric such as lycra and silk.
- 5 EXPERT - sews from the most difficult patterns such as detailed or tailored garments or self-designed patterns and uses any type of fabric.
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

14. Before taxes, what is your estimate of the total combined income of your household in 1989? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 UNDER \$10,000
- 2 \$10,000 TO \$14,999
- 3 \$15,000 TO \$19,999
- 4 \$20,000 TO \$29,999
- 5 \$30,000 TO \$39,999
- 6 \$40,000 TO \$49,999
- 7 \$50,000 TO \$59,999
- 8 \$60,000 TO \$69,999
- 9 \$70,000 OR MORE

Please turn the page

15. Please indicate the highest level of education you have completed.
(Circle one number)

- 1 8TH GRADE OR LESS
- 2 GRADES 9 THROUGH 11
- 3 HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATE OR EQUIVALENT
- 4 TECHNICAL TRADE SCHOOL BEYOND HIGH SCHOOL
- 5 SOME COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- 6 COMMUNITY (TWO-YEAR) COLLEGE DEGREE OR CERTIFICATE
- 7 SOME FOUR-YEAR COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY
- 8 COLLEGE OR UNIVERSITY DEGREE (BACHELORS)
- 9 SOME GRADUATE SCHOOL
- 10 GRADUATE OR PROFESSIONAL DEGREE
- 11 OTHER (specify _____)

16. Please indicate your age. (Circle one number)

- 1 UNDER 25 YEARS
- 2 25 TO 34 YEARS
- 3 35 TO 44 YEARS
- 4 45 TO 54 YEARS
- 5 55 TO 64 YEARS
- 6 65 YEARS AND OVER

17. Which of the following best describes your racial or ethnic identification?
(Circle one number)

- 1 BLACK (NEGRO)
- 2 HISPANIC (MEXICAN-AMERICAN)
- 3 NATIVE AMERICAN (AMERICAN INDIAN)
- 4 WHITE (CAUCASIAN)
- 5 ORIENTAL
- 6 OTHER (specify _____)

Please go to the next page

18. Are you currently employed full time or part time for pay?
(Circle one number)

1 NO, I AM NOT EMPLOYED

2 EMPLOYED FULL TIME

3 EMPLOYED PART TIME

→ _____ JOB TITLE
_____ INDUSTRY

19. What is your present marital status? (Circle one number)

1 SINGLE, NEVER MARRIED

2 DIVORCED/SEPARATED

3 WIDOWED

4 LIVING WITH A PARTNER

5 MARRIED

→ Is your spouse/partner employed full time or part time for pay?
(Circle one number)

1 NO, NOT EMPLOYED

2 EMPLOYED FULL TIME

3 EMPLOYED PART TIME

→ _____ JOB TITLE
_____ INDUSTRY

Please use the space provided to indicate anything else you would like to contribute about the service you get or would like to get from fabric store sales people.

Please turn the page

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. If you would like a summary of the results of this study please write your name and address on the back of the return envelope.

Please return in the enclosed reply envelope (no postage necessary)
or return to:

Heidi P. Hughes
Department of Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall 224
Corvallis, OR 97331



Appendix B - Fabric Store Manager Questionnaire

FABRIC STORES:**SALES PEOPLE****AND
CUSTOMER
SERVICE**

Heidi Hughes
Department of Apparel,
Interiors and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall 224
Corvallis, OR 97331



The following questions will ask you about characteristics of the sales people currently employed by your store as well as the most desirable characteristics of fabric store sales people.

1. Not counting yourself, how many sales people currently work in your store?
(Please specify number.)

_____ SALES PEOPLE

How many of these sales people are part-time? _____

How many of these sales people are full-time? _____

2. **Sewing experience.**

- A. Please **estimate** the number of current sales people (both part-time and full-time) in your store that have the following number of years of sewing experience. (Put the estimated number of employees on the line provided)

Number of employees

_____	NO SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	LESS THAN 1 YEAR OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	AT LEAST 4 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	AT LEAST 6 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	AT LEAST 8 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	AT LEAST 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	OVER 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
_____	I DO NOT KNOW

- B. How many years of sewing experience would you like your average sales person to have? (Circle one number)

1	NO SEWING EXPERIENCE
2	LESS THAN 1 YEAR OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
3	AT LEAST 2 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
4	AT LEAST 4 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
5	AT LEAST 6 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
6	AT LEAST 8 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
7	AT LEAST 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
8	OVER 10 YEARS OF SEWING EXPERIENCE
9	I DO NOT KNOW

Please go to the next page

3. Sewing ability.

- A. Of your current sales people (both part-time and full-time), **estimate** how many could be described as having the following sewing abilities.
(Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each description.)

