

1985

Career development of college graduates employed in retailing

Grace I. Kunz
Iowa State University

Follow this and additional works at: <https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd>

 Part of the [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), and the [Higher Education and Teaching Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Kunz, Grace I., "Career development of college graduates employed in retailing " (1985). *Retrospective Theses and Dissertations*. 8716.
<https://lib.dr.iastate.edu/rtd/8716>

This Dissertation is brought to you for free and open access by the Iowa State University Capstones, Theses and Dissertations at Iowa State University Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Retrospective Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Iowa State University Digital Repository. For more information, please contact digirep@iastate.edu.

INFORMATION TO USERS

This reproduction was made from a copy of a manuscript sent to us for publication and microfilming. While the most advanced technology has been used to photograph and reproduce this manuscript, the quality of the reproduction is heavily dependent upon the quality of the material submitted. Pages in any manuscript may have indistinct print. In all cases the best available copy has been filmed.

The following explanation of techniques is provided to help clarify notations which may appear on this reproduction.

1. Manuscripts may not always be complete. When it is not possible to obtain missing pages, a note appears to indicate this.
2. When copyrighted materials are removed from the manuscript, a note appears to indicate this.
3. Oversize materials (maps, drawings, and charts) are photographed by sectioning the original, beginning at the upper left hand corner and continuing from left to right in equal sections with small overlaps. Each oversize page is also filmed as one exposure and is available, for an additional charge, as a standard 35mm slide or in black and white paper format.*
4. Most photographs reproduce acceptably on positive microfilm or microfiche but lack clarity on xerographic copies made from the microfilm. For an additional charge, all photographs are available in black and white standard 35mm slide format.*

*For more information about black and white slides or enlarged paper reproductions, please contact the Dissertations Customer Services Department.

UMI University
Microfilms
International

8604486

Kunz, Grace I.

CAREER DEVELOPMENT OF COLLEGE GRADUATES EMPLOYED IN
RETAILING

Iowa State University

Ph.D. 1985

University
Microfilms
International 300 N. Zeeb Road, Ann Arbor, MI 48106

Copyright 1985

by

Kunz, Grace I.

All Rights Reserved

PLEASE NOTE:

In all cases this material has been filmed in the best possible way from the available copy. Problems encountered with this document have been identified here with a check mark ✓.

1. Glossy photographs or pages _____
2. Colored illustrations, paper or print _____
3. Photographs with dark background _____
4. Illustrations are poor copy _____
5. Pages with black marks, not original copy _____
6. Print shows through as there is text on both sides of page _____
7. Indistinct, broken or small print on several pages ✓
8. Print exceeds margin requirements _____
9. Tightly bound copy with print lost in spine _____
10. Computer printout pages with indistinct print _____
11. Page(s) _____ lacking when material received, and not available from school or author.
12. Page(s) _____ seem to be missing in numbering only as text follows.
13. Two pages numbered _____. Text follows.
14. Curling and wrinkled pages _____
15. Dissertation contains pages with print at a slant, filmed as received _____
16. Other _____

University
Microfilms
International

Career development of college graduates employed in retailing

by

Grace I. Kunz

A Dissertation Submitted to the
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department: Professional Studies in Education

Major: Education (Higher Education)

Approved:

Signature was redacted for privacy.

In Charge of Major Work

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Major Department

Signature was redacted for privacy.

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University

Ames, Iowa

1985

Copyright © Grace I. Kunz, 1985. All rights reserved.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
INTRODUCTION	1
STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND RESEARCH PLAN	3
Goals and Research Questions	4
Definitions	5
The Research Plan	6
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	9
LITERATURE REVIEW	13
Theories of Careers	13
The Retail Curriculum	20
Careers in Retail Organizations	28
PROCEDURE	37
Development of Instruments	39
Selection of Informants	44
Conducting Ethnographic Interviews	49
Data Analysis	53

ETHNOGRAPHY OF RETAIL CAREERS	56
Careers in the Retail Environment	57
<u>Department stores</u>	58
<u>Specialty stores</u>	60
<u>Discount store</u>	61
<u>Promotion</u>	62
<u>Management development</u>	65
<u>Commitment to a retailing career</u>	68
<u>Computers and the retail environment</u>	68
<u>Summary</u>	70
Taxonomy of Retail Careers	71
People in Middle and Upper Management	76
Career Development	82
<u>Mentoring and the fast-track</u>	85
<u>Patterns of employment</u>	90
<u>Careers that sputter, burnout,</u>	94
<u>derail, and stall</u>	
<u>Summary</u>	99
Educational Background and a Retail Career	100
<u>Recruiting</u>	103
<u>Merchandising programs</u>	105
<u>MBA and a retail career</u>	113
<u>Two-year programs</u>	116
<u>Summary</u>	116

RETAIL CAREERS RELATIVE TO CAREER THEORY AND RESEARCH	119
Recommendations for Further Research	130
SUMMARY	134
REFERENCES	142
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	149
APPENDIX A: TABLES	150
APPENDIX B	157
Correspondence and Information Forms	158
Personal Interview Guide	163
Demographics Form	171
Thank You Letter	172

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1. Taxonomy of retail careers	151
Table 2. Demographic, employment, and education profiles of informants	154
Table 3. Number of retail employers and career paths of informants	155
Table 4. Employment, education, and career paths of participants	156

INTRODUCTION

The retailers' investment in human resources frames the lives of millions of retail employees. Sears is the nation's third largest employer with over 426,000 employees; K-Mart is eighth with over 245,000 and J.C. Penney is twelfth with over 174,000 employees (Forbes, 1984). The majority of these retail employees are women that are clustered in sales and clerical positions, while middle to upper management is still over 70% male (Shaeffer and Lynton, 1979). A long-term trend in retailing has been to reduce traditional customer services in order to control labor costs (Bluestone, 1981). This suggests that an increasing proportion of human resource costs is devoted to management personnel.

Research regarding careers is a relatively recent area of inquiry, while career research in the retail setting is almost nonexistent. Most studies that deal with career development, Gould (1972) and Levinson (1978) for example, have used male subjects. Careers of women in business have been explored by only a few researchers (Adams, 1979; Hennig and Jardim, 1977; Kanter, 1977). Some of the researchers and theorists have explored career selection, others have focused on career development. How do thousands of people choose a retailing career and what are those careers like? How does career development for men differ from that of women? What are the career experiences and expectations of retail executives?

Retail recruiters, when interviewing for management personnel on college campuses, frequently describe the career opportunities in

retailing as well as express characteristics that they are looking for in graduates. Recruiters from different types of retail organizations describe different types of career paths. How do careers differ in different retail organizations? Are the experiences of those involved in retailing careers consistent with the picture drawn by the recruiters? What are the perspectives of those that are involved in retailing careers? What are the responsibilities and opportunities in the retail environment?

The American Collegiate Retailing Association (ACRA) has a membership of over 130 colleges and universities that offer programs in retail management and merchandising. Even though colleges and students make large investments in giving or acquiring retail management and merchandising training, many retail recruiters look with equal favor on graduates of any four-year program. Anthropology, psychology, business, fashion merchandising, and graduates of any other program are equally viable candidates for retail management training (Recruiting, 1982). With this observation, more questions arise. How is career development related to college background? Why are there so many retail management programs if the graduates are not preferred by retailers? What contribution does college education make to a retailing career? How well does the retail organization make use of education, abilities, and skills of management employees? Why do women remain concentrated in lower level positions? Obviously, many questions are unanswered about the contribution of academic training to retailing careers and about the career development of college graduates employed by retailers.

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM AND RESEARCH PLAN

During the last 30 years the growth and development of adults has been an important subject of inquiry. Erikson's work (1959) on the seven stages of man is a classic example of the theory of adult development. Erikson's theory is organized in sequential stages with a certain time frame associated with each stage. Other researchers like Levinson (1978) focused more closely on the working lives of the adult and developed theories of career development. Careers take place in organizations and therefore an adult's working career is the result of the interaction of the individual and the organization(s) in which he/she is employed. Dalton et al. (1977) explored the interrelationship of the developmental stages of the adult with the organizational environment. Both factors were found to be critical to career development and job satisfaction.

The purpose of this study was to describe the environment for and develop a description of careers in retailing based on experiences of retail executives. The perception of the participants was important because it was in the retail environment that each person took advantage of opportunities, experienced frustrations, made use of their academic background, and made career decisions. Therefore, an ethnography of retail environments was developed using the perspective and experiences of the participants.

