Student perceptions of home economics: Image, skill needs, and enrollment influencers

by

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ABSTRACT

Perceptions of consumer and homemaking programs, skill needs, and influences on enrollment were summarized from two student populations, college students and General Educational Development (GED) students, who were either home economics program participants or nonparticipants as middle or secondary school students. The general perception from the combined student sample was positive. College students had a more positive perception of home economics programs than GED students. College students and home economics program participants perceived a greater need for consumer and homemaking skills than did GED students and nonparticipants. Highest skill needs in seven areas included: plan for financial needs for retirement, manage stress, observe home safety practices, handle family crisis, manage child health, purchase food within a budget, and plan for clothing needs and coordination. Greatest influencers on home economics program enrollment were: desire to take home economics, ability to learn useful skills and information, and friends. The value and the need for home economics was generally highly recognized, but the need to take consumer and homemaking courses was not strongly felt. Implications from the study include marketing efforts, recruitment efforts, and curriculum development.

INTRODUCTION

Perceptions

The public perceives home economics education programs to be unnecessary, lacking in academic rigor, and taught by incompetent instructors. Some would describe the curriculum as cooking and sewing (Moxley, 1984). Spitze (1983) reported secondary level home economics programs are viewed as lacking respect and credibility.

On the other hand, the attitudinal instruments for home economics education used in Pennsylvania gives home economists evidence that the public does support home economics education as part of the school's curriculum (Love, 1981). As part of the "Marketing Home Economics" project at Iowa State University, a survey was developed to ask students, parents, community members, administrators, and home economics teachers their perceptions of the importance of home economics content and their feelings toward home economics programs. The participants were positive regarding the importance of home economics content; 90 percent (18 out of 20) of the content areas were rated as being important or very important. The participants also had positive feelings toward home economics programs (Torrie & Schultz, 1989). Because students are not generally required to enroll in courses offered in most home economics

education programs in secondary schools, it may be appropriate to assume that students who do enroll in consumer and homemaking programs think the course content will be useful to them in their present and/or future lives (Griggs and McFadden, 1980). The general public's perception of home economics appears positive, yet incomplete (Johnson et al., 1987).

Skill Needs

Consumer and homemaking programs are designed to serve students by teaching knowledge, attitudes, and skills that will improve personal and family life and increase quality of life. Determining the needs of students and how they view themselves and the world around them are essential steps in planning and promoting home economics programs (Schultz, 1989). In order to provide effective home economics programs, educators must first discern program elements needed by their constituents. Formal methods should be used to gather objective data. The needs assessment survey is one tool that can assist in objective data gathering which can be used to determine whether or not a home economics program or course is meeting the needs of students (Love and Weis, 1985). States have some discretion over their consumer and homemaking programs in order to meet the needs of the people in their state. The opportunity to

develop programs that meet the unique needs of a state may well be one of the strongest aspects of the consumer and homemaking programs (Griggs & McFadden, 1980).

Enrollment

Although there seemed to be general support for vocational home economics programs as found by Burnett, Harrison, and Miller (1986), the trend continues to be one of declining enrollment. Spitze (1983) cited a challenge home economics programs face at the secondary level which included declining enrollment. Franz (1987) reported that 42 of the 50 states had documented decreased enrollments in vocational programs. More specifically, in home economics, decreased enrollments were found in 22 of the 50 states (Love, 1986).

Student Populations

Vocational educators see that vocational education can attend to the needs of all students. Dyrenfurth (1985) observes that vocational educators share concern for all students, the academically able, the average, and those with limited ability.

The student populations chosen for the study were General Educational Development (GED) students and college students. The chosen populations were diverse and allegedly underserved by home economics programs. The choice was to

attain insight into the range of students a home economics program must serve, and to attain insight to service the high school counterparts of GED students and college students, the at-risk students and academic-tracked students, who have presumed enrollment potential.

General Educational Development (GED) students have discontinued their secondary schooling before high school graduation and are working to achieve a high school equivalency diploma. GED students high school counterparts are at-risk students who are defined according to the Iowa Department of Education as "any student identified who is at risk of not: meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district, completing a high school education, or becoming a productive worker." From the Iowa Department of Education Iowa Guidance Surveys (1990), Iowa had 2.61% students discontinue their secondary education (grades 7-12), for fiscal year 1989. This was a total of 5,652 students.

The other student population chosen was college students; students who presumably have followed the high school college-bound coursework track which generally allows little if any room for vocational courses. Courses required for graduation rarely include vocational education, sustaining the assumption that graduation requirements and vocational education are mutually exclusive (Copa & Johnson,

1988). From the Iowa Department of Education Iowa Guidance Surveys (1990), the graduate follow-up state totals for high school graduate of 1988 were 37.7% or 13,004 students attending four-year public or private colleges. Total number of students attending some type of post-secondary schooling was 65% or 22,513. From the statistics cited in the Iowa Guidance Surveys researchers and educators gain insight concerning the enrollment potential from the two student populations chosen for the study.

Summary

Because all people utilize knowledge and skills inherent in home economics programs, all students could benefit from involvement in home economics programs to increase the quality of their personal, family, and occupational lives. Formal education in home economics to gain knowledge and skills would be potentially beneficial to every student. Home economics program enrollment must be maintained and increased to service the educational needs of our students and society.

The perceptions of home economics, course content to meet student needs, and enrollment in home economics programs are prominent concerns in home economics education. To work constructively and effectively with these concerns, documented accurate assessment of current perceptions of

home economics, perceptions of acquired and needed consumer and homemaking skills, and influences on home economics program enrollment are vital. Reliable and valid information is needed to provide the solid basis for decisions regarding home economics perceptions, home economics program promotion, and enrollment recruitment.

It is vital to recruitment efforts to conduct a careful study of the perceptions and needs of target audiences. It is important to be aware of both positive and negative perceptions which each audience has toward a home economics program. The use of surveys can be helpful in determining the perceptions and needs of target audiences toward home economics programs (Schultz, 1987).

The objectives of the study were:

1) To determine General Educational Development students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the influences on enrollment for middle and secondary consumer and homemaking programs.

2) To identify General Educational Development students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.

3) To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to

meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

Null hypotheses to be tested included:

1) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of home economics.

2) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of home economics.

3) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

4) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

5) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

6) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

Questionnaires were used to gather data concerning perceptions of home economics programs, home economics skills possessed and needed, demographics, home economics course involvement, promotional methods for home economics

programs, and influences on middle and secondary school home economics course enrollment.

OBJECTIVES

1. To determine General Educational Development students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the influences on enrollment for middle and secondary consumer and homemaking programs.
2. To identify General Educational Development students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.
3. To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

DEFINITIONS

Consumer and homemaking program: Refers to classes offered in the home economics department which include content in the areas of consumer and homemaking education; i.e., consumer and resource management, housing and living environments, individual, child, and family development, nutrition and food, and textiles and clothing (American Home Economics Association, 1989).

Consumer and homemaking skills: Abilities necessary to perform tasks and responsibilities related to all areas defined in consumer and homemaking program.

General Educational Development; GED: A testing program for students to gain high school equivalency; the overall goal of the General Educational Development Program is to provide a practical program of diagnosis, prescription instruction and test readiness for adults so that they may obtain their High School Equivalency Diploma.

FHA: Future Homemakers of America; a home economics national vocational student organization; emphasizes consumer homemaking education.

HERO: Home Economics Related Occupations; emphasizes preparation for jobs and careers in home economics related occupations.

ASSUMPTIONS

1. Participants completed questionnaires honestly and accurately.
2. The data collection instrument accurately assessed:
   a) perceptions of consumer and homemaking programs,
   b) perceived consumer and homemaking acquired skills and perceived consumer and homemaking needed skills,
   c) demographic data,
   d) level of involvement in consumer and homemaking programs, and
   e) influences on enrollment in consumer and homemaking programs.
3. Data were accurately analyzed and interpreted.

LIMITATIONS

1. The sample was students from one Iowa State University Family and Consumer Sciences college class and students from 18 General Educational Development sites in Iowa.
2. The self-assessment capabilities of the two survey populations may not be equal.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Perceptions

An overall vocational education goal is to provide appropriate vocational education experiences for all students who can benefit (Evans & Herr, 1978). In providing appropriate educational experiences, and to encourage students to take advantage of these experiences, students' perceptions have an important impact. Three areas of perceptions toward consumer and homemaking education programs were included in a review and synthesis of research in consumer and homemaking education covering the period from 1979 through 1985. These areas of perception are: image of consumer and homemaking programs, content to include in consumer and homemaking education courses to meet the needs of students, and influences on enrollment in consumer and homemaking programs (Redick et al., 1986).

Spitze (1983) cited a challenge home economics programs face at the secondary level which included lack of respect and credibility. Moxley (1984) found that the public perceives home economics education programs to be unnecessary, lacking in academic rigor, and taught by incompetent instructors.

Home economics is perceived entirely as cooking and sewing by many. This perception is partly due to the visual

impact of the home economics classrooms and laboratories. The remainder of the home economics curriculum is often far less visible (Moxley, 1984). Johnson, Holcombe, Kean, Woodward, Tweeten and Hafer (1987) found the image of home economics as "cooking and sewing" was very much present in their sample. In a study of Robinson (1987) professional school personnel also perceived home economics as teaching cooking skills.

Home economics has the largest number of students of all curriculum areas and the largest number of female students. In 1984-85, total statewide enrollment in home economics courses in Minnesota accounted for 40 percent of all secondary vocational enrollments. Female students outnumber male students 3 to 1 overall in this curriculum area (Minnesota State Department of Education, 1986). Based on enrollment data in many schools, home economics is perceived to be a woman's field (Moxley, 1984). In Robinson's (1987) study, home economics was also perceived to be a woman's field.

In a study by Stenberg (1989), superintendents, secondary principals, and guidance counselors viewed home economics as teaching students nutrition, preparing and purchasing nutritious foods, child development, becoming responsible parents and building healthy families. This

group did not believe home economics was teaching topics such as global food supply, financial services, future housing needs, becoming sexually responsible, or coordinating work and family. According to Johnson et al. (1987) the general public's perception of home economics appears positive, yet incomplete.

On the other hand, the attitudinal instruments for home economics education used in Pennsylvania gives home economists evidence that the public does support home economics education as part of the school's curriculum (Love, 1981). Because students are not generally required to enroll in courses offered in most home economics education programs in secondary schools, it may be appropriate to assume that students who do enroll in consumer and homemaking programs think the course content will be useful to them in their present and/or future lives (Griggs and McFadden, 1980).

As part of the "Marketing Home Economics" project at Iowa State University, Iowa vocational home economics teachers who attended the 1988 August vocational home economics teachers conference were asked to complete a survey on how they felt administrators, teachers, students, faculty, and parents perceived home economics programs. Based on the results of this preassessment instrument, a survey was developed to ask students, parents, community members,

administrators, and home economics teachers their perceptions of the importance of home economics content and their feelings toward home economics programs. The Iowa schools of 30 Patterns for Progress Key Leaders provided the sample for the survey. Results reflected the perceptions of those who responded. The participants were positive regarding the importance of home economics content; for respondents as a group, 90 percent (18 of 20) of the content areas were rated as being important or very important. The respondents also had positive feelings toward home economics programs (Torrie & Schultz, 1989). When involved and knowledgeable about a consumer and homemaking program, students, parents, community members, administrators, and teachers had very positive perceptions of home economics.

Skill Needs

Consumer and homemaking programs are designed to serve students by teaching knowledge, attitudes, behaviors and skills which will improve personal and family life and increase quality of life. A major thrust of the early home economics movement championed by Ellen H. Richards was to address needs of individuals and families. Consumer and homemaking education is an outgrowth of this early home economics movement. States have some discretion over their consumer and homemaking programs in order to meet the needs

of the people in their state. The opportunity to develop programs that meet the unique needs of a state may well be one of the strongest aspects of the consumer and homemaking programs (Griggs and McFadden, 1980).

In order to provide effective home economics programs, educators must first discern program elements needed by their constituents. Formal methods should be used to gather objective data. The needs assessment survey is one tool that can assist in objective data gathering which can be used to determine whether or not a home economics program or course is meeting the needs of students (Love and Weis, 1985).

Determining the needs of students and how they view themselves and the world around them are essential steps in planning and promoting home economics programs. Schultz (1989) provided insight into teenagers' views of the future, themselves, and the world by highlighting the following results from the American Home Economics Association's Survey of American Teens:

> Money is one of their major concerns.
>
> Health issues are a concern to today's teenagers. Over half have a friend who has thought about or committed suicide, and approximately one-third report having a friend who has been sexually abused.

Reflecting the changing sex-role attitudes in American society, four fifths believe that men and women should share equally in household tasks and less than one-fifth disapprove of women assuming jobs traditionally held by men.

Teens believe that schools help them most in choosing a career; in fighting the pressure to use drugs and alcohol; in providing information about sex, AIDS, and pregnancy; and in making important decisions.

The two life skills areas in which teenagers perceive the schools as helping them least relate to parenting and dealing with family crises such as death, divorce, or unemployment.

Parents are important in the lives of adolescents. Almost all of the young people interviewed believe that a job will be an important part of their future.

Monts and Barkley (1978) conducted a state-wide study in Arizona to identify empirically, the essential living skills perceived as important by men and women in their roles as family members, individuals, and employees. The researchers noted that the skill needs identified in their study could provide a sound basis for program development. Abt et al. (1978) identified and analyzed the tasks performed by homemakers in Colorado. This task identification outlined

skill needs to impact program development. The importance of specific home economics content for economically disadvantaged high school students was measured by a Nebraska home economics needs assessment (Johnson, 1986).

A North Dakota junior high home economics curriculum "Life Skills: A Concerns Approach" began with an assessment of learner concerns (Crawford, 1985). Another project, conducted with seven Louisiana parishes, was conducted to study home economics curriculum needs by surveying former secondary home economics students to determine which tasks they learned in class and which instruction would have been helpful to meet their needs (Daniel and Stewart, 1983). Illinois assessed their home economic programs to determine if the programs were conducive to meeting the needs of students enrolled in them (Griggs, 1984). In a Texas study the focus was on former student assessment of the usefulness of skills taught in consumer and homemaking education needed for the occupation of homemaking (Bell & Glosson, 1983).