Number of employees

- _____ BEGINNER - sews from simple patterns such as elastic waist skirts and uses basic fabrics such as cotton broadcloth.
- _____ BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE - sews from somewhat difficult patterns such as loose fitting pants and shirts and uses somewhat difficult fabrics such as knits.
- _____ INTERMEDIATE - sews from difficult patterns like pants with a fly zipper and shirts with buttons and uses difficult fabrics such as corduroy and plaids.
- _____ INTERMEDIATE EXPERT - sews from more difficult patterns such as swimsuits and fitted garments and uses more difficult fabric such as spandex and silk.
- _____ EXPERT - sews from the most difficult patterns such as detailed or tailored garments or self-designed patterns and uses any type of fabric.
- _____ I DO NOT KNOW

- B. What level of sewing ability would you like your average sales person to have? (Circle one number)

- 1 BEGINNER - sews from simple patterns such as elastic waist skirts and uses basic fabrics such as cotton broadcloth.
- 2 BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE - sews from somewhat difficult patterns such as loose fitting pants and shirts and uses somewhat difficult fabrics such as knits.
- 3 INTERMEDIATE - sews from difficult patterns like pants with a fly zipper and shirts with buttons and uses difficult fabrics such as corduroy and plaids.
- 4 INTERMEDIATE EXPERT - sews from more difficult patterns such as swimsuits and fitted garments and uses more difficult fabric such as spandex and silk.
- 5 EXPERT - sews from the most difficult patterns such as detailed or tailored garments or self-designed patterns and uses any type of fabric.
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

Please turn the page

4. **Classes in sewing.**

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have had sewing classes/courses at each of the following sources of education. (**Mark all that apply** —ie. If an employee has had sewing classes in junior high, high school and 4-H include that employee in the number for each category.)

Number of employees

- _____ JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL
- _____ HIGH SCHOOL
- _____ COMMUNITY COLLEGE
- _____ UNIVERSITY
- _____ 4-H (OR OTHER CLUB)
- _____ PRIVATE CLASSES
- _____ CLASSES GIVEN BY FABRIC STORES
- _____ NO FORMAL SEWING EDUCATION
- _____ I DO NOT KNOW

- B. Would you like your average sales person to have had sewing classes/courses? (*Circle one number*)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO — GO TO QUESTION 5.

→ If YES, how important is it for your average sales person to have had sewing classes/courses at each of the following sources of education? (*Circle one number for each*)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Junior High School	1	2	3	4
b. High School	1	2	3	4
c. Community College	1	2	3	4
d. University	1	2	3	4
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2	3	4
f. Private Classes	1	2	3	4
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2	3	4
h. On the job training	1	2	3	4

Please go to the next page

5. Classes in textiles.

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have had textile (fibers and fabrics) classes/courses at each of the following sources of education. (**Mark all that apply** — ie. If an employee has had textile classes in junior high, high school and 4-H include that employee in the number for each category.)

Number of employees

- | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|
| _____ | JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL |
| _____ | HIGH SCHOOL |
| _____ | COMMUNITY COLLEGE |
| _____ | UNIVERSITY |
| _____ | 4-H (OR OTHER CLUB) |
| _____ | PRIVATE CLASSES |
| _____ | CLASSES GIVEN BY FABRIC STORES |
| _____ | ON THE JOB TRAINING |
| _____ | NO FORMAL TEXTILE EDUCATION |
| _____ | I DO NOT KNOW |

- B. Would you like your average sales person to have had textile classes/courses? (*Circle one number*)

- | | |
|---|-----------------------|
| 1 | YES |
| 2 | NO — GO TO QUESTION 6 |

→ If YES, how important is it for your average sales person to have had textile classes/courses at each of the following sources of education? (*Circle one number for each*)