Goals and Research Questions

1. Develop an ethnographic description of career development in retail organizations grounded in data collected from selected retail executives.
2. Develop a basis for a substantive theory of retail careers which can be expanded in future research.
3. Compare careers in retail organizations with previously developed career theory and selected research findings.
4. Examine the relationship between educational background and retailing careers.

More specifically, the following research questions were addressed:

1. Are there stages of career development in retailing?
2. Is there a time frame related to the development of retail careers?
3. Is there a relationship between such a time frame and any stages identified in the development process?
4. Do different types of retail organizations have different processes and opportunities for career development?
5. Does career development in retailing differ for men and women?
6. Is there a relationship between educational background and career development in retailing?
7. Are there benefits in career opportunities or career development related to academic training in a retailing or merchandising program?

8. Does career development in retail environments confirm selected theory or theories of career development?

Definitions

1. Career -- The individually perceived sequence of attitudes and behaviors associated with work-related experiences and activities over the span of the person's life (Hall, 1976).
2. Career development -- A lifelong and changing process of examining the possibilities for work related experiences and activities and deciding with awareness what one wishes to do with one's life ("Born free": A world of options, 1978).
3. Culture -- The acquired knowledge that people use to interpret experience and generate social behavior (Spradley, 1979).
(Retailing is the culture studied in this research.)
4. Department store -- A large retail institution which carries a wide variety of merchandise lines with a reasonably good selection within each line (Lewison & DeLozier, 1982).
5. Discount store -- A retailing institution that sells a wide variety of merchandise at less than traditional retail prices (Lewison & DeLozier, 1982).
6. Ethnographic analysis -- The search for the parts of a culture and their relationships as conceptualized by informants (Spradley, 1979).
7. Ethnography -- The discovery and description of the cultural meaning system that people use to organize their behavior and interpret experience (Spradley, 1979, p. 173).

8. Informants -- The subjects, suppliers of information, in ethnographic research.
9. Retailing -- Any business that directs its marketing efforts toward the final consumer for the purpose of selling goods or services (Lewison & DeLozier, 1982).
10. Specialty store -- A retail institution which limits its product/service offering (Lewison & DeLozier, 1982).
11. Substantive theory -- theory grounded in data related to a concrete, empirical, and problematic concern (Van Maanen, 1977).
12. Triangulation -- Checking inferences drawn from one set of data sources by collecting data from others; a way as to counteract various possible threats to the validity of the analysis (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983).

The Research Plan

In order to fully describe the environment for retail careers, diversity was sought in the experiences of the informants regarding types of retail employers, the positions (job titles) that the participants held, and their academic backgrounds. The plan was to interview at least 30 informants that were employed by at least five different retailers in several different geographic locations in the upper midwest. This provided a variety of experiences on which to base the ethnographic description and limited the study sufficiently so that it was accomplished within the time frame available. Additional dimensions of each retailer was explored by an interview with the personnel director. The result was

a better understanding of personnel policies, recruiting procedures, and advancement criteria. Any available documents containing information related to these topics were utilized. Field notes were compiled by the researcher during all phases of the data collection process.

Candidates for the research were identified by Iowa State University graduates who were employed by major retail organizations in the midwest. A questionnaire mailed to each candidate, when returned, provided the necessary information to select the informants, those that participated in an audio-taped interview. The interviews were taped because of the importance of recording observations in the informant's own words. Significant meaning was lost when information was immediately translated into the words of the researcher (Spradley, 1979). A series of questions was developed to assure coverage of similar topics in each interview.

Analysis of ethnographic data proceeded in a manner that preserved the perspective of the informants. The first step was to translate the taped interviews so all the data could be reviewed. Interviews were analyzed for similarities and differences in perspectives on the various issues and research questions. A Taxonomy of Retail Careers was developed that described the major functions of retail organizations with associated career levels and job titles. Next the data were divided into its component parts by major topic and in some cases by individual questions for closer comparison. Next, demographic information was tabulated and tables were used to help in visualization and summary of data. Documents were subjected to content analysis, a systematic evaluation of the information presented. Triangulation, a comparison of views on various topics from different sources of data, was used to

validate inferences. The Ethnography of Retail Careers was constructed based on analytic induction. No previously developed career theory was assumed but rather the descriptions were inductively derived from the data. A discussion of issues related to the research questions guided the description of retail careers in the ethnography. The characteristics of retail careers were compared to selected career theory and recommendations for further research were made.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

There is considerable discussion in social science literature regarding the development of theory and research methodology using qualitative (naturalistic) and quantitative (positivistic) methods (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Bruyn, 1966; Denzin, 1978; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Kaplan, 1964; Spradley, 1979; Van Maanen, Dabbs, & Faulkner, 1982). The purpose here is not to add to the discussion but rather to use the qualitative methodology that has been so generously described.

According to Van Maanen et al. (1982), qualitative research methodology in organizational studies involves the following principles:

- 1) Analytic induction: ...the investigator is initially uncommitted to a particular theoretical model....
Generalizations are built from the ground up.
- 2) Proximity: Importance is placed on concrete occurrences and occasions....To the extent possible, people should be observed engaged in activities that matter to them...
- 3) Ordinary behavior: ...Qualitative research is interested in everyday activity as defined, enacted, and made problematic by persons going about their normal routines.
- 4) Structure as ritual constraint: ...Human actions are intentional, mediated by what people think they are accomplishing. To ignore these meanings and the contexts within which they are situationally relevant is to impose

structure rather than discover it.

5) Descriptive focus: ...The aims of revelation and disclosure take precedence over explanation and prediction.

(p. 16)

Qualitative research produces "descriptive data: people's own written or spoken words and observable behavior" (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975, p. 4). Participant observation or ethnography, as the methodology is now popularly called, was used to collect the descriptive data for this research. Spradley (1979) stated:

People everywhere learn their culture by observing other people, listening to them, and then making inferences. The ethnographer employs this same process of going beyond what is seen and heard to infer what people know. It involves reasoning from evidence (what we perceive) or from premises (what we assume). (p. 8)

The intensive involvement of the researcher in the research process is both one of the greatest advantages and limitations of ethnography. Data are mediated several times over: by the researcher's presence, by the researcher's cultural perspective, and by the self-reflection demanded of the informants. Although these limitations cannot be totally overcome, they must be recognized in order to exploit the advantages of the methodology (Van Maanen et al. 1982, p. 141).

The value of ethnography is perhaps most obvious in the development of description and theory. Ethnographic methodology, then, is particularly appropriate when the goals of this research are considered. Intense observation of activities and perspectives of research

participants make it possible to challenge misleading misconceptions that social scientists sometimes bring to the research. Ethnographers, when working in the field, have three primary sources of making cultural inferences: what people say, how people act, and from the objects that people use (Bogdan & Taylor 1975, Hammersley & Atkinson 1983, Spradley 1979). These were all used in developing the ethnographic descriptions of retail environments and career development.

One of the greatest criticisms of qualitative research is the difficulty of eliminating the effects of the researcher on the data. It is impossible to eliminate this effect as researchers are always a part of the world that they study. In ethnographic research, the researcher is an active part of the research process. Fieldwork requires that the researcher become a

...research instrument par excellence....Data are not taken at face value, but treated as a field of inferences in which hypothetical patterns can be identified and their validity tested out. Different research strategies are explored and their effects compared with a view to drawing theoretical conclusions. (Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983, p. 18)

The intensity of the involvement of the researcher with the participants varies with the methodology employed. Van Maanen (1977) says the researcher can adopt what is commonly described as the "insider or outsider perspective in organizational studies" (p. 19). To gain an insider's perspective, the researcher is compelled to enter the culture of the participants. The outsider perspective "seeks to describe aspects of the studied world about which the members of those worlds are

presumably unaware" (p. 19). Glaser (1968) suggests that:

the researcher with theoretical generation as the major objective need not know the concrete situation better than the people being described....The job is to generate categories and their properties for general and specific situations and problems....The form in which a theory is presented does not make it a theory; it is a theory because it explains or predicts something. (p. 30-31)

Thus, with the development of ethnographic descriptions and substantive theory as the primary goals of this research, the outsider perspective was used in this study.

Data collection, coding, and analysis proceed simultaneously as much as possible when analyzing ethnographic data. This allows the researcher to respond to the data and makes it possible to provide verification on certain points as needed (Bogdan & Taylor, 1975; Bruyn, 1966; Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Hammersley & Atkinson, 1983; Spradley, 1979; Van Maanen, 1977). The generation of theory, coupled with the notion of theory as process, requires that all of these operations be done together. The substantive theory is developed through analytic induction and written in narrative form. Key points are illustrated by characteristic examples from the data (Glaser & Strauss, 1967).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study of careers in the retail environment has many dimensions that have previously been explored by researchers. However, few researchers have dealt directly with careers in retailing and even fewer with the implications of educational preparation for retailing careers. Thus, this literature review is divided into three parts: 1) Theories of Careers, where theories of career development and selection are reviewed, 2) The Retail Curricula, where views of educators and retailers about educational preparation for retailing are reported, and 3) Careers in Retail Organizations, where research related retail careers are explored.

