

SPECIFIED SHOPPING PRACTICES FOR DRESSES WORN WHILE WORKING  
AT HOME AS STATED BY A SELECTED GROUP OF WOMEN SIXTY-FIVE AND OVER  
IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

by

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## CHAPTER I

### THE PROBLEM

Knowledge and understanding of clothing practices of older people is needed, but only recently have studies been concerned with clothing requirements, preference and practices of people age sixty-five and over. Anspach found that such research first focused on the elderly woman in the post World War II era, 1946-1958 (10). Data from a 1952 survey conducted in California indicated that clothing was the second most frequent unmet need for persons beyond retirement age (6). Studies have shown that the older woman has an interest in the style and design of her clothing (11, 13, 14, 15, 18). It has seemed reasonable, therefore, to assume that the older woman has an interest in her personal appearance and that an all around pleasing appearance aids her general well being.

Statement of the Problem. The present exploratory study investigated by means of personal interviews, specified shopping practices concerning the dresses worn by a selected group of women sixty-five years of age and older living in Kansas City, Missouri, while they worked at home. Specific objectives of the study were:

- (1) To determine how women age sixty-five and over acquire dresses worn while working at home.
- (2) To determine where women age sixty-five and over shop for dresses worn while working at home.
- (3) To determine with whom age sixty-five and over shop for dresses while working at home.

- (4) To determine the cost of dresses worn by women age sixty-five and over while working at home.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Attitudes toward the aged are changing. This period of life is no longer considered a static period when the elderly person is relegated to the rocking chair to wait out the rest of his days. It is now considered a period of active participation in life (7).

Retailers have reportedly considered the older population difficult to identify because people do not want to be considered "old folks," they often have little money to spare for stylish clothing, and they do not care for style anyway (12). According to Dodge (11), retailers believe that older people have too little disposable income or savings to warrant special consideration. Only ten per cent of the merchants in Dodge's study (11) directed appeals to the older population. The Department of Agriculture Clothing Inventory studies published in 1956 (9), showed that while women over age sixty-five had fewer garments than did younger women, this decline in amount of clothing was only partly explained by a drop in income. As older persons are less active socially and physically, their clothing lasts longer than it did in the past.

One of the fastest growing segments of the population in the United States today is that made up of persons over sixty-five years of age. In 1830, only 2.6 per cent of the total white population was over sixty-five. By 1850, this percentage had increased to 8.1 per cent. Between 1900 and 1950, the number of persons sixty-five and older

increased nearly 300 per cent (8). It has been anticipated that by 1975, one-tenth of the population in the United States will be in this age group (3). This increase in the older population can be attributed in large measure to greater life expectancy and immigration. Since the beginning of the nineteenth century, both the birth and death rates have declined. The death rate has declined considerably more than the birth rate, thus increasing both the age and size of the population (2). Immigration also contributed to an aging population. Between 1875 and 1925, twenty-seven million people immigrated to the United States. Most of these people were young adults. Since 1925, the number of immigrants has been greatly reduced. As the first immigrants grew older, few young people immigrated to replace them, thus contributing to the increase in the proportion of the older population.

A study of the shopping habits of 196 women and 91 men age sixty-five and older made by Dodge in Portland, Oregon in 1957 (11), revealed that the majority of those participating in the study did not care to travel far to do their shopping. For the most part, participants in the study were dependent on public transportation to reach the shopping area. They shopped most frequently in department stores in central shopping districts because of the assortment of merchandise, price, quality, availability, convenience and habit. Approximately two-thirds of the respondents in Dodge's sample did not purchase merchandise on sale as they felt the sales merchandise was often inferior in quality. Neither did respondents like to shop by phone because they wanted to see what they were buying. The price paid for a housedress was usually about



four dollars. Respondents also reported wearing older "good dresses" as housedresses. Over fifty per cent of the women in this sample preferred to shop alone. The reason given for this practice was to minimize the influence of other persons on their purchases.

Another study conducted in Oregon was that of Burnette (15). This 1964 study made in Portland, Corvallis and Eugene, Oregon involved ninety-five women who were sixty years of age and older. For purposes of analysis, Burnette divided her group into older and younger age groups; low, middle and high income groups; and low, middle and high education groups. The younger age group included the segment of the sample sixty through sixty-nine years of age and the older group was the segment of the sample age seventy and over. These respondents were reluctant to say where they purchased housedresses. They believed housedresses were a thing of the past and they did not purchase dresses as such. Instead they purchased dresses that could be worn for many occasions and worn around the house when they were old. Although a majority of women in Burnette's study shopped in a department store, those under age seventy, those with middle and high incomes, and those with more education made some purchases in specialty shops. The majority of the women in the study shopped in the downtown area rather than the shopping centers. They also preferred to shop in their hometowns rather than another city or by mail. Almost seventy per cent of the women preferred to shop alone. Those who shopped with someone else usually shopped with a friend.

Dorsey's 1960 study in Stillwater, Oklahoma (16) found that most of the forty ladies interviewed thought the selection of half-size

dressess in Stillwater was average when compared to the selection of half-size dresses in other cities of comparable size. Most respondents in her study shopped locally for half-size dresses and indicated that they would buy more half-size dresses in Stillwater if more were available.

In a study, conducted in East Lansing, Michigan, in 1960 with 148 women fifty-five years of age and older, Shipley (18) found that those under age seventy and in the high income group shopped often for clothing. Most of the women in her study favored the department store for shopping, although some of those over age seventy and some of those in the high income group shopped at specialty shops.

Bartley's 1961 investigation in Manhattan, Kansas (14) indicated that 85 per cent of the forty-seven respondents interviewed who were sixty years of age and older, wore dresses while doing housework. Almost half of the sample (47 per cent) made some of their outer clothing. Sixty-four per cent of the group that sewed, made dresses to wear while doing housework. The most significant reason these women gave for home sewing was enjoyment. Bartley (14) also found that while most of the women shopped locally before buying a garment, a significantly larger number of women purchased clothing items elsewhere. The reasons given for these buying practices were that clothing was purchased while on visits to homes of relatives and/or they were unable to find what they wanted in Manhattan.

In Iowa City in 1963, Bader (13) found that someone else shopped for 25 per cent of the sixty women, sixty-five years and older in her

sample. The person who usually did the shopping was a daughter or daughter-in-law. According to Bader, this practice may have been one way of providing financial assistance for the relative. Sometimes an older woman was unable to do her own shopping and needed someone to do it for her. In other instances, it was something the other members of the family liked to do for a relative. While 60 per cent of the group said they liked the advice of others when shopping, they preferred the advice of a family member or a friend to that of a salesclerk. Almost all older women said that it was more important that they themselves like the garment.

