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REASONS GIVEN BY IOWA WOMEN  
FOR ATTENDING  
HOMEMAKING CLASSES FOR ADULTS



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## SUMMARY AND SUGGESTIONS FOR USE OF FINDINGS

Educators might find clues to help them interest more or different women in enrolling in homemaking classes for adults from the important reasons for attendance given by women attending classes. From 1,358 women in such classes in Iowa in 1949-51, this kind of information was obtained by asking them to answer a questionnaire during an adult class meeting. Each woman rated the relative importance of each of 43 possible reasons for her own attendance by checking "much," "some" or "none." These responses were studied reason by reason in their relationship to such factors as education, age group, occupation of husband, number and ages of children in the family, subject of study in the classes and size of town in which classes were held. As a result, it is possible to tell whether certain reasons seemed more important to homemakers with certain characteristics than to those with other characteristics; for example, to those with less than eighth grade education than to those with college degrees.

Of the 1,358 Iowa women included in this study, 92 percent were or had been married. The average number of children per married woman was two. More women had children of school age (53 percent) than under school age (34 percent). Two-thirds of the women were between the ages of 26 and 45, slightly more than one-eighth were younger than 26, and one-fourth were older than 45. Ten percent had had elementary school education only, 54 percent had attended or graduated from high school, and 36 percent had attended or graduated from college. Approximately half of the married women were farmers' wives; one-fourth were wives of professional men and proprietors. Only one-fifth of the total group of women were gainfully employed outside their homes. Almost one-half were enrolled in homemaking classes for the first time.

The proportion of women under 26 years of age enrolled in adult homemaking classes during 1949-51 was smaller than the proportion of women in Iowa under 26 as reported by the 1950 census. This fact raises the question, why aren't more of them attending? Does the subject matter fail to interest them? Doesn't the time and place of meetings fit into their schedules? Does responsibility for small children keep them away? Aren't they interested in furthering their education? Local communities should study the interests, available time and special arrangements required to make it possible for young women, especially young homemakers, to take advantage of the adult homemaking classes.

Women over 55 years of age also were not being served extensively by these classes. Although over 25 percent of the women in Iowa in 1950 were 55 years of age or older, only 7 percent of the women in the classes studied were in this age group. Consequently, local studies of their special needs and interests are suggested.

The majority (78 percent) of enrollees had

graduated from high school, and over one-third (36 percent) had some college education. The 1950 census shows that 40 percent of all women in Iowa over 25 years of age had no high school education. Since only 10 percent of the women enrolled in these classes had not attended high school, it is apparent that adults with an eighth grade education or less comprise another neglected group. Can they be reached if more creative efforts are made to serve their needs, if more intensive or different types of publicity are used or if classes of a different nature are offered? Could they perhaps be served effectively with educational radio programs or by pictorial means such as television programs or series of cartoons and thus receive the benefits of education previously missed? The need for experimentation with means of interesting and serving the less educated group is suggested by the findings of this study.

The responses of the women in homemaking classes in 1949-51, regardless of their age, education or the size of the community in which they lived, showed a strong desire for new ideas in homemaking, for adding to their present knowledge and for continuing to learn throughout life. Publicity which emphasizes such opportunities in the educational programs for adults should capture the interest of larger groups of women. Furthermore, since a desire for new ideas was a major reason given by many women for attending, teachers of adults are challenged to evaluate and present to their classes all the new and useful concepts and procedures they can find. It seems that teachers need not fear that class members would resist instruction in new modes and ideas, instead they would be receptive to them.

One motive for attendance, which was found to be more prevalent among women who lived in or near towns with less than 2,500 population than among those in larger communities, was the opportunity to contribute to community improvement by helping to maintain classes for adults. Although helping to maintain a program should not be the major reason for attending classes, in communities where the program is new, this appeal might be given some emphasis. Concern about community improvement was also shown by the greater importance attributed by women in small towns to class attendance as a means of becoming able to do more for children in the community. When the objectives of the class lend themselves to community improvement from the standpoint of doing more for the children, this aspect could be stressed in the publicity used for adult classes. Furthermore, class work itself might deal with action needed to make communities better places in which to rear children. Programs of action might be initiated which would continue long after the class sessions had been discontinued. Perhaps this dynamic kind of adult education would make a strong appeal to some adults.

Developing classes that stress action for community improvement might be difficult, according to the findings of the present study, since relatively few women thought they were influenced to attend classes for such reasons. However, if different types of classes were offered than in 1949-51 and greater emphasis were put on improving communities as places for families to live, the response might be entirely different. Some experimentation may be needed to determine how to develop a greater interest in community betterment through adult classes.

Many mothers, particularly those between the ages of 36 and 55, in the small communities reported they enrolled in classes to obtain help in keeping up with their children on new ideas. This desire was more evident in classes in food and nutrition, home furnishings, family relations and child development than in those in clothing and crafts. Pointing out the possibilities of mothers and children sharing in learning might be effective publicity. Actually arranging situations in which parents and children could learn together might encourage some parents and children in small towns to attend classes together.

The women who attend because they recognize specific problems with which they need help appear, from the responses, to be those between the ages of 26 and 35 who are interested in learning more about clothing and home furnishings. Those responsible for planning programs in these two areas of subject matter might make a survey to find what these specific problems are in their communities.

Since approximately half of the women, particularly the older ones and those with less education, attended classes in part to make new friends, to associate with the "up-and-coming" women in the community and to find something interesting to do, the need is evident for informality and opportunity for social activity. The need is equally evident for stimulating them after they join a class to achieve other goals of an educational nature.

Some clues for motivating the attendance of women who live on farms are evident from the data. The wives of farm owners were more interested than most other groups of wives in goals relating to their families such as improving family life, keeping up with their children on new ideas and learning things they can teach their children. Since many farm wives reported they had husbands enrolled in other classes and liked to come with them, this aspect of convenience might be pointed out to farm women where agricultural programs and homemaking programs are to run concurrently.

Classes in family relationships and child development appealed to more than half of the married women attending. The women viewed them as courses which would help them meet their responsibilities as their families grow up, aid them in keeping up with their children and in teaching their children things learned in the class. Such possibilities should be made evident in the pub-

licity. The two latter reasons were most important to women 35 years of age and older; the first, to women under 35 years of age.

The desire to increase skill, which apparently was taken to mean manipulative skill, motivated attendance in all types of classes except those devoted to a study of child development and family relations. Increasing such skill is an important goal in many aspects of homemaking if coupled with the desire to improve family life. Since relatively few women in craft classes indicated that they attended classes for the purpose of improving their family life, they must have wanted to improve these skills for other reasons. Their responses indicated that many were interested in crafts largely from the standpoint of personal recreation. This was especially true of those who were over 54 years of age, of those who had not graduated from high school and of the wives of farmers, laborers and men employed in service jobs. Although recreation has a place in adult education programs, it may be questionable to use the limited resources available for *homemaking education* for classes serving mainly as personal recreation. That is, persons responsible for programs for homemakers may need to examine their offerings in the light of the many needs of women in their communities to determine whether they can afford to use the time of *homemaking* teachers for classes which contribute mainly to personal recreation and only indirectly to the improvement of family life. In a general adult program, on the other hand, crafts classes might be offered by art teachers or specialists in certain crafts.

Another challenge to teachers of homemaking for adults is the tendency for women to prefer passive rather than active roles in the classes. The tendency to react more favorably to lectures and demonstrations than to taking part in discussions suggests the need to make participation more satisfying. Perhaps the greater use of such techniques as small discussion groups, sometimes called "buzz groups," can be effective in developing confidence and ability to express ideas in larger groups. An increasing number of motion pictures are becoming available which can be used to stimulate the expression of ideas and attitudes—particularly in child development and family relations where there is often a reticence to reveal personal problems. Discussions following the viewing of a movie might cultivate the ability to participate skillfully in discussion groups and help to make the sharing of ideas a more enjoyable experience. It is also possible that teachers need to become more skillful in the use of methods that involve the class members in active kinds of participation—especially when the class goals can be best obtained by member participation.

Selecting the material to be taught with reference to the standards and practices of the class members should aid in making the women believe that the discussion is pertinent and, hence, worthy of their participation. Keeping the class informal and friendly also is important, especially so

if women with less than 12 years of schooling attend; these were the women who most frequently checked reasons pertaining to class atmosphere as important.

These suggestions for interesting more women or different groups of women in attending classes in homemaking are based on findings summarized below. When a study was made of the numbers of times the women had indicated that these 43 reasons had been of much importance in bringing them to an adult class, it was found that:

- (1) At least 75 percent reported that they attended because of:
  - a wish to keep on learning,
  - a long-time desire to know more about the particular subject,
  - the friendly atmosphere in the classes,
  - the teacher's way of presenting things,
  - the enjoyment of watching a good demonstration, and
  - the desire to increase their skill.
- (2) Fewer than 25 percent indicated they were stimulated to attend because:
  - they desired to do more for children in the community,
  - the class came at a time when it was easy to get someone to take care of their home responsibilities,
  - they wanted something to fill in their spare time,
  - their families urged them to attend, and
  - their friends were going and they wanted to be with them.
- (3) As the *age* of the women *increased*, they tended *more often* to indicate they were influenced by:
  - the desire to improve their social status,
  - the wish to be with friends or make new friends,
  - the desire to be with others who have had the same experiences,
  - the admiration of the teacher's personality,
  - the enjoyment of the methods used in teaching,
  - the opportunity to do things which there is not time to do at home,
  - the chance to fill in spare time,
  - the enjoyment of doing things with their hands, and
  - the help received in doing more for children in the community.
- (4) As their *ages increased*, the women *less frequently* reported they enrolled because:
  - they wanted to know more about the subject, and
  - the course would help them meet responsibilities as their families grew up.
- (5) As the amount of *formal education increased*, the women *less frequently* indicated that they were influenced to enroll because of:
  - a concern for community welfare,
  - a desire to improve their social status,
  - a wish to keep up with their children or teach their children things learned in class, and
  - a chance to do things for which there was no time at home.
- (6) The wives of *farmers* (farm owners, operators and tenants) *more frequently* than those of men in other types of occupations reported being motivated to enroll by reasons concerned with:
  - improvement of family life,
  - keeping up with children on new ideas and teaching them things learned,

community welfare,  
their social status,  
contact with friends,  
the teacher and teaching procedures, and  
opportunity to come with husband to classes.

- (7) The wives of men in *professional* and *semi-professional* occupations checked no reason more frequently than did other groups of wives but *less frequently* than other wives checked reasons concerned with:
  - learning things to keep up with or to teach their children,
  - improving their social status,
  - the atmosphere in the class,
  - protecting the consumer's interests,
  - being with their friends, and
  - enjoyment of doing things with their hands.
- (8) In some respects the wives of *proprietors* tended to react more *like* the wives of *professional* men than the wives of *farmers*. They *less frequently* than *farm* wives checked reasons relating to:
  - social status and improvement of the community, and
  - opportunities to be with or to make new friends.