Theories of Careers

Careers have been an important subject of inquiry from the sociological, psychological, and organizational perspectives since the 1920s with a concentration of publications in the 1970s. Several researchers have summarized and evaluated research related to careers including Glaser, Ed. (1968), Organizational Careers: A Sourcebook for Theory; Osipow (1973), Theories of Career Development; Hall (1976), Career's in Organizations; Stevens-Long (1979), Adult life: Developmental Processes; Van Maanen, Ed. (1977), Organizational Careers: Some New Perspectives. These authors and editors presented, analyzed, and compared the several perspectives that have become prominent in the study of careers.

Glaser and Strauss (1967) argued for development of theory "grounded in data" beginning with "substantive theory" related to certain occupational situations. "Substantive theory" can be developed and refined to become "formal theory" (p. 3). However, over the years and between the various writers there has been little cross-referencing of theories and research. This appears to have stimulated some authors to do comparisons of theories to show their major similarities and differences.

Theories and findings that pertain to the research questions were selected to be included in this literature review. Some of the comparisons generated by other authors are included to give a sense of the relationships among the theories. Because of the scope of information and the multiplicity of perspectives, a complete survey of literature was not attempted here.

There are at least four theoretical treatments of career development: psychosocial, sociological, vocational, and organizational (Rush, Peacock, & Milkovich, 1980). The research regarding careers has had two dominant themes: career choice and career development. John L. Holland's Making Vocational Choices: A Theory of Careers (1973) is a prime example of the culmination of research that is vocational in nature and has focused on career choice. Holland developed a classification for personality interest styles including realistic, investigative, artistic, social, enterprising, and conventional styles. He then identified occupations that correspond to the interest styles and developed a "Self-directed Search" to determine appropriate occupations according to personality.

Grotevant, Scarr, and Weinberg (1978) asked the question, "Are career interests inheritable?" (p. 88) They used Holland's classification of personality interest styles to see if genes dictate occupational choice. They tested 491 families, 109 of which had adopted children.

The most striking evidence was the lack of similarity (or correlation) of interest between adoptive parents and their genetically unrelated children. The biological siblings were reasonably similar to each other, while the adoptive siblings showed no overall pattern of similarity. (p. 90)

These findings suggest that environmental influence has a limited effect on career choice.

While career choice tends to focus attention on the young adult, career development research sees the adult as an evolving, growing human being. Gould (1972) observed that adulthood as a developmental period had been conceptually and empirically ignored in the psychiatric literature. Erikson's work (1959) on the seven stages of man is probably the best known of what has been done. Gould reported two of his research projects including an observational study of psychiatric patients grouped by age and a questionnaire study of 524 non-patients. He found that developmental changes in adults tend to be time-dominated, but not necessarily age specific. An individual's sense of time and attitude toward self and others were found to be fundamental to adult development. Career development, in this psychosocial approach, is not a separate experience but is part of the development of the individual.

The career stage/life cycle theories developed by Erikson (1963),

Super (1957), and others give career development a more prominent focus and reflect the effort on the part of these researchers to make the theory age specific. In the following examples, numbers in parentheses give the age range for each stage; Erikson's stages of development are childhood (0-15), identity (15-25), intimacy (25-35), generativity (35-65), and ego integrity (65+). Super identified the stages of: growth (0-15), exploration (15-25), establishment (25-45), maintenance (45-65), and decline (65+). This simple comparison reveals one of the most important commonalities of the various theories, the time frame orientation, and it also points out two of the conflicts, inconsistent terminology and lack of age correspondence to career stage.

Levinson, Darrow, Klein, Levinson, and McKee (1974) also proposed a career stage model which Rush et al. (1980) attempted to test. Rush et al. concluded that there is a time-link to career development but not necessarily an age-link and that the stages are not necessarily experienced in the sequence that was hypothesized by Levinson et al.

While most research regarding career choice and career development proceeded with the aid of male subjects, more recently there has been considerable interest in the career development of females. Karelius (1982) produced a comparison of the early adult development of men and women using a life cycle perspective developed by Levinson (1978) for men and combined the work of several researchers (Bernard, 1976; Douvan & Adelson, 1966; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Stewart, 1977; Sales, 1978; Sheehy, 1976) to develop a life cycle for women. Karelius identified the 22-24 age for females as a phase where females often made a choice between

marriage and career. Males do not have to make that choice. That decision has a profound impact on career development throughout the females' lives. The comparison developed by Karelius suggests that it would not be appropriate to generalize findings of career research to women when using male subjects.

Karelius, in her own research, sought to describe, analyze and compare the early adult development (ages 22-32) of women and men who had enrolled in graduate school. Karelius found that the men in her study were primarily "life structure modifiers." Men tended to maintain their basic life structure while adding new roles as a result of developments like marriage, job transfer, or divorce. Men did not quit their jobs because they got married, got jobs, or because they got divorces. In contrast, women regarded changes in marital status as a "rebirth of individual potential" (p. 176). A late marriage (late 20's) resulted in reorientation from career to family. An early marriage followed by divorce resulted in reorientation from family to career. Women tended to be starting over rather than building on their previous life structure.

Some researchers, recognizing the importance of organizational constraints, have attempted to combine the career stage/life cycle theory with organizational theory. Kets de Vries (1978), in exploring the range of reactions to the mid-life and mid-career passage, proposed the following model as a descriptive of ways that a manager might cope with the combination of his own development and the demands of the organization in which he is employed. "Personality factors in combination with external circumstances will determine his style of coping..." (p. 51). Kets de Vries identified two polarities representing

the dimensions of the manager's relationship to his employing organization and to his personal life.

The first is the activity-passivity dimension indicating the pattern of activity and sense of dynamism with which the manager relates to the outside world. The second dimension represents the degree of reality with which the individual interprets and perceives his environment. Some managers accept reality--as disturbing as it may be--and deal with substantive issues. Others may not have attained this more mature psychological state and may resort to regressive, ritualistic, or distorted activities. We call this polarity the reality versus the distorted world orientation. (p. 51)

The combination of these dimensions results in four major styles with which managers may react to their environment: constructive, under-achievement, defensive, and depressed. These conceptualizations represent ideal styles and in reality one individual may manifest more than one style given different situations.

Success is another dimension of careers that has been studied. Dalton, Thompson, and Price (1977), in a research study involving about 2500 engineers, found "a negative correlation after age 35 between age and performance rating" (p. 20). He found that poor performance was often blamed on obsolescence, and so continuing education or additional coursework was often recommended. However, the data revealed that high performers were no more likely to have taken continuing education courses than low performers.

Thus, Dalton et al. embarked on a another study to answer the

following questions: "If high performers are not taking more courses than their peers, how are they different? What, if anything are they doing differently? In what respects have their careers been different?" (p. 22) They interviewed 550 professionally trained employees including 155 scientists, 268 engineers, 52 accountants, and 75 university professors. Subjects were selected to give representative samples of high and low performers. When they looked at time employed relative to performance rating they found that high performers that were early in their careers were performing different functions than high performers who were in the middle of their careers. Both these groups had different responsibilities than high performers whose careers were near completion. Further analysis revealed four distinct stages in the career of a professionally trained person. These four stages differ in the central activities of their jobs, the primary relationships with fellow workers, and the psychological orientation to the organization. For example, the central activities are Stage 1), helping, learning, and following directions; Stage 2), being an independent contributor; Stage 3), training; Stage 4), shaping the direction of the organization. The primary relationships are, Stage 1) apprentice, 2) colleague, 3) mentor, 4) sponsor. The major psychological issues are Stage 1) dependence, 2) independence, 3) assuming responsibility for others, 4) exercising power. Dalton et al. found that "it was the individuals who were moving successfully through these stages who had received the high performance ratings. Conversely, individuals who had remained in the early stages were likely to be low-rated" (p. 22).

The Dalton model provides a description of career growth as a

dynamic process that is the result of the interaction of three primary forces: The job(s) assigned the individual in the organization; The interaction of the individual with others inside and outside the organization; The personal development of the individual in these setting(s). Dalton's research also pointed out that there may be some faulty assumptions on the part of organizations and educators about the relationship between career growth and education.