Rankin's investigation conducted in Manhattan, Kansas in 1966 (17) found that 80 per cent of the thirty women sixty years of age or older interviewed, shopped alone while 20 per cent shopped with someone. Of those who shopped with someone, many considered their own opinion of a garment more important than that of their shopping companion. The opinion of others was asked merely as a courtesy. These women preferred the advice of a husband, daughter or of a friend to that of a salesclerk. Eighty per cent of the women interviewed by Rankin preferred housedresses for home wear. Three of the women made dresses worn at home, but they said they would buy such dresses ready-made if they could find them. Most of the women Rankin interviewed were no longer interested in sewing. One third of the women in her sample shopped in an out-of-town department store because of favorable prices and the convenience of shopping in one location. However, a number of these women did indicate that they would shop at specialty shops if they could find suitable

merchandise. Many shopped in both department stores and specialty shops. Few purchased dresses by mail order, although nearly one-third of the women interviewed did order by mail items advertised for sale in the newspaper.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

Data for this exploratory study of selected shopping practices for dresses worn by women age sixty-five and over while working at home were obtained by personal interviews. This method was used because:

- (1) Better responses were anticipated from interviews as older people often have problems with their sight and writing that make completion of a questionnaire difficult.
- (2) Respondents reactions and attitudes could be noted, recorded and questions pursued with more ease.
- (3) Explanation of unfamiliar terms could be done more easily in an interview than by other means of data collection (4).

A preliminary interview schedule developed by the investigator, was pretested in Manhattan, Kansas with five women over age sixty-five. After pretesting, refinements in the instrument were made and the revised interview schedule which required approximately thirty minutes to administer, was used to collect data from the women in Kansas City, Missouri. (See Appendix for a copy of the revised interview schedule.)

The names and addresses of women aged sixty-five and over were obtained from the rolls of a Church of the Brethren, a Methodist Church and a Salvation Army Corps, located in the East-Northeast section of Kansas City, Missouri. These women were then contacted by telephone. After agreeing to participate in the investigation, a date and time was set for the interview. Interviews were scheduled within one or two days

of the telephone contact. All respondents were able to keep the original appointment which eliminated the need for follow-up telephone calls and rescheduled interviews. Findings reported were based upon data obtained from fifty women who met the requirements for the study. The women were interviewed in Kansas City, Missouri during the winter of 1966-1967.

Data were analyzed descriptively, then compared to findings of studies cited in the review of literature.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE FINDINGS

Description of the Respondents. Fifty women who wore dresses while working at home were interviewed. The women were divided into three groups for the data analysis. Group I consisted of twenty-three women from a Church of the Brethren; Group II, nine women from a Salvation Army Corps; and Group III, eighteen women from a Methodist Church. The women interviewed ranged in age from sixty-five to ninety. The mean age in years of those interviewed was 71.3 with a mode and median of 70. The number and percentage distribution of respondents by age group is shown in Table I.

TABLE I  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING  
TO AGE OF FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Age	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
65 through 74 .....	16	7	13*	36	72
75 through 84 .....	6	-	5	11	22
85 and over .....	1	2	-	3	6

Twenty-six women in the sample were widows; twelve were married; eleven were single and two were divorced. The number and percentage distribution for the marital status of respondents is given in Table II.

TABLE II  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING  
TO MARITAL STATUS OF FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Marital Status	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
Widow .....	12	7	7	26	52
Married .....	9	1	1	11	22
Single .....	1	-	10	11	22
Divorced .....	1	1	-	2	4

The educational level of the respondents ranged from the third grade through a Master's degree. The mean level of education in years was 10.4 with a mode and median of 12. One respondent who had not attended high school had attended business school. Four respondents had educational training beyond high school other than formal college training. One had attended normal school, two had completed nurse's training and one had completed business school. The number and percentage distribution of educational attainment of the respondents is given in Table III.

The educational attainment of the respondents' husbands ranged from third grade through college graduation. The mean educational level was 9.7 with a mode of 12 years and a median of 10 years. Three husbands had attended trade schools but not high school or college. One husband had been educated in Switzerland. The number and percentage



distribution for the educational attainment of the respondents' husbands is presented in Table IV.

TABLE III  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO  
EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Educational Attainment	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
Grade school or less ...	10	5	2	17	34
Some high school .....	3	2	1	6	12
High school or beyond ..	10	1	15	26	52
No response .....	-	1	-	1	2

TABLE IV  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO EDUCATIONAL  
ATTAINMENT OF HUSBANDS OF THIRTY-NINE RESPONDENTS

Educational Attainment	Number of Husbands				Per cent Of Total Husbands
	Group I N=22	Group II N=9	Group III N=8	Total Husbands N=39	
Grade school or less .....	7	3	4	14	36
Some high school .....	3	1	-	4	10
High school or beyond .....	10	2	4	16	41
Other <sup>a</sup> .....	-	1	-	1	3
No answer .....	2	2	-	4	10

<sup>a</sup> Educated in Switzerland

Thirty respondents were retired; ten had never been employed; seven were employed part-time and three were employed full-time. The number and percentage distribution of respondents' employment is presented in Table V.

TABLE V  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING  
TO EMPLOYMENT STATUS OF FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Employment Status	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
Employed full-time ..	3	-	-	3	6
Employed part-time ..	4	2	1	7	14
Retired .....	7	7	16	30	60
Never employed .....	9	1	1	10	20

Six husbands were retired; five husbands were employed full-time while one was employed part-time. The number and percentage distribution of the husbands' employment is given in Table VI.

Occupations reported by respondents were twelve, salesclerk; ten, teacher; six, office worker; five, factory worker; four, housework; two each, registered nurse, and two, school cafeteria employee; one each missionary, operator of a rooming house, and manager of a paper route. The number and percentage distribution of the occupations of the respondents are classified in Table VII.