In other respects the responses of *proprietors'* wives resembled those of wives of *farmers* more than those of the wives of *professional* men. They indicated *more frequently* than the latter:

- enjoying the opportunity to do things with their hands and filling in spare time,
  - liking the friendly atmosphere of the class,
  - admiring the teacher's personality,
  - wanting to keep up with their children on new ideas, and
  - improving the community by attendance.
- (9) To some extent the wives of men in occupations classified as *clerical*, *service*, *crafts* and *labor* were *like* the wives of *farmers* and of *proprietors* in reporting that they were influenced by reasons relating to:
    - doing more for children in the community, and
    - learning things to teach their children.

In contrast, the former groups were *not* like the wives of *farm owners* and *operators* in their responses to four reasons. They *less frequently* than the latter checked these as important in their decision to attend classes:

- protection of the consumer's interests,
  - social status and more education,
  - classroom atmosphere and being with friends, and
  - filling in of spare time.
- (10) As the *size of the town increased*, there was *less tendency* to report attendance as a means of:
    - achieving social status,
    - making new friends or being with friends,
    - improving family life,
    - meeting new responsibilities as their families grow up,
    - teaching their children things learned in class,
    - keeping up with their children on new ideas,
    - contributing to community welfare,
    - fulfilling a long standing wish to learn more about the subject,
    - filling in spare time,
    - increasing skill and making things, and
    - doing things that there is little time for at home.

Responses to certain of the 43 reasons were studied in relation to the types of subject matter in the classes the women were attending. Their responses indicated that:

- (1) The women enrolled in *clothing classes more often* than those in some other types because:  
they had specific problems on which they needed help, they had always wanted to know more about the subject, they wanted to increase their skill, and they enjoyed participating in a good discussion.
- (2) Those attending *craft classes more frequently* than other groups checked reasons concerned with recreation and *less frequently* those relating to the improvement of family life and community welfare.
- (3) The women in classes on *family relations and child development* in contrast with those in other types of classes *more often* indicated they enrolled because of:  
a concern for family life, and

- a desire to do more for children in the community.
- (4) Enrollees in classes on *food and nutrition* differed from those in other groups by *less frequently* indicating:  
the desire to teach their children things learned, they knew little about the subject, and they had specific problems on which they needed help.
- (5) Those women studying *home furnishings more frequently* than other women checked as important in their decision to enroll reasons relating to:  
a desire to teach their children things learned, a recognition of a lack of knowledge about the subject, and  
a concern for the protection of the consumer's interests.

# Reasons Given by Iowa Women\* for Attending Homemaking Classes for Adults<sup>1</sup>

BY HESTER CHADDERDON<sup>2</sup> AND MARY S. LYLE<sup>3</sup>

## WHY THE STUDY WAS MADE

Administrators and teachers of educational programs for homemakers are faced continually with the question of how to interest a broader cross section of the women in their communities in learning more ways to improve their family life. Since participation in adult classes is voluntary, the problem of what motivates adults to attend is basic to good program planning.

The rapid changes in technical developments and in economic and social conditions today make it imperative that homemakers have means for keeping up to date. Programs of adult education have too often reached only a small proportion of the women who might profit by them. Leaders in adult education find it difficult to interest the homemakers—particularly those who have had relatively little formal education and who come from the lower economic levels—in attending organized study groups.

This study was made for these purposes:

(1) To find what reasons Iowa women select as important influences upon their attendance in classes in homemaking.

(2) To discover if these reasons vary with the amount of formal education, the age of the women, the occupations of their husbands, the subject matter area offered for study or the size of the towns in which the classes meet.

The assumption was made that the women attending classes could recognize, among a list of possible reasons, those which influenced them to enroll and the degree of influence each reason had had on this decision. Also, it was assumed that the motives of the women studied were sufficiently similar to those of other women in Iowa and, therefore, would indicate possible approaches for interesting a larger number of women in attending classes.

<sup>1</sup>Project 988 of the Iowa Agricultural Experiment Station in cooperation with the Iowa State Department of Public Instruction, Vocational Division.

<sup>2</sup>Professor of Home Economics Education, Iowa State College. Bethel Rust and Evelyn Gordon also participated in the study, serving as graduate assistants.

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## HOW THE STUDY WAS MADE<sup>4</sup>

A preliminary study<sup>5</sup> was made to determine if, by interviewing those who had not enrolled in homemaking classes, one could find clues for interesting the non-enrollee. Interviews with 79 women who were randomly selected in a district where classes had been well publicized and taught for 3 years indicated that women could not or would not give basic reasons for non-attendance. Even though every effort was made to gain rapport and each was encouraged to express attitudes and beliefs frankly, the responses seemed more nearly excuses than basic reasons. The interviewer believed that an appreciable number of these 79 women had made no conscious decision not to attend since many appeared to have given no serious consideration to enrolling in the classes.

As a result of this preliminary study, it seemed desirable to approach the problem from a positive point of view; that is, by obtaining direct reactions of women attending classes. It was assumed that, having recently made the decision to attend, they might be aware of their reasons for making this decision.

In 1948 a study of this latter type<sup>6</sup> had been made in Des Moines, Iowa, by questioning women enrolled in the adult classes in the spring semester. Responses were obtained to a questionnaire containing 43 reasons which they could reject as of no importance or check as being of some or much importance to their attendance.

The questionnaire used in the Des Moines study was developed by first obtaining a list of reasons for attendance from teachers of adult homemaking classes and from leaders in the field of adult education. The preliminary list was checked by 99 women attending classes in seven different

<sup>4</sup>For a more detailed description of the methods used in this study, see Bethel Rust. Characteristics of Iowa women related to certain reasons for attending adult homemaking classes. Unpublished M.S. thesis. Iowa State College Library, Ames, Iowa. 1952.

<sup>5</sup>Jean M. Hansen. Reasons given for nonparticipation in adult homemaking classes in Beardshear district, Ames, Iowa. Unpublished M.S. thesis. Iowa State College Library, Ames, Iowa. 1950.

<sup>6</sup>Ruth E. Baumgartner. Factors related to enrollment and persistence of attendance in adult homemaking classes. Unpublished M.S. thesis. Iowa State College Library, Ames, Iowa. 1949.

phases of homemaking offered in widely scattered sections of Des Moines during the fall semester. They were asked to respond whether each reason was of much, some or no importance in their decision to attend the class in which they were enrolled. They also were asked to add any important reasons for attending which might have been omitted. The original 34 and the 9 reasons added by these women were then arranged in a list of 43 reasons that appeared to have influenced some women to enroll. The final questionnaire was then submitted to all the women enrolled in adult homemaking classes in Des Moines during the spring semester. The order was the same on all copies, and no study was made to determine whether the length of the list resulted in the reasons at the end being given less adequate consideration than those near the beginning. Responses from 774 completed questionnaires were analyzed.

Baumgartner's questionnaire was used in the present study after a few changes were made in the statement of the reasons in the interest of clarity.<sup>7</sup> Provision was made for the women to check the importance to their attendance of each of the 43 reasons. They were to respond with a check mark under one of three levels of importance: much, some and none. Certain personal information also was obtained about each respondent to be used in analyzing the responses.

One of the largest programs in homemaking education for adults in Iowa includes classes offered by local schools and supported in part by federal funds administered by the Vocational Division, State Department of Public Instruction. During the school year 1949-50, there were 10,716 women<sup>8</sup> enrolled in classes; in 1950-51 there were 7,949 women.<sup>9</sup> The sample for the present investigation was obtained by selecting some of the classes in which these women were enrolled, with the exception of classes in towns with populations above 50,000. Since it was not possible to obtain information regarding plans for offering classes in the large cities early enough in the school year to facilitate sampling these cities, it was decided to limit the sample to classes in towns of less than 50,000 population.

In the fall of 1949 and of 1950, lists were obtained of the towns in which teachers had reported to the State Supervisor of Home Economics Education that their school was planning to offer a class or classes in homemaking for adults during the school year. To assure that the sample would represent the various geographical sections, the state was divided into four parts by drawing lines along county boundaries from east to west and north to south in such a way as to equalize, to some extent, the number of classes in the four sections. This resulted in the following division of the counties by sections:

|           |             |
|-----------|-------------|
| Northeast | 17 counties |
| Northwest | 19 counties |
| Southwest | 27 counties |
| Southeast | 24 counties |

Also, the towns were stratified by population as follows:

|                  |
|------------------|
| Less than 2,500  |
| 2,500 to 6,999   |
| 7,000 to 49,999. |

In both years the towns where classes were being anticipated were grouped by size into these three groups, listed alphabetically in the four sections of the state and numbered consecutively. Using a table of random numbers, sample communities were drawn from each of the three groups of towns. Because the data were incomplete concerning what classes would be held and when they would meet, a large sample (approximately 50 percent) was selected. It was anticipated that some classes would have completed their series of meetings before the reports of teachers concerning classes would be received and that others would report too late in the spring of 1951 to be included. When it was discovered that only 8 of the 12 towns in the population group 7,000 to 49,999 which were planning to have adult classes could be contacted in time to be included, the decision was made to take all available. However, one teacher was not willing to participate, so data were collected from seven towns, or 58 percent of those planning to offer classes.

The data in table 1 indicate the sample used. Forty-nine of the 95 towns with a population of less than 2,500 were drawn from the lists obtained in 1949 and 1950. Eight had completed their series of classes early in the fall, seven were offered too late in the spring of 1951 to be included, and one of the 49 teachers was not willing to cooperate; this left a total of 33 classes. Ten of the 27 teachers in towns of 2,500 to 6,999 population drawn in that stratum were contacted either too late or too early to participate. The programs in several towns, particularly the larger ones, included more than one class. The result was that 72 classes in 57 towns were included in the study.

Copies of the questionnaire were mailed to each teacher in the 57 towns. The questionnaires were to be filled out under the teacher's supervision during one of the class meetings. A sheet of di-

TABLE 1. NUMBER OF TOWNS IN IOWA REPORTING PLANS TO OFFER CLASSES IN HOMEMAKING FOR ADULTS AND NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF TOWNS INCLUDED IN STUDY.

| Population of towns | 1949-50  |          |         | 1950-51  |          |         | Total    |          |         |
|---------------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|----------|----------|---------|
|                     | In state | In study |         | In state | In study |         | In state | In study |         |
|                     | N        | n        | percent | N        | n        | percent | N        | n        | percent |
| Under 2,500         | 37       | 12       | 32.4    | 58       | 21       | 36.2    | 95       | 33       | 34.7    |
| 2,500-6,999         | 16       | 8        | 50.0    | 26       | 9        | 34.4    | 42       | 17       | 40.5    |
| 7,000-49,999        | 4        | 2        | 50.0    | 8        | 5        | 62.5    | 12       | 7        | 58.3    |
| Total               | 57       | 22       | 38.6    | 92       | 35       | 38.0    | 149      | 57       | 38.3    |

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix A for a copy of the questionnaire used.

<sup>8</sup>U. S. Office of Education. Digest of annual reports of state boards for vocational education, fiscal year ending June 30, 1950. p. 87, mimeo.

