AN ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS OF

Carol Ann Klein for the degree of Master of Science in __Clothing,__

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Title: Preplanning Used in Acquisition of Children's Clothing by

_____Women Who Patronize a Free Clothing Distribution Center____

Abstract Approved: Redacted for Privacy
                         Ardis W. Koester

The purpose of this study was to obtain information about cloth-
ing acquisition practices of low-income mothers. An interview ques-
tionnaire was designed to obtain information about the clothing
sources perceived as available to these women, the sources of clothing
used, the sources of information used, the preplanning practices used,
and demographic information including the respondent's age, education-
al level, place of residence (farm or nonfarm), household size, income
level (above or below a predetermined poverty level), and county of
residence. The interview was administered to 55 women at a free
clothing distribution center in Corvallis, Oregon.

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis. Chi-square
was used in analyzing the preplanning practices used in relation to
age, educational level, household size, and income level of the mother.

Clothing sources perceived as available by over half of the re-
spondents included: Department stores, Thrift shops, and a free
clothing distribution center.

Clothing sources used by over half of the respondents included:
Handed-down, Thrift shops, Department stores, Gifts (new clothes),
Discount stores, Secondhand stores, Homemade, Rummage sales, Garage
sales, Organizations, and Exchange.

Friends or Relatives and the Newspaper were information sources
used most frequently and considered the most important. Women with
incomes below a predetermined poverty threshold level were more often
accompanied by friends or relatives when acquiring clothing.

The women responded by answering Always, Sometimes, or Never to questions about 13 preplanning practices. Preplanning practices used Always or Sometimes by at least 90 percent of the respondents included: a) taking the children along when shopping, b) leaving the house knowing how they would pay for the clothes, c) repairing or remodeling clothes on hand, d) deciding before leaving the house whether fabric to make clothes or store-bought clothes would be acquired, e) considering obtaining clothing from sources other than a free clothing distribution center or buying new clothes, and f) looking for sales.

Age was significantly related to four preplanning practices as determined by Chi-square. These practices included: 1) measuring the children in order to obtain clothes that fit, 2) saving money for the acquisition of clothing, 3) deciding before leaving the house if store-bought clothes or fabric to make clothes would be obtained, and 4) considering obtaining clothes from sources other than the free clothes distribution center or buying new clothes.

Education was significantly related to two preplanning practices. They included: 1) leaving the house knowing exactly how to pay for the clothes obtained, and 2) leaving the house knowing at which store looking for clothes would take place.

Household size was significantly related to these two preplanning practices: 1) leaving the house knowing exactly what kind of clothes will be obtained, and 2) measuring the children in order to obtain clothes that fit.

Income level was significantly related to this preplanning practice: looking at two or more places before obtaining clothes.

Preplanning Used in Acquisition
of Children's Clothing by Women Who Patronize
A Free Clothing Distribution Center

by

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in charge of major

Redacted for Privacy

Acting Head of Department of Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts

Redacted for Privacy

Dean of Graduate School

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

In order to design educational programs for specific groups of
people, an assessment of their wants, needs, and desires must occur.
This study was designed in an attempt to provide information about the
clothing acquisition practices of women who frequent a free clothing
distribution center. This study was to accomplish two purposes: 1)
to describe the clothing acquisition practices of low-income women and
2) to make recommendations as to whether specific information needs
to be made available to low-income clothing consumers.

Before the development of educational programs can take place
for the low-income consumer one thing must occur, a preliminary in-
vestigation of the low-income consumer's wants, needs, values, and
poverty situation. "In theory, education is designed to complement
the wants, needs and values of each individual consumer" (Sukiennik,
1972, p. 2). But as Andreasen commented in the beginning of his
book, The Disadvantaged Consumer, "we... know very little about the
consumer problems of the rural and migratory poor, the elderly, and
other racial minorities besides blacks" (Andreasen, 1975, p. 8).
This preliminary investigation must include an investigation into
the poverty situation in which the low-income live. Individuals in-
terested in helping the low-income person must gain an understanding
of what it is like to live in poverty before help can be extended to
low-income persons. Irelan and Besner state, "we cannot change or
reduce rates of dependency and poverty without knowing what the con-
ditions of dependency and deprivation mean to people caught up in
them" (Irelan and Besner, 1965, p. 13). No matter how technically
or perfectly written educational program designs are, they are useless

unless they are relevant to the intended audience (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 2).

Likewise, the development of educational programs on clothing acquisition for the low-income consumer is difficult unless information is available on the practices used by these consumers when acquiring clothing. Some information about clothing acquisition practices of low-income consumers is available in the general areas of: clothing selection practices (Roberston, 1968; Orr, 1973), related clothing problems (Stender, 1970), satisfactions or dissatisfactions, and informational needs of low-income consumers (Sukiennik, 1972). Some information is also available on clothing acquisition from supplementary sources by low-income consumers (Peters, 1968). However, this information is not abundant or recent. As public and private institutions provide education and aid to low-income persons, these institutions may benefit from knowing more about clothing acquisition practices of the low-income consumer. This study is designed to provide more information on clothing acquisition practices of low-income consumers.

The practices involved in the acquisition of clothing can be varied and numerous; therefore, this study will focus on three areas of clothing acquisition. The first area is clothing sources perceived as available, and clothing sources used by low-income women. Information on clothing sources perceived and clothing sources used may be useful when providing information to low-income consumers on possible sources of low-cost clothing sources that are available within the area in which they live.

The second clothing practice to be focused on is sources of information about clothing that are used. This type of information will aid individuals and organizations concerned with dissemination of information to low-income people on clothing. It will aid in determining what type of communication channels are most effective when educators are attempting to communicate with low-income audiences. This would be especially beneficial, as a weak communication channel exists between the low-income audience and educators (Nelson and Coopedge, 1974, p. 21; Awa, 1974, p. 8). Many of the methods that

have been employed to communicate with the poor have been chosen more
or less haphazardly, without consideration of what is known about the
low-income audience and the subject to be communicated (Cavanagh,
1966, pp. 1-2). In an article entitled, "Communicating With the Rural
Poor", Awa (1974) discusses some of the methods that are often chosen
in order to communicate with the poor. He points out that in the
past, attempts to communicate with the poor have often been understood
only by the sender of the communication. Institutionalized channels
of communication, such as newspapers, magazines, radio, and televis-
ion, are most commonly used in transmitting information to the poor,
but only in a very few instances are noninstitutionalized channels,
such as newsletters, bulletins, leaflets, and the use of comic
strips employed. According to Awa, "some of the 'hard-to-reach' seg-
ments of rural populations could be reached through noninstitutional-
ized channels" (p. 9).

The third area of clothing acquisition is the extent to which
certain preplanning practices are used by low-income women in the
acquisition of clothing. This study is based on the supposition that
preplanning the acquisition of clothing is economical for low-income
clothing consumers. The author realizes, however, that this suppo-
sition is a value perhaps not upheld by the low-income person. One
possible reason preplanning may not be a value upheld by low-income
consumers may be related to another, more important value -- that of
maintaining strong social and kinship ties. The maintaining of these
social and kinship ties may be important because of the goods and
services exchanged between low-income persons. For example, a low-
income mother may receive clothing from a friend or relative in re-
turn for some goods or services offered to the friend or relative.
It is important to be aware of the possibility of differing values
among groups of people and of the danger involved in imposing values
upon different groups. Therefore, this study has been designed, in
part, to determine if preplanning acquisition of clothing is a value
held by low-income consumers. This study is also designed to ascer-
tain if preplanning is carried out by low-income consumers, or if

friends or relatives are depended upon more than their own abilities
in acquiring clothing. The literature tends to indicate the low-in-
come consumers do not preplan their purchases. Richards comments on
this point:

> Most [low-income consumers] do not use more deliberation,
> consult more sources, or shop more widely, to get the best
> buys. Instead, many depend on known merchants or relatives
> for judgements of what to buy (Richards, 1965, p. 10).

Among the available research about clothing acquisition practices
of the low-income person, little is available on the preplanning prac-
tices used. Therefore, this study is designed to investigate these
preplanning practices:

1) analysis of the clothing needs by the determination of a)
what clothes are on hand and what condition they are in, and b) what
clothes are needed, and what sizes are needed.

2) existence of a budget for clothing, and determination of the
method of payment to be used.

3) consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothing from
such sources as a) gifts, b) handed down, c) homemade, d) purchased
used, e) borrowed or exchanged, f) mended or repaired clothes on hand.

4) determination of where and when to buy clothing.
These preplanning practices were chosen as they seem to be the most
frequently discussed by writers of consumer texts.

Also related to clothing acquisition practices of low-income con-
sumers is lack of research about their planning practices in relation
to such demographic factors as: age, educational level, and household
size of the mother. Preplanning practices used by low-income cloth-
ing consumers and these demographic factors may be related, but
extent and nature are not known. Any relationship between these
factors and the preplanning of the acquisition of clothing has not
been extensively investigated. Therefore, this study is designed
to investigate the relationships, if any, that may exist between

preplanning the acquisition of clothing and such demographic factors as age, educational level, and household size of the mother. Reasons for choosing these factors are as follows:

1) Age of the mother - Family heads (including females) who are over 65 years of age are more likely to be heading poor families than family heads who are younger (Huber, 1977, p. 25). Because of her age, the older mother may have more experience in and be more familiar with clothing acquisition, and may use more clothing sources than the younger mother. Conversely, the older mother may have more experience in clothing acquisition, be more familiar with various clothing sources, but, because of habit, or social ties, may acquire clothing from a more limited number of sources than the younger mother.

2) Educational level of the mother - Family heads who have had less than eight years of education are six times more likely to be poor than family heads who have had some college education (Levitan, 1976, p. 6). Mothers with more education may do more preplanning for acquisition of clothing than mothers who have not had as much education.

3) Household size - There is a close relationship between large families and poverty (Levitan, 1976, p. 9). A large household on a limited budget means less money per member for wants and needs. However, it may also mean that less money is needed per member for a large household to survive than for a smaller household.

Low-income families are generally larger than other families; therefore, providing clothing for children may be a greater economic burden to low-income families. Because of this burden, some children of low-income families may not be adequately clothed. An uneven distribution of clothes among various low-income family members has been observed, with children at the age of five years and below having the least amount of clothing as compared to other family members. Over all, teenagers and adults had the best supplies of clothes in relation to the minimum clothing standards (Harriman, 1973, p. 53).

This study focuses on children's clothing for the following reasons:

1) it is assumed that the mother is concerned about clothing

her children,

2) it is assumed that the mother may talk more freely about her children than herself.

In summary, educational programs on clothing acquisition are difficult to develop for the low-income consumer because there is not a complete understanding about them, there is a weak channel of communication existing between the educators and the low-income consumer, and there is a lack of research about the low-income consumer's preplanning practices. All of these problems combined make it difficult to develop educational programs for the low-income consumer. It is, therefore, the purpose of this study to reveal some insights into the clothing preplanning practices of low-income consumers which will allow educators to communicate more effectively with them and develop educational programs for them. Such a study has the potential of being useful to public and private agencies as they disseminate education and aid to low-income persons.

Justification of the Study

Information about clothing acquisition practices of the low-income woman is important to the development of educational programs for the low-income consumer. A limited income requires more care in its dispersion among each of the family members for wants and needs than does a larger income for the same size family. Since a limited income requires careful handling, preplanning purchases may be more economical. Clothing acquisition is one area where preplanning might be practiced by low-income consumers. Some researchers have reported that low-income consumers do not preplan their clothing purchases; therefore, it seems that low-income consumers may need education for improving their preplanning practices. Such a study on the preplanning practices used in the acquisition of children's clothing by low-income women has the potential of providing at its completion recommendations such as whether information needs to be

made available to low-income clothing consumers on: 1) what low-cost clothing sources are available, 2) how to budget for clothing purchases, 3) how to buy children's clothing, or how to obtain comfortably fitting clothes for children, 4) what alternatives there are to buying clothes, or how to remodel or repair clothes that are on hand, 5) how to preplan for clothing acquisition.

This study will provide information about preplanning practices used in clothing acquisition by low-income consumers in order to provide effective educational programs for them.

Purposes and Objectives of the Study

Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study are to provide more information about low-income women on the following:

1. clothing sources perceived as available,
2. clothing sources used,
3. information sources used, and
4. preplanning practices used

To limit the scope of the problem, this study focused on women who frequent a free clothing distribution center where they acquire clothing for their children who are 18 years of age or younger and live at home.

Objectives of the Study

In order to achieve the above purposes, these objectives were formulated:

I.   To determine the extent to which women who frequent a free clothing distribution center engage in selected preplanning practices when acquiring children's clothing. The preplanning practices that will be studied are as follows:

A. Analysis of the clothing needs:
1. Determination of what clothes are on hand and in what condition they are.
2. Determination of what clothes are needed, and what sizes are needed.
B. Existence of a budget for clothing and determination of the method of payment to be used.
C. Consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothing:
1. Gifts
2. Handed down
3. Homemade
4. Purchase of used clothing
5. Borrowed or exchanged
6. Mended or repaired clothes on hand
D. Determination of where and when to buy clothing.

II. To determine clothing sources that are perceived as being available to these women when acquiring children's clothing, and the clothing sources used.

III. To determine the relationships between the frequency of use of selected preplanning practices and these demographic factors:
A. Age of the mother
B. Educational level of the mother
C. Household size of the mother

Limitations and Assumptions of the Study

Limitations of the Study

1. The study was limited to women who patronize a free clothing distribution center.

2. The study was limited to women who have at least one child 18 years of age or younger living at home.

Assumptions of the Study

1. It is assumed that women answered the questions truthfully and as completely as possible.

2. It is assumed that women who patronize a free clothing distribution center are in the lower-income bracket.

Definition of Terms

For the purpose of this study the following terms have been defined:

CLOTHING ACQUISITION PRACTICES - The way one usually, by one's own efforts or actions, gains clothing.

CLOTHING SOURCES - The ways in which clothing is or can be acquired.

LOW-INCOME - Those whose household income falls below the poverty thresholds used by the United States Census Bureau. Family size, sex, and age of the family head, number of children under 18 years of age, and farm or nonfarm residence are the factors considered in the formulation of these threshold figures. This poverty threshold index is updated yearly to reflect changes in the Consumer Price Index (CPI). The following table presents 1980 figures for all states except Alaska and Hawaii:

FAMILY SIZE	NONFARM FAMILY	FARM FAMILY
1	$3,790	$3,250
2	5,010	4,280
3	6,230	5,310
4	7,450	6,340
5	8,670	7,370
6	9,890	8,400
7	11,110	9,430

For each additional
member add: 1,220   1,030
(State Community Services Program, 1980, pp.8-9)

<u>PERCEIVED CLOTHING SOURCES</u> - All clothing sources used and all other sources not used but recognized as possible sources for clothing.

<u>POVERTY</u> - The condition or quality of being poor (Webster's <u>New World Dictionary</u>). The situation in which the poor live.

<u>PREPLANNING PRACTICES</u> - The way one usually prepares for clothing acquisition. Preplanning includes all practices one usually engages in up to the point of going out to search for clothing.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

A review of pertinent literature revealed insights into poverty
and what it means to be poor. It also revealed the consumer practices
related to clothing for the low-income person, and the problems asso-
ciated with the development of educational programs for the low-income
person. This chapter is devoted to the review of this literature.

The Cultural Situation

The Poor

Webster defines poor as "lacking material possessions; having
little or no means to support oneself; needy; impoverished" or as
"one who lacks the resources for reasonably comfortable living".
Poverty is defined as the condition of being poor (Webster's World
Dictionary, second college edition, 1970). Other sources tend to
use adjectives to describe the poor, such as: lacking education and
work experience; having poor health, low mental ability, high birth
rates, criminal records, and a degenerate home life; being old and
apathetic or lazy. A "currently popular label for the poor is 'cul-
turally disadvantaged'", say Frost and Hawkes (1970). Disadvantaged
by definition implies unfavorable circumstances and conditions; in-
jury to interest, reputation, credit and profit; and influences that
are detrimental, harmful and damaging". Frost and Hawkes describe
the poor further by saying that this group is "systematically denied
advantages enjoyed by the majority culture" (p. 1). All state wel-
fare agencies define the poor as those families whose income and re-
sources are insufficient to provide a minimum decent standard of liv-
ing. Minimum decency is defined differently in the various states
(Oster, Lake, and Oksman, 1978, p. 137). Some definitions are based

on need (that is, finances, food, clothing), some on annual income
level and family size, others on a combination of these factors
(State Community Services Program, 1978, p. 8). Levitan (1976) de-
scribes the poor and their situation by discussing family size. He
states that there is a "close relationship between family size and
poverty with 54 percent of poor children coming from families with
five or more children" (p. 9). This does not necessarily mean that
the poor want larger families, but they just do not have birth control
devices readily available to them (Levitan, 1976, p. 9).