TABLE VI  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO EMPLOYMENT  
STATUS OF HUSBANDS OF ELEVEN RESPONDENTS

Employment Status	Number of Husbands				Per cent Of Total Husbands
	Group I N=9	Group II N=1	Group III N=1	Total Husbands N=11	
Retired .....	4	1	1	6	55
Employed full-time .....	4	-	-	4	36
Employed part-time .....	1	-	-	1	9

Occupations reported for the respondents' husbands were; five, farmer; four each carpenter, painter and mechanic; three, railroadman; two each electrical work, meat packing company and teacher. Two husbands held a variety of jobs. One respondent each listed her husband's occupation as minister, carpet layer, fireman, and shop clerk at a utility company, owner of a cleaning shop, owner of a grocery store, Railway Express Company employee; welder and special officer. One husband had an egg route and one had a paper route. The number and percentage distribution of the husbands' employment status by present and former occupation is classified in Table VIII.

The number of social, church and civic organizations attended by thirty-nine respondents ranged in number from zero through five. Thirty-two women attended at least one religious meeting; twenty-four attended one or more social clubs; and eight respondents attended one or more civic and professional clubs. Twelve respondents attended no

TABLE VII  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING  
TO OCCUPATION OF FORTY RESPONDENTS

Occupation	Number of Respondents						Total <sup>a</sup> Respondents N=40	Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Presently Employed			Retired				
	Group I N=7	Group II N=2	Group III N=1	Group I N=7	Group II N=7	Group III N=16		
Salesclerk .....	2	-	1	6	1	2	12	30
Teacher .....	-	-	-	-	-	10	10	25
Office worker .....	2	-	-	-	1	2	5	13
Factory worker .....	-	-	-	2	3	-	5	13
Housework .....	-	1	-	-	2	-	3	10
Registered nurse .....	1	-	-	-	-	1	2	4
School cafeteria employee ..	1	-	-	-	1	-	2	4
Operator of rooming house ..	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	2
Missionary .....	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	2
Paper route .....	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Telephone operator .....	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2

<sup>a</sup> Some respondents gave more than one occupation

TABLE VIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PRESENT AND FORMER OCCUPATION  
OF HUSBAND AS REPORTED BY THIRTY-SIX RESPONDENTS

	Number of Husbands										Total <sup>a</sup> Husbands N=36	Per cent Of Total Husbands
	Present Employee			Retired			Deceased					
	Group I N=5	Group II N=0	Group III N=0	Group I N=4	Group II N=1	Group III N=1	Group I N=11	Group II N=7	Group III N=7			
Farmer .....	-	-	-	1	1	-	3	1	-	-	6	16
Carpenter .....	-	-	-	2	-	-	1	1	-	-	4	13
Painter .....	1	-	-	1	-	-	1	-	1	1	4	13
Mechanic .....	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	4	13
Railroadman .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	1	3	10
Electrical work .....	1	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Armour Packing Co. ....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	1	2	6
Variety .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	-	2	2	6
Teacher .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	6
Car salesman .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Fireman and Shop clerk at Utility Co. ....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Minister .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Owner of cleaning shop	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Owner of grocery store	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Railway Express Co. ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Paper route .....	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Egg route .....	1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Special officer .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3
Welder .....	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	3

<sup>a</sup> Some listed more than one occupation

organizational functions. The mean number of organizations attended was 1.6 with a mode and median of one. Church women's groups, church class meeting, Mercy League, and interdenominational church work were the reported religious functions. The clubs listed under social clubs were a retired teachers club, card club, school functions, teacher's sorority, Athenians, mother's club, people to people volunteer work, FBX Club, study club and Sunshine club. Classified as civic organizations were a Business and Professional Women's club, women's civic club, and Daughters of the American Revolution. The number and percentage distribution for attendance at functions of religious, social and civic organizations is presented in Table IX.

TABLE IX

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO RELIGIOUS, SOCIAL AND CIVIC ORGANIZATIONS ATTENDED BY FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Type of Organization	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
Religious .....	15	4	13	32	62
Social .....	2	2	20	24	47
Civic .....	-	-	8	8	15
Attend no religious, social or civic function	7	4	1	12	31

Respondents had lived in Kansas City from one and a half to eighty-nine years. The mean residence in Kansas City, Missouri in years

was 41.8; the mode was fifty years; and the median was forty-five years. The number and percentage distribution for length of residence in Kansas City, Missouri is given in Table X.

TABLE X

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO LENGTH OF RESIDENCE  
IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI AS REPORTED BY FIFTY RESPONDENTS

Length of Residence in Years	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=23	Group II N=9	Group III N=18	Total Respondents N=50	
0 through 9 .....	2	1	-	3	6
10 through 19 .....	2	-	2	4	8
20 through 29 .....	5	2	-	7	14
30 through 39 .....	2	1	-	3	6
40 through 49 .....	5	1	7	13	26
50 through 59 .....	4	2	7	13	26
60 through 69 .....	2	2	1	5	10
70 through 79 .....	-	-	1	1	2
80 through 89 .....	1	-	-	1	2

Shopping Practices. The first question in the interview schedule asked if respondents wore a dress while working at home (see Appendix). Of the fifty-one women with whom interviews had originally been scheduled, fifty wore dresses while working at home. Four respondents, who are now retired, said they sometimes wore slacks for outside work. One of these respondents had been an office worker and three had been teachers. The ages of the women who sometimes wore slacks ranged in age from sixty-seven to seventy. Three of these respondents were single and one was a widow. Their educational level ranged from high school graduation through a Master's degree with a mean educational level of fifteen

years. The number of church, civic and social organizations which these respondents attended ranged from one to five with a mean of 2.7. Two made the dresses they wore while working at home and two bought them ready-made at regular price. The one woman who did not wear a dress while working at home usually wore a housecoat for this type of activity.

Forty-seven women of the fifty women for whom data was reported, said they usually purchased the dresses they wore while working at home for this purpose. The other three respondents reported that they usually wore older "good" dresses while working at home. These respondents ranged in age from sixty-five to seventy-six with a mean age of seventy-two. Two of the respondents were widows and one was married. One, now retired, had been a teacher. One had never been employed and one was now employed part-time as a clerk. The educational attainment of these respondents ranged from a high school sophomore through a college graduate. The number of social, church and civic organizations attended ranged from zero to three with a mean of 1.3.

Acquisition of Dresses. When questioned about acquisition of dresses worn while working at home, twenty-three respondents said they purchased such dresses ready-made at regular price. Sixteen respondents made such dresses at home while eight purchased them ready-made on sale and eight received them ready-made as gifts.