<sup>9</sup>U. S. Office of Education. Digest of annual reports of state boards for vocational education, fiscal year ending June 30, 1951. p. 89, mimeo.



rections was included to facilitate satisfactory administration. So that sufficient time would be available for the questionnaires to be completed carefully, the suggestion was made to avoid the first and last class meetings in order to sample those who were more persistent in attendance and to avoid a class meeting which might be a particularly busy one.

When the questionnaires were returned by the teachers, it was discovered that 135 of the 1,493 were of questionable value. Sixty women had checked in only one of the three columns and 20 others had checked in one column except for one to four items, suggesting that little thought had been given to individual items. Fifty-three had reacted to fewer than 19 of the 43 items, and two had placed their check beside the statements instead of in one of the columns provided. These 135 questionnaires were not used, but an analysis was made to determine to what extent these women were different from those whose responses were included.

Compared with the 1,358 questionnaires used in the study, the 135 discarded were found more commonly to have been filled out by married women who were 46 years of age or over, women who had less than 4 years of high school training, women who had four or more children and whose children were beyond school age, women who had attended such classes 3 or more years and women whose husbands were domestic workers and farm owners.<sup>10</sup> Hence, the sample in the study is somewhat less representative of women attending classes who had the above characteristics.

The responses of the remaining 1,358 women were coded and punched on IBM cards. Chi square analyses<sup>11</sup> of frequency tables (tests of independence) were made for a series of factors and the three levels of response to pertinent items on the schedule.

Although the 1,358 women are characterized to a large extent in subsequent sections, some additional data concerning them may be helpful in interpreting the data. Most of the women were married (88 percent); only a few were single (8 percent), and the remaining 4 percent were widowed or divorced. Twenty percent were gainfully employed outside their homes. The most common types of employment were in office work, teaching and sales work.

The number of children per married woman varied from none to nine, and both the mean and the mode were two. Twenty-four percent of the total group had no children. More women with children had some of school age (53 percent) than had children under school age (34 percent). About 21 percent reported children over 18 years of age. Almost one-half of the women included in this study had not been enrolled in such classes in

previous years, but one-tenth had attended 5 or more years previously.

#### WHAT REASONS WERE MOST AND LEAST FREQUENTLY INDICATED AS IMPORTANT BY THE ENTIRE GROUP OF WOMEN?

A general desire to keep on learning seems to have been an important motivating factor for attending adult homemaking classes, since four of the nine reasons (see fig. 1 and table 2) most

TABLE 2. PERCENTAGES OF THE 1,358 WOMEN WHO CHECKED THE 43 REASONS FOR ATTENDING ADULT HOMEMAKING CLASSES IN IOWA ACCORDING TO THREE DEGREES OF IMPORTANCE.

| Reason  | Importance |      |      |
|---|------------|------|------|
|   | Much       | Some | None |
| I enjoy getting new ideas. ....   | 94.2       | 5.6  | 0.2  |
| I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life. ....  | 86.7       | 13.1 | 0.2  |
| I wanted to add to my store of knowledge. ...   | 85.4       | 13.5 | 1.1  |
| I wanted to increase my skill. ....   | 83.9       | 15.0 | 1.1  |
| I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes. ....   | 82.3       | 15.3 | 2.4  |
| I enjoy watching a good demonstration. ....   | 80.5       | 15.3 | 4.2  |
| I've always wanted to know more about this subject. ....  | 80.1       | 19.2 | 0.7  |
| I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education. ....   | 79.4       | 17.5 | 3.1  |
| I like this teacher's way of presenting things. ....  | 79.3       | 17.0 | 3.7  |
| I thought it would be helpful to be with people who have had more experience in this subject than I. ....                     | 73.8       | 23.7 | 2.5  |
| I enjoy doing things with my hands. ....  | 72.1       | 22.5 | 5.4  |
| I admire the personality of this particular teacher. ....   | 71.5       | 21.1 | 7.4  |
| I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture. ....  | 64.9       | 26.5 | 8.6  |
| I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have. ....   | 62.1       | 30.3 | 7.6  |
| I wanted an opportunity to make things. ....  | 60.7       | 30.3 | 9.0  |
| I feel that I know little about this subject and thought this class could help me. ....                                       | 55.6       | 38.9 | 5.5  |
| The place of meeting is very convenient for me. ....  | 53.5       | 27.8 | 18.7 |
| I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up. ....                      | 52.5       | 27.9 | 19.1 |
| I like to get away from regular duties for a while. ....  | 51.6       | 33.3 | 15.1 |
| I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this. ....  | 48.8       | 37.8 | 13.4 |
| I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home. ....   | 48.5       | 32.1 | 19.4 |
| I wanted something interesting to do. ....  | 48.2       | 35.1 | 16.7 |
| I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group. ....   | 47.2       | 38.7 | 14.1 |
| I enjoy taking part in a good discussion. ....  | 43.9       | 42.8 | 13.3 |
| I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend. ....   | 43.9       | 34.5 | 21.6 |
| I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas. ....   | 44.0       | 20.1 | 35.9 |
| I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class. .... | 42.7       | 36.0 | 21.3 |
| The class is being sponsored by the school, P.T.A. or some other organization. ....   | 42.4       | 22.3 | 35.3 |
| I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class. ....   | 38.9       | 26.9 | 34.2 |
| I had certain specific problems on which I needed help. ....  | 37.5       | 44.6 | 17.9 |
| I thought it might help me with my job. ....  | 34.9       | 27.5 | 37.6 |
| The class came at a very convenient time for me, so I thought I might as well go. ....  | 33.8       | 31.6 | 34.6 |
| I wanted a chance to make some new friends. ....  | 34.2       | 46.6 | 19.2 |
| The up and coming women in this community attend these classes. ....  | 32.1       | 35.8 | 22.1 |
| My husband is in another class, and we like to come together. ....  | 32.1       | 6.9  | 61.0 |
| I enjoy taking responsibility in a group such as this class permits. ....   | 28.4       | 44.4 | 27.2 |
| I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected. ....   | 26.2       | 27.8 | 66.0 |
| The class came at a time when it was easy to get someone to look after my home responsibilities. ....                         | 23.3       | 20.9 | 55.8 |
| Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community. ....   | 20.1       | 41.1 | 38.8 |
| I wanted something to fill in my spare time. ...  | 18.2       | 28.2 | 53.6 |
| Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them. ....   | 16.3       | 37.2 | 46.5 |
| Some of my friends have taken the course, so I thought I should take it. ....   | 15.4       | 36.0 | 48.6 |
| My family urged me to attend. ....  | 14.0       | 24.5 | 61.5 |

<sup>10</sup>Differences on these characteristics were significant at the 1-percent level. Two-by-two frequency or contingency tables were analyzed for the 1,493 questionnaires received.

<sup>11</sup>Tables showing analyses may be obtained by writing to the authors of this bulletin or from two unpublished M.S. theses available from the Iowa State College Library, Ames, Iowa: Bethel Rust, op. cit.; Evelyn Gordon, Relation of selected factors to four reasons for attending adult homemaking classes. 1953.

## REASONS

PERCENTAGES OF 1,358 WOMEN

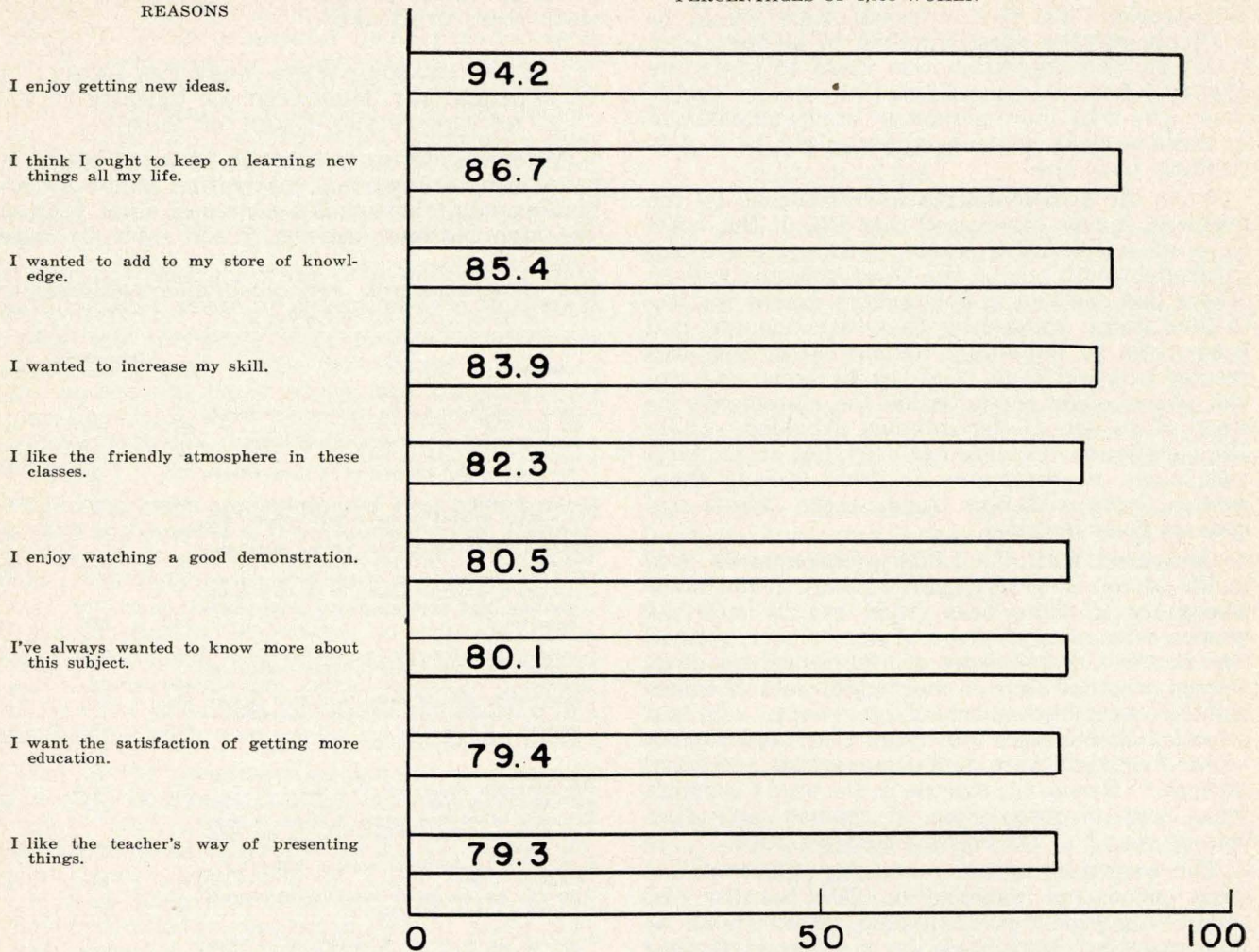


Fig. 1. The nine reasons checked as having much importance by 75 percent or more of the women.

frequently checked as having much importance were these:

- I enjoy getting new ideas.
- I think I ought to keep on learning new ideas all my life.
- I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.
- I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.

