CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS
STUDENTS IN PALO PINTO COUNTY, TEXAS

THESIS

Presented to the Graduate Committee of the
North Texas State University in Partial
Fulfillment of the Requirements

For the Degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

By

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Denton, Texas
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181 adolescent home economics students in Palo Pinto County, Texas, were surveyed. The questions examined the following: grades and self concept of academic ability, self concept of academic ability and occupational aspirations, school size and occupational aspirations, sex and occupational aspirations, race and occupational aspirations, parents' occupational aspirations, parents' educational levels and occupational aspirations.

The data suggested that career aspirations are positively related to self concept of ability, school grades, school size, race, parents' education, and fathers' occupations. Students' sex and their mothers' occupations were not shown to be related to career aspirations.
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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The high school home economics teacher is in a position to serve many important and unique needs of the students she comes in contact with daily. Career development counseling is one of these needs (2). The adolescents in high school classes are beginning to generalize about their future work in our society (6). Developmentally, adolescents are now at the point at which they, with their teachers' and parents' help, will begin to draw general conclusions about themselves and their place in the work force (3).

The increasingly high skills that society is now requiring of its work force is very perplexing to the home economics student. Thus, adolescence becomes a very complex and confusing time period (3). The enormous increase in the number and variety of career choices for youth, especially women and other minorities, has added to the general confusion about occupational choice many young people are currently experiencing (3).

During the high school years, adequate career guidance is an essential role of both educators and the school curriculum (7). Teachers and other educators must be aware of
the career aspirations of their students in order to better understand the students' needs (1). Needs cannot be met until they are made known. Through this study, the teachers of Palo Pinto County, Texas were informed of career aspirations of their home economics students.

Statement of the Problem

The problem of this study was to obtain information concerning the career aspirations and expectations of high school home economics students in Palo Pinto County, Texas. A major concern of the research was to identify factors which appeared to contribute to the students' level of occupational aspiration.

Research Questions

Answers were sought to the following questions.

1. Are grades positively related to self concept of academic ability among home economics students?

2. Is self concept of academic ability positively related to the occupational aspirations of home economics students?

3. Do home economics students attending schools in small towns have higher occupational aspirations than home economics students attending school in a large town?
4. Do male home economics students have higher occupational aspirations than do female home economics students?

5. Does race affect home economics students' occupational aspirations?

6. Are the fathers' occupations positively related to home economics students' occupational level?

7. Are the fathers' educational levels positively related to the level of occupational aspiration of home economics students?

8. Are the mothers' occupations positively related to home economics students' occupational choices?

9. Are the mothers' educational levels positively related to the occupational aspiration level of home economics students?

Significance of the Problem

The problem of this study was to examine the career aspirations and expectations of the high school home economics students in Palo Pinto County, Texas. Few studies have been concerned with the career aspirations of rural and
semi-rural students. Information gained through this research may prove useful to educators.

Definition of Terms

The following terms have restricted meanings and were defined for this study.

Environmental press theory was an educational theory that stated that students' aspirations were a function of the social context of which they were part. According to this theory, a student will get better grades and aspire to higher levels in an environment in which his peers have high grades and high aspirations (5).

Relative deprivation theory was an educational theory that stated that students' career choices were a function of their academic self concepts, which were based largely on the students' assessments of their academic performance relative to that of their peers (5, p. 17).

Large town was defined, for the purposes of this study, as a community that had a population of over 5,000.

Small town was defined, for the purposes of this study, as a community that had a population of 4,999 or less.

Occupation was an "activity with a market value which an individual continually pursued for the purpose of obtaining a steady flow of income" (8, p. 424). This activity was one indicator of the social position of the individual.

Occupational aspiration was the respondent's conception
Self concept of academic ability was how the respondent viewed his academic ability in relation to the academic ability of his peers.

Tentative choice stage was the second of Ginzberg's three occupational choice stages. During this stage, many important career attitudes and ideas were formulated.

Limitations of the Study

The population surveyed included only rural and semi-rural high school students enrolled in Home Economics in Palo Pinto County, Texas. The population did not include an equal representation of the sexes and ethnic groups. The investigator was not present during the administering of the research instrument. Since the questionnaire was administered by seven home economics teachers in their respective schools, some variability in the manner in which the questionnaire was presented to the students was inevitable.

The respondents ranged in age from fourteen years to eighteen years. Ginzberg defined this age span as a period of tentative occupational choice, which may have been an additional limitation.

Methodology

The population used in the study of "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County,
Texas" included all home economics students enrolled in each of the five school districts in Palo Pinto County, Texas. The school districts included in the study are the districts of Gordon, Graford, Mineral Wells, Santo and Strawn. All these schools, except Mineral Wells, are Class B schools. Mineral Wells is a Class AAA school; the other four schools were classified as small schools.

Each school superintendent in each of the five school districts in Palo Pinto County was contacted by the investigator and asked to allow their home economics students to participate in the survey. All superintendents gave permission for every high school home economics student to complete the questionnaire. Packets of questionnaires were then delivered to each home economics teacher. The individual teachers of home economics were asked to read a letter of instruction to their students before distributing the questionnaire.

As the surveys were returned, the data related to each question were entered into tables for ease of interpretation. The respondents were categorized by sex, age, grade and race.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

Adolescents in high school classes are beginning to generalize about their futures (16). Ginzberg, who has made several attempts to study the process of occupational choice, stated that every individual goes through three major stages in the career decision process. These stages are the fantasy stage, the tentative choice stage, and the realistic choice stage. The fantasy stage usually spans the ages of six to eleven, the tentative choice stage spans ages eleven to eighteen, and the realistic stage is in effect after age eighteen (16).

Ginzberg reported that most essential career attitudes and ideas are formulated during the tentative stage. This is the stage of students in high school. It is essential that school curriculum and educators provide necessary information and guidance in tentative occupational decision making during high school years.