	NOT AT ALL IMPORTANT	SOMEWHAT IMPORTANT	IMPORTANT	VERY IMPORTANT
a. Junior High School	1	2	3	4
b. High School	1	2	3	4
c. Community College	1	2	3	4
d. University	1	2	3	4
e. 4-H (or other club)	1	2	3	4
f. Private Classes	1	2	3	4
g. Classes given by fabric stores	1	2	3	4
h. On the job training	1	2	3	4

Please turn the page

6. Knowledge about fabrics.

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about fabrics (fabric structure and care)?
(Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each category)

Number of employees

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | HIGH - knowledge of the care, handling, and construction of a wide variety of fibers and fabrics. |
| _____ | MEDIUM - basic knowledge of fabric types and fabric care. |
| _____ | LOW - very little knowledge of fabrics or fabric care. |
| _____ | NO KNOWLEDGE OF FABRICS |
| _____ | I DO NOT KNOW |

- B. Would you like your average sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about fabrics (fabric structure and care).
(Circle one number)

- | | |
|---|---|
| 1 | HIGH - knowledge of the care, handling, and construction of a wide variety of fibers and fabrics. |
| 2 | MEDIUM - basic knowledge of fabric types and fabric care. |
| 3 | LOW - very little knowledge of fabrics or fabric care. |
| 4 | NO KNOWLEDGE OF FABRICS |
| 5 | I DO NOT KNOW |

7. Knowledge about sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles.

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about the types of sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles? (Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each category)

Number of employees

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of needles. |
| _____ | MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used needles. |
| _____ | LOW - very little knowledge of needle types and uses. |
| _____ | NO KNOWLEDGE OF NEEDLES |
| _____ | DO NOT KNOW |

Please go to the next page

- B. Would you like your average sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about the types of sewing machine needles and hand sewing needles? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of needles.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used needles.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of needle types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF NEEDLES NEEDED
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

8. Knowledge about threads.

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about threads. *(Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each category)*

Number of employees

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of threads. |
| _____ | MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used threads. |
| _____ | LOW - very little knowledge of thread types and uses. |
| _____ | NO KNOWLEDGE OF THREADS |
| _____ | I DO NOT KNOW |

- B. Would you like your average sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about threads? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the uses of all types of threads.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the most frequently used threads.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of thread types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF THREADS
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

9. Knowledge about interfacing.

- A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about interfacing. *(Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each category)*

Number of employees

- | | |
|-------|---|
| _____ | HIGH - knowledge of the types and uses of interfacing. |
| _____ | MEDIUM - knowledge of the types and uses of the most frequently used interfacing. |
| _____ | LOW - very little knowledge of interfacing types and uses. |
| _____ | NO KNOWLEDGE OF INTERFACING |
| _____ | I DO NOT KNOW |

Please turn the page

B. Would you like your average sales person to have HIGH, MEDIUM, LOW, or NO knowledge about interfacing? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 HIGH - knowledge of the types and uses of interfacing.
- 2 MEDIUM - knowledge of the types and uses of the most frequently used interfacing.
- 3 LOW - very little knowledge of interfacing types and uses.
- 4 NO KNOWLEDGE OF INTERFACING
- 5 I DO NOT KNOW

10. Sales experience.

A. Please **estimate** how many of your current sales people have worked in sales the lengths of time indicated below (including the time in their present position). *(Please indicate the estimated number of employees in each category.)*

Number of employees

- _____ NO EXPERIENCE
- _____ UP TO AND INCLUDING 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- _____ UP TO AND INCLUDING 6 EXPERIENCE
- _____ UP TO AND INCLUDING 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- _____ OVER 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- _____ I DO NOT KNOW

B. How many years would you like your average sales person to have worked in sales? *(Circle one number)*

- 1 NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY
- 2 UP TO AND INCLUDING 3 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 3 UP TO AND INCLUDING 6 EXPERIENCE
- 4 UP TO AND INCLUDING 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 5 OVER 9 YEARS EXPERIENCE
- 6 I DO NOT KNOW

Please go to the next page

11. Generally speaking, are the actual characteristics of your current sales people consistent with the characteristics you would like to have in your sales people?
(Circle one number)

1 YES

2 NO

→ If NO - please use the space below to explain the reasons for these differences.

The last set of questions will tell me about your store. These will be used only to describe the sample in general and will not be applied back to any store or chain.