Fantini and Weinstein (1968) describe and identify the poor and
their cultural situation in this way:

> They all are left out of a process which purports to
> carry all human kind, regardless of background, towards
> the same basic goals; physical comfort and survival, and
> feelings of potency, self-worth, connection with others,
> and concern for the common good.
> Low income forces a family to seek residence in low-
> rent areas where housing is bereft of the more comforta-
> able aspects of American living and where landlords are
> not motivated to keep their buildings in good repair.
> In some cases, even the municipality bypasses these areas
> in regular maintenance programs, largely because middle
> class taxpayers keep maintenance departments busy with
> pressure on the city to attend to details in their own
> "finer" neighborhoods. Consequently, the whole area be-
> comes more and more run down, garbage piles up, sewage
> drains clog, and rats and vermin move in with the ten-
> ants. The depressing, oppressive appearance of the slum
> neighborhood, along with general economic hardship, eats
> away at the aspirations and motivations of its inhabi-
> tants (p. 15).

Annual income is a characteristic used heavily by the United
States Census to identify the poor. Poverty is based on a "poverty
index", which provides a range of income cutoffs or "poverty income
thresholds". The income threshold level is adjusted yearly consid-
ering such factors as family size, sex, and age of the family head,
number of children under the age of 18 years and farm or nonfarm

residences. The threshold figures for 1980 were as follows:

FAMILY SIZE	NONFARM FAMILY	FARM FAMILY
1	$3,790	$3,250
2	5,010	4,280
3	6,230	5,310
4	7,450	6,340
5	8,670	7,370
6	9,890	8,400
7	11,110	9,430
for each additional member add:	1,220	1,030

(State Community Services Program, 1980, pp. 8-9)

For the purpose of this study, poor will be narrowly defined as those whose income is below these threshold levels.

Social Participation and Clothing

Without adequate clothing, low income families experience feelings of lesser self-worth which eventually leads to lesser social participation. This can been seen in this statement by a mother whose children dropped out of school because of inadequate clothing:

> The two boys and the oldest girl all quit because they hated Central High School. They all loved Junior High School down here, but up there they're so snobbish. If you don't dress right you haven't any friends (Ryan, 1966 p. 126).

The results of a study conducted by Kelly reinforces how true this mother's statement is. In her study of adolescent dress and social participation, Kelly used a sample of eighth graders in two rural

and two urban junior high schools in a South Louisiana parish. The
schools were qualified to receive federal funds designated for schools
in low-income areas. Kelly used a questionnaire which was administer-
ed to all eighth graders. The questionnaire was a check sheet type
which was read aloud to the students as they responded. Kelly used
324 questionnaires. The Hollingshead Two-Factor Index of Social
Position was used to determine social class ranks. From this study
Kelly reports that as long as students from a similar or homogeneous
lower social class remain together, they all feel comfortable with
their dress. However, as soon as the lower socioeconomic students are
put into a situation where the majority is from a higher socioeconomic
class, the lower socioeconomic students are rejected based on their
appearance and withdraw from a high degree of social participation
(Kelly, 1974, p. 175).

The Educational Situation

Problems in Developing Programs for the Poor

Nelson and Coppedge (1974) conducted a study in three western
Oregon counties. They interviewed 374 households in an attempt "to
identify educational needs and priorities" of the rural poor (p. 21).
As a result of their survey, they concluded that rural proverty is
heterogeneous, "a many-faceted phenomenon" (p. 27). They said:

> Programs should not be primarily small-farm oriented, nor
> should programs be designed principally for unemployed male
> household heads. The program should be flexible enough to
> serve the needs of the 60-year-old farmer and the 24-year-
> old female family head with several small children (p. 27).

The idea that different groups of low-income people need indi-
vidualized educational programs developed for them is also upheld by

Huber (1977). In an article about low-income consumers Huber gives seven points consumer educators need to know when designing programs for the low-income person. One of those points includes designing programs differently for different populations. He says these programs must be carried out differently to serve the needs of various groups of the poor effectively, even "within the inner city itself" (p. 28)..

Other problems that have been identified by Nelson and Coppedge (1974) in the developing of educational programs for the poor include the following:

1) A weak channel of communication exists which inhibits the Cooperative Extension Service from finding out the needs of the rural poor.

2) The ability to determine the needs of the poor is limited because the Cooperative Extension Service's lack of understanding of the rural poverty situation.

3) The rural poor lack support groups to express their interests and concerns (pp. 21-22).

Huber (1977) also stresses the importance of the consumer educator becoming a "servant, catalyst, agent or advocate" and the submissive "client" changed to "consumer". He says it is important to do away with the "paternalism and elitism" that is held by many consumer specialists (p. 29). Another problem Huber identifies is the lack of involvement low-income consumers have in society. Consumer involvement in human service structures and consumer education programming is important (pp. 28-29).

Overcoming Some of the Problems

A channel of communication is beginning to be opened as educators are asking the low-income women what they would like to know about clothing.

Two studies have provided data which will help in the development of educational programs for low-income women who desire to learn

more about clothing and its acquisition. The first study was conducted by Sukiennik in Talahassee, Florida. She selected 240 female consumers randomly from seven low-income areas in Talahassee and, in a personal interview about their clothing consumption patterns, satisfactions, dissatisfactions, and informational needs, found that they wanted to learn more about how to: 1) purchase less-expensive clothing without sacrificing quality; 2) discern quality in clothes; 3) construct garments; and 4) shop to satisfy oneself in areas of garment style, color, and other fashion aspects (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 59).

The second study was conducted by Taylor in East Tennessee. She paid Expanded Nutrition Program paraprofessionals to interview 103 low-income women. From the interviews and Expanded Nutrition Program files, Taylor obtained her data about informational needs of the low-income homemakers. Of her sample, 94 expressed a desire for some help with their clothing needs. Only nine in the sample said they did not need any help and the others responded to one or more of the following areas: 50 wanted help with selection and buying of clothing, 43 wanted help with clothing construction, 37 with care and storage, and 38 desired help with wardrobe planning (Taylor, 1976, p. 47).

Consumer Practices of the Poor

In an article entitled, "Consumer Practices of the Poor", Richards discussed the consumer practices of the poor, based on findings from many studies. The studies may be categorized into two broad areas of research. The first area includes economic surveys of consumer expenditures, savings, and debt which are made by government agencies, and businesses. The second area includes studies which examine specific consumer practices of the poor. Where possible, Richards reported the practices of families whose incomes were below $3,000, and indicated how their practices differed from those families whose incomes were higher. In an article, Richards described five recommended "Consumership" rules. These rules are as follows: 1) spend first for

necessities, last for luxuries, 2) buy the best quality goods for the lowest price, 3) budget a small income carefully, plan purchases in advance, 4) try to obtain what is needed or wanted without spending money, or by spending only for raw materials, and 5) take advantage of certain benefits available to persons with limited incomes (Richards, 1965, p. 2). Richard's summary of the consumer practices of the poor is:

> 1) Although . . . [low-income consumers] . . . spend most of their income on basic needs, those who buy durable goods [automobiles, furniture, etc.] make serious inroads on their incomes.
> 2) Most do not use more deliberation, consult more sources, or shop more widely, to get the best buys. Instead, many depend on known merchants or relatives for judgements of what to buy.
> 3) Few have savings of any size; most do not have life insurance; and only about half are covered by medical insurance.
> 4) It is doubtful whether many carry out home production activities to supplement cash purchases.
> 5) Many probably do not make full use of the programs established to provide services and goods free or at reduced rates (Richards, 1965, p. 10).

These general consumer practices of the poor will undoubtedly affect clothing acquistion.

Social Relationships as Related to Consumer Practices

This section is a summary of some research which has examined, more specifically, the clothing acquistion practices of low-income consumers.

Some sources tend to indicate that kinship and social relationship ties are strong among the low-income, that the low-income person depends greatly upon others for assistance in everyday life. This dependence may also involve the acquisition of clothing. Services or items may be provided for friends or relatives in exchange for

clothing. As mentioned earlier, Richards has stated that most low-income consumers demonstrate their dependence upon others by relying on known merchants or friends for advice on what to buy (Richards, 1965, p. 10).

In an article about the effects of income upon shopping attitudes and frustrations, Collazzo reported that the lower-income consumer has a greater dependence on sales clerks than any other consumer. Low-income families sought advice more often than higher income families for "getting proper style and quality as well as for getting the right size and color" (Collazzo, 1966, p. 5).

Not all sources, however, tend to indicate strong social relationships outside the family. Some sources tend to indicate that low-income people do not have many other people to rely on. For example, Komarovsky conducted case studies of 58 blue-collar couples. All were white, native born of native parents; they were under 40 years old, and had at least one child. The highest level of education among the respondents was four years of high school. A minimum of six hours was spent interviewing each family using open-ended questions within guidelines. Two two-hour long interviews were conducted with the wife; one two-hour long interview was conducted with the husband. Interviews were conducted privately. Recording of the responses was by detailed note-taking. Komarovsky found that one-fifth of the couples interviewed never visit other couples apart from relatives. An additional 16 percent do so only "very few times per year". These times include impersonal events such as Sunday School picnics or company Christmas parties. She stated further that those couples who do maintain social relationships with other couples have only a very small circle of friends. For one-half of these couples the circle of friends includes only one or two couples (Komarovsky, 1964).

Komarovsky's (1964) research tends to indicate that social ties outside the family are not common among low-income couples, while Richards (1965), and Collazzo (1966) tend to agree that low-income consumers tend to rely on friends for advice of what to buy, and upon sales clerks for advice on style, quality, size, and color.

Clothing Acquisition Practices

Regardless of the role friends and relatives play in clothing acquisition among low-income persons, certain clothing acquisition practices have been noticed by some individuals. These practices will now be described.

In Sukiennik's study, 240 female consumers, randomly selected from seven low-income areas in Talahassee, Florida, were asked in a personal interview about their clothing consumption patterns, satisfactions, dissatisfactions, and informational needs. Sukiennik found from her study that 58 percent of her sample of low-income women asked for advice when buying clothing. Twenty-one percent asked for advice from a friend, 18 percent from salespersons, and 17 percent from relatives. Some of the kinds of advice sought from people were questions about the general appearance of the garment (22 percent), and about the fit of the garment (17 percent)(Sukiennik, 1972, p. 33).

Orr conducted a study on the clothing purchasing practices of rural low-income families in Eastern Tennessee. She selected 25 rural families who earned less than $6,000 per year, had two to six children, and were active participants in the Expanded Nutrition Program for at least six months. Interviews were conducted with each family at their home. The responses to the interview questions, general observations about the clothing the individuals wore at the time of the interview, and other clothing seen in the home were all recorded after leaving the home, in order to reduce apprehension on the part of the respondents. From this study Orr found that her sample of low-income families did not preplan their clothing purchases, except to buy clothes in the fall for school (Orr, 1973, p. 41). This would concur with the statement Irelan made in an article about the characteristics of the poor, that they have a persistent tendency to think only in terms of the present and never into the future (Irelan, 1965, p. 17).

Orr also found that the husband would often accompany the wife shopping, but did not help in the selection and purchase of the

clothing for the family. The children were not usually present, so
the selection of their clothing required that someone guess at their
sizes (Orr, 1973, p. 37). It would then seem logical to say that
there would be a high rate of returns among low-income consumers if
the garment did not fit the child, but not so. According to Sukien-
nik's findings, 60 percent of her sample did not return unsatisfactory
clothing (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 47).

Other characteristics of low-income women's clothing acquisition
practices include less choosing of brand name clothing, less examin-
ing of construction, and less reading of clothing labels than those with
higher income (Ryan, 1966, p. 228). In the study conducted by Orr,
48 percent of her sample of 25 rural families did not read clothing
labels, of those who did, garment size was the most commonly noted
information followed by washing instructions (Orr, 1973, p. 37).
Sukiennik found in her study that 59 percent of her subjects looked
at clothing labels, and of those 22 percent looked for the brand name;
size was not mentioned (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 35).

The method of payment used by low-income consumers may be related
to preplanning practices used. Having options as to how to pay for
a purchase may require preplanning for the options; for example, credit,
in time, may cost more for the consumer to use. Therefore, the low-
income consumer may preplan to use cash. Attitudes about different
methods of payment also may have related to preplanning practices
used. Negative attitudes may mean some methods of payment may never
be considered as options to be used.

There are conflicting reports as to the most common method of
payment (that is, cash or credit) used by low-income families. In
Sukiennik's sample of 240 low-income women, 71 percent paid by cash,
12 percent paid by credit, 11 percent used a lay away plan, and 6
percent paid by check (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 40). Both Orr and Sukien-
nik reported negative feelings from low-income consumers towards the
use of credit (Orr, 1973, pp. 43-44; Sukiennik, 1972, p. 40). How-
ever, Richards stated that: "Half or more of poor families over the
nation use consumer credit of some kind" (Richards, 1965, p. 7).

Clothing Sources

Clothing may be acquired through many sources, that is, by buy-
ing clothing new from retail stores or used from secondhand stores,
garage sales,and rummage sales. Clothing also may be acquired by
handing down clothing, making garments at home, receiving items as
gifts, pay, bonuses, and prizes, and by renting or borrowing items.
Studies relating to the clothing sources used by low-income persons
have been conducted. Results of these studies follow.

Peters conducted a study entitled "Clothing Acquired from Select-
ed Supplementary Sources by Low to Moderate Income Families in a Mid-
western Town". She obtained a sample of 419 Des Moines, Iowa, fami-
lies. These families were drawn from census tracts in which the med-
ian family income in 1960 was below the city's median family income.
The data were collected by personal interview and included information
concerning family characteristics (education and work experience of
eligible members, sources and amount of income), kinds of clothing
worn at work, equipment and care of clothing, sources of clothing
acquisition, types and number of garments acquired from all sources,
and costs of materials for garments made at home. The data covered
the period from Easter 1965 to Easter 1966. Peters limited her sample
to those families that were composed of members in one of these two ways:

1) A woman less than 45 years old with a husband and with zero
   or more than five children at home under the age of 18 years,
OR
2) A woman less than 45 years old with no husband at home, and
   with at least one and not more than five children at home
   under the age of 18 years (Peters, 1968, p. 34).

Peters found that the most frequent supplementary source for
clothing was gifts. Of her 419 families, 390 acquired clothing as
gifts. Other supplementary clothing sources and percentages of the
families who acquired clothing in that way were as follows: handed-
down from outside the family, 62.4 percent; handed-down from within
the family, 42.6 percent; borrowed, 20 percent; purchased used

clothing, 18.6 percent; from bonus, pay, purchased with stamps, or as prizes, 18.1 percent; and rented, 8.1 percent (Peters, 1968, p. 53).

Peters observed that the purchase of used clothing drops off sharply in families above the poverty level, but handed-down clothing from outside the family remains constant in those income classes above the lowest income level in her sample (Peters, 1968, p. 205). Peters also reported that handed-down clothing from within the family of low-income families was not common (Peters, 1968, p. 206). Only 42 percent of the families she interviewed obtained handed-down clothing from other family members (Peters, 1968, pp. 53-54).

Orr found that the most common method of clothing acquisition was by purchasing new clothing; there was no indication that hand-me-downs, or secondhand clothing was undesirable, but that it simply was not available because the clothing was worn out before it was out-grown (Orr, 1973, pp. 40-41). Orr reported that discount and variety stores were the places shopped most often for clothing. A further survey of these stores indicated that the clothing found in them was low in quality and unfashionable (Orr, 1973, p. 42). Orr found no evidence of bargain hunting or comparative shopping (Orr, 1973, p. 42), and most of the women shopped at no more than two stores.

Sukiennik discovered that 67 percent of her sample obtained most of their clothing through new purchases, and 20 perecent, by con-structing new clothes (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 36). The types of retail outlets frequented most often were found to be speciality stores for better dresses, and second-hand stores for house-type dresses (Sukiennik, 1972, p. 58). The most common reason for selecting house-type dresses at a secondhand store was because of lower cost (Sukiennik, 1972, pp. 38-39).

One last source of clothing that is mentioned only briefly by any author is the purchase of clothing by mail. Orr stated that low-income shoppers make more mail-order purchases than any other segment of society (Orr, 1973, p. 18). Also, Ryan reported that most of the low-income people purchase clothing by mail (Ryan, 1966, p. 166).

Attitudes Towards Shopping

According to Orr low-income shoppers dislike shopping, and prefer to get it over quickly. This could be related to why most of the mothers select clothing for the rest of the family without their presence (Orr, 1973, pp. 44-45). Collazzo explains that the expectations of consumers increase when income increases. He says that lower-income groups put less "emphasis upon being able to get what they want when they want it". He says that there is a higher degree of frustration among the higher-income groups when they must make several trips to a shopping center when one trip could have sufficed. The reasons he gives are:

1) The higher-income groups pay more and thus expect better service;

2) Their time at work reaps better benefits, that is, higher wages which makes them more aware of the value of time;

3) They are more likely to be aware of alternative cost and its applicability to the problem of making several shopping trips where one should have sufficed (Collazzo, 1966, pp. 2-3).