Theories of Occupational Aspirations

The study of educational and professional aspirations of high school and college students in previous research
has been based largely on two sociological theories: the relative deprivation theory and the environmental press theory. Environmental press theory stated that students' achievements and aspirations are a function of the social context. Therefore, a student will perform best and aim highest at a school where most of his fellow students have high aspirations and are superior academically (12, p. 1152). The relative deprivation theory disagreed with this viewpoint.

During World War II, Stouffer and his colleagues developed the relative deprivation theory to explain the results of a large survey conducted on the United States soldiers' attitudes toward induction and their appraisals of chances of promotion (23, p. 283). The attitudes were all treated as independent variables. The analysis of the data revealed that soldiers of varying statuses had very different attitudes (23, p. 283). The status attitudes were treated provisionally as the dependent variables. To explain the relationship between the dependent and independent variables, the concept of relative deprivation was developed (23). Relative deprivation theorists contend that an individual's career choice is based on his attitude of himself in relation to his peers (11). The relative deprivation theory helped explain variations in attitude based on an individual's education, age, and socioeconomic
position. To many men becoming a soldier meant a very real deprivation. The feeling of deprivation was felt the strongest by those men who had career and academic aspirations prior to their military service. This group of men had a very high standard of comparison (34, p.125).

The attitudes of officers, like those of enlisted men, reflected some relationship with their level of expectation. This attitude was based on each man's assessment of his achievement level in relationship to that of his acquaintances (34, p. 25). For example, a captain who had been in grade a long time compared with other captains would be less happy about the promotion situation than a lieutenant in grade a relatively short time.

The concept of relative deprivation has tended to stress primarily the "deprivation" component of the concept, however, the "relative" component of the concept also has much significance. Stouffer introduced the idea of relative deprivation as similar to the concepts of social frame of reference, patterns of expectation, and definition of the situation (23, p. 52)

The theory of relative deprivation was further applied by Davis in a study of students' aspirations using research data obtained from the National Opinion Research Center (11). Within a reference group framework, Davis indicated that the students' career choice is a function of their
academic self concept, which is based largely on the students' assessments of their performance relative to that of their peers (11, p. 17). Davis stated that the significant reference group for a high school student consists of the other students in his own school, not the national pool of students. The data collected by Davis indicated that the graduating senior's career choice was more related to his school grade-point-average (a local measure of performance) than to school quality. Davis concluded that "being a big frog in a small pond has a more positive effect on aspirations than being a small frog in a big pond" (12, p. 1152).

The Hause study supported the Davis findings. Hause stated that a high ranking on a test of low standards is much more positively correlated to high career aspirations than a medium to low ranking on a test of high standards (33).

Relative deprivation theorists maintained that school selectivity indirectly affects the students' aspirations via its effect on the students' grade-point-average (11). One important factor in the theory of relative deprivation was based on the student's self concept of his academic ability. Drew and Astin found support in their research for the relative deprivation theory as related to academic self concept (12). Academic performance in school was found to be positively related to ability self concept which was independent of prior academic achievement,
ability, and selectivity (24). Stevenson supported this belief and cited the following statement by Berg. "Those who do best in school are those who are likely to do best later on - even if skills and personality traits learned in school are unrelated to those needed later. Success breeds success." (32). Gintis stated that students with the highest level of academic self concept are those with the most schooling. In Gintis' opinion, this group of students usually exhibit the highest level of aspiration realization (15). Taubman and Wales supported the belief that the overall educational interest as well as confidence level of the students has dropped significantly during the past few years. This drop has in part accounted for the limited supply of personnel for high paying prestige jobs.

More recently, Werts and Whatley used Davis' studies as the basis for their research on the relative deprivation theory. Werts and Whatley concluded the following:

1) The more selective the school a student attends, the lower his grades will be; thus from this standpoint, school selectivity is a negative determiner of school grades.

2) School grades are a positive determiner of future educational plans and aspirations; that is, grades are a determinant of a student's concept of his own ability, which in turn affects career aspirations.

3) School selectivity directly determines students' later plans because students do not adjust their ability self concepts to take into account their ability to function in a situation other than the one they are currently involved in.
Davis found that career decisions during the school years correlated with such background factors as parental socioeconomic status, religion, size of hometown, and race. Occupational values, sex, and academic performance were also major correlates of career decisions.

A consistency existed between the findings of Drew and Astin and Davis. Drew and Astin found the significant predictors to level of aspiration to be sex, scholastic aptitude, race, religion, mother's education, high school grades, and high school accomplishments. Sex and race appeared to be very important in prediction of aspiration level (11). Astin and Panos concluded that sex of the student, more than any other personal characteristic, entered into prediction of careers and academic majors (2).

Sex Differences and Occupational Aspirations

Sex differences in occupations increase during the college years because men do not change their career choices to traditionally female occupations while women tend to change to traditional careers (3). This finding of sex differences in occupational aspirations suggested certain constraints on some choices that seem to derive more from sex role considerations than other factors, i.e. race and socioeconomic situation.

Studies of white students show that women make their occupational decisions earlier than men, enter college with lower aspirations, and when they shift during
college, they change to a lower rather than higher level of aspiration (24, p. 58).

Women generally made better high school grades than men did, even in areas of math and science, but fewer women students planned to continue their education. More minorities than whites, and more women than men indicated that their future occupational plans did not require training in addition to a high school diploma (3). Beginning with the two year colleges, as the education of the students increased, the proportion of women decreased (4).

The findings of the Higher Institution Surveys (HEGIS) during fiscal year 1972 and 1973, indicated that women attended smaller, less selective and less affluent colleges than men (4). Women are also under represented in the technological institutions (4). When enrollment figures for thirty-six technical institutions were checked, women were found to make up ten per cent of the total student population. The picture has changed recently because women are increasingly choosing "nontraditional" fields. For the first time, King and Richardson and Astin reported that on entering college more young women planned to pursue traditionally "male" careers (3). Among entering freshmen, seventeen per cent of the women were planning a career in business, engineering, law or medicine, a two per cent increase over 1974, and an eleven per cent increase over 1966 (4). In spite of these changes, almost
one-third of women planned to have a college major in and pursue a career in education or nonmedical health fields (4).

