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A Survey of Senior Girls' Attitudes Toward the Home Economics Program at Mark Morris Senior High School in Longview, Washington

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A SURVEY OF SENIOR GIRLS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE HOME ECONOMICS
PROGRAM AT MARK MORRIS SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL
IN LONGVIEW, WASHINGTON

A Thesis
Presented to
the Graduate Faculty
Central Washington State College

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Education

by
Arlis Fulgham R
August, 1968

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APPROVED FOR THE GRADUATE FACULTY

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CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM AND DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Preparing young people for effective participation in this complex modern world makes it necessary that training be provided in all aspects of living. One of the most challenging concerns at this time is to strengthen and improve home life, which means to reach a wider group of people, to educate adults and boys, as well as all girls, for home and family living. Although women spend most of their lives in some kinds of experiences related to the home and certainly need to be prepared for these experiences, it is customary for family members to share in these experiences, and they need to be educated to cope with the various problems involved.

Family living is involved today with problems of mobility, consumer values, gainful employment, resource management, urban living, the aging family, leisure activities, and numerous other problems. If students are to gain some understanding in these areas, it seems necessary to develop more effective ways of education for this purpose.

This study deals with an attempt to examine the student's viewpoint and influences on that viewpoint.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the Problem

All girls in the State of Washington are required to take one year of homemaking as ninth, tenth, eleventh, or twelfth graders for high school graduation. As a general rule, students take ninth grade homemaking to get the requirement out of the way. This attitude on the part of students is of concern to many homemaking teachers and supervisors. Whether this attitude is influenced by parents, counselors, homemaking teachers, or fellow students is difficult to say. This study is concerned with students' attitudes toward the homemaking program which is offered to them. This study is also concerned with who influences students to take or not to take home economics.

Importance of the Study

Homemaking, in the Longview School District, allows the students several alternatives. In the junior high schools, they take one semester in both the seventh and eighth grades. The ninth grade is an elective and is under the supervision of the state vocational program which guarantees the broad coverage of all areas of homemaking but must necessarily limit the time spent on each area.

The homemaking teachers of the Longview School District have worked out a curriculum for each year of study beginning with the seventh

grade and continuing through the senior year in high school, allowing for continuous growth of the student in the field of homemaking, minimizing repetition, and aimed at developing interest and understanding. Many students elect to fulfill the state requirement of one year of homemaking prior to graduation from high school by taking the ninth grade homemaking class. However, since classes are provided in the high school, it may be taken there to fill the State requirement rather than the ninth grade.

A primary concern in this study is to determine why those students who take the requirement during the ninth grade do not elect to take any further study in this area. Most of the students who take ninth grade homemaking have had one semester of homemaking in both the seventh and eighth grades, the only exceptions being students who come from other schools. The seventh and eighth grade homemaking courses introduce students to the areas of child care, foods and nutrition, grooming, clothing, and family relationships.

As one of this writer's students stated, as she was dropping ninth grade homemaking, "I want to work in the office; I already know all there is to know about homemaking." Those who do continue in homemaking are very often students who are not able to complete other subjects. This places the prestige of homemaking at a very low level.

Those who do not choose to take ninth grade homemaking are usually encouraged to wait until their senior year if they plan to take

only the required year. This paper is interested in the responses of senior girls toward the homemaking program in the Longview School District.

Justification

It would be of value to the homemaking teacher to have an understanding and knowledge of the needs and interests of the students with whom she works. One purpose of this study is to determine what the students consider personally beneficial for the present and the future; to find what areas they feel should have more emphasis; and to find out why they have or have not continued to take homemaking in high school.

The results of this type of study should be of value to the teacher in improving her teaching. Since the students in the Longview Junior High Schools plan their ninth grade and senior high school schedules in their eighth grade conferences with their parents and a guidance counselor, this information could be useful to the counselor in helping students plan their programs.

Limitations of the Study

This study was confined to the 113 senior girls of one of the two existing high schools in Longview, Washington, with a combined enrollment of approximately 950 girls. The State Department of Vocational Education requires one year of home economics in grades nine through

twelve for high school graduation. In Longview, the ninth grade is part of the junior high; however, home economics taken in the ninth grade may be applied toward high school graduation.

Hypotheses

(1) Students who choose to complete the state requirement of one year of home economics at the ninth grade level will be less apt to see the value of the home economics program than will the students who choose to take the requirement in high school.

(2) Senior girls who have not taken homemaking classes beyond the ninth grade will see the need for additional homemaking in high school.

(3) Students will have some definite attitudes toward home economics.

II. DEFINITIONS OF TERMS USED

Attitude

"A readiness to react toward or against some situation, person, or thing, in a particular manner, for example, with love or hate or fear or resentment, to a particular degree of intensity" (3:48).

Home Economics, Homemaking

These two terms are used synonymously throughout this paper in referring to the general program offerings in home and family life education in the junior and senior high schools.

Vocational Homemaking

Programs in various states that fulfill the requirements for reimbursement from state and federal funds. The requirements may include certain standards for teacher qualifications, kinds of curriculum, and other factors.

Sequential Program

The continuing progressive program of providing home economics to students from the seventh grade through the twelfth grade.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Homemaking education courses vary widely from one school to another school, from one teacher to another teacher, and even from one class to another class. Each course is a different combination of the fundamentals of homemaking. Each is based on the needs, interests, and capacities of the students enrolled and the ability of the teacher.

The homemaking course of study should be continually appraised to determine its effectiveness. Junior high and high school home economics should have immediate value to the student, but it is difficult to assess the real value of the homemaking program until a girl has been able to put her knowledge to work in her own home or in a profession or some type of wage earning.

Martin (8:24) reacts to the homemaking program in the following:

I am not always sure of the exact future of home economics in the school program. However, my hunch is that it is pretty well established but that we have done a poor job of interpreting to administrators, parents, and communities the value of having all girls adequately trained for the job they are going to do for the major part of their lives. Homemaking is their number one job, the one in which success or failure makes the most difference to them. We cannot afford to have the educational program for such an important task either slow and out moded or bizarre and superficial. It must be practical, scientific, vital, and the very best education we are able to provide.

Talboy (10:187) reflects the need for family life education

because:

Changing economic and social conditions, changing moral and spiritual concepts are reflected in broken homes, family instability, and juvenile delinquency. The students in the nation's schools turn to their education leaders for guidance in the building of their homes. General education must face squarely its responsibility for family life education.

In the past, home economics has been equated with "cooking and sewing." Home economics today is losing this connotation and is becoming a family centered program concerned with understanding and improving home life in all its aspects.

Hurt (5:406-407) explains the place of home economics in the junior and senior high school.

In the junior high school the young adolescent learns to understand himself and others, how to make and keep friends, and how to resolve conflicts with his parents, which often occur at a greater degree at this age. He is helped to take increasing responsibility around the home and to be of service to others.

In the senior high school boys and girls are beginning to see themselves as adults with their own homes. Emphasis is given to helping them develop the abilities necessary to a well-managed, satisfying home life. Problems of selecting a mate and becoming established after marriage are discussed.

Various studies have been conducted in the high school and college home economics programs to determine the effectiveness of the programs and factors influencing the selection of homemaking education.

Nofsker (6:274-279) conducted a study in 1931 and 1932 of home economics education in Wisconsin public high schools, but not in the purely vocational high schools. In this study, the concern was to find out why students did or did not elect to take home economics. The study included 1,064 senior high school girls who had elected one or more courses in home economics and 662 girls who had not elected any home economics in high school.

The results of this study revealed that 54 per cent of the students who took home economics in high school had home economics in grade school and that 74 per cent of the students who did not elect home economics in high school had home economics in grade school. This indicated "that when girls study this subject in the seventh and eighth grade they tend to elect other subjects in the grades beyond" (6:274). Commercial subjects were considered more important by 54 per cent of those who did not elect home economics in high school and 40 per cent of this group indicated they did not elect home economics because of the necessity of meeting college entrance requirements.

The vocational value of home economics was considered by less than 10 per cent of the group that took home economics as having influenced them, and was considered by over 50 per cent of the group as a reason they had not elected to take home economics. Other reasons the second group did not elect to take home economics were conflicts in

class schedules, dislike of subject matter, family influence, the belief that they already knew enough or could learn it at home, that the training is not generally useful, and that students of superior ability do not usually elect it.

Of the group which did not elect to take home economics in high school as seniors, 8 per cent wished they had taken several courses, 43 per cent wished they had taken at least one, and 43 per cent were still satisfied that they had not elected home economics.

Nofasker (6:276) believes that:

The sooner we accept home economics in the general public high school as a subject with general educational value for every high school girl and parts of it for every high school boy and teach it in that way, the sooner will it be accepted as a necessary part of the high school program.

Nofsker's study brought out three points which would cause the study to vary from the present study. These are: (1) In Longview there is not a distinct vocational school and a school of general education, as in Wisconsin; (2) most colleges in the western states accept home economics credit as part of the high school program; and (3) since this study twenty-five years ago, emphasis and content of home economics has been changed to meet the needs of society (an example would be the emphasis that has been placed on wage earning since the Vocational Education Act of 1963).

A study conducted in 1950 by Wright (13:263) "was made in an attempt to determine the factors which influence students to enroll in the home economics departments of Nebraska colleges and universities" by using the questionnaire with all freshmen and transfer students in these institutions.

Approximately 30 percent of the students became interested in home economics before reaching high school. Slightly more of the students became interested during the junior and senior years than during the freshman and sophomore years of high school. About 10 percent did not become interested until they left high school.

In Wright's study, nearly 84 per cent of the students who enrolled in college home economics departments came from high schools which offered homemaking courses. These students were influenced to enroll in college home economics first by their families, then by their teachers, and, finally, by other college students.

