

**PURCHASERS AND CONSIGNORS OF SECONDHAND CLOTHING
IN CONSIGNMENT STORES**

by

Phoebe Mack Morrow

Thesis submitted to the Faculty of the
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

in

Clothing and Textiles

APPROVED:

Marjorie J. T. Norton, Chairman

Barbara E. Densmore

Thomas G. Johnson

November, 1985

Blacksburg, Virginia

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(ABSTRACT)

The research investigated acquisition and disposition behavior of purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors of secondhand clothing in consignment stores. A questionnaire was administered to 168 women and two men in three Roanoke, Virginia stores. It was hypothesized that (1) long-time purchasers (three to five years) patronized other secondhand sellers more than short-time purchasers (two years or less); and that purchasers (2) acquired (a) primarily to save money and (b) secondarily to have well-made clothing, (3) bought two to four times a month, and (4) were satisfied with stores' merchandise and services. Hypotheses 2a and 4 were supported but 1, 2b, and 3 were not. A hypothesis that consignors consigned to obtain a return on clothing investments and get rid of unwanted items was supported. Friends were important information sources about stores.

Chi-square analysis indicated that respondent groups were similar demographically, in the types of clothing they purchased and/or consigned, and in the uses of clothing purchased. Most respondents were Caucasian, 30-49 years old, and often had baccalaureates or other post-high school education. Twenty-seven percent of the respondents had total household incomes of \$40,000 or more. The most frequently

purchased and consigned garments were shirts or blouses. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors used purchased clothing primarily for social occasions. Purchasers and consignors differed on the number of years they had been patronizing stores and on their purchasing and consigning frequencies. Also, more purchasers than purchasers/consignors patronized flea markets and garage sales.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I wish to thank Dr. Marjorie Norton, my committee chairman and Assistant Professor of Clothing and Textiles, for her continual encouragement and guidance. From the very inception of the thesis Dr. Norton showed interest in my ideas, asked good questions, and shared relevant information. Her enthusiasm as a teacher made our many conversations an exciting learning experience. I want to offer special thanks to my other committee members, Dr. Barbara Densmore, Professor of Clothing and Textiles, and Dr. Tom Johnson, Assistant Professor of Agricultural Economics, for their enthusiasm and practical suggestions throughout the study.

I also wish to thank Steve and my many other friends whose positive encouragement never stopped.

I am grateful to my mother, Fay Morrow, who gave me unwavering support. This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my father, William Mack Morrow, who believed that education is the right of all people.

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CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The Secondhand Clothing Market (SCM) is a distribution system that has grown and changed in organization and clientele during the past 15 years. Often considered a secondary or last-resort clothing source, the market is used as a supplemental or primary source by certain groups of people (Winakor, 1963). Increasing numbers and sales of secondhand retail establishments, particularly after 1958 (Table 1), suggest the trend of consumer acceptance of this market as a viable alternative source for goods. Other observable changes taking place involve store merchandise and atmosphere. While bargain basement and neighborhood junk stores continue to exist, other types of sellers have arisen that differ in appearance and atmosphere from the typical "used-clothing" store. Relatively new selling establishments, such as vintage/antique and consignment stores, delineate themselves from the "used-clothing" image by focusing on store location and atmosphere, merchandise presentation and condition, fashion, and clientele. By employing sophisticated marketing techniques these new retailers have become attractive to a diversity of customers not commonly associated with the secondhand business (Horn & Gurel, 1982).

In the past, most large-scale secondhand sellers made little attempt to attract clients other than those with low incomes. Charitable organizations were more concerned with providing low-cost clothing to the needy than with selling stylish fashion. Goodwill

TABLE 1
Retail Census Data: Numbers of Establishments and Sales

Ratio of Secondhand to:											
All Retail			Apparel ¹		Secondhand ²		All Retail			Apparel	
Year	Numbers	Sales (\$, Millions)	Numbers	Sales (\$, Millions)	Numbers	Sales (\$, Millions)	Numbers	Sales (\$, Millions)	Numbers	Sales (\$, Millions)	
1929	1,476,365	48,330	114,296	4,240	15,065	148	.010	.003	.132	.035	
1933	1,526,119	25,037	86,548	1,923	20,869	105	.014	.004	.241	.055	
1935	1,587,718	32,791	95,968	2,656	22,550	113	.014	.003	.235	.043	
1939	1,770,355	42,042	106,959	3,258	23,962	138	.014	.003	.224	.042	
1948	1,688,479	128,849	110,944	9,716	13,387	298	.008	.002	.121	.031	
1954	1,721,650	169,968	119,743	11,078	14,364	424	.008	.002	.120	.038	
1958	1,794,744	200,365	119,252	12,569	21,155	640	.012	.003	.177	.051	
1963 ³	1,707,931	244,202	116,223	14,040	25,797	903	.015	.004	.222	.064	
1967	1,763,324	310,214	110,164	16,672	27,267	993	.015	.003	.248	.060	
1972	1,934,500	470,806	129,200	24,741	33,400	1,495	.017	.003	.259	.060	
1977	1,855,100	723,134	140,100	35,564	49,800	2,850	.027	.004	.355	.080	

¹Not department, variety, or other stores non-specific to apparel. Includes shoes.

²Excludes used cars. Designation changed to "antique, secondhand" in 1958 and to "used merchandise" in 1977.

³First year to include Alaska and Hawaii.

Industries and Salvation Army secondhand stores, based on the principle of service, maintain a large supply of inexpensive goods for those who cannot afford to shop elsewhere (Lewis, 1977). However, times have changed. Many charitable groups are currently upgrading their merchandise or creating special "higher priced" sections in their stores to compete with other markets (Colamosca, 1978). Privately owned stores, garage sales and flea markets have created competition for charitable groups, in some cases luring away supply, customers, and profits (Greenberg, 1983; H. M. McDaniel, personal communication, October 19, 1984).

Another trend is toward more merchandise specialization, combined with a greater diversity of buyers and sellers. Some sellers confine their inventory to specific historic time periods or types of clothing items (Love, 1982; Miller, 1984). Some upgrade their supply by cleaning, pressing, and sewing in labels, and through strict merchandise policies that stipulate season, age, style, and condition of garments (Dreyfus, 1980; M., 1982; Small, 1985). Sellers range from thrift store operators to consignors who maintain warehouses of clothing, to retailers who juxtapose new and secondhand clothing in their establishments (Miller, 1984; Small, 1985).

Buyers are as diverse as sellers. Teenagers imitating the punk style of rock musician Cyndi Lauper and other public figures have flocked to the vintage/antique segments of the SCM (Miller, McGuigan, Uehling, Huck, McAlevey, 1985; Small, 1985). Increasing numbers of buyers from different income groups are becoming participants in the market (Margerum, 1978; Richardson, 1982).

The activity generated by these buyers and sellers has resulted in SCM evolution. Home economists, consumer educators, and family resource professionals need up-to-date information on consumer behavior in the SCM in order to serve the growing number of families and individuals who participate in it. If home economists are to help consumers take best advantage of the market, they must examine it through the eyes of consumers (Stampfl, 1978). Determining who are the consumers of secondhand goods and how they use them is imperative if the "user perspective" is to be applied when assessing the benefits offered by the market and when identifying and resolving the problems that arise.

Since little research has been conducted on consumers of secondhand clothing and the retail outlets they patronize, and because the majority of the studies are out of date due to market evolution, this study focused on purchasers and consignors of clothing in one type of secondhand outlet, the consignment store.

CHAPTER 2

Review of Literature

The review of literature is in four sections:

(1) clothing sources, (2) secondhand clothing market, (3) consumers of secondhand clothing, and (4) clothing consumption behavior in the market.

Clothing Sources

Consumer clothing sources divide into two categories: the new ready-to-wear market as the primary source, and supplemental sources as when clothing is obtained by purchasing it used, receiving gifts of new or used items, home sewing, swapping, borrowing, and renting. New ready-to-wear clothing emanates from a for-profit production and distribution system. Supplemental sources are all others which include market and nonmarket sources. Market sources are ones where clothing is exchanged for money or other goods, and nonmarket sources consist of all those where clothing is obtained by in-kind transfer, prize, bonus, finding, etc.

Home economists have investigated clothing expenditures to determine the availability and utilization of consumer clothing sources. Though clothing expenditure studies are numerous, most focus on acquisition of new ready-to-wear clothing. Erickson

(1968), Hager and Bryant (1977), and Dardis, Derrick, and Lehfeld (1981) all exclude supplemental sources and concentrate on variables influencing new ready-to-wear purchases. Inventories, purchases of used items, in-kind transfers, alterations, and home production are not accounted for as to their effects and contributions in overall acquisitions.

In contrast, clothing acquisition studies usually do include discussions of supplemental sources, yet they often emphasize handed-down and gift clothing, and pay cursory attention to purchased used clothing (Geiger, 1972; Joyce, 1966; Nicholson, 1969; Robertson, 1968; Warning, 1956). If used-clothing purchases are mentioned, the acquisition source may be unspecified or the researcher may make no distinction between thrift stores, garage sales or other secondhand outlets. Terminology also varies from study to study. For instance, Hartz (1977) refers to thrift and garage sales as rummage sales. Audette (1981) and Matthews, Wymelenberg, and Cowley (1975) distinguish between large-scale charity sales which they call rummage sales, and small privately organized sales, called garage sales.

To add further confusion to the terminology dilemma O'Reilly, Rucker, Hughes, Gorang, and Hand (1984) do not define their term 'personal sales', but imply that personal sales are garage sales. Moreover, O'Reilly et al. (1984) use the borrowed term 'institutional sales' to refer to organizations or institutions that sell used goods. This could mean permanent thrift stores or

occasional rummage sales. Ginsburg's (1980) term for rummage sales and garage sales is 'jumble sales'. This thesis contains a glossary of relevant terms as they have been used in the research (Appendix A).

Britton (1975) reported that Des Moines families surveyed in 1965-66 acquired the major portion of their clothing as new ready-to-wear. Yet supplemental sources accounted for one-fifth of the clothing acquired by families with low to moderate incomes. During one year low-to moderate-income families acquired 70 percent of their clothing as new ready-to-wear, 14 percent by handing down, 11 percent as gifts, 2 percent by home construction, 2 percent by purchasing used, and 1 percent as bonuses or prizes. Handed-down clothing was a more important clothing source for infants than for other family members. Used-clothing purchases were more important for adults than for children.

Brewton (1973) studied shopping practices and clothing sources of rural adolescents purchasing new and used clothing. One hundred eleven black and white teenagers in a rural Louisiana parish were surveyed to supply information about their demographic characteristics, clothing acquisition sources, and clothing use behavior. Brewton postulated that a relationship existed between ethnicity, sex, and the shopping practices and sources for acquiring new and used clothing. No significant differences were found on ethnicity and sex between the groups of adolescents purchasing new or secondhand apparel. Both groups of

boys and girls purchased the majority of their clothing from department and discount stores. Brewton gave no indication of the numbers or percentages of students that purchased used clothing. However, more white females than white males received new and used clothing as gifts, and more white females than black females received gifts of used clothing. Hinton and Margerum (1984) found that 14-to 18-year-old females reported little overall usage of secondhand clothing, but with variation among clothing types; e.g., coats/blazers and shirts were used more than jeans and vests.

Brewton (1973) is more helpful than other researchers in identifying types of secondhand clothing sellers that respondents might utilize. She listed secondhand sellers such as friends, neighbors, rummage sales, and The Salvation Army on the survey questionnaire, but consignment stores, thrift stores, and flea markets were inexplicably omitted.

Other studies have investigated the use and nonuse of supplemental clothing sources. Repeatedly, the ready-to-wear market is reported as the main acquisition source. Brew, O'Leary, and Dean (1956) concluded that no differences in acquisition sources existed between employed and nonemployed women, although she had expected the nonemployed to possess more homemade and made-over clothing.

Winakor, MacDonald, Kunz, and Saladino (1971a) did not find large amounts of clothing purchased from used-clothing sources among 83 families with pre-tax incomes of \$3,000-\$4,999. Later

they developed a clothing budget for low-income families, which included supplemental categories for handed-down garments and ones received as gifts, made at home, received as pay or bonus, and bought with stamps but excluded purchased used clothing (Winakor et al., 1971b). They noted that supplemental sources were imperfect substitutes for new garments and that family expenditures for new clothing could not be reduced merely by substituting one garment from a supplemental source for each garment purchased new. In a separate study by Kunz (1970), supplemental sources did appear to affect the quantity of garments acquired new: there was a significant reduction in the number of garments acquired new when garments were acquired from supplemental sources.

Supplemental sources tend to be more important for certain age groups. Smith and Olson (1984) analyzed interfamily transfers of goods, services, and money to beginning and elderly families in New Mexico. Clothing and meals were the goods received by the greatest number of beginning families (96 percent), although other goods surpassed the dollar value of the clothing. Fewer elderly families (59 percent) received clothing transfers. Winakor et al. (1971a), Kundel (1976), Hartz (1977), and Britton (1975) all cite children as the primary recipients of supplemental clothing. In Winakor's study, infants received more garments as gifts and hand-me-downs than did older children, thereby reducing infant clothing expenditures. An inverse relationship existed between age of child and numbers of garments

from supplemental sources. These findings are similar to those of Britton: infants' garments accounted for one-third of the handed-down clothing received by family members, including 21 percent from outside the family and 12 percent from within the family. For females and males 2 to 17 years, handed-down clothing amounted to about 20 percent of total clothing owned. Handed-down clothing is a readily available source of clothing between relatives and friends. Children often outgrow their clothing before it becomes worn out, especially during the years when growth spurts occur. Handed-down clothing between adults was not mentioned in the literature. Maternity clothing and special formal wear are two types of garments that adults might hand down between themselves to meet short-term needs.

Home construction of apparel, another supplemental source, allows for individual taste, uniqueness, and individualized fitting and has been traditionally promoted as a way to "stretch the clothing dollar". The economic savings achieved by home sewing are now questioned because of time and sewing-supply costs. Courtless' (1982) analysis of home sewing trends did not support the traditional supposition that sewing was motivated by economic reasons. Personal satisfaction and pleasure were cited as the reasons for sewing, and home sewing usually occurred in households at the highest income levels and did not substitute for purchased new clothing. Courtless concluded that women were more likely to postpone buying, do more repair, recycle, and buy items on sale in order to save money on clothing.

The next section discusses one source of supplemental clothing, the SCM. The market is outlined in terms of its distribution subsystems (wholesale, retail, and subterranean), and in terms of differentiating seller characteristics. Emphasis is on the consignment segment of the market because of its role as an acquisition and disposition clothing outlet and because of its pertinence to this study. Consignment stores are a secondhand outlet where buyers and sellers are brought together as each group performs functions necessary to the operation of the consignment business.

The Secondhand Clothing Market

Secondhand clothing, that which has been previously owned, can be acquired from market and nonmarket sources. The SCM is a market system where one thing is exchanged for another, with or without using money, and where there is the clear expectation of exchange, not occasional reciprocation under certain conditions. Secondhand clothing is frequently obtained through transfer, rather than exchange. Transfers occur by handing down within or between households and through assistance or relief programs. Scavenging results in a transfer, though unintended by the disposed item's original owner. Generally, transfer systems are not part of the secondhand clothing market, but the lines can blur. For example, so-called clothing exchanges sometimes give garments to poor families.

Popular and research literature both provide information on

the SCM. The popular genre typically reports on contemporary events, issues, and perspectives, and provides current seller information. It often extolls the virtues of "secondhanding" because of the possible moneymaking and moneysaving avenues open to secondhand sellers and buyers. Research literature is scarce (though recently expanding) and tends to focus on the consumer of supplemental clothing sources, not on the components of the SCM as a viable clothing source. The fragmentary information available makes little attempt to view the SCM in terms of the interrelationships among types of secondhand sellers, the regular market, and the consumer.

Information garnered from various sources indicates that the SCM distribution system is of three types: wholesale, retail, and subterranean. All three share the distinguishing feature of the SCM: the clothing has been previously owned, though not necessarily worn. The just-previous owner is usually a household but could be a manufacturer or retailer who shunts off unsold stock into the market. Some goods may be thirdhand or more. The same merchandise can generate income several times for different sellers. Wholesalers and retailers in the SCM perform similar functions as in any market where goods are bought and sold. Wholesalers buy large volumes of "baled" clothing and sell thousands of pounds to domestic and foreign dealers of secondhand and new ready-to-wear apparel (Reinhold, 1984; Small, 1985). In some cases retailers maintain warehouses to ensure steady stock or act as supply conduits for wholesale export. The very

existence of such extensive operations indicates a well-organized, established market for secondhand clothing.

The "subterranean market" refers broadly to exchanges of goods and services that go uncounted by current techniques for monitoring economic activity. It has many epithets for its parts or its entirety: black, irregular, hidden, unrecorded, barter, unofficial, concealed, informal, unobserved, shadow, cash, moonlight, recycle or second-order marketing system, second economy, and the back door. Dubbed "subterranean" by some because of its hidden or invisible nature, this market is erratic, unpredictable, and lacks meticulous record keeping (Ginsburg, 1980). Yet, it has generated enough activity to attract attention from local and state governments and from the professional economic community. Street vendor operations, flea markets, and garage sales are sometimes officially nonexistent businesses in the subterranean or underground economy. Although the overall size of the underground economy is unknown, some speculate that it is 10 to 15 percent of the GNP (Gutmann, 1983). Herrmann and Soiffer (1984) estimated that garage-sale revenues alone totaled nearly one billion dollars in the U.S. in 1981. No statistics are available on the amount of income generated by "underground or subterranean" clothing sales.

Differentiating SCM Sellers

The structure of the secondhand clothing market lacks clear delineation. Despite a long history, the American market appears to be at a fledgling stage of development and is comprised of

many types of sellers, some quite informal (Ginsburg, 1980). Sellers go by generic names, such as thrift and consignment, but the names do not necessarily imply mutually exclusive characteristics. Some sellers intermix secondhand clothing with other merchandise, which may or may not be used (Small, 1984). Rather than describe the overall structure of the secondhand market this section focuses on certain characteristics that differentiate the sellers.