In conclusion, poverty is a very real situation. From the studies conducted relating to the providing of educational programs for the poor, several problems have been identified which hinder the development of such programs, although some of these problems might be beginning to be overcome. From these studies it has also been learned that educational programs need to be designed differently for each low-income group. Research on clothing acquisition practices, clothing sources used, and attitudes of the low-income person towards shopping were discussed. The general trend of this research indicates that most low-income people do not follow all of the "good consumership" rules when acquiring clothing as Richards has outlined. This may be related to the habit of borrowing or exchanging clothes with friends or relatives.

CHAPTER III

PROCEDURE

The steps in the investigation included: the creation of the questions to be answered, formulation of the questionnaire, pretesting of the questionnaire, selection of the sample, gathering of the data, and analysis of the gathered data.

Data were gathered to answer these questions:

1. What clothing sources are perceived as being available to women who frequent a free clothing distribution center when they are acquiring clothing for their children?

2. What clothing sources are used by these women when acquiring clothing for their children?

3. What sources of information about children's clothing are used by these women?

4. To what extent do these women engage in selected preplanning practices when acquiring children's clothing?

5. Is there any relationship between the preplanning practices used and these demographic factors:

    Age of the mother
    Educational level of the mother
    Household size of the mother

Selection and Development of Measures

Low-income women are more likely to have a low educational attainment which might make it difficult for them to read or understand a questionnaire, so the interview method of data collection was chosen to obtain responses from these women. This method provided the opportunity for obtaining information from women who may not have been able to read, as well as provided the opportunity for the interviewer to determine when the respondent did not understand and needed to have

the questions repeated or clarified. Two limitations to using the interview method of data collection were: 1) interviewing was time-consuming on the part of the interviewer, and 2) interviewing may have produced socially desirable rather than accurate answers. Therefore, this study was limited to 55 participants, and assurances were made to maintain the anonymity of individual respondents. The method of interviewing was controlled by having a predetermined introduction and set of questions to be asked.

The questionnaire was developed by the researcher since no other questionnaire was available that would meet the needs of this study. The questionnaire is included in Appendix A. Its purpose was to obtain information about what clothing sources are perceived as being available, what clothing sources are used, the sources of information used, and the preplanning practices used by women who frequent a free clothing distribution center when acquiring clothing for their children. Other information to be obtained through the use of the questionnaire included: the respondent's age, educational level, household size, and whether the respondent has an income above or below the poverty level.

The introduction to the questionnaire was designed to accomplish five purposes. The first purpose was to identify the researcher and the university through which the research was being done. The second purpose was to explain a little about the study. The third purpose was to assure the respondent of the confidential nature of the interview, and that everything told to the interviewer would be shared with others only in an aggregate form. The fourth purpose was to extend an invitation to participate in the study to each respondent. And the fifth purpose was to determine eligibility for participation in the study. Eligibility was based on responses to two questions. One question, which was asked beginning the second day of interviewing, was whether the respondent had participated in this interview before; an honest positive response eliminated the possibility of interviewing an individual more than once. If the respondent gave a positive response, the interview terminated. Another question asked the

respondent if there was at least one child, 18 years of age or younger, living with her. If the respondent gave a negative response, the interview terminated.

The questionnaire contained primarily close-ended questions. It also provided a written explanation for each question, or set of questions, that was asked. Some of these explanations were adapted from interviews Peters conducted (Peters, 1968, pp. 228-232).

Clothing Sources Perceived and Used

Question 1 was developed to obtain the clothing sources perceived as available by these women. An open-ended question was used to obtain this information. The responses obtained from these women were categorized into groups for analysis. These groups were intended to be similar to the list of clothing sources used in Question 2 of the questionnaire.

Question 2 asked what clothing sources were used when acquiring clothing for children. To make recall easier for the respondents, a list of clothing sources was read to her, to which she needed only reply Yes, if she used it when obtaining clothing for the children or No, she did not use it when obtaining clothing. An example of how this information was obtained follows:

"Do any of the children at your home have clothing that was obtained new as a gift?"
All responses were marked with a check (√) under either Yes or No.

For analysis, all Yes responses were assigned a code of 2, and all No responses were assigned a code of 1. One clothing source, Supplied by Employer, was asked only of mothers with teenagers; therefore, if the respondent did not have teenagers this clothing source was not asked. The code assigned when the respondent was not asked a question was 0. Also for analysis, the responses were categorized into either New Clothing Sources, Used Clothing Sources, or Other.

In order to provide examples of the various clothing sources for

the second question, local stores were classified according to type, that is, discount, variety, drug, etc. These local store names were then used as examples given to the respondent when requested. In this way the same example was given to all respondents, so each had the same definition for each clothing source. The stores used as examples for each source were classified according to type, with the assistance of Cheryl Jordan, Assistant Professor, Clothing, Textiles, and Related Arts, at Oregon State University. The clothing sources, their definitions, and examples are as follows:

Gift   new clothing received from a friend or relative at no charge.

Mail-order   the purchase of goods or clothing received by mail. Examples: Sears, Roebuck and Company (mail-order department); Montgomery Ward (mail-order department); J. C. Penney (mail-order department).

Discount store   one which emphasized lower prices, carried large volumes and provided minimum customer services. Examples: Bi-Mart, K-Mart.

Drug store   one where medical prescriptions were filled and drugs and medical supplies were sold (some infant clothing is available). Examples: Rice's Pharmacy, Williams Drug, Payless.

Variety store   "retail organization that primarily carries limited lines of apparel and accessories for men, women, and children as well as limited assortments of other goods. Price lines are generally low to medium" (Troxell, 1971, p. 393).
                  Example: McGregor's

Department   one that sold general lines of merchandise in
Store   each of three categories: home furnishings; household linens and dry goods; and apparel and accessories for the entire family. Each was

sold in a separate area or department of its
under one roof.
Examples: J. C. Penney (retail store), Fred
Meyer.

Supermarket   large, self-service, retail food store or market, often one in a chain. Example: Safeway.

Specialty store   "retail establishment that handles primarily merchandise within fairly narrow categories, such as women's apparel, men's apparel, women's accessories, home furnishings, shoes and so on" (Troxell, 1971, p. 392).
Retailers define it as any apparel or accessory store that exhibits a degree of fashion awareness, even if it carries goods for both sexes.
Examples: Kid Shop, The Blade, The Trend.

Rummage Sale   sale of contributed clothing and miscellaneous articles used or new, to raise money for charitable purposes or for some organization. A rummage sale is not usually held more frequently than once a year.

Garage sale   sale of miscellaneous unwanted items including clothing by an individual or, in some cases, several neighboring families.

Thrift shop   store where cast-off or used clothing was sold at a low price. Example: OSU Thrift Shop.

Secondhand store   store where used clothing was sold and where unwanted clothing may be exchanged for needed clothing. Examples: Other Mothers's, Granny's Attic.

Borrowed   clothing belonging to someone else, which was loaned without charge for temporary use.

Flea market   sale of various items by individuals all gathered

in a common place, at a common time. Example: Philomath Flea Market.

Exchanged	clothing which was obtained with the exchange of another unwanted article or clothing item.
Handed-down	used clothing received from a friend or relative.
Homemade	clothing made at home by the individual or by the relative or friend at little or no cost.
Rented	clothing for which a fee was paid in return for right of temporary use.
Supplied by Employer	clothing that has been provided free of charge by the employer for the employee to wear at work.
Organization	a place where new or used clothing was acquired either free of charge or for a minimal price. Examples: Vina Moses Center, Assistance League, Good Will, churches.
Miscellaneous sources	clothing acquired from a group of sources including: bonus, pay, purchase with stamps, and prizes.

Sources of Information Used

Question 3 was used to determine if these women relied on other people for information about children's clothing. This question contained four parts. The first asked, "I have a list of where people can get information about children's clothing. When you have a question about children's clothing, do you get help from any of these . . .?" The sources of information read to the respondents included: Newspapers, Magazines, Friends or Relatives, Organizations, Pamphlets, and Other. Respondents were instructed to answer either Yes or No, depending on whether or not the source was used.

The next part in Question 3 asked the respondents which one of the aforementioned sources of information was the most important. For analysis each source of information was assigned these codes as follows:

	Code		Code
Newspapers	(1)	Organizations	(4)
Magazines	(2)	Pamphlets	(5)
Friends or Relatives	(3)	Other (specified)	(6)

This third part of Question 3 asked, "Generally, is a friend or relative present or not when you shop for children's clothing?" The respondents were asked to answer either Yes or No.

The last part in Question 3 asked, "About how often do you usually see a friend or relative?" This question was later omitted from analysis. It was not specific in obtaining information about seeing a friend or relative who was a source of information about children's clothing or who was present when shopping.

Question 4 pertained to the preplanning practices used in clothing acquisition. This question was subdivided into 13 separate questions under these general types of preplanning practices:

1. Analysis of the clothing needs (sub-questions 1-4).
2. Existence of a budget and determination of what method of payment was to be used (sub-questions 5-7).
3. Consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothes (sub-questions 8-10).
4. Determination of where and when to shop for clothes (sub-questions 11-13).

After each sub-question the respondent was asked to respond Always, Sometimes, or Never depending on how often she engaged in each practice. Codes were assigned to each response to aid in analysis. Always responses were assigned the code of 3; Sometimes, 2; and Never, 1.

The questions which obtained demographic data were placed after the preplanning practices since they were more personal. It was hoped

that by having less personal questions first, a nonoffensive atmosphere would be established where the respondent would be comfortable in answering the more personal questions truthfully and without hesiation.

Demographic Data

Questions 5, 6, and 7 were designed to obtain data on the mother's age, educational level, and place of residence. In an effort to make the respondent more comfortable, questions pertaining to age and educational level were put on cards. The respondent looked at the card and gave only the letter of the group which contained her age and grade level last completed. To aid in analyzing these data, age, and grade level last completed were given codes as follows:

Age	Code		Code
under 24	(1)	4th grade or less	(1)
between 25 and 34	(2)	5th to 8th grade	(2)
between 35 and 44	(3)	9th to 10th grade	(3)
between 45 and 54	(4)	11th to 12th grade	(4)
between 55 and 64	(5)	college and more	(5)
over 64	(6)	do not remember	(0)

Since the study was designed to obtain information which may aid in the development of educational programs for low-income individuals, Question 7 was designed to determine the place of residence of the respondent which was necessary in order to determine the respondent's income level (see Question 8). The 1980 Poverty Threshold Index was used to determine whether the respondent was above or below the poverty level. This index differentiated between farm and nonfarm residences so Question 7 determined residence. Farm included rural residents who lived on a farm of ten or more acres and with sales of more than $1,000. Residence was determined by responses to three questions: "Does the place you live have ten or more acres?", "Was

any of your income for the past 12 months from the sales of crops, livestock or other farm products?", and "During the past 12 months, did the sale of crops, livestock and other farm products amount to more or less than $1,000?". Residences that had sales of more than $1,000 were classified as Farms; all other were Nonfarm. Nonfarm included urban residents and rural residents living on a farm with sales amounting to less than $1,000 per year (U. S. Bureau of the Census, 1980, p. 202). Depending on how the place of residence was classified, the respondent was given a NONFARM income card, or a FARM income card with a chart of the 1980 poverty index and household sizes. Question 8 then asked the respondent to tell the interviewer whether her household income was above or below the income level across from her household size.

The last two questions were less personal than the previous three. Question 9 asked for the county in which the respondent lived. Question 10 was intended to give the respondent a chance to express her opinion about shopping for children's clothes or the questionnaire. These questions were used in making recommendations for educational programs to help low-income people.

Collection of the Data

Description of Collection Site

Benton County in Oregon is located in the west central portion of the State. Of its 668 square miles, over half is forest; one-third of the land is used in intensive agriculture. The total population in 1980 was 68,211. Most of the population of Benton County is clustered around Corvallis and Philomath. The largest town and county seat is Corvallis with a population of 40,843. The 1980 Census of Population and Housing reports that there are 25,189 housing units in Benton County (Oregon Data Center). From this figure and the total population

figure, the average household size of 2.7 is computed. The average age of Benton County residents is 23.3 years, the youngest in the State (Ruttle, Coppedge, and Youmans, 1974, p. 22). The total population below the age of 18 in Benton County is 15,151 or 22.2 percent of the total population.

Agriculture and lumbering are the major industries in Benton County; however, educational services employ the most people, as Oregon State University is in Corvallis. As of January 1, 1979, the estimated family income for Benton County residents was $19,950, slightly above the State's average of $19,487; however, the unemployment rate has been rising in 1981. The unemployment rate rose to 7.8 percent in January 1981, its highest point in four and one half years ("Jobless rate hits", 1981).

Corvallis, Oregon is composed mainly of middle to upper income families. It is a relatively conservative community. As mentioned earlier, Corvallis is the home of Oregon State University. Just a few miles east of Corvallis, in Linn County, is Linn-Benton Community College.

In Corvallis the only organized free distribution center for clothing is the Vina Moses Center. A limited number of small household items for low-income families are also available. From a personal interview with the director of the Vina Moses Center, the following information was obtained. The Vina Moses Center, started in 1915, was originally a Red Cross outreach. It is now a United Way project to serve the low-income in Benton County. Most items are donated by individuals; occasionally items are received from churches after their rummage sales. A local thrift shop, after paying its rent and other operating expenses, uses the remainder of its profits for community concerns such as the Vina Moses Center. The Center has received some of this money which has been used to purchase children's underclothing, shoes, and infant items which are always in short supply.

People hear about the Vina Moses Center mainly by word of mouth, but some people are referred to the Center by several welfare

agencies in the area as well as the police. Low-income Benton County residents are the intended beneficiaries of the Vina Moses Center; however, due to a lack of time, space, and volunteers, formal screening is impossible. Therefore, those persons obtaining items at the Center may or may not be from Benton County and may or may not be low-income.

The Center is open from one to three o'clock Monday through Friday, and eleven to two o'clock on Saturday. During an average day 30 to 40 individuals come to the Center. The only time during the year that the Center is opened all day is one week in August, for the purpose of providing school children with clothing. Approximately 11,000 individuals representing approximately 2,000 families frequented the Center during 1980. The director reports that about 10 percent of the individuals who come to the Center return from year to year. Individuals obtaining clothes for infants or children from the Center are allowed two items per child per month free of charge. A sign-in book is at the door for the individuals to sign their names and give their addresses, but no one is forced to sign. Files are kept on some of the individuals. Confidentiality prohibits public disclosure of the files.

Selection of the Sample

The method of sample selection for this study is similiar to Glaser and Strauss' strategy of "theoretical sampling". The aim is to choose a sample for the purposes of learning something about the theoretical category, not to sample the whole population. Glaser and Strauss distinguish between theoretical sampling and statistical random sampling in this way:

> Theoretical sampling is done in order to discover categor-
> ies and their properties, and to suggest the interrelation-
> ships into a theory. Statistical sampling is done to obtain
> accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories
> to be used in descriptions or verifications (Glaser and
> Strauss, 1967, p. 62).

The location of the sample was at the Vina Moses Center in Corvallis, Oregon for three reasons: 1) it was one of the few places the researcher was granted permission to interview women believed to be low-income, 2) the Center provided the researcher with the opportunity to interview low income families without having to travel to their homes, and 3) it distributed mainly clothing to low-income persons. Interviews were conducted with as many of the eligible women as were present at the Center on interviewing days and as time would allow. It was thought that 50 was the minimum number of respondents needed for a reliable sample. Interviews were conducted during consecutive days (except Sunday), until 55 respondents were obtained (11 days).

The following conditions were established as criteria used in the selection of women for this study: had at least one child 18 years of age or less living at home; voluntarily agreed to participate in the interview.

Administration of the Questionnaire

Before the actual data collection began, the questionnaire was pretested in order to determine if it was understandable to the respondents. The site chosen for pretesting was as similar to the Vina Moses Center as possible. The pretesting sample site was the Salvation Army store in Linn County, Oregon. The questionnaire was administered to eight volunteers. Each interview was timed in order to obtain an approximation of the length of time required for each interview. It was concluded that each interview could be completed in 15 minutes. Revisions made in the questionnaire involved reordering a few questions. Each question was then judged by a group of five individuals selected for their expertise in clothing merchandising, test development, or experience in working with low-income individuals. The questionnaire was revised as recommended. Some questions were simplified and some were added in order to obtain more accurate data.

Arrangements were made with the director and assistant director

of the Vina Moses Center for administration of the interviews. The
interviewer dressed consistently for each interview by wearing non-
faded blue jeans and a pink T-shirt under a red, black, and white
plaid flannel shirt. The flannel shirt was worn with the shirt
tail out and the sleeves rolled up to the elbows. Each question was
presented in exactly the same manner in order to avoid a biased in-
terview. All questions were read as written, in a conversational
tone, and in the same order each time.

Interviews took place as the women were looking for children's
clothing or as the women were leaving after having made their select-
ions. Children's and infants' clothing were in rooms separated from
other clothes and household items. Only one family was allowed in the
"baby room" or "school room" at one time. This simplified interview-
ing by eliminating the presence of many other shoppers. A more re-
laxed atmosphere was possible when interviews were conducted in
either of these two rooms or when the selection of clothing or house-
hold items was completed.