Enrollment Influencers

Although there seemed to be general support for vocational home economics programs as found by Burnett, Harrison, and Miller (1986), the trend continues to be one of declining enrollment. Spitze (1983) noted declining enrollment in home economics programs. Decreased enrollments

were found in 22 of the 50 states (Love, 1986). Franz (1987) reported that 42 of the 50 states had documented decreased enrollments in vocational programs. The National Assessment of Vocational Education reported that the average amount of vocational education taken by students generally increased up to 1982. Since then average enrollments in vocational education have leveled off or declined slightly.

In 1978-79, 1147 schools included in the National Census Consumer and Homemaking Programs Project were asked to provide student enrollment for males and females in each taxonomy category offered in their vocational consumer and homemaking programs. Of the total students enrolled in vocational consumer and homemaking classes, 19% were males, and 81% were females. More than 70% of the males in vocational consumer and homemaking programs were enrolled in four taxonomy categories: comprehensive homemaking, foods and nutrition, family relations, and consumer education. Of the females, 68% were enrolled in four categories: comprehensive homemaking, clothing and textiles, food and nutrition, and child development. Senior high school programs tended to include both comprehensive homemaking classes and a variety of classes within the other taxonomy categories. Most junior high schools in the sample scheduled only comprehensive homemaking. Male and female students

appear to have preferences for different subject matter areas. Semester length courses focused on areas of concern may encourage larger student participation (Hughes, 1980).

Many home economics teachers who responded to the Iowa Home Economics Association (IHEA) survey believed enrollment was restricted by scheduling problems (83%), college requirements (78%), graduation requirements (52%), lack of parental and student understanding of program content (42%), and lack of administrative support (45%) (Moore, 1989).

Dyrenfurth (1985) in his national survey of vocational directors, found a narrowed opportunity for students to take vocational education in nearly every state. Reduced vocational education enrollment, reduced vocational education time blocks, less exploratory courses, and vocational education programs being cut have been common responses. Many secondary area vocational education centers face severe enrollment pressures. With tighter class schedules and less vocational offerings, many students may graduate with perhaps higher standardized test scores, yet seeking work and family roles without vocational skills.

Thomas and Arcus (1988) found that when educational progressive principles have been the priority in education, home economics has expanded; when the goal of education was

intellectual development through academic traditionalism, home economics programs were reduced.

It is clear from A Nation at Risk: The Imperative for Educational Reform (1983), and other sources of information, that home economics is perceived by many as one of the lesser important subject areas (Moxley, 1984). Reports have greatly influenced the demand for academic subjects, specifically, increases in English, math, and the sciences. A foreign language requirement for students considering college has often been added. This has effected the ability of students to enroll in electives such as home economics. Interested students may not be enrolling in vocational education programs because of increased academic requirements necessary to graduate (Goldberg, 1987).

A study by Love (1986) found that of the vocational directors in the 50 states and 6 territories, 45 reported increased graduation requirements and 8 reported no change. Only 15 reported vocational education was required for graduation and 38 had no vocational education requirements.

Goodlad (1984) believed that initial placement in an academic or vocational track often led to limited educational experiences because of the difficulty or impossibility of moving between the two areas. Lotto and Murphy (1987) believed that vocational education courses must be expanded

to attract academic students, and complement the academic program with a content which focuses on the application of knowledge and skills to experiences and problems.

It becomes apparent that administrators and counselors need to be knowledgeable about the goals and objectives in home economics programs in their schools. This group of professionals can directly control the offerings or scheduling of courses in home economics programs. They are influential in what the student elects to take during high school. Counselors especially have an impact on student scheduling and placement in high school classes (Stenberg, 1989).

Wendland's (1987) findings showed that teachers were more influential in determining enrollment than peers, guidance counselors, and principals. Others found peers to be more influential than teachers or counselors, although teachers were scored above counselors by most young people (Vaines & Arcus, 1987; Wall et al., 1983; Michigan State Department of Education, 1978).

A study by Nichols, Kennedy and Schumm (1983) found that the prior experience and feelings of competency in a subject area by the mother could be used to predict the amount of home economics the mother would want for her child in that same area. Role models were also found to be particularly

important in influencing nontraditional students (Veres & Carmichael, 1983). Goggans (1980) believed student apprehension about taking a vocational education course in what would be considered a nontraditional area is the result of the reaction of those who are influential in the personal life of the students--namely parents, peers, and other family members. Parents and peers often help determine the values and expectations that dictate behavior and influence decisions made by the student.

Student Populations

The student populations chosen for the study were General Educational Development (GED) students and college students. The choice was to attain insight into the range of students a home economics program must serve, and to attain insight to service particular populations who have high school counterparts, the at-risk students and academic-tracked students, with presumed enrollment potential.

Vocational educators see that vocational education can attend to the needs of all students. Dyrenfurth (1985) observes that vocational educators share concern for all students entrusted to the school, the academically able, the average, and the limited ability. In recognizing the need for schools to serve students of all abilities and a whole spectrum of learning styles, vocational educators are

apprehensive toward the school curriculum being slanted so strongly toward traditional academics. The single-mindedness of the reformers toward academics will result in failure to recognize diversity of need.

A striking characteristic of secondary vocational education is that student participation is nearly universal. As expected, students who plan to complete their education at the end of high school (work-bound students) are the largest consumers of vocational education. We find that academically disadvantaged students and students with handicaps clearly take more vocational education than do academically advantaged and nonhandicapped students. Surprisingly, college-bound students also take substantial amounts of vocational education. In 1982, students planning to attend postsecondary vocational institutions or college accounted for nearly three-quarters of all vocational credits taken by high school graduates. For 1982 graduates, students who planned to work after high school took an average of 6.06 credits of vocational education during high school. Students who aspired to attend a postsecondary vocation-technical institution averaged 5.81 credits, students who planned to attend some college averaged 4.55 credits, and students who planned to graduate from college averaged 3.17 credits. The breadth of participation in vocational education presents

major challenges to educators. One challenge is adapting the vocational curriculum to provide a range of courses to serve students with different educational and work goals (Wirt et al. 1989).

One student population chosen was General Educational Development (GED) students. GED students have discontinued their secondary schooling before high school graduation and are now working to achieve a high school equivalency diploma. GED students' high school counterparts would be at-risk students who are defined according to the Iowa Department of Education as "any student identified who is at risk of not: meeting the goals of the educational program established by the district, completing a high school education, or becoming a productive worker. These students include, but are not limited to, those identified as: dropouts, potential dropouts, teenage parents, drug users, drug abusers, low academic achievers, abused and homeless children, youth offenders, economically deprived, minorities, culturally deprived (rural isolated), culturally different, those with sudden negative changes in performance due to environmental or physical trauma and those with language barriers, gender barriers and disabilities."

From the Iowa Department of Education Iowa Guidance Surveys (1990), Iowa had 2.61% students discontinue their

secondary education (grades 7-12), for fiscal year 1989. This was a total of 5,652 students. Vocational education may serve an important function in keeping potential dropouts in school. Mertens, Seitz, and Cox (1982) found that among students in high-probability dropout groups, the more vocational education they had, the less likely they were to leave school.

In a more recent study of matched groups of students in New York City, Perlmutter (1982) found that students who applied to attend specialized vocational high schools and were admitted were more likely to graduate. Lotto (1983) concludes that vocational education helps avoid the liabilities of dropping out and gives salable skills. Vocational programs offer alternatives for those students tempted to drop out of school.

Eisen (1986) says that vocational education is not a dropout program and not an alternate education for the noncollege-bound. Vocational education serves all students. A 1984 National Gallup Poll cited in The Unfinished Agenda reported that 37 percent of the general public feel some vocational education should be required for the college-bound.

The other student population chosen was college students; students who presumably have followed the high

school college-bound coursework track which generally allows little if any room for vocational courses. Courses required for graduation rarely include vocational education, sustaining the assumption that graduation requirements and vocational education are mutually exclusive (Copa & Johnson, 1988). Even those who do continue their education beyond graduation can benefit from the vocational skills learned in high school. Interests developed in high school vocational education might be the basis upon which some students direct their further education (Pucel, 1984, Saul and Gull, 1985). From the Iowa Department of Education Iowa Guidance Surveys (1990), the graduate follow-up state totals for high school graduate of 1988 were 37.7% or 13,004 students attending four-year public or private colleges. Total number of students attending some type of post-secondary schooling was 65% or 22,513. From the statistics from the Iowa Guidance Surveys researchers and educators gain insight concerning the enrollment potential from the two student populations chosen for the study.

Copa (1984) states that vocational education in the secondary school is a place to learn, a way to learn, and a reason to learn. It is a place to learn by providing a niche in the school where students with a common interest in work and family roles can come together to pursue their

educational needs. Vocational education as a way to learn provides an alternative integrating body and mind. As a reason to learn, vocational education can provide the motivation and relevance to learning necessary content which under other circumstances would be very unappealing. As such, vocational education can equitably and effectively serve a wide diversity of students.

Pucel (1984) agrees with some of these same perspectives on the role of vocational education in the high school curriculum because it provides an alternative learning mode for the many students who cannot learn, or do not want to learn through typical academic classes. He points out that it is not that vocational students cannot learn, but that they learn differently; that the method for learning used in vocational education is more consistent with the cognitive development of some students. Vocational education also makes academic subjects more relevant by the use of real objects and real problems. Mathematics, science and English are taught when they are needed to do practical tasks and the relevance of such knowledge is then appreciated. Some students, Pucel notes, helped by vocational education through a stage of cognitive development, become able to later learn abstraction more effectively.

Summary

The concept of work, whether in a family or job setting, is central to vocational education. Vocational home economics education prepares youth and adults for competence in the work of the family as well as for occupations based on home economics skills. Perennial problems of nurturing human development, feeding, clothing, and housing people, and managing finite resources are faced by each generation across cultures and over time. Home economics enables individuals to solve such problems in satisfying ways. Because all people utilize knowledge and skills inherent in home economics programs, all students could benefit from involvement in home economics programs to increase the quality of their personal, family, and occupational lives. Home economics knowledge and skills are used and needed by everyone. Formal education in home economics to gain knowledge and skills would be potentially beneficial to every student. Home economics program enrollment must be maintained and increased to service the educational needs of our students and society (American Home Economics Association, 1989).

It is vital to recruitment efforts to conduct a careful study of the needs and attitudes of target audiences. It is important to be aware of both positive and negative perceptions which each audience has toward a home economics

program. The use of surveys can be helpful in determining the perceptions and needs of target audiences toward home economics programs (Schultz, 1987).

The perceptions of home economics, course content that meets student needs, and enrollment in home economics programs are prominent concerns in home economics education. To work constructively and effectively with these concerns, documented accurate assessment of current perceptions of home economics, perceptions of acquired and needed consumer and homemaking skills, and influences on home economics program enrollment are vital. Reliable and valid information is needed to provide the solid basis for decisions regarding home economics perceptions, home economics program promotion, and enrollment recruitment.

The objectives of the study were:

1) To determine General Educational Development students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the influences on enrollment for middle and secondary consumer and homemaking programs.

2) To identify General Educational Development students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.

3) To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

Null hypotheses to be tested included:

1) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of home economics.

2) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of home economics.

3) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

4) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

5) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

6) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

Questionnaires were used to gather data concerning perceptions of home economics programs, home economics skills

possessed and needed, demographics, home economics course involvement, promotional methods for home economics programs, and influences on middle and secondary school home economics course enrollment.

PROCEDURE

The major purpose of the study was to document college and General Educational Development (GED) student perceptions of home economic programs as a basis for making recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, develop content effective in meeting consumer and homemaking skill needs of students, and positively impact home economic program enrollment. Unique features of the study include sampling diverse student populations and acquiring data from both participants and nonparticipants in home economics programs.

The specific objectives of the study were:

1) To determine GED students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the enrollment influencers of middle and secondary school consumer and homemaking programs.

2) To identify GED students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.

3) To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

Description of the Sample

Two diverse student populations were chosen for this research study because of the enrollment potential for their high school counterparts. The student populations selected were college students and General Educational Development (GED) students because they have high school counterparts, the academic-tracked college-bound students and the at-risk potential drop-out students, who are target audiences for enrollment. One student sample was the Iowa State University Family and Consumer Sciences Education Introduction to Home Economics course with 170 students. The other student sample was students attending 18 General Educational Development sites in Iowa to gain their high school equivalency diplomas. The sites average about eight students each; GED students N=149. All students, males and females, former participants and nonparticipants in middle and secondary home economics programs, responded to the questionnaire. All students were categorized as adults, ages ranged from 18 to 38 or older. All individuals were enrolled in either a college course or at a GED site; hence, the sample possessed a broad range of ability levels.

Development of the Survey Instrument

To collect the data necessary to accomplish the objectives of this study, a home economics survey instrument

was developed. The instrument was a self-report inventory with Likert-type scales, checklists, and multiple choice items. The survey instrument consisted of three parts: 1) Attitudes Toward Home Economics, 2) Consumer and Homemaking Skills, and 3) General Information, which included demographics, home economics courses enrolled in, semesters of home econonomics completed, methods recalled to promote home economics, and enrollment influencers.

The first part, Attitudes Toward Home Economics, had 30 statements to reveal perceptions of home economics programs. Refer to Appendix C for the Perceptions of Home Economics Programs Content Outline which was used for content validation, and which had the statements grouped into four subscales, value, content, characteristics, and people. Respondents used the five-point Likert-type response mode, "1" indicating strongly disagree to "5" indicating strongly agree.

The second part, Consumer and Homemaking Skills, had 71 skills in a checklist format. The skills were grouped into seven subscales reflecting home economics program areas: consumer management, personal development (individual development/resource management), housing (housing and living environments), family living (family development), child development, food and nutrition, and textiles and clothing. All skills within a home economics area remained

grouped together on the questionnaire. Two responses were to be given for each skill, either "1" have skill or "2" do NOT have skill; and either "3" need skill or "4" will NOT need skill.