Possibly some of them interpreted the term "education" as formal schooling rather than classes for adults such as those in which they were enrolled.

As the reasons related to learning became more specific, the proportion of women checking them as important<sup>12</sup> tended to decrease. "I had certain specific problems on which I needed help," was indicated as of much importance by 38 percent; whereas, 80 percent checked in the "much" column the statement, "I've always wanted to know more about this subject."

A desire to know more about but reluctance to admit or to believe they lacked knowledge in some specific phase of homemaking seems to have prevailed. Examination of the replies to two closely

<sup>12</sup>Unless otherwise stated the term "important" refers to "much" importance rather than to "some" importance.

related items showed that the statement, "I've always wanted to know more about this subject," was checked as of much importance by a higher percentage (80 percent) than the statement, "I feel I know little about this subject and thought the class would help me" (56 percent).

An opportunity to create some article requiring manual skills appears to interest many women since three reasons relating to such activity were checked as important by 60 to 84 percent of the respondents. It should be pointed out that the majority of the women in the study were enrolled in classes in which articles were made—a fact which may in itself reflect this interest or may mean that, if more offerings of a different nature were made, women with other interests might be drawn into the program. Nevertheless, in this study, "I wanted to increase my skill" was checked as having much importance by 84 percent; "I enjoy doing things with my hands," by 72 percent; and "I wanted an opportunity to make things," by 61 percent.

An attempt was made to determine whether certain aspects of the teaching situation had any

appreciable relation to decisions to attend adult homemaking classes. Since four of the seven items of this nature were reported as having much importance by a large majority of the women, it would seem that the teacher and her methods do influence enrollment. Approximately 80 percent checked, "I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes," "I like this teacher's way of presenting things" and "I enjoy watching a good demonstration."

Another motivation indicated by 72 percent was the personality of the particular teacher. Likewise, the attendance of many women appears to have been affected by the methods of teaching used. In this study the women seemed to prefer those in which the teacher takes the major responsibility. They showed preference for demonstrations (81 percent) and lectures (65 percent) rather than discussions (44 percent), and only 28 percent checked an enjoyment of taking responsibility in a group as important to them. No information was collected that would show to what extent teachers were employing these various methods or the experience each woman had had in sharing in discussion or being responsible for class activity. The reactions recorded should not be interpreted, therefore, as meaning that all women in all classes will not wish to take part in a responsible way in group activities or will always prefer a passive role in classes.

Four statements were related to the contribution to family life that might result from the homemaker's attendance in such classes. Of those who were or had been married, 58 percent indicated they thought the course they were taking might help them meet new responsibilities as their families grew up, and 46 percent reported that they thought it might help them improve their family life. Fifty-three percent of the mothers gave evidence of being concerned with keeping up with their children on new ideas, and 59 percent seemed concerned with being able to teach their children things they expected to learn in the class.

The need to have a greater variety of activities or to escape monotony appears to have had considerable influence on the attendance of approximately half of the women. These three statements were in the list to obtain evidence of this need:

I like to get away from regular duties for a while (52 percent).

I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home (49 percent).

I wanted something interesting to do (48 percent).

Very few (18 percent), however, checked as of much importance the statement that they wanted something to fill in their spare time.

The extent to which the women were motivated by a desire for social contacts may be indicated by their response to five reasons. The desire to be with others who had had similar experiences and the enjoyment of working on projects of one's own in a group were those most commonly

indicated as reasons of much importance for class attendance (62 and 47 percent, respectively). An opportunity to associate with the type of people who attend such classes interested 44 percent of the women. About 32 percent saw the class as a chance to be with the "up-and-coming" women in their community. The possibility of making new friends also appealed to 34 percent. In contrast, being with friends who were taking the course was reported by 15 percent to have had much influence on their attendance.

Interest in contributing to community improvement was not found to be one of the types of reasons greatly influencing the women to enroll in classes. Forty-three percent, however, did indicate as of much importance the belief that the community might be improved by such classes and, hence, had a desire to help maintain the class. Twenty-six percent reported attending because of a concern that the consumer's interests be protected and 20 percent because they believed the course would help them do more for children in the community. Perhaps, if reasons of a more general nature concerning community improvement had been presented, the number responding favorably would have been higher. On the other hand, the small proportions who checked these reasons may be due in part to the fact that many of the courses in which they were enrolled did not lend themselves to the achievement of objectives of community improvement.

The relation of satisfaction with place and time for adult class meetings and enrollment may be seen in the frequency with which the following three reasons were checked as of some or much importance:

The place of meeting is very convenient for me (81 percent).

The class came at a very convenient time for me, so I thought I might as well go (65 percent).

The class came at a time when it was easy to get someone to look after my home responsibilities (44 percent).

In summary it may be said that the Iowa women in this study indicated most frequently that they were motivated to enroll in homemaking classes for adults by the desire to keep on learning new ideas rather than because they recognized specific problems on which they needed help. An interest in increasing their hand skills was frequently reported. The methods of teaching, the personality of the teacher and the friendly atmosphere in the classes appear to be related to attendance. A majority checked that the time and place of class meetings were conducive to attendance. Somewhat less commonly reported as important were items relating to the effects of attendance on their families, the desire for social contacts, a desire to increase their activities and an interest in community development.

#### HOW IS AGE RELATED TO REASONS WOMEN GIVE FOR ATTENDING CLASSES?

From the experience of those who have taught adult homemaking classes, older women seem

to want different subjects and have different goals than the young women who enroll. If this observation is substantiated by facts, it might mean that separate classes sometimes should be planned to meet the needs of different age groups. To see if women of different ages rated the reasons submitted to them of different importance, the data were analyzed by age groups. Respondents were asked to indicate the age group to which they belonged. Apparently they did not object to giving this information, for only 14 of the 1,358 women failed to respond to the request. The 1,344 responding were distributed by age groups as follows:

| Age     | Percentage |
|---------|------------|
| 16-25   | 13.3       |
| 26-35   | 31.8       |
| 36-45   | 30.5       |
| 46-55   | 17.2       |
| Over 55 | 7.2        |

When the above percentages were compared with the distribution of ages of Iowa women given in the 1950 census, it was found that the classes in this study were drawing 6 percent less of the women 16-25 years of age and 20 percent less of those over 55 years of age than in the general population. The classes were more largely made up of women 26 to 54 than the proportion which existed in the population of Iowa generally.

When the responses of the women in the different age groups were examined to see if there were differences among them in the importance they attributed to the various reasons for attendance, six reasons were found to have been checked as important by 75 percent or more of each age group. These reasons, all bearing on wanting to learn new ideas and to add to their skill and on atmosphere in the class, were:

- I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.
- I enjoy getting new ideas.
- I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life.
- I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.
- I wanted to increase my skill.
- I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.

In contrast to this, four reasons were checked as important by less than 35 percent of each age group:

- Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.
- My family urged me to attend.
- Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.
- I wanted something to fill in my spare time.

The responses to 16 other statements tended to vary consistently with age, although the differences between succeeding older groups of women were not always large. For two reasons (see fig. 2) the proportion responding "much" tended to *decrease* as age *increased*.<sup>13</sup>

<sup>13</sup>Throughout this report all differences cited among groups are significant at either the 1- or 5-percent level of significance. Those at the 1-percent level will be designated with two asterisks (\*\*); those at the 5-percent level with one asterisk (\*).

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*  
I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

For these 14 statements, the general tendency was for the proportion checking "much" to increase as age increased:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*

I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere of these classes.\*\*

I like this teacher's way of presenting things.\*\*

I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.\*\*

I enjoy watching a good demonstration.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*

When seven additional reasons were analyzed in relation to age, the responses of the women were not sufficiently different to indicate that age was a factor:

I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.

I feel I know little about this subject and thought this class could help me.

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.

I enjoy taking responsibility in a group such as this class permits.

I thought it would be helpful to be with people who have had more experience in this subject than I.

I wanted an opportunity to make things.

I like to get away from regular duties for a while.

#### WOMEN 16-25 YEARS OF AGE

There were 179 women in this youngest age group. They chose only three reasons as important with greater frequency than any other age group. A somewhat larger proportion than those in the 26-35 age group indicated that they came because of a chance to make some new friends\*\* and a desire to do something interesting.\*\* Also they, like those 26-35, more often than the women older than 55, checked as important this reason: "I've always wanted to know more about this subject."\*\* Those 16-25 years of age did differ, however, from the other age groups by *less frequently* attaching importance to seven of the reasons which at least 60 percent of the total group had indicated were highly important in their attendance:

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

I enjoy watching a good demonstration.\*\*

I like this teacher's way of presenting things.\*\*

I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*

I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.\*\*

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*

I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.\*\*

REASONS

PERCENTAGES OF WOMEN IN GIVEN AGE GROUPS

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.

I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.

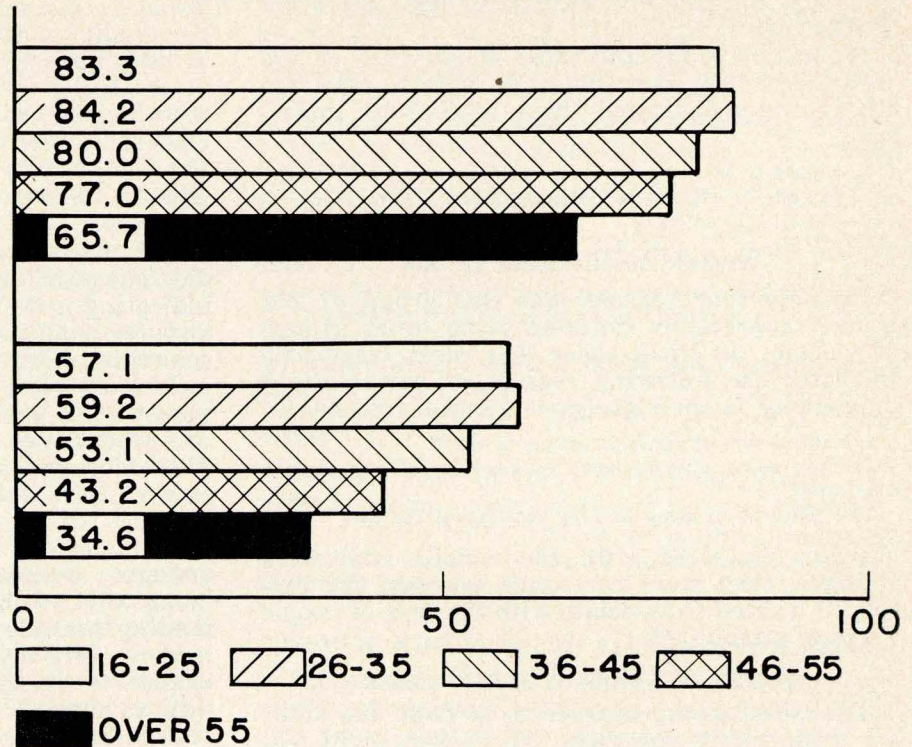


Fig. 2. The two reasons which tended to decrease in importance as age increased.