Merchandise ownership, profit/non-profit, continuity. One differentiating characteristic is whether the seller owns the clothing. A consignment shop, by definition, does not take title but acts as an agent for the owner/consignor of a garment. The consignor pays an annual consignment fee and agrees by contract to a selling arrangement which authorizes the store to sell the consignor's garment. If the garment is sold, the shop splits the receipt with the owner, typically on a 50-50 basis. Unsold garments revert to the owners or are sent elsewhere (such as charity) depending on the store policy and the owners' wishes (Audette, 1981). Auctions and some garage sales and clothing exchanges also involve seller-agents who may be organizations or individuals. Charity thrifts occasionally or regularly agree to sell on consignment (White, 1983).

Most other sellers, whether occasional or permanent operators, own their supply. Groups or individuals selling clothing intermittently for charity causes or for special purposes, such as moving sales or clean-out-closet sales, receive

it on donation or own the clothing privately. Clothing emanates from the sellers' wardrobes or is donated by individuals or even businesses (Winakor & Martin, 1963). Unsold items go back to the original owner or elsewhere. Flea market operators, vintage/antique, and some thrift shop owners and other secondhand sellers in business for themselves usually purchase supply.

Nonprofit vs. for-profit is a dichotomous characteristic that differentiates secondhand sellers. A high proportion appear to be the former and run the gamut from occasional sales sponsored by groups to formally organized permanent stores. For-profit secondhand clothing dealers are becoming more numerous. They represent such diversity that the profit motive may be the only common bond. Consignment stores fall into this category as do auctions, sample sale shops, estate sales, government surplus stores, and permanent flea markets.

As is apparent, sellers vary in degree of continuity. Building facilities and established warehousing and supply systems, as through rag dealers or consignor clientele, are dependent on continuous sales. Itinerant flea market operators and peddlers may also sell continuously, but not in the same location, which may prompt local governments to extract fees or impose restrictions (Ginsburg, 1980; Munde, 1985). Discontinuous selling, say less than twice a month, is characteristic of those who do not regard the activity as the chief source of income but hold sales to discard unwanted items or raise funds.

Surroundings and service. Secondhand clothing is sold in places that range from dingy to luxurious, depending on such factors as profit/nonprofit, continuity, and desired image. Image is interrelated with merchandise and general price level. It can be as important to a secondhand merchant as to any retailer because of its potential for attracting certain types of customers and suppliers.

Bargain barns and junk or thrift shops exemplify one type of store surroundings, and retail stores carrying mid-to high-priced secondhand goods that attract middle and upper class customers and suppliers exemplify another type of store surroundings. The former are well known for their spare facilities and lack of amenities like good lighting, mirrors, dressing rooms, orderly displays, convenient locations, ample parking, and services. Low prices trade off for incommodity and increased customer time use. Consignment stores often have surroundings and modes of operation that resemble those of new ready-to-wear retailers. Often garments are clean and pressed, hung, and organized by style and size. Holding and lay-away services are offered.

Some proprietors call customers when their favorite consignor drops off a new batch of clothes. Personalized attention is standard fare between proprietor and consignor and frequently results in friendships. Proprietors and consignors depend upon each other to function in their respective roles (seller-agent and supplier) and to remain discrete about the relationship. Consignors who wish that their activities remain secret from

friends and family do not want checks mailed to their homes or do not want to be publicly acknowledged by proprietors (M., 1982; Salholz, Huck, & Michael, 1985).

Less formal and more subject to individual whims, flea markets and yard, garage, and rummage sales by nature stand apart from secondhand stores. The mobility of flea markets and the temporality of rummage and garage sales often translates into lack of dressing rooms, mirrors, or services.

Types of merchandise. Secondhand goods are differentiable from new goods in two respects: age and condition. A garment's age, the elapsed time since its production, can significantly affect who will buy it and what its market price will be. Age is pivotal because of the fashion element in apparel (Margerum, 1981; O'Reilly et al., 1984). Secondhand clothing runs the gamut from current styles through antiques, at least a century old. Garments usually become outmoded within 5-10 years and concomitantly depreciate in value. At some point tastes may swing toward garments of particular periods, thereby ending their obsolescence and increasing their market value. They become "vintage," which presently refers to garb of the 1920s-50s (McQuown & Laugier, 1981). Eventually they attain antique status, and their value escalates, more because of historical value than use value (Greenwood & Murphy, 1978). Obviously, all through the cycle, market value hinges on how well the market participants-- donors, consignors, buyers, sellers-- are attuned to a garment's age and to existing demand and supply (Margerum,

1980). A garment's condition refers to the degree to which it retains its original desirable characteristics. Condition is largely determined by a garment's age and its treatment by the previous owner(s), but it can be ameliorated by repair, cleaning and pressing. Better condition boosts the market value (Winakor, 1979; O'Reilly et al., 1984).

Secondhand traditionally equates with outmoded. Though still true for much of the market, it is not the case for a growing segment that carries nearly new garments in current styles or vintage clothing now back in style. The stores that carry clean and pressed clothing in current styles operate on consignment bases. Merchandise is assiduously chosen from other sellers or by exercising the right to accept or reject consignments (M., 1982). Merchants actively cultivate consignors who bring in garments in good condition, and that sell easily (Audette, 1981; Bee, 1982).

Vintage sellers scour estate sales, auctions, and any other prospective source of salable items. Antique dealers operate similarly to vintage sellers, but their customers tend to be collectors and museums. They usually sell in stores or auctions and sometimes combine antique with vintage clothing.

Beyond these sellers, there is a large part of the market in which the goods do not bear the mark of selectivity. They include many thrift shops, flea markets, exchanges, bazaars, and garage sales. Selling what comes their way through donation, purchase, or consignment, merchandise is an eclectic mingling of

clothing of all ages placed on tables and racks, in bins and boxes, or in piles on the floor (Reinhold, 1984).

Pricing systems. Winakor (1979) observed that the secondhand clothing market is partly separate from the new ready-to-wear market, and it has its own systematic price system. Secondhand prices range considerably below regular retail prices, and most goods are priced far beneath their original prices. Exceptions are the astronomical prices for vintage/antique apparel, which can greatly exceed original values (Greenberg, 1983). As in any market, the secondhand market has customary, expected price points that are understood by experienced participants, though sellers differ in the price ranges of their goods. Previous discussion alluded to several characteristics of secondhand sellers that influence the prices they charge. The focus of this section will be on the pricing systems, the ways that prices are established, not on the price levels of the market. Two general systems are evident, though hybrids are common.

Some sellers establish price with reference to the retail price of the garment when new. The older the garment, the less well this works. Consignment stores carrying current or slightly outmoded styles seem to utilize the system most (Dreyfus, 1980). The owner/consignor might have a say in the asking price, but the proprietor may customarily use a certain discount from the original retail price. Added considerations are the store's overall price level and a garment's salability in terms of fashion, condition, quality, and other factors. Though stores

discount by varying percentages, the 50-75 percent range is typical.

A consignment store sets the asking price and agrees to hold a garment only for a certain period, usually a few months. Markdowns occur by set percentages at specified time intervals. Some places tag each garment to show the date it entered the store so that shoppers know when markdowns will happen (Clauson, 1983).

Profit and nonprofit flea markets, garage and rummage sales, and thrift businesses might also price by percentages of original retail values, however the prices are at the low end of the secondhand market's price scale. Discounts start at 50 percent, but they are frequently much larger, 75-90 percent (Kieffer, 1981).

The second general pricing system does not involve specific reference to original retail prices. Rather, buyers' and sellers' judgments of a garment's worth determine the price (Matthews, et al. 1975). These judgments obviously relate to a garment's attributes, such as age and condition, and to current demand and supply for certain types of apparel. Secondhand sellers who stock donated or purchased goods that range from high to low on the price scale may shift from initial prices as they watch how merchandise moves, or else buyers and sellers arrive at prices through bargaining or bidding. Price-setting by the seller and bargaining may coexist when buyers can override marked prices by haggling.

The SCM in Research Literature

One of the first research projects on the SCM was by Winakor and Martin (1963) who analyzed yard and rummage sales. They set out to survey consumers of used clothing but found this difficult because of a lack of secondhand sales vocabulary and criteria for a stratified sample. To overcome the problems, Winakor and Martin developed a used-clothing sales classification system and reported characteristics of sales. Sales were classified in two ways: by nature of sponsoring organization and whether the sale was continuous or occasional. Sale sponsors included nonprofit organizations, seller-agents, and individual clothing owners. In general, organizations held sales as moneymaking projects, while individuals held sales to dispose of unwanted clothing.

Sales were classified as continuous if regularly held at least twice a month. Any sale held less frequently in a room used at other times for other purposes was classified as occasional. Thirty-two of the 34 sales studied were occasional. One of the two continuous sales was sponsored by an individual, the other by an organization.

Winakor and Martin found that sales were held throughout the year, with the majority in the spring and fall. Popular sale days were Fridays and Saturdays. "Good sales" had a wide assortment of reasonably priced adult and children's clothing. Merchandise for the sales sponsored by organizations was largely donated, although sometimes supplemented by unsold merchandise left over from other used-clothing sales and from new ready-to-wear retail

donations. Garments were grouped into sections for men, women, and children and further sorted by type. Sometimes clothing was labeled with paper price tags, but many garments remained unmarked. Lack of size labels was common.

Pricing garments was noted as the most difficult sales procedure. Winakor and Martin suggested that prices were determined by fashion and remaining wear life in each garment rather than by original garment price. Prices were also set by customer acceptance. Interviews with sellers indicated that recognized price ceilings existed.

Infants' clothing was classified as the easiest to sell, followed by boys' and then girls' clothing. Men's clothing was deemed the most difficult to get rid of. Sellers did not rate women's clothing as either easy or hard to sell. Unsold merchandise was saved for other sales, donated to another community sale, or sent to a large organization such as Goodwill Industries or The Salvation Army.

Rucker (1981) studied thrift shops as a source of used textile products and focused on them as an alternative marketing system. Rucker was interested in thrift shop characteristics that fostered acquisition of used clothing. Store atmosphere, store conveniences, merchandise display, and clothing prices were factors identified to either foster or hinder the movement of clothing from original to subsequent owner. Clothing acquisition was also influenced by the length of time a consumer had been patronizing thrifts and by the condition and fashionability of

clothing. The research suggested that the recycling of clothing through thrift shops may require balancing consumer preferences for neat, clean clothing against low prices.

Wiseman (1979) described various retail establishments, separating the large national and international charity thrifts from local charity and entrepreneurial establishments. Thrifts, large and small, operated on donated clothing and other dry goods for men and women. Methods of merchandising varied between organizations and ranged from unordered chaos to neat stacks and piles. Wiseman enumerated the reasons why sizing and pricing policies, clothing displays, and lack of consumer amenities enhanced sociability among thrift store shoppers. She did not study entrepreneurial enterprises which she defined as sellers who bought discarded clothing. Two groups of stores were described, those specializing in moderately priced clothing and those selling expensive "designer" clothing.

Richardson (1982) identified two types of used-clothing stores, labeling them "A" or "B" according to how they ranked on each of four aspects of store image (clothing price points, store atmosphere, convenience, and merchandise). Judges were asked to indicate whether the clothing in each store was higher or lower priced than the clothing items listed on a rating sheet. Store atmosphere was judged by organization and display of clothing. If the store was organized, with clothing types grouped together and garments displayed, the store received a higher rating. Store convenience criteria included dressing room availability,

aisle space for multiple customers, and size and price labels on garments. Merchandise was judged by cleanliness, fabric condition, construction quality, and assortment of a particular type of clothing. Stores with higher ratings were labeled type "A" (consignment), and stores with lower ratings received a type "B" (thrift) label. In this way Richardson differentiated between two types of SCM sellers by price, store atmosphere, convenience, and merchandise.

Consumers of Secondhand Clothing

Consumers of used clothing have traditionally been low- to middle-income families. Historical literature, as well as research, documents the utilization of secondhand sources by the impoverished or unskilled.

Nystrom (1928) pointed out that the old system of home production proved entirely inadequate to meet the expanding demand for clothing during the rapid growth and development in this country from 1830 to 1860. The problem was most acute for many unmarried men migrating to new western territory, who lacked sewing skills or female family members to make clothing. Consequently, the men purchased secondhand apparel from dealers who brought it from the East. According to Strasser (1982), secondhand clothing for the poor was shipped in quantity to the South and West and sold at retail in the early 1900s. During the same period J.P. Morgan, founder of Goodwill, stocked his church with the castoffs of the rich and opened its doors to the urban

poor, often destitute immigrants in need of warm winter garments. The recipients of this charity emptied the church house but insisted on exchanging their labor or some small token for the clothing (Lewis, 1977).

National catastrophes and world events have also fostered the purchase of used clothing. Agencies, relief programs and professional home economists were galvanized into action by the Great Depression in an effort to provide families with clothing. Social agencies suggested vast reduction or omission of budgeted allowances for clothing, with the idea that it could be obtained secondhand through purchase or gift (Guilford, 1932). Extension specialists taught renovation techniques, and home economists organized the collection of old clothing so that it could be repaired and redistributed in the community.

World War II caused another wave of clothing conservation and spawned creative usage of available textiles and materials. The War Production Board urged women to "quilt, piece, mend, patch, darn, and remodel in order to conserve fabrics" (Raushenbush, 1942). The Board solicited the services of Goodwill, The Salvation Army, and other organizations that had experience and established systems for collecting secondhand articles. Other charities and the Red Cross marshalled women to make and repair items for themselves, their communities, American soldiers, and foreign countries.

Research investigating sources of clothing has frequently linked secondhand clothing outlets and the poor, yet

discrepancies occur from study to study as to exactly who consumers of used clothing are. The literature seems inordinately preoccupied with low-income and rural subjects when there is evidence that other groups of people have utilized secondhand clothing sources (Colamosca, 1978; "Famous Fashions," 1959; "Hand-Me-Downs," 1961). Some research indicates that low-income families do not purchase large quantities of used clothing and prefer to buy clothing in discount stores instead (Brewton, 1973; Orr, 1973).

This is not to say that low-income people do not purchase used clothing. Used clothing has been identified as characteristic of particular groups of people such as slum dwellers and migrant workers (Robertson, 1968). Perhaps the point of demarcation between those who purchase customarily and those who do not is the amount of income regularly available. If there is no other choice the least expensive source might be charity, the used-clothing store, or even the garbage dump as a last resort for the homeless, destitute, and disadvantaged. For individuals with some income, who perhaps have limited choices, the preference is for new clothing which may help alleviate the stigma of being poor. Thrift shops are frequented by homeless men and women who regularly purchase a few items of clothing. One thrift store owner believes that such purchasers throw clothing away and buy weekly because they lack storage and cleaning facilities (J. Spivey, personal communication, Valdosta, Georgia, 1983).

Research within the last 10 years has identified a change in secondhand store clientele. Margerum's (1978) description of 144 thrift shop consumers notes that one-fourth of the consumers were housewives (socioeconomic class not indicated by Margerum), one-fifth were "white collar" employees, and one-fifth were "blue collar" employees. The primary reason consumers purchased in thrift shops was to save money. Yet a frequently mentioned reason for purchasing was the desire to have more clothing variety. Margerum (1980) supported Winakor and Martin's (1963) suggestion that price was related to fashionability of clothing. Higher prices were put on items that represented current styles.

Richardson (1982) studied consumers who purchased used apparel from a variety of secondhand stores. Relationships were tested between clothing variables and consumer demographic variables. Significant differences were found between consumers of type "A" (consignment) stores and consumers of type "B" (thrift) stores. A significant relationship was indicated between sex of the consumer and types of used-clothing stores patronized. More male consumers patronized stores with overall lower ratings on prices, atmosphere, conveniences, and merchandise assortment and quality, while a significantly larger number of females patronized used-clothing stores with higher store image. Richardson also linked store type to user of purchase. Consumers bought more work clothing for themselves from stores with high store image ratings. Consumers who shopped in used-clothing outlets with lower store image bought clothing

primarily for home use, for themselves, children, and others.

Richardson's study did not support the prevalent idea that secondhand clothing users were low- to middle-income families. The largest proportion of respondents indicated yearly incomes of over \$17,000. Over one-third of the consumers surveyed indicated either incomes of \$7,000 or less or incomes of \$15,000 or more. The largest proportion of consumers were 18 to 29 years of age. Family unit respondents were 55 percent of the total sample, and most of these had one child. Richardson's findings support Margerum's (1978) conclusion that saving money was a primary reason for purchasing used clothing. Over 85 percent of the participants purchased clothing for "rational" reasons, i. e., price, quality, fit, etc. Respondents who completed high school, one year of college, junior college, and four years of college, adopted fashions earlier than those who indicated less education. Classification of secondhand consumers is not prevalent in the literature, but researchers are taking notice of the variety of secondhand shoppers and complexity of secondhand sales. Herrmann and Soiffer (1984) grouped garage sale shoppers into 10 categories: (1) Retailers, (2) Child-Item Shoppers, (3) Habituals, (4) Economic Transition Shoppers, (5) Specific-Needs Shoppers, (6) Movers, (7) Collectors, (8) Bargain-Hunters, Browsers, the Bored, (9) Social Buyers, and (10) Obligees. The labels connote reasons for shopping which vary from the economic to the social.