The main purpose of a study conducted by Hall (4:165) in California in 1951 and 1952 was to obtain basic information about the opinions of various groups in the school and community concerning the strengths and weaknesses of the homemaking programs. Attitudes were expressed by 7,237 students including 886 non-homemaking students, 1,968 former homemaking students who had graduated, several homemaking teachers, non-homemaking teachers, administrators, and parents. The study showed student interest as the principal reason for taking home economics. "Students in the twelfth grade expressed their interest more

frequently than did those in the ninth grade" (4:166-167). Parents also exerted a strong influence on the selection of home economics. Many of the students, particularly at the ninth grade, said they took it to fulfill a requirement.

Students in the ninth grade expressed greater interest than did those in the twelfth grade in learning to sew, dress properly, and care for the sick . . . those in the twelfth grade were more interested in preparing for marriage, furnishing the home, and entertaining (4:167-168).

This points out the variation in interests of the two age levels.

Another study was conducted by Garrett (2:92) "to determine the factors which influence the election or non-election of home economics by girls in the senior high schools of Washington, D.C." Questionnaires were given to those taking as well as to those not taking home economics.

The results of Garrett's (2:96) study are as follows:

1. Most students take home economics because of a personal interest in the subject.
2. The junior high school home economics program has a marked effect upon whether or not girls elect home economics in senior high school.
3. Many students have a false impression regarding the credits colleges allow for home economics courses.
4. Home economics courses need constant revision to meet the needs of the pupil.
5. Good publicity would attract more students into the home economics curriculum.
6. Girls really like a well-taught home economics program.

7. Home economics teachers need to have certain qualifications and personalities to influence girls toward the election of their courses.
8. Parents are very influential in the election or non-election of home economics by their children; therefore, it is vital that parents have a thorough understanding of this program.
9. The home economics program is not meeting the needs of pupils in many situations.
10. Girls prefer home economics classes without boys.
11. There is too much repetition in home economics courses.
12. Opportunity for faster progress should be allowed the more able pupils; more challenge is needed.
13. IQ's play a slightly significant part in the election of home economics; socioeconomic status plays no part in whether or not girls elect home economics.

A very extensive national study of home economics in secondary schools was conducted by Coon (1:1) in 1959 "to have reasonably up-to-date information about the availability of home economics in the schools, the nature of the programs, and the proportion of pupils having instruction."

This study revealed that home economics was taught in 95 per cent of all public secondary schools; that, of the girls enrolled in schools offering home economics, 49 per cent were enrolled in home economics; that of the boys enrolled in such schools, 1 per cent were enrolled in home economics courses.

The major concern is what goes on in classes for the pupils enrolled. This study indicated that in practically all of the courses

taught, some time was spent on each of the following areas of home economics: child development; clothing; consumer education; family relationships; foods and nutrition; health and first aid, and home care of the sick; the house, its furnishings and equipment; and management of resources.

Coon (1:35) reflects the opinion of this writer in the following:

Many educators feel that home economics has a contribution to make to the education of all pupils, and particularly to girls. With the smaller proportion of girls enrolled during the later years of school, the question might be asked whether girls are being reached at the maturity level when some aspects of the content of home economics, such as home management, family relationships, and child development might be most meaningful.

Coon (1:50) stated that "Of all the girls enrolled in home economics in the country as a whole, 63 per cent were in the seventh, eighth, and ninth grades, and 37 per cent were in the tenth, eleventh, and twelfth grades." Emphasis in courses showed that in grades seven through eleven, more than one-half to three-fourths of the time was spent on the area of foods and clothing. In the twelfth grade the time was more evenly distributed among the eight areas of instruction.

Massman (9:688) sent questionnaires to students she had as seniors and were since married, to evaluate the units in home economics, to suggest revisions of these units, and to obtain an analysis of the carry-over skills, etc. From this small sampling of 39 subjects, "70 per cent of the married graduates said they recalled skills more than principles or attitudes taught"

All but one of the young mothers responded that they would take more homemaking courses if they had a chance to repeat high school. The other girl said she would take the same amount, namely, one year. All but three of the respondents said they would go on record as recommending that every girl be required to enroll in at least one year of high school homemaking (9:689).

Kopenhefer (7:1) conducted a study in 1965 "To determine if there is a difference in the attitudes and interests of general students from those of home economics students" She found that:

Certain conclusions in this study are particularly pertinent to the home economics teacher in program planning: (1) Students who never had a homemaking course lacked knowledge of the content of the homemaking program. (2) The fact that 34% of the students who have had a home economics course feel that they will need more training. (3) Thirty-two per cent of the senior girls surveyed have no intention of seeking further education (7:72-73).

These studies have many limitations, such as the small number of subjects involved; the location; the community; the attitudes of parents, teachers and friends; the type of questionnaire; and the method of presentation. This writer will have many of the same limitations to consider in this study.

Home economics education has undergone some very important changes as is true of all education in general. Home economics educators are continually aware of changes that are taking place and are concerned about improving the program. Wood (12:96-97) states that:

Undergraduate programs in home economics were initially designed to prepare students to become competent homemakers and teachers of useful homemaking skills. Present day programs emphasize professional training for a variety of careers wherein understanding of the needs and concerns of individuals and families is essential.

Lloyd Trump (11:80) accepts the two following basic assumptions as he looks into the future of home economics:

It is essential that all boys and girls be educated better for their present and future homemaking roles.

Home economics education must be revised to make it a more vital subject.

As he proceeds to look into the future of home economics, Trump (11:81) believes that:

Home economics curriculum planners will identify the knowledge, skills, and attitudes that are essential for all boys and girls as they participate concurrently and also prepare for their future roles in home and family living. This content will be organized logically and sequentially to cover a thirteen-year period. Students will start the homemaking program when they first enter school at age five or six. They will continue through it until they leave school or graduate at age sixteen to eighteen. . . . Actually, the content per se will be learned for the average student during the first ten years of school. The latter three years--what we now call grades 10, 11, and 12 of the conventional high school--then will be devoted to special presentations, discussions, and independent study to review, reinforce, and update homemaking knowledge in all the respective areas of the subject.

Trump (11:88) further states that:

Home economics in the school of the future will occupy a much more prominent place than it does today. Life holds much more for each of us than earning a living. What happens at home affects all the rest of our lives. Making a home more artistic, more cultural, more friendly, and a place where all of the persons in it are more respectful of each other constitutes a foundation for the full life. Home economics education in the future will meet the challenge better as it changes its curriculum, its methods, its staff utilization, its facilities, its evaluation techniques and its fiscal policies.

This is truly a challenge to homemaking teachers to take time to evaluate what they are doing and how they can improve their programs. Finding the needs and interests of their own students is possibly a step in the right direction. It is hoped that the following study will give some insight into the strengths and weaknesses of one particular school.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

I. THE RESEARCH SETTING

This research was conducted with senior girls shortly before graduation in the spring of 1967. All of the senior girls attending Mark Morris Senior High School in Longview, Washington participated in this study. Permission was secured from the principal of the high school and he scheduled a time and a place for conducting the survey.

The questionnaire was given to a few ninth and tenth grade students to see if they had any difficulty in interpreting the desired information. The questionnaire (Appendix A) was then presented to each senior girl as they assembled in one large group.

Mr. Charles Dennis, a guidance counselor, gave the directions for the questionnaire, asking each girl to answer the questions as honestly and as carefully as possible. Names were omitted; however, other pertinent information was given, such as: how many years they had taken home economics, at what grade level, grade point average, major area, and immediate plans following graduation. Students were told that their opinions were needed to evaluate the home economics program now offered. In this setting it was hoped that they would be concerned more about

improving the program than reflecting attitudes toward homemaking teachers.

II. THE RESEARCH SAMPLE

The questionnaire was given to the 113 senior girls, including home economics and non-home economics students, at Mark Morris Senior High School in Longview, Washington.

III. METHOD OF GATHERING DATA

The method of gathering data was by the use of a questionnaire which consisted of five different sections. The first section included the information on the personal background of each of the subjects. The second section included twenty questions: questions 1, 6, 11, and 16 pertained to interests in home economics; questions 2, 7, 12, and 17 pertained to the practical aspects of home economics; questions 3, 8, 13, and 18 were related to the sequential program; questions 4, 9, 14, and 19 were concerned with program changes; and questions 5, 10, 15, and 20 were associated with conflicts in the curriculum. The third section of four questions pertained to the various content areas of home economics. The fourth section consisted of six questions as to who had influenced students in the election or non-election of home economics. The last question was an open question where students would express how they

would improve the program or what changes they would make in the existing program.

After administering the questionnaire, all forms were analyzed to determine if students had filled them out correctly. One questionnaire had not been completed correctly and was eliminated from this study.

All of the information was transferred to five by eight inch cards for ease in handling. Questions were grouped on the card as they had been arranged in this paper. All of the cards for students who had only ninth grade homemaking were placed at the beginning, followed by students who had ninth grade and one year in high school, two years, three years, etc. Last were the cards for students who did not have ninth grade home economics. These were arranged according to the number of years they had home economics in high school. The cards were held together by two loose rings so they provided easy reference. A copy of this card is found in Appendix B.

Comparisons were made in cases where it seemed pertinent. Percentages were rounded off to the nearest whole number. Results are illustrated in the form of bar graphs and tables for the purpose of clarity as well as ease in comparison.

CHAPTER IV

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS

This survey is concerned with senior girls' attitudes toward interest, practical aspects, sequential program, program changes, and conflicts in the curriculum as they relate to the home economics program. Other concerns are: Who influences students in the election or non-election of home economics; and what areas of study do they consider the most interesting and the least interesting.

I. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

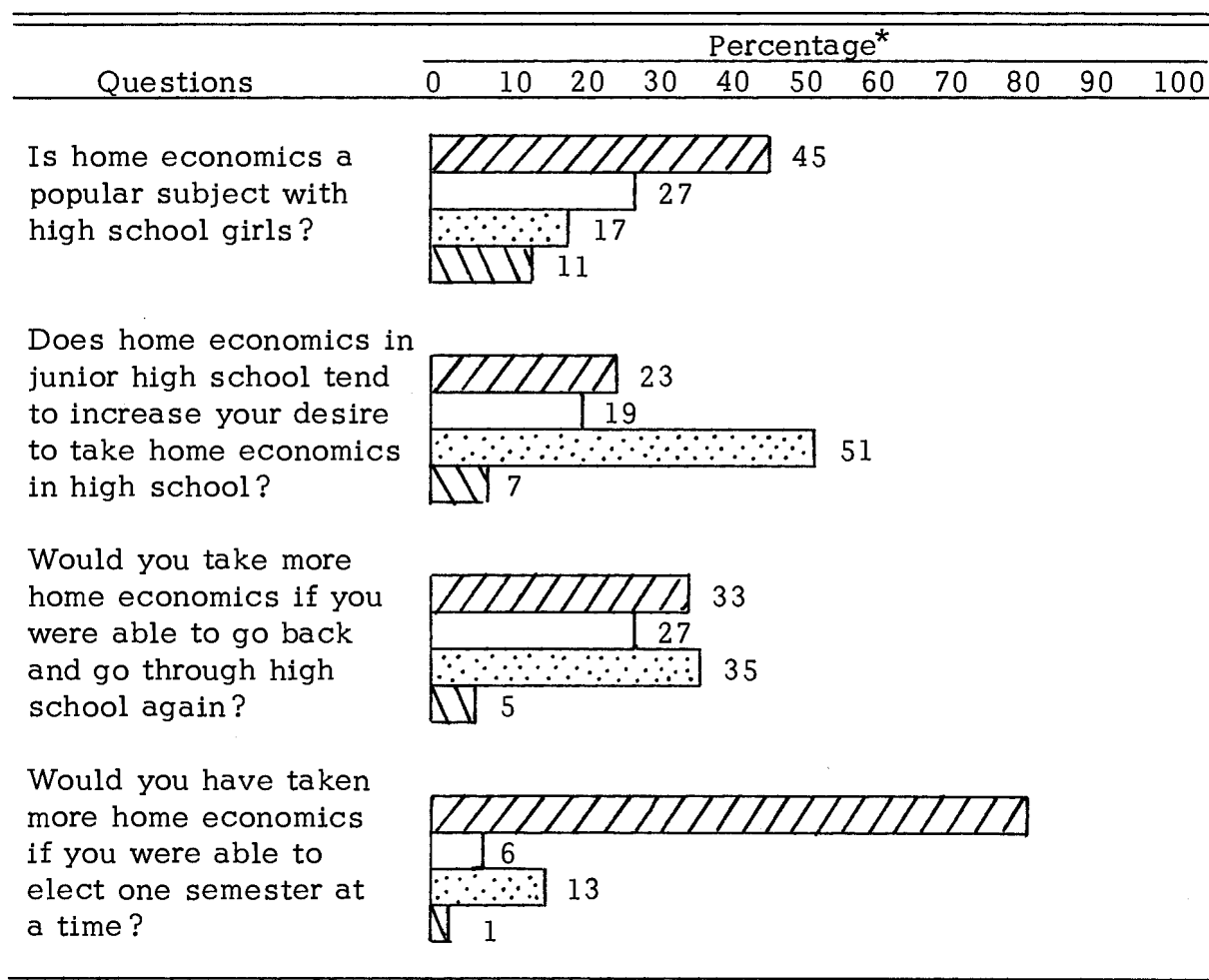
The information presented on the first page of the questionnaire (Appendix A) provides some interesting facts which have a bearing on the results of this study. Forty-nine per cent of the students indicated they had taken one year of home economics in grades nine through twelve, 21 per cent had taken two years, 16 per cent had taken three years, and 11 per cent had taken four years. Seventy-five per cent of these students took home economics in the ninth grade, 23 per cent took it in the tenth grade, 28 per cent in the eleventh, and 40 per cent in the twelfth grade. This shows a sharp decline in the number of students at the tenth grade level and a gradual rise through the senior year. Forty-five per cent of the students did not take any home economics beyond the ninth grade.

Senior girls, in stating their plans beyond high school (within four months), showed 15 per cent planned to get married, 33 per cent planned to find a job, 67 per cent planned to further their education, and 10 per cent had other plans. The number of students planning to go on to school and their major areas of interest are: twelve in business, seven in cosmetology, five in elementary education, five in nursing, five in social science, four in home economics, three in physical education, twelve indicated other majors, while 23 were undecided.

II. ATTITUDES TOWARD INTEREST IN HOME ECONOMICS

In response to the four questions on attitudes toward interest in home economics, Figure 1 shows that 45 per cent of the students considered home economics a popular subject with high school girls, while only 17 per cent did not consider it a popular subject. In a further breakdown, Figure 2 shows that of the students who elected only one year as ninth graders, 25 per cent considered home economics a popular subject, whereas 61 per cent of the students who elected one or more years in high school considered it a popular subject. This definitely illustrates a more positive attitude on the part of students who elected home economics in high school.

In response to the question "Does home economics in junior high school tend to increase your desire to take home economics in high school?"



YES	
DOUBTFUL	
NO	
NO OPINION	

* Percentage of senior girls who checked each of the responses with 113 girls responding.

FIGURE 1

PERCENTAGE OF SENIOR GIRLS' ATTITUDES TOWARD
INTERESTS IN HOME ECONOMICS

23 per cent of the students answered yes while 51 per cent answered no. (See Figure 1.) Breaking this down further, Figure 2 indicates that 61 per cent of the students who had a ninth grade home economics class only, answered no, while only 44 per cent of those who had high school economics responded negatively. This may have at least four implications: (1) Students were not mature enough as ninth graders to see the importance of home economics; (2) they had a negative attitude toward the program or teacher at the ninth grade level; (3) they simply lacked interest in the subject; (4) ninth graders lost interest after having one semester in the seventh and one semester in the eighth grade and then a full year in the ninth grade.

"Would you take more home economics if you were able to go back and go through high school again?" Responses to this question were divided quite evenly as shown in Figure 1, with 33 per cent of the students responding with yes, 27 per cent responding doubtful, and 35 per cent responding no. There was a wider difference when it was further considered that only 23 per cent of the students who had only one year of home economics in the ninth grade answered yes, and 40 per cent of the students with one or more years in high school home economics answering yes. (See Figure 2.) Fifty-one per cent of the students with ninth grade home economics indicated they would not take any more home economics, while only 21 per cent of the high

Students Who Had At
Least One Year of
Home Economics in
High School (N = 62)

Students Who Elected
Only One Year of
Home Economics in
Ninth Grade (N = 51)