Seven additional reasons, less commonly indicated than those above as very important by the entire group, were checked even *less frequently* by those 16-25 years old:

- I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*
- I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*
- I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*
- Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*
- The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*
- I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group.\*\*
- I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.\*\*

WOMEN 26-35 YEARS OF AGE

The 427 women in this group tended to react to most of the responses presented to them in a manner similar to those in the other age groups. Only these two reasons appeared to be of *much importance* to a larger proportion of the women 26-35 years of age than to any other group:

- I had certain specific problems on which I need help.\*
- I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.\*\*

Four reasons seemed to concern this group the *least* of any age group:

- I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*
- I wanted something interesting to do.\*\*
- I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*
- I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

The women in this 26-35 age group *less frequently* than the older women checked four statements as important for their attendance:

- The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*
- Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*
- I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.\*\*
- I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

Along with the younger women, they *more frequently* were concerned with whether the course would help them to meet new responsibilities as their families grew up\*\* and indicated a desire to know more about the subject.\*\*

On the other hand, this 25-36 year old group resembled the older women in the importance they attributed to these three reasons:

- I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.\*\*
- I enjoy watching a good demonstration.\*\*
- I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

WOMEN 36-45 YEARS OF AGE

Since these 409 women make up the middle-age group, it is not surprising to find that they did not differ greatly from the group as a whole in their reactions to most reasons. About the same proportion of them as of the 1,344 women who gave information about their ages usually checked each reason as of much importance.

Only one statement was significantly *more*

often checked "much" by these women, "I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class."\*\*

When this group and those 46-55 years of age were combined, they *more frequently* than the other groups indicated these reasons as important:

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*  
I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

#### WOMEN 46-55 YEARS OF AGE

On only four reasons was this group of 232 women appreciably different from other groups of women. In three cases they *most frequently* indicated the following reasons as having *much* importance in their decision to enroll in a class:

I wanted something interesting to do.\*\*  
I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group.\*\*  
The place of meeting is very convenient for me.\*\*

When compared with the women who were younger, they *more commonly* checked the reason, "I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend."\*\*

#### WOMEN 56 YEARS OF AGE OR OLDER

The oldest group differed most from the other age groups in its reactions. There were eight reasons for enrolling which seemed *more important* to these 97 women than to other groups:

I enjoy watching a good demonstration.\*\*  
The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*  
I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*  
I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*  
I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*  
I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*  
I like this teacher's way of presenting things.\*\*  
Taking this course would help me to do more for the children in the community.\*

Furthermore, of all the women, these older women were least concerned about three reasons:

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*  
I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.\*\*  
I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

When the responses of all women over 45 were combined, six statements were found to be *more frequently* checked by them as important than by those younger:

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*  
I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*  
I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.\*\*  
Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*  
I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*  
I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

In summary, it may be said that none of the reasons analyzed by age of the women was checked important significantly more often by those 16-25 years of age than by those in the 26-35 group, but the youngest group least fre-

quently indicated as important those reasons relating to methods used in the classroom, to the personality of the teacher, to a desire to use ideas to keep up with or teach to their children and a desire to be with friends or with other women who had had similar experiences. Two reasons, leaders in the community attend and enjoying doing things with their hands, were also less frequently reported as influencing their attendance.

The women 25-36 years of age tended to react either like those younger or those older. They did, however, check to a greater extent reasons indicating a desire for help on specific problems and for additional knowledge. A wish to find something interesting to do, to make new friends and to associate with the type of women attending appears less important than to older women. The frequencies of reporting enjoyment of a good discussion and demonstration as well as the desire to learn things to teach their children, resembled the frequencies of the older rather than the younger groups of women. They, like the younger women, indicated less concern with being able to listen to a good lecture, with attending because their friends or the community leaders were attending the classes and with the chance to do things for which there was little time at home. The two groups of younger women both indicated the desire to obtain help in meeting new responsibilities as their families grew up.

Only one reason differentiated the middle-age group, those 36-45 years of age, from all other groups by being more commonly checked as of much importance—namely, the desire to teach their children things they could learn in class. Like those 46-55 years of age, they reported wanting to keep up with their children on new ideas and having a chance to do things they seldom had time to do at home. In addition, those 46-55 more frequently than other groups reported attending because of a wish to find something interesting to do and to work on projects of their own in a group.

The oldest women were more likely than the young women to check reasons relating to association with others attending classes, to the teacher's way of presenting material and to an enjoyment of doing things with their hands. They were least concerned about meeting new family responsibilities, learning about the particular subject or adding to their store of knowledge. Like those 46-55 years of age, the desire to fill in their spare time was more evident than among the younger women. Also, these two groups of women over 45 were more likely to associate attendance with the personality of the teacher, certain methods of teaching and the opportunity to make new friends.

#### HOW IS AMOUNT OF EDUCATION RELATED TO REASONS WOMEN GIVE FOR ATTENDING CLASSES?

Believing that women with different amounts of formal education would differ in reasons for

attending homemaking classes, information was collected about their education. Perhaps women with high school or college education might be interested in further education, particularly in the realm of ideas and stimulation to problem-solving. Perhaps those with little education might be concerned mainly with very concrete subjects and manipulative skills in sewing or crafts or with the social aspects of the class sessions. Therefore, the variation among educational groups in importance of the reasons checked was studied.

The women were asked to indicate the highest school level attained by checking one of the following: elementary school, attended high school, graduated from high school, attended college or graduated from college. To differentiate between beauty or business colleges and 2- or 4-year academic colleges, the name of the college was requested. Only attendance of academic colleges and graduation from 4-year colleges were recorded for this study.

All except 45 women reported the amount of schooling they had received. One woman reported she had no formal education. Of the remaining 1,312, 10 percent had attended elementary school only, 13 percent had attended high school, 41 percent had been graduated from high school, 24 percent had attended college but had not graduated and 12 percent were graduates of 4-year colleges.

When the responses of those with different amounts of education were analyzed, seven reasons were found to have been checked by at least 70 percent of each educational group as being of much importance for their attending classes:

I enjoy getting new ideas.

I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life.

I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.

I like this teacher's way of presenting things.

I wanted to increase my skill.

I thought it would be helpful to be with people who have had more experience in this subject than I.

In contrast, the four reasons checked as of much importance by fewer than 25 percent of each educational group were:

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.

Some of my friends have taken the course, so I thought I should take it.

My family urged me to attend.

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.

Many differences were found among the five educational groups in the importance they attached to the various reasons. Of the 33 statements analyzed to determine the significance of the differences, the responses to only three were no more characteristic of one group than of another:

I wanted to increase my skill.

I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.

I thought it would be helpful to be with people who have had more experience in this subject than I.

Eight of the 30 differentiating statements were *less frequently* reported of much importance as the amount of *education increased*:

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

Perhaps some of these differences among educational groups may be due in part to the tendency of the women who were college graduates to check a relatively small number of items as of much importance.

#### WOMEN WHO ATTENDED ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

There were three reasons *less frequently* checked important by the women who had not progressed beyond the elementary school than by others:

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

I enjoy getting new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.\*\*

On the other hand, this group checked 10 reasons *more frequently* than the other groups. Two of these reasons show concern for family responsibilities:

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*

Two of the 10 items concerned community welfare:

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

This finding should not be construed to mean that women with more formal education were not as interested in contributing to community welfare or consumer's interests. Instead they may have recognized more clearly than the others that the classes they were attending were not providing education especially helpful in these directions.

The need for status and contacts with other women is evident in the responses to 4 of the 10 reasons more frequently checked by those with the least formal education:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group.\*\*

The remaining two reasons which these women more frequently checked as important are:

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

#### WOMEN WHO ATTENDED HIGH SCHOOL

Only two reasons distinguished the women who had attended high school from the other educational groups. The one reason they checked *less frequently* than the other groups—namely, “I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life”<sup>\*</sup>—was, nevertheless, an important reason since 80 percent of them checked it as of much importance. The second distinguishing reason was checked *more frequently* by this group than by any other, “I wanted something interesting to do.”<sup>\*\*</sup>

When all the women with less than 4 years of high school education were compared with those having more education, these 10 reasons were found to have been *more frequently* checked as of much importance by the former:

I enjoy taking responsibility in a group such as this class permits.\*\*

I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

I like this teacher's way of presenting things.\*\*

I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*

I like to get away from regular duties for a while.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

Two reasons were checked *less frequently* by women with less than 4 years of high school than by those with more than 4 years of high school:

I have always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

#### WOMEN WHO GRADUATED FROM HIGH SCHOOL

High school graduates did not differ significantly from the other groups in their responses. There was, however, a slight tendency for them to react like those with more rather than those with less formal education.

#### WOMEN WHO ATTENDED COLLEGE

As with the high school graduates, this group usually responded much like those with somewhat less or those with somewhat more formal education. However, there was a greater tendency for them to react like the latter.

To only three items were their responses significantly different from the other groups. They *more frequently* checked as having some or much importance, “I think I ought to keep on learning

new things all my life”<sup>\*</sup> and “I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.”<sup>\*\*</sup>

Also, they indicated considerably *less frequently* than those who had not attended college that they came to classes because they enjoyed doing things with their hands.”<sup>\*\*</sup>

#### WOMEN WHO GRADUATED FROM COLLEGE

Twenty-six of the 33 reasons analyzed in relation to extent of formal education were less frequently checked as important by those with college degrees than by any other group. It is possible that the reasons used in the questionnaire were not as satisfactory for the latter group in exploring their motivation for enrollment in classes.

Perhaps women who have finished college are more reluctant than other women to indicate their need for additional education. Evidence of the soundness of the above hypothesis is the fact that two statements concerning an increase of learning were *less frequently* checked by them. However, these same two reasons were accepted as having much importance by more than 50 percent of the college graduates:

I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.\*\*

I feel that I know little about this subject, and thought this class would help me.\*

Motivation by appealing to a desire for social status seems to be less effective for women who had been graduated from a 4-year college, perhaps because they are more commonly in the upper social class in their community. The findings tend to support this hypothesis since the graduates *least frequently* attributed much importance to these two reasons for attendance:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

The concern for community improvement, which was not strongly evident among many of the educational groups, was even less evident among the women with college degrees. The subject matter and emphasis in the classes they were attending could account in part for their responses. Each of the three statements relating to community welfare was *less often* checked as of much importance by college graduates. However, there was little difference between those with some college and those with 4 years of college in the proportion who checked the first one of these three reasons as having much importance:

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

Attending classes to obtain help in teaching their children\*\* or in meeting new family responsibilities\*\* or to improve family life\* were *less frequently* given as reasons by the mothers who



were college graduates than by other mothers. They appeared less concerned with getting new ideas to keep up with their children,\*\* a reason which the least educated group had checked more frequently (30 and 58 percent, respectively).