An apparent inconsistency exists in the available data on male-female differences in occupational aspirations (24). Some of the data have shown that males aspire to higher occupations than females (25). Other data suggested that males and females have equal aspirations (18, pp. 70-79). Stevenson stated that female aspirations usually begin higher than males but later change to a much lower level (33). One explanation for this trend was that plans are generally more uncertain in females than males due to the women's tendency to marry and conform their career goals with their husbands' career goals (33). Conversely, the further removed a plan or career choice has been from direct occupational commitment, the more likely it was to be expressed in a relatively high aspiration (33). Males face their occupational commitments earlier than females do because they do not base their career choices on the possibility of an impending marriage after their high school education (33). This situation may account for the drastic lowering of female career aspirations that Astin and Panos have observed in their research. The male often has faced his occupational reality at a much younger age. Minorities who have a much greater occupational freedom than in previous years, often experience lower aspirational
shifts when they attend college for the first time and face direct occupational commitment.

Cultural Differences and Occupational Aspirations

Slocum indicated that nearly all college students aspired to high occupational status and expected to enter a professional or scientific occupation (30). However, Whetstone and Hayles stated that blacks expressed stronger interests in business, accounting, sales, verbal, linguistic and social services while whites were more interested in science, mathematical and aesthetic fields (36). Astin's research supported these findings (3). Astin found that more black men and fewer black women planned to major in education than the general college population (3). Slocum reported that financial considerations are more important to minorities and men (30).

Black children have been found to have highly exaggerated career aspirations (25). These aspirations have been found to be realistically impossible to attain (25). Hayles stated that many blacks and other minorities lack the knowledge of requirements and education to attain their goals. As a result, these children were often able to achieve very little. In addition to these statistics, several authors have noted high aspirations of black youth in regard to schooling and occupational choice (26, 25). Also, Katz and Gordon indicated the demands for academic achievement that
have been placed on black youth by their parents, especially their mothers, often has been exceptionally high (26). Gordon and Katz discussed the discrepancy between aspirations and productive behavior that has persisted because the educational and occupational values and goals of white society have been internalized by minority youth; however, the necessary behavior pattern for successful attainment of aspirations have not been learned (26).

Minorities often stated that they lacked information concerning higher education (3). Minorities have complained that several factors have prevented them from actualizing their aspirations. Some complaints are the following:

1) They did not get necessary educational information on time.
2) They did not know about educational requirements and/or costs.
3) They did not know if schools in their area would accept them.

Gottlieb and Henson's study concerning "Educational Goals of Black Youths in Segregated Schools," revealed that black students are more likely to plan to go to college, but not to carry out their plans (17). Black students often have lacked educational encouragement at home. Black students, lacking able referents at home or among their peers, are more dependent on school personnel for assistance with career planning. Black students reported a higher level of
interaction with teachers, including teachers they perceive as lacking the desire to work with them, than any other group of students (3).

Gist and Bennett's study of occupational and educational aspirations of minority and white students in high schools found no difference between aspirations and plans for occupation or education, per se. Blacks tended to reveal higher mobility aspirations than whites or other minorities. The black girls in the study showed particularly high evidence toward high mobility aspirations. However, Stephenson stated that even when controlling sex and social class, blacks plan on lower level occupational pursuits than whites at every level. Stephenson advanced the hypothesis that the youth of our society shared the same cultural value of high achievement, but confronted by class or race, youth had to scale down their goals to more realistic levels. Gist and Bennett's study indicated evidence of strong maternal influence among blacks concerning educational and occupational aspirations; comparatively, the maternal influence in whites was not as strong.

Stephenson's study also found no significant difference between educational and occupational aspirations expressed by white and black students regardless of the occupational status of the father (32). Despite this finding, the black students tended to set lower educational goals than the white students in Stephenson's study (32). Holloway and
Berreman generally supported Stephenson's views related to educational aspirations. At all levels, the research indicated that the occupational aspirations for blacks were lower than for whites, but black students did not scale down their plans or expectations any more than white students did (26).

Broom and Glenn indicated that, "Where minorities' social isolation has decreased and egalitarian social contacts have increased, one effect undoubtedly has been a rise of aspiration and a heightened sense of deprivation." (5). In previous years, the black middle class by white standards, has been his community's leader (5, p. 22). Therefore, the black has enjoyed high prestige in the minority community (5, p. 23). As long as the black evaluated his economic status in relationship to whites, he ranked himself lower and was less satisfied (5, p. 23). "He is no longer a big frog in a little pond, but a little frog in a big pond." (5, p. 23).

Research has shown that minorities have a lower sense of control over their environment than whites, but this sense of control over environment increased as the proportion of whites with whom minorities attend school has increased. These findings suggested that when minorities are interacting in a school situation which approximated the world in which they must cope, their sense of control and achievement increased. Living in an approximate real
world situation suggested to minorities that they are able to cope in any situation (26). This situation tended to result in a larger percentage of career goal realization among minorities.

Several studies have been conducted concerning the variables that correlate positively with goal achievement. Chervenik supported the concept that career goals were often not achieved because our society placed emphasis on what a person wanted to become, rather than what a person was willing to do to meet his goals (7). According to Chervenik, many students abandoned their career goals at the college level upon realization of career requirements. However, Holden stated that during the first three years of college, high ability students' goals remained constant, while students of low ability lowered their goals. Sanborn's opinion was that indecision in career planning, due to the large number of career options, may be one reason many young people are unable to accomplish their career goals (28). Juergenson further stated that the largest per cent of dropouts after the freshman at college had undecided career choices (21).

In contrast, Holden contended that more young people today realize their goals than in the past. Holden explained this phenomenon in terms of career interest. Today approximately eighty per cent of the work force
listed interest in work as a major concern. In 1930, only one to two per cent of the work force considered the importance of job interest (20).

According to Thompson, commitment was the most important factor in achievement of career goals. Thompson defined committed students as those who:

1) Decided on their career goals while in junior high school.
2) Decided on their specific career before surveying the job market.
3) Sought higher learning institutions by their prestige in their specialized area.
4) Indicated they would not have continued their education after high school if they could not have pursued the specialized area.