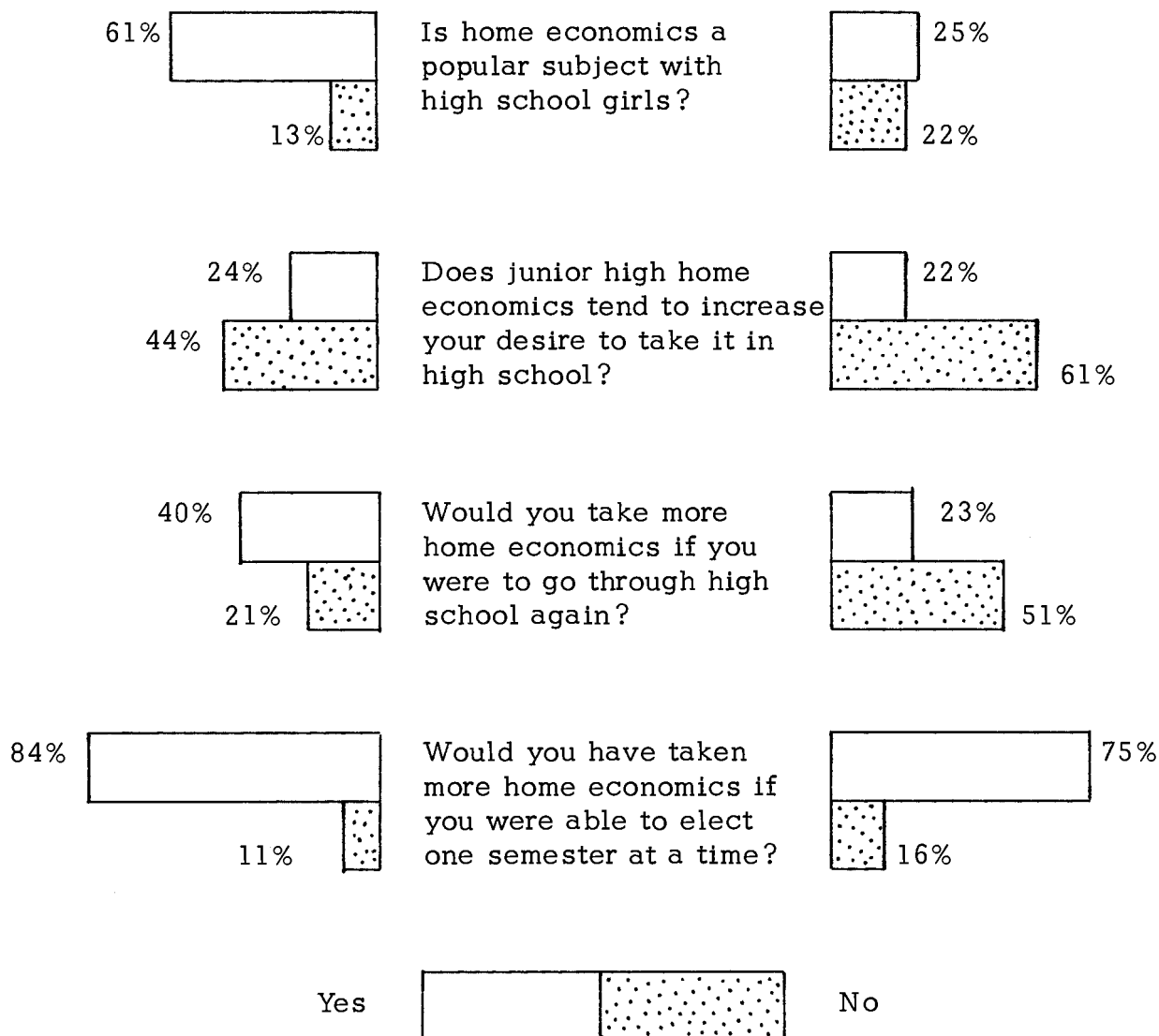


FIGURE 2

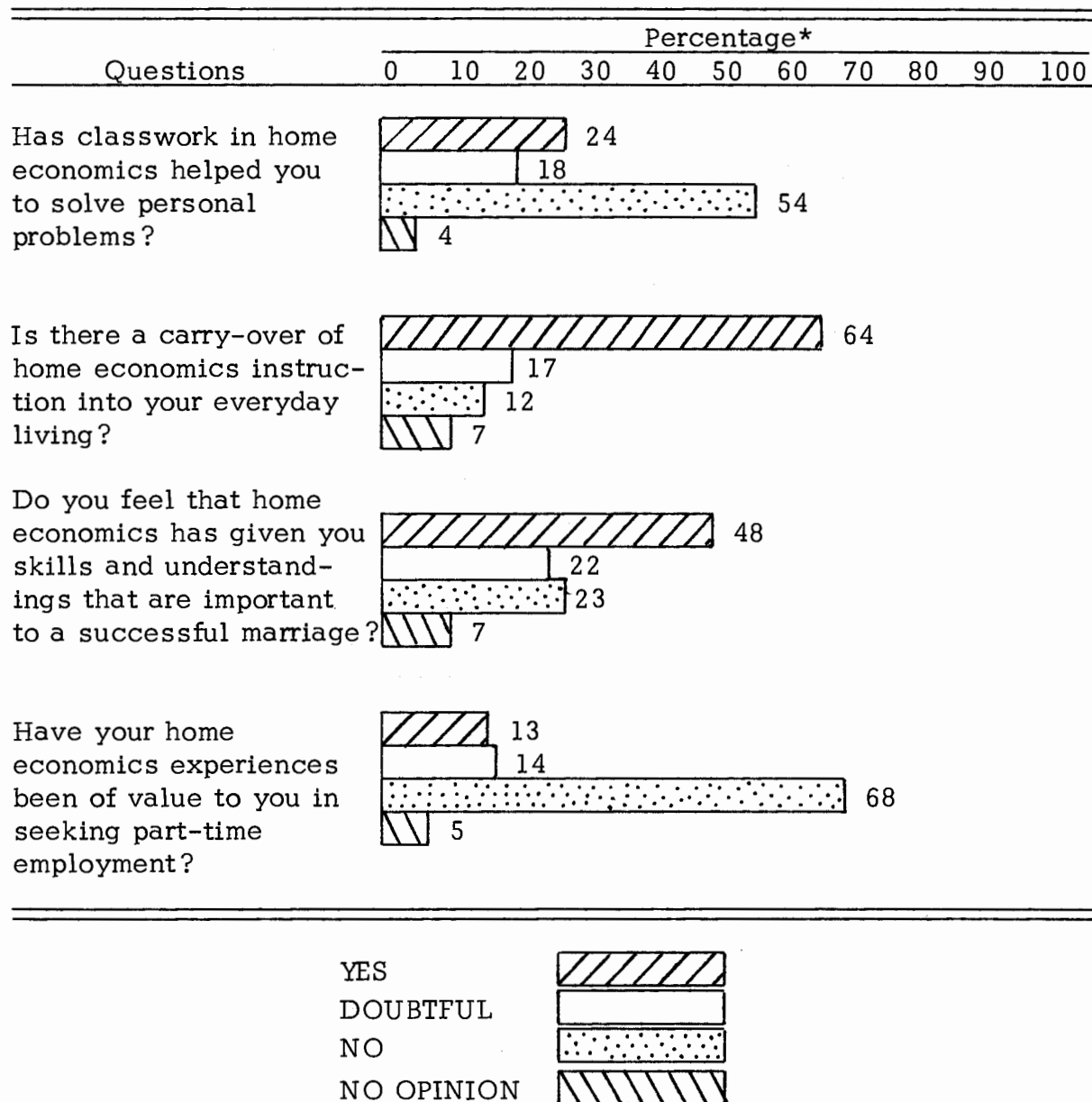
STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD INTERESTS IN HOME ECONOMICS

school students expressed this attitude. This certainly indicates a lack of interest on the part of the students with only ninth grade home economics as compared with students who elected home economics in high school.

"Would you have taken more home economics if you were able to elect one semester at a time of a specified area (for example, one semester of foods or clothing, etc.)?" Figure 1 affirms that 80 per cent of the students would have taken more home economics, while 13 per cent indicated that they would not have taken any more. Figure 2 points out that 75 per cent of the students who had ninth grade home economics and 84 per cent of the high school students expressed an interest. This is a less significant difference than the previous three questions, but shows a definite interest on the part of students to be able to elect specific areas of study for a semester at a time.

III. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF HOME ECONOMICS

An analysis of answers to the four questions pertaining to the practical aspects of home economics indicates a decided trend. Figure 3 illustrates that 24 per cent of the entire group felt that classwork in home economics helped them solve personal problems (at home or at school), while 54 per cent indicated that it did not. Again it is evident



* Percentage of senior girls who checked each of the responses with 113 girls responding.

FIGURE 3

PERCENTAGE OF SENIOR GIRLS' RESPONSES SHOWING ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRACTICAL ASPECTS OF HOME ECONOMICS

that students with only ninth grade home economics realized less value. (See Figure 4.) Only 18 per cent answered yes as compared to 31 per cent of the students with high school home economics. There was an even greater difference in the percentage answering no, with 75 per cent of the ninth graders and 37 per cent of the high school home economics students indicating a negative feeling. These findings possibly indicate a need for more emphasis in this area, particularly at the ninth grade level; however, these students may not be able to apply or retain as much of what they learn at this early an age.

A more positive response was received to the question, "Is there a carryover of home economics instruction into your everyday living?" Figure 3 shows 64 per cent indicating yes and only 12 per cent indicating no. Here again, Figure 4 shows that a lower percentage of the ninth graders realized this carryover with 55 per cent answering yes and 71 per cent of the high school economics students expressing this attitude. The no answers were not significantly different for the two groups.

"Do you feel that home economics has given you skills and understandings that are important to a successful marriage?" As shown in Figure 3, 48 per cent of the students answered yes, while 22 per cent of the students were doubtful, and 23 per cent answered no. In the breakdown in Figure 4, only 27 per cent of the students having only

Students Who Had At
Least One Year of
Home Economics in
High School (N = 62)

Students Who Elected
Only One Year of Home
Economics in Ninth
Grade (N = 51)