12. Is your store independently owned or part of a chain of stores?
(Please circle one number)

1 INDEPENDENT

2 CHAIN

3 OTHER (specify _____)

13. How many years has your specific store been operating?
(Please specify number.)

_____ YEARS

14. How many years has this store been under your management?
(Please specify number.)

_____ YEARS

15. Does your store offer any classes? (Circle one number)

1 YES → What kind? _____

2 NO

Please turn the page

16. Please estimate the average monthly sales for your store.
(Please circle one number)

- 1 UNDER \$10,000
- 2 \$10,000 TO \$29,999
- 3 \$30,000 TO \$49,999
- 4 \$50,000 TO \$69,999
- 5 \$70,000 TO \$89,999
- 6 \$90,000 TO \$100,000
- 7 OVER \$100,000

17. Please estimate the average starting wage for new employees in your store in 1989. (Please circle one number)

- 1 MINIMUM WAGE - \$3.35/HOUR
- 2 \$3.40 TO \$3.60/HOUR
- 3 \$3.61 TO \$3.80/HOUR
- 4 \$3.81 TO \$4.00/HOUR
- 5 \$4.01 TO \$4.20/HOUR
- 6 \$4.21 TO \$4.40/HOUR
- 7 \$4.41 TO \$4.60/HOUR
- 8 \$4.61 TO \$4.80/HOUR
- 9 \$4.81 TO \$5.00/HOUR
- 10 OVER \$5.00/HOUR

18. Is there a college or university located within thirty miles of your store that offers clothing and/or textile related classes? (Please circle one number)

- 1 YES
- 2 NO
- 3 I DO NOT KNOW

Please go to the next page

Please use the space provided below to indicate anything else you would like to contribute about fabric stores and fabric store employees.

Please turn the page

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire. If you would like a summary of the results of this study please write your name and address on the back of the return envelope. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire. Please return in the enclosed reply envelope (no postage necessary) or return to:

Heidi P. Hughes
Department of Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
College of Home Economics
Oregon State University
Corvallis, OR 97331



Appendix C - Sewing Ability Pretest Questionnaire

EXTRA CREDIT
5 POINTS

Describe the patterns and fabrics you think sewers use at each of the following levels of expertise.

1. BEGINNER

Patterns - _____

Fabric - _____

2. BEGINNER INTERMEDIATE

Patterns - _____

Fabric - _____

3. INTERMEDIATE

Patterns - _____

Fabric - _____

4. INTERMEDIATE EXPERT

Patterns - _____

Fabric - _____

5. EXPERT

Patterns - _____

Fabric - _____

Appendix D - Cover Letters and Post Cards

Home sewers' first cover letter

Department of
Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
College of
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331

(503) 754-3796

Fabric stores suffered major economic problems in the late 1970's when the number of home sewers declined. Today home sewing is on the rise and home sewers are sewing for different reasons than they were in the 1970's. In order for fabric stores to provide their customers with appropriate products and services, the needs of today's home sewer must be known.

You have been randomly chosen from a group of likely home sewers in Oregon to give your opinions on customer service in fabric stores. In order for the results to represent home sewers in Oregon, it is very important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Your answers will be kept completely confidential. An identification number has been placed on the questionnaire for mailing purposes only. Your name will never appear on or be identified with the questionnaire.

The results of this research will be made available to fabric store owners and managers in order to inform them of their customers' service needs. You may receive a summary of results by writing your name and address on the back of the reply envelope. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire.

If you have any questions, we would be happy to answer them. Please write or call. The telephone number is (503) 737-3796.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Home sewers' second cover letter

Department of
Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising

College of
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331

(503) 754 3796

About three weeks ago we wrote to you seeking your opinions on customer service in fabric stores. As of today we have not received your completed questionnaire.

We have undertaken this research because we believe fabric store owners and managers can benefit by knowing the opinions and desires of home sewers today.

We are writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. It was sent out to a small sample representing all likely home sewers in Oregon. Therefore, it is very important that your answers be included in this study.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Home sewers' reminder post card



Department of Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall 224
Corvallis, OR 97331-9986

Last week a questionnaire seeking your opinions on the quality of customer service in fabric stores was mailed to you. Your name was randomly chosen from a group of likely home sewers.

If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. It was sent out to a small sample representing all home sewers in Oregon. Therefore, it is very important that your answers be included in the study if the results are to be accurate.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, call us right now, collect (503-737-3796) and we will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, & Merch.