The third part, general information, was subdivided into three sections. There were six multiple choice demographic items including gender, age, employment status, marital status, number of children, and community size. Participation in FHA/HERO and the number of semesters of home economics completed were also items included. The next section had two checklists. The respondent indicated the home economics courses he/she enrolled in for the first checklist, and indicated methods used to promote home economics in the second checklist. The last section had a two-part checklist to indicate reasons that influenced the respondents' enrollment in home economics. Refer to Appendix C for the Enrollment Influencers Content Outline.

The survey was submitted to experts in the field to determine its usability. Two current home economics teachers with 23 years of combined teaching experience validated the instrument with the content outlines. Three graduate students in the field critically reviewed the survey instrument. Three experts reviewed the survey instrument regarding format of instrument and data to be

collected for statistical analysis. Revisions were made according to suggestions given.

Human Subjects Committee Review

The Iowa State University Committee on the Use of Human Subjects in Research reviewed the survey instrument and approval was obtained March 30, 1990. The committee concluded that the rights and welfare of the human subjects were adequately protected, that risks were outweighed by the potential benefits and expected value of the knowledge sought, that confidentiality of data was assured and that informed consent was obtained by appropriate procedures.

Pilot Test

The survey instrument was pilot-tested with nine high school special education students and ten adults. Males and females were represented. Both clarity of items and length of time for completion of the questionnaire were determined. Results of the pilot test indicated that the respondents answered the questionnaire within 20 minutes and had little difficulty in interpreting the items.

Data Collection

Data for the study were collected by the same questionnaire in two ways from the two populations. Questionnaires were distributed during a college class

session at Iowa State University in the Family and Consumer Sciences Education Introduction to Home Economics course and returned within two weeks. A list of GED instructor names, GED site locations and phone numbers was secured from the community college coordinator. All instructors were contacted by phone. Survey instruments, cover letters, teacher letters, and postage-paid addressed envelopes were sent to the sites. Postcards served as first and second follow-ups to GED instructors to return student questionnaires. GED sites were again contacted to encourage more student participation and thus improve the return rate.

Data Analysis

After the survey instruments were collected, weights were reversed for responses on the unfavorable statements on the 30 Likert-type scale items. All responses were hand-entered and statistically analyzed with the SPSS-X program at Iowa State University. Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, percentages, means, ranges, and correlations were computed. T-tests were run to see if there were significant differences between GED and college students, and home economics program participants and non-participants, on the variables of home economics program perception (attitude), consumer and homemaking acquired skills, and consumer and homemaking needed skills.

Content validation typically takes place during instrument development. It is primarily a matter of preparing detailed construct content, and then developing a instrument that covers all the content. The items should adequately cover those attitudinal topics included in the construct to be measured. The content validation procedure is a matter of analyzing the content included in the measuring instrument and the construct to be measured, and judging the degree of correspondence between them (Gronlund & Linn, 1990). The investigator prepared the Perceptions of Home Economics Programs Content Outline and the Enrollment Influencers Content Outline and developed the instrument to include all content as outlined. Two current home economics teachers with 23 years of combined teaching experience validated the instrument with the content outlines.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 233 students out of a possible 319 responded to the questionnaire used in this study, a response rate of 73%. Ninety-two out of 149 GED students from 18 GED sites returned usable questionnaires. One hundred forty-one out of 170 college students returned usable questionnaires. The return rates were 61.7% and 82.9% respectively.

The objectives of the study were:

1) To determine General Educational Development students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the influences on enrollment for middle and secondary consumer and homemaking programs.

2) To identify General Educational Development students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.

3) To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

Null hypotheses tested included:

1) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of home economics.

2) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of home economics.

3) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

4) There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

5) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticpants' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills.

6) There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

The topics included in this findings and discussion chapter are:

demographic characteristics,
semesters of home economics completed,
membership in home economics student organizations,
courses students enrolled in,
methods recalled to promote home economics,
perceptions of home economics,
consumer and homemaking acquired and needed skills,
enrollment influencers,

comparisons of GED students and college students on:

perceptions of home economics,

consumer and homemaking acquired skills, and

consumer and homemaking needed skills;

comparisons of home economics program participants and nonparticipants on:

perceptions of home economics,

consumer and homemaking acquired skills, and

consumer and homemaking needed skills.

Demographic Characteristics

Male respondents accounted for 18.3% of the combined sample; the GED student sample had 19.1% males, and the college student sample had 17.7% males. In the combined sample, 57.6% of students were age 18-22; the GED student sample had 28.9% students age 18-22, and the college student sample had 75.9% students age 18-22. In the combined sample, 11.7% of students were 38 or older; the GED sample had 26.7% students 38 or older, while only 2.1% were in the 38 or older age bracket for college students. For the GED student sample, 33.0% had full-time paid employment, 20.5% had part-time paid employment, 20.5% were seeking employment, 25.0% were full-time homemakers, and 1.1% was a full-time student. The college student sample had .7% full-time paid employment, 55.3% part-time paid employment, 4.3%

seeking employment, .7% full-time homemakers, and 39.0% full-time students. Of the GED student group, 58.4% were single, while 87.2% of the college student group were single. There were 69.7% of the combined sample that had no children; 34.4% in the GED student sample and 92.2% in the college student sample. Another 24.4% of the GED student sample had three or more children while only 3.5% of college students did. Forty-nine percent of GED students indicated they did not know population size range for their community. The 77.8% of the total sample that did respond were divided relatively evenly among the three community sizes provided.

Insert Table 1 about here

Semesters of Home Economics Completed

A total of 29 students from the combined sample (13.7%) reported completing zero semesters of home economics courses at either the middle or secondary school level; 24.7 percent of the GED student sample and 7.4% of the college student sample. The combined student sample who completed one semester of home economics was 14.6%. In the GED student sample 19.5% completed one semester of home economics while 11.9% of the college student sample completed one semester. Twenty-five percent of the total student sample completed two semesters of home economics. Two semesters of home

Table 1. Demographic characteristics

Characteristics	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Gender						
Male	17	19.1	25	17.7	42	18.3
Female	72	80.9	116	82.3	188	81.7
Age						
18-22	26	28.9	107	75.9	133	57.6
23-27	11	12.2	22	15.6	33	14.3
28-32	16	17.8	5	3.5	21	9.1
33-37	13	14.4	4	2.8	17	7.4
38 or older	24	26.7	3	2.1	27	11.7
Employment Status						
Full-time, paid	29	33.0	1	0.7	30	13.1
Part-time, paid	18	20.5	78	55.3	96	41.9
Seeking employment	18	20.5	6	4.3	24	10.5
Full-time homemaker	22	25.0	1	0.7	23	10.0
Full-time student	1	1.1	55	39.0	56	24.5
Marital Status						
Single	52	58.4	123	87.2	175	76.1
Married	37	41.6	18	12.8	55	23.9
Number of Children						
None	31	34.4	130	92.2	161	69.7
One	14	15.6	5	3.5	19	8.2
Two	23	25.6	1	0.7	24	10.4
Three or more	22	24.4	5	3.5	27	11.7

Table 1. Continued

Community Size						
0-6000	17	19.1	47	33.3	64	27.8
6001-30,000	20	22.5	36	25.5	56	24.3
30,000 or more	8	9.0	51	36.2	59	25.7
Don't know	44	49.4	7	5.0	51	22.2

economics were completed by 20.8% of the GED student sample while 24.4% of the college student sample completed two semesters. Four semesters of home economics were completed by 16.5% of the combined student sample. GED and college student samples completed four semesters of home economics at 15.6% and 17.0% respectively.

Insert Table 2 about here

Membership in Home Economics Student Organizations

For the combined student sample, 30.8% reported that neither Future Homemakers of America (FHA) nor Home Economics Related Occupations (HERO) were offered in their middle and/or high school. Where FHA and/or HERO was offered, 62.0% of the combined sample indicated they were not members. Two GED students reported HERO membership, and 8 GED students and 6 college students were FHA members. Total membership in home economics student organizations accounted for 7.2% of the combined student sample.

Insert Table 3 about here

Table 2. Semesters of home economics completed

Semesters	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
None	19	24.7	10	7.4	29	13.7
1	15	19.5	16	11.9	31	14.6
2	16	20.8	37	27.4	53	25.0
3	3	3.9	11	8.1	14	6.6
4	12	15.6	23	17.0	35	16.5
5	2	2.6	9	6.7	11	5.2
6	5	6.5	12	8.9	17	8.0
7	0	0	4	3.0	4	1.9
8	1	1.3	9	6.7	10	4.7
9	1	1.3	2	1.5	3	1.4
10	1	1.3	1	0.7	2	0.9
11	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.5
12	0	0	0	0.0	0	0.0
13	1	1.3	0	0.0	1	0.5
14	0	0	1	0.7	1	0.5

Table 3. Membership in home economics student organizations

Membership	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
FHA	8	9.8	6	4.3	14	6.3
HERO	2	2.4	0	0.0	2	0.9
Neither	44	53.7	93	66.9	137	62.0
Not Offered	28	34.1	40	28.8	68	30.8

Courses Students Enrolled In

Foods and nutrition ranked as the most frequent course enrolled in; combined student sample, 68.1%, GED students, 64.8%, college students, 70.2%. Child development ranked second in frequency for combined student sample, 53.9%, and college student sample, 67.4%, but ranked fourth for GED, 33.0%. Clothing ranked third most frequent for the combined student sample, 46.6%, fourth most frequent for college student sample, 42.6%, and second for GED student sample, 52.7%. Family living ranked fourth for combined student sample, 36.2%, sixth for college student sample, 36.2%, and third for GED student sample, 36.3% Exploratory ranked fifth most frequent course enrolled in for combined student sample, 34.9%, third for college student sample, 48.9%, and 13.2% of the GED students reported enrollment in an exploratory course. Comprehensive courses rank sixth for combined student sample, 28.9%, fifth for college, 39.0%, and 13.2% of the GED students reported enrollment in a comprehensive course.

Insert Table 4 about here

Methods Recalled to Promote Home Economics

Students indicated methods they recalled that were used to promote home economics when they attended grades 6-12.

Table 4. Courses students enrolled in

Courses	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Foods and nutrition	59	64.8	99	70.2	158	68.1
Child development	30	33.0	95	67.4	125	53.9
Clothing	48	52.7	60	42.6	108	46.6
Family living	33	36.3	51	36.2	84	36.2
Exploratory	12	13.2	69	48.9	81	35.9
Comprehensive	12	13.2	55	39.0	67	28.9
Consumer education	15	16.5	39	27.7	54	23.3
Parenthood education	22	24.2	28	19.9	50	21.6
Personal development	14	15.4	31	22.0	45	19.4
Personal finance	13	14.3	27	19.1	40	17.2
Housing	19	20.9	14	9.9	33	14.2
Independent living	19	20.9	12	8.5	31	13.4
Management	12	13.2	17	12.1	29	12.5

The combined student results reported peer recommendation and bulletin board/exhibit/display as methods of home economics promotion most frequently recalled, 47.4% for each method. Open house/parent night ranked next, 43.1%, and parent-teacher conference, 34.9%, school newsletter, 31.0%, and career day, 27.6, followed. GED students reported parent-teacher conference first in frequency, 41.8%, while college students ranked it fifth, 30.5%. Open house/parent night ranked second for GED students at 39.6%, while college-student rank was third at 45.4%. Bulletin board/exhibit/display and peer recommendation ranked third and fourth for GED students, 38.5% and 35.2% respectively. Peer recommendation, 55.3%, and bulletin board/exhibit/ display, 53.2%, were the most frequent methods for college students. School newsletter ranking was similar for the two student groups, fifth for GED, 29.7%, and fourth for college students, 31.9%. Career day ranked sixth for GED students, 20.9%, and fourth for college students, 31.9%. Newspaper article was ranked sixth by college students, 28.4%, while 16.5% of the GED students recalled home economics promotion via newspaper article.

Insert Table 5 about here

Table 5. Methods recalled to promote home economics

Methods	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Peer recommendation	32	35.2	78	55.3	110	47.4
Bulletin board etc.	35	38.5	75	53.2	110	47.4
Open house/parent night	36	39.6	64	45.4	100	43.1
Parent-teacher conference	38	41.8	43	30.5	81	34.9
School newsletter	27	29.7	45	31.9	72	31.0
Career day	19	20.9	45	31.9	64	27.6
Newspaper article	15	16.5	40	28.4	55	23.7
Pamphlet/flyer/brochure	11	12.1	20	14.2	31	13.4
Videotape	4	4.4	19	13.6	23	10.0
Teacher letter	9	9.9	14	9.9	23	9.9
Booklet	6	6.6	15	10.6	21	9.1
Teacher phone call	7	7.7	8	5.7	15	6.5
TV coverage or talk show	3	3.3	11	7.8	14	6.0
Teacher visit to home	3	3.3	7	5.0	10	4.3

Perceptions of Home Economics

The first part of the questionnaire, Attitudes Toward Home Economics, had 30 Likert-type items concerning perceptions of home economics. Refer to Appendix C for the Perceptions of Home Economics Programs Content Outline which had the statements grouped into four subscales--value, content, characteristics, and people. Students responded to positive and negative statements about home economics on a 5-point scale: 5 strongly agree, 4 agree, 3 don't know, 2 disagree, and 1 strongly disagree. Two-hundred and thirty-three students responded to the questionnaire. Negative statements had weights reversed for statistical analysis. All negative statements had the language reversed for reporting. Discussion of the results has generally had the agree responses, numbers 4 and 5, combined, and the disagree responses, numbers 1 and 2, combined. Number 3 response in the middle of the scale represents "don't know" and a neutral position. Considering the sample populations involved in the study, it was felt that to decipher between "don't know" and "neutral" would not have been consistently feasible for the respondents.