Thompson further explained that committed students often earned slightly lower grades than other students in their fields (35). One explanation for this may be that the committed students lacked superior verbal skills (35). Thompson described the committed students as being "traditionally oriented, dedicated, hard working, task centered students."

In Juergenson's opinion, students could be successful in a career choice if they perceived themselves to resemble typical persons in their chosen field in terms of attitudes, achievements, and personality (21). Hidelang's studies revealed that when a career goal was held constant, the highest percentage of goal achievement was with white students. Mexican American students ranked second in
achievement of career goals and black students ranked third in achieving their career goals (19).

A language barrier often affected the Mexican American students' academic success in high school. However, research indicated that more Mexican Americans than blacks attended college (2). Astin's study of youth who were eighteen to twenty-one years of age revealed the following statistics:

One-third of all whites studied attend college.
One-fourth of all Mexican Americans attend college.
One-fifth of all blacks studied attend college.
One-sixth of all American Indians studied attend college.

Hidelang's 1970 study of occupational aspirations of blacks, Mexican Americans and whites rated the Mexican American the lowest of the three groups (19). Heller compared career aspirations levels of Mexican American high school seniors with those of white seniors. Due to low self esteem, Mexican American students had lower career and mobility goals than white students. However, Soares and Soares reported that positive self concepts existed in all groups of disadvantaged children (29). Carter also stated that Mexican American youth do not perceive themselves negatively when compared to their white peers (6). In Carter's research, a questionnaire was administered to elementary students asking them to give their opinions of their own intelligence, power, goodness and happiness. The children's answers were
compared to white children's answers. The author found no significant difference between the groups on these factors.

In reviewing the data concerning the effects on occupational aspirations, contradictory findings existed. Minorities have been shown to have higher, similar, and lower aspirations than whites (10, pp. 317-330; 9, pp. 177-182; 22; 31, pp. 11-23). Stephenson advanced the hypothesis that all youth in our society share the same cultural value in high achievement, but, when confronted with determinants imposed by society, youth scaled down their aspirations.

Other Factors Affecting Occupational Aspirations

The socioeconomic level of the students' parents has been identified as a very important factor in determining career aspirations (33; 26, pp. 81-90). Several authors have stated that the socioeconomic situation of the students' parents had been a more important consideration in career choice than ability. Stevenson tried to determine whether ability or parents' socioeconomic position played a larger role in determining the students' career choice (33). Stevenson's study was conducted with 65,000 high school juniors in Minnesota in 1969 (33). The validity of this study may be questioned because many poor students drop out of high school before their junior year, however, Minnesota had the lowest state dropout rate of only eight per cent. (33, p. 18). Students were given a standardized intelligence
test to rate ability along with the students' high school grades. The study showed that students who were attracted to high pay, high prestige professional positions usually came from high socioeconomic backgrounds (33).

Feingold reported that the family often plays a critical role in career growth and development since young people spend so much time in the family setting (14). As part of the family, individuals are exposed to feeling, a certain emotional and physical climate, relationships, value, and a way of life (14). With so much contact, the parents' role should not be minimized. A 1965 study of the importance of parents' effects on teenagers' decision-making process reinforced this opinion. Sixty-five per cent of the teenagers in his study said that their parents were the most important figures in their lives in regards to the decision-making process (30). In a 1970 study by Harrison, students were asked to compare the relative influence of parents, peers, high school teachers, high school guidance counselors, and other individuals in their lives. The proportion of individuals reporting factors other than parents as being highly influential was relatively small (18). There seemed to be a definite relationship between value configuration and family status factors. In addition, Duncan and Gazda found limited or
lacking parental guidance adversely affected the students' occupational aspirations (13). These students, with little or no parental guidance, tended to go the opposite direction of the parents' occupations as a way of asserting themselves and gaining parental attention.

Clark contended that high school students' occupational preferences were affected by the prestige or status they assigned to the occupations (8). Clark believed that students aspire to higher status than what they ultimately attain (8). Students tend to desire high prestige occupations if they can see no major barriers in achievement due to socioeconomic factors.

Students who had parents who were college educated were much more likely to attend college after the completion of high school (33). The father's career proved to be the major contributing factor of both boys' and girls' career aspirations in white families (33). A white child who has a father who has a college degree had an eleven per cent better chance of attending than a white student whose father did not attend college (33). Several research studies supported the concept that the mother in black families provided the major catalyst in children's career choices (5, 9, 15). Whetstone and Hayles stated that more black mothers than black fathers want a college education for their children (36).
The size of the town the student resided in also had been shown to contribute largely to the career process (33). Attending school in a rural area diminished the chances of college education by eight per cent (33). Even among young people of equal ability, those who live in rural areas are not as likely to attend college as those who live in the urban areas (33). Stevenson defined rural students as those who live in a town of less than 5,000 persons (33). Based on the available information regarding occupational aspirations of various groups, this study was designed to verify the significant variables in career aspirations of high school students.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER III

PROCEDURES FOR CONDUCTING THE STUDY

Introduction

During April of 1978, the study was undertaken to investigate the "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County, Texas." The study was designed to determine the high school student's future career aspirations and to identify the variables which appeared to affect the student's occupational aspirations.

Instrument

The questionnaire (See Appendix D) entitled "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County, Texas" was developed to examine future career aspirations and to identify factors which might relate to their occupational aspirations. In collecting data, the questionnaire requested biographical and career aspiration information from high school home economics students. The items of the questionnaire were developed based on a review of literature. After formulating the questionnaire, child development specialists reviewed the instrument and recommended revisions prior to pretesting. After making the revisions, the pretest was distributed in a graduate level
class at North Texas State University. College students independently evaluated the questionnaire and made suggestions for clarifying certain points. After the modifications were made in the questionnaire, "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County, Texas" consisted of forty-one questions.