Retailers purchased goods to resell in stores, perpetual

garage sales, or flea markets. Child-Item Shoppers, Habituals, Economic Transition Shoppers, Specific-Needs Shoppers, Movers, and Collectors looked for specific commodities to fulfill some need caused by either external (changing residence) or internal (collecting depression glass) situations. Bargain-Hunters, Browsers, and the Bored, Social Buyers, and Obligees frequented garage sales for social or entertainment reasons. Obligees went to friends' or neighbors' sales to pay their social dues. Social Buyers, Browsers, the Bored, and Bargain-Hunters looked upon sales as a way to make social contact and engage in an entertaining event. Personal sale (garage sale) patrons characterized by O'Reilly et al. (1984) tended to be married females with large families. Household items, commonly offered at personal sales, may have been the attraction for married couples and families. Students were also reported to be shoppers although they were not predominant.

Clothing Consumption Behavior

Acquisition and disposition are two important components of the clothing consumption process which increase or decrease an individual's clothing stock and determine the flow of garments into and out of inventory (Winakor, 1969). The SCM performs a unique dual function for consumers; it provides outlets for disposition and at the same time supplies clothing. Yet, research focused on secondhand clothing acquisition or on clothing disposition is scarce.

Whereas the previous section on clothing sources discussed a variety of outlets for acquisition, this section reviews research findings on factors that motivate clothing acquisition and disposition. Although a large body of literature addresses factors affecting acquisition of new ready-to-wear clothing, few studies specifically investigate factors affecting secondhand clothing acquisition and clothing disposition. Research that reports on the disposition of commodities other than clothing is included here because it identifies general product and consumer characteristics that influence disposition decisions and behaviors.

Acquisition

Acquisition of clothing from supplemental sources depends upon several factors related to the demographics of the purchasing family, the user of the clothing, and the physical characteristics of clothing items. No one demographic or clothing characteristic appears to have dominant influence over what clothing item is acquired or who utilizes purchased secondhand clothing. However, some general trends are evident.

Research findings differ on the influence of family size for purchased used clothing. Hartz (1977) and O'Reilly et al. (1984) reported that large families with children were more likely to purchase used clothing. Nicholson (1969) found that large families were not more likely to purchase used clothing. She suggested that clothing was more likely to be handed down within the family than purchased outside the family. Large migrant

families in Robertson's (1968) study purchased more used clothing from a clothing exchange than new ready-to-wear. However, these families disposed of clothing either by burning or making into rags, thus preventing any handing down. Furthermore, due to the migrant workers' jobs (harvesting crops), their garments possibly became so worn and stained that handing down was not an alternative. Therefore, occupation can affect where and how clothing is acquired and discarded.

Income is another possible factor affecting used-clothing purchases, but it may or may not be a good predictor of who patronizes the SCM. As discussed previously, low-income families may not purchase used clothing. Other research suggests that secondhand clothing outlets vary in the income levels of the customers they serve. The occupational status of personal sale purchasers in the O'Reilly et al. (1984) study was higher than that of the nonpurchasers. The researchers noted a positive relationship between income and personal sale usage and cited Yavas and Riecken who found a negative relationship between income and institutional sale patronage. Ginsburg (1980) observed that the middle class and prosperous working class in England now attend and organize jumble sales.

The physical characteristics of a garment after it has been worn may hinder the acquisition of secondhand clothing. Manoushagian (1977), Hartz (1977), Robertson (1968), and Geiger (1972) all indicated that shoes were not a desirable secondhand clothing item; they tended to be worn out and ill-fitting for a

second owner. Shoes and underwear were primarily purchased new by migrant families particularly during times of windfall income (Robertson, 1968). Sanitation reasons also hinder secondhand clothing acquisition. Rucker (1981) reported that thrift store consumers indicated negative attitudes toward items that had intimate contact with the body. Similarly, personal sale purchasers increasingly rejected clothing as it increased in closeness to the body, suggesting that concerns about previous body contact may be an important deterrent to the use of previously worn clothing (O'Reilly et al., 1984). Personal sale shoppers purchased more streetwear than any other type of clothing. Garment price, condition, and fashionability of clothing foster its movement from original owner to subsequent owner. Low prices and good condition of items were the prime prerequisites for personal sale purchasers (O'Reilly et al., 1984). Rucker (1981), Margerum (1981), and Richardson (1982) indicated that "fashionability" was an important garment characteristic that purchasers considered before acquisition. Fashionability in terms of brand names was not as important as price to personal sale patrons (O'Reilly et al., 1984).

Other influential factors have been found to be the number of years consumers have patronized secondhand sales and the merchandising methods that sellers used to price and display sale items. Long-time shoppers, compared to short-time shoppers, found more types of clothing items acceptable for purchase (Rucker, 1981; O'Reilly et al., 1984). How garments were priced,

(as a group, individually, or no marked price) affected the success of personal sales (O'Reilly et al., 1984). Pricing each item individually was the most effective and displaying items without prices was the least effective merchandising strategy. O'Reilly et al. also observed that items on tables sold better than those in boxes.

Nicholson (1969) focused on acquisition and disposition of handed-down clothing. Purchased used clothing and made-over, borrowed, and exchanged clothing were not investigated in detail. Probably the small number of participants utilizing these sources accounted for the minimal attention to them. Nicholson's findings indicated that handed-down garments were only one percent of all acquisitions for all participants.

Most of the clothing worn by girls aged 14-19 was purchased new or received as gifts. Nicholson's results supported others' findings that purchased new clothing is the main source of supply (Brewton, 1973; Hartz, 1977; Joyce, 1966; Kundel, 1976). Home sewn garments were third in order followed by handed-down, purchased used, made-over, borrowed, and exchanged. No differences were found between members of different social classes nor between families of different sizes in obtaining handed-down, purchased used, borrowed, home sewn, or made-over clothing.

Manoushagian (1977) studied clothing purchase practices of families living in a rural community. The sample included 79 mothers whose children were enrolled in kindergarten through

grade five of an elementary school. Findings indicated that the primary recipients of used clothing were children followed by adult women. Previously-owned clothing was least likely to be purchased for senior citizens.

In the two-part questionnaire, information was gathered to characterize families and determine purchasing practices. Demographics included age, family composition, occupation, socioeconomic status, and education. Forty-three percent of the respondents were 20-39 years old, and the majority of these were "blue collar" workers. Manoushagian found an inverse relationship between socioeconomic status and frequency of purchasing used apparel.

The respondents indicated frequency of secondhand purchase by selecting the "sometimes purchase" category. Children's clothing was most often purchased. Sixty-two percent of the respondents often or sometimes purchased used children's clothing for school. Infants' wear, accessories, formal wear, and shoes were infrequently purchased. Condition of garment was ranked as the highest criterion followed in order by usefulness, fit, price, care, quality of construction, style, fashion, and color. Friends were the primary source of used apparel, followed by private garage sales. Used-clothing stores such as Goodwill and The Salvation Army, were seldom patronized by the participants. Manoushagian noted that secondhand clothing stores were not located in the area surveyed but were within driving distance, implying that participants could have shopped in the stores had

they so desired.

Information sources utilized by shoppers which may influence secondhand purchasers vary according to type of secondhand seller patronized. O'Reilly et al. (1984) reported the predominant use of newspapers over friends as an information source by personal sale shoppers. Friends were more likely to be utilized when information on institutional sales was needed.

Disposition

Empirical research on disposition of consumer products is not readily available. According to Hanson (1980), researchers have not analyzed disposition in any detail even though knowledge of this aspect of the consumption process would lend a more comprehensive view of the consumer. Hanson cited economic and ecological reasons that strongly justified disposition research but noted that only a few reported studies dealt specifically with the topic.

Jacoby, Berning, and Dietvorst (1979) and Hanson (1980) both recognized that product related factors and psychological characteristics of the decisionmaker influenced disposition choices. They also contended that situational factors extrinsic to the product affected the disposition process. Hanson's proposed paradigm for consumer product disposition summarizes the disposition process into a three-part framework. The situation and object (product) factors are the external stimuli that influence the decisionmaker (family or individual) to then initiate the disposition process which includes problem

recognition, search and evaluation, disposition decision, and post-disposition outcome. The paradigm was not tested empirically by Hanson in a consumer disposition context, but it provides a basis for hypothesis generation.

Jacoby et al. (1979) developed a taxonomy for describing consumer disposition behavior and tested it empirically on a set of consumer products. In addition to the factors noted above, their results showed that amount of available storage space and financial considerations of disposal affected disposal decisions. As available storage space increased, the probability that an item would be kept increased, and the probability that it would be thrown away decreased. When an individual was concerned about the financial aspect of disposal, the item would be sold, more often directly to a customer than to or through an agent.

Although the Jacoby et al. findings may be product-specific, it is likely that storage space availability affects disposition decisions for a wide range of commodities. Matthews et al. (1975) noted that city dwellers disposed of usable furniture and household items by dumping them on the street because of a lack of storage space. Clothing disposition can occur for this and many other reasons. According to one popular article, overstuffed closets trigger a disposition decision not only because more clothing cannot be added to existing storage space, but also because the garment owner has pangs of guilt about owning so many items (Salholz, et al., 1985). In this case inventory is the motivating force for disposal, not only for

physical reasons (storage space is full) but also for psychological reasons. Compulsive or obsessive shopping that results in the possession of goods far exceeding what can be used is beyond the scope of this literature review, yet it is worth mentioning that shopping addicts have guilt feelings about the quantity of clothing in their closets (Seligmann, Greenberg, Bailey, & Burgower, 1985). It is conceivable that this type of acquisition behavior promotes disposition by way of the SCM since many consignment shops are the recipients of clothing never worn or gently worn. Often obsessive shoppers continue their consumption behavior until closet rods break or, in severe cases, until bankruptcy is imminent.

Inadequate storage space not only motivates disposal decisions, it can cause economic waste as well. Maintenance of a good requires time, effort, and proper use of equipment (Burk, 1968). All these factors are needed to avoid economic waste. If storage space is inadequate, a good can deteriorate to such a degree that it becomes unusable. For example, clothing packed too tightly in a space without air circulation can be damaged by insects and odors, and can become misshapen. Therefore, disposal ceases to be a choice and instead becomes a mandatory action. In the case of food, bacterial growth caused by improper maintenance forces immediate discard due to potential health risks if ingested. Other more durable products lose their physical characteristics at a slower rate and can occupy storage space for years. In the latter example, limited space would motivate

disposal before product disintegration. If space is not limited and the quality of the garments does not decline, clothing is not 'wasted' because it is still wearable but it becomes less valuable due to depreciation. Style changes quickly date garments causing them to become unfashionable. Depreciated clothing occupies space that might otherwise be used more efficiently.

Storage space for clothing usually contains two types of garments, active and inactive. Active storage houses clothing that is currently worn whereas inactive storage houses clothing that is not being worn for a variety of reasons, e.g. it has been forgotten, it is a purchasing mistake, it is a family heirloom, or is out of style (Winakor, 1969).

Stored clothing that is inactive but not necessarily worn out or 'used up' may or may not be useful to an individual. Some respondents in VeVerka's (1974) study maintained inactive storage adjacent to active storage; many seldom worn garments were not physically separated from garments in active use. If inactive garments remain in the same space as active garments, an individual may lack adequate storage space to separate the two, or has not considered that the inactive clothing could be eliminated to free the space for a better use. Inflow and outflow rates of clothing therefore may be a function of knowledge and of active decisionmaking about disposal alternatives and availability of appropriate outlets.

Another problem the consumer may have is to determine use

value of clothing. VeVerka (1974) defined use value as that which equals or exceeds the costs involved in acquiring, owning, storing, and maintaining a garment. Not knowing the use value of active or inactive clothing may cause improper storage of clothing. Is the garment useful as an active or inactive garment? In either case, if the garment is not useful, even though it may still be wearable, does the consumer have enough knowledge to make a disposition decision? "Apparel may be discarded when the current use value provided by the garment is less than the current costs of the garment and when the cost of keeping the garment exceeds the costs of disposition" (VeVerka, 1974, p. 79).

Hall (1975) examined clothing discard practices of adult women. She found that more clothing was discarded for physical than for social reasons. She did not study disposition methods or quantity of clothing discarded. Hambrick (1976) noted that shoes and dresses were discarded in usable condition by the majority of study participants who were elderly retired women. However, more shoes than dresses were discarded in nonusable condition for functional reasons. Geiger's (1972) results also indicated that shoes were the most nonusable clothing item discarded.

Dresses were discarded for aesthetic reasons (Hambrick, 1976). Over half of the respondents got rid of dresses because they were tired of wearing them or because the garments were no longer in fashion or were unattractive to the women. Most study

participants had nonworn clothing hanging in the closet which implies that a disposal decision had not yet taken place. If time is not taken to review current stock on a periodic basis, disposal decisions are put off causing inventory build up. Respondents that removed clothing from storage gave it away to charity, church organizations, or individuals. The aesthetic reason for discarding dresses in Hambrick's study differed from the discard reason given by respondents in Hall's (1975) study. Pershing (1974) studied the clothing consumption behavior of faculty men. Younger faculty men disposed of "out-of-style" clothing, and faculty members with full professor rank disposed of clothing for "worn fabric" reasons only.

Warning (1956) and Nicholson (1969) included this important topic in their studies. Garments were often disposed of by handing down within the family (Warning, 1956). Participants in the lower-middle class were more likely to hand down clothing within the family than were participants in the upper-lower or upper-middle groups. A greater proportion of the upper-middle social class mothers got rid of clothing by giving garments to friends or by participating in neighborhood exchanges (Warning, 1956). Garments were discarded because they were either worn out or outgrown. The upper-middle group eliminated garments before they were worn out. In the lower-middle and upper-lower groups clothing was more likely to be worn out and outgrown before disposal.

Eighty-one percent of the participants in the Nicholson

(1969) study discarded clothing by destroying. Nicholson (1969) did not investigate reasons for using any particular disposition method. She did say, however, that many individuals destroyed stockings. Handing down was the second most frequently used method of disposition. The number of participants who handed down clothing to others exceeded the number who acquired from this source. Clothing was given to charity, kept but not used again, put aside for rags, sold, and recycled as stuffing in decreasing quantities. Nicholson was the only researcher to mention the sale of clothing as a means of disposal. Warning (1956) noted the exchange of garments between neighbors, but made no mention of clothing exchanged for cash.

Other disposition literature cites the effects that physical product characteristics and psychological factors have on disposition behavior. Burke, Conn, and Lutz (1978) studied disposition behavior of consumers who had broken or unused small appliances in their homes. They identified variables that influenced consumers' disposition choices when the behavior was dichotomous: discarding the product or recognizing some value in the product. The demographic variable age and two lifestyle factors demarcated a "trasher" from a "pack rat". The "trasher" threw away broken products even though repairs were possible, whereas the "pack rat" did not dispose of a malfunctioning, broken, or out-of-style product. Younger individuals were more likely to throw away products than keep them around the house in anticipation of later use, sale, or donation. Burke, Conn, and

Lutz concluded that lifestyle factors were moderately useful when studying disposition behavior, while demographic factors alone were not enlightening. They conjectured that the trouble or time a consumer must expend to get a product repaired may foster the throwing away.

DeBell and Dardis (1979) studied product related factors as they affected the disposition decision for washing machines and refrigerators. A higher percentage of washing machines than refrigerators were discarded because they did not work and were replaced due to mechanical problems. Significantly more refrigerators were put to use elsewhere in the home, given away, sold, and donated. Added features were very important in the disposal decision for refrigerators and unimportant for washing machines.

Summary

The primary clothing source utilized by the majority of the population is new ready-to-wear retailing. If used clothing or clothing from supplemental sources is acquired it is usually worn by infants and children. Secondhand clothing is sold by retailers, wholesalers and subterranean sellers. In some cases wholesalers not only buy and sell to retailers but also store, clean, advertise merchandise, and sell at retail (Hosenball, 1985; Small, 1985).

As the number of secondhand establishments has increased, the number of SCM participants has grown. In the past decade specialization by sellers has attracted a diversity of consumers buying, selling, and trading. The SCM is unique in that the clothing consumption activities of acquisition and disposition can occur in the same market segment or between different segments. Consignment stores are one secondhand clothing outlet where consumers can simultaneously buy and sell, thus satisfying the need to acquire and dispose of clothing.

Various demographic characteristics of families and individuals affect clothing acquisitions and disposition. The physical attributes of clothing and the situational factors are also pertinent to acquisition and disposition activities. Therefore, acquisition and disposition may be influenced by a combination of dynamic factors.

CHAPTER 3

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this research describes the dynamic linkage between the SCM and consumers. The basic concepts were derived from Winakor's clothing consumption process. The following discussion explains the relationships between the SCM and acquisition and disposition by households, as well as factors that underlie the relationships, which are pertinent to this study.

The Secondhand Clothing Process Model

The Secondhand Clothing Process Model (Figure 1) illustrates the flow of clothing into and out of the household sector. The inflows are acquisitions, followed by wearing, maintenance, and storage while the clothing remains in a household's inventory or stock. Ultimately outflows or dispositions, either planned or unplanned, take place. Depending on the manner of household disposition, clothing may funnel into the SCM. When it does, the clothing becomes available to cycle back into the household sector through exchange.