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, & Merch.

Fabric store managers' first cover letter

Department of
Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
College of
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331

(503) 754 3796

As you know, many fabric stores suffered major economic problems in the late 1970's when the number of home sewers declined. Today the retail fabric business is growing. One factor that may have contributed to this growth is customer service provided by sales people in stores such as yours. In order to continue growing, the retail fabric industry needs to know what types of sales people they have now and what types of sales people they would like to have. As the manager of a fabric store, you have this information.

Your store is one of a small number of stores asked to give information about characteristics of their sales people. It was drawn in a random sample of all fabric stores in the entire state. In order for the results to truly represent fabric stores in all of Oregon, it is important that each questionnaire be completed and returned.

Your answers will be kept completely confidential. An identification number has been placed on the questionnaire for mailing purposes only. Your name and store name will never appear on or be identified with the questionnaire.

The results of this research will be made available to the retail fabric industry. You may receive a summary of the results by writing your name and address on the back of the return envelope. Please do not write your name on the questionnaire itself.

If you have any questions, we would be happy to answer them. Please write or call. The telephone number is (503) 737-3796.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Fabric store managers' second cover letter

Department of
Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
College of
Home Economics



Corvallis, Oregon 97331

503/754-3796

About three weeks ago we wrote to you seeking information about the characteristics of your sales people. As of today we have not yet received your completed questionnaire.

We have undertaken this research because the retail fabric business, after a long period of decline, is growing. For continued growth the industry needs to know about the types of sales people they have and the types of sales people they need. As the manager of a fabric store, you can give us this information.

We are writing to you again because of the significance each questionnaire has to the usefulness of this study. The name of your store was drawn randomly from all fabric stores in Oregon. In order for the results to truly represent all of Oregon, each questionnaire must be completed and returned.

In the event that your questionnaire has been misplaced, a replacement is enclosed.

Your cooperation is greatly appreciated.

Cordially,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, and Merchandising

Fabric store managers' reminder post card



Department of Apparel, Interiors
and Merchandising
Oregon State University
Milam Hall 224
Corvallis, OR 97331-9986

Last week a questionnaire seeking information about characteristics of your employees was mailed to you. Your store was drawn in a random sample of all fabric stores in Oregon.

If you have already completed and returned it to us, please accept our sincere thanks. If not, please do so today. Because it has been sent to only a small, but representative, sample of Oregon fabric stores it is extremely important that yours also be included in the study if the results are to accurately represent fabric store employees in Oregon.

If by some chance you did not receive the questionnaire, or it got misplaced, call us right now, collect (503-737-3796) and we will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Heidi P. Hughes
Apparel, Interiors, & Merch.

Leslie L. Davis, Ph.D.
Apparel, Interiors, & Merch.

Appendix E - Application for Exemption

APPLICATION FOR EXEMPTION

COMMITTEE FOR THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN SUBJECTS

Principal Investigator* Leslie L. Davis Phone 737-3796
 Student's Name (if any) Heidi P. Hughes Phone 737-3796
 Department Apparel, Interiors, Housing, and Merchandising
 Source of Funding private
 Project Title Home Sewers' and Fabric Store Managers' Expectations of
Fabric Store Sales Personnel's Product Knowledge, Education, and
Experience

Certain categories of research are exempt from human subjects review. These categories are reproduced for your information on the back of this form. Feel free to call the Research Office, 754-3437, if you have questions.

The following information should be attached to this form and two copies of the complete Application for Exemption should be submitted to the Research Office, AdS A312:

1. A copy of any questionnaire, survey, testing instrument, etc. to be used in this project.
2. A copy of the informed consent document, survey cover letter, or other informed consent information, and a description of the methods by which informed consent will be obtained from the subjects.
3. A brief description of the methods and procedures to be used during this research project, including:
 - (a) A short paragraph describing the objectives of this research,
 - (b) A description of the methods by which anonymity of the subjects will be maintained,
 - (c) A description of the subject population, and
 - (d) Information regarding any other approvals which have been or will be obtained (e.g., school districts, hospitals, cooperating institutions).

Signed Redacted for privacy Date 12-15-89
 Principal Investigator*

*Note: Student projects should be submitted by the Major Professor as Principal Investigator.