The Retail Curriculum

Attention to retailing programs in four-year colleges receives sporadic attention from academicians. In 1978, a special issue of the Journal of Retailing focused on "retail education" (Hollander, Ed.). The purpose of the special issue was to increase the ties and understanding between educators and retailers. The special edition consisted of a series of articles authored by executives of major retail firms with the preface and a follow-up article by retail educators. The words of these retailers and educators reflect many difficulties and frustrations in teaching in retailing programs and in recruiting and developing retail management personnel.

The retailers discussed qualities needed to be successful in retailing, inadequacies of retail managers, educational requirements for retailing, and recruiting. One point of agreement was that the college program should include an internship, an apprenticeship, or a field experience program. Inadequacies of retail managers include skills in mathematics and negotiation. "Programs should be more practical and less theoretical...The best preparation for retailing is on the job" (p. 69).

Criteria for selecting recruits include education, experience, and personal qualities. Desired personal qualities include the ability to handle pressure, meet deadlines, assign priorities; a sense of urgency and flexibility; high motivation and enjoyment of making decisions. One retailer said that a commitment to retailing may be more important than capabilities because skills can be taught. No indication was given as to how these qualities are identified in recruits.

Many companies use educational criteria as a screening device. Harmon (1972) found that 49% of companies surveyed (not specifically retailing) used educational criteria in the selection of professional and managerial staff. But, in spite of its widespread use as a selection criterion, there is little evidence that educational attainment has any relationship to later job performance (Bray & Grant, 1966; Guion & Gottier, 1965; Miner 1968). However, education has been shown to be related to career advancement and salary (Doeringer & Piore (1971), Weisbrod & Karpoff (1968). Investment in college does not pay off as well as it once did. The rate of return relative to investment in college has been reduced from about 12% in the early 1960s to about 8% percent in the early 1970s (Freeman, 1976). Harlan and Weiss (1982) suggest that the use of educational credentials for higher level jobs, despite its typical low validity in predicting future job performance, is likely to discriminate against women and minorities because they are less likely to have completed a baccalaureate degree than Caucasian males and much less likely to have any college work beyond the bachelors degree.

Students should learn "how to get things done through others...how to handle and analyze information" (Hollander, Ed., 1978, p. 82-83).

"We do not limit the search for talent exclusively to retailing majors...look for a strong business foundation" (p. 67). Two dozen new recruits were asked about academic preparation for retailing by one of the executives. Specific business courses were identified as the most useful while vendor relations, time budgeting, and managing people were the most difficult to learn.

According to Hollander (1978), "Collegiate education in retailing began in 1919 with the founding of The Training School for Teachers of Retail Selling (now the Institute of Retail Management) at New York University. Other universities soon followed suit" (p. 3). The relationship between retail educators and practitioners has not always been a productive one. The problem may be indifference or the complete opposite, the expectation of more than the other can deliver.

Dickerson, a Professor of Business Administration, asserts:

Retailing leaders are not interested in what universities do.

They want bright students with or without retailing courses for their training programs...regardless of how education should change, one might assume that it will not change at all. Over the last 40 years retail education has changed little, although the community of retailers appears to have changed dramatically. (Dickerson et al., 1985, p. 88)

Hollander (1978) says retail education in four-year colleges has always focused on department stores. Now, because of the growth of other types of retailing, educational programs need a broader orientation. Retailing firms are more diversified. However, "the promotional ladders of retail conglomerates still, for the most part, mount within divisions

rather than criss-cross between branches" (p. 7). This suggests that although Hollander believes the educational programs should have a broader focus, the career path is still narrow.

In 1984, interest in retail education was renewed in the form of a retail workshop called "Research and Teaching in Retailing" sponsored by the Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and the American Collegiate Retailing Association (Dickerson et al., 1985). Topics range from the future of retailing to Japanese management, and to retail curriculum. Many of the same issues identified in the special issue of the Journal of Retailing in 1978 reappear and a few others were added. J. Barry Mason (1985), when discussing the indifference of faculty and students to retailing courses points out the following:

...probably half of the students in the College of Business ultimately accept positions in either retailing or sales. I am also intrigued with why increasingly firms are seeking liberal arts graduates for retailing positions when they interview on our college campuses....Also, why can't we attract the brightest students in colleges of business to a career in retailing and why is industry so reluctant to pay competitive starting salaries to our students? (p. 11)

The place of retail education in colleges and universities is controversial among educators. Four-year retail education programs tend to be offered as a part of three different programs: 1) Business Administration, where the emphasis is on marketing and management, 2) Home Economics, where the focus is on the product and consumer, 3) Letters and Science, where a broad based education is emphasized

(Stampfl, 1985).

Coe (1978) surveyed one hundred four-year schools and colleges of business administration located in the United States about the place of retailing in the business curriculum in 1974. She conducted a follow-up survey in 1978. Of the educators responding, approximately 66% in 1974 and 61% in 1978 were opposed to a retailing major. In both surveys, about 92% opposed requiring one or more retailing courses of all business majors. A majority of respondents favored requiring one or more retailing courses for marketing majors. The major reasons for not including retailing in the curriculum were: too specialized, low priority as compared to other course needs, and vocational nature of the field. Retailing was regarded as a specialty within the marketing major. In the 1974 survey, 71% of the respondents commented that a retailing major was more appropriate in the two-year colleges. This percentage dropped to 40% in 1978. In both 1974 and 1978, the main reasons for offering retailing as a part of the curriculum were the students' career orientation toward retailing and the importance of retailing in the economy.

Retailing was compared by Coe to other potential career fields using a five point scale. Social status of retailing careers was ranked as poor by 39% of respondents in 1974 as compared to 32% in 1978. Sixty percent of faculty judged salary potential to be poor or below average in 1974, while in 1978, 61% said below average or average. In 1974, 53% ranked management training programs as above average or excellent. This increased to 57% in 1978. Overall personal satisfaction and success was ranked as poor or below average by 59% of the sample in 1974 and 56% in

1978. The attitudes of the educators indicate that the difficulties that retailers have in recruiting top students from business schools are likely to continue.

Swinyard (1981) conducted a study among marketing students in 13 universities and colleges in the United States to examine the appeal of retailing as a career. Among 12 proposed marketing careers, retailing was ranked 7th. Marketing management, management consulting, public relations, personnel, market research, and consumer product sales were ranked ahead of retailing in terms of preference. In addition, "students having higher average grades rated retailing as less appealing than did students having lower grades" (p. 87). Retailing was described by students as being "dull, people-oriented, poor salary, poor working hours, and routine." However, students that had taken a retailing course were more than twice as likely to find retailing "very appealing" (p. 90).

Swinyard suggests that these results have implications for both marketing faculty and retailing. Retailing careers may not be represented correctly or completely by marketing faculty, and/or retail recruiters have a real challenge in attracting the best students.

According to some retailers, "Schools should teach principles of product quality and techniques of quality control....Students should learn the anatomy of a customer" (Hollander, 1978, p. 78). This is often regarded as the strength of fashion merchandising or retailing programs offered by colleges or departments of home economics (Barry, 1985). Rudd, in 1981, described the status of textiles and clothing programs. She found that fashion merchandising was offered by 75% of the 98 schools

that responded to her questionnaire. Merchandising was the program most frequently offered and usually had the highest enrollment.

Textiles and clothing faculty and administrators identified career opportunities of graduates as the third most important strength of the textiles and clothing programs following opportunity for creative expression, and consumer orientation. "Retailing was overwhelmingly rated as the most important employment outlet for graduates" (Rudd, 1981, p. 91) followed by consumer education, product promotion and advertising, and fashion coordination.

Merchandising and retailing majors have a long history in textiles and clothing programs. The first college level merchandising program was offered by the University of Washington in 1917. The program included a combination of nutrition, home management, textile and non-textile merchandising, salesmanship, and an internship. Merchandising programs are described as a "winning combination" since thousands of women graduate from these programs and enter retailing careers every year (Paoletti, 1985).

The perception of retailing as a career opportunity differs markedly between the faculty of business administration programs and the faculty of home economics. Business administration faculty see retailing as a less desirable opportunity while textiles and clothing faculty see retailing as the best opportunity. The vast majority of merchandising majors are female. For example, at Iowa State University, there are approximately 300 merchandising majors and there is seldom more than one male major at any given time. Since most textiles and clothing majors are female, is the difference in the perception of career opportunities

in retailing because of the sex of the graduates or are the opportunities available to the graduates limited because of the academic program?