Because the model in Figure 1 was developed for purposes of this research to show the relationship between the household sector and the SCM, it excludes certain important aspects of acquisition and disposition that are beyond the scope of the study. It encompasses only clothing acquisitions that lead to household ownership, thus not

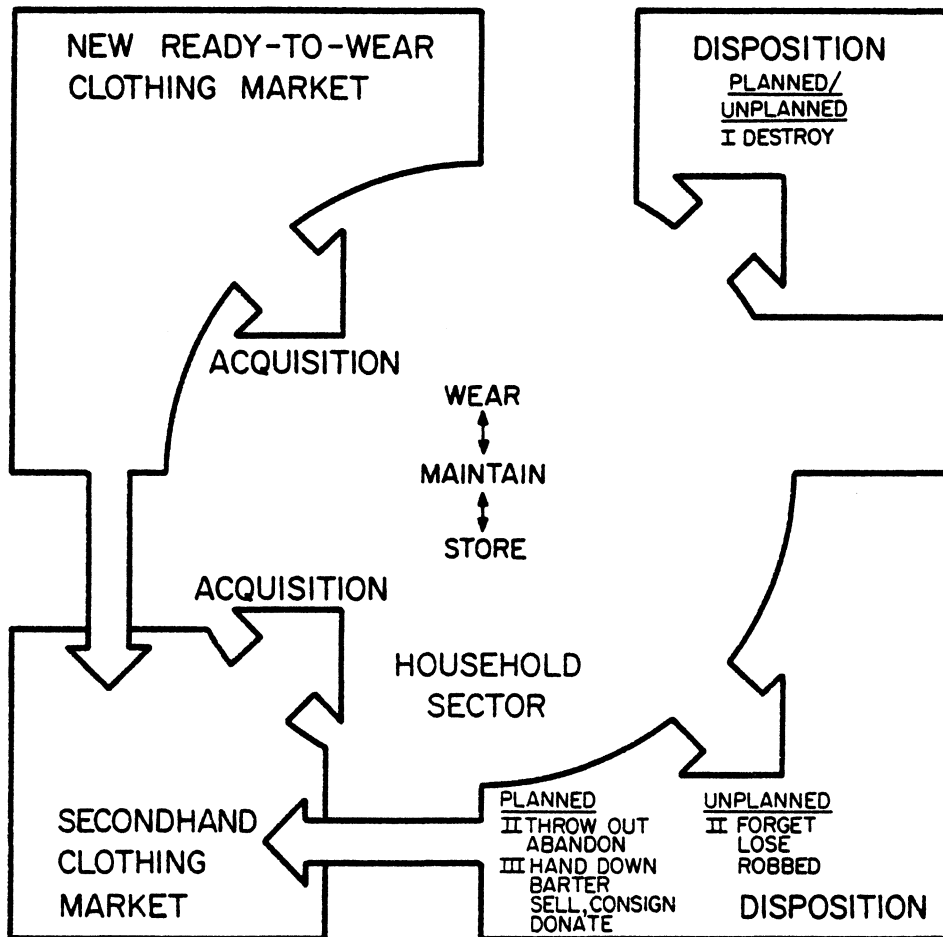


FIGURE 1 Secondhand clothing process model

renting or borrowing where garments are in transitory possession. An implication of this delimitation is that it frees household members to dispose of items in whatever manner they choose.

The model does not specifically incorporate intra- and interhousehold clothing transfers between members of households. Certain disposition methods shown in the model could result in transfers, as when clothing is handed down, donated, thrown out, abandoned, lost, or stolen. Such transfers could replace clothing market acquisitions. Yet, they remain outside the domain of the SCM, a system of exchange, not transfer. Consigned clothing is an exceptional case. When unsold consigned garments in the SCM are reclaimed, they may revert back to the household or reenter the SCM by another route.

The Clothing Consumption Process

The model assumes that clothing is initially acquired by households by any of the several possible means discussed previously, then is stored, and may be worn and subjected to maintenance procedures before it is discarded, either with or without planning. Winakor (1969) defined the clothing consumption process as the whole set of household activities of acquisition, storing, wearing or using, maintaining, and disposition. Acquisition and disposition are flows that regulate the household's stock or inventory of garments in various stages of usage, maintenance, and storage. Acquired clothing cycles through these stages while in inventory for a variety of reasons and in an infinite variety of combinations before it is eliminated from inventory by some means of disposition.

Winakor (1969) assumed that inventory was the "feedback" mechanism interconnecting acquisition, inventory, and discard. Inventory is kept at some equilibrium level, and returned to that level in case of disturbance. The possibility exists that each consumer has an equilibrium level for the overall wardrobe and/or levels for specific types of clothing (e.g., shirts) which are governed by storage capabilities and by usage and maintenance patterns. Equilibrium inventory levels may change over time.

Winakor acknowledged that it is not known how the mechanism works and admitted the possibility of stock remaining unaffected by acquisition and disposition. She identified some demographic characteristics of the family and individual as well as physical attributes of clothing that might influence the relative rates of acquisition and disposition. Winakor did not discuss availability and acceptability of disposal outlets as factors that affect disposition. Some researchers have suggested that physical and aesthetic attributes of clothing prompt disposition behaviors (Geiger, 1972; Hall, 1975; Hambrick, 1976; Pershing, 1974). Others have suggested that a combination of external stimuli, family and household demographics, and product related factors motivate disposal (Hanson, 1980; Jacoby et al., 1977). Yet, few studies have addressed the role of inventory itself in regulating equilibrium clothing levels. Inadequate storage space and time-consuming, expensive maintenance may foster discard, which in turn can activate replacement.

Disposition. Disposition is either a planned or unplanned activity with or without compensation for the garment owner. In Figure 1, disposal methods are classified as Types I, II, and III. The manner of disposal determines where clothing goes and whether the garment owner receives compensation. Garment destruction, Type I, is planned or unplanned and results in irrevocable disintegration and no compensation. Type II disposal occurs when clothing is thrown out or abandoned, both planned by the owner, or when clothing is forgotten, lost, or stolen, all unplanned by the owner. Again, no compensation results. Although unintended by the owner, Type II disposal can lead to subsequent ownership by another individual who finds or steals the clothing, or retrieves it from the trash. If the original owner plans the disposition and also intends ownership by another individual, the Type III disposal classification applies. The owner disposes of a garment by handing down, bartering, selling, donating, or consigning; these are avenues for SCM supply, except for handing down which is a form of transfer. Whereas handing down involves no compensation, one may receive cash, tax deductions, or goods in other Types III disposal methods.

Certain demographic characteristics of garment owners influence their disposal methods. Occupations in which clothing receives hard wear, excessive soiling, or even contamination (e.g., with pesticides) encourage destruction of clothing (Robertson, 1968). Types II and III planned disposal methods can be affected by the sexes and ages of household members, number of persons in a household, number of children financially supported, education, employment status, race,

and income (Hanson, 1980). The research literature, however, does not give a consistent recognizable pattern on these variables.

For example, handing down appears more likely when a younger individual and/or one of the same sex is available to receive handed-down clothing. The recipients are more often children than adults (Britton, 1975). Age and changes in income or household composition, as when a spouse dies, can be the impetus for older individuals to move to retirement communities or health care facilities and sell or otherwise dispose of their houses and belongings. Some families throw out or donate unwanted items when relocating (Herrmann & Soiffer, 1984). Income, relocation, or a hobby can prompt selling and bartering. Flea market and garage sellers engage in these entrepreneurial activities for reasons mentioned above and in the process dispose of innumerable goods, their own or purchased goods from other sellers (Herrmann & Soiffer, 1984; O'Reilly et al. 1984).

Consigned clothing supplies a market segment usually handled by a specific type of seller, the consignment store. Other sellers, including thrift and vintage stores, also consign clothing but do not obtain the majority of their supply in this way (Small, 1985; White, 1983). Discarding clothing by consignment is a disposal method that dictates thoughtful planning. Consignors cannot simply bag up all the clothing they want to discard, in any usable or unusable condition, and drop it off at the nearest store. Consignment store policies require consignors to bring in seasonable, fashionable garments without obvious physical defects, by appointment. Therefore, these

parameters dictate what types of garments are consigned and why they are consigned and may affect the frequency of consigning.

Prior knowledge of a consignment store through a personal source (e.g., a friend) may influence where clothing will be consigned if the process is a new phenomenon. Also, the friendship between store proprietor and consignor will affect how, why, and when consignment decisions are initiated. Sometimes proprietors starting a new store obtain initial supply from their friends' closets. Personal relationships are continued over years and sometimes long distances. Some consignors prefer to deal with stores in another state because of the delicacy of the buy/sell process; they do not want to see people they know wearing their clothes (Salholz et al., 1985).

Empirical evidence confirming or refuting the notion that consignment store information is primarily obtained by word-of-mouth is not available. Yet, the lack of written material on consignment stores implies a void in other information sources. Individuals in large metropolitan areas have written shopping guides in an effort to compensate for this gap (Miller, 1984; White, 1983). O'Reilly et al. (1984) cited newspapers as the most frequently used information source by personal sales shoppers. In the present study, it was observed that the Roanoke consignment stores advertised somewhat, and one store proprietor did not advertise at all in the newspaper, believing advertisements to be counterproductive. The proprietor commented that advertisements induced an excessive flow of individuals who did not understand the consignment process, wanting only to drop off "car loads" of clothing that did not meet the store's requirements for

garment quality and condition.

On occasion patrons who initially consign clothing become buyers and vice versa (Bee, 1982; Seligmann et al., 1985). Their consumption behavior as buyers/sellers may or may not be the same as individuals who buy or sell only. Purchaser/consignor patrons may differ from other patrons in terms of the duration of and reasons for patronizing consignment stores.

Planned disposal methods Types II and III are initiated by the garment owner or by a surrogate, such as a parent. Handing down, bartering, selling, and donating clothing are activities conducted by the garment owner or the individual responsible for the clothing. These disposal methods are conducted primarily between the person who possesses the clothing and the person or organization who assumes ownership. It is possible that disposal decisions can be directly influenced by the potential recipient. Consigned clothing is markedly different because the garment owner has no direct contact with the buyer and acts through the seller-agent. However, the proprietor may campaign for a consignor to place his or her clothing in the store.

Secondhand Clothing Market. Consumers connect the market and household sector by moving clothing between the two units. The acquire/dispose cycle is necessary for the market's existence. In some cases new and secondhand ready-to-wear outlets overlap, enabling an individual to purchase used goods in a retail store selling new clothing or vice versa. Retailers sometimes shunt off unsold new clothing into the SCM by donation, consignment, or sale.

All clothing, unless it is destroyed, has some chance at some time

of cycling through the SCM as a garment, as a part of a garment, as a rag, or as a scrap to be reincorporated into a new garment or textile. The eventuality of clothing entering the market depends upon garment owners' planned or unplanned disposition. Once clothing is in the market a set of demographic and product characteristics fosters clothing acquisition, starting the process over again.

Acquisition. The most influential demographic factors affecting secondhand clothing acquisitions appear to be the sex of the purchaser, family size, ages of children, number of children financially supported by the household, and household income. O'Reilly et al. (1984) determined that married women with large families were most representative of purchasers at personal sales. Margerum (1978) and Richardson (1982) also reported more women thrift and consignment store purchasers than men. A child's age is important when acquiring in the SCM. Personal sales tend to have a greater variety of children's clothing in better condition than adult clothing (O'Reilly et al., 1984). Garage sale purchasers in the Herrmann and Soiffer (1984) study complained of the scarcity of children's clothing for those nine years old or more. Infants' clothing was readily available.

Income may motivate the poor to purchase secondhand. Yet, the income level of secondhand clothing purchasers has risen in the last decade. As Ginsburg (1980) observes, the middle class find the jumble sale an acceptable pastime. Researchers such as O'Reilly et al. (1984) and others cited by them have reported the level of a purchaser's occupational status to be higher than that of

nonpurchasers. O'Reilly et al. did not find age to be a significant discriminator between purchasers and nonpurchasers. Educational and employment status, and race, though factors affecting new acquisitions, are not known to be influential factors in secondhand purchases.

Consumers' initial decision to purchase secondhand may be motivated by external pressures that have environmental, social, economic, and psychological roots. The primary motivation for secondhand shopping identified by Richardson (1982) and others is price. For many individuals price and clothing condition are the first and second considerations when buying (Herrmann & Soiffer, 1984; Manoushagian, 1977; O'Reilly et al., 1984).

Several variables appear to encourage or discourage acquisition in the SCM. Rucker (1981) identified length of time as an influential variable. The longer individuals had been shopping secondhand the more likely they were to purchase a variety of clothing articles. Short-term shoppers were less likely to accept clothing that had close contact with the body. Streetwear (coats/blazers, shirts) appears to be the most acceptable kind of garment (Hinton & Margerum, 1984; O'Reilly et al., 1984). One implication of this observation may be that the longer individuals participate in the market the more segments of the SCM they frequent.

Sometimes structure and organization of sellers may influence acquisition as purchasers try to cope with erratic business hours, lack of store amenities, obscure locations, unique merchandise, and variable condition of clothing. For example, unique, one-of-a-kind,

merchandise can prompt consignment clientele to regularly visit their favorite store hoping to drop by on the same day that a consignor brings in a "good find". Consignors erratically supply the store, therefore prediction of what will be in stock is impossible. Also, buying on the spot is standard fare because the good merchandise goes quickly (Audette, 1981; McQuown & Laugier, 1981). In some cases proprietors help buyer and consignor by calling clients when new stock is consigned. Proprietors have also been known to reserve the best garments for a select group of consumers, and provide lay-a-way and pick-up services.

Services like these add to customer satisfaction that in turn fosters repeat business. Consignment stores are known for their amenities, atmosphere, clothing, and service (Salholz et al., 1985). One side effect of the consignment arrangement is familiarity between proprietor and patron. Holding garments and calling clients increase the personal contact between the two parties. Also, an information network is established enabling proprietors to solicit supply from clients and their friends. Clients pass on store information to their friends.

People react differently to previously owned clothing. Some will readily purchase and wear used clothing, others will not or will only wear a few types of garments. Kinds of clothing purchased depend upon what the consumer wants and what the seller has to offer. Consignment store purchasers often want designer or name brand clothing whereas personal sale shoppers do not appear to have a strong preference for brand names (Bee, 1982; Dreyfus, 1980; O'Reilly et al., 1984; Salholz

et al., 1985). Need or activity specifies type of clothing purchased, for whom it is purchased, and where it is purchased. Activities such as school, play, and vacation motivate purchases of children's clothing by personal sale and thrift store shoppers (Herrmann & Soiffer, 1984; O'Reilly et al., 1984). Job or occupation can also determine type of clothing acquired (Robertson, 1968). For example, individuals who quickly wear out work pants may patronize thrift stores regularly to replenish their supply (Thrift store shoppers, personal communication, January-August, 1985).

CHAPTER 4

Statement of the Research Problem

Purpose

The primary purpose of this research was to analyze the clothing consumption practices of purchasers and consignors of secondhand clothing in consignment stores located in Roanoke, Virginia. A second consideration was to describe the sample groups' demographic characteristics.

Objectives

1. To investigate characteristics of consumers who patronize consignment stores with particular attention to demographics and purchasing and/or consigning behaviors.
2. To investigate differences between purchasers', purchasers/consignors', and consignors' demographic characteristics and patronization patterns in consignment stores.

Hypotheses

Research and statistical hypotheses were formulated on the basis of information from the literature reviewed in previous sections, observations from numerous visits to consignment and other secondhand stores, conversations with consignment store clients and proprietors, and the conceptual framework.

The two research hypotheses were not tested statistically. They were:

1. The primary and secondary reasons purchasers and purchasers/consignors buy consigned clothing will be to save money and to purchase well made clothing, respectively.
2. The primary and secondary reasons consignors and purchasers/consignors consign will be to obtain a return on their money invested in clothing and to get rid of unwanted clothing, respectively.

The major statistical hypotheses that were tested were:

1. Purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors will not differ on:

- a.) demographic characteristics,
- b.) length of time patronizing consignment stores,
- c.) frequency of purchasing and consigning,
- d.) sources of information about consignment stores,
- e.) familiarity with store proprietors.

2. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors will not differ on:

- a.) types of clothing purchased,
- b.) uses of clothing purchased,
- c.) numbers and types of other segments of the SCM patronized,
- d.) satisfaction with the price, quality of clothing, and store atmosphere and service.

3. The patronization (yes/no) of other segments of the SCM will not differ by the number of years of patronization of consignment stores.

4. Consignors and purchasers/consignors will not differ on types of clothing consigned.

Additional statistical tests were conducted on demographic variables.

Delimitations

The study was limited to consignment stores within Roanoke, Virginia.

The study did not attempt to evaluate the fashion consciousness of the consignment store proprietors or consumers.

The study did not determine demographic or clothing consumption differences between purchasers, consignors, or purchasers/consignors of different consignment stores.

Assumptions

1. Consignment store patrons were purchasers, consignors, or purchasers/consignors.
2. Respondents understood the role that they played --consign, purchase, purchase and consign-- in consignment stores and responded accordingly.
3. Respondents were able to recall the clothing articles they bought and consigned in consignment stores.

CHAPTER 5

Procedure

This study investigated purchasers' and consignors' clothing acquisition and disposition behavior in consignment stores. A questionnaire was developed to elicit clothing consumption and demographic information from each of three groups of consignment store patrons: purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors. A pretest and revision preceded the questionnaire administration to participants in three selected consignment stores located in Roanoke, Virginia during June and July of 1985. The data were analyzed through tabulation and Chi-square procedures. Comparisons were made between the three respondent groups on selected clothing and demographic variables. Details of the various steps in the procedure follow.

Operational Definitions

The operational definitions of important concepts that applied to this research were:

1. Consumer- An individual who engages in an interrelated set of household activities related to clothing: acquisition to obtain possession; wearing, storing, and maintaining clothing in inventory; and disposition to release from possession (Reid, 1934; Winakor, 1969). This research focused on acquisition in the secondhand market, with particular emphasis on the purchase of consigned clothing.

Disposition was limited to the consignment of clothing.

2. Used, Secondhand, or Previously Owned Clothing- That which has been owned, worn or non-worn, by one consumer before it passes to a subsequent consumer by exchange or transfer.

3. Secondhand Clothing Market- The universe of buyers and sellers who engage in the exchanging of used, secondhand, or previously owned clothing for money or for some other good of equal value.

4. Consigned Clothing- That which is contracted out to a seller-agent's care for selling according to pre-arranged agreements; the seller-agent and garment owner split revenues. In the questionnaire, "selling" was used to refer to consigning, to avoid misunderstandings by respondents as evidenced in the pretest.

5. Consignment Stores- Profit or nonprofit stores selling secondhand clothing owned by consignors.

6. Consignor- A consumer who arranges by contract for a consignment store to sell clothing that the consumer owns or is responsible for. The consignor retains ownership until the garment is sold. If a garment is not sold by a predetermined date and the consignor fails to reclaim it, the consignor forfeits his right of ownership and the store is free to dispose of the garment.