Five of the seven statements pertaining to classroom procedures and to the teacher were *less commonly* indicated as being important by women who had college degrees than by other women. More than 50 percent of each educational group, however, checked as important each of these reasons except the last:

- I enjoy watching a good demonstration.\*\*
- I like this teacher's way of presenting things.\*\*
- I like the friendly atmosphere of these classes.\*\*
- I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.\*\*
- I enjoy taking responsibility in a group such as this class permits.\*\*

College graduates also gave evidence of *less interest* than others in group participation and in making additional contacts with friends through these classes, as shown by fewer attributing importance to the following three items:

- I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group.\*\*
- I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*
- I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

The desire to add variety to their activities and find a use for spare time was also *less evident* among the college graduates than among those of lower educational levels since the responses of "much importance" to these four statements were proportionately lower:

- I wanted something interesting to do.\*\*
- I like to get away from regular duties for a while.\*\*
- I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*
- I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

College graduates and women with some college education both *less frequently* indicated their motive for attending classes as, "I enjoy doing things with my hands,"\*\* "I wanted an opportunity to make things"\* or "I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas."\*\*

While the findings do not disclose any motivations peculiar to high school or college graduates, they do show that women with elementary school educations most often indicated attending because of a desire to meet family responsibilities, a need for status and social contacts and a concern for community welfare; women who attended but did not complete high school seemed to want particularly to find something interesting to do. When the responses of these two groups were combined, it was found that they seemed more concerned with classroom atmosphere and methods of teaching, with attendance as a means of helping the community improve by maintenance of classes for adults, with the desire to obtain ideas to teach their children and with opportunities to get away from regular duties and to fill in spare time.

Women who attended college less than 4 years more frequently than others checked reasons re-

lated to a desire to continue to learn. The proportion of the college graduates did not exceed those of the women with less education in the frequency of selecting reasons as important. However, they tended to check fewer reasons and to indicate less concern for additional formal education, social status, social contacts, community improvement, and for classroom procedures and atmosphere.

#### HOW IS OCCUPATION OF HUSBAND RELATED TO REASONS WOMEN GIVE FOR ATTENDING CLASSES?

There is some reason to believe that a relationship exists between the social status of the homemaker and the occupation of her husband. Furthermore, environment, as indicated by the occupation of the breadwinner, has seemed to have an influence upon the interests of adults in the family. With these possible relationships in mind, differences among the responses of the women whose husbands were in various types of occupations were examined by statistical methods.

The married women were asked to state the occupation of their husbands and, where appropriate, to indicate whether they owned their business or whether they were farm owners, renters or farm workers. The occupations were classified in the categories used in the sixteenth census report of the United States, with a few minor exceptions. Domestic service workers were combined with other service workers because both were small groups. Farmers were classified into two groups: (1) farm owners and managers and (2) farm tenants. The responses of the women whose husbands had retired or whose type of occupation was not clear from the information given were not analyzed in this section of the study.

Fifty-three percent of the husbands were engaged in farming. The next largest group was made up of proprietors (15 percent) and the third largest group of professional men (11 percent). Other groups included from 2 to 6 percent of the 1,149 husbands whose occupations were classified.

Only the responses of 22 reasons, which appeared to have some relationship to husband's occupation, were analyzed. Due to the small numbers in some groups, it was necessary in the analyses to make still further combinations of occupations. Occasionally the replies were analyzed in terms of farm and nonfarm wives.

The wives of men in the various occupational groups did not differ significantly in their responses to 2 of the 22 reasons:

- I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.
- I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life.

In addition, responses of the wives of farmers (owners, managers and tenants) did not differ from those of wives of nonfarmers on this statement, "I thought the community might be im-

proved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class."

#### WIVES OF FARMERS

When the responses of the 614 farm wives were compared with those of the wives of men in other occupations (fig. 3), the former *more commonly* than the latter indicated that these three items relating to their families were important reasons for class attendance:

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

The wives of farm owners and operators seemed more affected by the last two reasons than the wives of farm tenants.

More of the farm than nonfarm wives, especially the wives of owners and operators, appear to have been motivated to a greater extent by a concern for the welfare of other groups. They *more frequently* indicated these two reasons as important:

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

Class attendance as a means of improving their social standing in the community seems to have been of more concern among farm women, particularly the wives of farm owners and operators, than among other women. A *larger proportion* of them than of other women checked these two reasons as highly important:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

Four reasons were designed to obtain evidence of an interest in opportunities to be with friends or make new friends and to learn in a friendly atmosphere. The wives of farmers *more frequently* than others checked these four as important in their decision to attend:

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*

The last two items were reported as especially important to the wives of farm owners and operators.

It appears that the teacher and teaching procedures had some relation to enrollment of these women. Admiration for the personality of the teacher\*\* was given *more frequently* as a reason for attendance by women whose husbands were farm owners and operators than by wives in any of the other occupational groups. Also, they reported enjoyment of a good lecture\*\* somewhat *more frequently* than other groups.

Although a large percentage of the wives in each occupational group indicated being influenced by a desire to continue to learn, one reason of this nature, "I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education,"\* was checked *more commonly* by the wives of farm owners and managers than by any other group.

The wives of farmers were distinguished from other wives by the fact that they *less frequently* checked as important "I had certain problems on which I needed help."\* Although less than 20 percent of either the farm wives or the nonfarm wives indicated the desire to "fill in" their spare time, a *larger proportion* of the farm than nonfarm wives checked this as an important reason for their enrollment.\*\*

Since, in many towns, classes for farmers are a part of a general program of adult education commonly meeting in the school building, one might anticipate finding that wives of farmers would check these reasons *more often* than other wives:

My husband is in another class, and we like to come together.\*\*

The class came at a very convenient time for me, so I thought I might as well go.\*\*

#### WIVES OF MEN IN PROFESSIONAL AND SEMI-PROFESSIONAL OCCUPATIONS

The occupations classified as professional and semi-professional include doctors, lawyers, teachers, veterinarians and bankers. There were 125 husbands engaged in these types of occupations.

The wives of these men did not check any of the 22 reasons analyzed more frequently than did any other group of wives. They did, however, indicate being *less motivated* to attend than did most or all other groups by nine reasons:

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

Many of my friends were going and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*\*

Seventy-five percent of the women whose husbands were engaged in these occupations were college graduates or had attended college. This may account in part for the fact that five of these reasons which differentiated the wives of professional and semi-professional men from other wives also differentiated those with some college education from those with less education.

#### WIVES OF MEN WHO OWN THEIR OWN BUSINESSES

The 170 wives of proprietors tended to respond more like the wives of professional and semi-

REASONS

PERCENTAGES OF FARM AND NONFARM WIVES

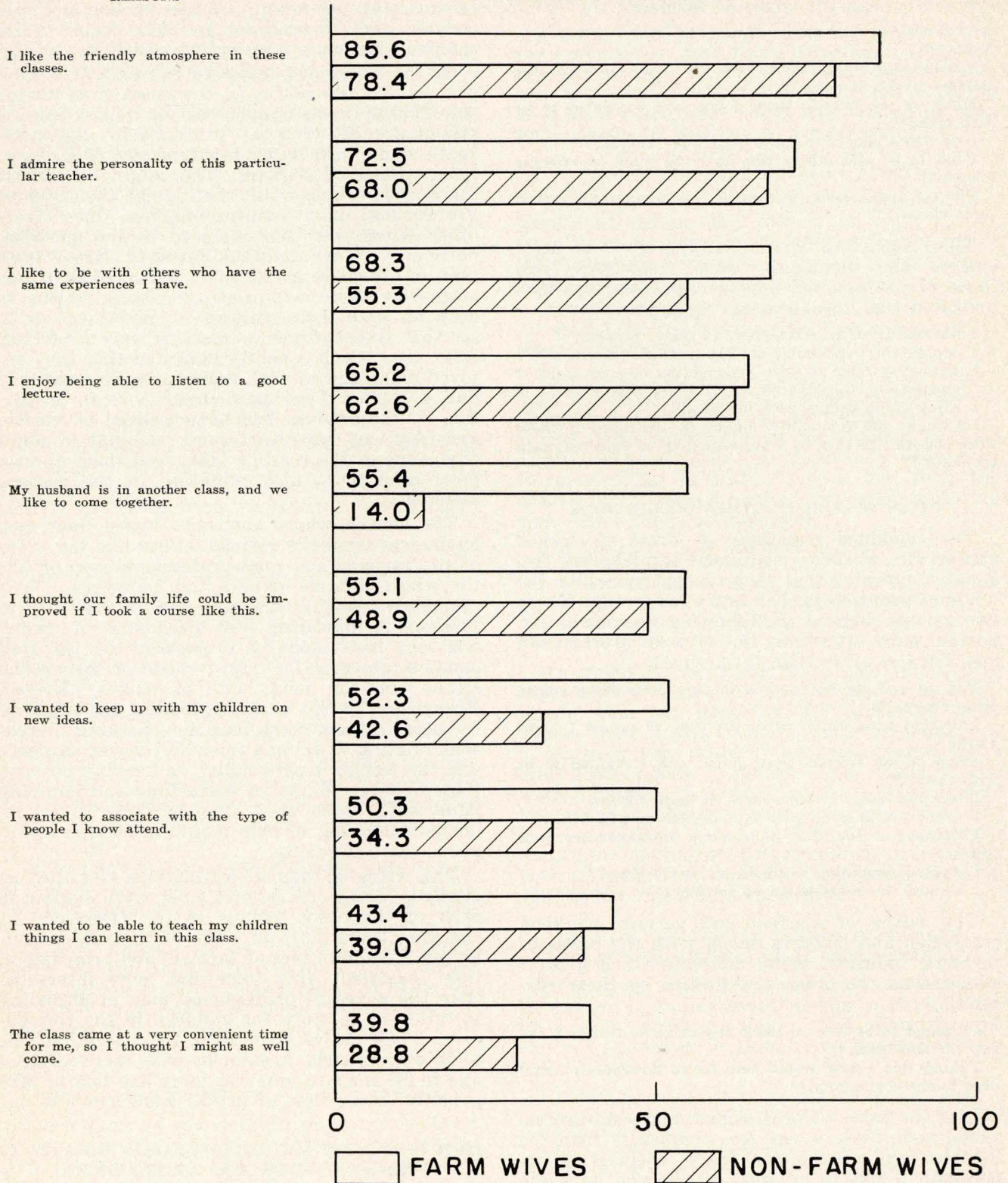


Fig. 3. The 10 reasons most commonly checked by a higher percentage of farm than of nonfarm wives.

professional men in checking these reasons *less frequently* than the wives of farmers:

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

Taking this course could help me to do more for the children in the community.\*\*

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

The proprietors' wives, like the wives of farm owners and managers, *more frequently* than those of professional and semi-professional men indicated that these reasons were important:

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

#### WIVES OF MEN IN OTHER OCCUPATIONS

The combined responses of wives of clerical and service workers, craftsmen and laborers frequently indicated that they reacted more like the wives of proprietors than any other group. These two groups checked the following reasons as important *more often* than the wives of *professional* men but *less often* than *farm* wives:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.\*\*

The wives of clerical and service workers, craftsmen and laborers, along with the wives of farmers, indicated being motivated to a *greater extent* than the other two groups by these reasons:

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

Like the wives of professional and semi-professional men, these wives, *less frequently* than the farmers' and proprietors' wives, checked as important, "I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have."\*\*

In summation, the wives of farmers appear to have been motivated to attend to a greater extent than wives of men in other occupations by reasons concerned with (1) welfare of family and community, (2) improvement of their social

status, (3) opportunities to be with or make new friends, (4) personality of the teacher and procedures used in teaching and (5) desire to accompany husband in attending classes for adults.