Seven women acquired the dresses they wore at home by more than one method. Of these respondents, two purchased some of their dresses ready-made on sale and purchased others ready-made at regular price; two purchased some of their dresses ready-made at regular price and made



some at home; one woman purchased some dresses ready-made on sale and made some at home; one purchased some dresses ready-made on sale and received some ready-made as gifts; and one purchased some dresses ready-made at regular price, made some at home and received some ready-made as gifts. The number and percentage distribution of methods used to acquire dresses worn while working at home is shown in Table XI.

TABLE XI

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF METHOD USED TO ACQUIRE DRESSES WORN WHILE WORKING AT HOME AS REPORTED BY FORTY-SEVEN RESPONDENTS

Method Used	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=22	Group II N=9	Group III N=16	Total Respondents N=47	
Purchased ready-made at regular price ...	6	2	10	18	38
Made at home .....	4	3	5	12	26
Received ready-made as gifts .....	3	3	1	7	15
Purchased ready-made on sale .....	4	-	-	4	9
Purchased ready-made and made at home ...	3	1	-	4	9
Purchased ready-made on sale and at regular price .....	2	-	-	2	4
Purchased ready-made on sale and received ready-made as gifts	1	-	-	1	2

Eight respondents received all or some of the dresses worn while working at home as a ready-made gift. Of these respondents; six were widows; one was divorced; and one was married. These respondents ranged in age from sixty-six to eighty-five years with a mean age of

seventy-four. Four respondents were retired, one was employed part-time; and three had never been employed. Of the respondents who were or who had been employed, two said they did housework and three said that they were salesclerks. Their educational attainment ranged from six years through two years of high school, their educational level was eight years. The number of social, civic and religious organizations attended by these respondents ranged from zero through four with a mean of 1.2 organizations.

Twenty-nine respondents purchased all or part of their dresses ready-made. Some of these dresses were purchased at regular price while others were purchased on sale. The ages of these respondents ranged from sixty-five to eighty-nine with a mean age of seventy-one. Twelve were widows, nine were single, seven were married and one was divorced. Seventeen were now retired, six had never been employed, four were now employed part-time and two were employed full-time. The occupations listed were teacher, salesclerk, office worker, factory worker, registered nurse, paper route and operator of a rooming house. The educational attainment of these respondents ranged from the third grade through a Master's degree with a mean educational attainment of eleven years. The number of civic, religious and social organizations attended ranged from zero through five with a mean of 2.1.

Merchandising Outlets. The preferred merchandising outlet for purchasing ready-made dresses as indicated by twenty-seven of twenty-nine women who bought their dresses ready-made was a department store. The least shopped merchandising outlets were: mail order catalogs,

specialty shops, variety stores, and discount stores. Only one woman shopped often at more than one type of merchandising outlet, while fourteen respondents sometimes shopped at more than one type of outlet. The number and percentage distribution of frequency of shopping at these outlets are given in Table XII. The reasons cited for shopping often at a department store were: better selection, habit, convenience and charge account. The reasons given for never shopping from a mail order catalog or in a specialty shop, variety store or discount store were: inconvenience and selection. In addition, respondents indicated that they did not like to shop by mail because they could not see the merchandise before buying. The number and percentage distribution of reasons given for frequency of shopping at listed outlets are shown in Table XIII.

Seventeen respondents never shopped by telephone. Respondents did not shop by telephone because they liked to see merchandise, needed to try dresses on, and they like to shop. Eleven women sometimes shopped by telephone because of convenience and in response to advertising. Because of convenience, one woman often shopped by telephone. The number and percentage distribution of reasons given for frequency of shopping by telephone are listed in Table XIV.

Sixteen respondents made all or part of the dresses worn while working at home. The ages of these respondents ranged from sixty-five to ninety with a mean age of sixty-nine. Nine of the women were widows, five were married and two were single. Eleven of the respondents were retired. Two were employed full-time and two had never been employed.

TABLE XII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY OF  
SHOPPING FOR READY-MADE DRESSES BY TYPE OF MERCHANDISING  
OUTLET REPORTED BY TWENTY-NINE RESPONDENTS

Type of Merchandising Outlet	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=16	Group II N=3	Group III N=10	Total Respondents N=29	
	<u>OFTEN SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	15	2	10	27	93
Specialty shop .....	-	-	-	-	-
Mail Order Catalog ..	-	1	-	1	3
Discount store .....	1	-	-	1	3
Variety store .....	-	1	-	1	3
	<u>SOMETIMES SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	-	1	-	1	3
Specialty shop .....	8	2	2	12	41
Mail Order Catalog ..	6	-	1	7	24
Discount store .....	10	2	2	14	48
Variety store .....	10	1	1	12	41
Other <sup>a</sup> .....	1	-	-	1	3
	<u>NEVER SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	1	-	-	1	3
Specialty shop .....	8	1	8	17	59
Mail Order Catalog ..	10	2	9	21	72
Discount store .....	5	1	8	14	48
Variety store .....	6	1	9	16	55

<sup>a</sup>One respondent reported buying from offers on back of margarine boxes



TABLE XIV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN BY TWENTY-NINE RESPONDENTS  
ACCORDING TO REPORTED FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING BY TELEPHONE

Reasons Given	Number of Respondents <sup>a</sup>									Per cent Of Total Respondents	
	Often			Sometimes			Never				Total <sup>a</sup> Respondents N=29
	Group I N=1	Group II N=0	Group III N=0	Group I N=6	Group II N=1	Group III N=4	Group I N=9	Group II N=2	Group III N=6		
Like to see merchandise ....	-	-	-	1	-	1	6	1	4	13	45
Convenience .....	1	-	-	2	1	1	-	-	-	5	17
Need to try on garment .....	-	-	-	1	-	-	2	1	1	5	17
Newspaper advertisement ..	-	-	-	1	-	3	-	-	-	4	14
Enjoy shopping ...	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	2	2	7
Don't decide on dress until return home ....	-	-	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	3
Dislike of delivery charges	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Dresses are unsatisfactory .	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	3
Difficulty in returning merchandise ....	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	1	3

<sup>a</sup> Some respondents gave more than one response

One respondent was employed part-time. Occupations listed by these respondents were housework, cafeteria worker, office worker, salesclerk, factory worker and teacher. The educational level of these respondents ranged from six years through college graduation, with a mean of ten years education. The number of religious, social and civic organizations attended by these respondents ranged from zero through four with a mean of 1.7 organizations.