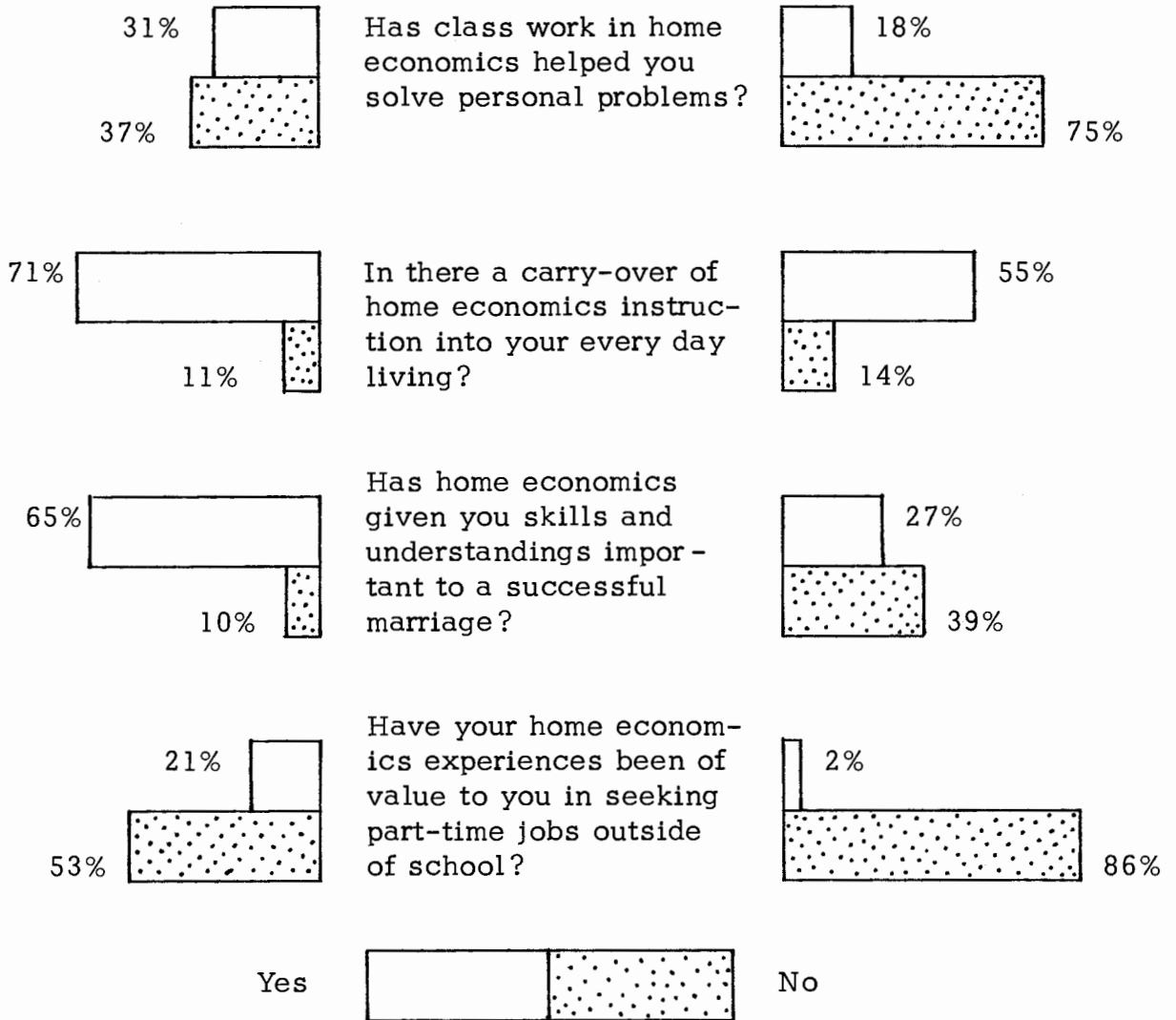


FIGURE 4

COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE PRACTICAL
ASPECTS OF HOME ECONOMICS

ninth grade home economics felt that they had received skills and understandings important for a successful marriage while 65 per cent of the high school home economics students felt they had received these skills and understandings. Again, this points up the importance of students continuing home economics beyond the ninth grade. Marriage is not emphasized as greatly to ninth graders as it is to high school students who may or may not be considering this in the near future.

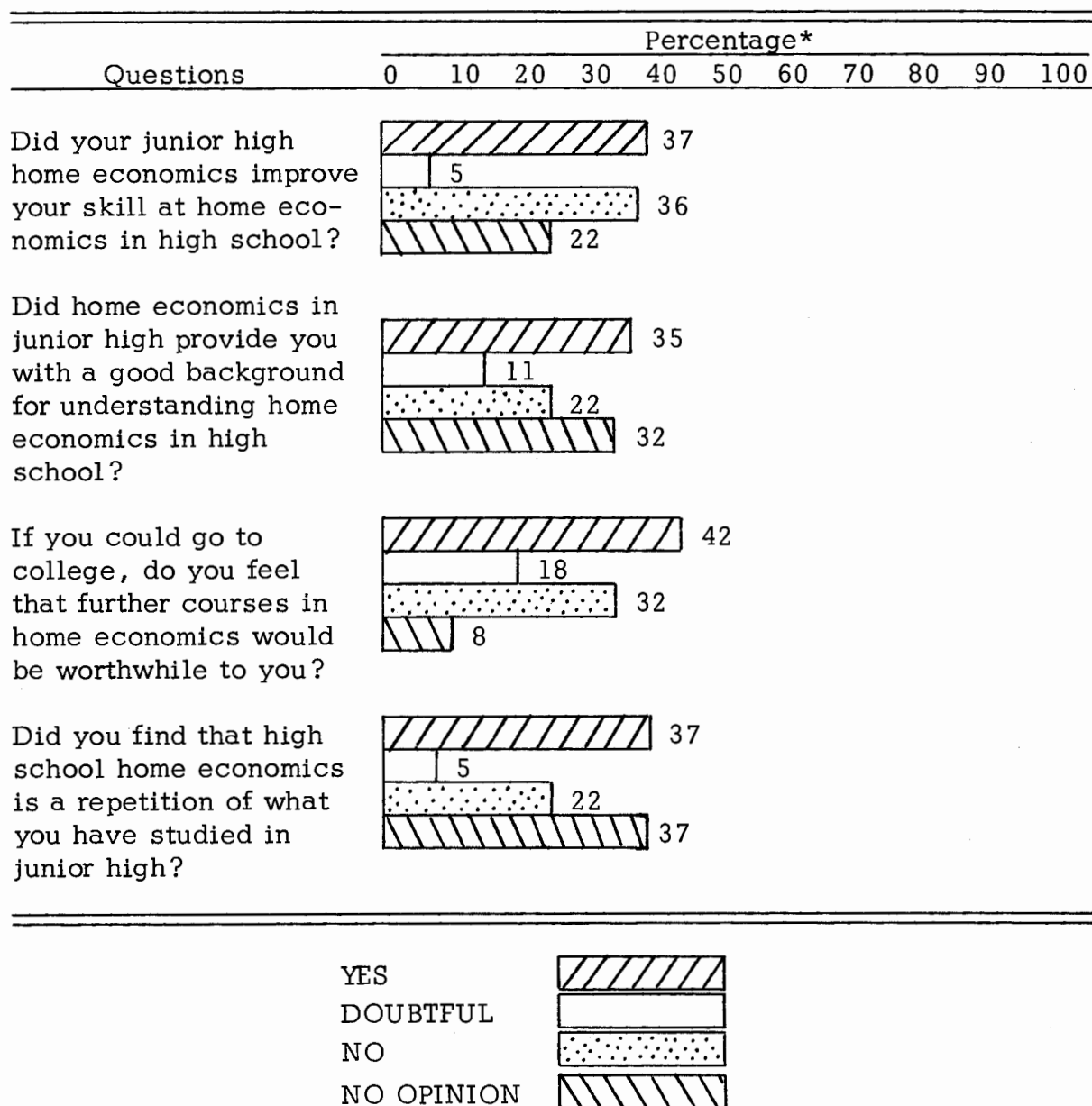
"Have your home economics experiences been of value to you in seeking part-time employment?" Figure 3 shows that only 13 per cent answered yes while a larger percentage, 68 per cent, answered no. It is interesting to note, as indicated in Figure 4, that only 2 per cent of the ninth graders answered yes as compared to 21 per cent of the high school students. Eighty-six per cent of the ninth grade home economics students felt that home economics experiences were not of value in seeking part-time employment, while only 53 per cent of the high school girls indicated this reaction. The purpose of the ninth grade program has not been to prepare students for jobs but to introduce them to the various areas of home economics. High school girls would probably be more interested in preparing themselves for employment than ninth grade girls.

IV. ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SEQUENTIAL PROGRAM IN HOME ECONOMICS

No significant differences were found in the first, second, and fourth questions as shown in Figure 5. These questions were directed toward the students who had junior high school home economics and continued to take home economics in high school. To get a more accurate response, it was necessary to eliminate those who did not take home economics beyond the ninth grade. Comparisons were made with 43 students who had seventh, eighth, and ninth grade home economics before taking home economics in high school, and with 20 students who had only seventh and eighth grade and high school home economics.

Figure 6, page 32, illustrates that 56 per cent of those who had ninth grade home economics indicated that junior high home economics improved their skills in home economics in high school, while 45 per cent of those who had only seventh and eighth grade home economics believed this. Twenty-six per cent of those with ninth grade home economics did not feel that it improved their skills, while 40 per cent of those without ninth grade home economics felt this lack of skills.

"Did home economics in junior high provide you with a good background for home economics in high school?" Figure 6 shows that 63 per cent of the respondents with a ninth grade background in home economics indicated that it helped them in high school, compared with



* Percentage of senior girls who checked each of the responses with 113 girls responding.

FIGURE 5

PERCENTAGE OF SENIOR GIRLS' RESPONSES SHOWING ATTITUDES
TOWARD THE SEQUENTIAL PROGRAM IN HOME ECONOMICS

Students Who Had Ninth
Grade and High School
Home Economics (N=43)

Students Who Had
Seventh and Eighth
Grade and High School
Home Economics (N=20)