7. Purchaser- An individual who exchanges money for secondhand clothing.

8. Purchaser/Consignor- An individual who buys and consigns clothing in a consignment store.

9. Type of Clothing Items Consigned and Purchased- Generally, a set of apparel items of similar form and usable by either sex in any age

groups, exemplified by such categories as coats or jackets, blazers or sports coats, suits, blouses or shirts, and slacks. Also, the "formal wear" referred to streetwear of various forms worn for formal occasions, and "accessories" referred to items worn or used only as complements to garments, such as jewelry, hats, belts, and handbags.

10. Satisfaction with Price, Quality of Clothing, Atmosphere, and Service- Satisfaction with, or the degree of liking, each of the four aspects of a consignment store, measured by a five-point ordinal scale from very dissatisfied to very satisfied. Price referred to the monetary cost of the clothing, quality to its degree of excellence from each patron's perspective, atmosphere to the physical environment or ambiance of the store, and service to various types of assistance available to patrons.

11. Primary and Secondary Reasons for Buying- The most important and the second most important motives for buying clothing in a consignment store, which respondents indicated by selecting among nine listed reasons or by volunteering reasons not listed.

12. Primary and Secondary Reasons for Consigning- The most important and the second most important motives for consigning clothing in a consignment store, which respondents indicated by selecting among five listed reasons or by volunteering reasons not listed.

13. Frequency of Purchasing or Consigning- How often respondents purchased or consigned clothing in consignment stores, indicated by selecting among five categories ranging from weekly to three or four times a year or less often.

14. Uses of Purchased Clothing- Activities at home or away from home,

for which clothing purchased in consignment stores were used, indicated by checking any of seven listed categories. For each activity, respondents could check activities for which they, their mates (e.g., spouses), or children used the clothing, depending on for whom the clothing was purchased.

15. Contact with Store Personnel- Whether and how often purchasers and purchasers/consignors asked personnel in the consignment store about specific types of garments they wanted to buy. If respondents said "yes" to a question of whether they ask, they indicated the frequency of asking by selecting among five categories ranging from weekly to three or four times a year or less often.

16. Patronization of Other Secondhand Sellers- Purchasers and purchasers/consignors indicated if they purchased clothing from other secondhand sellers by checking one or more of four sellers listed or by volunteering a seller.

17. Familiarity of Consumer with Manager/Owner of Consignment Store- Respondents indicated how well they knew the manager/owner of the consignment stores by selecting among five categories ranging from very well to not at all.

18. Length of Time Patronizing Consignment Stores- Respondents indicated how many years they had been patronizing consignment stores by selecting a time period from less than one year to over 10 years.

19. Source of Information Respondents Utilized to Learn About Consignment Stores- Respondents indicated those they used by selecting from one or more of the six sources listed.

20. First Activity Performed in Consignment Stores-

Purchasers/Consignors were asked an open-ended question to indicate whether they first purchased or consigned in consignment stores and why.

21. Household Composition- Respondents indicated the adult and child populations of their households by selecting one of three choices under each of two headings, households with children and households without children.

22. Children Financially Supported by Households- Respondents indicated how many children their households financially supported by selecting from none to five or more children.

23. Ages of Children- Respondents volunteered the ages of their children.

24. Age of Respondent- Respondents indicated their age range by selecting the appropriate listed 10 year span.

25. Education Level- Respondents indicated the level of their education by selecting one from six offered that ranged from some high school to graduate degree or by volunteering a level.

26. Employment Status- Respondents indicated their employment status by selecting the appropriate choice under one of two headings, employed or not presently employed.

27. Total Household Income- Respondents indicated their household income from all sources by selecting one of the appropriate income categories that ranged from less than \$9,999 to \$40,000 and above.

28. Personal Contribution to Total Household Income- Respondents indicated the amount of income that they contributed to total household income by indicating one of the income categories that

ranged from none to \$40,000 and above.

The Survey Instrument

The first part of the instrument consisted of three questionnaires (Appendix C) to determine clothing consumption behavior of consignment store patrons. Each questionnaire related specifically to purchasers and/or consignors. The purchasers/consignors questionnaire was a combination of the ones for purchasers and consignors, with an additional open-ended question explained later.

Each question in the instrument related to one or more of the concepts described in the conceptual framework and defined operationally in the just-preceding section. Acquisition, the act of obtaining possession of clothing, related to questions 1, 3, 4, 5, and 8 on the purchaser questionnaire. Respondents were asked about types of clothing purchased, reasons for buying, frequency of buying, activities for which purchased clothing was used, and length of time they had been purchasing in consignment stores. Disposition or discard, the act of releasing clothing from one's possession, related to questions 1, 2, 4, and 5 on the consignor questionnaire. Participants were asked about types of clothing consigned, reasons for selling, frequency of selling, and length of time they had been consigning.

Several questions pertained to the SCM. Purchasers (question 6) and consignors (question 3) indicated how well they knew the store manager/proprietor, and purchasers were asked if they asked store personnel about items of clothing they would like to buy (question 7a)

and how often they asked (question 7b). Also, purchasers related their satisfaction with price, quality of clothing, and store atmosphere and service (question 2). Questions 9 and 10 on the purchaser questionnaire asked if respondents bought secondhand clothing in other segments of the SCM and the sources of information used to learn about consignment stores. Question 6 on the consignor questionnaire was similar to question 10 on the purchaser questionnaire. All the above questions were included in the purchaser/consignor questionnaire except for an additional open-ended question for purchasers/consignors about whether they first bought or sold in a consignment store (question 14).

Questions on demographic variables made up part two of the instrument, which was administered to each respondent regardless of purchaser and/or consignor status. The variables included: total household income, personal contribution to household income, household composition, number of children financially supported by household, ages of children, and respondent's age, education, sex, race, and employment status.

The preliminary instrument was pretested in two stores, one in Christiansburg and one in Pearisburg, Virginia, two rural towns located near Roanoke. One store consigned crafts and clothing, and the other sold men's, women's, and children's clothing. The response rate was very low, 17 usable questionnaires, but the pretest provided information to revise the instrument.

In the pretest, customers in the shops were asked if they would participate in the study by filling out a questionnaire. If

affirmative, a second question was asked, "Do you purchase, consign, or do both in consignment stores?" The appropriate questionnaire was then given. If participants had questions, they asked for added directions from the researcher. Because of limited space in the shops, all respondents had to stand while completing the instrument. The close proximity of merchandise and other customers may have made respondents uncomfortable and possibly affected the response rate and respondents' answers.

Statistical analysis of pretest data was not possible due to small cell sizes. Tallies of the responses were made for the 17 completed questionnaires, which illuminated some general trends. All respondents were females and high school graduates, and most lived in households with children. They were 30 years old or more and the majority were employed. More pretest participants had household incomes of \$20,000 and above than those with incomes of \$19,999 or below. Only three individuals had incomes of \$9,999 or below. Garments were purchased to save money and consigned to get a return on the money invested in clothing. Respondents also purchased secondhand clothing at garage sales and flea markets but did not patronize thrifts or vintage/antique clothing stores.

The results revealed the need for revision of the survey instrument. The questionnaires were too long, some questions were redundant, and the terms 'purchasing' and 'consigning' were not always understood by clients of consignment stores, which led to changing the term 'purchasing' to 'buying' and 'consigning' to 'selling'. Some deletions were made on the 'type of clothing' purchased and/or

consigned question. The 'other' category was deleted and categories for jewelry, purses, and hats, were collapsed under 'accessories'. Additional categories were needed for the 'number of years purchasing and consigning' and 'sources of information about consignment stores' questions.

The Survey Administration

Individuals who visited consignment shops in Roanoke, Virginia were targeted as potential participants for this study. The sample was not expected to include patrons who dealt with the stores by mail. Proprietors were reluctant to give out consignors' addresses and stressed that many clients wanted no mail from the stores sent to their homes. Previous conversations with store proprietors in various locations indicated that the most efficient way to survey consignment patrons was to ask them to complete questionnaires in the stores. A mail survey to randomly selected subjects was expected to yield a low response rate, in part because the number of consignment patrons in the general population was thought to be small. Margerum (1978), Rucker (1981), and Richardson (1982) found it necessary to collect their data in secondhand stores. This researcher had found that being physically present at a store increased the chances of obtaining data. Several times customers agreed to fill out questionnaires in exchange for the researcher's help when trying on clothes or carrying clothing from the car to the store. The researcher also gave participants a reference list of secondhand shopping books and metropolitan guides.

Selection of Sampling Area

Roanoke was selected as the site for data collection for several reasons: (1) it is the largest city in the southwestern region of Virginia and in Roanoke County; (2) the distance to be traveled was within the means of the investigator; and (3) Roanoke has a variety of consignment stores that are frequented by individuals from the city and surrounding area.

Roanoke County is 43 miles square and encompasses the towns and cities of Salem, Vinton, and Roanoke. It is a regional center for transportation, distribution, trade, manufacturing, health care, entertainment, banking, and conventions (Street guide and Map of Roanoke Valley, 1983).

Census statistics for Roanoke County were obtained in order to determine if the sample demographics reflected those of the general Roanoke population. In addition, demographics which have been important factors for new clothing expenditures may or may not affect secondhand clothing expenditures. Richardson (1982) showed that independent demographic variables were significant on at least one of the five dependent secondhand clothing variables tested in her study.

According to the U.S. Bureau of the Census (1983), Roanoke County has a total population of 100,220. Approximately 77% of the population is Caucasian, 22% is Black, and less than one percent is American Indian, Asian, or Spanish. The median family income is \$16,591 and per capita income is \$6,816. Of the total number of households that earn income, 38% earn \$10,000 or less. Households that earn \$40,000-\$49,999 are less numerous (2.1%) than those that earn

\$50,000 and above (3.2%). Six percent earn \$30,000-39,999. Twelve percent of Roanoke County families live below the poverty level; of that total 32% are headed by single females. The unemployment rate for June 1985 was 4.6% ("Valley Area Economic Roundup", 1985).

Selection of Stores

An informal survey before data collection indicated that the Roanoke area had five consignment stores. Some stores stocked men's, women's, and children's clothing, while others sold only women's and children's. Most stores have been in business for at least two years. Consignment stores in Roanoke compete with each other and with retail stores selling new clothing. One store contacted considered itself a consignment and ready-to-wear retail business as it sold consigned and new clothing. The consignment stores were generally neat and attractive, displayed up-to-date fashions in season, offered amenities such as dressing rooms and mirrors, and were located in accessible business areas. Prices ranged from \$4.00 to \$6.00 for a blouse to \$60.00 for women's suits. After data collection the researcher learned that there were two other stores in Roanoke selling clothing on consignment. However, they lacked telephones or did not maintain regular business hours and were not contacted initially.

Interviewing Store Managers

Managers of four consignment stores that stocked clothing only on consignment were contacted by letters that stated the purpose and benefits of the study, and asked for their cooperation (Appendix B). The managers' permission was needed for data collection, and their

support was needed to increase the chances of obtaining an adequate sample of purchasers, consignors, and purchasers/consignors. Previous discussions with store managers indicated that they were hesitant to permit anyone to question their consignor clients because the relationship between the two parties depended upon discretion and anonymity.

Follow-up phone calls were made to set up an interview with the manager of each store. The interview allowed the manager to: (1) become acquainted with the investigator and the data collection procedures, (2) decide whether to allow access to the store facilities for data collection, and (3) obtain answers to questions.

Data Collection

Data collection occurred from June -7 through July 3, 1985 on Tuesdays through Saturdays. Each week during data collection the researcher alternated among the three stores to accommodate the vacation schedules of proprietors. The stores were closed on Mondays. Lunch hours, early mornings, and late afternoons were the busiest times. All individuals entering the store were asked to participate in the study in the same manner as in the pretest. Most respondents completed questionnaires while in the stores. Those who were in a hurry took the questionnaires home, completed them, and returned them in self-addressed envelopes provided by the researcher. This procedure yielded a higher response rate for the consignors. Consignors who walked into the stores and dropped off clothing without staying to consult with proprietors about price frequently took questionnaires home. A total of 170 questionnaires were completed:

81 purchasers, 50 consignors, and 39 purchasers/consignors.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage distributions were calculated for all variables to characterize the overall sample and each of the three sample groups-- purchasers, consignors, and purchasers/consignors. Chi-square tests at the .05 level of significance were used to investigate differences between respondent groups on demographic and clothing variables, as well as relationships among variables.

CHAPTER 6

Findings and Discussion

This chapter presents and discusses the findings based on data collected from the 170 subjects who participated in the study. The findings are presented under three general headings: (1) Sample Demographics, (2) Discussion of Major Variables, and (3) Differences Among Sample Groups. The section on sample demographics discusses demographic characteristics of the respondents, generally and specifically, and also demographic differences among sample groups. In section two the clothing variables are reported. Differences among the sample groups on clothing variables are reported in section three.

Sample Demographics

Selected demographic information provided a description of the overall sample and determined its representativeness of the general Roanoke population. Some of the data was collapsed into broader categories because of small cell sizes. Chi-square tests are not appropriate if more than 20% of the cells have less than five observations. The sample consisted of 81 purchasers, 50 consignors, and 39 purchasers/consignors. Refer to Appendix C for the questionnaire.

The results of the survey showed that consignment store

patrons in Roanoke had some demographic characteristics not generally associated with secondhand clothing consumers, and that the patrons were not representative of the general Roanoke population in some respects. The patrons were mostly Caucasian females, 30-49 years old, and often had baccalaureates or some post-high school education. Since only eight Blacks participated in the study and the Black community comprises 22% of the Roanoke population, the sample was not representative of the general Roanoke population. Also, the education level of the sample participants is higher than that of the general Roanoke population. Twelve percent of all Roanokers 25 or more years old are college graduates, and 57% of this age group are high school graduates. Most patrons did share their households with other adults which exemplifies the average Roanoke household that has 2.46 persons per housing unit. Of those who shared households, 50% financially supported one or two children who more often than not were between the ages of 13 and 18.

The survey subjects were usually employed, either part- or full-time and contributed \$19,999 or less to total household income. Twenty-seven percent of the consignment store consumers surveyed had total household incomes of over \$40,000 or more, an interesting deviation from the normal pattern of Roanoke household earnings, where only three percent fall into this income range. This sample would appear to represent the upper-income segment of the Roanoke population. Further discussion on related demographic variables and on the breakdown

of those variables by sample groups follows.

Related Demographic Variables

Several demographic variables were found to be significantly related to others. Total household income was related to education (Table 2). As the level of education increased, total household income increased. The baccalaureate group had a slightly larger number of respondents than the high school graduate group. Forty-five and two-tenths percent of the respondents that had post-high school education and 35.1% of the college educated respondents had total household incomes of \$40,000 and over.

Educational level was related to the respondents' ages and household composition. College graduates represented large proportions of several age categories: 18-29 years (46.4%), 30-39 (40.9%), and 40-49 (51.4%) (Table 3). Those 50-59 and 60 years old or more had the largest percentages of respondents who were either high school graduates or had not earned a high school diploma. Two respondents were less than 18 years old and were not included in Table 3. Education was also found to be significantly related to household composition (Table 4). Over half of the respondents who shared a household with another adult (54.4%) or were single parents (57.1%) were either high school graduates or had not earned a high school diploma. Respondents with households of two or more adults and children (44.4%) and of single-adult occupants (37.5%) were mostly college graduates or had post-high school education.

Table 2
Distribution of Respondents' Total Household Income by Education

	Education					
	High School Graduate or less		Vo-Tech/ Associate Degree		Bachelor Degree or more	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Total Household Income						
<\$9,999-19,999	23	41.8	7	16.7	9	15.8
\$20-29,999	12	21.8	10	23.8	11	19.3
\$30-39,999	13	23.6	6	14.3	17	29.8
\$40,000 +	7	12.7	19	45.2	20	35.1
Totals	55	99.9*	42	100.0	57	100.0

$\chi^2=21.19$, $df=6$, $p=.0017$

* does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 3
Distribution of Respondents' Education by Age

	Age									
	<u>18-29</u>		<u>30-39</u>		<u>40-49</u>		<u>50-59</u>		<u>60+</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Education										
High School Graduate or less	10	35.7	10	22.7	9	25.7	10	38.5	19	67.9
Vo-Tech/ Associate Degree	5	17.9	16	36.4	8	22.9	9	34.6	7	25.0
Bachelor Degree or more	13	46.4	18	40.9	18	51.4	7	26.9	2	7.1
Totals	28	100.0	44	100.0	35	100.0	26	100.0	28	100.0

$\chi^2=24.59$, $df=8$, $p=.0018$

Table 4
Distribution of Respondents' Education by Household Composition

	Household Composition							
	<u>2 or more adults w/ children</u>		<u>2 or more adults w/o children</u>		<u>Single parents w/ children</u>		<u>Single adults</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Education								
High School Graduate or less	16	22.2	25	54.4	8	57.1	11	34.4
Vo-Tech/ Associate Degree	24	33.3	7	15.2	2	14.3	12	37.5
Bachelor Degree or more	32	44.4	14	30.4	4	28.6	9	28.1
Totals	72	99.9*	46	100.0	14	100.0	32	100.0

$\chi^2=17.75$, $df=6$, $p=.0069$

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Breakdown of Demographic Variables by Sample Groups

Sex and Race. Of the 170 respondents, there were 79 female purchasers, one male purchaser, one male purchaser/consignor, 38 female purchasers/consignors, and 50 female consignors. The majority (94%) were Caucasian purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors, and the others included eight Black and two Asian purchasers. The low male participation rate may be due to the stores' lack of men's clothing and limited stock, and to the time of day when the survey was conducted. One out of the three utilized did not sell any boys' or men's clothing. Also, stock in the stores appeared to be limited in size and style, mainly excluding tall and large men's sizes. The survey was conducted from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Tuesday through Saturday which may have prohibited employed individuals from shopping. One man purchased and consigned clothing for his family; his flexible work schedule allowed him to stop by the consignment store whenever he was in the area.