Thirteen respondents reported that they preferred to shop for dress fabrics in a department store. The least utilized merchandising outlets were; mail order catalogs and discount stores. Four respondents often shopped at more than one type of merchandising outlet while thirteen sometimes followed this practice. One woman sometimes shopped at all types of outlets for dress fabric. The number and percentage distribution for frequency of shopping for fabric by type of merchandising outlets is given in Table XV. Reasons given for often shopping at department stores were better selection and convenience. Reasons given for never shopping from a mail order catalog or a discount store were inconvenience and selection. In addition, respondents did not shop from a mail order catalog because they could not see the fabric before buying it. Of this group, fifteen women purchased findings for dresses at the same place fabrics were purchased. One respondent always bought findings at a variety store. The number and percentage distribution of reasons given for frequency of shopping according to type of merchandising outlet is presented in Table XVI.

Forty-one of the women interviewed did their own shopping.

TABLE XV

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION ACCORDING TO FREQUENCY OF SHOPPING  
FOR FABRIC BY TYPE OF MERCHANDISING OUTLET AS REPORTED BY  
SIXTEEN RESPONDENTS WHO PURCHASED FABRICS

Type of Merchandising Outlet	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=7	Group II N=4	Group III N=5	Total Respondents N=16	
	<u>OFTEN SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	5	3	5	13	81
Specialty shop .....	1	-	-	1	6
Mail Order Catalog ..	-	-	-	-	-
Discount store .....	1	1	-	2	13
Variety store .....	1	1	1	3	19
	<u>SOMETIMES SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	2	1	-	3	19
Specialty shop .....	5	4	5	14	88
Mail Order Catalog ..	4	3	1	8	50
Discount store .....	4	3	1	8	50
Variety store .....	5	3	3	11	69
	<u>NEVER SHOPPED</u>				
Department store ....	-	-	-	-	-
Specialty shop .....	1	-	-	1	6
Mail Order Catalog ..	3	1	4	8	50
Discount store .....	2	-	4	6	38
Variety store .....	1	-	1	2	13





Twenty-four of these respondents preferred to shop downtown while fifteen preferred to shop at a shopping center. Two women expressed no preference concerning the location of shopping outlets. When questioned about city in which they preferred to shop, thirty-seven respondents said they preferred to shop in Kansas City because of convenience, place of residence and better selection of merchandise. Five of those interviewed preferred to shop in other cities.<sup>1</sup> One woman preferred to shop in two cities. The reasons given for preferring to shop in other cities were place of residence and convenience. The number and percentage distribution of all reasons given is shown in Table XVII.

Twenty-seven women preferred to shop alone. The reasons given most often for preferring to shop alone were that it took less time and respondents liked their own opinions. The number and percentage distribution of all reasons given for preferring to shop alone are listed in Table XVIII.

Shopping Companions. Eleven respondents preferred to shop with someone. Typical reasons given for preferring to shop with someone were like other's opinions and need transportation. The number and percentage distribution of all reasons given for preferring to shop with someone are given in Table XIX. Three of the forty-one women who did their own shopping expressed no preference concerning their shopping companion.

Of the eleven respondents who preferred to shop with someone, eight preferred to shop with a member of her family and three preferred

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<sup>1</sup>These cities were Independence and Clinton, Missouri.

TABLE XVII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN BY FORTY-ONE RESPONDENTS WHO SHOP FOR READY-MADE DRESSES AND/OR FABRIC ACCORDING TO CITY PREFERRED FOR SHOPPING

Reason Given	Number of Respondents							Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Kansas City			Other Cities <sup>a</sup>			Total <sup>b</sup> Respondents N=41	
	Group I N=17	Group II N=5	Group III N=15	Group I N=4	Group II N=1	Group III N=0		
More convenient .....	8	1	14	3	1	-	27	66
Place of residence .....	6	4	-	3	-	-	13	32
Like the selection .....	4	-	2	-	-	-	6	15
Acquainted with city .....	3	-	-	1	-	-	4	10
Can not go elsewhere .....	-	1	-	-	-	-	1	2
Easy to exchange merchandise .	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	2
Habit .....	-	-	1	-	-	-	1	2

<sup>a</sup> These cities were Independence and Clinton, Missouri

<sup>b</sup> Some respondents gave more than one reason

TABLE XVIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN FOR PREFERRING  
TO SHOP ALONE AS REPORTED BY TWENTY-SEVEN RESPONDENTS

Reasons Given	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=12	Group II N=4	Group III N=11	Total <sup>a</sup> Respondents N=27	
Takes less time .....	4	2	3	9	33
Can concentrate better .....	2	2	2	6	22
Like my own ideas ...	2	-	4	6	22
More convenient .....	2	-	4	6	22
Do not want to bother with others	4	1	-	5	19
Have no one to shop with .....	-	-	1	1	4

<sup>a</sup> Some respondents gave more than one response

TABLE XIX

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN FOR PREFERRING  
TO SHOP WITH SOMEONE AS REPORTED BY ELEVEN RESPONDENTS

Reason Given	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=7	Group II N=1	Group III N=3	Total <sup>a</sup> Respondents N=11	
Like other's opinion	3	1	3	7	64
Need transportation ..	4	-	-	4	36
Companionship .....	1	-	-	1	9

<sup>a</sup> Some gave more than one reason

to shop with a friend, because they liked their opinions and they furnished transportation. The number and percentage distribution concerning the preferred shopping companion are given in Table XX.

TABLE XX  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PREFERRED SHOPPING  
COMPANION AS REPORTED BY ELEVEN RESPONDENTS

Preferred Shopping Companion	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=7	Group II N=1	Group III N=3	Total Respondents N=11	
Friend .....	2	1	-	3	27
Family .....	1	-	1	2	18
Sister .....	-	-	2	2	18
Daughter .....	2	-	-	2	18
Daughter-in-law ....	1	-	-	1	9
Son-in-law .....	1	-	-	1	9

Six respondents reported that shopping companions sometimes influenced their choice of dresses. While three respondents said they were never influenced by shopping companion in the choice made, two respondents were often influenced. Persons who often or sometimes influenced the choices made by the respondents expressed opinions concerning the suitability of the dress or fabric to the respondent. Table XXI gives the number and percentage distribution of reasons given for shopping companion preference.