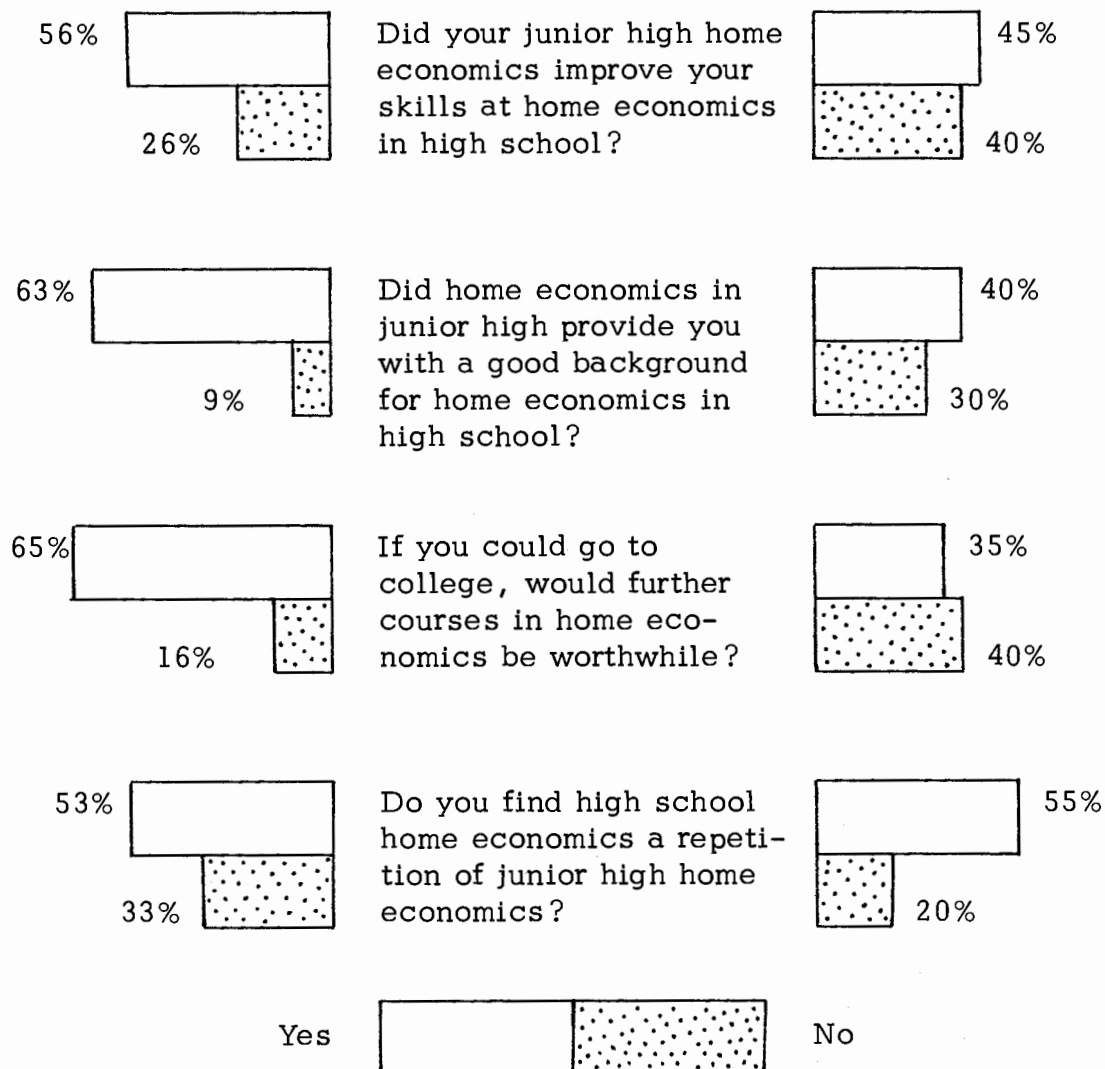


FIGURE 6

COMPARISON OF STUDENTS' ATTITUDES TOWARD THE SEQUENTIAL
PROGRAM IN HOME ECONOMICS

40 per cent of those who did not take home economics in the ninth grade. Only 9 per cent with ninth grade home economics did not feel that they had a good background, as compared to 30 per cent of those without ninth grade home economics. This confirms that ninth grade home economics provides a good background for most of the students who go into high school home economics.

"If you could go to college, do you feel that further courses in home economics would be worthwhile to you?" Of the students with a ninth grade background, 65 per cent felt that it would be worthwhile, while only 35 per cent of those without ninth grade home economics felt that further courses would be worthwhile. These values probably stem from the fact that students who are interested in home economics took it in the ninth grade and in high school, while those not interested took only one year in high school to satisfy the requirement.

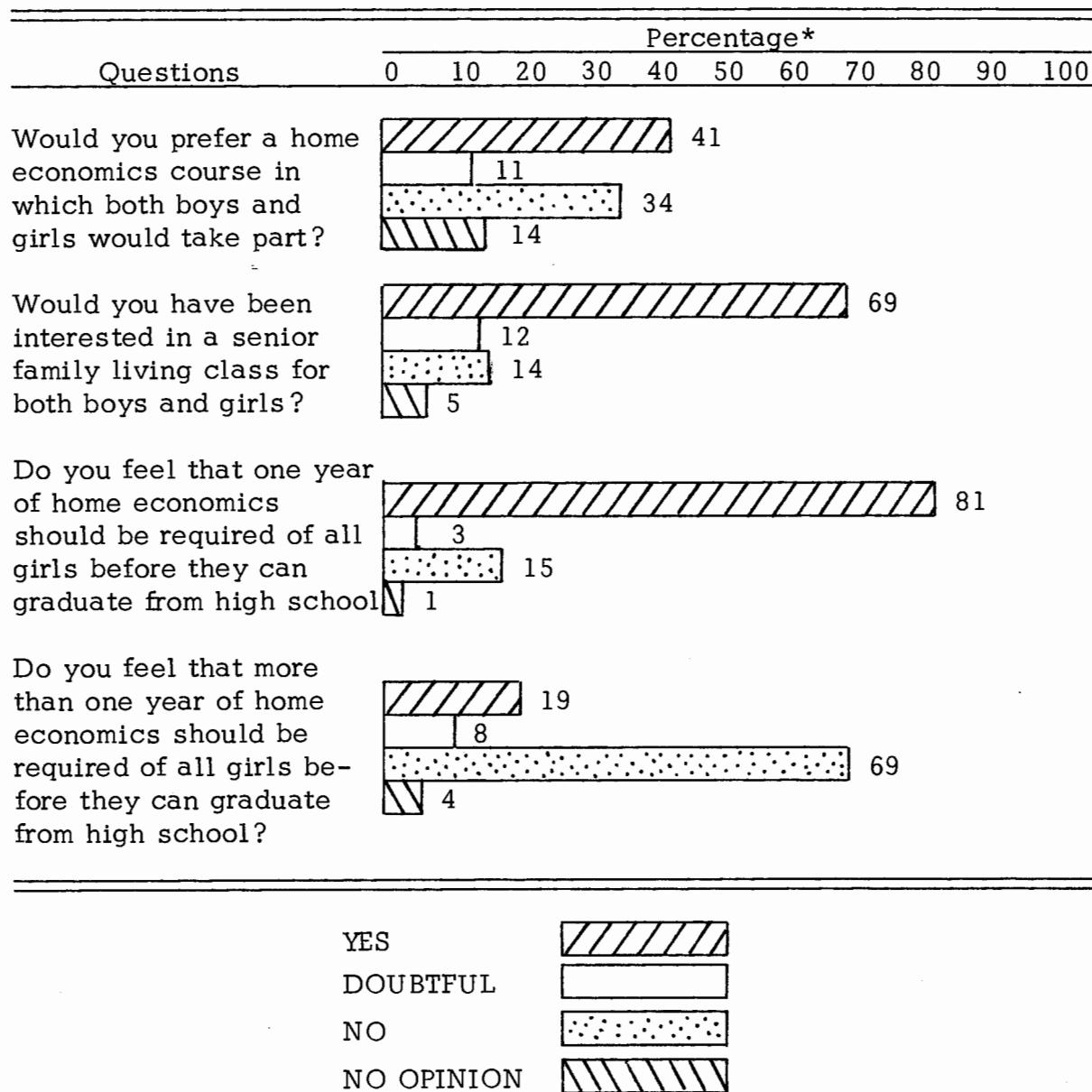
Figure 6 illustrates that 53 per cent of those with ninth grade and 55 per cent of those without ninth grade home economics related that they considered high school home economics a repetition of what they learned in junior high. Thirty-three per cent of the ninth graders and 20 per cent without ninth grade home economics did not consider it a repetition. A certain amount of repetition is necessary in teaching home economics; however, too much repetition seems to cause students to select other subjects. Possibly there needs to be better communication

between the junior high and senior high schools on their home economics curriculums.

V. ATTITUDES TOWARD PROGRAM CHANGES IN HOME ECONOMICS

The following opinions were expressed concerning changes in the program and are illustrated in Figure 7. In answer to the question, "Would you prefer a home economics course in which both boys and girls would take part?" responses indicated that only 41 per cent of the girls preferred a mixed class and 34 per cent did not want such a class. However, when asked if they would be interested in a senior family living class for both boys and girls, 69 per cent of the students indicated an interest with only 14 per cent expressing a negative attitude. This reaction seems to show a desire for family living classes to meet the needs of both boys and girls at a certain age and grade level. Home economics education is expanding in this area and trends indicate that it will continue to do so in the future.

Eighty-one per cent of the girls expressed the feeling that one year of home economics should be required of all girls before they can graduate from high school; only 15 per cent did not feel that one year should be required. Even though this is a Washington State requirement for graduation, the investigator did not expect such a high percentage



* Percentage of senior girls who checked each of the responses with 113 girls responding.