Of the 22 reasons analyzed in relation to occupations of husbands, none was checked as having significantly more importance for motivating the attendance of wives of professional and semi-professional men than the attendance of wives of other groups of workers. This might be because the reasons which would distinguish the wives of professional and semi-professional men from other wives were not included in the questionnaire or were not analyzed. Fewer of these women than of other groups of wives indicated that they attended classes to improve their social status, to keep up with their children on new ideas or to see that the consumer's interests were protected. Also, they less frequently indicated that they enjoyed doing things with their hands or wanted to find a use for their spare time. A large proportion of these wives had some college education, and they may have been more reluctant to admit that some of the reasons influenced them or may have been more discriminating in the reasons selected.

The women whose husbands owned their own businesses tended to respond either like the wives of professional and semi-professional men or like the wives of farm owners and managers. Their responses resembled the responses of the wives of farmers in indicating that attendance of classes was not motivated by a concern for the consumer's interests, for improvement of their social status and for being with or making friends. Proprietors' wives tended to be like the wives of farmers in their more frequent checking of reasons relating to liking a friendly class atmosphere and the teacher's personality, to keeping up with their children, filling in spare time and enjoying hand work. Also, they, like the farm wives, reported attending to help maintain classes to improve the community.

The wives of men in occupations classified as clerical, service, crafts and labor were similar to each of the other groups in the frequency of checking importance of some of the reasons analyzed. Like the wives of farmers and proprietors, they indicated being somewhat more interested than the wives of professional men in attending in order to do more for children in the community. Their desire to improve their social status, to be with friends, to keep up with their children and to fill in spare time was more like that of proprietors' wives than of professional men's wives.

#### HOW IS SUBJECT MATTER OF CLASSES RELATED TO REASONS GIVEN FOR ATTENDANCE?

The reasons given the women to mark with respect to the relative importance for their own attendance were extremely varied. Some referred to reasons that might be more appropriate to one attending a clothing or craft class in which articles were produced than one attending a class

in family relationships or nutrition where no products were made. It seemed reasonable to think that women might attend classes in one subject for different reasons than might those who attended a class dealing with a totally different subject.

To test the hypothesis that certain reasons for attending classes in one area of subject matter would differ from those for attending in other areas, data concerning the areas taught in the classes under study were obtained from the teachers. The six subject areas in which classes in this study were taught are given below, together with the number of women enrolled in each:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Clothing                               | 346 |
| Crafts                                 | 90  |
| Family relations and child development | 99  |
| Food and nutrition                     | 143 |
| Home furnishings                       | 276 |
| Combinations of two or more areas      | 404 |

Only 16 reasons in the questionnaire pertained to special areas; hence, these were selected for analysis. Each of the 16 reasons differentiated at least one group from the others to a significant degree.

#### WOMEN ENROLLED IN CLOTHING CLASSES

Evidently women in clothing classes were attending to meet a felt need for specific help, since they, *more frequently* than those in other classes, checked as important these two items on the questionnaire:

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*  
I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*

Additional evidence that they enrolled for definite reasons is seen in the fact that they *less frequently* than those in some classes indicated that they came because they wanted something to fill in their spare time.\*\*

Since most of the clothing classes were sewing groups, it is not surprising that the desire for increasing their skill\*\* characterized this group *more* than those in other classes. Evidently this skill was thought of as personal achievement rather than as contributing to the family welfare, for women in clothing classes reported being *less motivated* than women attending other classes by these two items concerning their families:

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

Since many of the clothing classes were developing construction rather than selection abilities, it is not surprising that *fewer* of the enrollees expected to gain some ability or information to help them meet social-civic responsibility. The proportion of women in clothing classes who checked "much" was *lower* than in most of the classes to the following two statements:

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

The nature of the course may also have affected the response to two items relating to methods used in classes. Those in clothing classes *more commonly* indicated enjoyment of participating in a good discussion\*\* and *less commonly* than some classes in listening to a good lecture.\*\*

#### WOMEN ENROLLED IN CRAFT CLASSES

Two of the statements that differentiated, to a significant extent, the women in craft classes from those in other areas suggest that *more* of the women in craft classes were motivated by a desire for personal recreation:

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

There was a greater tendency for these women than the others to check as important the reason, "I enjoy doing things with my hands."\*

Using this course for its contribution to their family or community life apparently influenced those enrolling in crafts courses less than the other women, since a *smaller proportion* indicated these three items as important:

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.\*\*

I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

As might be expected, the items relating to enjoyment of a good discussion\* and a good lecture\*\* were *less important* for women in these classes than in other classes since these methods of teaching were probably used less frequently in craft classes than in others. Also, fewer of the women in craft classes envisioned these classes as important in adding to their knowledge\*\* or giving them help on specific problems.\*\* Apparently the major motivation for attending such classes was recreation or learning something about a subject on which they knew little.\*\*

#### WOMEN ENROLLED IN CLASSES ON FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS AND CHILD DEVELOPMENT

In contrast to the women in craft classes, those in classes in family relationships and child development *more commonly* than other groups checked as important three items concerned with their families:

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I thought this class might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

When the responses were examined in relation to the ages of their children, it was found that there was a greater tendency for the mothers who had children of school age than those with pre-school children to check the first of these statements as important.\*\* Also, those with children

of school age or older more frequently checked the second item as important.\*\*

The women taking courses in family relations and child development were *more likely* than those in other areas to indicate that they believed the course would help them to do more for children in the community.\*\* However, they did not appear to be motivated more than the other groups to join the classes to improve the community by helping to maintain the class.

Those taking classes in this area of subject matter *less frequently* than others attributed importance to the following statements:

I wanted to increase my skill.\*

I enjoy doing things with my hands.\*\*

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

It appears that these women were interpreting "skill" as manipulative in nature rather than as skills relating to relationships with people.

Also, this group of women reported being motivated *less* than some other groups by these reasons:

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

Only 15 percent indicated that they came because they recognized specific problems in this area—as contrasted with 50 percent of those enrolled in clothing classes and 41 percent in home furnishings classes. It seems likely that women recognize problems more readily in areas involving the making of articles than in areas involving human relations or are more reluctant to think of difficulties in child guidance and family relationships as "problems."

#### WOMEN ENROLLED IN CLASSES ON FOOD AND NUTRITION

Only 2 of the 16 reasons analyzed by subject matter differentiated the women enrolled in food and nutrition classes from other groups. They reported more frequently than those in clothing and crafts classes that they were motivated to attend to improve their family life\*\* and to keep up with their children on new ideas.\*\* Three reasons, however, did distinguish this group by being checked as *less important* than some groups in their decision to enroll in the class:

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I feel I know little about this subject and thought this class would help.\*\*

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

#### WOMEN ENROLLED IN CLASSES IN HOME FURNISHINGS

Only 1 of the 16 reasons analyzed was *more frequently* checked as having much importance by women in home furnishings classes: "I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture."\*\* On three statements these women *more* commonly than the other groups indicated that they were influenced to *some extent*:

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I feel I know little about this subject and thought this class could help me.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

These women also checked *more frequently* than women in clothing and craft classes items about the course contributing to the improvement of their family life.\*\*

By way of summary, several reasons were found to differentiate the women attending the various types of classes. Those in clothing classes were distinguished from others by checking more definite purposes—purposes concerned with obtaining help on specific problems and increasing their skill. The women in craft classes appear to have been more interested in classes to serve their personal recreation needs than were women attending other types of classes. The ones enrolled in clothing and in craft classes indicated less motivation to attend than other groups because of a concern for improving family life or the community.

In contrast the enrollees in classes studying family relationships and child development tended more frequently than others to indicate the desire to make a greater contribution to the welfare of their families and communities. Few of these women, however, indicated that they came with specific problems on which they recognized a need for help.

Either the women in food and nutrition classes were not greatly different from the others in their reasons for attendance or the reasons analyzed were inadequate to reveal their unique purposes. They were more concerned about attending to improve family life and to keep up with their children on new ideas than the women enrolled in clothing and craft classes. Like those in family relationships and child development classes, they failed to indicate that specific problems motivated their attendance.

The women attending classes in home furnishings were more like those in family relationships and child development in their interest in improving their family life. The women in all groups more frequently checked this type of reason as important if they had children.\*\* The desire to find a means of using their spare time did not characterize the home furnishing classes.

#### HOW IS SIZE OF TOWN IN WHICH CLASSES ARE HELD RELATED TO REASONS WOMEN GIVE FOR ATTENDANCE?

Today mass media and rapid transportation make new ideas and information as readily available to rural as to city people. However, differences remain in the environment that might affect the interests and concerns of those living in or near towns and cities of various sizes. People living in small communities might know each other and have enough opportunities for social activities outside of adult classes. Therefore, reasons related to social opportunities afforded by the class might be of little importance to the

enrollees. On the other hand, they might look forward to class attendance as a pleasant opportunity to meet friends. People in larger towns and cities might be greatly influenced to attend classes by the opportunity to meet people and make friends or they might have ample opportunity for social life in other groups and attend classes mainly for the opportunity to learn new ideas, information or skills.

It was also thought possible that, since many retired people live in small towns, the homemakers there who are drawn to adult classes might be less busy than those in cities and be looking mainly for something to fill their spare time.

A major objective of the study was to find if differences in motivation were evident in the reasons given by women attending classes in towns and cities of different sizes. Consequently, the 55 towns drawn in the two samples (1949-50 and 1950-51) were classified into three groups according to population: (1) less than 2,500, (2) 2,500 to 6,999 and (3) 7,000 to 49,999. There were 33 towns in the first, 16 in the second and 6 in the third group. In some towns, particularly the larger ones, more than one adult homemaking class was being held during the years the data were collected. Hence, the number of classes was 35, 20 and 15, respectively. Because of the difficulties<sup>14</sup> in obtaining information about programs in towns with populations over 49,999, no data were included in this study from towns of that size. However, a survey was made in Des Moines<sup>15</sup> in 1948 using the questionnaire which was slightly revised for use in this study. Findings from that survey will be noted whenever appropriate.

In each of the three groups of towns, more than 70 percent of the women checked reasons which indicated that they were motivated to attend classes by a general desire to learn. Four statements of this nature were included in the questionnaire, and all were in the list of 10 most frequently checked as having much importance in the present study, as well as in the Des Moines study. Three of the four elicited approximately the same high proportion, at least 80 percent, of responses from the women regardless of the size of town:

I enjoy getting new ideas.

I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.

I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life.

In addition, differences among towns were not significant for two other reasons, which were reported as important by 55 and 72 percent, respectively, of all the women:

I feel I know little about this subject and thought this class could help me.