Reporting of the Data

Frequencies and relative frequencies were used as the main tech-
nique in reporting the data. Mean scores were used to determine aver-
ages and frequency of occurrence. Chi-square was used in the analysis
of the data on the preplanning practices used and age, educational
level, household size, and income level of the respondents.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Information for this study was obtained by interviewing 55 mothers of children 18 years of age or less. These mothers were voluntary participants who came to a free clothing distribution center in Corvallis, Oregon. Five additional women were approached by the interviewer but are not represented in the final analysis because they; 1) refused to be interviewed, 2) did not have the time to be interviewed, 3) could not understand the questions, 4) had to leave before the interview was completed, or 5) did not have a child 18 years of age or younger at home.

Findings from the analysis of the data are presented under the following major headings: 1) Description of respondents, 2) Clothing sources perceived as being available, 3) Clothing sources used, 4) Sources of information used, 5) Frequency of seeing a friend or relative, 6) Preplanning practices used, 7) General comments of the respondents, and 8) Relationship between the preplanning practices used and age, educational level, household size, and income level of the mother.

Description of the Respondents

Age Group

Table 1 provides a description of the sample according to age. Each respondent was handed a card containing six age groups and was asked to indicate the group in which her age was included. Sixteen women indicated their ages to be under 24. Half of the respondents (28 or 50.9 percent) were between 25 and 34 years of age. The three youngest age groups (under 24, 25-34, and 35-44) represented 92.6 percent of the respondents.

Educational Level

The educational level of each respondent was obtained in the
same manner as age was determined, that is by each respondent indi-
cating the group containing the grade level last completed from a
card containing five choices. There were no respondents with a 4th
grade or less educational level (see Table 2). The lowest grade
level completed by any of the respondents was between the 5th and 8th
grade, four (7.3 percent) indicated this group to be the extent of
their educational level. The highest educational level reported by
any respondent was college or more, 19 (34.5 percent) of the respond-
ents had had some college education. The largest group of respondents
(25 or 45.5 percent) reported an educational level of 11th to 12th
grade.

TABLE 1

Age Group of Respondents Represented in the Sample

Age Group	Number	Percent
under 24	16	29.0
25 - 34	28	50.9
35 - 44	7	12.7
45 - 54	3	5.5
55 - 64	1	1.8
over 64	0	0.0
Total	55	

TABLE 2

Educational Level of Respondents Represented in the Sample

Educational Level	Number	Percent
4th grade or less	0	0.0
5th to 8th grade	4	7.3
9th to 10th grade	7	12.7
11th to 12th grade	25	45.4
college and more	19	34.5
Total	55	

Place of Residence

Place of residence was classified into either farm or nonfarm in order to aid in determining income status. All 55 respondents reported to be nonfarm residents, which included urban residents as well as rural residents who do not live on an acreage of 10 or more acres and whose income for the past 12 months did not amount to $1,000 or more from the sale of crops or other farm products.

Household Size

Household size was necessary in order to aid in determining income status (see Table 3). The smallest household size was two with 9.1 percent of the respondents reporting this household size. The largest household size was nine persons, reported by only one respondent. The largest group of respondents (15 or 27.3 percent) came from households of three people. Household sizes of two, three, and four comprised over half (31 or 56.4 percent) of the sample.

TABLE 3

Household Size of Respondents Represented in the Sample

Household Size	Number	Percent
2	5	9.1
3	15	27.3
4	11	20.0
5	9	16.4
6	10	18.2
7	4	7.3
8	0	0.0
9	1	1.8
Total	55	

Number of Children

The 55 mothers interviewed represented 126 children 18 years of age or younger. Over half (33 or 60 percent) of the respondents only had two or less children 18 years of age or younger, and 43 (78.2 percent) respondents had three or less children (see Table 4). Table 4 also shown that there is little variation in the total number of male and female children (64 and 62 respectively) represented in this study.

Table 5 gives information on ages of the children by sex. The ages of the female children ranged from 8 months to 17 years. The ages of the male children ranged from 6 months to 17 years. The ages of the two largest groups of the female children were 4-5 years, and 10-11 years, each group containing 10 (7.9 percent) children. The ages of the three largest groups of the male children were 1 year or less, 6-7 years, and 8-9 years each group containing 10 (7.9 percent) children. The children 9 years of age or younger totaled 81 (64.1 percent).

TABLE 4

Number of Children 18 Years of Age or Younger Reported by Respondents
in the Sample

Number of Children	Number of Respondents Number	Number of Respondents Percent	Number of Children by Sex Female	Number of Children by Sex Male
1	19	34.5	11	8
2	14	25.5	13	15
3	10	18.2	15	15
4	11	20.0	22	22
5	1	1.8	1	4
Total	55		62	64
Total number of children		126		

TABLE 5

Age of Children Reported by Respondents in the Sample

Age Group	Female Children Number	Female Children Percent	Male Children Number	Male Children Percent	Total Children Number	Total Children Percent
1 year or less	8	6.3	10	7.9	18	14.3
2-3 years	7	5.5	9	7.1	16	12.7
4-5 years	10	7.9	4	3.2	14	11.1
6-7 years	6	4.8	10	7.9	16	12.7
8-9 years	7	5.5	10	7.9	17	13.5
10-11 years	10	7.9	8	6.3	18	14.3
12-13 years	5	4.0	5	4.0	10	7.9
14-15 years	3	2.4	3	2.4	6	4.8
16-17 years	6	4.8	5	4.0	11	8.7
Total	62		64		126	

Birth Order of Children

Of the 19 households with only one child, 11 respondents had a female 18 years of age or younger and eight had a male 18 years of age or younger. Of the 36 households with two or more children, seven households had either all male or all female children. Of these seven households, five reported two children, and two reported four children. This information was omitted from further analysis as not enough specific information was obtained as to how or if birth order of the children was related to the clothing acquisition practices of these women.

Income Level

Income level was determined by considering the respondent's place of residence (farm or nonfarm) and household size. As mentioned earlier, all respondents were classified as nonfarm residents since none lived on an acreage of 10 or more acres and received $1,000 or more income from the sale of crops or other farm products for the past 12 months.

Since the respondents were classified as nonfarm residents, each respondent was given an income card for nonfarm residents. The card contained a table with household sizes and income levels as used by the United States Census Bureau to determine poverty level. The respondents were asked to indicate if their 1980 income, before taxes, was above or below the figure across from their household size. Only one respondent abstained from answering (see Table 6). A majority of the respondents (35 or 63.6 percent) indicated that their 1980 income was below the figure on the card according to household size.

County of Residence

Respondents were asked in which county they lived. As Table 7 indicates, four counties were represented. A majority of the

TABLE 6

Income Level of the Respondents Represented in the Sample

Income Level	Number	Percent
Above Poverty Level	19	34.5
Below Poverty Level	35	63.6
No answer	1	1.8
Total	55	

respondents (48 or 87.3 percent) named Benton as their county of residence. There were four Linn County respondents (7.3 percent). Polk and Marion Counties each had one (1.8 percent) respondent. Only one person abstained from answering.

TABLE 7

County of Residence of Respondents Represented in the Sample

County of Residence	Number	Percent
Benton	48	87.3
Linn	4	7.3
Polk	1	1.8
Marion	1	1.8
No answer	1	1.8
Total	55	

Clothing Sources Perceived as Being Available

To determine what clothing sources were perceived as being available to these women, an open-ended question asked where can a mother get clothes for children. Respondents were asked to name as many

sources as they could. Some of the specific store names and individual friends and relatives named by the respondents were categorized for analysis. These categories were intended to be similar to the Clothing Sources Used listed in Question 2 of the questionnaire. The categories were based on pre-established definitions. The specific responses to the question about clothing sources perceived as available and the categories used are presented in Appendix B. No probing was done for general answers such as "stores", "clothing stores", "sales", and "new clothes". Therefore, these general responses were placed in a miscellaneous category. All of the respondents answered this question and named from one to seven different sources where children's clothing could be obtained. A total of 210 responses were given. Respondents named an average of 3.8 sources. These responses are summarized in Table 8.

To aid in analysis, these categories of the specific responses were grouped by Purchased New, Purchased Used, and Other sources (see Table 8). When these responses were grouped, 82 responses were included in the Purchased New category, 68 in the Purchased Used category, and 60 in the Other category. Table 8 shows the categories into which the responses were grouped.

The most frequent response was "from the Vina Moses Center". Over half (35 or 63.6 percent) of the respondents named the Center as one source of children's clothing. The next most frequent response was Thrift shops which was named by 34 (61.8 percent) respondents. Clothing sources which were reported by at least 20 percent of the respondents included: Department stores (27 or 49.1 percent), Discount stores (19 or 34.5 percent), Stores - nonspecified (22 or 39.9 percent), Secondhand stores (21 or 38.2 percent), and Friends or Relatives (11 or 20 percent). The responses which were given by less than five percent of the sample were: Specialty stores, Variety stores, Exchange or Trade, Churches, and Gifts.

TABLE 8

Clothing Sources Perceived as Available by Respondents Represented in the Sample[a]

Source	Number of Respondents Naming the Source	Percent of Respondents Naming the Source
Purchased New		
Department stores	27	49.1
Discount stores	19	34.5
Mail-order catalogues	7	12.7
Drug stores	4	7.3
Specialty stores	2	3.6
Variety stores	1	1.8
Total	60	
Purchased Used		
Thrift shops	34	61.8
Secondhand stores	21	38.2
Garage or Yard sales	13	23.6
Total	68	
Miscellaneous		
Stores-nonspecific	15	27.2
Clothing stores	3	5.4
Sales-no store specified	3	5.4
New clothes-no store specified	1	1.8
Total	22	
Other		
Vina Moses Center	35	63.6
Friends or Relatives	11	20.0
Handed-down	7	12.7
Homemade	3	5.4
Exchange or Trade	2	3.6
Churches	1	1.8
Gifts	1	1.8
Total	60	
Total number of responses	210	

[a]N = 55

Clothing Sources Used

A list of possible clothing sources was read to the respondents. Examples were given when requested (see Appendix A, Q2). After hearing each clothing source, the respondent was instructed to answer Yes or No depending on whether the source was used or not. The clothing sources used by the respondents may be seen in Table 9. For analysis, the responses were categorized into either New Clothing Sources, Used Clothing Sources, or Other.

Handed down clothing was reported as being used by 52 (94.5 percent) of the respondents as a source for children's clothes. At least three-fourths of the respondents reported using these New Clothing Sources when acquiring clothing for their children: Department stores by 49 (89.1 percent) respondents, Gifts by 46 (83.6 percent) respondents, and Discount stores by 44 (80 percent) respondents. At least three-fourths of the respondents also reported Yes to using these Used Clothing Sources when clothing their children: Thrift shops by 51 (92.7 percent) respondents, Secondhand stores by 44 (80 percent) respondents, Rummage sales by 43 (78.2 percent) respondents, and Garage sales by 42 (76.4 percent) respondents. More than half (32 out of 55) also reported Yes when asked if they obtained clothes for their children by Exchanging (58.1 percent).

Over 70 percent reported Yes to using these Other Clothing Sources when clothing their children: Homemade (44 or 80 percent), and Organizations (39 or 70.9 percent).

Sources of Information Used

Sources of Information

A list of possible sources of information about children's clothing was read to each respondent. After hearing each source the respondents were instructed to answer Yes or No depending on whether they

TABLE 9

Clothing Sources Used by Respondents Represented in the Sample[a]

Clothing Source	YES	
	Number	Percent
New		
Department stores	49	89.1
Gifts	46	83.6
Discount Stores	44	80.0
Specialty stores	17	30.9
Variety stores	16	29.1
Drug stores	15	27.3
Supermarkets	12	21.8
Mail-order	11	20.0
Used		
Handed-down	52	94.3
Thrift shops	51	92.7
Secondhand stores	44	80.0
Rummage sales	43	78.2
Garage sales	42	76.4
Exchanged	32	58.1
Borrowed	20	36.4
Flea Market	15	27.3
Barter Fairs (additional response obtained)	1	1.8
Other		
Homemade	44	80.0
Organizations	39	70.9
Supplied by Employer*	5	26.3
Rented	3	5.4
Prize	1	1.8
Bonus	0	0.0
Pay	0	0.0

*This clothing source was asked only of mothers with teenagers.

[a]N = 55

used the source or not.

The source of information about children's clothing used most often was Friends or Relatives with 46 respondents or 83.6 percent reporting they get information concerning children's clothing in this way (see Table 10). Newspapers were also used by 34 or more than half of the respondents (61.8 percent) as a source of information for children's clothing. Slightly less than half (49.1 percent) reported Organizations as being a source of information about children's clothing.

Respondents were asked if there were any other sources of information about children's clothing that they used; 19 respondents (34.6 percent) reported using one or more of the 14 additional sources mentioned. These additional sources may also be seen on Table 10.

Most Important Source of Information

From the sources of information reported as being used (see Table 10), the respondent was then asked which one source was the most important or useful. Respondents reported that Friends and Relatives were the most important or most useful source of information (36.4 percent) about children's clothing (see Table 11). However, newspapers were also reported as being an important source of information (31 percent). Less than 10 percent considered Organizations, Magazines, or Pamphlets as being an important source of information. Nine respondents (16.4 percent) did not state which source was the most important to them.

Frequency of Seeing a Friend or Relative

The question, "How often do you see a friend or relative" was omitted from analysis. It was not specific in obtaining information about the influence of a friend or relative on the acquisition of clothing for children. The question should have been stated, "How

TABLE 10

Sources of Information Used by Respondents Represented in the Sample[a]

Sources of Information	YES	
	Number	Percent
Friends or Relatives	46	83.6
Newspaper	34	61.8
Organizations	27	49.1
Magazines	16	29.1
Pamphlets	13	23.6
Other (total)*	19	34.6
mail order catalogues	5	9.1
television	3	5.4
pattern books	2	3.6
radio	2	3.6
Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC)	2	3.6
flyers from hospital	1	1.8
newspaper advertisements for store sales	1	1.8
public bulletin boards	1	1.8
Cooperative Extension Service	1	1.8
garage sales	1	1.8
classifieds	1	1.8
word of mouth	1	1.8
referral center	1	1.8
churches	1	1.8

* Some respondents named two, and three additional sources.

[a] N = 55

often do you see a friend or relative who is a source of information about children's clothing or who is present when you shop?"

TABLE 11

Most Important Source of Information Reported by Respondents
Represented in the Sample

Source of Information	Number	Percent
Friends or Relatives	20	36.4
Newspapers	17	30.9
Organizations	3	5.4
Magazines	2	3.6
Pamphlets	0	0.0
Other		
mail order catalogues	3	5.4
pattern books	1	1.8
No answer	9	16.4
Total	55	

Presence of a Friend or Relative When Shopping

Table 12 shows the frequency with which a friend or relative is present when the respondent shops for children's clothes. When all the respondents are considered, the responses of Yes and No appear almost equally distributed (49.1 and 50.9 percents respectively). When only those respondents whose income was below the poverty threshold level are considered, 32.7 percent reported that a friend or relative is usually present when shopping for children's clothes; 30 percent reported they were not. The largest difference came when considering those respondents whose income was above the threshold level. Fewer respondents reported Yes, a friend or relative is usually

present when shopping (14.6 percent) than those who reported No (20 percent).

TABLE 12

The Presence of a Friend or Relative When Shopping for Children's
Clothes by Respondents Above and Below the Poverty Threshold Level
Represented in the Sample[a]

| Income Level | YES | | NO | | Total |
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Percent
Below	18	32.7	17	30.9	63.6
Above	8	14.6	11	20.0	34.6
No answer	1	1.8	0	0.0	1.8
Total	27	49.1	28	50.9	100.0

[a]N = 55

Preplanning Practices Used

The four types of preplanning practices investigated were 1)
analysis of the clothing needs, 2) existence of a budget and deter-
mination of the method of payment to be used, 3) consideration of al-
ternatives to purchasing new clothing and 4) determination of where
and when to buy clothes. These four types of preplanning practices
were measured by 13 questions in which the respondents were asked
to indicate Always, Sometimes, or Never to determine the frequency
with which each practice was carried out. Table 13 summarized the
frequency with which these practices were carried out by the respondents.

Analysis of the Clothing Needs

The first type of preplanning practice investigated, analysis

of the clothing needs, was measured by asking sub-questions 1 through 4 in the questionnaire (see Appendix A, Q4).

The first sub-question, "Do you leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?", was reportedly Sometimes carried out by the most respondents (24 or 43.6 percent). The fewest number of respondents reported that they Always carried out this practice (13 or 23.6 percent). About one-third (18 or 32.7 percent) reported that they Never carried out this practice.

Sub-question 2 was: "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?" This practice was Never carried out by 27 respondents (49.1 percent). The fewest number of respondents reported Always carry out this practice (9 or 16.4 percent). About one-third (19 or 34.5 precent)reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

Sub-question 3 was: "Do you take the children with you?" Sixty percent reported Sometimes take the children with them; only three respondents (5.4 percent) reported that they Never do. About one-third (19 or 34.5 percent) reported they Always carry out this practice.