Price Paid for Dresses and Fabrics. Twenty-five of the twenty-nine respondents who purchased ready-made dresses to wear while working at home paid from \$3.00 to \$7.00 for them. Two women paid less than

TABLE XXI  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF REASONS GIVEN FOR SHOPPING  
COMPANION PREFERENCE ACCORDING TO ELEVEN RESPONDENTS

Reason Given	Number of Respondents							Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Friend		Member of Family			Total <sup>a</sup> Respondents N=11		
	Group I N=1	Group II N=1	Group III N=0	Group I N=6	Group II N=0		Group III N=3	
Like their opinions .....	-	1	-	4	-	3	8	73
Provided Transportation ....	-	-	-	4	-	-	4	36
Companionship .....	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	9

<sup>a</sup> Some respondents gave more than one reason

three dollars for their dresses while two women paid at least \$7.00 for them. Table XXII classifies this information.

TABLE XXII  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PRICE USUALLY PAID PER  
DRESS ACCORDING TO TWENTY-NINE RESPONDENTS PURCHASING  
READY-MADE DRESSES

Price Paid Per Dress	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=16	Group II N=3	Group III N=10	Total Respondents N=29	
Under \$3.00 .....	2	-	-	2	7
\$3.00 to \$5.00 .....	7	1	3	11	38
\$5.00 to \$7.00 .....	6	2	6	14	48
\$7.00 and over .....	1	-	1	2	7

Sixteen respondents purchased fabric and made the dresses they wore while working at home. Fifteen of these women usually paid less than \$1.00 per yard for this fabric; only one usually paid \$1.00 or more per yard for the fabric used. The price usually paid per yard for fabric is shown in Table XXIII.

TABLE XXIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF PRICE USUALLY PAID PER  
YARD FOR FABRIC ACCORDING TO SIXTEEN RESPONDENTS  
PURCHASING FABRIC FOR DRESSES

Price Paid Per Yard	Number of Respondents				Per cent Of Total Respondents
	Group I N=7	Group II N=4	Group III N=5	Total Respondents N=16	
\$ .40 to \$ .59 .....	3	2	-	5	31
\$ .60 to \$ .79 .....	4	2	1	7	44
\$ .80 to \$1.00 .....	-	-	3	3	19
\$1.00 and over .....	-	-	1	1	6



## CHAPTER V

### COMPARISON OF FINDINGS

Fifty of fifty-one women contacted in the present study reported wearing dresses to work in at home. This finding was in general agreement with Rankin's (17) finding in which twenty-five out of thirty respondents preferred housedresses for home wear. Respondents in Dodge's study (11) who wore dresses at home indicated that these dresses were usually purchased as housedresses, but they also wore older good dresses for this purpose. These findings also agree with the current study in which 94 per cent of the fifty-one respondents purchased dresses to wear while working at home. However, Burnette (15) found that many of her respondents thought housedresses were a thing of the past. Respondents in Burnette's study purchased dresses that could be worn for many occasions and then worn at home when they were old. This finding could be the result of either a difference in population or a difference in the method of asking questions. About 57 per cent of the sample in the present study purchased dresses to be worn while working at home ready-made, as compared with approximately 90 per cent who reportedly did this according to Rankin (17). The reason for this difference is unknown but it may have resulted from a different interest in home sewing. Bartley (14) found that 47 per cent of the women in her sample sewed. The most significant reason they gave for this practice was the satisfaction derived from sewing. Ninety per cent of the women in Rankin's sample (17) were not interested in sewing. Thirty-one per

cent in the present study showed an interest in home sewing. Age may have been a factor in this difference but this can not be verified without further study.

Most respondents in the present study preferred to shop in a department store for both ready-made dresses and fabric because of selection, habit, and convenience. The respondents in other studies reviewed (11, 15, 18) also tended to favor department stores for shopping for these same reasons. Reasons given for preferring a department store as reported by Rankin (17) were more favorable prices and more shopping could be done in one place. Although these same reasons were mentioned in the current study, they were not mentioned as often as other reasons such as selection and habit. Burnette (15), Shipley (18) and Rankin (17) found that some of their respondents shopped in specialty shops although they preferred to shop in a department store. The present study found that specialty shops were one of the least shopped merchandising outlets because of inconvenience and selection. However, specialty shops were used more often than mail order outlets. This agreed with Rankin's findings which indicated that few of those she interviewed shopped by mail order. Another reason for this practice could have been the type of garment investigated. It could also have been that other types of merchandising outlets would have been used more if a clothing category other than dresses worn while working at home, were under investigation.

The current study found that 59 per cent of those who purchased their dresses ready-made did not like to shop by telephone because they

liked to see the merchandise before buying, agreeing with the findings of Dodge (11) which found that respondents did not shop by telephone because they wanted to see what they were buying.

The majority of women interviewed in the present study preferred to shop downtown while 36 per cent preferred to shop in a shopping center. This was in agreement with studies in which the respondents preferred the central or downtown shopping area to a shopping center (11, 15). This preference may be the result of the respondents dependence upon public transportation which is often better in downtown areas than in shopping centers.

Ninety per cent of the respondents in the current study preferred to shop locally in Kansas City because it was more convenient and had better selection. Dodge (11) and Burnette (15) also found that people in their sample shopped locally because they did not like to travel to shop. Burnette found that some of her respondents also shopped in other areas because of a larger selection. Dorsey (16) found that although the women in her sample shopped locally and thought the selection of dresses average for the size of city, more ready-made dresses would be purchased if the selection was larger. Bartley and Rankin both found that women tended to shop in their home towns before shopping in other cities. However, a large number of women in the studies by Bartley (14) and Rankin (17) bought dresses in other cities because of a wider selection of merchandise in the larger cities. The cities where these groups lived were smaller cities with a more limited selection. The cities were also university towns where the appeals of the retailers are

directed to a younger age group. These reasons help to explain the difficulty women expressed in finding a suitable selection in the home town.

In the current study, about two-thirds of the respondents preferred to shop alone. Dodge (11), Burnette (15) and Rankin (17) also found that most of the women preferred to shop alone. The reason given most often in all of these investigations for this practice was to minimize the influence of others on the final selection. In contrast, Bader (13) found that 60 per cent of her respondents preferred to shop with someone else. Many of those who preferred to shop with others said that it is most important that they like the dresses themselves. The contradiction again could be accounted for by a population difference and different method of asking questions. Those in Bader's study (13) who preferred to shop with others preferred a member of the family or a friend because they preferred their advice over that of a salesclerk.

Only Dodge (11) mentioned price paid for dresses worn at home. Four dollars was the usual price paid. The price usually paid in the current study ranged from \$3.00 to \$6.98.