In spite of its long history and widespread use in home economics, some home economics educators question whether merchandising is an appropriate part of a textiles and clothing curriculum. "Let's face it: Both from a philosophical base and from a knowledge base, fashion merchandising is more appropriately tied to business than it is to home economics..." (Horn, 1981). "Merchandising has by tradition, and by its very nature, required the professional to be in the marketplace rather than in the home. For this reason alone, merchandisers often have a difficult time relating to the name 'home economics'" (Sutton 1984, p. 63). Sutton concluded, however, that textiles and clothing programs should respond to the national trend toward entrepreneurship, observing that developing and promoting home based businesses is a natural challenge to home economics.

Dickerson and Clowes (1982) explored the movement of textiles and clothing programs from four-year to two-year colleges. They found that there were approximately 265 sub-baccalaureate clothing and textiles programs serving about 24,000 full-time and part-time students. In contrast, in 1978-79, 199 colleges and universities awarded 3,310 bachelors' degrees in clothing, textiles, and merchandising. While the numbers are difficult to compare, it is clear that there were more sub-baccalaureate than baccalaureate programs. The sub-baccalaureate programs are similar to the baccalaureate with a stronger and more immediate job focus. Retailing is the most common source of employment for the sub-baccalaureate program. The graduates of the

sub-baccalaureate and baccalaureate programs in textiles and clothing appear to compete for the same entry-level jobs.

Where does retail education belong? Two-year program? Four-year program? Or is retail education in the academic setting even necessary? Some educators regard retailing as a specialty not requiring in depth study. Some retail executives say executive trainees need more technical knowledge but then retail recruiters show no preference for the graduates of programs that include it. There would appear to be little consistency in attitudes and practice either among educators or retail executives and perhaps even less communication between the two. There is little understanding of the contribution of a four-year college education to a career in retailing. Controversy reigns about whether retailing should be taught, who should teach it, what should be the program focus, and how long the program should be.

Careers in Retail Organizations

One of the ways that concern about careers in retail organizations is expressed is in the discussion of employee turnover. There were over 100 articles and presentations regarding turnover in the non-retail sector and a few articles regarding turnover of non-managerial employees in retailing but only three dealing with managerial personnel in retailing. Managerial turnover in retailing was reported to range from 24% to 54% per year (Ford, 1983; Gable & Hollon, 1984; Porter, Crampton, & Smith, 1976). That in itself represented tremendous costs to retail organizations for training and development.

Gable, Hollon, and Dangelo (1984) sought to determine if employment

turnover among managerial trainees could be predicted from the personal data supplied on the employment application form. They studied 279 trainees that joined a national retail chain in 1981. They found that 1) trainees that financed their own educations were less likely to leave the organization and 2) the greater the understanding of the job by the applicant, the less likely that individual was to leave the organization. Gable recommended that the retailer should ask managerial applicants to provide a statement of what they envision the job to be. In addition, retailers should furnish applicants with clear descriptions of what they require including both positive and negative aspects of the job (p. 55-56).

Bluestone, Hanna, Kuhn, and Moore (1981) have provided an assessment of the state of retailing employment. Bluestone et al. asserts that ownership patterns have become increasingly concentrated, moving in the direction of retail oligopoly. In 1977, when retailing was a \$90 billion industry, the five largest stores in the United States (Sears, K-Mart, J.C. Penney, Woolworth's, and Federated) accounted for one half of all general merchandise sales, doubled their share in 1967 (p. 48).

Retail chains rely on advertising to sell merchandise so the members of the sales staff have become order-takers. Elimination of the well-trained sales person has made it possible for most of the workforce to be employed on a part-time basis. As many as 70% of the 15 million people employed in retailing in 1980 worked less than a full schedule. Retailing provides periodic jobs for many women over the age of 25 and temporary employment for men who have been laid off. Retail jobs are also a common source of "moonlighting." Only to a small proportion of

the total workforce does the industry provide stable career opportunities (Bluestone et al. 1981).

Bluestone et al. based their analysis of the status of careers in retailing on the following:

...the Social Security Administration's Longitudinal Employer-Employee Data (LEED) File. This file contains information on a one percent sample of all workers covered by the Social Security system and includes a complete work history of each individual for the period 1957-1975. These special tabulations were prepared at the Social Welfare Research Institute at Boston College. (p. 81)

The LEED File shows that young people do not remain in the retail industry. "Among those under 25, only one in twenty (5.8%) remain as long as seven years" (p. 92). Younger workers dominate the industry. "By 1970 more than half of the workforce was under 25, up from only 30 percent twelve years earlier" (p. 95). New sales technology has made it possible to "de-skill" the labor force and make ready use of inexperienced labor. Consequently there are a few sophisticated supervisory positions. The remainder are the low-wage jobs that are the majority of employment opportunities. "For this reason, the industry is now best characterized as having a 'missing middle'" (p. 98).

Considerable disparity in earning between men and women is revealed in the LEED file analysis. "In 1975, one-fifth of all men employed in retailing earned over \$15,000 a year, most in management positions and in the few commission jobs left. Only 3 out of every 1000 women had earnings over \$15,000" (p. 105).

Little training and low-pay have contributed to high turnover rates but retailers seem unwilling to increase training or pay. Instead, the industry seems to have chosen to live with high turnover. The industry is experiencing saturation of retail markets, areas are becoming overstored. At the same time, fierce price competition has increased the emphasis on controlling costs. "The enormous costs of mass advertising and electronic technology, in effect form a barrier to entry into the mass market" (p. 146). This, in turn, probably contributes to the oligopolistic market structure. Thus, cost cutting seems to be exemplified in reducing the hours, pay, and benefits of the workforce.

Not all retail firms are reluctant to invest the necessary resources in the development of counseling and training for career development of their employees. In 1977, the Zale Corporation completed a Career Development Program (CDP) designed to meet the needs of a jewelry store with 1100 outlets operating in a highly competitive environment. The program took two years to develop and is one of only two management training programs that can be taken as a college course for academic credit. (The other was developed by McDonalds.) In 1981, CDP was accepted as a part of 15 hours junior college credit granted by the Dallas County Community College District when the CDP was completed in conjunction with the Management Candidate Seminar and 12 hours of college credit at one of 7 Dallas County community colleges.

The CDP program has three phases: 1) learning experiences useful to all employees including stock persons, salespersons, and bookkeepers; 2) management experiences useful to experienced employees, manager trainees or assistant managers; 3) management experiences primarily for manager

trainees and assistant managers. The firm's investment in the CDP has paid off by lower turnover among managers and thus higher return on training dollars, more objective evaluation of employee performance, and more effective recruiting and training (Kelly, 1982).

Harlan and Weiss (1982) studied managers in two retail organizations, one with 19% female managers, the other with 6% female managers. They purposely chose the retail industry because it is often seen as being favorable to women. A sample of 50 managers in each organization was half male and half female and the men and women were matched on level of management, responsibility, and functional area. Data collection consisted of a battery of psychological instruments and a 2 to 3 hour taped interview with each participant based on a semi-structured questionnaire. The researchers believed "to adequately understand career success, we believe the focus should be on the understanding of the individual in the context of the organization" (p. 64).

Based on previous research, Harlan and Weiss hypothesized that women would aspire to lower positions than men. The data supported this prediction. They suggest three reasons why women might have lower aspirations: 1) Women may be influenced by subtle clues such as little expectation among other members of the organization that women would advance to top levels, 2) Women may feel that the costs of advancement in terms of time, outside interests, and family outweigh the benefits, and 3) Women may have perceived that less opportunity was available and consequently lower their expectations of success (p. 74).

Harlan & Weiss found:

...a striking degree of similarity between men and women managers both in terms of individual characteristics as well as organizational experiences. Men and women were found to have very similar psychological profiles of high power and achievement needs, high self-esteem, and high motivation to manage. In addition, both men and women experience difficulty in understanding and planning their careers, in obtaining balanced, useful feedback, and in obtaining opportunities for new skill development. (p. 91)

Harlan and Weiss suggested that the expected difference in men's and women's career experiences may have existed because women's career experiences have been compared to the "successful male myth" rather than to the actual experiences of men. This myth assumes that

...men are highly successful, have well-planned careers, receive excellent training and development, have good working relationships with other company employees, have all their skills utilized in their work setting, and encounter no problems on the road to top management--the position to which all men aspire. (p. 91)

The extent to which managers believe in external versus internal control of events influencing them may be a factor in career planning and goal setting. Some researchers have found that women have a strong tendency to be externalizers while men are more likely to be internalizers. In other words, women are more likely to attribute success to luck while men attribute success to their own actions (Maccoby and Jacklin, 1974). Other researchers have found that women are more

likely to attribute success to luck and failure to their own actions while men are more likely to attribute success to their own actions and failure to external circumstances (Frieze, 1973; Kukla, 1972). The majority of the men and women in retail careers studied by Harlan and Weiss "felt that their success was due to their hard work and good performance of responsibilities" (p. 73). Few people had done any long range career planning and most had drifted into retail positions in the first place.