In item 1, 72.4% of the students were aware of home economics courses offered in their school, while 18.6% of the students were not aware. In item 2, 5.3% of the students responded that home economics teaches more than

cooking and sewing, while 40.4% of the students did not think home economics taught more than cooking and sewing. In item 23, 45.0% of the students did not think cooking and sewing were main topics in all home economic courses, and 45.0% of the students did think cooking and sewing were main topics in all home economics courses.

In item 13, 85.0% of the students thought home economics improved the quality of life, while only 4.7% of the students did not think so. In item 25, 73.1% of the students responded that home economics contributes to success in personal life, while 7.8% of the students disagreed. In item 30, 62.8% of the students thought home economics to be helpful in any job, while 16.9% of the students did not consider home economics to be helpful in any job.

In item 5, 82.9% of the students reported they frequently use home economics skills, while 12.0% of the students said they did not. In item 19, 91.3% of the students said there is an equal need for home economics by both males and females, while only 5.6% of the students said this was not the case. Yet in item 7, only 27.9% of the students responded that they needed to take home economics classes to learn consumer and homemaking skills, while 55.4% of the students responded that they did not need home economics classes to learn consumer and homemaking skills.

In item 4, 88.8% of the students, with 63.5% of the students who strongly agree, responded they respect males enrolled in home economics, while 6.8% of the students do not respect males taking home economics. In item 28, 62.0% of the students thought male students were not favored, while 10.0% of the students thought male students in home economics were favored. In item 24, 57.1% of the students said home economics students were not teased, but 26.4% of the students said home economics students were teased.

In item 3, 79.3% of the students expected to learn about proper nutrition in home economics, while 12.0% of the students did not expect to learn about proper nutrition. In item 12, 77.7% of the students responded that people can learn parenting skills prior to parenthood, while 15.8% of the students disagreed. In item 15, 82.3% of the students did think math skills are needed in home economics, while 9.1% of the students thought math skills unnecessary for home economics. In item 22, 42.9% of the students thought home economics included consumer management, while 22.9% of the students thought consumer management was not part of home economics. In item 26, 44.1% of the students thought science knowledge was needed in home economics, while 23.3% of the students did not think this was a need. In item 27, 49.4% of the students responded that home economics taught

time management, while 22.0% of the students did not think time management was included in home economics.

In item 29, 61.0% of the students considered the home economics room attractive, while 16.9% of the students considered it unattractive. In item 9, 56.6% of the students considered the home economics equipment modern, while 13.8% of the students considered the home economics room equipment not modern. In item 21, 53.3% of the students considered the home economics courses current, while 18.7% of the students thought home economics courses were not current. In item 17, 64.5% of the students thought home economics credits look good on a high school transcript, while 10.4% of the students thought home economics credits make a high school transcript look poor. In item 16, 68.5% of the students would support some home economics required as part of high school graduation requirements, while 15.9% of the students would be opposed to this. In item 10, 36.5% of the students reported that home economics classes were not easy credits, but 47.7% of the students thought home economics classes were easy credits.

In item 8, 30.0% of the students had parents that supported home economics, while 26.7% of the students said their parents did not support home economics and 43.3% of the students were neutral or didn't know. In item 14, 67.0%

of the students reported that the guidance counselor encouraged home economics, while only 5.2% of the students reported being discouraged to take home economics by the guidance counselor. In item 18, 28.2% of the students revealed that their principal supported the home economics program, while 9.6% of the students said the principal did not support the home economics program, and 62.3% of the students were neutral or did not know.

In item 11, 44.6% of the students felt the home economics teacher encouraged enrollment, while 18.8% of the students did not, and 36.5% of the students were neutral or did not know. In item 6, 68.8% of the students felt they could comfortably ask the home economics teacher for advice, while 13.9% of the students felt they could not. In item 20, 68.0% of the students thought the home economics teacher taught well, while 7.8% of the students thought the home economics teacher did not teach well.

Insert Table 6 about here

Consumer and Homemaking Skills

A two-part checklist with 71 items concerning consumer and homemaking skills was devised. The 71 skills were grouped into seven areas of home economics that created seven skill subscales: consumer management, personal

Table 6. Perceptions of home economics

The language of negative items on the questionnaire has been reversed for the table.
Response number meanings: 5 strongly agree
4 agree
3 don't know
2 disagree
1 strongly disagree

Item	Combined Student Sample Response									
	5		4		3		2		1	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
1. Was aware of home economics courses offered	38	16.4	130	56.0	21	9.1	34	14.7	9	3.9
2. Home economics teach more than cooking & sewing	40	17.2	84	36.1	15	6.4	75	32.2	19	8.2
3. Expect to learn proper nutrition	53	22.8	131	56.5	20	8.6	24	10.3	4	1.7
4. Respect males enrolled in home economics	148	63.5	59	25.3	10	4.3	11	4.7	5	2.1
5. Frequently use home economics skills	108	46.4	85	36.5	12	5.2	22	9.4	6	2.6
6. Comfortable to ask for advice	61	26.4	98	42.4	40	17.3	23	10.0	9	3.9
7. Need home economics classes to learn skills	8	3.4	57	24.5	39	16.7	105	45.1	24	10.3
8. Parents support home economics	14	6.0	56	24.0	101	43.3	50	21.5	12	5.2
9. Modern home economics equipment	14	6.0	118	50.6	69	29.6	23	9.9	9	3.9
10. Home economic classes not easy credits	13	5.6	72	30.9	37	15.9	88	37.8	23	9.9

Table 6. Continued

Response number meanings:
5 strongly agree
4 agree
3 don't know
2 disagree
1 strongly disagree

Item	Combined Student Sample Response									
	5		4		3		2		1	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
11. Home economics teacher encouraged enrollment	18	7.7	86	36.9	85	36.5	39	16.7	5	2.1
12. Can learn parenting skills prior to parenthood	61	26.2	120	51.5	15	6.4	22	9.4	15	6.4
13. Home economics improves quality of life	79	33.9	119	51.1	24	10.3	8	3.4	3	1.3
14. Guidance counselor encouraged home economics	51	21.9	105	45.1	65	27.9	9	3.9	3	1.3
15. Math skills needed in home economics	58	25.0	133	57.3	20	8.6	18	7.8	3	1.3
16. Require some home economics for graduation requirements	45	19.4	114	49.1	36	15.5	27	11.6	10	4.3
17. Home economics credits look good on transcript	52	22.5	97	42.0	58	25.1	19	8.2	5	2.2
18. Principal supported home economics program	8	3.5	57	24.7	144	62.3	17	7.4	5	2.2
19. Equal need for home economics by both male and female	89	38.5	122	52.8	7	3.0	9	3.9	4	1.7
20. Home economics teacher taught well	38	16.5	119	51.5	56	24.2	15	6.5	3	1.3

Table 6. Continued

Response number meanings:
5 strongly agree
4 agree
3 don't know
2 disagree
1 strongly disagree

Item	Combined Student Sample Response									
	5		4		3		2		1	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
21. Home economics courses were current	18	7.8	105	45.5	65	28.1	38	16.5	5	2.2
22. Home economics teachers consumer management	12	5.2	87	37.7	79	34.2	47	20.3	6	2.6
23. Cooking & sewing not main topics in all courses	25	10.8	79	34.2	23	10.0	88	38.1	16	6.9
24. Home economics students not teases	31	13.4	101	43.7	38	16.5	55	23.8	6	2.6
25. Home economics contributes to success in personal life	40	17.3	129	55.8	44	19.0	15	6.5	3	1.3
26. Science needed in home economics	13	5.6	89	38.5	75	32.5	47	20.3	7	3.0
27. Home economics taught time management	6	2.6	108	46.8	66	28.6	47	20.3	4	1.7
28. Male students not favored	29	12.6	114	49.4	65	28.1	17	7.4	6	2.6
29. Attractive home economics room	21	9.1	120	51.9	51	22.1	35	15.2	4	1.7
30. Home economics helpful in any job	30	13.0	115	49.8	47	20.3	34	14.7	5	2.2

development, housing, family living, child development, food and nutrition, and textiles and clothing. For each skill listed, students responded to the first part of the checklist by marking "Have Skill" or "Do NOT Have Skill" and students responded to the second part of the checklist by marking "Need Skill" or "Will NOT Need Skill". Reported are the skills in each subscale that had the greatest percentage of student response for each of the four possible responses, "Have Skill", "Do NOT Have Skill", "Need Skill", and "Will NOT Need Skill".

In the consumer management area, 84.0% of the students marked they have the ability to compare purchases and services and 88.2% of the students can balance a checkbook. Skills students did not have were to buy insurance and health plans, 54.3%, and compute taxes or utilize sources of assistance, 54.5%. The highest skill needs reported were to compute taxes or utilize sources of assistance, 92.3%, and plan for financial needs for retirement, 93.1%. Use sources of public aid when needed, 21.6%, and balance a checkbook, 14.2%, were skills students reported they do not need. The variety of interpretations concerning not needing the skill of balancing a checkbook could include: Because I know how to balance a checkbook, I don't need to learn to do it; I know how to balance a checkbook but I never do it; I can

balance a checkbook but I just reconcile my check record with the bank statement when it comes.

In the personal development area, 95.0% of the students reported the ability to make responsible decisions and 96.4% of the students can maintain personal hygiene and grooming. Skills students did not have were to manage stress, 36.0%, and use home computers, 55.7%. The highest need reported was manage stress, 91.6%, and recognize how decisions are influenced by values, 91.5%. Other needs were to communicate clearly, 90.6%, make responsible decisions, 90.9%, and set long- and short-term goals, 90.1%. All personal development skills had 79.0% or higher need response. Skills not needed included to deal with boredom, 21.0%, and use home computers, 16.7%.

In the housing area, 91.1% of the students felt they could share a home with a roommate or family, and 95.5% of the students can clean a home. Skills students did not have were to make a home more energy efficient, 45.5%, finance a home, 36.6%, and select a home, 36.5%. The highest needs were to observe home safety practices, 90.3%, select a home, 89.8%, and finance a home, 89.0%. Some students felt they did not need skills to share a home with a roommate or a family, 19.4%, and decorate a home interior, 17.6%.

In the family living area, 88.2% of the students reported the ability to communicate effectively with family

members, and resolve conflict, 85.9%. Skills students did not have were to manage divorce, single parenting and recombined family, 57.5%, and combine and balance family members' income-producing jobs, 49.1%. The highest needs reported were combine and balance family members' income-producing jobs, 90.0%, and handle family crisis, 90.2%. Skills students did not feel they needed were to select a life partner, 21.8%, make decisions about marriage, 21.8%, and manage divorce, single parenting and recombined family, 35.6%.

In the child development areas, 81.8% of the students reported the ability to interact with, teach, entertain, and comfort children, and choose toys for children, 78.5%. Skills students did not have were to care for handicapped children, 66.5%, and manage child health, 42.3%. The highest needs reported were manage child health, 85.8%, and interact with, teach, entertain, and comfort children, 85.5%. Skills students did not feel they needed were care for handicapped children, 31.8%, and work with groups of children, 25.9%.

In the food and nutrition area, 85.8% of the students reported the ability to store food properly and bake food items, 85.0%. Skills students did not have were to maintain ideal weight, 33.6%, and maintain a healthful daily diet, 31.5%. The highest needs were to shop for and buy food

within a budget, 90.2%, maintain a healthful daily diet, 89.4%, and plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals, 89.4%. Over 84% of the students saw each food and nutrition skill as a need. The skills students felt were not needed were to evaluate convenience foods, 15.8%, and choose food and beverages wisely when eating out, 13.8%.

In the textile and clothing area, 96.9% of the students reported the ability to clean clothing and shop for and choose clothing for self and others, 93.7%. Skills students did not have were to sew fabric items or clothing including alter patterns, 49.5%, and repair and alter clothing, 42.3%. The highest needs were to plan wardrobe, 88.7%, and clean clothing, 87.4%. The skills students felt were not needed were to sew fabric items or clothing including alter patterns, 29.6%, and judge whether to make or purchase fabric items or clothing, 21.8%.

Insert Table 7 about here

Enrollment Influencers

Students in the sample responded to a checklist of enrollment influencers. The greatest reported influence on enrollment for both groups of students was their desire to take home economics courses, 51.3% combined, GED students, 47.3%, and college students, 53.9%. In the combined sample,

Table 7. Consumer and homemaking skills

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Consumer Management								
1. Get a loan	131	62.1	80	37.9	186	88.6	24	11.4
2. Make a budget	136	63.0	80	37.0	186	92.5	15	7.5
3. Anticipate expenses	177	82.7	37	17.3	182	91.5	17	8.5
4. Compare purchases and services	184	84.0	35	16.0	175	89.3	21	10.7
5. Use sources of public aid when needed	132	62.0	81	38.0	156	78.4	43	21.6
6. Buy insurance and health plans	96	45.7	114	54.3	185	90.2	20	9.8
7. Use credit wisely	153	71.5	61	28.5	182	89.7	21	10.3
8. Balance a checkbook	187	88.2	25	11.8	175	85.8	29	14.2
9. Compute taxes or utilize source of assistance	92	45.5	110	54.5	192	92.3	16	7.7
10. Plan for financial needs for retirement	57	27.4	151	72.6	190	93.1	13	6.4

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Personal Development								
11. Communicate clearly: be understood and understand others	192	88.1	26	11.9	184	90.6	18	8.9
12. Make responsible decisions	209	95	11	5	180	90.9	18	9.1
13. Recognize how decisions are influenced by values	181	83.8	35	16.2	183	91.5	17	8.5
14. Set long- and short-term goals	181	85	32	15	182	90.1	20	9.9
15. Plan time for work, routine tasks, rest, and leisure	178	82.0	39	18.0	176	87.6	25	12.4
16. Deal with boredom	148	69.8	64	30.2	158	79.0	42	21.0
17. Manage stress	135	64.0	76	36.0	186	91.6	17	8.4
18. Maintain personal hygiene and grooming	213	96.4	8	3.6	163	84.9	29	15.1
19. Practice good health habits	203	93.5	14	6.5	170	87.2	25	12.8
20. Practice responsible sexual decision-making	206	93.6	14	6.4	167	86.1	27	13.9
21. Use home computers	94	44.3	118	55.7	170	83.3	34	16.7