In general, the findings of the current study agreed with the findings in previous studies. In only two areas, the area of home sewing and the area of preference of shopping alone or with someone did findings disagree with other studies. In the present study more women made their dresses and preferred to shop alone. The study gave insight into specified shopping practices for dresses worn while working at home, a category that has had limited investigation.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary. The present study investigated specified shopping practices concerning the dresses worn by a selected group of women sixty-five years of age and older while they worked at home. The specific objectives were to determine how these women acquired the dresses worn while working at home, to determine where they shopped for these dresses, with whom they shopped for these dresses, the cost of the dresses. The data for the study was collected from interviews with fifty women, age sixty-five and older selected from the rolls of three religious groups in Kansas City, Missouri.

Dresses were worn while working at home by all of the women who were interviewed for the study. The majority of those interviewed said that the dresses worn were purchased for this purpose. Those who wore dresses at home but who did not purchase them for this purpose were usually wearing out garments described as "good" dresses.

Most dresses worn at home were purchased ready-made at regular price. Respondents in two of the religious groups acquired more of the dresses worn while working at home ready-made at regular price while more of those in the third group made their dresses. The majority of the respondents who wore dresses while working at home shopped often at a department store because of the selection offered, habit and convenience.

Twenty-one respondents said they never shopped for ready-made :

dresses from a mail order catalog, specialty shop, variety store or discount store. The reasons given most often for not using these merchandising outlets were inconvenience and selection. In addition, women did not like to order by mail order because they wished to see merchandise before purchasing.

Of the twenty-nine respondents who purchased dresses ready-made, less than half shopped by telephone. The reasons most often stated for not shopping by telephone were they needed to try on the dress and liked to see the merchandise before purchasing. Slightly more than a third of the sample sometimes shopped for dresses by telephone because of convenience and the influence of newspaper advertising. Only one respondent shopped often by telephone.

Most of the women who made their dresses at home shopped often at a department store. The reasons given for this practice were that they liked the selection and it was more convenient. Fabrics for dresses worn while working at home were seldom purchased from a mail order catalog, discount store, variety store or a specialty shop. The reasons stated for not using these types of merchandising outlet were selection and inconvenience. In addition the respondents did not purchase from a mail order catalog because they wanted to see the fabric before purchasing. Fifteen of the sixteen respondents who made their dresses bought the findings at the same place they bought the fabric. The one who did not follow this practice, always shopped for findings at a variety shop.

Slightly more than half of the women sampled, preferred to shop downtown and about a third preferred to shop in Kansas City because of

better selection, convenience and city of residence.

Two-thirds of those interviewed preferred to shop alone for dresses to be worn while working at home because they could complete their shopping in less time. Almost a third of the women in the sample preferred to shop with someone because they liked someone else's opinion and there was a need for transportation.

The 22 per cent who preferred to shop with someone usually preferred to shop with a member of the family because they liked their opinions and they furnished transportation. About half of this group was sometimes influenced in the choice they made by the person with whom they were shopping as this person often expressed an opinion concerning the suitability of the dress or the fabric.

Those who purchased dresses ready-made paid between \$3.00 and \$6.98 each for the dress, and those who made their dresses at home paid between \$.40 and \$1.00 a yard for fabric.

Recommendations. This study concerning dresses worn while working at home investigated specified shopping practices of a selected sample of fifty women age sixty-five or over living in one metropolitan area of the midwest. Because of possible differences in social, cultural and ethnical backgrounds, findings of the study should not be used to judge shopping practices of all older women. It is recommended that a similar study involving a random sample of the same metropolitan population be conducted. Similar studies might also be conducted in other metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas. Such studies might also include questions designed to discover the extent to which women



sixty-five and older consider current fashion when selecting dresses to be worn while they work at home. Questions to identify fashion dissemination media that influence selection might also be included in the interview schedules.

Several past studies have indicated that women often shop at several stores before purchasing a garment. Investigation to determine if this practice holds true with older women need to be conducted. Studies might also explore the amount and kind of planning older women do before they shop for clothing items. Such studies would provide some indication if women plan to shop for one or many clothing items at a given time or if they plan to purchase only one garment from a given merchandising outlet.

Since shopping practices and social participation of those living in non-metropolitan areas may differ from those living in metropolitan areas, studies of shopping practices and social participation of women sixty-five and over should be conducted in different areas and different geographic locations.

Some studies have shown that many older women sew. Research to determine why these women sew would ascertain if home sewing of house-dresses results from habit developed earlier, if it is related to socioeconomic level, place of residence, a combination of these factors, or for other reasons.

Studies to determine if shopping practices differ among clothing categories would be helpful. It is believed that practices followed when shopping for dresses worn while working at home may differ from



those used when shopping for other types of garments.

Findings of the present study indicated that few women shopped by mail for dresses worn while working at home. Studies to discover if there are clothing items which women purchase by mail and for what reasons are needed. Such studies should be conducted in different geographic locations and in both metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas to determine influence of place of residence on mail order shopping.

Investigation of the influence of transportation facilities available to women sixty-five and over would give some indication of the influence of transportation of the preferred locale for shopping. Expressed preferences for shopping alone or with someone might be explained by understanding the influence of available transportation.

Studies concerning the effects of the inter-relationships of mental and physical health, grooming and appearance and factors influencing these relationships would add greatly to the existing knowledge and understanding of human behavior.

Comments and reactions of those interviewed are often lost because of the interviewer's inability to remember or record responses and comments. Consideration of the practicality of group interviews and the use of tape recorders for interviewing is recommended for future investigations.

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## APPENDIX

## INTERVIEW SCHEDULE

1. Do you wear a dress while working at home? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_  
(IF "NO", TERMINATE INTERVIEW)

2. Are most of the dresses you wear while working at home purchased for this purpose? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

IF NO, For what purpose are these purchased? \_\_\_\_\_

3. Are most of the dresses you wear while working at home purchased ready-made at regular price, purchased ready-made on sale, made at home, received ready-made as gifts, made from fabrics received as gifts, or obtained some other way?