A vital element in the career development of the adult is mentoring (Burton, 1977; Hennig & Jardim, 1977; Levinson, 1978; Sheehy, 1976; Stevens-Long, 1979). A simple definition of a mentor is a friend, a supporter, an admirer, and an encourager (Levinson, 1978). "Mentors can be described as persons who recognize competence and motivation in others and decide to give assistance by explaining the system within which the mentors work" (Barnier 1981, p. 7). Barnier examined research and literature regarding mentoring and mentoring relationships in business and higher education. She concluded that the mentoring experiences of men and women differ. Men have easier access to the existing informal systems (sometimes called the "old boys network") and therefore easier access to mentoring and sponsoring relationships.

There is a tendency toward homogeneity operating in the business environment and in institutions of higher education, and this tendency functions to exclude women and include men. The training and development programs instituted in the 70s do not appear to have increased the number of women in executive, management, administrative, full professorship or university

president positions. If women wait for the upper echelons of business and higher education to change they will be in the same place ten years from now as they are today. (Barnier 1981, p. v)

The type of position that an individual holds in an organization may be a factor in career opportunities. Pruden and Cunningham (1975) examined the anticipated career patterns of line and staff marketing employees. The traditional distinction between line and staff is that line executives are responsible for functions that contribute directly to the major goals of the business while staff executives operate more in an advisory capacity. They reported four career strategies for marketing executives: 1) stable strategy--this company in marketing, 2) organizational strategy--this company but not in marketing, 3) outside strategy--different company in marketing, 4) heuristic strategy--different company and not in marketing. These strategies are similar to those developed by Jennings (1971) and Thompson, Avery, and Carlson (1968). Pruden and Cunningham (1975) found that "Line marketing employees perceive themselves as being more mobile both inside and outside the organization than do staff marketing employees" (p. 37). The line executives have more of a "true executive focus" and see themselves as capable of managing diverse types of operations both inside and outside the company. The staff executives see themselves as specialists, tied much closer to present position and present organization (p. 39).

This literature review presents interesting challenges to research regarding careers in retailing. It appears that neither retailers nor educators have addressed issues related to managerial turnover. Instead

retailers have learned to live with rapid turnover both among sales and clerical employees and among management. Costs to retailers of managerial turnover have not been assessed and the role of career development in turnover has not been explored. Educators disagree about the role of retail education in business and merchandising programs and have different perceptions about the opportunities of the graduates. Issues related to career choice, career planning, career development, opportunities of men and women, educational background, and organizational structure are viable topics for further investigation.

PROCEDURE

One obvious way to gain information from retail executives about their careers was to contact retail organizations and ask for their cooperation in supplying names of executives that work for their firm. Sofer (1970) used this approach in studying careers of men in industry. However, developing the level of cooperation necessary for a company to participate in a research project like this requires negotiation with management about who and what will be studied, when the study would take place, what space and facilities would be required, and how the data would be reported. An understanding and commitment on the part of both the researcher and the company must be developed. Sofer was able to develop the necessary relationship because he had been acting as a consultant for the companies. They worked out an agreement to conduct the research over a five year period. One advantage of Sofer's approach was that it was possible to have a scientifically selected sample of all workers in the organization. However, a limitation was that the study provided extensive information about only one or two organizations. Another limitation was that the research design provided aggregate data and therefore didn't describe differences in position or perspectives within the organization below the levels of aggregation.

Sofer's methodology, though effective for his project, was not consistent with the objectives of this study of retail careers, the goals of which require a broader research base. In addition, there was neither

the amount of time necessary to work out complex arrangements nor the inside contacts to facilitate such an arrangement.

One resource at hand, however, were graduates of the Iowa State University (ISU) Textiles and Clothing Department that were employed by major retailers. It was not desirable to confine the sample to ISU graduates because it was unlikely that sufficient numbers of informants could be found. Therefore, it was decided to seek the help of the ISU graduates as "experts" in identifying retail executives to participate in this research. The names supplied by the graduates were supplemented by names suggested by retail candidates and by names supplied by the researcher.

This approach eliminated one of the major problems that Sofer identified, development of a comfortable relationship with the informants. Informants saw Sofer and his assistants as being aligned with management and therefore were unsure about how frank they could afford to be with the researcher. Using retail executives recommended by graduates avoided the "aligned with management problem." However, the sample was biased toward "success" and the retail careers experienced by the informants were primarily in the merchandising and stores divisions of retail organizations.

This methodology required making contacts with several groups of people with different purposes in mind. These groups were defined as follows:

- 1) graduates -- Iowa State University (ISU) Textiles and Clothing graduates employed by major retailers in the midwest,
- 2) candidates -- names of retail executives recommended by

graduates, by other candidates, or identified by the researcher,

- 3) participants -- candidates that returned the preliminary questionnaire,
- 4) informants -- participants who were interviewed for the research.

Development of Instruments

A microcomputer word processing system was used for this research. Therefore, some identification system was needed not only to keep track of the documents used in correspondence and interviewing but also for identification of the files on the data disks so the information could be found and called up efficiently. The system consisted of a prefix followed by a four digit number. These are the prefixes that were used:

- 1) Form -- for form to be filled out and returned,
- 2) Inter -- for interview guide,
- 3) Intro -- for introduction to the project,
- 4) Let -- for letter,
- 5) Rem -- for reminder card to stimulate response.

The 4 digit number was composed as follows:

- 1) 100 -- for contact with ISU graduates requesting names of retailers,
- 2) 200 -- for contact with retail executives who were recommended by the graduates,
- 3) 300 -- for personal interview with retail informants,
- 4) 400 -- for analysis and interpretation of data.

The fourth digit was added to the 100, 200, 300, or 400 number indicating the version number of the document. If a modification in the document was made, either a major or a minor revision, the version number was increased so that it was possible to tell at the first glance what the document represented and what the stage of development was. For example, Form 1004 means: form indicated the type of document, 100 indicated the level of interaction with the participant (this form was used to obtain information from ISU graduates), and the final digit, 4, indicated that this was the fourth revision. The numbering system was very functional in facilitating the development of the appropriate instruments and generating them as needed on the microcomputer word processing system. The numbering system was maintained throughout data analysis utilizing the 100, 200, 300 number to identify the data base for any given process or discussion.

Each candidate was assigned a participant number before he/she was contacted so that it would not be necessary to have the participant's name on the form. The participant numbers ranged from 1 to 161 and were assigned in the order that the candidates names were received from the graduates. The participant numbers were maintained throughout the interview and data analysis process to identify the participants and informants.

The letters and forms for contacting graduates and candidates were drafted by the researcher. See Appendix B. The purposes of the letters to graduates and candidates (Let 1002, Let 2002) were similar, introduce the research project and motivate the graduate or candidate to respond and supply the needed information. The basic premise was that the

graduates and retail candidates were offered information about the results of the study in exchange for their cooperation. The instruments were critiqued by members of the merchandising faculty in the Textiles and Clothing Department at Iowa State University. Minor modifications were made and they were named Let 1002 and Let 2002.

Form 1002 was developed so that graduates would know what information was needed about candidates. It also helped in getting the information into a format that could be easily utilized in the next phase of the research. The request for information about the career of the graduate was included to show that the researcher was also interested in the career development of that individual, to give the inquiry a more personal orientation. The information was added to the Career Development File that was maintained by the Textiles and Clothing Department at Iowa State University.

When Form 2003 was returned, the candidates for the research became participants. The purpose of Form 2003 was to get information about the retail executive candidates in order to determine which respondents had the best potential for becoming informants through personal interviews. The information needed for screening includes: employer, job title, education, sex, and career history. In addition, participants that were not interviewed remained an important data source for this study because of the information provided on the preliminary questionnaires about their career histories.

The question about retailing terms was included to help the researcher converse with the informants in their "native tongue" early in the interview. It was important to begin using terms that incorporate

the language of the retail business as quickly as possible. This helped the informant to talk from within his/her culture rather than interpreting and translating for the researcher. When the informant steps outside his/her culture and takes on an analytical role, he/she was reflecting a different perception of the reality of that culture and his/her role in it. "It is best to think of ethnographic interviews as a series of friendly conversations into which the researcher introduces new elements to assist informants to respond as informants" (Spradley, 1979, p. 58).