I enjoy doing things with my hands.

Only 40 percent of the women in Des Moines had indicated that the first item had considerable

weight in their decision but 75 percent had checked the second as having much importance.

In contrast, each of the eight statements relating to the desire for social contacts differentiated among the women in towns of different sizes. The proportion of the women checking the following three statements as having much importance decreased as the size of the town increased:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

The women in the Des Moines classes responded similarly to the women in towns of 7,000 to 49,999 population on the first and third of these statements. The second item had been restated in the present study, so no comparison can be made.

One of the four reasons for attendance which related specifically to families, "I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas,"\*\* differentiated among married women in towns of the three population groups. The smallest towns (under 2,500) had the largest proportion of women who checked this reason as important, and the largest towns had the lowest proportion. The responses to the other three reasons related to families were not significantly different in towns of various sizes when the responses of the three groups were compared, but did differentiate among towns when they were placed in two groups: less than 7,000 and 7,000 or more. These three reasons were believed important by *more* married women in *smaller* than in larger towns:

I thought this course might help me meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.\*\*

The first two reasons were checked by about the same proportion of women in Des Moines as in towns of 7,000 to 49,999 population. The third was restated after Baumgartner collected her data, so comparisons could not be made with Des Moines.

Attendance because of concern for persons outside their families also appears to be related to the size of town. As the size *increased*, a *smaller proportion* of women checked these items on the questionnaire:

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

The women in Des Moines tended to respond like those in the largest towns in the present study on the first two items but more frequently indicated the last item as important than any of the groups in the present study.

<sup>14</sup>See Introduction for explanation of sampling.

<sup>15</sup>Ruth E. Baumgartner, op. cit.

There also was evidence that women in towns of different sizes vary in interest in increasing their skills and making articles. The importance of reasons of this nature was significantly different when responses on the basis of size of town were tested. As the size of town increased up to 50,000, *more women* reported they attended class to increase their skill.\*\* This trend was not continued, however, in Des Moines where a smaller proportion of women than in small towns checked this as important. In contrast, those enrolled in towns of 7,000 to 49,999 population *less frequently* than the women in smaller towns reported attending because of a desire for an opportunity to make things.\*\* The Des Moines women responded more like the women in the smaller than the larger towns in the present investigation.

Wanting to know more about the subject under study\*\* was frequently checked of *much importance* in Des Moines and in towns of all sizes but in the present study the percentage rose from 76 to 87 as the size of town increased.

The women in the smaller towns rather than in the larger tended to check *more frequently* two quite dissimilar reasons:

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to find time to do at home.\*\*

In none of the groups nor in Des Moines did the proportion of women checking the first reason as important exceed 22 percent, but almost 50 percent in the present study and about 40 percent in Des Moines checked the second reason. It is surprising to find that an item similar to the first one above, "I wanted something interesting to do," did not differentiate between women in towns of different sizes. On the average, 48 percent checked it as important while in Des Moines only 28 percent checked it similarly.

#### TOWNS OF LESS THAN 2,500 POPULATION

The women in the smallest towns seemed to attach much importance to 10 items which they checked *more frequently* than the women in larger towns. Four of these suggest a desire for social contacts:

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

One of the 10 reasons was related to their families: "I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas."\*\*\* Three indicated a concern for their communities as a motivation:

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

The interests of the women enrolled in classes in small towns are further revealed by their responses to reasons indicating specific goals. They tended *more* than the women in larger towns to check these as important:

I wanted something to fill in my spare time.\*\*

I wanted the chance to do things I never seem to have time to do at home.\*\*

On the other hand, they *less frequently* than other groups reported these:

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*

#### TOWNS OF 2,500 TO 6,999 POPULATION

The women attending classes in towns of this size *more frequently* than either of the other two groups checked these reasons as important:

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.\*\*

I admire the personality of this particular teacher.\*\*

The frequency of "much" responses on 13 reasons checked by the women attending classes in towns of this size fell between the frequencies of those in smaller and larger towns. The women in towns of 2,500 to 6,999 population, however, tended to be more like the former than the latter in *more frequently* indicating these 10 reasons as important:

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

I wanted a chance to make some new friends.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.\*\*

I thought this course could help me meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

I thought this community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.\*\*

I like to get away from regular duties for a while.\*\*

The women in the middle-sized towns resembled those in the larger towns in *more frequently checking* "much" to two reasons:

I've always wanted to know more about this subject.\*\*

I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.\*\*

#### TOWNS OF 7,000 TO 49,999 POPULATION

In the largest towns in the study, the women were *less likely* than women in smaller towns to check the one differentiating statement which related to a general desire to learn, "I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education."\*\*\* The women in Des Moines extended this trend but no such trend was found among the other three statements relating to a desire for learning. A



higher proportion of the women in the larger towns and in Des Moines were college graduates, and, as pointed out in another section, they may have interpreted the phrase "more education" to mean an additional amount of formal education and, hence, may not have thought of classes for adults in that category.

In contrast to both groups of women in the smaller towns, women in these largest towns appear to be less concerned with achieving social status by attending classes since they *less frequently* checked "much" on the following items:

I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.\*\*

The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.\*\*

The first item above was restated so a comparison cannot be made with the reactions of women attending classes in Des Moines. The second item, however, elicited responses that were similar in frequency in Des Moines to those found in the largest towns in the present study.

The failure on the part of more women in large towns to see in these classes the opportunities for furthering friendships is suggested by the fact that they *less commonly* checked these three statements as important:

I wanted a chance to make new friends.\*\*

I like to be with others who have the same experience I have.\*\*

I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.\*\*

If classes are more formal in larger centers, that fact in itself may account for this response. These women also indicated that they were *less motivated* to attend by the personality of the teacher\*\* than did those in smaller towns. It is interesting to find that the women in Des Moines tended to react more like the women in smaller towns to the two reasons listed last and to the item concerning the teacher's personality.

The women in the largest towns were *less likely* to respond "much" than those in the smaller towns to items relating to community welfare:

Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.\*\*

I thought this community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class.\*\*

I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.\*\*

The percentages of Des Moines women checking these items as important were higher than those in the larger towns in the present study, and the response to the first statement was even higher than that in the smallest towns.

Three items concerned with the effect of class learning on family members, particularly children, appear to have been of *least importance* to the women in the largest towns:

I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.\*\*

I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.\*\*

I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.\*\*

The first of these was changed before the questionnaire was used in the present study, the second item obtained a similar proportion of "much" responses in Des Moines but the third was less commonly checked as important by women in Des Moines than by any of the groups in the present study.

Using classes as a means of "getting away from regular duties for a while"\*\*\* appears to characterize women in the largest towns and in Des Moines *less commonly* than the women in towns of less than 7,000 population.

A long-standing desire to learn more about the subject being studied\*\* seems to have motivated women *more frequently* in the largest towns. Those in Des Moines were less concerned by this desire.

From the findings presented in this section, it appears that women in towns of less than 2,500 population were more likely than those in larger towns to be motivated to attend by (1) a desire for status and for social contacts and (2) a concern for improving family life and for community welfare. The women in towns of 2,500 to 6,999 population tended on the whole to respond more like those in the smaller rather than the larger towns, but they indicated more concern than either of the other groups for improving their family life and a greater liking of the teacher's personality and a friendly classroom atmosphere. Women attending from the largest towns in the study reported being less affected than the other groups by many of the reasons presented in the schedule. The one exception was the desire to learn more about the subject.

APPENDIX A  
QUESTIONNAIRE USED IN THE STUDY

REASONS FOR ATTENDING ADULT

HOMEMAKING CLASSES

How many years have you attended adult homemaking classes *before* this year?..... How many meetings have you attended this year?..... If you are employed outside your home, what type of work do you do?.....

Are you divorced?..... Widowed?..... Married?..... Single?..... What is your husband's occupation?.....

Does he own his business?..... If he is a farmer, is he a farm owner?..... Renter?..... Farm worker?..... What is the last school level which you attended? Elementary school.....

Attended high school..... Graduated from high school..... Attended college.....

Graduated from college..... Name of college.....

In what age group are you? 16-25 years....., 26-35....., 36-45....., 46-55....., 56-65....., 66 or over.....

If you have children what are their ages? .....

Below you will find a list of reasons for attending adult classes. Check (X) *each* reason in one of the three columns at the right, to show how important each reason was in bringing you to *this* class.

| Reasons for Attending   | Importance To Me |       |       |
|---|------------------|-------|-------|
|   | Much             | Some  | None  |
| 1. Some of my friends have taken the course, so I thought I should take it.           | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 2. I've always wanted to know more about this subject.                                | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 3. I thought our family life could be improved if I took a course like this.          | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 4. I had certain specific problems on which I needed help.                            | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 5. The place of meeting is very convenient for me.                                    | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 6. I enjoy taking part in a good discussion.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 7. My family urged me to attend.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 8. I enjoy getting new ideas.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 9. Taking this course would help me to do more for children in the community.         | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 10. I wanted an opportunity to make things.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 11. The class came at a very convenient time for me, so I thought I might as well go. | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 12. I enjoy watching a good demonstration.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 13. The up and coming women in this community attend these classes.                   | .....            | ..... | ..... |

| Reasons for Attending  | Importance To Me |       |       |
|--|------------------|-------|-------|
|  | Much             | Some  | None  |
| 14. I wanted to add to my store of knowledge.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 15. I thought the community might be improved if there were classes like this, so I am attending to help maintain the class. | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 16. I wanted something interesting to do.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 17. Many of my friends were going, and I wanted to be with them.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 18. I enjoy being able to listen to a good lecture.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 19. The class is being sponsored by the school, P.T.A. or some other organization.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 20. I think I ought to keep on learning new things all my life.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 21. I wanted to see that consumer's interests are protected.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 22. I wanted a chance to make some new friends.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 23. The class came at a time when it was easy to get someone to look after my home responsibilities.                         | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 24. I enjoy being able to work on projects of my own in a group.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 25. I feel that I know little about this subject and thought this class could help me.                                       | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 26. I enjoy taking responsibility in a group such as this class permits.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 27. I thought it would be helpful to be with people who have had more experience in this subject than I.                     | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 28. I enjoy doing things with my hands.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 29. I like this teacher's way of presenting things.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 30. I like the friendly atmosphere in these classes.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 31. I like to get away from regular duties for a while.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 32. I like to be with others who have the same experiences I have.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 33. My husband is in another class, and we like to come together.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 34. I thought it might help me with my job.  | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 35. I admire the personality of this particular teacher.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 36. I wanted to associate with the type of people I know attend.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 37. I wanted to increase my skill.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 38. I thought this course might help me to meet new responsibilities which arise as my family grows up.                      | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 39. I wanted to keep up with my children on new ideas.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 40. I wanted the chance to do things that I never seem to have time to do at home.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 41. I wanted something to fill in my spare time.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 42. I wanted to be able to teach my children things I can learn in this class.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |
| 43. I wanted the satisfaction of getting more education.   | .....            | ..... | ..... |

**BE SURE you have checked EACH statement!**

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