Purchased ready-made at regular price \_\_\_\_\_  
 Purchased ready-made on sale \_\_\_\_\_  
 Made at home \_\_\_\_\_  
 Received ready-made as gifts \_\_\_\_\_  
 Made from fabrics received as gifts \_\_\_\_\_  
 Other (Identify) \_\_\_\_\_

4. (ASK ONLY IF MOST DRESSES WORN WHILE WORKING AT HOME ARE PURCHASED READY-MADE) How often do you shop for the dresses you wear while working at home from a:

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
Department Store?	_____	_____	_____
Specialty Shop?	_____	_____	_____
Mail Order Catalog?	_____	_____	_____
Discount Store?	_____	_____	_____
Variety Store?	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify) _____	_____	_____	_____

5. (ASK ONLY IF MOST DRESSES WORN WHILE WORKING AT HOME ARE MADE AT HOME) How often do you shop for fabrics for dresses you wear while working at home from a:

	<u>OFTEN</u>	<u>SOMETIMES</u>	<u>NEVER</u>
Department Store?	_____	_____	_____
Specialty Shop?	_____	_____	_____
Mail Order Catalog?	_____	_____	_____
Discount Store?	_____	_____	_____
Variety Store?	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify) _____	_____	_____	_____

6. Do you buy findings for these dresses at the same place you buy the fabric? Yes \_\_\_\_\_ No \_\_\_\_\_

IF NO, Where do you buy the findings? \_\_\_\_\_

7. (ASK FOR MERCHANDISING OUTLET(S) OFTEN USED) Why do you purchase most of the ready-made dresses you wear while working at home from a \_\_\_\_\_?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. (ASK FOR MERCHANDISING OUTLET(S) NEVER USED) Why do you never purchase ready-made dresses you wear while working at home from a \_\_\_\_\_?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. (ASK FOR MERCHANDISING OUTLET(S) OFTEN USED) Why do you purchase most of the fabrics for dresses worn while working at home from a \_\_\_\_\_?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. (ASK FOR MERCHANDISING OUTLET(S) NEVER USED) Why do you never purchase fabrics for dresses worn while working at home from a \_\_\_\_\_?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
11. How often do you shop by telephone for dresses to be worn while working at home? Often \_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes \_\_\_\_\_ Never \_\_\_\_\_  
Why is this? \_\_\_\_\_
12. Do you prefer to shop downtown or in a shopping center for these dresses? Downtown \_\_\_\_\_ Shopping Center \_\_\_\_\_
13. In what city or town do you shop for most of these dresses?  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Why do you shop there? \_\_\_\_\_
14. When you shop for a dress or for fabric for a dress to be worn while working at home, do you prefer to shop alone or with someone? Alone \_\_\_\_\_ With someone \_\_\_\_\_  
Why is this? \_\_\_\_\_  
(ASK ONLY IF RESPONDENT PREFERS SHOPPING WITH SOMEONE) With whom do you prefer to shop? \_\_\_\_\_  
Why do you prefer to shop with this person? \_\_\_\_\_

How often does this person influence the choice you make?  
Often\_\_\_\_\_ Sometimes\_\_\_\_\_ Never\_\_\_\_\_

(ASK ONLY IF OFTEN OR SOMETIMES) In what way is your choice influenced by this person?\_\_\_\_\_

15. About how much do you usually pay for a ready-made dress that you will wear while you work at home?\_\_\_\_\_
16. About how much do you pay per yard for fabric that will be made into a dress to wear while you work at home?\_\_\_\_\_
17. a. What social and religious functions do you attend?  
b. How often do you attend?\_\_\_\_\_ (REPEAT FOR EACH FUNCTION)

FUNCTION

FREQUENCY OF ATTENDANCE

_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

18. How long have you lived in the Kansas City area?\_\_\_\_\_
19. Are you employed Full-time\_\_\_\_\_ Part-time\_\_\_\_\_ Retired\_\_\_\_\_  
Not employed\_\_\_\_\_?

(ASK ONLY IF EMPLOYED FULL- OR PART-TIME) What is your occupation?\_\_\_\_\_

(ASK ONLY IF RETIRED) What was your former occupation?\_\_\_\_\_

20. Is your husband employed Full-time\_\_\_\_\_ Part-time\_\_\_\_\_  
Retired\_\_\_\_\_ Not employed\_\_\_\_\_?

(ASK IF HUSBAND IS EMPLOYED FULL- OR PART-TIME) What is your husband's occupation?\_\_\_\_\_

(ASK IF HUSBAND IS RETIRED OR RESPONDENT IS WIDOWED) What was your husband's former occupation?\_\_\_\_\_

21. What was the last year of school that you completed?\_\_\_\_\_
22. What was the last year of school your husband completed?\_\_\_\_\_

IDENTIFICATION (TO BE FILLED IN BY INTERVIEWER)

a. Age\_\_\_\_\_ B. Marital Status\_\_\_\_\_



SPECIFIED SHOPPING PRACTICES FOR DRESSES WORN WHILE WORKING  
AT HOME AS STATED BY A SELECTED GROUP OF WOMEN SIXTY-FIVE AND OVER  
IN KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

by

ROBERTA FLORENCE VARNER

B. S., McPherson College, 1962

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Clothing and Textiles

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

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The purpose of this exploratory study was to investigate specified shopping practices involving dresses worn while working at home by a selected group of women sixty-five and older. Data were obtained by interviews with fifty women in Kansas City, Missouri.

Almost all respondents wore dresses purchased for this purpose while working at home. More than half the respondents purchased these dresses ready-made; one-third made them at home; while the remainder received such dresses as gifts. A department store was favored for purchasing both ready-made dresses and fabrics for dresses worn while working at home. The reasons given for this preference were better selection and convenience for shopping. Because of inconvenience and inadequate selection, the least favored merchandising outlets for dresses to be worn while working at home were mail order catalogs, specialty shops, variety stores and discount stores. Few respondents liked to shop by telephone because they preferred seeing the merchandise before making their selection.

The respondents preferred to shop locally in Kansas City because it was more convenient. Over half the respondents preferred to shop downtown. About one-third preferred a shopping center, while the remainder indicated no preference for downtown or shopping center. Two-thirds of the women interviewed preferred to shop alone because it took less time and/or they liked their own opinions. Almost one-third of the respondents preferred to shop with someone because they liked to have the opinion of someone else and/or they relied on others for their transportation. Those who liked to shop with someone, preferred to shop

with a relative because they liked that person's opinion. Such persons sometimes influenced respondent's choice by telling her if the dress or fabric was suitable. Prices paid for ready-made dresses ranged from \$3.00 to \$6.98 while the price paid for fabric ranged from \$.40 to \$1.00 per yard.