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Housing								
22. Share home with roommate or family	204	91.1	20	8.9	154	80.6	37	19.4
23. Utilize storage effectively	174	79.8	44	20.2	164	83.2	33	16.8
24. Decorate home interior	156	71.6	62	28.4	164	82.4	35	17.6
25. Observe home safety practices	184	86.4	29	13.6	176	90.3	19	9.7
26. Clean home	211	95.5	10	4.5	162	84.8	29	15.2
27. Select home	139	63.5	80	36.5	176	89.8	20	10.2
28. Finance home (purchase or rent)	137	63.4	79	36.6	178	89.0	22	11.0
29. Make home more energy efficient	120	54.5	100	45.5	177	88.5	23	11.5
30. Maintain home	175	80.3	43	19.7	168	87.5	24	12.5
31. Evaluate home technology (appliances, entertainment, computers, communications)	138	64.5	76	35.5	168	85.3	29	14.7

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Family Living								
32. Select life partner; make decisions about marriage	172	79.3	45	20.7	154	78.2	43	21.8
33. Employ measures for family planning	135	63.7	77	36.3	162	83.1	33	16.9
34. Combine and balance family members' income-producing jobs	108	50.9	104	49.1	181	90.0	20	10.0
35. Manage roles of wage-earner and homemaker for self	136	62.7	81	37.3	167	87.9	23	12.1
36. Communicate effectively with family members	195	88.2	26	11.8	168	86.6	26	13.4
37. Resolve conflict	183	85.9	30	14.1	170	86.3	27	13.7
38. Schedule activities with family members	178	81.7	40	18.3	170	86.3	27	13.7
39. Share responsibilities of household and child care	177	80.8	42	19.2	163	84.9	29	15.1
40. Handle family crisis (accident, illness, death)	162	74.3	56	25.7	175	90.2	19	9.8
41. Manage family health	154	71.6	61	28.4	164	85.9	27	14.1
42. Manage divorce, single parenting, recombined family	90	42.5	122	57.5	125	64.4	69	35.6

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Child Development								
43. Practice good prenatal health and nutrition including knowledge of genetic history	122	59.5	83	40.5	155	82.0	34	18.0
44. Select appropriate clothing for children	163	74.4	56	25.6	157	80.9	37	19.1
45. Plan, purchase and prepare appropriate foods for children	152	69.1	68	30.9	162	83.5	32	16.5
46. Choose toys for children	172	78.5	47	21.5	161	84.3	30	15.7
47. Manage child health (immunizations, illnesses, accidents)	127	57.7	93	42.3	163	85.8	27	14.2
48. Interact with, teach, entertain, and comfort children	180	81.8	40	18.2	165	85.5	28	14.5
49. Discipline children appropriately	162	73.6	58	26.4	160	82.9	33	17.1
50. Identify and report suspected child abuse	132	60.6	86	39.4	162	82.7	34	17.3
51. Select suitable child care	134	62.3	81	37.7	165	83.3	33	16.7
52. Care for handicapped children	71	33.5	141	66.5	135	68.2	63	31.8
53. Work with groups of children	137	64.0	77	36.0	146	74.1	51	25.9

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Food & Nutrition								
54. Maintain ideal weight	140	66.4	71	33.6	179	88.6	23	11.4
55. Maintain a healthful daily diet (food and beverages)	146	68.5	67	31.5	178	89.4	21	10.6
56. Choose foods and beverages wisely when eating out	167	77.0	50	23.0	168	86.2	27	13.8
57. Plan food purchases	167	76.3	52	23.7	170	87.6	24	12.4
58. Shop for and buy food within a budget	171	78.8	46	21.2	175	90.2	19	9.8
59. Evaluate convenience foods	152	71.4	61	28.6	165	84.2	31	15.8
60. Store food properly; prevent spoilage and waste	187	85.8	31	14.2	169	88.0	23	12.0
61. Bake food items (casseroles, desserts, breads, etc.)	187	85.0	33	15.0	165	86.6	26	13.4
62. Plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals	167	78.0	47	22.0	177	89.4	21	10.6
63. Plan and prepare nutritious snacks	172	80.4	42	19.6	177	87.6	25	12.4

Table 7. Continued

Skills	Combined Student Sample Response							
	Have		Do not have		Need		Do not need	
	#	%	#	%	#	%	#	%
Textiles & Clothing								
64. Plan wardrobe; plan clothing needs and coordination	199	91.7	18	8.3	172	88.7	22	11.3
65. Shop for and choose clothing for self and others	208	93.7	14	6.3	164	85.4	28	14.6
66. Judge whether to make or purchase fabric item or clothing	169	77.5	49	22.5	154	78.2	43	21.8
67. Repair and alter clothing	124	57.7	91	42.3	161	80.5	39	19.5
68. Clean clothing; launder and dry-clean	216	96.9	7	3.1	167	87.4	24	12.6
69. Sew fabric item or clothing including alter patterns	107	50.5	105	49.5	140	70.4	59	29.6
70. Eliminate unneeded clothing (recycle, give away, sell)	200	90.9	20	9.9	162	84.8	29	15.2
71. Shop for textile products for the home (blankets, sheets, towels, draperies, carpet, rugs, furniture, etc.)	191	85.7	32	14.3	164	86.3	26	13.7

19.4% reported not enrolling because they did not want to, GED students, 18.7%, and college students, 19.9%.

Being able to learn useful skills and information tallied second for the combined sample, 50.4%, although for students separately the amount of influence varied, GED students, 40.7%, and college students, 56.7%. In the combined sample, 44.4% indicated that friends did influence them to enroll, while 10.8% of the students reported friends influenced them against enrolling, GED students, 7.7% and college students, 12.8%. In the combined sample, 40.5% indicated that feeling comfortable in class influenced their enrollment, but only 33.0% of the GED students indicated comfort in class while 45.4% of the college students did. A similar discrepancy between the two student groups is reported on the teacher influencers, GED students, 17.6%, and college students, 29.1%.

Home economics classes fulfilling high school graduation requirements influenced enrollment in home economics for the two student groups differently, GED students, 22.0%, and college students, 42.6%. In the college sample, 9.2% planned post-secondary home economics education which positively influenced their enrollment at the secondary level.

Parents, 3.4%, and promotional efforts, 2.6%, were indicated to have the least influence on enrollment for the

combined sample. Parents had more influence for GED students, 6.6%, than college students, 1.4%. Only 3.4% of the parents in the combined sample limited enrollment. Guidance counselors were indicated to influence 26.3% of the students toward enrollment; 26.4% of the GED students and 26.2% of the college students. However, 8.5% of college students and 1.1% of GED students were influenced not to enroll by guidance counselors.

Only 5.5% of the GED student sample indicated enrollment because of being helpful in a job, while 26.2% of the college student sample did. Only 3.9% of the combined student sample reported that a job kept them from enrolling in home economics courses. Having no fee costs to pay was more influential on enrollment for GED students, 9.9%, than college students, 2.1%. High fee costs were reported by 8.8% of the GED students to limit their enrollment, while only 4.3% of college students reported this influence.

The combined sample reported that students different than themselves, the home economics teacher(s), and graduation requirements not being fulfilled detracted from their home economics enrollment at 7.8%, 7.3%, and 7.8% respectively. Class schedule conflict was reported by 28.4% of the combined sample, with only 11.0% indicated from the GED student sample and 39.7% indicated from the college sample. Prerequisite classes prevented enrollment for only

4.3% of the combined sample while college entrance requirements affected 16.3% of college students. High school graduation requirements prevented home economics enrollment for 31.9% of the college students and 14.3% of the GED students. Extra-curricular activities limited enrollment for 17.0% of the college students and 3.3% of the GED students.

Insert Table 8 about here

Comparisons

Comparisons were made with the use of t-tests. T-tests were used to determine whether there were significant differences between General Educational Development (GED) students and college students, and between middle and secondary school home economics program participants and nonparticipants.

The first part of the questionnaire, Attitudes Toward Home Economics, had 30 statements to reveal perceptions of home economics programs. Refer to Appendix C for the Perceptions of Home Economics Programs Content Outline which had the statements grouped into four subscales--value, content, characteristics, and people.

In Table 9, a t-test compared perception subscale score means between GED and college students. There were 92 GED

Table 8. Enrollment influencers

Did Enroll	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Wanted to	43	47.3	76	53.9	119	51.3
Useful skills & info	37	40.7	80	56.7	117	50.4
Friends	36	39.6	67	47.5	103	44.4
Comfortable in class	30	33.0	64	45.4	94	40.5
Fulfilled grad. require.	20	22.0	60	42.6	80	34.5
Fit in schedule	26	28.6	48	34.0	74	31.9
Guidance counselor	24	26.4	37	26.2	61	26.3
Teacher	16	17.6	41	29.1	57	24.6
Helpful in job	5	5.5	37	26.2	42	18.1
Labs & projects	10	11.0	26	18.4	36	15.5
Planned postsec. h.ec.ed.	4	4.4	13	9.2	17	7.3
No fee costs	9	9.9	3	2.1	12	5.2
Parents	6	6.6	2	1.4	8	3.4
Promotional efforts	4	4.4	2	1.4	6	2.6

Table 8. Enrollment influencers

Did Enroll	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Wanted to	43	47.3	76	53.9	119	51.3
Useful skills & info	37	40.7	80	56.7	117	50.4
Friends	36	39.6	67	47.5	103	44.4
Comfortable in class	30	33.0	64	45.4	94	40.5
Fulfilled grad. require.	20	22.0	60	42.6	80	34.5
Fit in schedule	26	28.6	48	34.0	74	31.9
Guidance counselor	24	26.4	37	26.2	61	26.3
Teacher	16	17.6	41	29.1	57	24.6
Helpful in job	5	5.5	37	26.2	42	18.1
Labs & projects	10	11.0	26	18.4	36	15.5
Planned postsec. h.ec.ed.	4	4.4	13	9.2	17	7.3
No fee costs	9	9.9	3	2.1	12	5.2
Parents	6	6.6	2	1.4	8	3.4
Promotional efforts	4	4.4	2	1.4	6	2.6

Table 8. Continued

Could Not/ Did Not Enroll	GED Number	GED Percent	College Number	College Percent	Combined Number	Combined Percent
Class schedule conflict	10	11.0	56	39.7	66	28.4
H.S. grad. requirements	13	14.3	45	31.9	58	25.0
Did not want to	17	18.7	28	19.9	45	19.4
Extra-curricular activity	3	3.3	24	17.0	27	11.6
Friends	7	7.7	18	12.8	25	10.8
College entrance req.	2	2.2	23	16.3	25	10.8
Students differed	6	6.6	12	8.5	18	7.8
Grad. req. not fulfilled	5	5.5	13	9.2	18	7.8
Teacher	5	5.5	12	8.5	17	7.3
High fee costs	8	8.8	6	4.3	14	6.0
Guidance counselor	1	1.1	12	8.5	13	5.6
Prerequisite classes	2	2.2	8	5.7	10	4.3
Job	2	2.2	7	5.0	9	3.9
Parents	3	3.3	5	3.5	8	3.4
Labs & projects	1	1.1	5	3.5	6	2.6

students and 141 college students. The perception subscale score means for GED students ranged from 3.30 with a standard deviation of 0.45 on the content subscale, to 3.59 with a standard deviation of 0.55 on the teacher subscale. The perception subscale means for college students ranged from 3.38 with a standard deviation of 0.60 on the characteristics subscale, to 3.89 with a standard deviation of 0.48 on the value subscale. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) between GED students and college students on the subscale score means of value and content. The college students scored higher on every home economics perception subscale.

Insert Table 9 about here

In Table 10, a t-test compared perception subscale score means between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. Participants were students who were involved in one or more semesters of middle and/or secondary home economics courses and nonparticipants were students who took no home economics courses. There were 183 home economics program participants and 29 nonparticipants. The perception subscale score means for home economics program participants ranged from 3.45 with a standard deviation of 0.60 on the characteristics subscale, to 3.82 with a

Table 9. T-test groups to compare perception subscale score means between GED and college students

Perception Subscales	GED Students			College Students			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Value	92	3.52	0.52	141	3.89	0.48	5.52**
Content	92	3.30	0.45	141	3.56	0.49	4.18**
Characteristics	92	3.36	0.57	141	3.38	0.60	.20
People	92	3.34	0.53	141	3.55	0.51	1.20
Teacher	92	3.59	0.55	141	3.63	0.61	.56

** $p < .01$

standard deviation of 0.50 on the value subscale. The perception subscale means for home economics program nonparticipants ranged from 2.99 with a standard deviation of 0.35 on the characteristics subscale, to 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.54 on the value subscale, and 3.48 with a standard deviation of 0.36 on the people subscale. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) between home economics program participants and nonparticipants on the perception subscale score means of value, characteristics, and teacher. The participants scored higher on every home economics perception subscale.

Insert Table 10 about here

The second part of the questionnaire, Consumer and Homemaking Skills, had 71 skills in a checklist format. The skills were grouped into seven home economics areas which created seven subscales: consumer management, personal development, housing, family living, child development, food and nutrition, and textiles and clothing. All skills within a subscale remained grouped together on the questionnaire.

In Table 11, a t-test compared "have" skill subscale score means between GED students and college students. Because of missing data, the number of surveys analyzed ranged from 83 to 89 for GED students, and from 140 to 141

Table 10. T-test groups to compare perception subscale score means between home economics program participants and nonparticipants

Perception Subscales	Participants			Nonparticipants			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Value	183	3.82	0.50	29	3.48	0.54	3.29**
Content	183	3.49	0.49	29	3.38	0.41	1.15
Characteristics	183	3.45	0.60	29	2.99	0.35	5.83**
People	183	3.62	0.52	29	3.48	0.36	1.86
Teacher	183	3.66	0.60	29	3.23	0.45	3.78**
Total	183	3.62	0.40	29	3.34	0.31	3.55**

** $p < .01$

for college students. The greatest difference between the two student samples was the personal development subscale, and the least difference was the housing subscale. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) between GED students and college students on the skill subscales of personal development, family living, and child development.