Subjects

Male and female high school home economics students participated in the study. The subjects ranged in age from fourteen to eighteen years. All four high school grades, freshman, sophomore, junior and senior, were included in the study. One hundred eighty-one useable questionnaires were completed, representing a total of eighteen males and one hundred sixty-three females. The ethnic background of the respondents were one hundred sixty-seven white respondents, six black respondents, seven Mexican American respondents, and one Oriental respondent.

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TABLE I

ETHNICITY AND SEX OF SUBJECTS

N = 181
Data Collection

The questionnaire was administered to over two hundred high school students who made up the total enrollment in all high school home economics classes in Palo Pinto County, Texas. The school districts of Gordon, Graford, Mineral Wells, Santo and Strawn were included in the study. These schools are located in a primarily rural, farming Texas county within a seventy-five mile radius of Fort Worth, Texas.

High school students participating in the study received verbal and written instructions (see Appendix C) for completion of the questionnaire. Students were directed to select and mark the appropriate answer for each question. Three open ended questions were included to permit the students to express their own opinions. The questionnaires were completed under the supervision of the local high school home economics teachers.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF THE DATA

High School Grades and Self Concept of Ability

Research question one asked whether high school home economics students' grades would be positively related to their self concept of their academic ability. Table II presents the frequency and percentage distribution of high school students who achieved a given range of scores on the self concept of academic ability question in relation to their cumulative high school grade point average. Twenty-eight students reported an overall grade point average of A, eighty-nine students reported an overall grade point average of B, fifty-five students reported an overall grade point average of C, nine students had an overall grade point average of D, the lowest grade. Of the twenty-eight respondents with an A average of 96.4 per cent ranked themselves as an excellent or above average student. Fifty-four per cent of the respondents with a B average ranked themselves as an excellent or above average student. Only six per cent of the respondents with a C grade average ranked themselves as an excellent or above average student.

The results of the analysis indicated that there was a great difference in the self concept of ability among
TABLE II

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF HIGH SCHOOL
GRADES AND ACADEMIC SELF CONCEPT OF ABILITY

N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Self Concept of Ability of Students</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Excellent Student</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above Average Student</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average Student</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Average Student</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Poor Student</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.
high school students in relation to the overall grade point average. Students whose grade point average fell in the A and B range rated themselves considerably better than did those students in the C, D, and F range. The results of the analysis supported Drew and Astin in their study of Occupational Aspirations. Drew and Astin's study supported the prediction of the relative deprivation theory. Grades received in school were found to be positively related to academic self concept.

**Self Concept of Ability and Occupational Aspirations**

Research question two questioned whether self concept of ability was positively related to occupational aspiration level of high school home economics students. Students with high occupational aspirations were those whose career goals fell within Level I (professionals) and Level II (owners, managers and officials) on the Alba Edwards Scale of Occupational Categories (5) (See Appendix E). As seen in Table II, over seventy-one per cent of the students who rated themselves high in academic self concept indicated high occupational aspirations. In this study, students were considered high in self concept if they ranked themselves as an excellent or above average student. Almost seventy-four per cent (74%) of the students in the medium or average concept of ability range ranked themselves in the medium occupational aspiration range. Students with
medium occupational aspiration levels were those whose career goals fell within Level III (clerks and kindred workers) and Level IV (skilled workers and foremen) on the Edwards Scale of Occupational Categories. Students were considered medium or average in self concept if they ranked themselves as an average student.

Forty-one per cent of the students in the low concept of ability range ranked themselves in the low occupational aspiration range. Students with low occupational aspiration level were those whose career goals fell within Level V (semi-skilled workers) and Level VI (unskilled workers) on the Alba Edwards Scale of Occupational Aspirations. Students were considered low in self concept of ability if they ranked themselves as a below average or poor student.

Students with high self concept of ability were predicted to have high occupational aspirations. Davis indicated that students' career choice is a function of self esteem or academic self concept, which is based on the student's assessment of his performance with that of his peers. Davis argued that the significant reference group for the student consists of other students in his school (3). In accordance with a reference group framework, occupational aspirations were predicted to be positively related to the self concept of each individual student. Students with high self concepts of ability were predicted to have
high occupational aspirations. The findings of this data were consistent with the Davis theory which indicated that student's career choice is a function of self esteem. The findings of this study supported the theory that self concept of ability is significantly related to the occupational aspirations of high school students.

### TABLE III

FREQUENCY AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF SELF CONCEPT OF ABILITY AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

\[ N = 181 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Aspiration</th>
<th>Self Concept of Ability</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High (Level I-Level II)</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium (Level III-Level IV)</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low (Level V-Level VI)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>81</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

School Size and Occupational Aspirations

Research question three asked whether respondents attending small schools would have higher occupational aspirations than respondents attending large schools. Fifty-one per cent of the students attending small schools had high occupational aspirations, while thirty-six per cent of those students attending large schools had high occupational aspirations. Forty-six per cent of the respondents attending small schools had medium occupational aspirations compared
to fifty-six per cent of the respondents attending large schools. Furthermore, only two per cent of the students currently attending small schools had low occupational aspirations in comparison with nine per cent of the respondents of large schools.

The environmental press theory differed from the relative deprivation theory in the role it assigned to school selectivity. According to the relative deprivation theory, selectivity has a negative effect on aspirations due to a negative effect on academic achievements. Environmental press theorists maintained that selectivity positively affects aspirations, since a student in a school where much is expected will rise to the norm maintained by his classmates.

The data indicated that a larger percentage of students (51.2 per cent) attending small schools had high occupational aspirations when compared to the students (36.1 per cent) attending large schools. The findings of this study related to this issue tended to discount the environmental press theory. The literature supported that larger schools are more selective. Research in this study indicated that students who attend small, less selective schools, had higher occupational aspirations than students in the larger schools.
TABLE IV
SCHOOL SIZE AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Aspiration</th>
<th>Small</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Large</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>84</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>97</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Male and Female Occupational Aspirations

A comparison of males and females according to their occupational aspirations indicated that a slightly higher percentage of males had higher occupational aspirations; however, the percentages between the groups was very close. Forty-four per cent of the male respondents indicated high occupational aspirations while 43.4 per cent of the females indicated high occupational aspirations. These data are represented in Table V.