Sub-question 4 was: "Do you think ahead about clothes that can be worn with other clothes the children already have?" Over half (58.2 percent) reported that they Always do so. Only eight (14.5 percent) reported Never. About one-fourth (15 or 27.3 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

Existence of a Budget and Determination of the Method of Payment

These types of preplanning practices were measured by sub-questions 5, 6, and 7 on the questionnaire (see Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-question 5 was: "Do you save money to purchase clothes for the children?" Over half (58.2 percent) reported that they Sometimes saved money in order to purchase children's clothes. The remainder of the sample was almost evenly divided between Always (21.8 percent) and Never (20 percent) in carrying out this practice.

TABLE 13

Preplanning Practices Used by Respondents Represented in the Sample[a]

Preplanning Practice	Always #	%	Sometimes #	%	Never #	%
Do you. . .						
1. leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?	13	23.6	24	43.6	18	32.7
2. measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?	9	16.4	19	34.5	27	49.1
3. take the children with you?	19	34.5	33	60.0	3	5.4
4. think ahead about clothes that can be worn with other clothes the children already have?	32	58.2	15	27.3	8	14.5
5. save money to purchase clothes for the children?	12	21.8	32	58.2	11	20.0
6. known how much money you can spend on clothes before you leave your house?	39	70.9	9	16.4	7	12.7
7. leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?	44	80.0	8	14.5	3	5.4
8. try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?	31	56.4	23	41.8	1	1.8
9. decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?	35	63.6	15	27.3	5	9.1
10. consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?	21	38.2	28	50.9	6	10.9
11. leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?	19	34.5	16	29.1	20	36.4
12. look at two or more places before you get the clothes?	18	32.7	24	43.6	13	23.6
13. look for sales?	43	78.2	11	20.0	1	1.8

[a] N = 55

The sixth sub-question, "Do you know how much money you can spend on clothes before you leave your house?" was Always carried out by 70.9 percent of the respondents. Only 12.7 percent reported Never knowing how much money could be spent on clothes before leaving the house. Less than one-fourth (9 or 16.4 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

Sub-question 7 was: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?" The largest percentage of respondents (80 percent) reported that they Always carried out this practice. Never was reported by the fewest respondents (5.4 percent). Less than one-fourth (8 or 14.5 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

<div align="center">Consideration of Alternatives</div>

The third type of preplanning practice investigated was consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothing. This type of practice was measured by sub-questions 8, 9, and 10.

Sub-question 8 was: "Do you try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?" Over half (56.4 percent) reported that they Always try to do so, while one respondent (1.8 percent) reported Never carried out this practice. About two-fifths (23 or 41.8 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

Sub-question 9 was: "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?" Most of the respondents (63.6 percent) reported that they Always carried out this practice. Less than 10 percent reported that the Never carried out this practice. Over one-fourth (15 or 27.3 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

Sub-question 10 was: "Do you consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?" About one-half (50.9 percent) reported they carry out this practice

Sometimes. The fewest number of respondents reported that they Never carried out this practice (10.9 percent). Over one-third (21 or 38.2 percent) reported that they Always carried out this practice.

Determination of Where and When to Buy

The last type of preplanning practice, the determination of where and when to buy clothing, was measured by sub-questions 11 through 13 (see Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-question 11 was: "Do you leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?" The number of respondents reporting each frequency was about equal. The largest number of the respondents (20 or 36.4 percent) reported that they Never carried out this practice. The fewest (16 or 29.1 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice. About one-third (19 or 34.5 percent) reported that they Always carried out this practice.

Sub-question 12 was: "Do you look at two or more places before you get the clothes?" Most of the respondents carried out this practice Sometimes (43.6 percent), the fewest reported Never (23.6 percent). About one-third (18 or 32.7 percent) reported that they Always carried out this practice.

Sub-question 13 was: "Do you look for sales?" Over three-fourths (78.2 percent) Always look for sales. Only 1.8 percent Never look for sales. One-fourth (11 or 20 percent) reported that they Sometimes carried out this practice.

General Comments of the Respondents

The last question on the questionnaire gave the respondents a chance to voice anything they wanted to mention about children's clothing or the questionnaire. One half of the respondents (28 or 50.9 percent) gave comments. Fifteen comments related to how the respondents shop for children's clothes and eight comments involved

statements about the expense involved in acquiring children's clothing. Seven comments related to the Vina Moses Center. Other comments related to the problems and satisfactions encountered when shopping for children's clothes in Corvallis, Oregon (six comments). Three comments related to the use of handed-down clothing. See Appendix C for the complete list of comments. Some comments were paraphrased by the interviewer in order to record the main thought without recording the entire lengthy comment.

Relationship Between Preplanning Practices Used and Age, Educational Level, Household Size, and Income Level of the Respondents

Table 14 shows the relationships that exist between each of the 13 Preplanning Practices Used and Age, Education, Household Size, and Income Level of the respondent. Chi-square was used to determine these relationships. Chi-square values for age, education, and household size between 7.79 - 9.49 were significant at the .05 level; values between 9.50 - 13.8 were significant at the .01 level. Chi-square values for income between 4.62 - 5.99 were significant at the .05 level; values between 6.00 - 9.21 were significant at the .01 level.

Preplanning Practices and Age

Four preplanning practices had statistically significant relationships with age. These practices were: Number 2, "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?" ($x^2(4) = 8.42$, $p < .05$), number 5, "Do you save money to purchase clothes for the children?" ($x^2(4) = 10.8$, $p < .01$), number 9, "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?" ($x^2(4) = 8.13$, $p < .05$), and number 10, "Do you consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?" ($x^2(4) = 7.02$ $p < .05$).

All other relationships with age were not significant at the .05 level.

TABLE 14

Chi-Square Values for Preplanning Practices Related to Age, Educational Level, Household Size, and Income Level of the Respondents

Preplanning Practice Do you.........	Age[a]	Education[a]	Household Size[a]	Income Level[b]
1. leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?	3.12	3.45	7.83*	1.52
2. measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?	8.42*	1.74	9.68*	4.54
3. take the children with you?	3.75	4.19	0.69	1.08
4. think ahead about clothes the children already have?	0.96	1.12	0.77	2.22
5. save money to purchase clothes for the children?	10.8**	2.12	0.86	1.44
6. know how much money you can spend on clothes before you leave your house?	2.62	5.57	1.21	1.99
7. leave the house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?	1.95	6.36*	1.25	2.35
8. try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?	5.52	4.67	4.91	1.59
9. decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?	8.13*	3.37	3.91	2.57
10. consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?	7.02*	3.12	2.36	0.14
11. leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?	2.82	6.22*	1.86	0.17
12. look at two or more places before you get the clothes?	0.73	4.75	4.57	4.91*
13. look for sales?	2.03	5.39	4.46	2.68

[a]df = 4   [b]df = 2   *p < .05   **p < .01

As Chi-square does not show direction, Table 15 shows the frequencies these four preplanning practices were used by respondents in three age groups. The age groups were condensed into three groupings because of the small number of respondents in the age groups 35 - 44, 45 - 54, and 55 - 64. These age groups were combined into one group, 35 and over. When these groups are combined, small expected values of Chi-square were avoided and more appropriate Chi-square criteria resulted.

Table 15 shows that the respondents in the middle age group (25 - 34) most frequently Never or Sometimes carried out Preplanning Practice Number 2 (measuring the children).

The respondents in the middle age group most frequently carried out Preplanning Practice Number 5 Sometimes (saving money for clothing acquisition).

The respondents of all age groups most frequently Always carried out Preplanning Practice Number 9 (deciding on store-bought clothes or fabric). The middle age group most frequently Always and Sometimes carried out this practice.

Respondents in the middle age group most frequently carried out Preplanning Practice Number 10 Sometimes (considering other sources).

Preplanning Practices and Education

Two preplanning practices had statistically significant relationships with education. These practices were: Number 7, "Do you leave the house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?" ($x^2(4) = 6.36$, $\underline{p} < .05$), and number 11, "Do you leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?" ($x^2(4) = 6.22$, $\underline{p} < .05$).

All other relationships with education were not significant at the .05 level.

Table 16 shows the frequencies these two preplanning practices were used by respondents in three educational levels. The educational

TABLE 15

Frequencies of Four Preplanning Practices Used in Relation to Age

	Frequency of Response		
Age Group	Always	Sometimes	Never
#2 Measuring the children			
Under 24	5	3	8
25 - 34	4	9	15
35 and over	0	7	4
#5 Saving money for clothing acquisition			
Under 24	8	6	2
25 - 34	3	18	7
35 and over	1	8	2
#9 Deciding on store-bought clothes or fabric			
Under 24	12	3	1
25 - 34	13	11	4
35 and over	10	1	0
#10 Considering other sources			
Under 24	5	11	0
25 - 34	11	14	3
35 and over	5	3	3

Note: number of respondents = 55

TABLE 16

Frequencies of Two Preplanning Practices Used, in Relation to Educational Level

Educational Level	Frequency of Response		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
#7 Knowing payment method			
5th to 10th grade	6	4	1
11th to 12th grade	21	3	1
college	17	1	1
#11 Knowing where to look			
5th to 10th grade	5	0	6
11th to 12th grade	8	10	7
college	6	6	7

Note: number of respondents = 55

level groups were combined because of the small number of respondents with educational levels of 4th grade or less, 5th to 8th grade, and 9th to 10th grade.

Table 16 shows that the respondents in the 11th to 12th grade level most frequently Always carried out Preplanning Practice Number 7 (knowing payment method). Those respondents with some college had the least responses in Never and Sometimes.

Also, the respondents in the 11th to 12th grade level most frequently Sometimes or Always carried out Preplanning Practice Number 11 (knowing where to look).

Preplanning Practices and Household Size

Two preplanning practices had statistically significant relationships with household size. These practices were: Number 1, "Do you leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?" ($x^2(4) = 7.83$, $p < .05$), and Number 2, "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?" ($x^2(4) = 9.68$, $p < .05$).

All other relationships with household size were not significant at the .05 level.

Table 17 shows the frequencies these two preplanning practices were used by respondents of different household sizes. Household sizes were grouped in order to avoid small Chi-square expected values. The grouping of household sizes resulted in fairly even distribution of respondents in each of the three groups.

Table 17 shows that the respondents in the small and medium household sizes (2 - 3, and 4 - 5 persons) most frequently Sometimes or Never carried out Preplanning Practice Number 1 (knowing what kind of clothes to obtain).

The respondents in the medium and large household sizes (4 - 5, and 6 - 7, 9 persons) most frequently carried out Preplanning Practice Number 2 (measuring the children) Sometimes or Never.

TABLE 17

Frequencies of Two Preplanning Practices Used, in Relation to Household Size

Household Size	Frequency of Response		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
#1 Knowing what kind of clothes to obtain			
2 - 3	4	10	6
4 - 5	2	11	7
6 - 7, 9	7	3	5
#2 Measuring the children			
2 - 3	4	2	4
4 - 5	4	9	7
6 - 7, 9	1	8	6

Preplanning Practices and Income Level

Only one preplanning this practice had a statistically significant relationship with income. This practice was: Number 12, "Do you look at two or more places before you get the clothes?" ($x^2(2) = 4.91$, $\underline{p} < .05$).

All other relationships with income level were not significant at the .05 level.

Table 18 shows the frequency this preplanning practice was used by respondents in the two income levels. Respondents in both income levels most frequently carried out Preplanning Practice Number 12 (looking at two or more places) Sometimes or Always. Those respondents with incomes below the poverty threshold level were widely divided among Always, Sometimes, or Never carrying out this practice.

TABLE 18

Frequency of One Preplanning Practice Used, in Relation to Income
Level

Income Level	Frequency of Response		
	Always	Sometimes	Never
#12 Looking at two or more places			
above poverty threshold level	8	10	1
below poverty threshold level	10	14	11

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSIONS AND DISCUSSION

This was a descriptive study designed to investigate the clothing aquisition practices of women who frequent a free clothing distribution center. Descriptive statistics were utilized to describe the sample, the sources of information used, the preplanning practices used, and general comments of the respondents. A correlation statistic was used to examine the relationship between the preplanning practices used and age, educational level, household size, and income of the respondents. The following conclusions have been made from these data.

Descriptions of the Respondents

Most of the respondents in this sample (44 or 79.7 percent) were 34 years of age or younger. The age group with the most respondents was 25 - 34 years with 28 (50.9 percent) reporting their age to be within these limits. The average age of Benton County residents is 23.3 years (Ruttle, Coppedge, and Youmans, 1974, p. 22). This average is less than the rest of the state because of the presence of Oregon State University in Corvallis. The age group with the most respondents (25 - 34) is higher than the County's average of 23.3 years; this is possibly due to this sample containing only women with children. The County's average includes women (and men) without children, many of whom are not at a child bearing age.

The modal educational level of the respondents in this sample was 11th to 12th grade. This average is slightly less than the county average of 13 years, 12.8 years for females (Ruttle, Coppedge, and Youmans, 1974, p. 33). The County's average may be high because Oregon State University (OSU) is located here. These results do indicate, however, that the majority of the respondents in this sample are not college-educated people. This may be related to the fact that

on the door of the Vina Moses Center is a sign excluding OSU students. Several sources describe low-income person as having low educational attainment (Irelan, and Besner, 1965; Levitan, 1976; Richards, 1965; Robertson, 1968).

The place of residence of all the respondents was nonfarm which included urban residents, and rural (nonfarm) residents whose income from the sale of crops, livestock, or other farm products over the past 12 months was less than $1,000. The breakdown of type of residence in Benton County indicates that only 13 percent live on farms and 87 percent live in urban or rural nonfarm areas (Ruttle, Coppedge, and Youmans, 1974, p. 19). Therefore, this sample comes from the 87 percent of the County's population which lives in urban or rural nonfarm areas. According to Richards, the poor more often reside in rural farm areas or cities, and less often in rural nonfarm areas or suburbs (Richards, 1965, p. 2). Levitan also states that poverty locates itself in specific geographic locations, one of these locations being in farming areas (Levitan, 1976, p. 123).

The household size of over half (56.4 percent) of this sample was four or less. No exact figure was available at the time this study was underway to indicate the average household size of Benton County. However, when taking into account the County's population of 68,211 and the number of housings units of 25,189 (1980 Census of Population and Housing) an estimated household size of 2.7 is computed. The 1970 Census indicated that about 50 percent of the households in Benton County were three or less. Therefore, the respondents in this sample had slightly larger households than the County average.

Levitan (1976) says, the poor desire about the same size family as the nonpoor, but they have limited access to birth control and family planning devices; therefore, the poor have larger families than the nonpoor. As most of the respondents in this sample have incomes below the poverty threshold level, Levitan's comments may be relevant here.

Other possible explanations relating to the household size of
most of the respondents in this sample may be: 1) About three-fourths
of the respondents in this sample were 34 years of age or younger;
some may have just begun their families; if so, the average household
size of this sample of women may increase. 2) A household may include
extended family members, and/or nonfamily individuals who are living
in the same house. This may be the case in some of the households
of six or more. Households of six or more comprise about 27 percent
of this sample.

Over three-fourths of the respondents (43 or 78.2 percent) had
three children or less who were 18 years of age or younger. Infor-
mation relating to the number of children per household in Benton
County was unavailable at the time this study was conducted.

There were about equal numbers of female and male children
represented in this sample. Female children numbered 62, while male
children numbered 64.

The majority of this sample (35 or 63.6 percent) had incomes
below the poverty threshold level. Most of the sample was expected
to be low-income as the sample site was a free clothing distribution
center for the low-income people of Benton County. Ruttle et al. re-
port that 1.4 percent of the individuals in Benton County had incomes
below the poverty threshold level (Ruttle, Coppedge, and Youmans,
1974, p. 32). The sample used in this study was similar to Glaser
and Strauss' method of sample selection called "theoretical sampling".
The aim was to chose a sample for the purpose of learning something
about the theoretical category, and not to sample the whole popula-
tion (Glaser and Strauss, 1967, p. 62). Knowing that the income
level of the majority of the respondents in this sample was below
the poverty threshold level aids in explaining why the educational
level is lower and why the household size is larger than the
County averages. The poor tend to lack education (Irelan, and Besner,
1965; Levitan, 1976; Richards, 1965; Robertson, 1968), and to have
high birth rates (Levitan, 1976). However, the respondents in this
sample are not extremely low in their educational levels, or extremely

low in their educational levels, or extremely high in their birth rates.

The area in which this sample was taken may account for the 19 (34.5 percent) respondents who had some college and the 35 (63.6 percent) respondents who had incomes below the poverty threshold level. Corvallis, Oregon, is a university town, and university students may be termed low-income based on earnings per month, even though their educational level may be high.

Eighty-seven percent (48 respondents) of the respondents reported living in Benton County. It is expected that only Benton County residents will obtain items from the Vina Moses Center; therefore, some respondents who were not from Benton County may have answered "Benton County" in order not to jeopardize their chances of obtaining items from the Center. Seven respondents (12.7 percent) reported they were not from Benton County or abstained from answering the question.