Insert Table 11 about here

In Table 12, a t-test compared "need" skill subscale score means between GED students and college students. Because of missing data the number of surveys analyzed ranged from 70 to 86 for GED students, and from 137 to 140 for college students. The greatest difference between the two student samples was the personal development subscale and the least difference was the food and nutrition subscale. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) between GED students and college students on each of the seven "need" skill subscales, consumer management, personal development, housing, family living, child development, food and nutrition, and textiles and clothing. For each skill subscale, college students saw a greater need for consumer and homemaking skills.

Table 11. T-test groups to compare "have" skill subscale score means between GED students and college students

Skill Subscales	GED Students			College Students			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Consumer Management	88	5.52	2.60	141	6.09	2.17	1.79
Personal Development	89	7.18	2.74	141	9.23	1.73	6.31**
Housing	86	7.20	2.50	141	7.23	2.53	0.09
Family Living	85	7.99	2.86	140	7.22	2.77	1.99*
Child Development	83	7.82	3.01	140	6.45	3.56	2.93**
Food & Nutrition	83	7.60	2.51	140	7.32	2.58	0.79
Textiles & Clothing	83	6.47	1.70	141	6.22	1.65	1.08

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Insert Table 12 about here

In Table 13, a t-test compared "have" skill subscale score means between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. The number of surveys for home economics program participants ranged from 178 to 182, and the number of surveys for home economics program nonparticipants ranged from 25 to 28. The greatest difference between the two student samples was the child development subscale and the least difference was the family living subscale. There were significant differences ($p \leq .05$) on the personal development and the child development "have" skill subscale scores between the home economics program participants and nonparticipants. For both personal development and the child development skill subscales, home economics program participants had higher subscale means than the nonparticipants.

Insert Table 13 about here

In Table 14, a t-test compared "need" skill subscale score mean differences between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. The number of surveys for home economics program participants ranged from 170 to 180,

Table 12. T-test groups to compare "need" skill subscale score means between GED students and college students

Skill Subscales	GED Students			College Students			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Consumer Management	86	5.93	3.39	140	9.29	1.55	8.65**
Personal Development	82	5.94	4.05	138	10.39	1.41	9.61**
Housing	76	5.05	3.83	138	9.44	1.57	9.56**
Family Living	75	5.69	4.07	137	10.01	1.97	8.66**
Child Development	71	5.38	4.22	138	9.78	2.32	8.17**
Food & Nutrition	71	5.99	3.78	139	9.36	1.98	7.05**
Textiles & Clothing	70	4.31	3.08	138	7.12	1.56	7.16**

** $p < .01$

Table 13. T-test groups to compare "have" skill subscale score means between home economics program participants and nonparticipants

Skill Subscales	Participants			Nonparticipants			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Consumer Management	181	6.00	2.26	28	5.32	2.50	1.46
Personal Development	182	8.75	2.13	28	7.29	2.90	2.57*
Housing	181	7.38	2.47	26	6.42	2.72	1.83
Family Living	180	7.66	2.78	26	6.96	3.24	1.16
Child Development	178	7.15	3.34	26	5.23	4.00	2.66*
Food & Nutrition	178	7.54	2.42	26	6.77	3.15	1.46
Textiles & Clothing	180	6.41	1.60	25	5.84	1.90	1.62

* $p < .05$

and the number of surveys for home economics program nonparticipants ranged from 25 to 27. The greatest difference between the two student samples was the family living subscale and the least difference was the food and nutrition subscale. There were significant differences ($p \leq .05$) on the consumer management, personal development, housing, and food and nutrition skill subscales between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) on the family living, child development, and textiles and clothing skill subscales between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. Home economics program participants had a higher level of perceived need for all consumer and homemaking skills than did the nonparticipants.

Insert Table 14 about here

In Figure 1, the results of the Pearson product moment correlation analysis between the perception scale means and the number of semesters of home economics courses completed was a positive correlation ($r=.38$). The positive correlation indicates that the more involved students have been with a home economics program, the more positive their perceptions are toward home economics.

Table 14. T-test groups to compare "need" skill subscale score means between home economics program participants and nonparticipants

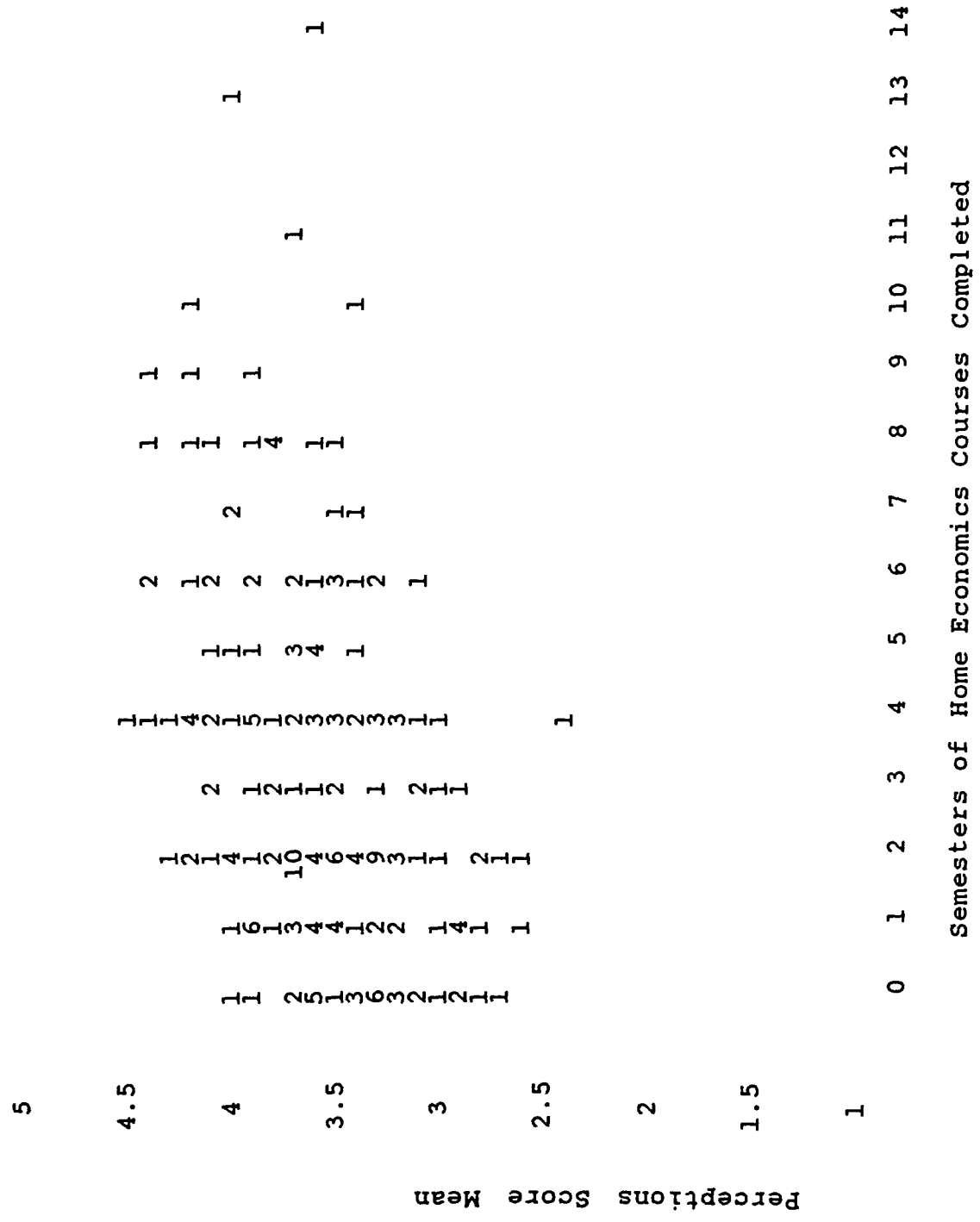
Skill Subscales	Participants			Nonparticipants			t-value
	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	N	$\bar{X}$.	SD	
Consumer Management	180	8.41	2.63	27	6.44	3.75	2.63*
Personal Development	176	9.35	3.01	27	6.41	4.16	3.54*
Housing	174	8.31	3.03	25	6.12	4.08	2.59*
Family Living	172	8.97	3.25	25	6.36	4.25	3.59**
Child Development	171	8.74	3.46	25	6.08	4.47	3.44**
Food & Nutrition	172	8.55	2.90	25	6.64	3.89	2.36*
Textiles & Clothing	170	6.48	2.30	25	4.68	3.05	2.84**

* $p < .05$

** $p < .01$

Insert Figure 1 about here

Figure 1. Scatterplot of perceptions score mean with semesters of home economics courses completed (The highest number on the perceptions score mean (5) refers to the most positive perceptions, and the lowest number (1) refers to the least positive perceptions.)


Perceptions Score Mean
5
4.5
4
3.5
3
2.5
2
1.5
1
0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14
Semesters of Home Economics Courses Completed

SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The present study was conducted to collect data from General Educational Development (GED) students and college students about their perceptions of home economics, their consumer and homemaking skill needs, and influences on their middle and secondary school home economics program enrollment. Collecting and analyzing data about perceptions, skill needs, and enrollment influencers from diverse populations can help home economics educators describe the wide range of perceptions, skill needs, and enrollment influencers students have, and also improve service to target student populations that may have potential for increased enrollment.

The objectives of the study were:

1) To determine General Educational Development students' and college students' involvement in, their perceptions of, and the influences on enrollment for middle and secondary consumer and homemaking programs.

2) To identify General Educational Development students' and college students' perceived acquired consumer and homemaking skills and perceived needed consumer and homemaking skills.

3) To make recommendations to promote a desired home economics image, adapt consumer and homemaking programs to meet student skill needs, and impact enrollment in home economics programs positively.

To collect the data necessary to accomplish the objectives of this study, a home economics survey instrument was developed. The instrument was a self-report inventory with Likert-type scales, checklists, and multiple choice items. It was used to gather data concerning perceptions of home economics programs, home economics skills possessed and needed, demographics, home economics course involvement, promotional methods for home economics programs, and influences on middle and secondary school home economics course enrollment.

The student populations selected were General Educational Development (GED) students and college students. These student populations have middle and high school counterparts, the at-risk students who are potential drop-outs and the academic-tracked college-bound students, that are target audiences for increased enrollment. One student sample was the Iowa State University Family and Consumer Sciences Education Introduction to Home Economics course with 170 students. The other student sample was students attending 18 General Educational Development sites in Iowa to gain their high school equivalency diplomas.

Descriptive statistics including frequency distributions, percentages, means, ranges, and correlations were computed. T-tests were run to see if there were significant differences between GED and college students, and between home economics middle and secondary program participants and nonparticipants, on the variables of home economics program perceptions, consumer and homemaking skills acquired, and consumer and homemaking skills needed.

Conclusions

The average for all student means on the scale for perceptions of home economics was 3.56. This reflects an overall positive perception of home economics.

Approximately 40% of the students did not think home economics taught more than cooking and sewing, and there was an equal division, 45% each, between students who did, and students who did not think cooking and sewing were main topics in all home economics courses. These results suggest that educators need to make areas in home economics besides cooking and sewing more visible.

The value of home economics and the need for home economics skills were generally highly recognized, but only 28% of the students thought they needed to take home economics classes to learn consumer and homemaking skills. Researchers need to determine if students have actually

gained consumer and homemaking skills outside of the classroom to substantiate the perception of this acquisition identified in this study. The question of where students are learning consumer and homemaking skills needs to be investigated. Educators could pre- and post-assess skill acquisition in home economics classes so they can document and publicize skills that are acquired and developed in home economics programs.

The breadth and depth of content in home economics programs was not clearly perceived by students surveyed in this study. Approximately one-fifth of the students did not think consumer management, time management, and science knowledge were aspects of home economics. Over 10% did not think proper nutrition was included, nor did they think parenting skills could be learned prior to parenting, and almost 10% thought math skills were unnecessary in home economics classes. Home economics must have a clear definition for itself and educators must have content inherent in the definition clearly included in their programs.

More students thought home economics classes were easy credits compared to students who did not think so. Educators may need to evaluate this concept to determine whether this is, in fact, a positive or negative perception.

Nearly 70% of students would support some home economics courses to be required as part of high school graduation requirements. This reflects the students' positive perception of the value of home economics, and having some home economics courses required for high school graduation would impact enrollment positively.

The majority of students, approximately two-thirds, were neutral regarding the principals' support, while 67% reflected the guidance counselor encouraged enrollment in home economics. This reflects that the majority of guidance counselors are supporting home economics programs. Approximately the same percentages of students reported their parents did, 30.0%, and did not, 26.7%, support home economics. Educators may need to focus on gaining parental support. This may mean updating the perception parents have of home economics rather than having parents rely on a memory of what home economics was like when they were in high school. Assignments that require students to interact with their parents, personal contacts, letters, conferences, newspaper articles, and other forms of promotion could be used.

Less than half of the students reported that the home economics teacher encouraged enrollment, nearly 20% of the students reported the home economics teacher did not encourage enrollment, and over one-third of the students

were neutral in their response. This could be a function of lack of opportunity for teacher-student interaction in regard to course selection. Teachers need to become more involved in orientation programs and school-based career fairs focusing on school preparation and course selection. Individual teachers must campaign for their own classes with more fervor.

Listed are the two highest skill needs reported in each of the seven subscales: (consumer management) plan financial needs for retirement, 93.1%, and make a budget, 92.5%; (personal development) manage stress, 91.6%, and recognize how decisions are influenced by values, 91.5%; (housing) observe home safety practices, 90.3%, and select a home, 89.8%; (family living) handle family crisis, 90.2%, and combine and balance family members' income-producing jobs, 90.0%; (child development) manage child health, 85.8%, and interact with, teach, entertain, and comfort children, 85.5%; (food and nutrition) shop for and buy food within a budget, 90.2%, maintain a healthful daily diet, 89.4%, and plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals, 89.4%; (textiles and clothing) plan a wardrobe, 88.7%, and clean clothing, 87.4%. Educators need to consider inclusion of these skills in home economics programs in general, and give particular attention to such inclusion when designing curriculum for at-risk, college-bound, and gifted students.