TABLE V
FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF MALE AND FEMALE OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Aspirations</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>83</td>
<td>50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>163</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.
Astin and Panos concluded that the sex of the student, more than any other personal characteristic, was important in the prediction of career and academic choice (1). The Gurin and Katz study indicated that women enter college with lower occupational aspirations than men; when women change occupational aspirations during college, they change to a lower rather than a higher level of aspiration (7).

In tabulating the findings related to research question five, there are no differences between the occupational aspirations of male and female students. This finding was consistent with Slocum's report that nearly all college bound students aspire to high status occupations and expect to enter a professional or scientific occupation (9). Forty-four per cent of the males in the study had high occupational aspirations compared with forty-three per cent of the females. Similar numbers of males and females aspired to medium position occupational aspirations. Fifty per cent of the males and the females fell within this category. Five per cent of the males had low occupational aspirations compared to six per cent of the females.

Race and Occupational Aspirations

Research question five dealt with the effects of race on occupational aspirations. Forty-three per cent of the white respondents indicated a high level of occupational
TABLE VI

FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF RACE AND OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occupational Aspirations</th>
<th>White</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Black</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Mex. Am.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Oriental</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>87</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.
aspiration as compared with fifty per cent of the black respondents, fourteen per cent of the Mexican American respondents and one hundred per cent of the Oriental respondents. These findings agree with previous research which indicated that blacks have high occupational aspirations (8) and Mexican Americans have a low level of occupational aspirations.

Occupational Aspirations and Fathers' Occupations

Research question six questioned the effects of the fathers' occupations on occupational occupations. As seen in Table VII, between eighty and ninety per cent of the respondents whose fathers were employed in professional, proprietor or managerial and sales occupations had high occupational aspirations. Almost thirty-six per cent of the respondents whose fathers were employed in semi-skilled occupations had high occupational aspirations. The largest percentage of the respondents whose fathers were clericals and farm workers indicated medium occupational aspirations.

These findings agree with the hypothesis set forth by Davis which stated that parents' socioeconomic background was correlated with students' career decisions. Drew and Astin also indicated the importance of parental occupations (4). Some variations in the percentages in this research may be explained by a study done by Ely Chinoy on automobile
TABLE V

FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
AND FATHERS' OCCUPATION

N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occup. Aspir.</th>
<th>Prof. %</th>
<th>Prp. %</th>
<th>Sls. %</th>
<th>Cl. %</th>
<th>Skl. %</th>
<th>SS. %</th>
<th>Sv. %</th>
<th>US. %</th>
<th>FW. %</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>46</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

- Prof. = Professional
- Prp. = Proprietor
- Sls. = Sales
- Cl. = Clerical
- Skl. = Skilled
- SS. = Semi-skilled
- Sv. = Service
- US. = Unskilled
- FW. = Farm Workers
workers. Chinoy stated that the workers had relatively low aspirations for themselves, but high aspirations for their sons (2). Perhaps further research should concern itself with the aspirations that fathers may have for their children and the effect that the fathers' aspirations have on their children's aspiration levels.

Occupational Aspirations and Father's Education

Research question seven dealt with the fathers' education and occupational aspirations of high school home economics students. A comparison of the percentages of occupational aspirations and the fathers' education indicated that 66.7 per cent of the respondents whose fathers had graduate degrees or professional degrees beyond the bachelor's degree indicated high occupational aspiration levels. A larger percentage of the respondents whose fathers had some association with a college education indicated high occupational aspirations. Almost thirty-six per cent of those respondents whose fathers attained a high school diploma or a partial high school education indicated high occupational aspirations. A larger percentage of those respondents indicated a medium occupational aspiration level than the respondents whose fathers had some college education or a degree. Table VIII presents these percentages. The findings of this study agreed with Drew
TABLE VIII
FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS AND FATHERS' EDUCATION

\[ N = 181 \]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Pt. HS. = Part High School
HS. Grad. = High School Graduate
Pt. Col. = Part College
Col. Grad. = College Graduate
Prof. Deg. = Professional Degree
and Astin's research which indicated that the fathers' education was a significant variable in the overall level of aspirations (4).

**Occupational Aspirations and Mothers' Occupations**

Mothers' occupations and occupational aspirations of high school home economics students were discussed in research question eight. As seen in Table IX, twenty-two per cent of the respondents whose mothers were proprietors had high career aspirations as compared with fifty-one per cent of the respondents whose mothers were semi-skilled workers, and sixty per cent of the respondents whose mothers were farm workers. Twenty-five per cent of the respondents whose mothers were professionals had medium career aspirations in comparison with forty-nine per cent of the respondents whose mothers were farm workers. Eight per cent of the respondents whose mothers were professionals had low career aspirations. This finding is in contrast with no respondents with low aspirations whose mothers were skilled, semi-skilled or service workers. The findings of this data were not consistent with the findings of Gist and Bennett's study of occupational and educational aspirations of high school students which gave evidence of maternal influence concerning educational and occupational aspirations (6). In the recent study, the mothers' occupations were not related to the occupational aspiration level of the respondents.
TABLE IX

FREQUENCY AND DISTRIBUTION OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS
AND MOTHERS' OCCUPATION

N = 181

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occup.</th>
<th>Aspir.</th>
<th>Prf.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Prp.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Clr.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>S.S.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Sv.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>Unsk.</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>F.W.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>60</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>40</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>38</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>62</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Prf. = Professional
Prp. = Proprietor
Clr. = Clerical
Skl/S.S. = Skilled/Semi-skilled
Sv. = Service
Unsk. = Unskilled
F.W. = Farm Worker
Research question nine dealt with the effects of mothers' education on the occupational aspiration level of the respondents. A comparison of the percentages of occupational aspirational ranges indicated that 58.3 per cent of the respondents whose mothers had a graduate or professional degree beyond the bachelor's level had high occupational aspirations. Over sixty-eight per cent of the respondents whose mothers had a college degree indicated high occupational aspirations. Over forty-three per cent of the students whose mothers had attained a high school diploma had high occupational aspiration scores. Table X presents the frequency and percentage distribution of occupational aspiration level and educational level attained by the high school students' mothers. Mothers' education was found to influence the aspiration level of high school students. These findings are consistent with the research findings of Drew and Astin which indicated that mothers' education is a significant variable in the overall level of aspiration (4).
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Occup. 8th Gr.</th>
<th>Pt.</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>Pt.</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>Grad.</th>
<th>Pt.</th>
<th>HS</th>
<th>Grad.</th>
<th>Prof. Deg.</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Aspir. or less</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>High</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>32</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>68</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medium</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>55</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Low</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>29</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Every percentage rounded to the nearest whole number.