Age. The less than 18 and more than 69 age categories had the smallest number of respondents, and the largest category was the 30-39 age group (Table 5). Consignors had a tendency to be younger than the other two sample groups; 26.5% were 18-29 years old. Twenty-five percent of all purchasers and 35.1% of all purchasers/consignors were 30-39 years old. Purchasers' and purchasers/consignors' second largest age groups were 40-49 years old (21.3% and 27%, respectively). Note the number of purchasers in the 60-69 age category in comparison to the two

Table 5
Distribution of Respondents by Age

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Age							
< 18	1	1.3	1	2.7			2
18-29	13	16.3	3	8.1	13	26.5	29
30-39	20	25.0	13	35.1	11	22.5	44
40-49	17	21.3	10	27.0	9	18.4	36
50-59	11	13.8	5	13.5	10	20.4	26
60-69	13	16.3	4	10.8	5	10.2	22
> 69	5	6.3	1	2.7	1	2.0	7
Totals	80	100.3*	37	99.9*	49	100.0	166

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

other sample groups. One possible reason for the number of older purchasers may be the popularity of children's clothing among grandparents. Several women indicated, in passing conversations with the researcher and in written comments on the questionnaire, that they bought clothing for grandchildren.

Education. The two largest education groups were college graduate and high school (Table 6). Thirty-two and four-tenths percent of all purchasers/consignors and 38% of all consignors were college graduates (Table 6). Between purchasers and consignors there was a significant difference in educational achievement; consignors (46.9%) more often had undergraduate and graduate degrees, and purchasers (44.4%) were more often high school graduates (Table 7). Purchasers/consignors did not significantly differ on educational level from purchasers or consignors.

Household Composition. Household composition categories were combined due to the small cell sizes (Table 8). The categories 'two adults with children' and 'two or more adults with children' were combined into the 'adults with children' category. The same was done to the 'two adults without children' and 'two or more adults without children' categories. Adults with children had the most respondents. It was evident that the majority of respondents lived with children because the adults with children group was represented by 41.8% of the purchasers, 41% of the purchasers/consignors, and 46% of the consignors. Household composition was significantly different between purchasers and

Table 6
Distribution of Respondents by Education

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Education Level							
Some High School	4	4.9					4
High School	32	39.5	11	29.7	15	30.0	58
Vocational School	8	9.9	3	8.1	1	2.0	12
2 Year College	17	21.0	6	16.2	10	20.0	33
College Graduate	14	17.3	12	32.4	19	38.0	45
Graduate Degree	6	7.4	4	10.8	4	8.0	14
Other			1	2.7	1	2.0	2
Totals	81	100.0	37	99.9*	50	100.0	168

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 7
Distribution of Purchasers and Consignors by Education

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Education					
High School Graduate or less	36	44.4	15	30.6	51
Vo-Tech/ Associate Degree	25	30.9	11	22.5	36
Bachelor Degree or more	20	24.7	23	46.9	43
Totals	81	100.0	49	100.0	130
$\chi^2=6.84, df=2, p=.0327$					

Table B
Distribution of Respondents by Household Composition

Household Composition	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Adults w/ children	33	41.8	16	41.0	23	46.0	72
Single parents w/children	10	12.7	3	7.7	1	2.0	14
Adults w/o children	26	32.9	12	30.8	11	22.0	49
Single Adults	10	12.7	8	20.5	15	30.0	33
Totals	79	100.1*	39	100.0	50	100.0	168

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

consignors but not between purchasers/consignors and either purchasers or consignors (Table 9). Only one consignor was a single parent.

Numbers and Ages of Children. Nearly half of the 170 respondents either did not financially support any children or supported one or two (Table 10). Children in respondents' households were most often 13 to 18 years of age. Other age groups of children supported by sample respondents were infants, toddlers, pre-teens, and young adults. Sample participants who were 18-29 years old had infants and toddlers, and those 50-59 years old had children who were 19 years old or more. Thirty to 49 year old respondents supported children 13 to 18 years old. Yet, large percentages of purchasers (43.2%), purchasers/consignors (46.1%), and consignors (56%) did not support children. This variable was the only demographic variable to be significantly different among the sample groups. (Table 10). Nine purchasers/consignors supported three to five children whereas only one consignor supported this many children.

Employment. The majority of purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors was employed full-time (Table 11). There was an almost equal number of respondents working part-time as there were people not looking for work. Full-time employees represented the largest groups among purchasers (48.2%), purchasers/consignors (42.1%), and consignors (38%). However, consignors' second largest group of respondents (30%) were not looking for work, and the second largest group of

Table 9
Distribution of Purchasers and Consignors by Household Composition

Household Composition	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Adults w/ children	33	41.8	23	46.0	56
Single parents w/children	10	12.7	1	2.0	11
Adults w/o children	26	32.9	11	22.0	37
Single Adults	10	12.7	15	30.0	25
Totals	79	100.1*	50	100.0	129

$\chi^2=10.23$, $df=3$, $p=.0167$

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 10
Distribution of Respondents by Number of Children

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Number of Children							
0	35	43.2	18	46.1	28	56.0	81
1	23	28.4	4	10.3	9	18.0	36
2	16	19.8	8	20.5	12	24.0	36
3	3	3.7	8	20.5			11
4	2	2.5	1	2.6	1	2.0	4
5	2	2.5					2
Totals	81	100.1*	39	100.0	50	100.0	170
combined categories for number of children							
none	35	43.2	18	46.1	28	56.0	81
1 to 2	39	48.2	12	30.8	21	42.0	72
3 to 5	7	8.6	9	23.1	1	2.0	17
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0	170

$\chi^2=12.98$, $df=4$, $p=.0114$

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 11
Distribution of Respondents by Employment

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Employment Level							
Full-Time	39	48.2	16	42.1	19	38.0	74
Part-Time	18	22.2	10	26.2	11	22.0	39
Not Looking For Work	15	18.5	5	13.2	15	30.0	35
Looking For Work	2	2.5	2	5.3	1	2.0	5
Retired	7	8.6	5	13.2	4	8.0	16
Totals	81	100.0	38	100.0	50	100.0	169

purchasers (22.2%) and of purchasers/consignors (26.2%) were employed part-time.

Personal Contribution to Total Household Income. The respondents were mostly on the lower end of the scale in the none and less than \$9,999 categories (Table 12). Eighty-eight individuals either did not work or contributed less than \$9,999 to total household income. Three purchasers/consignors (8.8%) were in the \$35,000-\$39,999 group, and two consignors (4.4%) made \$40,000 or more. There was a small increase in the number of participants from \$15,000-\$19,999 to \$20,000-\$24,999. Notice that 29% of all purchasers contributed \$10,000-\$19,999 to total household income.

Total Household Income. As mentioned earlier total household income was rather high since almost half of the sample had household incomes of \$30,000-\$40,000 and over. In Table 13 income distribution by category rises and falls by a few respondents until the \$40,000 and over category where the number of respondents jumps from 15 to 47. In this study, households with incomes in excess of \$40,000 were predominate in each of the three sample groups. Occupying second place were 14.3% of the purchasers and 15.6% of the consignors whose total incomes were between \$30,000 and \$34,999. There were 26.5% of the purchasers/consignors in the \$20,000-\$24,999 income range.

Table 12
Distribution of Respondents' Income Contribution to Family Income

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Amount Contributed							
none	18	22.8	9	26.5	15	32.6	42
< \$9,999	22	27.8	11	32.4	13	28.3	46
\$10-14,999	17	21.5	2	5.9	6	13.0	25
\$15-19,999	6	7.6	1	2.9	4	8.7	11
\$20-24,999	8	10.1	5	14.7	4	8.7	17
\$25-29,999	6	7.6	1	2.9	1	2.2	8
\$30-34,999	1	1.3	1	2.9	1	2.2	3
\$35-39,999			3	8.8			3
\$40,000 +	1	1.3	1	2.9	2	4.4	4
Totals	79	100.0	34	99.9*	46	100.1*	159

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 13
Distribution of Respondents by Total Household Income

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Total Income							
< \$9,999	9	11.7	2	5.9	3	6.7	14
\$10-14,999	8	10.4	2	5.9	4	8.9	14
\$15-19,999	6	7.8	1	2.9	4	8.9	11
\$20-24,999	7	9.1	9	26.5	4	8.9	20
\$25-29,999	9	11.7	1	2.9	3	6.7	13
\$30-34,999	11	14.3	4	11.8	7	15.6	22
\$35-39,999	9	11.7	2	5.9	4	8.9	15
\$40,000 +	18	23.4	13	38.2	16	35.6	47
Totals	77	100.1*	34	100.0	45	100.2*	156

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Discussion of Major Variables

Types of Clothing Purchased and Consigned

Respondents were asked to indicate the types of clothing items purchased or consigned. More than half of all purchasers acquired shirts or blouses for themselves, mates, and children, and more than half of all purchasers/consignors acquired shirts or blouses for themselves and children but not for mates. Both groups purchased shirts, skirts, and dresses for themselves.

Shirts, the most purchased clothing items, were also the most consigned clothing items. Here again consigned clothing for mates was the exception. More consignors than purchasers/consignors consigned suits and coats than any other clothing items for mates. The first six consigned clothing categories selected by consignors and purchasers/consignors to consign were their own shirts, dresses, skirts, slacks, coats, and blazers.

The turnover rate for shirts may be because they are one of the most versatile and worn items in an individual's wardrobe. Shirts get frequent wearings which can speed up the rate of 'wear and tear'. Frequent wearings can make a person psychologically tired of garments, which may foster the disposition of garments and/or the acquisition of other garments.

Primary and Secondary Reasons for Purchasing

Saving money was the primary motivation for purchasing secondhand clothing (Table 14). Forty-six percent of the purchasers and 36.1% of the purchasers/consignors wanted to save

Table 14
Distribution of Respondents by Primary Reasons for Purchasing

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Reasons					
Have well made clothing	21	28.4	11	30.6	32
Have fun	5	6.8	3	8.3	8
Have a variety of clothing	1	1.3	3	8.3	4
Have unique clothing	5	6.8	1	2.8	6
Save money	34	46.0	13	36.1	47
Replace wardrobe with other clothing	1	1.3	2	5.6	3
More clothing for the amount of money spent	6	8.1	3	8.3	9
Buy gifts					
Have brand name clothing					
Other	1	1.3			1
Totals	74	100.0	36	100.0	110

money. There was a smaller difference between the save money (36.1%) and have well made clothing (30.6%) reasons for purchasers/consignors than for purchasers (46% and 28.4%, respectively). Margerum's (1978) and Richardson's (1982) respondents purchased secondhand clothing to save money. Margerum (1978) reported that respondents also mentioned a second motive for purchasing, to have a variety of clothing, but the results here did not show this.

In Table 15 the most frequently selected second reason for buying was to obtain more clothing for the amount of money spent. This finding was contradictory to the research hypothesis that the second reason for purchasing would be to have well made clothing. Note the dispersion of purchasers/consignors among the fun, variety, unique, and save money categories, with 11.1% in each.

The motivation for purchasing secondhand clothing appears to be based on saving money. The selected secondary reason perhaps implied that consumers have a preference for a certain amount of clothing. Individuals can obtain the quantity of clothing they desire at a cost they can afford or are willing to pay.

Primary and Secondary Reasons for Consigning

The primary reason that participants consigned clothing was "to get back part of the initial investment" (Table 16). Fifteen consignors (34.1%) and 19 purchasers/consignors (52.8%) chose this reason. Eight consignors (18.2%) selected the "trade-in clothing" and the "make extra money" categories. "To get rid of

Table 15
Distribution of Respondents by Secondary Reasons for Purchasing

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Reasons					
Have well made clothing	5	6.9	1	2.8	6
Have fun	8	11.0	4	11.1	12
Have a variety of clothing	11	15.3	4	11.1	15
Have unique clothing	1	1.4	4	11.1	5
Save money	18	25.0	4	11.1	22
Replace wardrobe with other clothing	1	1.4	3	8.3	4
More clothing for the amount of money spent	21	29.2	13	36.1	34
Buy gifts	4	5.6			4
Have brand name clothing	2	2.8	3	8.3	5
Other	1	1.4			1
Totals	72	100.0	36	99.9*	108

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 16
Distribution of Respondents by Primary Reasons for Consigning

	Respondents				
	<u>Cons</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Reasons					
Get back initial investment	15	34.1	19	52.8	34
Trade-in clothing for other clothing	8	18.2	6	16.7	14
Get rid of unwanted clothing	10	22.7	7	19.4	17
Make room in closet for other clothing	3	6.8	3	8.3	6
Make extra money	8	18.2	1	2.8	9
Other					
Totals	44	100.0	36	100.0	80

unwanted clothing" was the second reason for consigning clothes (Table 17). More than one-third of the consignors and purchasers/consignors chose this reason. These findings confirm research hypothesis 2.

Frequency of Purchasing and Consigning

Purchasers and purchasers/consignors did not differ significantly on frequency of purchases made in consignment stores (Table 18). Twenty-six purchasers (32.5%) and 16 purchasers/consignors (41%) bought secondhand clothing three or four times a year. "Once a month" and "twice a month" were the second and third categories selected.

The number of store visits was not reflected in the question asked of respondents. Store visits may be frequent, as often as once a week. Several times during data collection the researcher saw the same purchasers and purchasers/consignors in the stores. Popular literature advises readers to shop at least once a week (Audette, 1981; Dreyfus, 1980; McQuown, 1981). The one-of-a-kind clothing stock and rather erratic timing of in-coming supply mandates regular store visits if the "good bargains" are to be found. Thus respondents may shop more often than they purchase.

The majority of consignors and purchasers/consignors have a regular pattern of selling clothing (Table 19). Fifty-three respondents consigned clothing three or four times a year: 66.7% of the consignors and 55.3% of the purchasers/consignors.

Proprietors of the consignment stores indicated that consignors and purchasers/consignors bring in their clothing on a

Table 17
Distribution of Respondents by Secondary Reasons for Consigning

	Respondents				
	<u>Cons</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Reasons					
Get back part of initial investment	6	13.6	3	8.6	9
Trade-in clothing for other clothing	4	9.1	6	17.1	10
Get rid of unwanted clothing	17	38.6	14	40.0	31
Make room in closet for other clothing	12	27.3	4	11.4	16
Make extra money	5	11.4	8	22.9	13
Other					
Totals	44	100.0	35	100.0	79

Table 18
Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Purchasing

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Frequency					
Weekly	5	6.2	3	7.7	8
Twice-a-month	16	20.0	7	17.9	23
Once-a-month	17	21.2	9	23.1	26
Once every two months	16	20.0	4	10.3	20
3 or 4 times a year	26	32.5	16	41.0	42
Totals	80	99.9*	39	100.0	119

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 19
Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Consigning

	Respondents				
	<u>Cons</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Frequency of Consigning					
Weekly					
Twice-a-month			1	2.6	1
Once-a-month	5	10.4	5	13.2	10
Once every two months	11	22.9	11	28.9	22
3 or 4 times a year	32	66.7	21	55.3	53
Totals	48	100.0	38	100.0	86

seasonal basis. Every March and August their stores are crowded with an influx of clothes for the coming season as patrons clean out closets and convert from spring and summer to fall and winter. Some consignors intermittently consign throughout the year, but apparently the majority do not.

Use of Purchased Clothing

The three most frequently selected uses for purchased clothing by those who purchased it for themselves were social, working at a job, and relaxing at home. The social category was chosen by 53.1% of all purchasers and 53.8% of all purchasers/consignors. Clothing purchased for children was mainly used for school but also used for home, sports, and social activities. Richardson (1982) also found that secondhand clothing was used for work, home, school, and social occasions in decreasing order of frequency.

Familiarity with Store Proprietors

Individuals in this study either knew proprietors well or not at all. The largest group of respondents was 26 purchasers (32.5%) in the "not at all" category (Table 20). Purchasers (17.5%) numbered 14 in the "very well", "well", and "somewhat" categories, and 15% were in the "a little" category. Purchasers/consignors were concentrated in the first three categories, 25.6%, 28.2%, and 30.8%, respectively. They may be more familiar and interact more frequently with store proprietors than other patrons as a result of both buying and selling. The largest group of consignors (30%) chose the "well" category. Ten

Table 20
Distribution of Respondents by their Familiarity with Store Proprietors

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Familiarity							
Very well	14	17.5	10	25.6	10	20.0	34
Well	14	17.5	11	28.2	15	30.0	40
Somewhat	14	17.5	12	30.8	6	12.0	32
A Little	12	15.0	2	5.1	7	14.0	21
Not At All	26	32.5	4	10.3	12	24.0	42
Totals	80	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0	169

consignors (20%) selected the "very well" category. Overall, respondents were acquainted with store proprietors.

Frequency of Personal Contact between Respondents and Proprietors

Information about requests for specific clothing items was investigated. Over half the purchasers (61.3%) spoke to proprietors, but 55.3% of the purchasers/consignors did not (Table 21). Thirty-three individuals that made requests spoke to proprietors three or four times a year.

Services offered, such as personal attention, lay-a-way, and other conveniences, attract customers and foster personal contact between clients and proprietors. One service commonly offered by the stores in Roanoke was holding of garments. If particular types of clothing had been designated the proprietor took note that if such a garment came into the store the customer would be notified. One owner maintained a closet where the best merchandise was placed and made available to a select group of patrons.

Consignment stores' services are not unlike those offered in regular retail stores. However, ready-to-wear retail prices more accurately reflect such services than do secondhand prices. Owners often handle each consignor's or purchaser's account differently and base the amount of service they offer on customer preference.