There are various strategies for arranging instructional programs for gifted and high achieving students in grades nine through twelve that may operate within the existing structure of the school and yet provide for a qualitative differentiation for able students. Honors sections stress more in-depth study of a subject, may go at an accelerated pace, and may be an impetus for independent study for some students. A full program of advanced electives is a realistic possibility when schools pool their resources and work out cooperative scheduling arrangements. The work-study program idea could be extended to make provisions for students planning to study home economics professions. Another extension of the work-study program idea is the executive high school internship program whereby, for a specific period of the school year, the student works in an appropriate business organization and has opportunities for decision making. In some communities college courses and seminars are available to high achieving students. Independent studies incorporate enrichment, continuous progress, acceleration and allow students to do in-depth research (Miller & Price, 1981).

At the other side of the spectrum are the at-risk students. If students deal with life situations that cause a high level of emotional conflict, learning is blocked. If a student's learning style is not addressed, learning might

become too much of a challenge. If student intellectual level is low, learning may not keep up with the pace of teaching. School becomes a place of frustration. Teacher attempts to teach are met with scorn. The value of learning and the motivation to work at learning has been lost. The student decides he/she can make it on his/her own; "I don't need school. I don't need what you're trying to teach me, and you aren't teaching me anything anyway. What I know already is good enough. I'll get along fine."

There are methods to combat the challenges of the at-risk student. Use at-risk staff to work with students concerning their life situations that may cause emotional conflict. Become knowledgeable about individual students and be sensitive when presenting topics that might cause emotional upheaval. Educators can learn about learning styles and adjust teaching methods to incorporate activities that different types of learners will respond to. Continually realize that learning is difficult and takes time. Begin with and establish basic terminology and concepts, and build upon concepts at an appropriate pace. Demonstrate the worth of what is being taught by clear examples and explanations. Include the "why are we learning this" as part of daily lessons. Be certain lessons correspond to critical learnings. Use real-life examples, case studies, situations, and consequences to supplement any

abstract concepts presented. Plan methods for concrete feedback and evaluation from each student to monitor understanding and progress (Conrath, 1989).

The reasons GED and college students reported that they did enroll in home economics included: desire to take home economics courses, 51.3%, able to learn useful skills and information, 50.4%, friends, 44.4%, felt comfortable in class, 40.5%, and fulfilled a high school graduation requirement, 34.5%.

Planning strategies to cause students to want to take home economics courses should prove beneficial for increasing enrollment. Being able to learn useful skills and information reflects the value students perceive in home economics classes. Promoting peer endorsements should encourage enrollment. Peer recommendation, along with bulletin board/exhibit/display, ranked highest as methods of home economics promotion most frequently recalled. Because 69% of the students surveyed indicated they would support some home economics coursework as part of high school graduation requirements, attention needs to be directed to this inclusion by the Iowa Department of Education and local school boards. Here it is noted that home economics courses fulfilling high graduation requirements does pay off in encouraging enrollment.

The reasons students reported that they did not/could not enroll in home economics classes included: class schedule conflict, 28.4%, high school graduation requirements, 25.0%, did not want to take home economics courses, 19.4%, extra-curricular activities, 11.6%, friends, 10.8%, and college entrance requirements, 10.8%.

There will always be conflicts with class schedules, but administrative support and cooperation can minimize major conflicts with home economics classes. High school graduation requirements often crowd out electives such as home economics. If home economics were a high school graduation requirement, scheduling would have to be altered to allow room for home economics. Teachers need to plan strategies to create a desire to take home economics. Extra-curricular activities can create a need for study time during the school day, causing a student to choose a study hall rather than a class. Some schools stipulate a certain number of classes that must be taken each semester so student schedules will not have excessive study halls. College entrance requirements generally mean that students must complete certain traditionally labeled academic courses. These courses often compete with home economics courses, even when a student plans to major in the field of home economics for post-secondary education. Peers can detract from, as well as endorse a course. The data

collected reflects one negative student toward home economics classes for every five students who comment favorably to their peers about home economics.

Comparisons

H_{A1} There is a significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of home economics. H_{o1} There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of home economics. The findings reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) on the subscale score means of value and content. For all subscale score means, college students reflected more positive perceptions of home economics programs. Prior to the study, the investigator assumed that marketing a home economics program would have to have an emphasis that included persuading college students of home economics programs' value and their need for home economics. From the study, it was found that this sample of college students had positive perceptions. These findings may reflect the generally more astute perceptions that high achievers have, or they may reflect a limitation in the study concerning sample choice; the college sample was taking a Family and Consumer Sciences Education course.

H_{A2} There is a significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of home economics. H_{O2} There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of home economics. The findings reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis. There were highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) on the subscale score means of value, characteristics, and teacher between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. For all subscale score means, home economics program participants reflected more positive perceptions of home economics programs. This is in support of the findings by Torrie and Schultz (1989) that the more contact an individual had with home economics programs, the more positive his/her perceptions were. The Pearson product moment correlation in this study reiterates this fact by revealing a positive correlation between perceptions and number of semesters completed in a home economics program. The Pearson product moment correlation was a positive correlation ($r=.38$) which indicated that the more involved students have been with a home economics program, the more positive their perceptions are toward home economics.

The sample had only 29 students out of 233, or 12%, that did not participate in a home economics program.

Because the majority of the sample included participants, this influenced the overall positive perceptions. If this is an accurate representation of involvement in home economics programs for recent high school students, educators have substantial opportunity to create the desired perceptions of home economics with the students enrolled in home economics programs each year. Mary Petersen, (personal communication, Iowa Department of Education, September, 1990) state home economics consultant, reported the unduplicated home economics enrollment for the state of Iowa for fiscal year 1989-1990 was 32,590 students. Educators must plan and carry out their programs to support the perceptions home economics desires to create. A short unit (1-3 days) to inform students about the field of home economics and career opportunities in home economics could be included in home economics classes.

H_{A3}: There is a significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills. H_{o3}: There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills. The 71 consumer and homemaking skills were analyzed as seven independent subscales. The seven subscales were: consumer management, personal development,

housing, family living, child development, food and nutrition, and textiles and clothing.

There was a highly significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between GED students and college students on the personal development subscale score means with college students reporting having more skills. There was a highly significant difference ($p \leq .01$) between GED students and college students on the child development subscale score means with GED students reporting having more skills. There was a significant difference ($p \leq .05$) between GED students and college students on the family living subscale score means with GED students reporting having more skills. The analysis is based on the students' perceived acquired skills. Further study could be done to test whether college students actually have more personal development skills than GED students, and whether GED students actually have more family living and child development skills than college students.

A question that arises, is whether all students are capable of accurate self-assessment. Self-assessment is drawn from concepts created within oneself. Concept making is crucial to human behavior. The human brain is prone to conceptualize experiences in certain ways. The brain develops under the biochemical guidance of the genes in such a way as to assemble incoming experience into realistic,

useful concepts. The concepts we make out of our experiences are largely predetermined by neural structures.

Concept formation relies on innate abilities and predispositions. What is learned by a student is the product of an interaction between incoming experiences and the brain's circuitry. Categories are formed by overgeneralizing experiences, until additional experiences cause categories to become more refined and specific. The method of making categories is neither logical nor tidy, but it maximizes the ability to make sense of experiences and to interact effectively with the environment. People pigeonhole experiences in ways that prove functional, not by conscious design and not because they were taught to, but naturally and inevitably. We do make a world within, one that mimics the world without, and we do it, to some degree, even if we are not taught to (Hunt, 1982).

Concept formation, and therefore perceptions, can be assisted by formal teaching and experiences. If student perceptions and self-assessment appear to be inaccurate, additional learning experiences may be needed to create more specific concepts within the student for them to draw upon. Innate intellectual ability will be a factor in speed and success of concept formation.

H_{A4}: There is a significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their needed

consumer and homemaking skills. H_{04}: There is no significant difference between GED students' and college students' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills. The findings reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis. All seven subscales showed highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) between the GED students and college students concerning the skills they perceived they needed. GED students reported less need for consumer and homemaking skills and college students perceived a greater need for consumer and homemaking skills. There may be differences in lifestyle between GED students and college students that would account for this. There may be differences in cognitive skills between GED students and college students so that the checklist was interpreted and responded to differently between the two student samples. There may be differences in self-assessment capabilities between the two student samples.

H_{A5}: There is a significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills. H_{05}: There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their acquired consumer and homemaking skills. The 71 consumer and homemaking skills were analyzed as seven independent subscales. There were significant

differences ($p \leq .05$) between home economics program participants and nonparticipants on the personal development and child development subscales. The home economics program participants reported having more skills in these areas. One way to look at this is to suggest home economics programs are only being effective in two areas, personal development and child development, because the acquired skills in the other five areas show no significant differences between participants and nonparticipants. A follow-up study might test students to determine whether they actually have what they perceive they have and note differences between participant and nonparticipants actual tested skills.

H_{A6}: There is a significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

H_{o6}: There is no significant difference between home economics program participants' and nonparticipants' perceptions of their needed consumer and homemaking skills.

The findings reject the null hypothesis and support the alternative hypothesis. There were significant differences ($p \leq .05$) or highly significant differences ($p \leq .01$) on each of the seven subscales between home economics program participants and nonparticipants. For each subscale home economics program participants reported a greater need for

consumer and homemaking skills than did nonparticipants. Exposure to formal training of consumer and homemaking skills increases perceptions of consumer and homemaking skills needed. Nonparticipants do not report as high of need level for consumer and homemaking skills. Nonparticipants may lack perspective on what consumer and homemaking skills actually involve and what skill needs they actually have.

Recommendations

Recommendations for further research include:

1. Repeat the study with the following changes: collect data in the fall when GED site enrollment is higher, create the college student sample by randomly selecting from a general university class, i.e., a library course, and make revisions to the questionnaire to enhance clarity.
2. Repeat the study using different populations, i.e., parents, administration, faculty, senior high school students, home economics teachers, and other populations.
3. Test students to determine their actual skill acquisition and compare the results to students' perceived acquired skills.
4. Investigate how and where students acquired the consumer and homemaking skills they actually possess.

5. Pre- and post-assess student skill acquisition from home economics classes.
6. Test student knowledge of home economics using a pre-test, treatment, post-test design. Develop a unit to teach students about home economics for the treatment.
7. Research the components that cause students to desire to take a home economics course.
8. Research effectiveness of home economics program marketing strategies; compare marketing strategies carried out by home economics teachers to their effect on students and the community.

Implications

Implications of the study include the need to:

1. Develop curriculum to address the at-risk and the college-bound students.
2. Focus aggressive efforts with students, parents, school boards and state legislature to require selected consumer and homemaking courses.
3. Further efforts to showcase the content concerning useful knowledge and abilities acquired in home economics programs, including state mandated topics in Human Growth and Development and Health.
4. Expand adult education programs to reach those with felt "need" for home economics content and the GED population.

5. Provide workshops for home economics teachers to plan and follow-up on specific local marketing efforts.
6. Add "home economics teacher encouraging students to enroll" to marketing home economics program strategies. Include specific ways the home economics teacher could encourage students to enroll.

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Norman, my husband, for continually being patient, faithful, and loving;

God, my heavenly Father, with whose guidance this endeavor was undertaken, and with whose grace it was brought to fruition.

APPENDIX A.

CORRESPONDENCE

Letter to experts in the field to validate questionnaire

Dear _____,

Here is the questionnaire and tables of specification that we discussed in a recent phone conversation. This questionnaire will be administered to college students and GED students, those that have participated and those who have not participated in home economics programs.

The first part is about attitudes toward home economics programs. Refer to the table of specifications to relate why each statement is included. Determine whether the statements will assess perceptions as outlined. Also determine whether there is complete coverage of the topic (home economics image) or whether there are additional items to include.

The second part is about skill needs. Determine whether the format is clear to understand and easy to answer. Also determine if each home economics area has good representation and coverage of skills.

The last part is general information and enrollment influencers. Please go through both carefully and mention any needed revisions. Refer to the table of specifications for the enrollment influencers to critic coverage of topic.

Thank you for your time, expertise, and cooperative assistance.

Sincerely,

Gelene Klein
R.R. #1 Box 107
Reasnor, Iowa 50232

515/798-4460

Phone contact with GED instructors

Hello, I'm Gelene Klein and I'm calling you because your name was given to me by the GED program coordinator as a GED instructor. Is this correct?

I'm hoping you'll be able to help me with a project. I'm a graduate student at ISU and my research is about perceptions students have of Home Economics programs. If you would be willing to help, I'd mail a set of questionnaires to you and you could give them to your students. The questionnaires take approximately 20 minutes to complete. After collecting the completed questionnaires, mail them back in the postage-paid addressed envelope provided.

To what address shall I send the questionnaires?

Thank you for your time and assistance.

Letter to GED instructors enclosed with questionnaires

Dear Teacher,

I was delighted to contact you by telephone recently to visit with you about research at Iowa State University regarding home economics programs. I am interested in collecting students' opinions to gain insights to better serve them.

Enclosed are the questionnaires about home economics programs for your students to complete. Please encourage every student to respond. It will take approximately 20 minutes to complete, or somewhat longer if the questionnaire must be read orally to them. I hope they feel a sense of contribution; I am seeking out their input because their opinions are vital.

After two weeks, or when all possible students have responded to the questionnaires, place them in the self-addressed postage-paid envelope provided and return them to me.

I hope this proves to be an interesting enjoyable activity for the students, and one that flows into your schedule smoothly. I genuinely appreciate your assistance.

Sincerely,

Gelene Klein
R.R. 1 Box 107
Reasnor, Iowa 50232
(515)798-4460

Letter to students attached to questionnaire

Congratulations!