Clothing Sources Perceived as Being Available

As a result of the open-ended question, "Where can mothers get clothes for children?", the Vina Moses Center was named by the majority of the respondents (34 or 63.6 percent). This may be due to the fact that the Vina Moses Center was where the respondent was looking for children's clothes at the time of being interviewed. The next most frequent response, Thrift shops, was reported as a possible clothing source by 34 (61.8 percent) of the respondents.

The respondents in this sample seemed to be aware of alternative clothing sources and were not dependent only on the acquisition of new clothing. Some alternatives named by these respondents included the acquisition of used clothing from Thrift shops by 34 (61.8 percent) respondents, Second-hand stores by 21 (38.2 percent) respondents, and Garage or Yard sales by 13 (23.6 percent) respondents. These respondents were also aware that Friends or Relatives (11 or 20 percent), Handed-down clothes (7 or 12.7 percent), Homemade clothing

(3 or 5.4 percent), Exchanging or trading (2 or 3.6 percent), and Churches (1 or 1.8 percent) were possible alternatives to purchasing new clothing.

This awareness of alternative clothing sources may be significant to note among clothing and textile educators. Some thrift shops, secondhand stores etc. do not necessarily check garments for condition; therefore, some clothes obtained from these types of sources may need some mending to make them wearable.

The availability of sources for used clothing is plentiful in Corvallis. There are several thrift shops, secondhand stores, and organizations that give or sell clothing. Garage or yard sales in which clothing is for sale occur fairly regularly also, especially during the times of year when Oregon State University students pack to leave Corvallis. This availability of used clothing may account, in part, for the several respondents naming such sources as Thrift shops, Secondhand stores etc.

One other finding is related to the purchasing of clothing through mail-order catalogues. According to Ryan, most low-income shoppers purchase by mail (Ryan, 1966, p. 166); however, only seven (12.7 percent) of the respondents in this sample named Mail-order as a possible source of clothing.

The question about the perceived clothing sources was an open-ended question. No examples were given by the interviewer and the only probing question used was "are there any other places a mother can get children's clothing?" One disadvantage to obtaining responses to an open-ended question is the inability of all of the respondents to recall all of the children's clothing sources that are available. Also, it is likely that the clothing sources that were named as possible sources for children's clothes were sources that the respondent used as it is easier to remember sources that are used than sources not used. Therefore, this final list of perceived clothing sources might have been different if the respondents had been able to recall all of the known sources.

Clothing Sources Used

Of the clothing sources used by over half of the respondents, three were categorized in New Clothing Sources, six were categorized in Used Clothing Sources, and two were categorized in Other (see Table 9). Two clothing sources were used by over 90 percent of the respondents. They were categorized in Used Clothing Sources. They were: Handed down by 52 (94.4 percent) respondents, and Thrift shops by 51 (92.7 percent) respondents. Therefore, it appears that the women in this sample use alternatives to purchasing new clothes for their children.

When two or more children of the same sex are in a family, clothing may be handed-down from one child to the next. In this sample seven families of two or more children had either all male or female children. No indication was made to determine where the handed-down clothing originated, that is, from within the family or from outside the family. Therefore, handed-down clothing may have been received as used clothes from friends or relatives outside the home whose children had outgrown the clothes as well as from older siblings within the home.

The third clothing source used by 49 respondents was Department stores (89.1 percent). Department stores may be used in the acquisition of clothes for the children when new clothes are used as gifts.

Homemade clothing was a clothing source used by 44 (80 percent) respondents. It might be concluded that 80 percent of the low-income mothers in this sample have sewing machines, have access to one and know how to sew, or have friends or relatives who sew for the children.

Orr (1973, p. 18) and Ryan (1966, p. 166) stated that most low-income shoppers purchase clothing by mail, but, in this study, only 11 (20 percent) respondents reported that they acquired clothing by mail.

The clothing sources used and not used by these respondents may be related to the ages of the children (and this Anglo culture). Based on a comment made by one respondent, it was concluded that new

clothing may more likely be acquired for teenagers than used clothing.
Younger children may be content in wearing used clothing, but the
older children (teenagers, especially) were wanting new clothes.
Peer pressure may have a great deal to do with the teenagers wanting
to have new clothing.

Sources of Information Used and Most Important Source of Information

The purpose in asking this question regarding where information
about children's clothing is obtained was to determine if friends
and relatives were used more often than other sources by these respond-
ents in the acquisition of children's clothing.

Friends or Relatives (83.6 percent) and Newspaper (61.8 percent)
are the most frequent sources of information, used by 46 and 34 re-
spondents respectively in this sample. These two responses were also
considered the most important sources of information by 20 and 17
(36.4 and 30.9 percents) respondents respectively. Therefore, it
appears that perhaps there is a reliance upon friends or relatives
for information about the acquisition of children's clothing, but
whether it is any more than people of other income levels cannot be
deduced from this study. Based on comments the respondents made, the
newspaper was important in locating garage or yard sales.

Nineteen respondents named one or more additional sources of
information. A total of 14 additional sources was named. These
sources may be important to educators as perhaps a variety of sources
should be used when attempting to disseminate information to the low-
income person. Awa (1974) suggested that noninstitutionalized channels
of communication be used in transmitting information to the low-in-
come person. Some examples he gave of noninstitutionalized channels
of communication included: newsletters, bulletins, and leaflets
(p. 9). Some of the additional sources of information used by these
respondents included: flyers from the hospital, public bulletin
boards, garage sales, word of mouth, and churches.

Presence of a Friend or Relative When Shopping

In order to determine if friends or relatives were relied upon in
the acquisition of children's clothes, the respondents were asked if
a friend or relative was usually present when shopping for children's
clothes. When answers from all the respondents are considered, about
half (49.1 percent) reported that someone is usually present when
shopping for children's clothes, and half (50.9 percent) reported they
were not. But when the respondents with incomes below the poverty
threshold level are compared to those with incomes above the poverty
threshold level, more respondents (32.7 percent) with incomes below
the threshold level reported Yes than those with incomes above the
poverty threshold level (14.6 percent). Therefore, it may be con-
cluded that the respondents whose incomes are below the poverty thres-
hold level more frequently have a friend or relative with them when
shopping for children's clothes.

The presence of a friend or relative may be related to a depen-
dence of the respondent upon the friend or relative in the acquisition
of clothing. Richards (1965) and Collazzo (1966) tend to agree that
low-income consumers rely on other individuals for help and advice
when purchasing items. These respondents may have a friend or rel-
ative present for the purpose of helping to decide what to buy,
but these respondents may have friends or relatives present for other
reasons also. A friend or relative may be present in order to help
baby-sit while the respondent shops, or to provide transportation
for the respondent.

In summary, the data on the sources of information used indi-
cated that 83.6 percent of the respondents obtain information about
children's clothing from friends or relatives. The largest percent-
age of the respondents (36.4 percent) also consider friends and
relatives to be their most important source of information. The
date from this last question about the presence of a friend or rel-
ative when shopping indicates that 51.4 percent of the respondents
below the poverty threshold level said Yes, a friend or relative is

is usually present when shopping for children's clothing. Therefore, it is possible that these women in this sample may depend more upon friends or relatives when acquiring clothing for their children than upon their own ability to acquire the clothes by themselves.

Preplanning Practices Used

The objectives of this study included the determination of the extent to which certain preplanning practices were engaged in by women frequenting a free clothing distribution center. Four types of preplanning practices were investigated: 1) analysis of the clothing needs, 2) existence of a budget and determination of the method of payment to be used, 3) consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothing, and 4) determination of where and when to buy clothing.

Analysis of the Clothing Needs

The first type of preplanning practice chosen to be investigated was: Do the respondents analyze their clothing needs? It was measured by sub-question number 1 through 4 on the questionnaire (see Table 14 or Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-question number 1 was: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?" More respondents said they Never, rather than Always carry it out. The largest percentage of respondents said they Sometimes knew what kind of clothes they wanted to get before leaving the house, but this percentage was still less than half of the total number of respondents. The results from this question may be related to the places these respondents shopped for clothes. Thrift shops, Secondhand stores, and Organizations such as the Vina Moses Center do not usually carry large quantities of clothes; therefore, the respondents are limited in what they can plan to obtain.

Sub-question number 2 was: "Do you measure the children so you

get clothes that fit?" Almost one-half (49.1 percent) of the respondents Never carried out this practice. Some of the respondents made comments to the effect that they just know the sizes the children need. Others said they hold the clothes up to the child to decide if they will fit. These respondents may never measure their children for clothing because they know the children's sizes and, especially for the young child, deliberately obtain slightly larger clothes so the child can wear the clothes longer and grow into them.

Sub-question number 3 was: "Do you take the children with you when shopping?" This was carried out Sometimes by 60 percent of the respondents and Always by 34.5 percent. A very small percentage of the respondents (5.4 percent) Never take their children with them when shopping; therefore, most of the respondents in this sample have the opportunity at least some of the time to have their children try on the clothes in order to obtain clothes that fit the children. Having the children with the respondent while shopping reduces the need of having to measure the child; therefore, the responses to sub-question number 2 as previously discussed may be related to the presence of children when shopping. Conversely, children may not be present for the purpose of fitting clothes, rather for the purpose of obtaining clothes the children would like and wear. This may be the case as many thrift shops, garage sales etc. do not have facilities for the trying on of clothes. Such was the case at the free clothing distribution center where these data were collected. The presence of children when shopping may also be related to the lack of a baby sitter. If a baby sitter is not obtainable, the respondent may have only one other alternative, that is, to take the children with her when shopping. These results also do not tend to agree with Orr's findings where she reports that the children are often left home (Orr, 1973, p. 37).

Sub-question number 4 was: "Do you think ahead about the clothes that can be worn with other clothes the children already have?" With an exception of 14.5 percent (8 respondents) who reported Never, the respondents in this sample think about clothes already on hand when they are acquiring additional clothes at least Sometimes. A plan to

coordinate new clothes with others on hand may be attempted by these respondents, but may be limited by resources available as noted in sub-question 1. This indicates that at least 85.5 percent of these respondents consider what clothes are on hand when acquiring additional clothes at least some of the time.

Existence of a Budget and Determination of the Method of Payment

The second type of preplanning practice investigated was: Do the respondents establish a budget or determine what method of payment will be used in the acquisition of clothing? This type of practice was measured by asking three sub-questions, numbered 5, 6, and 7 in the questionnaire (see Table 14 or Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-questions number 5 was: "Do you save money to purchase clothes for the children?" Over half (58.2 percent) of the sample reported they did Sometimes. About the same number reported they Always saved money as those who reported they Never saved money in order to purchase children's clothes. This may indicate that some of these respondents may set aside money when it is available for some children's clothing.

Sub-question number 6 was "Do you know how much money you can spend on clothes before you leave your house?" Over two-thirds (70.9 percent) of the sample Always knew how much money was available for the acquisition of clothes. Therefore, some determination is made, or preplanning carried out as to how much money can be spent for children's clothes. Another possibility is that these respondents plan on going shopping for clothes only when the money is available.

Sub-question number 7 was: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?" Of the respondents in this sample, 80 percent Always determined ahead of time how they would pay for the clothing they bought. Only 5.4 percent Never determined ahead of time how they would pay for the clothes they bought, and the remaining 14.5 percent reported that they Sometimes determined how they would pay for the clothes they bought.

Therefore, it may be concluded that these women usually leave the house knowing exactly how they will pay for the clothes they buy. Orr (1973) and Sukiennik (1972) reported negative attitudes from low-income consumers towards the use of credit. Negative feelings toward the use of credit may have been present among the respondents in this sample; if so, then the high percentage of respondents Always determining ahead of time how they would pay for the clothes they buy may be related to that attitude. If the negative attitude toward the use of credit was present, it might be safe to say that these respondents knew before leaving their houses that they would not use credit as a means of paying for clothes they buy.

Consideration of Alternatives

The third type of preplanning practice investigated in this study was: Do the respondents consider alternatives to purchasing new clothing? This type of practice was measured by asking three sub-questions numbered 8, 9, and 10 in the questionnaire (see Table 14 or Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-question number 8 was: "Do you try to remodel or repair clothes children already have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?" All but one respondent reported she tried to repair or remodel clothes before obtaining new ones, at least some of the time. From this type of response, it can be concluded that repairing or remodeling clothes is perhaps an alternative to acquiring new clothes practiced by these respondents.

Sub-question number 9 was: "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will obtain store-bought clothes or if you will obtain fabric and materials to make the clothes?" Again, only a very few respondents (5 or 9.1 percent) Never decided before leaving their house which they would obtain. Therefore, the majority of the respondents in this sample decide before leaving the house whether they will obtain store-bought clothes or fabric and materials to make the clothes.

Sub-question number 10 was: "Do you consider obtaining clothes from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?" Only six respondents reported that they Never considered obtaining clothes in any other way except from the Center or through purchasing them new. However, less than half reported they Always considered other ways of obtaining clothes. For six of these respondents, the Vina Moses Center is the only place considered when obtaining clothes. This may indicate that these respondents may not be aware of additional inexpensive places from which clothes may be obtained.

Determination of Where and When to Buy

The last type of preplanning practice investigated in this study was: Do the respondents determine where and when to buy clothing? This type of practice was measured by asking sub-questions numbered 11, 12, and 13 (see Table 14 or Appendix A, Q4).

Sub-question number 11 was: "Do you leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?" The largest percentage of respondents (36.4 percent) reported that they Never carried out this practice. This may indicate that some of the acquisition of clothing may be impulse buying, without much preplanning of location. Planned purchases at specific locations, therefore, may not always occur among the respondents in this sample. However, some respondents who do not have transportation of their own may ride with a friend or relative. This dependence on others may limit the stores at which the respondent is able to shop. Furthermore, it is possible that the respondent would not know before leaving the house at what stores looking for clothes would take place or what selection is currently available in which stores. A slightly lower percentage, 34.5 percent, reported they Always know at which store they would go to look for clothes.

Sub-question number 12 was: "Do you look at two or more places before you get the clothes?" Fewer women said Always (32.6 percent) than said Sometimes (43.6 percent). Only 23.6 percent said Never. The results of this question do not necessarily agree with Richards' summary of low-income consumer practices that "most do not...consult

more sources, shop more widely to get the best buys" (Richards, 1965, p. 10).

Sub-question number 13 was: "Do you look for sales?" The response on this question was 78.2 percent reporting that they Always carried out this practice. Only one of these respondents did not watch for clothing sales; therefore, this may indicate that some clothing is obtained at sales by most of these respondents.

In summary, questions on preplanning practices with responses of Always or Sometimes by at least 90 percent of the respondents (or reported as Never carried out by six respondents or less) included:

Number 3: "Do you take the children with you?"

Number 7: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?"

Number 8: "Do you try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?"

Number 9: "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?"

Number 10: "Do you consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?"

Number 13: "Do you look for sales?"

From this investigation, it is these six preplanning practices which are carried out most often by these respondents. There was only one question on the preplanning practices which was answered Never by close to half of the respondents. This was sub-question 2, "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?" Even though most of the respondents did not carry out this practice, it may be affected by number 3, "Do you take the children with you?", as all but 5.4 (percent (3 respondents) reported to Always or Sometimes take the children with them when shopping.

Relationships Between Preplanning Practices Used and Age, Educatonal
Level, Household Size, and Income Level of the Respondents

Relationships between each of the 13 questions on preplanning
practices and age, educational level, household size, and income
level of the respondents, were measured by using Chi-square (see
Table 14). Statistically significant relationships will be discussed
within each of the following four headings.

Preplanning Practices and Age

Four preplanning practices were significantly related to age.
The first practice was that of measuring the children so clothes could
be obtained that would fit. This practice was statistically signifi-
cant at the .05 level. The respondents in the middle age group (25 -
34) most frequently Sometimes or Never carried out this practice.
These respondents either do not know how to measure their children
or simply chose not to. The choice of choosing not to measure may
be very likely as a majority of the respondents in the total sample
took their children with them when shopping. This would make trying
on the clothes possible, and reduce the need of having to measure
a garment.

The practice of saving money to purchase children's clothes was
statistically significant at the .01 level. This relationship was
the most significant of all the relationships investigated. Age
apparently is quite significantly related to whether money is saved
for the purchase of children's clothing or not. The respondents in
the 25 - 34 age group most frequently Sometimes carried out this
practice. The respondents in this age group apparently do not know
how, or do not choose to manage money in such a way that they are
able to reserve some for the acquisition of clothing. It is also
possible that the amount of income one has may determine the amount
of saving one may do for clothing acquisition. It may be possible
that these respondents may not have a steady income. A sporatic

income may influence how much money, if any, can be saved for clothing acquisition.

The practice of deciding before leaving the house whether store-bought clothes or fabric and materials would be obtained, was statistically significant at the .05 level. The respondents in the middle age group (25 - 34) most frequently Always carried out this practice and made the decision before leaving the house. The respondents in this sample may have discovered from experience that they are able to sew or not, which could affect decisions of whether to buy fabric to make clothes or to buy store-bought clothes. The respondents also may have concluded that home-sewn garments are or are not as satisfactory to the family as store-bought ones.