FIGURE 7

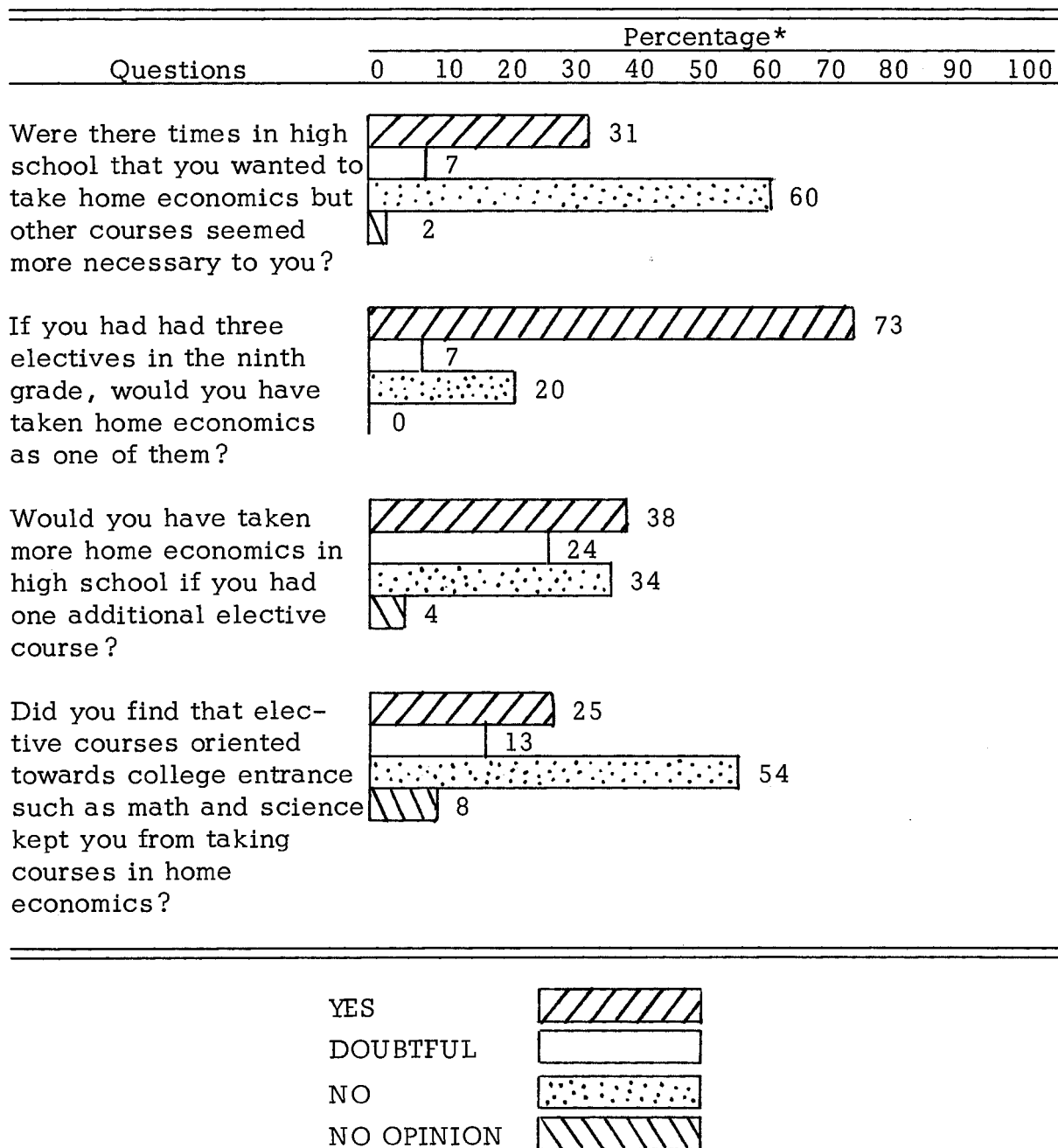
PERCENTAGES OF SENIOR GIRLS' RESPONSES SHOWING ATTITUDES
TOWARD PROGRAM CHANGES IN HOME ECONOMICS

in favor of the requirement. Only 19 per cent felt that more than one year should be required, and 69 per cent felt that more than one year should not be required. These students seemed to realize the need for one year of home economics for all students; however, they would prefer to have additional study as an elective for the students who are interested.

VI. ATTITUDES TOWARD CONFLICTS IN CURRICULUM WITH HOME ECONOMICS

"Were there times in high school that you wanted to take home economics but other courses seemed more necessary to you?" Figure 8 shows that 31 per cent of the respondents indicated this particular conflict in the curriculum; however, 60 per cent did not see this as a problem.

"If you had three electives in the ninth grade, would you have taken home economics as one of them?" Figure 8 indicates that 73 per cent of the students agreed they would and 20 per cent said they would not. When asked the same question except for high school, 38 per cent indicated that they would have taken home economics, 24 per cent were doubtful, and 34 per cent said they would not have elected to take more home economics. It would seem that these students do not consider home economics any more beneficial to them than home economics in junior high school. This should be a concern for home economics



* Percentage of senior girls who checked each of the responses with 113 girls responding

FIGURE 8

PERCENTAGES OF SENIOR GIRLS' RESPONSES SHOWING ATTITUDES
TOWARD CONFLICTS IN THE CURRICULUM
WITH HOME ECONOMICS

teachers in evaluating their teaching and in communicating with the students about the high school home economics curriculum.

"Do you find that elective courses oriented toward college entrance, such as math and science, kept you from taking courses in home economics?" Twenty-five per cent of the respondents indicated that it did, while 54 per cent did not find this conflict. From all indications, home economics is available to most of the students who would be interested in taking it.

VII. INFLUENCING FACTORS

Table I shows what persons are most instrumental in influencing students in the election or non-election of home economics at different grade levels. Guidance counselors had the most influence in encouraging students to take home economics in the ninth grade and in high school. The student's own interest came second, parents third, friends fourth (but only in influencing at the ninth grade), and home economics teachers fifth. There were no significant influences in discouraging students other than their own interests.

This shows the important part that guidance counselors play in helping the students set up the best program they possibly can. Since parents and guidance counselors are present when the students plan

TABLE I
NUMBER OF STUDENTS INFLUENCED TO TAKE
OR NOT TO TAKE HOME ECONOMICS

Persons Influencing	Encouraged to Take			Discouraged from Taking		
	Ninth Grade	High School	College	Ninth Grade	High School	College
Parents	10	6	5	1	3	2
Friends	7	2	2	2	3	3
Brothers/Sisters	1					
Home Economics Teachers	4	4	6	1	3	
Counselors	38	22	2		3	
Other Teachers	1			1	1	
Other People		2	1	2	1	
Self Interest	26	26	17	5	15	13
No One	<u>21</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>91</u>	<u>79</u>	<u>89</u>
Totals	108	111	112	103	108	107

Note: The number indicate the number of responses from 113 senior girls--some did not respond.

their ninth grade and high school schedules, it seems understandable that they would have the most influence.

VIII. REACTIONS TOWARD AREAS OF STUDY IN HOME ECONOMICS

Table II indicates that these particular senior girls enjoyed clothing selection and construction, and food and nutrition more than the other areas. It is interesting to note that of the 44 per cent of those who considered clothing as most interesting, 40 per cent of those considered food and nutrition as least interesting and 28 per cent considered home management as least interesting. Of the 24 per cent of those who considered foods and nutrition most interesting, 33 per cent considered home furnishings least interesting, while 30 per cent considered clothing as least interesting, next came home management, family relationships, and last of all, child care and development. This shows a definite relationship and interest between food and nutrition and home management; and between clothing selection and construction and home furnishings.

Of those selecting family relationships as most interesting, 55 per cent considered clothing as least interesting. Of girls who chose child care as most interesting, 42 per cent rated foods as least interesting while 26 rated clothing as least interesting.

Most girls are interested in some area of home economics, as was shown in their enthusiasm for semester courses in the various areas

TABLE II
REACTIONS TOWARD SIX AREAS OF HOME ECONOMICS

Area	Wished to Cover More Thoroughly	Most Inter- esting	Least Inter- esting	Would Elect By Semester
Food and Nutrition	22	27	33	51
Clothing Selection and Construction	38	50	23	63
Family Relationships	20	11	18	35
Child Care and Development	12	19	13	43
Home Management	16	7	25	26
Home Furnishings	<u>13</u>	<u>7</u>	<u>22</u>	<u>35</u>
Totals	111	111	134	253

Note: This shows the number of students responding from a total of 113 senior girls. In some instances, more than one area was indicated, particularly in the last two columns.

of home economics. All but two students indicated an interest in at least one area and several marked from two to all of the six areas that they would be interested in for a semester course.

IX. SUGGESTIONS OF STUDENTS

The following suggestions were given by three or more of the students as to how the program could be changed or improved and are listed in ascending order from the least to the most important.

Students recommended longer class periods for food and clothing. Teachers should show more enthusiasm and should be good examples of what they teach. Greater emphasis should be placed on maintaining a home, such as management or family living, rather than cooking and sewing. Students should be allowed to select a semester of an area for a more concentrated study. Most often mentioned was that there should be less book work, lectures, and tests, and more activities.

X. RESULTS AS THEY APPLY TO THE HYPOTHESES

The hypothesis that students who choose to complete the state requirement of one year of home economics at the ninth grade level will be less apt to see the value of the home economics program than will the students who choose to take the requirement in the high school can be accepted in the light of this study. A significantly higher percentage

of the students with one or more years of home economics in high school responded favorably to its value in solving personal problems, that it carried over to everyday living, that it provided them with skills and understanding important to a successful marriage, and that it was of value in seeking part-time jobs outside of school.

The second hypothesis, that senior girls who have not taken home economics beyond the ninth grade will see the need for additional homemaking in high school was rejected. Fifty-one per cent of these girls indicated that they would not have taken more home economics if they were to go through high school again. Twenty-three per cent, or less than one-four of these girls, indicated that they would have taken more.

The third hypothesis, that students will have some definite attitudes toward home economics, can also be accepted. The results of this study indicate that students felt definitely that junior high home economics did not create a desire for further study; that their home economics experiences were not particularly valuable in solving personal problems or in seeking part-time employment; that high school home economics is repetitious of junior high; that senior girls are interested in family living classes for both boys and girls; and that only one year of home economics should be required for high school graduation. Students who took one or more years of home economics in high school

reacted more positively toward the program than students who did not take home economics in high school.

The results of this study were limited because of the geographic location which lends itself more to logging and industry than to farming and other occupations. Students tend to reflect the same attitudes as their parents, so this was another influencing factor. The type of questionnaire used provides only the information desired for this study, but other questions would have certainly given a wider representation of attitudes. The investigator feels that some of these girls may not have had the background necessary to make the wisest decisions.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

I. SUMMARY

It was the purpose of this study to determine senior girls' attitudes toward interests, practical aspects, the sequential program, program changes, and conflicts in the curriculum as they related to the home economics program; reactions toward content; and, who influenced them to elect or not to elect home economics. Comparisons were made with students who elected home economics at the ninth grade and those who elected one or more years in high school to determine their attitudinal differences, if any.

A questionnaire was presented to 113 senior girls shortly before graduation in the spring of 1967. A guidance counselor administered the questionnaire with the directive that students' honest opinions were desired as an aid in improving the program now offered. The questions were grouped into their related groups and results were tabulated and presented in the form of bar graphs and tables. A discussion of the results preceded each illustration.