You've been selected to participate in a research study because you are continuing your education. Your answers on this survey about home economics programs in middle, junior high, and high school are important to collect needed information. The survey has three parts, attitudes, skills, and general information, and it will take about 20 minutes to complete. Please answer each item carefully and return the survey to your teacher.

Your response will be confidential. Code number information will be destroyed after all the surveys have been returned and counted.

Thank you for your time and sincere effort in completing the survey.

Sincerely,

Gelene Klein
Graduate Student

Margaret Torrie
Associate Professor
Family and Consumer Sciences Education
215B MacKay Hall

Follow-up postcard notes to GED instructors

First follow-up

Dear GED Instructor,

I hope students can complete the home economics surveys so they can be returned soon. Thank you so much for your assistance in this research project.

Sincerely,
Gelene Klein
(515)798-4460

Second follow-up

Dear _____,

Please return all home economics surveys at this time. I will use the data from those that are filled out and send the blank ones to another site.
Thank you for your cooperation in this research project.

Sincerely,
Gelene Klein
(515)798-4460

APPENDIX B.

HUMAN SUBJECTS APPROVAL

Checklist for Attachments and Time Schedule

The following are attached (please check):

12. [X] Letter or written statement to subjects indicating clearly:
    a) purpose of the research
    b) the use of any identifier codes (names, #'s), how they will be used, and when they will be removed (see Item 17)
    c) an estimate of time needed for participation in the research and the place
    d) if applicable, location of the research activity
    e) how you will ensure confidentiality
    f) in a longitudinal study, note when and how you will contact subjects later
    g) participation is voluntary; nonparticipation will not affect evaluations of the subject

13. [ ] Consent form (if applicable)

14. [ ] Letter of approval for research from cooperating organizations or institutions (if applicable)

15. [X] Data-gathering instruments

16. Anticipated dates for contact with subjects:

First Contact	Last Contact
April, 1990	June, 1990
Month / Day / Year	Month / Day / Year

17. If applicable: anticipated date that identifiers will be removed from completed survey instruments and/or audio or visual tapes will be erased:

December, 1990
Month / Day / Year

18. Signature of Departmental Executive Officer | Date | Department or Administrative Unit

3/22/90

19. Decision of the University Human Subjects Review Committee:

X Project Approved ___ Project Not Approved ___ No Action Required

Patricia M. Keith — Name of Committee Chairperson

3-30-90 — Date

Signature of Committee Chairperson

APPENDIX C.

INSTRUMENT

Perceptions of Home Economics Programs Content Outline

I. Value
- (13) A. Quality of life
- (25) B. Personal life
- (30) C. Employment
- (5) D. Skill use
- (19) E. Gender needs
- F. Formal education
  - (7) 1. Skills learned
  - (16) 2. High school completion
  - (17) 3. High school transcripts

II. Content
- A. Background
  - (15) 1. Math
  - (26) 2. Science
- B. Topics
  - (2,23) 1. Food preparation and clothing construction
  - (22) 2. Consumer education
  - (12) 3. Parenting education
  - (27) 4. Time management
  - (3) 5. Nutrition

III. Characteristics
- A. Classes
  - (21) 1. Timeliness
  - (10) 2. Level of difficulty
  - (1) 3. Level of awareness
- B. Facilties
  - (29) 1. Room
  - (9) 2. Equipment

IV. People
- A. Students
  - (24) 1. Peers
  - (4) 2. Males
- B. Adults
  - (8) 1. Parents
  - (18) 2. Principal
  - (14) 3. Guidance counselor
  - 4. Home economics teacher
    - (20) a. Teaching ability
    - (28) b. Student treatment
    - (6) c. Comfort level
    - (11) d. Recruitment efforts

Enrollment Influencers Content Outline

I. People
(7,25) A. Parents
(2,17) B. Guidance counselor
(9,27) C. Teacher
(1,16) D. Friends

II. Perceptions
(3,19) A. Desire for involvement
(8,26) B. Comfort in class
(13) C. Usefulness of content
(5,23) D. Worthiness of labs/projects
(14) E. Attractiveness through promotional efforts

III. Class Management
(6,24) A. Fees
B. Schedule
(21) 1. Required courses
(11,18) 2. Desired courses
(4,20) 3. Job
(22) 4. Extra-curricular
C. Requirements
(29) 1. Prerequisites
(10,28) 2. High school completion
(30) 3. College entrance
(12) 4. Post-secondary education

ATTITUDES TOWARD HOME ECONOMICS

Directions: Think about the home economics programs that were offered in grades 6-12 in your school. Read each statement and choose one of the following reactions that best describes your feelings. Write the number of your reaction on the line in front of the statement.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree

____ 1. I was aware of the courses offered in the home economics program.

____ 2. I expected home economics classes to teach only cooking and sewing.

____ 3. I would have expected to learn about proper nutrition from home economics.

____ 4. I lack respect for males in home economics classes.

____ 5. I rarely use home economics skills.

____ 6. I would have been uncomfortable asking the home economics teacher(s) for advice.

____ 7. I was able to learn consumer and homemaking skills without taking home economics courses.

____ 8. My parents felt home economics courses were an important part of my education.

____ 9. The home economics equipment was modern.

____10. Home economics classes were easy credits.

____11. The home economics teacher encouraged students to enroll in home economics courses.

____12. It is impossible to learn parenting skills until you become a parent.

____13. Home economics helps individuals and families improve the quality of their lives.

____14. The school guidance counselor discouraged students from taking home economics classes.

1	2	3	4	5
strongly disagree	disagree	don't know	agree	strongly agree

____15. Math skills are unnecessary in home economics classes.

____16. Some home economics courses should be required for high school graduation.

____17. Home economics credits look poor on a high school transcript.

____18. The school principal seemed positive toward the home economics program.

____19. Males and females have an equal need for home economics.

____20. The home economics teacher taught students well.

____21. Home economics courses tended to be outdated.

____22. Home economics courses successfully taught students to be wise consumers.

____23. Cooking and sewing are main topics for all home economics courses.

____24. Students who took home economics were teased.

____25. Home economics contributes to success in personal life.

____26. Science knowledge was helpful to understand home economics.

____27. Home economics courses successfully taught wise use of time.

____28. Home economics teachers favored male students in home economics classes.

____29. The home economics room was unattractive.

____30. Home economics knowledge and skills are helpful to an employee in any job.

Each line describes a different skill. In the first two columns, indicate whether you 1) have the skill, or 2) do not have the skill. For the last two columns, consider the present and the future. Indicate whether you 3) now need or will need the skill, or 4) do not need or will not need the skill. Mark two X's for each skill. Examples follow:

1	2	3	4	
X		X		Drive car safely. (I have this skill and I need this skill.)
X			X	Drive car safely. (I have this skill but I do not need this skill.)
	X	X		Drive car safely. (I do not have this skill but I will need this skill.)
	X		X	Drive car safely. (I do not have this skill and I will not need this skill.)

HAVE SKILL	DO NOT HAVE SKILL	NEED SKILL	WILL NOT NEED SKILL	
1	2	3	4	
				31. Get a loan.
				32. Make a budget based on income.
				33. Anticipate expenses realistically.
				34. Compare purchases and services.
				35. Use sources of public aid when needed.
				36. Buy insurance and health plans.
				37. Use credit wisely.
				38. Balance a checkbook.
				39. Compute taxes or utilize source of assistance.
				40. Plan for financial needs for retirement.
				41. Communicate clearly; be understood and understand others.
				42. Make responsible decisions.
				43. Recognize how decisions are influenced by values.
				44. Set long- and short-term goals.
				45. Plan time for work, routine tasks, rest, and leisure.
				46. Deal with boredom.
				47. Manage stress.
				48. Maintain personal hygiene and grooming.
				49. Practice good health habits.
				50. Practice responsible sexual decision-making.
				51. Use home computers.
				For items 52-61 home refers to room, apartment, house, etc.
				52. Share home with roommate or family.
				53. Utilize storage effectively.
				54. Decorate home interior.
				55. Observe home safety practices.
				56. Clean home.
				57. Select home.
				58. Finance home (purchase or rent).
				59. Make home more energy efficient.
				60. Maintain home.
				61. Evaluate home technology (appliances, entertainment, computers, communications).

AVE SKILL	DO NOT HAVE SKILL	NEED SKILL	WILL NOT NEED SKILL	
1	2	3	4	
				62. Select life partner; make decisions about marriage.
				63. Employ measures for family planning.
				64. Combine and balance family members' income-producing jobs.
				65. Manage roles of wage-earner and homemaker for self.
				66. Communicate effectively with family members.
				67. Resolve conflict.
				68. Schedule activities with family members.
				69. Share responsibilities of household and child care.
				70. Handle family crisis (accident, illness, death).
				71. Manage family health.
				72. Manage divorce, single parenting, recombined family.
				Practice good prenatal health and nutrition including
				73. knowledge of genetic history.
				74. Select appropriate clothing for children.
				75. Plan, purchase and prepare appropriate foods for children.
				76. Choose toys for children.
				77. Manage child health (immunizations, illness, accidents).
				78. Interact with, teach, entertain, and comfort children.
				79. Discipline children appropriately.
				80. Identify and report suspected child abuse.
				81. Select suitable child care.
				82. Care for handicapped children.
				83. Work with groups of children.
				84. Maintain ideal weight.
				85. Maintain a healthful daily diet (food and beverages).
				86. Choose foods and beverages wisely when eating out.
				87. Plan food purchases.
				88. Shop for and buy food within a budget.
				89. Evaluate convenience foods.
				90. Store food properly; prevent spoilage and waste.
				91. Bake food items (casseroles, desserts, breads, etc.).
				92. Plan, prepare, and serve nutritious meals.
				93. Plan and prepare nutritious snacks.
				94. Plan wardrobe; plan clothing needs and coordination.
				96. Shop for and choose clothing for self and others.
				97. Repair and alter clothing.
				98. Clean clothing; launder and dry-clean.
				99. Sew fabric items or clothing including alter patterns.
				100. Eliminate unneeded clothing (recycle, give away, sell).
				101. Shop for textile products for the home (blankets, sheets, towels, draperies, carpet, rugs, furniture, etc.).

GENERAL INFORMATION

For the next seven items, circle the number of your choice.

102. Gender:
1. male
2. female

103. Age:
1. 18-22
2. 23-27
3. 28-32
4. 33-37
5. 38 or older

104. Employment status:
1. full-time, paid
2. part-time, paid
3. seeking employment
4. full-time homemaker, unpaid
5. full-time student, unpaid

105. Marital status:
1. single
2. married

106. Number of children:
1. 0
2. 1
3. 2
4. 3 or more

107. Size of community in which you attended high school:
1. 0-6000
2. 6001-30,000
3. 30,001 or more
4. don't know

108. Member of:
1. FHA (Future Homemakers of America)
2. HERO (Home Economics Related Occupations)
3. neither FHA nor HERO
4. neither; FHA nor HERO was available

Indicate all the home economics courses you enrolled in, whether you completed them or not, by marking X on the line in front of the course.

____ 1. exploratory (short introductory course)
____ 2. comprehensive (several areas in one course)
____ 3. child development and guidance
____ 4. clothing and textiles
____ 5. consumer education
____ 6. family living
____ 7. foods and nutrition
____ 8. housing and home furnishings
____ 9. independent living
____ 10. parenthood education
____ 11. personal development
____ 12. personal finance
____ 13. resource/home management
____ 14. other _____

Write the total number of semesters of home economics courses completed in grades 6-12 below. If the course(s) completed were different than a semester in length, indicate number of course(s) and course length(s) on the "other" line.

To count each semester:
one year course = 2 semesters
two semester courses taken during the same semester = 2 semesters
two one-year courses taken during the same year = 4 semesters

(#)_____ semesters of home economics courses completed grades 6-12

(#)_____ other _____

Indicate all the methods you recall used to promote home economics in your school by marking X on the line in front of the method.

____ 1. open house/parent night
____ 2. newspaper article
____ 3. school newsletter
____ 4. pamphlet, flyer, brochure
____ 5. booklet
____ 6. parent-teacher conference
____ 7. career day
____ 8. teacher's letter
____ 9. teacher's phone call
____ 10. teacher's visit to home
____ 11. television news coverage or talk show
____ 12. friend or student recommendation
____ 13. bulletin board/exhibit/display
____ 14. videotape

Indicate each of the reasons that influenced your enrollment in home economics by marking X on the line in front of the reason.

If you did enroll in home economics, complete both parts.

If you did not enroll in home economics, complete the second part only.

Be sure to mark all the reasons that influenced your enrollment.

Part I I did enroll in home economics because:

____ 1. my friends were in home economics classes.
____ 2. the guidance counselor included it in my class schedule.
____ 3. I wanted to take home economics.
____ 4. it was helpful in my job.
____ 5. of the labs and projects required.
____ 6. there were no fee costs.
____ 7. my parents insisted.
____ 8. I felt comfortable in class.
____ 9. of the teacher(s).
____ 10. the class fulfilled a high school graduation requirement.
____ 11. the class fit in my class schedule.
____ 12. I planned post-secondary eduction in home economics.
____ 13. I could learn useful skills and information.
____ 14. of promotional efforts for the classes.
____ 15. other _____

Part II I could not enroll in some home economics classes because: OR
I did not enroll in any home economics because:

____ 16. my friends were not in home economics classes.
____ 17. I was advised against it by the guidance counselor.
____ 18. other classes were scheduled during the same time period.
____ 19. I did not want to take home economics.
____ 20. of my job.
____ 21. required courses left no time for home economics.
____ 22. of extra-curricular activities.
____ 23. of the labs and projects required.
____ 24. the fee costs were too high.
____ 25. my parents did not allow me to enroll.
____ 26. students in home economics were different than me.
____ 27. of the teacher(s).
____ 28. the credits did not fulfill a graduation requirement.
____ 29. of the prerequisite classes.
____ 30. of college entrance required courses.
____ 31. other _____

THANK YOU FOR COMPLETING THIS SURVEY.

PLEASE GIVE THE SURVEY TO YOUR TEACHER.