The fourth preplanning practice related to age was that of considering sources other than the Vina Moses Center and purchasing new clothes when acquiring clothing was statistically significant at the .05 level. The respondents in the middle age group most frequently Sometimes carried out this practice. The respondents in this age group apparently are aware of and consider sources other than the Vina Moses Center and buying new clothing. These respondents may take more opportunities to talk with people and learn where others to obtain clothes for their children.

Preplanning Practices and Education

Two preplanning practices were statistically significant with education at the .05 level. The first practice was that of knowing how to pay for the clothes that are bought. Respondents in the 11th to 12th grade and those with some college most frequently Always knew how they would pay for the clothes bought. Education above the 11th to 12th grade may have provided some to these respondents with a broader awareness of alternatives to buying with cash. Education may have exposed the consumer to the responsibilities of the use of credit or bank cards and they may have decided against using these types of payment. In addition, because of their income level, they may not be

able to obtain credit. As education is considered the best insurance against poverty (Levitan, 1976, p. 135), the respondents with more education may have larger incomes which could allow for the use of more cash purchases, as well as the option of using credit cards.

The second significant relationship of a preplanning practice with education was that of leaving the house knowing exactly where to look for clothes. The respondents in the 11th to 12th grade level most frequently Sometimes or Always carried out this practice. Planning where to look for clothes may be based on a knowledge of available resources such as money, time, and transportation.

Preplanning Practices and Household Size

Two preplanning practices were statistically significant with household size at the .05 level. The first practice was that of leaving the house knowing exactly what kind of clothes were wanted. The respondents with household sizes of 2 - 3, and 4 - 5 most frequently Sometimes or Never carried out this practice; however, the respondents with a household size of 6 - 7, 9 most frequently Always or Sometimes carried out this practice. A larger household may mean the respondent has less time to spend away from the house, especially if there are very young children present. Therefore, in order to reduce the time spent in the store, the respondent may leave her house knowing exactly what kind of clothes she plans to obtain. A larger household size may also provide the respondent with more experience in obtaining clothing as more children are present for whom clothes have been obtained in the past.

The second practice significantly related to household size was that of measuring the children in order to get clothes that fit. The respondents with a household size of 4 - 5 most frequently Sometimes carried out this practice. The practice of measuring the children is not always carried out either because these respondents choose not to or because they do not know how to. The respondents may choose not to measure the children because the children are usually

with the respondent when looking for clothes. This allows for the possibility of trying on the clothes to see if they fit.

Preplanning Practices and Income Level

Only one preplanning practice was statistically significant with income at the .05 level. This practice was that of looking at two or more places before obtaining clothing. The respondents with incomes below the poverty threshold level were most widely divided between Always, Sometimes, and Never carrying out this practice, whereas, those respondents with incomes above the poverty threshold level most frequently Sometimes or Always carried out this practice. The respondents with incomes above the poverty threshold level may be able to afford to look for clothes from more sources.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Statement of the Problem

In order to design educational programs for specific groups of people, an assessment of their wants, needs, and desires must occur. This study was designed in an attempt to describe the clothing acquisition practices of women who frequent a free clothing distribution center, and to make recommendations as to whether specific information needs to be made available to low-income clothing consumers.

There is not a complete understanding about the shopping practices of the low-income consumer. The weak channel of communication between low-income consumers and educators only perpetuates the problem of incomplete understanding. The lack of understanding about the low-income consumer hinders the development of programs which could complement their wants, needs, and values.

A person with a small income must take care in its dispersion. Preplanned purchases may become more economical for the low-income person. Clothing is one commodity where preplanning may need to be practiced by the low-income consumer. However, several authors state that most low-income consumers do not preplan their purchases, and the acquisition of clothing occurs only when an article is needed (Orr, 1973, pp. 41-43). Richards says:

> Most [low-income] consumers do not use more deliberation, consult more sources, or shop more widely, to get the best buys. Instead, many depend on known merchants or relatives for judgements of what to buy (Richards, 1965, p. 10).

There is a lack of research about the low-income consumer's clothing
acquisition practices and more specifically, their preplanning prac-
tices used in clothing acquisition. Therefore, four types of pre-
planning practices were chosen to be investigated for this study.
These practices were:

1) analysis of the clothing needs.
2) existence of a budget for clothing, and determination of
   the method of payment to be used.
3) consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothing.
4) determination of where and when to buy clothing.

Also related to the clothing acquisition practices of low in-
come consumers is the lack of research about their preplanning prac-
tices in relation to such demographic factors as: age, educational
level, and household size. The preplanning practices used by low-
income clothing consumers and these demographic factors may be re-
lated but to what extent and nature is not known. Therefore, this
study was designed to investigate the relationships, between the
preplanning of clothing acquisition and age, educational level, house-
hold size, and income level of the mother. This study was also de-
signed to reveal the following insights into related areas of cloth-
ing acquisition by women frequenting a free clothing distribution
center: clothing sources perceived as available, clothing sources
used, and sources of information used.

The literature on the consumer practices of the low-income person
tends to suggest that "good consumership" rules (Richards, 1965) may
not be as important as the maintaining of strong kinship or social
ties. The exchanging of goods and services among friends and rela-
tives may be a more economical way of obtaining clothing for the
low-income consumer than preplanning for its acquisition. This study
was designed, in part, to investigate this type of situation.

Procedure

A questionnaire was designed by the investigator to be used in

interviewing women at a free clothing distribution center. The questionnaire was designed to obtain information about the following areas: clothing sources perceived as available, clothing sources used, sources of information used, preplanning practices used, and respondent's age educational level, place of residence (farm or non-farm), household size, whether the respondent's income was above or below the poverty level, and county of residence.

An open-ended question was designed in order to obtain a list of the clothing sources perceived as available. This question asked: "Where can mothers get clothing for children?" No probing questions or examples were used by the interviewer except to ask, "Are there any other ways a mother can get clothing for children?"

In order to determine what clothing sources were used, a list of possible clothing sources was read to the respondents. Each respondent was then asked to respond Yes or No depending on whether the clothing source was used or not. Predetermined local store names were given as examples when requested.

In order to determine if friends or relatives were relied upon more often than other sources for information about children's clothing four questions were designed and asked of each respondent. The first question in this area asked if the respondent ever obtained information about children's clothing from magazines, pamphlets, newspapers, organizations, or friends or relatives. The second question asked, "Which source do you feel is the most important to you?" The third question asked, "Generally, is a friend or relative present or not when you shop for children's clothing?" And the fourth question in this area was, "About how often do you usually see a friend or relative?" This question was later omitted from analysis. It was not specific in obtaining information about the influence of a friend or relative on the acquisition of clothing for children. The question should have stated, "How often do you see a friend or relative who is a source of information about children's clothing or who is present when you shop?

The fourth question area investigated asked the respondents the frequency with which 13 preplanning practices were carried out.

After hearing each preplanning practice the respondents were asked to answer Always, Sometimes, or Never.

The last part of the questionnaire obtained demographic information on the respondents. Age groups and grade level groups were organized on cards which were given to the respondents to see. This information was then obtained by asking the respondents to report the letter of the group which contained their age and the letter of the group which contained their grade level last completed.

In order to aid in determining whether a respondent's income level was above or below the Poverty Threshold Index as established by the U. S. Census, farm or nonfarm residence needed to be determined. Three questions were designed in order to determine place of residence. The first question asked, "Does the place you live on have 10 or more acres?" If the answer was No a card with household sizes and income level for a Nonfarm resident was given to the respondent. The respondent was then asked, "How many are in your household?" and "Please look at this card and tell me if your 1980 total household income, before taxes, was above or below the figure across from the size of your household. Was your 1980 income above or below this figure?"

If the respondent's residence had 10 or more acres, the next question was asked, "Was any of your income for the past 12 months from the sales of crops, livestock, or other farm products?" If the answer was No then the Nonfarm income card was given to the respondent. The respondent was then asked about household size, and income. Conversely, if the answer was Yes, then this question was asked, "During the past 12 months did the sale of crops, livestock or other farm products amount to more or less than $1,000?" If the response was More, a Farm income card was given to the respondent and was asked about household size and income. If the response was Less, a Nonfarm income card was used and the questions on household size and income were asked.

Question number 9 on the questionnaire asked the respondent, "In what county do you live?" This question was used in the description of the respondents.

One last question was asked of the respondents in order to give them more of an opportunity to express their opinions. This question was, "Is there anything else you would like to say about shopping for children's clothing in Corvallis, or about this questionnaire?"

A pretest of the questionnaire was administered to women in a Salvation Army store in another county. It was also evaluated by a panel of individuals with expertise in clothing merchandising, test development, or with experience in working with low-income persons. The questionnaire was revised and then administered by personal interview to 55 women at a free clothing distribution center in Corvallis, Oregon. Interviews were conducted with women who were looking for children's clothes in either the "school room" or "baby room" at the Vina Moses Center. Only those women with children 18 years of age or younger were interviewed.

Descriptive statistics were used in the analysis of each individual question. Chi-square was used to determine any correlations that may have existed between the preplanning practices used and age, educational level, household size, and income level of the mother.

Results and Conclusions

Age group. The age group of about half of the respondents in this sample was 25 - 34 years. The majority of the respondents were below the age of 45, with 92.6 percent of the respondents in one of the three youngest age groups (under 24, 25 - 34, and 35 - 44).

Educational level. The educational level of the largest group (45.4 percent) of the respondents in this sample was 11th to 12th grade. This is less than the County's average of 13 years.

Place of residence. All 55 respondents were rural nonfarm, or urban residents. This meant that none of the respondents had incomes from the sale of crops, livestock or other farm products over the past 12 months that amounted to $1,000.

Household size. The household size of about half of the

respondents in this sample was four or less persons. The household size reported by the largest group of respondents was three presons.

Number of children. The mothers interviewed represented 126 children 18 years of age or younger. Sixty-two of the children were female and 64 were male. Forty-three or 78.2 percent of the respondents had three or less children 18 years or younger. The respondents who reported having one or two children comprised 60 percent of the sample. The ages of these children ranged from less than one year old to 17 years old.

Income Level. The majority (63.6 percent) of the respondents in this sample had incomes below the poverty threshold level. This is much higher than the County's average of 1.4 percent who are below the threshold level; however, this was expected as the data collection site was a free clothing distribution center for low-income persons in Benton County.

County of residence. Eighty-seven percent of the respondents reported living in Benton County. A high percentage was expected to live in Benton County as the sample site was a free clothing distribution center designed for Benton County residents only.

Clothing sources perceived. As a result of the open-ended question, "Where can mothers get clothes for children?" the Vina Moses Center was named by 63.6 percent of the respondents in this sample. This may be due to the fact that the Vina Moses Center was where the respondents were looking for children's clothes at the time of being interviewed. Over half (61.8 percent) of the respondents also named Thrift shops as possible sources for clothing.

The respondents in this sample seemed to be aware of alternatives to buying clothes which do not involve the acquisition of new clothing. The sources named by at least 20 percent of the respondents which do not involve the acquisition of new clothing included: Thrift shops, Secondhand stores, Garage or yard sales, the Vina Moses Center, and Friends or relatives. Other sources named at least once included: Handed-down clothes, Homemade clothes, Exchanged or traded clothes,

Churches, and Gifts.

According to Ryan, most low-income shoppers purchase by mail (Ryan, 1966, p. 166), but, only 12.7 percent of the respondents in this sample named mail-order as a possible source for clothing.

Clothing Sources Used. A list of clothing sources was read to the respondents. Each respondent reported either Yes of No depending on whether she used the source when obtaining clothes for her children. The responses were categorized into New, Used, and Other Clothing Sources.

Those sources categorized in the New Clothing Sources reported as being used by at least three-fourths of the respondents included: Department stores, Gifts, and Discount stores. Those sources categorized in the Used Clothing Sources reported as being used by at least three-fourths of the respondents included: Handed-down, Thrift shops, Secondhand stores, Rummage Sales, and Garage sales. Those sources categorized in Other Clothing Sources reported as being used by at least three-fourths of the respondents included Homemade and Organizations. It was concluded that these women appear to use alternatives to purchasing new clothing for their children.

Sources of information. Friends or relatives and the newspaper were the most frequent sources of information used by the respondents in this sample. These sources were considered the most important sources of information by the respondents. It was concluded that perhaps there is a reliance upon friends or relatives for information about the acquisition of children's clothing, but whether it is any more than people of other (higher) income levels cannot be deduced from this study.

Presence of friend or relative. More of the respondents with incomes below the poverty threshold level reported that friends or relatives are generally present when they are shopping for children's clothes than did those respondents with incomes above the poverty threshold level.

The data from the sources of information used and the presence of a friend or relative when shopping for children's clothes indicated

that friends or relatives may be depended upon more by these women when acquiring children's clothing than upon their own ability to acquire clothing by themselves.

Preplanning practices. Four types of preplanning practices were investigated: 1) analysis of the clothing needs, 2) existence of a budget and determination of what method of payment would be used, 3) consideration of alternatives to purchasing new clothes, and 4) determination of where and when to buy clothing. Thirteen questions were designed to measure each of these four types of preplanning practices. The respondents were asked to indicate the frequency each of these 13 preplanning practices was carried out as Always, Sometimes, or Never. Six of these practices were reported to be carried out Always or Sometimes by at least 90 percent of the respondents. These included:

Number 3: "Do you take the children with you?"

Number 7: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for the clothes you buy?"

Number 8: "Do you try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?"

Number 9: "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric and materials to make the clothes?"

Number 10: "Do you consider getting clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?"

Number 13: "Do you look for sales?"

Only one preplanning practice was reported by almost half of the respondents as Never carried out. This practice was Number 2, "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?" Even though this practice was not carried out by about half of the respondents it may be affected by Number 3, "Do you take the children with you?" as 94.5 percent reported to Always or Sometimes take the children with them when shopping.

Relationships between practices and demographic data. Chi-square
was used to determine any relationships between each of the 13 pre-
planning practices and age, educational level, household size, and
income level of the respondents.

The preplanning practices with a statistically significant re-
lationship to age were:

Number 2: "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes
that fit?"

Number 5: "Do you save money to purchase clothes for the
children?"

Number 9: "Do you decide before you leave your house if you will
get store-bought clothes or if you will get fabric
and materials to make the clothes?"

Number 10: "Do you consider getting clothes from sources other
than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?"

Respondents in the middle age group (25 - 34) most frequently
Never or Sometimes carried out preplanning practices Numbers 2 and 5.
These respondents in this age group either do not know how to or choose
not to measure their children (#2) and to save money for clothing
aquisition (#5). The same age group most frequently Always and Some-
times carried out preplanning practices Number 9 and 10. The respond-
ents in the middle age group usually decide whether they will obtain
store-bought clothes or fabric before leaving their houses (#9). These
respondents have had experience with sewing and apparently know whether
they will sew or not for the family. Finally, the respondents in this
age group are aware of and usually consider sources other than the
Vina Moses Center when acquiring clothing (#10). These respondents
may talk to others in order to find out additional sources for cloth-
ing.

The two preplanning practices with a statistically significant
relationship to education were:

Number 7: "Do you leave the house knowing exactly how you
are going to pay for the clothes you buy?"

Number 11: "Do you leave your house knowing at what store you
will look for clothes?"

Respondents in the 11th to 12th grade level most frequently Always or Sometimes carried out these two preplanning practices. Education may have provided some of these respondents with a broader awareness of alternative methods of paying for clothes and the increased ability to make decisions about where to shop.

The two preplanning practices with a statistically significant relationship to household size were:

Number 1: "Do you leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to get?"

Number 2: "Do you measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?"

The only preplanning practice with a statistically significant relationship to income was:

Number 12: "Do you look at two or more places before you get the clothes?"

Respondents with incomes below the poverty threshold level were widely divided between Always, Sometimes, and Never carrying out this practice. Those respondents above the poverty threshold level most frequently Sometimes or Always carried out this practice. The search for clothes in this county at two or more places may be futile for some respondents whose incomes are below the poverty threshold level as it might be possible that the Vina Moses Center is the only place where they can afford clothing.

Recommendations

For Use of the Present Study

The ultimate goal of this investigation was to gain insight into the clothing acquisition practices of women who frequent a free clothing distribution center and to provide recommendations as to whether certain information should be made available to low-income clothing consumers. The insights gained, and recommendations made, may prove potentially useful to social service workers and sociologists as they

attempt to work with and help low-income persons, or to educators (of clothing and textiles, or economics) as they develop new educational programs for the low-income mother.

Recommendations were made in five areas relating to whether information should be made available to low-income clothing consumers on: 1) what low-cost clothing sources are available, 2) how to budget for clothing purchases, 3) how to buy and obtain comfortably fitting clothing for children, 4) what alternatives there are to buying clothes, such as how to remodel or repair clothes that are on hand, and 5) how to preplan for clothing acquisition. Suggested recommendations are as follows.