Table 21
Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Contact

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Do you ask about clothing?					
Yes	49	61.3	17	44.7	66
No	31	38.7	21	55.3	52
Totals	80	100.0	38	100.0	118
Frequency of Asking					
Weekly	3	6.4	1	6.3	4
2 time a month	8	17.0	2	12.5	10
Once a month	5	10.6	5	31.3	10
Every 2 months	3	6.4	3	18.7	6
3 or 4 times a year	28	59.6	5	31.2	33
Totals	47	100.0	16	100.0	63

Length of Time Purchasing and/or Consigning

Consignment establishments have been operating in large cities around the country since at least the 1950s ("Famous Fashion," 1959). Although they may be a familiar phenomenon to some people, especially in large metropolitan areas, consignment stores are a relatively new experience for the general populace. Two of the three stores utilized for this research had been in operation for two years, and the third one opened in 1974.

Store age may explain why 28% of all consignors, 15.4% of all purchasers/consignors, and 19.7% of all purchasers had been purchasing or consigning for two years or less (Table 22). Another explanation may be the time of year when the survey was taken. Long-term purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors may have been on vacation. Repeatedly, store proprietors commented that business was slow during June and July. In one store there were a few long-term consignors that the proprietor would not let the researcher speak to. Purchasers were clustered in the two, three, five, and over 10-year categories. The second largest category of all respondents was the three-year category which was followed by the less than one year category. The years that were least selected were six, seven, and nine.

Patronization of Other Secondhand Clothing Sellers

Respondents, 120 in all, supplied information about their purchasing of clothing from other secondhand sellers. The word sellers is used here because the choices given in the

Table 22
Distribution of Respondents by Number of Years Patronizing
Consignment Stores

	Respondents						
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N
Years							
< 1	6	7.4	4	10.3	14	28.0	24
1	6	7.4	2	5.1	5	10.0	13
2	16	19.7	6	15.4	9	18.0	31
3	14	17.3	8	20.5	7	14.0	29
4	7	8.6	6	15.4	3	6.0	16
5	13	16.1	4	10.3	1	2.0	18
6					1	2.0	1
7	1	1.2	2	5.1	1	2.0	4
8	5	6.2	1	2.6	3	6.0	9
9	1	1.2	2	5.1			3
10	4	4.9	1	2.6	3	6.0	8
over 10	8	9.9	3	7.6	3	6.0	14
Totals	81	99.9*	39	100.0	50	100.0	170

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

questionnaire are not necessarily permanently established stores. Garage sales, flea markets, and clothing exchanges are usually non-continuous and/or itinerant. The "clothing exchange" choice was included because it is a popular bi-annual sale in Roanoke (Harris, 1984). The two other choices were thrift shops such as Goodwill and vintage/antique shops that specialize in old clothing.

Years of patronization were not significantly related to purchasers' and purchasers/consignors' purchasing in other segments of the SCM (Table 23). Statistical hypothesis 3 failed to be rejected. Forty-six and five-tenths percent of all purchasers and purchasers/consignors patronized other secondhand sellers besides consignment stores and had done so for three to five years. Those purchasers and purchasers/consignors (44.9%) , who did not patronize other sellers had been purchasing in consignment stores for two years or less.

Table 24 gives the distribution of respondents who patronized secondhand clothing sellers other than consignment. About half of the purchasers/consignors did not patronize other sellers (56.4%) and more than one-half of the purchasers did (66.7%).

Information Sources

Friends were used as a source of information by over half of all purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors (Table 25). Fewer responses were made in the "newspaper", "relatives", and "other" categories. The "phone book", and "passing-by-the-store" were volunteered responses for the "other" category. Categories

Table 23
Distribution of Years by 'Buy in other Segments of the SCM'

	'Buy in Other Segments of the SCM'				
	<u>No</u>		<u>Yes</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Years of Patronization					
<1 to 2	22	44.9	18	25.4	40
3 to 5	19	38.8	33	46.5	52
6 to 8	1	2.1	8	11.3	9
9 to 10 or more	7	14.3	12	16.9	19
Totals	49	100.1*	71	100.1*	120
$\chi^2=7.14, df=3, p=.0677$					

Table 24

Distribution of Respondents who Purchase in Other Segments of the SCM

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Purchase in other Secondhand Stores?					
Yes	54	66.7	17	43.6	71
No	27	33.4	22	56.4	49
Total	81	100.1*	39	100.0	120

*does not equal 100 due to rounding

Table 25
Distribution of Respondents by Source of Information

Source of Information	Respondents					
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Friends						
Yes	54	66.7	26	66.7	26	52.0
No	27	33.3	13	33.3	24	48.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0
Relatives						
Yes	17	21.0	6	15.4	10	20.0
No	64	79.0	33	84.6	40	80.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0
Print Media						
Yes	19	23.5	14	35.9	11	22.0
No	62	76.5	25	64.1	39	78.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0
Radio						
Yes	3	3.7			2	4.0
No	78	96.3	39	100.0	48	96.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0

Table 25 continued

	Respondents					
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Cons</u>	
	N	%	N	%	N	%
Sources of Information						
Military						
Yes	2	2.5				
No	79	97.5	39	100.0	50	100.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0
Other (yellow pages, passing-by-the-store)						
Yes	17	21.0	4	10.3	9	18.0
No	64	79.0	35	89.7	41	82.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0
Sources Combined						
Friends & Relatives	44	54.3	22	56.4	28	56.0
Media	18	22.2	13	33.3	13	26.0
Other	19	23.5	4	10.3	9	18.0
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	50	100.0

 $\chi^2=3.75$, $df=4$, $p=.4415$

for "radio" and "military" had the fewest responses. The bottom part of Table 25 combines the friends and relatives, radio and print media, and military and other categories. For purchasers and consignors the media and other information sources are of nearly equal importance. Magazine articles often recommend checking the yellow pages for names, addresses, and telephone numbers of consignment stores.

Roanoke consignment stores do not heavily advertise their businesses. In fact one store did not publicly advertise at all, relying totally on word-of-mouth for customer contacts. All three store owners commented that advertising did not increase their business enough to warrant the added expense and problems it created. Two proprietors strongly felt that advertising was more of a disadvantage than an advantage.

Apparently, advertising creates some inconvenience for store proprietors. If a consignor fails to understand the consignment process before bringing in large amounts of clothing to the store, she may put herself and the proprietor in a confrontational situation that may become unpleasant if the proprietor refuses the clothing. Consignment stores generally do not accept more than 10 items at a time and often require clients to make appointments.

Satisfaction

Respondents related their satisfaction with price, quality of clothing, and store atmosphere and service. About 80% of the purchasers and of the purchasers/consignors were very satisfied

with the two apparel factors and store services. This seemed logical since two of the three stores were neat, attractive, and well lighted, and had adequate aisle and floor space for shopping. All three stores provided dressing rooms, full length mirrors, and parking spaces for customers.

One store that was crowded with clothing did a brisk business, despite its cluttered appearance. The owner of this shop was nonchalant about the store environment and made the comment, "either the customers love the store or they hate it".

Differences Among Sample Groups

Sample groups were tested for differences on clothing variables. Three clothing variables were applicable to purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors. Twelve clothing variables were specific to purchasers and consignors and all 15 clothing variables applied to purchasers/consignors.

Purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors were tested for differences in length of time they had been patronizing consignments, frequency of clothing consumption behavior (buying and selling), sources of information about consignment stores, and familiarity with store proprietors. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors were compared by types of clothing purchased, uses of clothing purchased, types of other segments of the SCM patronized, and satisfaction with consignment clothing and store. The variable compared between consignors and purchasers/consignors was types of clothing consigned.

Statistical hypothesis 1 was failed to be rejected. Only one demographic variable, numbers of children, was found to be significantly different among the sample groups. There were no significant differences between sample groups on length of time they had been patronizing consignments, frequency of clothing purchasing and/or consigning, sources of information, and familiarity. However, there were significant differences between purchasers and consignors on two of the clothing variables. Purchasers and consignors differed significantly in the number of years (in combined categories) they had been patronizing consignment stores (Table 26). The number of purchasers increased in the three to five year category, decreased at six years, and increased again at nine years. Consignors formed a downward pattern until the ninth year. A slight rise from 10% to 12% occurred between the sixth and ninth years.

The two sample groups also had different purchasing and consigning frequencies (Table 27). The purchasers were nearly evenly divided between categories whereas the majority of the consignors (89.6%) fell into the "three or four times a year" one.

There was no distinction between the three sample groups in terms of sources of information about consignment stores and familiarity with proprietors. Purchasers and/or consignors used their friends and the media as the main sources for information about consignment stores and most either knew proprietors well or not at all.

Table 26

Distribution of Respondents by Number of Years Patronizing Stores

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Number of Years					
< 1 year to 2 years	28	34.6	28	56.0	56
3 to 5 Years	34	41.9	11	22.0	45
6 to 8 Years	6	7.4	5	10.0	11
9 to 10 Years or More	13	16.1	6	12.0	19
Totals	81	100.0	50	100.0	131

 $\chi^2=6.84$, $df=2$, $p=.0327$

Table 27
Distribution of Respondents by Frequency of Purchasing and Consigning

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Frequency					
Once-a-week to Once a Month	38	47.5	5	10.4	43
Once Every 2 Months to 3 or 4 Times a Year	42	52.5	43	89.6	85
Totals	80	100.0	48	100.0	128
$\chi^2=18.49$, $df=1$, $p=.0001$					

Also, statistical hypothesis 2 was failed to be rejected. Only part c of this hypothesis was rejected. No significant differences were found between purchasers and purchasers/consignors on types of clothing purchased, use of clothing purchased, and satisfaction with consignment clothing and store. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors differed on the types of other segments of the SCM patronized (Table 28). More than a quarter of the purchasers acquired clothing from flea markets and garage sales and less than ten percent of the purchasers/consignors patronized these two secondhand businesses.

Consignors and purchasers/consignors did not differ on types of clothing consigned for themselves, mates, and children. Both respondent groups consigned shirts more than any other clothing item. Statistical hypothesis 4 was failed to be rejected.

Table 28

Distribution of Respondents by Segments of the SCM Patronized

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Segments of the SCM					
Thrifts					
Yes	23	28.4	6	15.4	29
No	58	71.6	33	84.6	91
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120
$\chi^2=2.43$, $df=1$, $p=.1189$					
Clothing Exchange					
Yes	16	19.7	8	20.5	24
No	65	80.3	31	79.5	96
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120
$\chi^2=.009$, $df=1$, $p=.9224$					
Flea Market					
Yes	32	39.5	6	15.4	38
No	49	60.5	33	84.6	82
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120
$\chi^2=7.079$, $df=1$, $p=.0078$					

Table 28 continued

	Respondents				
	<u>Purs</u>		<u>Purs/Cons</u>		<u>Total</u>
	N	%	N	%	N
Segments of the SCM					
Yard/Garage Sales					
Yes	39	48.2	9	23.1	48
No	42	51.8	30	76.9	72
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120
$\chi^2=6.89$, $df=1$, $p=.0086$					
Vintage/Antique					
Yes	12	14.8	4	10.3	16
No	69	85.2	35	89.7	104
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120
$\chi^2=.473$, $df=1$, $p=.4914$					
Other					
Yes	2	2.5			2
No	79	97.5	39	100.0	118
Totals	81	100.0	39	100.0	120

CHAPTER 7

Summary, Conclusions, and Implications

Summary

The purpose of this study was to analyze the acquisition and disposition behavior of purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors of secondhand clothing in consignment stores. A further purpose was to demographically describe the sample groups.

Three consignment stores located in Roanoke, Virginia were chosen for the data collection sites. Proprietors of five stores were contacted, and three consented to allow the researcher to collect data during business hours. The questionnaires concerning consumption behavior and demographic information were administered to purchasers and/or consignors in consignment stores.

Data collection took place in the consignment stores during June and July of 1985. Each week during data collection the researcher alternated among the three stores to accommodate the vacation schedules of proprietors.

The survey instrument was administered to the majority of the respondents during store visits except when customers were in a hurry and agreed to complete the questionnaire at home and return it by mail. A total of 170 subjects were included in this study, which included 79 women purchasers, 39 women purchasers/consignors, and 50 women consignors. Two male respondents also participated; one

purchaser and one purchaser/consignor.

Data tabulations were used to determine respondents' similarities and differences on demographic and clothing variables. Purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors were compared on ten demographic variables and on four clothing variables: length of time patronizing consignment stores, frequency of purchasing and/or consigning, sources of information about consignment stores, and familiarity with store proprietors. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors were compared on types and uses of clothing purchased, types of other segments of the SCM patronized, and satisfaction with consignment clothing and store. Consignors and purchasers/consignors were compared on one clothing variable, types of clothing consigned.

Statistical analysis showed that purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors were different in the number of children their households financially supported. There were no differences between the sample groups on the other nine demographic variables. Over half of the consignors (56%) did not support any children, and less than half of the purchasers either did not support any children (43.2%) or supported one to two children (48.2%). Less than half of the purchasers/consignors (46.1%) did not support any children and 23% supported three to five children. Purchasers and consignors differed on household composition and educational achievement. Both groups had a majority of individuals in the adult with children category. However, there were 10 single-parent purchasers and one single-parent consignor. The two respondent groups differed on education: 46.9% of all consignors were

baccalaureates and 44.4% of all purchasers were high school graduates or less.

There were significantly more purchasers who had patronized consignments for three to five years (41.9%) and for nine to 10 years (16.1%) than consignors participating for the same amounts of time (22% and 12%, respectively). Likewise a significant difference occurred between these respondent groups in frequency of purchasing and consigning. Almost half of the purchasers (47%) purchased clothing either once a week, twice a month or once a month. Only five consignors (10.4%) consigned clothing this often, and the majority (89.6%) consigned clothing three or four times a year. Chi-square analysis did not illuminate any dissimilarities between purchasers and consignors in their use of sources of information about consignment stores or familiarity with store proprietors. Both groups relied mainly on friends for information. Most purchasers either knew proprietors well or not at all; and the majority of the consignors knew proprietors well.

No significant differences were found between purchasers and purchasers/consignors on types of clothing purchased, use of clothing purchased, and satisfaction with consignment clothing and store. These subjects however did differ on other segments of the SCM utilized. Flea markets and garage sales were more often patronized by purchasers than by purchasers/consignors.

Consignors and purchasers/consignors did not differ on types of clothing consigned. Shirts were the one clothing item most often purchased and consigned.

Conclusions

Several conclusions emerged from the research, although they may not be generalizable due to the use of a convenience sample.

1. The consignment stores in this study catered to upper income consumers in Roanoke.
2. Purchasers, purchasers/consignors, and consignors were more alike than different, demographically. However, the respondents in the study differed on the number of children their households financially supported. Purchasers/consignors had a tendency to support three to five children, consignors either supported one child or did not support any children, and the majority of the purchasers supported one or two children.
3. Education was a demographic factor that differentiated respondents.

a) There were more respondents in the study who had baccalaureates or other post-high school education than not. The college educated respondents most often had total household incomes of \$40,000 and above, and respondents who were high school graduates or who had some high school education most often had total household incomes of \$29,999 or less.

b) College graduate respondents frequently were 18 to 49 years old, and high school graduates or respondents with some high school education were 50 or more years of age.

c) Respondents with adults and children in their households were more often college educated than those with adults and no children,

single-parent households, or single-adult households.

4. Purchasers and consignors had some distinct demographic and clothing consumption characteristics. The purchasers and consignors differed significantly on household composition, education, length of time patronizing consignment stores, and frequency of purchasing and consigning.

a) The largest proportion of consignors (46%) and of purchasers (41.8%) lived with other adults and children, but there were more single parent purchasers (12.7%) than consignors (2%).

b) The consignor sample group had more college educated respondents (46.9%) than did purchasers (24.7%).

c) The majority of the consignors (56%) had been patronizing consignment stores for two years or less, and most purchasers had been patronizing the stores for three years or more.

d) Purchasers bought clothing in consignment stores either once a month or less often (47.5%) or three or four times a year (52.5%), but consignors consigned clothing only three or four times a year (89.6%).

5. Purchasers and purchasers/consignors had different consumption patterns of secondhand clothing in the SCM. Purchasers/consignors in the study were not as likely to patronize flea markets (15.4%) or garage sales (23.1%) as purchasers (39.5% and 48.2%, respectively). Neither sample group patronized the thrift, clothing exchange, or vintage/antique segments of the market in great quantity.

6. The consignment business appeared to be conducive to interaction between patrons and proprietors. In general, consignors and purchasers/consignors were more familiar with store proprietors than

purchasers, probably because of their role as suppliers.

7. Consignors' frequency of consigning produces a cyclical influx of clothing to the stores two to four times a year.

8. Friends were mainly used by respondents as sources of information about consignment stores.

Implications of the Study

Some findings of the study imply that proprietors can increase profits by giving consignors variable percentages of the sale price for certain garments and by knowing who their purchasers and/or consignors are. For example, profits could be increased if consignors were given higher percentages of the sale price for those garments that sell well and a lower percentage for unsaleable or slow selling garments. This economic incentive might prompt consistent consigning of the 'good selling' garments. A low price maintained on those items that sell well would enhance volume sales and provide a savings incentive for the purchaser. Lower percentage rates on the slow selling items, such as shoes, might decrease the number consigned, thus diminishing the space they occupy in the store, and the time proprietors have to spend handling and managing them.

Variable percentage rates might also help alleviate the problem of cyclical supply. Higher percentages rates than the normal 50% might motivate consignors to increase the number of times they consign. Supply consigned more often than three or four times a year might result in an even flow of clothing and cultivate confidence in purchasers. If purchasers know that supply is well maintained, they

may shop more often than once a month or three or four times a year.

Also, a demographic knowledge of the three groups of store clients could aid proprietors in selecting supply. Purchasers/consignors may have different preferences than purchasers. In this study purchasers/consignors tended to have larger families which may mean that they have a greater need for childrens' clothing. The findings showed that most children of survey participants were aged 13 to 18.