The results of the study indicated that students who elected to take one or more years of home economics in high school had a

tendency to show more interest in the course than did the students who terminated their home economics courses with the ninth grade. Junior high home economics did not seem to create a desire for further study in high school and may even be a deterrent. Students expressed a definite interest in being able to select semester courses in specific areas. Students in general did not feel that their experiences in home economics had been of value in helping them solve personal problems or in seeking part-time employment. Many of the students felt that their home economics experiences had carried over to their everyday living and almost half of them believed that they had received skills and understandings helpful for a successful marriage. Among the girls who took high school home economics there was a significantly higher percentage who were able to see the practical aspects in all areas. This indicates the importance of maturity and experience in being able to understand and use the knowledge presented.

Students who had home economics in the ninth grade before taking home economics in high school, felt that they were better prepared for high school home economics and could see more value in taking it in college than did those without the ninth grade background. Over half of the students consider high school home economics a repetition of junior high home economics. This may be a result of an inability to retain the ideas presented at the junior high level or may be a result

of using too much time reviewing concepts taught in junior high and not enough time devoted to new learnings .

More than two-thirds of the students expressed an interest in a family living class for both boys and girls during the senior year. Eighty-one per cent of the girls went on record affirming that one year of home economics should be required of all girls before high school graduation. This shows that seniors realize the need for factual information.

Several of the students indicated that other courses seemed more important than home economics , but that they would have elected home economics if they had another elective . Only 25 per cent of the students felt that courses oriented toward college had kept them from taking home economics .

Guidance counselors had more influence on students' election or non-election of home economics than did any other person; however, the student's own interest was the second most influential factor.

Most girls are interested in at least one or more areas of home economics; often there is a relationship between two areas of interest.

Students suggested several changes or improvements which they felt should be made to improve the existing program.

II. CONCLUSIONS

The study supported the hypothesis that students who choose to complete the state requirement of one year of home economics at the ninth grade level will be less apt to see the value of the home economics program than will the students who choose to take the requirement in high school. This implies a lack of maturity and judgment on the part of the younger students.

The second hypothesis was rejected that senior girls who have not taken home economics beyond the ninth grade will see the need for an additional year of home economics in high school. Apparently they are not aware of what the program has to offer.

The third hypothesis can be accepted that students will have some definite attitudes toward home economics. These attitudes are evident in the percentage of reactions given throughout this study.

It may also be concluded that all of the feelings and attitudes expressed are not necessarily consistent with what would be best for the students. This is particularly evident in the somewhat negative attitude of students who did not take home economics beyond the ninth grade. Possibly this attitude reflects a lack of understanding of what is actually involved in home economics at the high school level, but probably reflects their attitude toward school in general.

III. IMPLICATIONS

Implications for the Home Economics Teacher

Since junior high home economics does not tend to increase a student's desire to take home economics in high school, it may be well for the teachers to find out why this is true and to try to come up with a solution. A majority of the students did not feel that classwork in home economics had helped them solve personal problems; teachers could try to incorporate this in their planning. It may also indicate that the offerings are beyond the interests and abilities of the students. Also, students considered high school home economics repetitious of junior high school home economics. Maybe teachers find it difficult to understand the needs of this age group. Some of the students commented that teachers should show more enthusiasm and should be good examples of what they teach. Teachers will be better able to guide students by understanding their attitudes.

Implications for the Counselor

By having a better understanding of students' attitudes, counselors will be in a better position to advise students in the election or non-election of home economics at the junior high or high school level.

Implications for Scheduling

Students should be given opportunity to prepare for some type of wage earning which may be incorporated into course work. Students expressed an interest in family living classes for both boys and girls, but did not indicate an interest in other mixed home economics classes. Students' interests in areas show a definite relationship with each other, such as foods and nutrition and management, and could be offered in semester courses which students seemed to prefer to a general course covering all areas.

Implications for Further Research

The nature of this study has been limited in scope and would need to be verified by future studies. A few studies have been conducted on attitudes toward the home economics program, but results are far from being conclusive and need to be continually up-dated. The findings of this study seem to indicate a need to evaluate the desirability or worth of junior high school home economics programs being offered in all three grade levels. The fulfillment of the graduation requirement in the ninth grade may need further research to consider whether or not the state requirement should be changed. Should home economics be job oriented in high school? Many questions remain unanswered and much research needs to be done in this and other areas.

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APPENDIX A

QUESTIONNAIRE

SURVEY OF HOME ECONOMICS EXPERIENCES

You are being asked to answer the following questions as part of a study of the long range effects of the Home Economics program. Please express your answers as completely and frankly as possible. Only your true feelings will be of value to us. Thank you for helping us in this survey. We hope that future students of Home Economics will benefit from your experiences.

Personal Background:

Circle the appropriate numbers or responses to the following questions or fill in the requested information.

- | | |
|--|---------------|
| A. How many years of Home Economics have you taken in your Junior and Senior high school program from grade 9 through 12? | A. 1 2 3 4 |
| B. Circle the grades in which you have taken home economics courses (either whole or part year). | B. 9 10 11 12 |
| C. What is your present accumulated Grade Point Average (estimates are okay if you are not sure). | C. _____ |
| D. What are your plans beyond high school? (within 4 months) 1. Get married. 2. Find a job. 3. Go to college. 4. Other (Use the number or numbers of your response.) | D. _____ |
| E. If you plan on going on to college, what area have you chosen for your major? (Use the appropriate number or numbers.) 1. Math. 2. Science. 3. Social Science. 4. Home Economics. 5. Languages. 6. Other (specify) _____ 7. Undecided | E. _____ |

Answer the following questions by placing an X in the appropriate column which most nearly indicates your feelings.

Questions:	Yes	Doubtful	No	No Opinion
1. Is Home Economics a popular subject with high school girls?	_____	_____	_____	_____
2. Has classwork in Home Economics helped you to solve personal problems (at home or at school)?	_____	_____	_____	_____
3. Did your junior high home economics improve your skill at home economics in high school?	_____	_____	_____	_____
4. Would you prefer a home economics course in which both boys and girls would take part?	_____	_____	_____	_____
5. Were there times in high school that you wanted to take home economics but other courses seemed more necessary to you?	_____	_____	_____	_____
6. Does home economics in junior high tend to increase your desire to take home economics in high school?	_____	_____	_____	_____
7. Is there a carry over of home economics instruction into your everyday living?	_____	_____	_____	_____
8. Did home economics in junior high provide you with a good background for understanding home economics in high school?	_____	_____	_____	_____
9. Would you have been interested in a senior family living class for both boys and girls?	_____	_____	_____	_____

- | | Yes | Doubtful | No | Opinion |
|---|-------|----------|-------|---------|
| 10. If you had had three electives in the ninth grade, would you have taken home economics as one of them? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 11. Would you take more home economics if you were able to go back and go through high school again? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 12. Do you feel that home economics has given you skills and understandings that are important to a successful marriage? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 13. If you could go to college, do you feel that further courses in home economics would be worthwhile to you? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 14. Do you feel that one year of home economics should be required of all girls before they can graduate from high school? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 15. Would you have taken more home economics in high school if you had one additional elective course? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 16. Would you have taken more home economics if you had been able to elect one semester at a time of a specific area (for example 1 sem. of foods or clothing, etc.)? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 17. Have your home economics experiences been of value to you in seeking part-time jobs outside of school? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 18. Did you find that high school home economics is a repetition of what you have studied in junior high? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

- | | Yes | Doubtful | No | No
Opinion |
|--|-------|----------|-------|---------------|
| 19. Do you feel that more than one year of home economics should be required of all girls before they can graduate from high school? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| 20. Did you find that elective courses oriented towards college entrance such as math and science, kept you from taking courses in home economics? | _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

* * * *

Write the letter of one of the following units which best describes your feelings in answering the following questions. Place the letter in the blank.

- | | | |
|---|----------------------|---------------------|
| A. Foods and Nutrition | C. Family Relations | E. Home Management |
| B. Clothing Selection
and construction | D. Child Care & Dev. | F. Home Furnishings |

1. What area of Home Economics do you wish you had covered more thoroughly? 1. _____
2. What area of Home Economics did you find the most interesting? 2. _____
3. What area did you find the least interesting? 3. _____
4. If you could have selected home economics by a semester of the areas above in any order you wished, which areas would you have requested for one semester's work? (List as many or as few areas as you wish.) 4. _____

Students are often influenced in taking home economics courses by many sources such as the following. Use the numbers to refer to the following questions.

- | | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|------------------|
| 1. Parents | 4. Home Ec. Teachers | 7. Other people |
| 2. Friends | 5. Counselors | 8. Self interest |
| 3. Brothers or Sisters | 6. Other classroom teachers | 9. No one |

1. Who has encouraged you most to take Home Economics in the 9th grade? 1. ____
2. Who discouraged you from taking home economics in the 9th grade? 2. ____
3. Who encouraged you most to take home economics in high school? 3. ____
4. Who discouraged you most from taking home economics in high school? 4. ____
5. Who has encouraged you to continue home economics beyond high school? 5. ____
6. Who has discouraged you from taking any further instruction in home economics? 6. ____

* * * *

Essay Item: If you could improve the home economics program in any way you wished, what changes or improvements would you make?

SAMPLE TABULATION CARD

Below is a sample of the printed tabulation card used to handle data. The card itself was 5 x 8 inches in size. The completed cards were bound together by rings for ease in handling.

Grades
taken H. Ec. 9 10 11 12

Plans beyond
high school _____

Grade Point _____

Major Area _____

	Yes	Doubt- ful	No	No Opinion
1				
6				
11				
16				
2				
7				
12				
17				
3				
8				
13				
18				
4				
9				
14				
19				
5				
10				
15				
20				

Interest in areas:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____

Persons who influenced
your decisions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____
4. _____
5. _____
6. _____