First, information should be made available to low-income clothing consumers regarding the availability of low-cost clothing sources. As a group, these respondents seemed to be aware of several low-cost clothing sources. However, individual women may benefit by having a list of low-cost clothing sources provided for them. Lists may be posted at such places as the Vina Moses Center, thriftshops, and secondhand stores, on public bulletin boards, and in newspapers. Publication of lists may be made available through agencies such as Aid to Families with Dependent Children, hospitals, doctors' offices, and the Cooperative Extension Service.

Second, information should be made available to low-income clothing consumers on how to budget for clothing purchases. Information such as how to save small amounts of money periodically for the aquisition of clothing may be especially helpful for the 20 percent who reported Never saving money. In addition, women may find it helpful to have information on how to save money in order to coincide with clothing sales, and how to make a list of needed clothing so that when money is available, the clothing might be obtained.

Third, information should be made available to low-income clothing consumers on how to buy and obtain comfortably fitting clothes for children. An educational program could be designed for low-income mothers on how to measure their children in case there is ever a time when the acquisition of clothing might occur when the children are not

present. Although this study did not obtain information about the
satisfactions or dissatisfactions these women may have had in finding
comfortably fitting clothes for their children, a program may include
tips on ease allowances, construction techniques, and fabrics to
look for which might help in the selection of comfortable garments.
Additional tips on how to recognize clothing with such built-in growth
features as wide hems and seams, elastic waists or nondefined waists,
raglan sleeves, and adjustable shoulder straps might be useful to
some mothers.

Fourth, information should be made available to low-income cloth-
ing consumers on what alternatives there are to buying clothes, such
as how to remodel or repair clothes that are on hand. Even though as
a group, 56.4 percent of the women Always repaired or remodeled
clothes on hand, individual women may benefit by having some infor-
mation about repairing and remodeling clothing. Tips on how to mend
rips and tears in such a way that the mend would not draw attention
to itself, and tips on how to make-over some garments so a smaller
child might be able to wear them could also be useful to some women.

Fifth, information for low-income clothing consumers on how to
preplan for clothing acquisition may not be useful because of the
possibility that the preplanning practices investigated are based
on values not necessarily held by low-income consumers. The literature
tends to suggest, "good consumership" rules (Richards, 1965) may not
be as important to low-income consumers as maintaining strong social
or kinship ties. The findings from this study also tend to support
this in that most of the respondents obtained clothing information from
a friend or relative, considered them to be their most important source
of information, and about half of the low-income consumers reported
that they usually shopped for clothing with a friend. Educators need
to be aware of this in their preparation of educational programs for
the low-income consumer. Values which are important to the educator
may not be considered important to low-income consumers and vice versa.
An insistance on the educator's part for the low-income consumer to
learn the different values held by the educator is unlikely to produce

any beneficial effects for either party. Therefore, just because
some preplanning practices are not followed by a low-income consumer
of clothing does not necessarily mean that the consumer's method of
clothing acquisition may be improved by learning how to preplan.

Finally, while keeping the previous recommendations in mind,
information should be disseminated to low-income clothing consumers
through a variety of sources. Some of these sources may include:
posted information in places frequented by the low-income person, for
example, the welfare office, medical clinics, Good Will, the Salvation
Army, the Vina Moses Center, and in stores. Fliers may be used in dis-
seminating information to the low-income consumer, and in taking Awa's
(1974) advice, the use of comic strips may also be employed (pp. 8-9).
The fact that the most used and the most important source of information
for these respondents was from friends or relatives also must not be
over looked. If low-income people believe they are benefiting from a
service or type of information they may have received, they will
probably spread the news to friends and relatives. Perhaps information
of all kinds may be transmitted to a low-income audience within a
small geographic area by word of mouth using trained paraprofessionals.
Another possible way of disseminating information about clothing may
be by sharing of ideas and experiences among individuals. It was
observed that approximately 30 minutes before the Vina Moses Center
opens each day a small crowd usually gathers. At that time, infor-
mation may be shared among individuals on how to mend rips and tears,
or how to alter clothing from one child to fit another. Displays with
step-by-step diagrams posted in areas where groups may gather might
help direct the conversations and encourage people to share knowledge
and experiences.

For Improvement of the Study

The questionnaire may be improved with the revision of two of the
questions.

Question Number 3, "About how often do you usually see a friend

or relative?" (see Appendix A) could be strengthened by restating it: "About how often do you see a friend or relative who is a source of information about children's clothing or who is present when you shop?" This would limit the answers to the frequency with which a friend or relative may be consulted about children's clothing. Also, a more specific question like, "When you shop for children's clothes do you make the selection decision on your own or do you ask for advice from a friend or relative about what to get?" might have obtained a more useful answer for the purpose of this study.

Question Number 8 may be strengthened by restating it in such a way that it would eliminate some of the need to explain how the question should be answered to the respondents. As the question is stated now, some respondents would mistakenly give the interviewer the number across from their approximate income. A slight alteration in how the question is stated may help. This alteration may be, "Please look at this card and would you please tell me, was your 1980 total household income, before taxes, above or below the figure across from number ___ (insert the size of the household the respondent just reported)?"

In addition to these changes, the questionnaire may be improved by asking some carefully worded probing questions in connection with the first open-ended question. By asking the respondent, "What kind of 'stores'?", "What kind of 'clothing store'?", "What kind of 'sales'?", and "How or where do you get 'new clothes'?", it may have made it possible to categorize these general responses into more specific categories.

This study could be augumented by investigating further, to determine if birth order is related to the clothing acquisition practices of low-income mothers. An addition of questions that would obtain information about the sources of handed-down clothing (that is from within the family or from without the family), and whether unisex clothes are used in clothing the children in families of both boys and girls might be useful in determining if birth order of the children affects clothing acquisition.

For Further Study

A further study could be designed to investigate differences between populations, for example, a comparison between a low-income population and a higher-income population. A study could be designed to investigate differences in other geographic areas.

This study indicated that friends or relatives were the most used and considered the most important source of information used by the majority of the respondents in this sample. Further study may be designed to investigate more thoroughly the sources of information used by low-income individuals, what types of information are received from these sources, and what types of information are not received from these sources but are perceived as needed by low-income individuals.

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

The Questionnaire

INTRODUCTION

Hello, my name is Carol Klein. I am a student at Oregon State University. I'm working on a project about children's clothing. Do you have time and would be willing to help me by answering a few questions?

You were selected randomly from the people here at the Vina Moses Center today.

There are no right or wrong answers and no one will be able to identify you by the answers you give to me.

The information will be reported in summary form by combining it with information from other people.

I will need to ask you a few questions about yourself, but the main thing I am interested in is where and how you get children's clothes.

Participation is voluntary, and if, after we have started, you decide you do not want to finish, please tell me and we can stop.

The information people give to me about where and how they get children's clothing will be used to help mothers obtain clothes for their children.

Do you have any questions?

(Beginning the second day of interviewing ask:)

If you have been interviewed before for this study, you do not need to answer these questions again. Have you been interviewed before for this study?

Yes _____(Terminate interview. Thank you for your help).

No _____(Continue with interview.)

Because I am interested in finding out about children's clothing, the study is limited to women who have children at home. Do you have at least one child living with you who is 18 or younger or not?

Yes _____(Continue with interview)

No _____(Terminate interview. I'm sorry I need to interview women who have children at home who are 18 or younger. Thank you.)

How many children, 18 or younger, are in your household? _____

How many boys? _____ What are their ages?_____

How many girls?_____ What are their ages?_____

Q1. Where do you think mothers can get clothing for their children?

Q2. I have here a list of some sources where a mother might be able to get children's clothing. As I read each source to you would you please tell me whether or not you have ever obtained clothing from any of these sources for the children living with you who are 18 or younger.

(Interviewer, check (√) response under either Yes or No. Give only the examples in parentheses if examples are requested.)

	Yes (2)	No (1)
Gifts (new clothes only)		
Handed-down		
Homemade		
Mail-order (Sears, Wards)		
Rummage sales		
Garage sales		
Thrift shops (OSU Thrift shop)		
Discount stores (Bi-Mart, K-Mart)		
Secondhand stores (Other Mothers)		
Drug stores (Rice's, Payless, Williams)		
Variety stores (McGregor's)		
Department stores (J. C. Penney, Fred Meyer)		
Supermarkets (Safeway)		

	Yes (2)	No (1)
Borrowed		
Specialty (Kid Shop, The Blade, The Trend)		
Rented		
Exchanged		
Supplied by Employer		
Flea Market (Philomath Flea Market)		
Organization (Vina Moses, churches, Assistance League)		
Bonus		
Pay		
Purchase with stamps		
Prize		
Other		

Q3. I have a list of where people can get information about children's clothing. When you have a question about children's clothing, do you get help from any of these. . . ?

(Interviewer, check (√) response under either Yes or No.)

	YES (1)	NO (2)	MOST IMPORT.			YES (1)	NO (2)	MOST IMPORT.	
Newspapers	___	___	_____	(1)	Organizations	___	___	_____	(4)
Magazines	___	___	_____	(2)	Pamphlets	___	___	_____	(5)
Friends or Relatives	___	___	_____	(3)	Other (specify)	___	___	_____	(6)

Which source do you feel is the most important to you? (Check (√) appropriate source above under MOST IMPORT.)

Generally, is a friend or relative present or not when you shop for children's clothing?

Yes ____

No ____

About how often do you usually see a friend or relative?_____

Q4. Now I'd like to ask you a few questions about how you shop for children's clothes. As I read the following list, would you please tell me whether you do each of these things Always, Sometimes, or Never.

(Interviewer, check (✓) response under Always, Sometimes, or Never.)

Do you Always, Sometimes, or Never . . .

	Always (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)
1. leave your house knowing exactly what kind of clothes you want to obtain?	___	___	___ 1
2. measure the children so you can get clothes that fit?	___	___	___ 2
3. take the children with you?	___	___	___ 3
4. think ahead about clothes that can be worn with other clothes the children already have?	___	___	___ 4
5. save money to purchase clothes for the children?	___	___	___ 5
6. know how much money you can spend on clothes before you leave your house?	___	___	___ 6
7. leave your house knowing exactly how you are going to pay for any clothes you buy?	___	___	___ 7
8. try to repair or remodel clothes children have so they will be wearable before you go out to buy the same kind of clothes?	___	___	___ 8
9. decide before you leave your house if you will obtain store-bought clothes or if you will obtain fabric and materials to make the clothes?	___	___	___ 9
10. consider obtaining clothing from sources other than from the Vina Moses Center or buying them new?	___	___	___ 10
11. leave your house knowing at what store you will look for clothes?	___	___	___ 11

Q4 Continued. . . .

	Always (3)	Sometimes (2)	Never (1)	
12. look at two or more places before you get the clothes?	____	_____	____	12
13. look for sales?	____	_____	____	13

I would like to know a little about you so I can group the women I interview and describe the group. Then I can study how and where they get clothing with other women like themselves.

Q5. Please look at this card:

```
What is your age?
A.   under 24         D. between 45 and 54
B.   between 25 and 34 E. between 55 and 64
C.   between 35 and 44 F. over 64
```

Would you please tell me the letter of the group in which your age falls?

A. (1) _____   D. (4) _____

B. (2) _____   E. (5) _____

C. (3) _____   F. (6) _____

Q6. Please look at this card:

```
What grade level did you last complete?
G.   4th grade or less   J. 11th to 12th grade
H.   5th to 8th grade     K. college and more
I.   9th to 10th grade    L. do not remember
```

Would you please tell me the letter of the group in which the grade level you last completed falls?

G. (1) _____   J. (4) _____

H. (2) _____   K. (5) _____

I. (3) _____   L. (0) _____

Q7. I want to be able to group the women I interview according to where they live and how much money they have to spend. Does the place you live have 10 or more acres?

Yes _____ (ask next question)

No _____ (give NONFARM income card, ask Q8)

    Was any of your income for the past 12 months from the sales of crops, livestock or other farm products?

Yes _____ (ask next question)

No _____ (give NONFARM income card, ask Q8)

    During the past 12 months did the sales of crops, livestock or other farm products amount to more or less than $1,000?

More _____ (give FARM income card, ask Q8)
Less _____ (give NONFARM income card, ask Q8)

Q8. How many are in your household? _____
Please look at this card:

SAMPLES ON FOLLOWING PAGE

NONFARM		FARM	
Number of people in your household:	Was your total income more or less than . . .	Number of people in your household:	Was your total income more or less than . . . .
1	$3,790	1	$3,250
2	5,010	2	4,280
3	6,230	3	5,310
4	7,450	4	6,340
5	8,670	5	7,370
6	9,890	6	8,400
7	11,110	7	9,430
8	12,330	8	10,460
9	15,550	9	11,490
10	16,770	10	12,520
11	17,990	11	13,550
12	19,210	12	14,580

Would you please tell me was your 1980 total household income, before taxes, Above or Below the figure across from the size of your household?

Above ____
Below ____

Q9. In what county do you live?_____

Q10. Is there any thing else you would like to say about shopping for children's clothing in Corvallis, or about this questionnaire?

This completes my questions. Do you have any questions? Thank you for your help.

APPENDIX B

Responses to the open-ended question about clothing sources perceived
as available

Type of store or source	Specific response	Number of times response was named	Total
Department store	Fred Meyer	14	
	J. C. Penney	13	
			27
Discount store	K-Mart	16	
	discount store - nonspecific	2	
	Bi-Mart	1	
			19
Mail-order	Sears, Roebuck & Company	5	
	Montgomery Wards	2	
			7
Drug store	Payless Drug Store	4	
			4
Specialty store	Kid Shop	2	
			2
Variety store	variety store - nonspecific	1	
			1
Thrift shop	thrift shop - nonspecific	17	
	Good Will	8	
	Salvation Army	4	
	Veteran's Thrift Shop, Albany	3	
	OSU Thrift Shop	2	
			34
Secondhand store	Other Mothers	12	
	secondhand store - nonspecific	7	
	Philomath Secondhand Store	1	
	Sugar, Spice and Puppydogtails	1	
			21

Type of store or source	Specific response	Number of times response was named	Total
Garage or yard sales	garage or yard sales	13	13
Vina Moses Center	Vina Moses Center	35	35
Friends or Relatives	friends or relatives	11	11
Handed-down	handed-down	7	7
Homemade	material not specified	2	
	old material	1	3
Exchange or Trade	exchange or trade	2	2
Churches	churches	1	1
Gifts	gifts	1	1
Miscellaneous	stores - nonspecific	15	
	clothing stores	3	
	sales - no store specified	3	
	new clothes - no store specified	1	22

APPENDIX C

<u>Responses to open-ended question about shopping for children's clothing
or the questionnaire</u>

<u>How the respondent shops</u>

Buy clothes three to six months larger.

Do not look for brand names. Others are just as good, not as expensive.

The children grow out of clothes so fast there is no use in buying new clothes.

Watch paper and try to find best deals you can; no sense in paying $8.00 for a pair of pants when you can get them cheaper elsewhere.

Look at yard sales, you can find nice things, even better than here, for 10 to 15 cents.

Look for garage sales.

Try to get slightly larger clothes. Look for sales.

Get clothes on sale and big enough, "Make sure they (the children) can grow into them and not out of them!"

Buying things slightly too large is helpful.

I use lay-away often, it's the only way to get new clothes. I get pants that both the two younger children can wear. (The youngest – one boy and one girl).

Make sure clothing fits. New clothing is sometimes ripped or torn, so check them carefully.

Buy durable clothes, not just cute clothes.

<u>Expensive clothing</u>

One cannot afford children's clothes. They get higher and higher.

Clothes are too high priced.

Clothes are too expensive in stores.

Clothes are too, too expensive.

Wish children's clothes were cheaper.

It's a crime to have to pay the price for clothes, they're not worth what they are charging considering quality.

If you've got the money, you can buy new clothes. It costs a lot to raise a kid.

Everything is too expensive, even food. It's "hard to support a kid".

Wish I could find a place to buy cheaper clothes.

The price is nice to know.

The Vina Moses Center

I always bring the kid here (Vina Moses Center) to get clothes.

Volunteer organizations pocket good stuff and leave the patched jeans for us. The volunteers act as if it's (items at the Vina Moses Center) coming out of their pockets. People like me bring things in (to the Center).

It's great to have places like this so you can (save money in order to) get new stuff.

For the low-income or single mother these are the only places she can shop (Vina Moses Center, and thrift shops).

Too bad there's not more places like this (Vina Moses Center). My neighbor told me about Vina Moses (Center).

Since these places (Vina Moses Center, thrift shops, etc.) are here, use them; they save money, they work, they help.

Problems and satisfactions in shopping in Corvallis

Corvallis has good organizations for getting children's clothes.

Volunteer organization pocket good stuff and leave the patched jeans for us.

I wish there was a K-Mart here. Corvallis caters more to college kids. We need more of a choice of places to shop.

It is very difficult to shop for children's clothes.

Handed-down clothing

I have not bought many clothes because I have many handed downs.

The younger girl sometimes wears older brother's clothes. I try to put something girlish on her then.

The youngest girl gets the oldest girl's clothes.

Miscellaneous comments

The baby has lots of clothes now.

Permanent press is great. Boys seem to be harder to clothe now than girls. The boys seem to be more clothes conscious now.

It's smart to sew.