Implications for Further Study

1. Disposing by way of the consignment store is a particular method of discard. The subject of clothing disposition and in particular consigning needs to be investigated in more depth. There are many unanswered questions about clothing disposition. For example, when does the decision to dispose of a garment occur? Do individuals consider disposition when acquiring?
2. A timing and frequency study on consumers' purchasing and consigning behavior in the consignment store needs to be conducted to explain the "costs" of consuming in the store. Such a study might also illuminate business cycles of the stores.
3. Further investigation of types of clothing purchased and consigned would perhaps confirm and explain why or refute that shirts are the most frequently purchased and consigned clothing item in the stores.
4. The consignment store itself needs to be characterized in terms of price points, merchandising practices, and differences and similarities to other secondhand market sellers.
5. A historical study of the development of consignment stores and the

American SCM needs to be written so that future development of the market can be compared to its beginnings, its European counterpart, its influence on fashion, and its function as a clothing supplier to other nations (Colamosca, 1978).

6. The study needs to be replicated with a larger number of respondents chosen by random sampling to determine if the findings of this study would be consistent in other areas of the country.

7. A clothing values and attitude study of consignment store clients would be useful in identifying and explaining why consumers, who may have the means to purchase new ready-to-wear, purchase and consign secondhand clothing.

8. A study of consignment purchases and disposals is needed to determine the effect consignment stores have on new ready-to-wear retail purchases. Does the availability of the consignment store increase acquisition and disposal?

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Appendix A

Glossary

Secondhand Clothing Sellers

1. Consignment Stores- Profit or nonprofit stores selling used, new, or non-worn clothing owned by consignors. The store acts as a selling agent and splits revenues with consignors according to a pre-arranged agreement.

2. Resale Shops- Profit or nonprofit stores that sell new, non-worn, or used clothing. The term "resale" commonly refers to a store with merchandise that is literally being "resold". The way a store owner obtains his supply varies; he may purchase outright, take in donations, or depend upon consignors (Miller, 1984; White, 1983). At any time a resale shop may have consigned and purchased supply on the selling floor. Consignments are commonly called resale shops by the public.

3. Flea Markets- Indoor or outdoor, temporary or permanent public markets selling new, used, or hand-crafted items for profit or nonprofit purposes.

4. Garage/Yard/Porch/Basement/Tag Sales- Any sale, barter, or exchange of used or secondhand personal, family, or household goods or articles not purchased to be resold at such sale, operated out of a single family, two family, multi-family, or business location by the person who owns or holds an annual lease for property where the sale is to be conducted, being of two

hours or more in duration (W. M. Hackworth, personal communication, October 25, 1984).

5. Thrifts- Profit or nonprofit stores that sell donated, purchased, or consigned clothing at prices which are about 75-90% off the original market prices (Kieffer, 1981).

6. Vintage/Antique Stores- Stores which specialize in clothing from a specific historic period, usually 1900s through 1960s (White, 1983). Vintage and antique clothes may or may not be found in the same store. Clothing 80-100 years old or more is considered to be antique (Farmer, personal communication, December 15, 1984).

Clothing Terms

1. Borrowed Clothing- Clothing loaned from one person to another that is later returned to its original owner.

2. Consigned Clothing- Clothing that is contracted out to a seller-agent's care for selling according to pre-arranged agreements. Selling agent and garment owner split revenues.

3. Donated Clothing- Clothing given by an individual, group, or business to an organization or individual to dispose of as seen fit. The donator may or may not take a tax deduction for the donation.

4. Exchanged Clothing- Clothing which is received in return for another good of equal value, a swap of goods without the involvement of money.

5. Gift Clothing- Clothing freely given to an individual.

6. Used, Secondhand, or Previously Owned Clothing- Clothing which has been owned by an individual, before it is passed to a second individual, by exchange, gift, or purchase.

7. Non-worn Clothing- Clothing never worn after acquisition for any length of time to an event, gathering, or activity.

8. New Clothing- Never worn clothing, including new ready-to-wear, bought at a store, ordered from a catalogue, professionally constructed, or homesewn.

9. Ready-to-Wear Clothing- Clothing immediately ready to be worn by an individual after that person has obtained possession of the clothing. Clothing can be purchased from a business or another individual. The term usually refers to new clothing but it can be applied to secondhand clothing.

10. Handed-down Clothing- Used or non-worn clothing received as a gift from someone within or outside the household unit.

11. Home-Produced Clothing- Clothing newly constructed as an unpaid activity within the household unit made by and for some member of that unit (Reid, 1934).

12. Made-Over Clothing- Salvaged clothing altered in construction to the satisfaction of the owner.

Appendix B

Letter to Store Managers

Dear Mrs. _____,

As a graduate student in the Department of Clothing and Textiles at Virginia Tech University I am required to do some original research and write a thesis. During the past year my efforts have been concentrated on studying the secondhand clothing market, and in particular individuals who patronize consignment shops. To complete my thesis, some information is needed about purchasers and consignors and their clothing activity in consignment shops.

Would you please consider allowing a survey to be conducted in your shop,_____. I would like to meet with you to discuss this possibility, explain the study, the research procedure, and show you the survey. Any questions that you might have will be answered. Please be reassured that the survey will be conducted in a professional manner.

In return for your cooperation I will be glad to share the results of the study and conduct an in-store seminar on wardrobe planning and shopping in consignment stores. I was a home economist for the Georgia Extension Service and am comfortable conducting workshops. You will be interested in the results of the study because it will provide insight into the dynamic relationships between purchasers and consignors, and the consignment store.

Following this letter I will telephone you on June 4 to set a convenient appointment date. I am looking forward to meeting you and discussing my study.

Sincerely,

Phoebe M. Morrow
Graduate Assistant

Appendix C

Questionnaires

Part I. Buying

1. CHECK the secondhand clothing item(s) that you buy for yourself, your mate, or your children in CONSIGNMENT stores.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Coats or	1	1	1	1
Jackets	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Blazers	1	1	1	1
or Sports	1	1	1	1
Coats	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Suits	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Skirts	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Blouses	1	1	1	1
or Shirts	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Dresses	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Slacks	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Jeans	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Formal	1	1	1	1
Wear	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Shoes	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Accessories	1	1	1	1

2. How satisfied are you with the prices that you pay for clothing, the quality of clothing merchandise offered, the general atmosphere, and the service of THIS CONSIGNMENT store? Check one space for each column heading.

	1 Price	1 Quality	1 Atmosphere	1 Service	1
Very Satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat Satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Neutral	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Very Dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1

3. What are the TWO most important reasons why you buy secondhand clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores? Place the letter that corresponds to the most important and second most important reasons in the blanks below.

- A. to have well made clothing of good quality or special fabrics.
- B. to have fun.
- C. to have a greater variety of clothing.
- D. to have unique clothing.
- E. to save money.
- F. to replace current wardrobe with other clothing on a fairly regular basis.
- G. to get more clothing for the amount of money spent.
- H. to buy gifts and presents.
- I. to have brand name clothing.
- J. other, list _____

_____ (1) reason _____ (2) reason

4. About how often do you buy in CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle one letter.

- A. WEEKLY
- B. TWICE a month
- C. ONCE a month
- D. ONCE EVERY two months
- E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

5. For what type(s) of activities are the purchased clothing used? CHECK the appropriate space(s) under each heading.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Relaxing	1	1	1	1
at home	1	1	1	1
Working	1	1	1	1
at home	1	1	1	1
Working	1	1	1	1
at a job	1	1	1	1
School	1	1	1	1
Sports	1	1	1	1
Social	1	1	1	1
Costume	1	1	1	1
Parties	1	1	1	1

6. How well do you know the manager and/or owner of THIS CONSIGNMENT store? Circle one letter.

- A. very well
- B. well (you talk and exchange information)
- C. somewhat (greet each other when you meet)
- D. a little (you know who the manager/owner is)
- E. not at all

7a. Do you ever ask personnel in this store about specific types of garment(s) that you would like to buy? Circle one letter.

- A. yes
- B. no-----GO TO QUESTION 8

7b. If yes, about how often do you ask? Circle one letter.

- A. WEEKLY
- B. TWICE a month
- C. ONCE a month
- D. ONCE EVERY two months
- E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

8. How long have you been buying clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores?
Circle one letter.

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| A. less than 1 year | F. 5 years | K. 10 years |
| B. 1 year | G. 6 years | L. over 10 years |
| C. 2 years | H. 7 years | |
| D. 3 years | I. 8 years | |
| E. 4 years | J. 9 years | |

9. Do you buy used clothing in other types of secondhand clothing stores?

_____ yes Circle all that apply. _____no

- A. Salvation Army, Goodwill or thrift stores
- B. Clothing exchanges
- C. Flea markets
- D. Yard / garage sales
- E. Vintage / antique stores
- F. other, list _____

10. From what source(s) did you first learn about CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle all that apply.

- A. Friends
- B. Relatives
- C. Newspaper and/or magazines
- D. Radio
- E. Military
- F. other, list _____

Part I. Selling

1. CHECK the clothing item(s) that you sell in CONSIGNMENT stores for yourself, your mate, or your children.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Coats or	1	1	1	1
Jackets	1	1	1	1
Blazers	1	1	1	1
or Sports	1	1	1	1
Coats	1	1	1	1
Suits	1	1	1	1
Skirts	1	1	1	1
Blouses	1	1	1	1
or Shirts	1	1	1	1
Dresses	1	1	1	1
Slacks	1	1	1	1
Jeans	1	1	1	1
Formal	1	1	1	1
Wear	1	1	1	1
Shoes	1	1	1	1
Accessories	1	1	1	1

2. What are the TWO most important reasons why you sell clothing? Place the letter that corresponds to the most important and second most important reasons in the blanks below.

- A. to get back part of the initial investment
that you put into your clothing
- B. to trade-in current clothing so that you can
get other clothing
- C. to get rid of unwanted clothing that someone
else might be able to use
- D. to make room in your closet for other clothing
- E. to make some extra money
- F. other, list _____

_____ (1) reason

_____ (2) reason

3. How well do you know the manager and/or owner of THIS CONSIGNMENT store?

- A. very well
- B. well (you talk and exchange information)
- C. somewhat (greet each other when you meet)
- D. a little (you know who the manager/owner is)
- E. not at all

4. About how often do you sell clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores?

- A. WEEKLY
- B. TWICE a month
- C. ONCE a month
- D. ONCE EVERY two months
- E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

5. How long have you been selling clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores?

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| A. less than 1 year | F. 5 years | K. 10 years |
| B. 1 year | G. 6 years | L. over 10 years |
| C. 2 years | H. 7 years | |
| D. 3 years | I. 8 years | |
| E. 4 years | J. 9 years | |

6. From what source(s) did you first learn about CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle all that apply.

- A. Friends
- B. Relatives
- C. Newspaper and / or magazines
- D. Radio
- E. Military
- F. other, list _____

Buying and Selling

1. **CHECK** the secondhand clothing item(s) that you buy for yourself, your mate, or your children in **CONSIGNMENT** stores.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Coats or	1	1	1	1
Jackets	1	1	1	1
Blazers or	1	1	1	1
Sports Coats	1	1	1	1
Suits	1	1	1	1
Skirts	1	1	1	1
Blouses	1	1	1	1
or Shirts	1	1	1	1
Dresses	1	1	1	1
Slacks	1	1	1	1
Jeans	1	1	1	1
Formal Wear	1	1	1	1
Shoes	1	1	1	1
Accessories	1	1	1	1

2. How satisfied are you with the prices that you pay for clothing, the quality of clothing merchandise offered, the general atmosphere, and the service of **THIS CONSIGNMENT** store? Check one space for each column heading.

	1 Price	1 Quality	1 Atmosphere	1 Service	1
Very Satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat Satisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Neutral	1	1	1	1	1
Somewhat Dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1
Very Dissatisfied	1	1	1	1	1

3. What are the TWO most important reasons why you buy secondhand clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores? Place the letter that corresponds to the most important and second most important reasons in the blanks below.

- A. to have well made clothing of good quality or special fabrics.
- B. to have fun.
- C. to have a greater variety of clothing.
- D. to have unique clothing.
- E. to save money.
- F. to replace current wardrobe with other clothing on a fairly regular basis.
- G. to get more clothing for the amount of money spent.
- H. to buy gifts and presents.
- I. to have brand name clothing.
- J. other, list _____

_____ (1) reason _____ (2) reason

4. About how often do you buy in CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle one letter.

- A. WEEKLY
- B. TWICE a month
- C. ONCE a month
- D. ONCE EVERY two months
- E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

5. For what type(s) of activities are the purchased clothing used? CHECK the appropriate space(s) under each heading.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Relaxing	1	1	1	1
at home	1	1	1	1
Working	1	1	1	1
at home	1	1	1	1
Working	1	1	1	1
at a job	1	1	1	1
School	1	1	1	1
Sports	1	1	1	1
Social	1	1	1	1
Costume	1	1	1	1
Parties	1	1	1	1

6a. Do you ever ask personnel in this store about specific types of garment(s) that you would like to buy? Circle one letter.

A. yes

B. no-----GO TO QUESTION 7

6b. If yes, about how often do you ask? Circle one letter.

A. WEEKLY

B. TWICE a month

C. ONCE a month

D. ONCE EVERY two months

E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

7. Do you buy used clothing in other types of secondhand clothing stores? Check one answer.

____yes Circle all that apply below. ____ no

A. Salvation Army, Goodwill or similar stores

B. Clothing exchanges

C. Flea markets

D. Yard / garage sales

E. Vintage / antique stores

F. other, list _____

8. CHECK the clothing item(s) that you sell in CONSIGNMENT stores for yourself, your mate, or your children.

	1 Yourself	1 Mate	1 Children	1
Coats or	1	1	1	1
Jackets	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Blazers or	1	1	1	1
Sports Coats	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Suits	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Skirts	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Blouses	1	1	1	1
or Shirts	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Dresses	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Slacks	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Jeans	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Formal Wear	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Shoes	1	1	1	1
	1	1	1	1
Accessories	1	1	1	1

9. What are the TWO most important reasons why you sell clothing? Place the letter that corresponds to the most important and second most important reasons in the blanks below.

- A. to get back part of the initial investment that you put into your clothing.
- B. to trade-in current clothing so that you can get other clothing.
- C. to get rid of unwanted clothing that someone else might be able to use.
- D. to make room in your closet for other clothing.
- E. to make some extra money.
- F. other, list _____

_____ (1) reason

_____ (2) reason

10. How well do you know the manager and/or owner of THIS CONSIGNMENT store? Circle one letter.

- A. very well
- B. well (you talk and exchange information)
- C. somewhat (greet each other when you meet)
- D. a little (you know who the manager/owner is)
- E. not at all

11. About how often do you sell clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle one letter.

- A. WEEKLY
- B. TWICE a month
- C. ONCE a month
- D. ONCE EVERY two months
- E. 3 or 4 times a year or less often

12. How long have you been buying and selling clothing in CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle one letter.

- | | | |
|---------------------|------------|------------------|
| A. less than 1 year | F. 5 years | K. 10 years |
| B. 1 year | G. 6 years | L. over 10 years |
| C. 2 years | H. 7 years | |
| D. 3 years | J. 8 years | |
| E. 4 years | I. 9 years | |

13. From what source(s) did you first learn about CONSIGNMENT stores? Circle all that apply.

- A. Friends
- B. Relatives
- C. Newspaper and / or magazines
- D. Radio
- E. Military
- F. other, list _____

14. When you learned about CONSIGNMENT stores which activity did you do first? Check one.

_____ buy _____ sell

Why? _____

Comments about the questionnaire. _____

Part II.

Thank you for answering Part I. For this short section please **CIRCLE** the **LETTERS** that correspond to the answers that apply to you.

1. Your Sex.

- A. Female
- B. Male

2a. Which of the following best describes your household?
Circle **ONE LETTER** under the correct heading.

Households WITH
children

- A. Two adults (male and female);
with one or more children
- B. Two or more adults (male or
female); with one or more
children
- C. One parent with one or more
children

Households WITHOUT
children

- D. Two adults (male and
female); no children
- E. Two or more adults
(male or female); no
children
- F. One adult (male or
female); no children

2b. How many children does your household financially support?

- A. none----- GO TO QUESTION 3
- B. 1 child
- C. 2 children
- D. 3 children
- E. 4 children
- F. 5 children or more

2c. List the ages of your children. _____

3. Your Age.

- A. less than 18
- B. 18 - 29
- C. 30 - 39
- D. 40 - 49
- E. 50 - 59
- F. 60 - 69
- G. over 69

4. What is your education level?

- A. some high school
- B. high school graduate
- C. vocational/technical degree
- D. 2 year college degree
- E. college graduate
- F. completed graduate or professional degree
- G. other, list (_____)

5. Employment Status. Check **ONE LETTER** under the correct heading.

EMPLOYED

- A. Full time
- B. Part time

NOT PRESENTLY EMPLOYED

- C. Not looking for work
- D. Looking for a job
- E. Retired

6. Which one of the following groups do you belong to?

- | | |
|--------------|----------------------|
| A. Caucasian | D. Black |
| B. Hispanic | E. other, list _____ |
| C. Asian | |

7a. Total household income from all sources.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A. less than \$9,999 | E. \$25,000 - \$29,999 |
| B. \$10,000 - \$14,999 | F. \$30,000 - \$34,999 |
| C. \$15,000 - \$19,999 | G. \$35,000 - \$39,999 |
| D. \$20,000 - \$24,999 | H. \$40,000 and above |

7b. Your personal contribution to total household income.

- | | |
|------------------------|------------------------|
| A. none | F. \$25,000 - \$29,999 |
| B. less than \$9,999 | G. \$30,000 - \$34,999 |
| C. \$10,000 - \$14,999 | H. \$35,000 - \$39,000 |
| D. \$15,000 - \$19,999 | I. \$40,000 and above |
| E. \$20,000 - \$24,000 | |

THANK YOU for your cooperation.

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