Pt. HS. = Part High School
HS Grad. = High School Graduate
Pt. Col. = Part College
Col. Grad. = College Graduate
Grad. or Prof. Deg. = Graduate or Professional Degree
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

The purpose of this study was to investigate the occupational aspirations and expectations of high school home economics students in Palo Pinto County, Texas. A major concern of the study was to determine factors which contributed to the students' level of occupation. The instrument used to gather data was a forty-one item questionnaire. The questionnaire was devised to yield information concerning occupational aspirations and expectations of high school home economics students. Questionnaires were completed under the supervision of the local home economics teachers.

The questionnaire was administered to high school home economics students in Palo Pinto County, Texas. All home economics classes in the county were included in the study. Career aspirations and biographical information were elicited from one hundred eighty-one students, representing a total of eighteen males and one hundred sixty-three females. There were one hundred sixty-seven white respondents, six black respondents, seven Mexican American respondents and one Oriental respondent.
Conclusions

The study of 181 high school students revealed the following:

1. High school grades were related to self concept of ability of high school home economics students.
2. Self concept of ability was positively related to the occupational aspiration level of high school home economics students.
3. School size affected the respondents' occupational choice.
4. Male and female home economics students had equal aspiration levels.
5. Race affected occupational aspirations and expectations of high school home economics students.
6. Fathers' occupations positively affected high school home economics students aspiration levels.
7. Fathers' education was an important factor in career aspiration level of high school home economics students.
8. Mothers' occupation was not positively related to career aspirations of high school home economics students.
9. Mothers' education was positively related to career aspirations of high school home economics students.

These findings suggest that of all the variables investigated, the self concept of ability, school the student attends, parents' income level, self concept of academic ability, high school grades, race, parents' education, and
fathers' occupation are related to the occupational aspirations of high school students. In the study, the only variables not related to the occupational aspirations of high school home economics students were the race of the students and the mothers' occupations.

Davis, in an attempt to apply the theory of relative deprivation in the analysis of the aspirations of college students, perceived that the academic self concept is based in part on the student's assessment of himself in relation to his peers (3, p. 17). The relative deprivation theory predicted that grades and self concept of ability were positively related independently of any prior academic achievement, ability, or selectivity (4, p. 1156-1157).

In accordance with a reference group framework, occupational aspirations were found to be related to self concept of ability. The self concept of ability was based, in part, on the students' assessment of their performance relative to that of their peers. Davis, in his study of college students, indicated that a high school graduating senior's career choice was more highly related to his school grade point average than to the quality of his school (3).

The findings of this study also indicated a difference of occupational aspirations when a consideration was given to the parents' education level. Several studies indicated that parents were very influential in their children's
career decision process. Other studies showed that students who had college educated parents were much more likely to attend college themselves.

Fathers' careers were found to be related to the occupational aspiration level of students. However, the mothers' careers were not found to be related to the career aspirations of their children. Stephenson's study of occupational aspiration of black and white high school students found no difference in aspirations regardless of sex or occupational status of the students' fathers (7). The actual maternal influence was not found to be as strong among whites as blacks (5, p. 40). Further evidence of maternal influence was indicated by Almquist and Angrist who found an association between females' career orientation and maternal employment (2, pp. 242-249). However, this study's finding did not support the Almquist and Angrist study.

The results of the present study did not indicate any differences in the occupational aspirations of male and female students. This finding contradicts the suggestion that the sex of the student, more than any other factor, was important in the prediction in the occupational aspiration level (1, pp. 103-104). Gurin and Katz indicated that women usually change their occupational aspirations to a lower level when they go to college (6, P. 58).
Recommendations

The findings of the present study indicated the importance of continued research in the socioeconomic background characteristics of the students and their occupational aspirations; father's occupation and its influence on the occupational aspirations and expectations of high school home economics students; and the expectations of parents for their children's future occupational choices. A comparison of parent and student aspirations and expectations may provide considerable insight into student aspirations.

While consideration was given in this study to the occupational expectations of male and female students, further research should be directed toward the influence of other variables on students' future occupational planning. Variables such as self concept of ability, size of school attending, and socioeconomic background variables and occupational expectations should be explored in greater depth. A similar study could be conducted which includes a larger sampling of different types of schools and different types of populations. A state-wide or regional study might provide greater diversity of schools. In addition, a measure of aspirations at the end of the students' high school years and follow-up checks at various points in the students' higher education and work years would allow measurement of change in occupational aspirations and expectations. This study has attempted to examine the occupational aspirations of high school home economics students.
CHAPTER BIBLIOGRAPHY


APPENDIX A

LETTER TO THE SUPERINTENDENTS
Dear [Name],

I am writing a thesis at North Texas State University entitled: "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County, Texas." In researching this study, I find that there is a definite need for further study.

I would appreciate the opportunity to include your school district in this study. The attached copy of the survey would take about twenty minutes to complete. It would expedite matters if I could have a list of the home economics teachers in your district. When the study is completed, you will receive a copy.

Thank you for your consideration and assistance.

Yours truly,
APPENDIX B

LETTER TO THE HOME ECONOMICS TEACHERS
IN THE SCHOOL DISTRICTS
Dear Mr. _____________,

Mr. _____________, your superintendent, has agreed to the Independent School District's participation in a survey entitled "Career Aspirations of High School Home Economics Students in Palo Pinto County, Texas."