Three of the goals of the interviews were to 1) make the informants feel comfortable in sharing information about their careers, 2) their employers, and 3) to preserve the spontaneity of their responses. Thus, it was important to have the topics flow together in a natural manner. Spradley recommended beginning with "descriptive" type questions and then moving into "structural" questions and finally into "contrast" types of questions (p. 66). Examples of descriptive questions on the interview guide (Inter 3008 in Appendix B) would be those regarding career history and descriptions of present job responsibility. Structural type questions relate to items involving the hierarchy of the organization. Contrast questions are items dealing with likes and dislikes of the job and establishing hypothetical situations such as "if you could do your education over again, what program would you take." As a result of using Spradley's guidelines for interviewing it was possible to begin with topics that were less personal and less threatening and work into items that might be more sensitive and difficult to discuss.

The content of the interview guide was based on a schedule used by

Sofer (1970) in studying British male managers in mid-career. Sofer had conducted pilot interviews and then used the interview schedule for interviews with 80 randomly selected people who worked for two companies. The style and the topics of the Sofer interview schedule were compatible with ethnographic methodology for this research in that it had a conversational tone and focused on career development. The interview schedule used by Adams (1979) for studying the development of women's careers was also consulted. Adams studied, in depth, the careers of 16 women who had achieved high levels of success as business executives. Sofer and Adams, together provided information about topics and their sequence for the interview. The language was modified to make it suitable to the retail environment.

The interview guide was pretested in four audio-taped practice interviews with participants who were local retailers. The first taped interview was transcribed. The words of the informant were typed out, as much as possible, just as the informant said them. The content and the flow of the discussion as it occurred in the interview were analyzed relative to the interview guide. Major revisions in the interview guide were not required. The interview guide was modified slightly in terms of order of presentation of topics and a second interview was conducted. Once again the tape was translated and the content and topics in the interview were analyzed. Two of the topics were expanded with additional questions. Alternative approaches to the same topic were added to help the researcher to be prepared in advance and ready to adapt to a particular interview situation. Two more practice interviews were conducted with minor modifications in the interview guide following each.

Finally, Inter 3008 emerged and proved to be a functional tool in conducting the interviews. As indicated by the version number Inter 3008, the interview guide went through 8 minor revisions so Inter 3008 was the basis of 38 of the interviews. Because the revisions in the interview guide were minor and primarily for the convenience of the researcher, all interviews were considered a valid part of the research even though the first 4 were essentially practice interviews.

The interview guide was held in hand during the interview but questions were not read. The guide was referred to frequently but it was important to remain primarily focused on the words of the informant. Thus, the instrument was truly a guide rather than an interview schedule.

In considering the information on the preliminary questionnaire, Form 2003, and the Sofer and Adams interview schedules, it became apparent that it would be useful to have a brief demographic questionnaire to be administered at the close of the personal interview. Thus, Form 3005 was developed. Age, marital status, number of children, type of employer, and status in the organization were sought along with identification of income range. Only two informants refused to supply income information after the completion of the personal interview.

Selection of Informants

Fifty-six Iowa State University (ISU) Textiles and Clothing graduates were selected as "experts in retail executives" because they were employed by major retailers within the geographic area selected for study. They were identified from a list of textiles and clothing graduates provided by the Iowa State University Alumni Association to the

Textiles and Clothing Department in September of 1984. The selected graduates were mailed a letter introducing the research project and a form for fulfilling the request for names of appropriate retail executives to interview (Let 1002 and Form 1002 in Appendix B). The form provided space for information about that graduate's own career as well as space to identify four retail executive candidates by name, address, phone number, employer, and job title. Two postcard reminders (Rem 1003) were sent within 14 days of the first mailing. The "quick" reminders were very effective in generating response. Thirty-six responses were received from the 56 graduates contacted for a 64.29% response rate. A total of 125 executives became research candidates because they were recommended for interview by the graduates. The number of candidates from each graduate ranged from 0 to 11 with a mean of 3.47 names.

One hundred and twenty-five letters and forms (Let 2002, Form 2003) were mailed to the retail executives (candidates) identified by the graduates. Two post card reminders (Rem 2002) were sent within 14 days of the original mailing. The "quick" reminders were nearly as effective in generating response from the candidates as they had been from the ISU graduates. Seventy-two responses were received for a 57% response rate. In addition, five candidates supplied a total of 21 additional names of candidates for the research so these people were also sent a letter and questionnaire (Let 2002, Form 2003). To round out the number of executives in the personnel division and the executive ranks, 15 candidates were added for a total of 161 executives contacted in all. A total of 95 candidates became participants in the research by returning the preliminary questionnaire, a 59% response rate over all.

Spradley (1979) suggested that his ethnographic methodology required a series of interviews interspersed with careful analyses. "At a minimum, it will take six to seven one-hour interviews" (p. 51) to describe a particular cultural scene. One way to deal with inadequacy of available time with each informant is to use "tandem informants" (p. 52), informants that share the same cultural scene. This made it possible to gain a broader understanding of the culture by eliminating some parts of the interview process with successive informants.

According to Spradley (1979), a good informant is:

...someone who can assist the novice ethnographer in learning the informant's culture while at the same time learning interviewing skills....five minimal requirements for selecting a good informant: 1) thorough enculturation, 2) current involvement, 3) an unfamiliar cultural scene, 4) adequate time, and 5) nonanalytic {of his/her own cultural scene}. (p. 47)

One more criterion for selecting informants was added: that the informant be located within the geographic limitations of the research project, the upper midwestern part of the United States. Spradley's first and second requirements were evident from the preliminary questionnaire in terms of number of years involved in retailing and current employment. Retailing was not a totally unfamiliar cultural scene, however, the researcher had not been employed by any of the retailers selected for the study. Whether the participants met the third requirement (had adequate time to participate in the research) could only be determined by making telephone contacts and attempting to make appointments for interviews. Whether the participants were nonanalytic,

would talk to the researcher in their own language and from their perspective, could only be determined by talking with them.

The preliminary questionnaires (Form 2002) were screened based on geographical location and current involvement in retailing. Eighteen responses from outside the intended geographical area were eliminated. Seventy-seven potential informants remained. The questionnaires were then clustered first by city and then by retail employer. From that process, six major retail department stores and one discount store were selected, each with the potential for five to seven interviews with participants in their employ. In addition, a cluster of participants who operated or were employed by specialty stores was identified.

Potential informants were telephoned to identify times for personal interviews. Since the return of the preliminary questionnaire was an implicit agreement to be interviewed, none of the participants refused outright to be interviewed. However, because retail executives travel so much, many of them were unavailable at the time the researcher could be in their city. One of the groups of candidates seemed to have particular difficulty making commitments for interview appointments. As a result, that retailer was eliminated as one of the firms in the study. Many of those that were unavailable at the time that interviews could be conducted expressed regret that they would not be able to participate and asked that they be sent the results of the study.

The process of setting up interviews was extremely time consuming. On the average, it took two days of calling to set up a three day interview trip. A total of 147 phone calls were made to secure what finally was 42 interviews. Appendix A includes demographic descriptions

of both the 42 participants that became informants and the 38 participants that were not interviewed but who lived within the geographical range of the study.

Some things learned about retailers that were helpful in making appointments:

- 1) Find out what the executive's direct telephone number is from the company operator so that many transfers can be eliminated.
- 2) Avoid calling on Monday. Mondays are very busy days for retailers. They receive all the reports for the previous weeks' business. There are many meetings regarding those reports, as well as many, many calls from vendors.
- 3) Executives are unlikely to return calls. However, when the researcher was successful in getting them on the phone they were for the most part very cooperative. Persistence pays.
- 4) Many office assistants and clerical workers leave at 4 or 4:30 p.m. while most executives work until 6 or 6:30 p.m. Calls from vendors also diminish at about 4:00 p.m. Therefore, when calls are placed after 4:00 there is a chance that the executive in question will personally answer the telephone which can facilitate making the appointment.
- 5) It seemed easier to make appointments with higher level executives than with lower level executives. Higher level executives had no qualms about talking to a researcher at the office, whereas those in lower level positions did not always see that as appropriate job activity. However, if a higher level executive was interviewed first, and others knew about

it, lower level executives also seemed more comfortable being interviewed.

Conducting Ethnographic Interviews

According to Spradley (1979), conducting successful ethnographic interviews:

...depends on a cluster of interpersonal skills. These include: asking questions, listening instead of talking, taking a passive rather than an assertive role, expressing verbal interest in the other person, and showing interest by eye contact and other nonverbal means. (p. 46)

The appropriateness of questions was assured by careful preparation of the interview guide. Although it was necessary to be very assertive in order to get the preliminary questionnaire returned and to set up the interview, a more passive stance needed to be assumed at the time of the interview. The researcher was introduced as a graduate student and faculty member from Iowa State University. However, no details were offered regarding teaching responsibilities or knowledge of the retail business. "If informants believe your background has already taught you the answer to your own questions, they will feel you are asking dumb questions and that you may be trying to test them in some way" (Spradley, 1979, p. 50).