Attached you will find copies of the survey and a stamped, self addressed envelope. Please take time out of your very busy day to have your students complete the survey. It should take no more than twenty minutes.

I would appreciate your returning this survey to me by _____________.

Yours truly,
APPENDIX C

INSTRUCTIONS FOR STUDENTS IN HOME ECONOMICS CLASSES
Dear Home Economics Teacher:

Please read the following to your class before they complete the questionnaire:

Your cooperation would be greatly appreciated by a graduate student at North Texas State University in completing her thesis. Please complete the following questionnaire. Your identity will be of no use in her research, so feel free to answer each questionnaire truthfully.

Thank you.

Dawn Singleton
APPENDIX D

SURVEY
CAREER ASPIRATIONS OF HIGH SCHOOL HOME ECONOMICS STUDENTS IN PALO PINTO COUNTY, TEXAS

Place an "X" by the correct answer to each of the following questions:

1. Sex
   Male__________________
   Female________________

2. Age:
   14__________________
   15__________________
   16__________________
   17__________________
   18__________________
   19__________________

3. Grade Level:
   Freshman______________
   Sophomore____________
   Junior_______________
   Senior_______________

4. Race:
   Anglo_______________
   Black_______________
   Mexican Am._________
   Am. Indian___________
   Asian_______________
   Other_______________ Identify____

5. Place an "X" by the number of brothers you have who are older than you:
   0___________________
6. Place an "X" beside the number of brothers you have who are younger than you:

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| 5 or more

7. Place an "X" beside the number of sisters you have who are older than you:

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</table>
| 5 or more

8. Place an "X" beside the number of sisters you have who are younger than you:

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9. Place an "X" beside the highest level of education you plan to complete:

- Ninth grade
- Tenth grade
- Eleventh grade
- High School
- Trade School
- Junior College
- College
- Graduate or Professional School

10. After I finish high school, I plan to work in the field of __________________________.

11. Place an "X" beside the highest level of education your father completed:

- Grade School
- Junior High
- High School
- Trade School
- Junior College
- College
- Graduate or Professional School

12. Place an "X" beside the highest level of education your mother completed:

- Grade School
- Junior High
- High School
Trade School
Junior College
College
Graduate or Professional School

13. Place and "X" beside each of the following courses you
are currently taking, have taken, or plan to take during
your high school education:

Chemistry
Metal Trades
Algebra I
Building Trades
Vocational Agriculture
Physics
Biology
Speech
English

14. Does your father now or has he ever attended college?

Yes
No

15. Does your mother now or has she ever attended college?

Yes
No

16. Do you have a brother or a sister who is now or has ever
attended college?

Yes
No

17. What is your father's occupation?
18. What is your mother's occupation?

19. Do you currently hold a job?
   Yes__________________
   No__________________

20. Do you usually hold a summer job?
   Yes__________________
   No__________________

21. Do you plan to enter a career related to your current job after the completion of your education?
   Yes__________________
   No__________________

22. Are you familiar with career opportunities in Home Economics other than teaching?
   Yes__________________
   No__________________

23. How many Home Economics courses have you taken?_______

24. What is the name of the Home Economics course you are currently taking?

25. Place an "X" beside the answer that most describes your father's attitude toward your taking the home economics class in which you are currently enrolled.
   Generally approves__________________
   Slightly approves__________________
   Slightly disapproves__________________
   Generally disapproves__________________
   No opinion__________________

26. Place an "X" beside the answer that most describes your mother's attitude toward your taking the home economics class in which you are currently enrolled.
Generally approves__________________
Slightly approves__________________
Slightly disapproves________________
Generally disapproves_______________
No opinion_________________________

27. Do you anticipate receiving a scholarship, loan, or grant after the completion of your education?

Yes______________________________
No_______________________________

28. How long do you anticipate your parents supporting you after the completion of your high school education?

0-3 months_______________________
3-6 months_______________________
6-12 months_______________________
2 years___________________________
3 years___________________________
4 years___________________________
5 or more years___________________

29. What type of student do you consider yourself?

Excellent________________________
Above average____________________
Average__________________________
Below average_____________________

30. Place an "X" beside the grade you expect to receive in the home economics course in which you are currently enrolled.

A_______________________________
B_______________________________
31. Place an "X" beside the grade you expect to receive in English this semester.

A
B
C
D
E
F

32. Place an "X" beside your overall grade average.

A
B
C
D
E
F

33. Do you like the Home Economics course you are currently enrolled in?

Yes
No

34. Do you think you learn useful information in Home Economics classes?

Yes
No

35. Do you think Home Economics is a "fun" course?

Yes
No
36. Do you believe you learn useful skills in Home Economics classes?
   Yes________________________
   No________________________

37. Do you participate in F.H.A. activities?
   Yes________________________
   No________________________

38. Do you participate in other school activities?
   Yes________________________
   No________________________

39. List your extra curricular activities.

40. In choosing a career after the completion of your education, which of the following factors will you consider? (You may mark more than one answer.)
   Financial success________________________
   Work hours________________________
   Job location________________________
   Work conditions________________________
   Job security________________________
   Your skills in relation to the job___________
   Ease of job________________________
   Opportunities for advancement________________________
   Retirement benefits________________________
   Importance of the job to your community________
   Social standing related to your profession______
   Glamour________________________
41. Who has been most influential in helping you determine a career choice after the completion of your education? Please list your first, second, and third choice in the order of most influence.

Father
Mother
Brother
Sister
H.E. Teacher
Other Teachers
Principal
Counselor
Minister
Peers
Boyfriend
Girlfriend
Others (please specify)
APPENDIX E

ALBA EDWARDS SCALE OF OCCUPATIONAL CATEGORIES
ALBA EDWARDS SCALE OF OCCUPATIONAL ASPIRATIONS

Level I - Professionals
Level II - Owners, Managers, Officials
Level III - Clerks and Kindred Workers
Level IV - Skilled Workers and Foremen
Level V - Semi-skilled Workers
Level VI - Farm Workers and Unskilled Workers
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