Preparation ahead of each interview was important. To increase the passive image a plain beige suit and simple accessories were worn to minimize any visual intimidation during the interview. Having all materials easily at hand (interview guide, tape recorder already loaded

with batteries and tape, additional tapes, additional batteries, and demographics form) was very important to minimize distraction. It also contributed the maintenance of a calm and organized appearance.

Normally the interview began with the researcher explaining the purpose of the interview and what would be done with the data. Intro 3002 was developed to use as a guide in this explanation. It includes a statement of who the researcher was, a statement of desire to learn about careers in retailing, an expression of the lack of knowledge on the part of the researcher about those careers, and the need for the informant to share their experience and expertise. A copy of Intro 3002 was sometimes left with the informant because they wanted a copy of the goals of the research or the name and address of the researcher.

After the informant was comfortable with the purpose and intent of the researcher, the use of the interview guide was introduced and the informant was asked for permission to audio-tape the interview. The informant was assured that only the researcher would hear the tape of the interview and that neither the name of the informant nor his/her employer would appear in any publications resulting from the research. Only one informant refused to allow taping of the interview.

A small micro-cassette recorder was used. Some informants were nervous about the tape recorder and seemed more guarded in their first few answers. One informant repeatedly asked that the recorder be turned off when he answered questions that he felt were sensitive issues in his company.

Because the interviews were taped, the researcher could assume an "active listening" role during the interview, injecting questions when

needed and reflecting the ideas of the informant. The primary activity of the researcher was being very involved in what the informant was saying by maintaining eye contact, expressing verbal interest in the informant's ideas, and exhibiting total concentration on the informant. Informants often brought up new topics before the researcher had introduced them. Frequently, the topic would be represented by the next question or series of questions on the interview guide.

Informants that started out being very guarded usually became comfortable during the interview process and shared information toward the end of the interview that they probably would not have considered imparting at the beginning. This was probably due to the effectiveness of Spradley's methodology that was used to structure the interview guide. The last question normally gave the informant the opportunity to bring up any issues or ideas that the informant felt had been overlooked during the interview. If the informant had not relaxed his/her guard before then, he/she usually did at that point. The interview concluded by asking the informant to fill out Form 3005, Demographics, thanking him/her for participating, and wishing him/her well with his/her career.

Some informants were very interested in the research and therefore time was not a factor for them. "Because interviews involve the informant as an expert witness, they generate considerable enthusiasm" (Spradley, 1979, p. 52). For those individuals, interviews extended for as long as 3 hours, but interviews of 1 1/2 to 2 hours were more common. Interviews ranged in length from 3/4 of an hour to 3 hours. Three interviews a day was a comfortable number. Time between interviews was used for observations of the retail environment and the metropolitan

area.

During the interview process, when there were more than one informant employed by the same firm, it was possible to use them as "tandem informants" (Spradley, 1979). It was possible to build on information shared by a previous informant even though the same basic interview guide was used for each. This minimized the time commitment required for each informant and increased the depth of the subsequent interviews. Most of the retail firms were visited at least twice with interviews conducted with different informants each time. Thus, it was possible to enhance the development of cultural understanding because of content analysis of earlier interviews.

At least 30 interviews was the goal identified in the research plan. At the conclusion of 30 interviews, the distribution of interviews among executive positions, retail organizations, and urban areas was evaluated. An additional 12 interviews were scheduled to round out the range of executives talked with in the major retail organizations and to get a better representation of executives from the personnel division in each organization. Ultimately, 42 interviews were conducted within a 5 week period.

A thank-you letter (Let 3001) was promptly mailed to the retail executives interviewed. Pencils with Iowa State University and/or the name of their employer imprinted on them were included with the thank-you letter as a token of appreciation and reminder of their participation. A summary of findings was prepared and a copy mailed to each graduate, participant, and informant who requested the information.

Throughout this study, the confidentiality of the informants was

protected by the use of participant numbers on all of the documentation. A master list of the participant numbers with the names and addresses was the only identification of the informants by name and by employer. The preliminary questionnaires, the interview tapes, the translated interviews, documents provided by informants, and summaries of data were all identified as to source by participant number. Employers were classified by store types, and geographic locations were not revealed so as to further protect the rights of informants.

Data Analysis

When data collection was completed, there were a number of types of data that could be triangulated, used for verification of inferences. The Preliminary Questionnaire (Form 2003) from both participants and informants provided information about educational background. In addition, it provided a career summary including names of employers, job titles, and sequence of career development. The transcribed interviews provided in-depth perspective of informants on the issues identified in the interview guide (Interview 3008). The demographics questionnaire provided information about age, marriage and family status, employer description, and income range. In addition, some informants provided documents produced by their employers that outlined career paths or organizational structure. Fieldnotes were recorded, often taped, of observations of various retail organizations, informants, and urban areas.

Since no previously developed theory of career development was assumed, all comparison and verification of findings was internal to the

data. This process is called analytic induction. It was immediately evident that there were far greater differences in career development and opportunities between different types of retail organizations (discount, department, specialty) than between different stores in an urban area or even between urban areas. Thus, the data analysis and the development of the ethnography proceeded, for the most part, according to store type. The commonalities among organizations was described in the form of a Taxonomy of Retail Careers that includes the major divisions of responsibility in retail organizations and the job titles at each career level in each division.

Data were also analyzed on an "issues" basis. For example, timing of career advancement in department stores was first explored in the translated interviews. Tentative conclusions were drawn and those conclusions were compared to the career summaries on the Preliminary Questionnaires from both informants and participants, organizationally produced documents provided by informants, and fieldnotes that dealt with that issue.

Some issues required multiple perspectives from the standpoint of job title or career experience. For example, for issues related to the promotion of men and women the perspectives of those in top management was compared to the perspectives of those in mid-management positions and perspectives of men were compared to perspectives of women. The process involved a great deal of mental as well as manual synthesis of information.

The ethnography includes on many topics the extremes of variation as well as the commonalities in the data. Inferences that were validated

from multiple sources of data or a variety of perspectives were reported. Quotations that described the perspective of informants on the various issues were identified in the transcripts of interviews and were included in the ethnography.

ETHNOGRAPHY OF RETAIL CAREERS

The descriptions and quotations presented in these findings come primarily from a synthesis of interviews and other data collected from 42 informants who had experienced careers in retailing. In order to help the reader to understand the sources of information throughout the text, informants are identified by participant number, for example, #44 or #109. The participant numbers for informants are not sequential because the numbering system was developed early in the research before the informants were selected from all the participants. Descriptive information about the informants and participants is included in Appendix A. Table 1 in Appendix A presents the Taxonomy of Retail Careers. This taxonomy was developed as a part of this research and will be explained later. Tables 2 and 3 include information about informants. Table 2 includes informant participant number, current job title, store type, years in retailing, age, marital status, ages of children, sex, income range, college degree, and academic major. Table 3 includes informant participant number, number of retail employers, and career path using the career codes from the Taxonomy of Retail Careers in Table 1. Table 4 presents information about participants who were not interviewed including participant number, current job title, store type of current employer, years in retailing, sex, college degree, academic major, number of retail employers, and career path. Income and certain other demographic information is not available for participants because

participants were not interviewed and the demographics questionnaire was administered following the interview.

In the findings, Appendix A is used like a bibliographical reference for information provided by informants. When the reader encounters "#46", he/she can choose to refer to Table 2 or Table 3 to explore the background of an informant who is quoted or who is cited as the source of a particular bit of information. This will allow a better understanding of the context of descriptions and quotations from informants without extensive repetition in the text.

Careers in the Retail Environment

When the retail environment was observed from a career perspective, it was impossible to separate one retailer from another within a store type in an urban area. Career summaries on the Preliminary Questionnaire (Form 2003) indicated that people who had moved from one retail employer to another were very likely to have worked for major department store(s), specialty stores, or discount stores in that urban area at one time or another. For example, retail department store executives from the Chicago area probably have worked for Marshall Field's at some time or other while retail department store executives from the Detroit area probably have worked for Hudson's. Consequently, retail executives tended to be somewhat familiar with competing organizations and their management.

Of the 42 informants in this study, 25 were employed at the time of the interview by 6 different midwest based, multiple unit, department stores; 10 were employed by 10 different specialty stores ranging in size

from 1 to 150 units; and 7 informants were employed by 1 discount store, 3 in the stores division and 4 in the corporate headquarters. An overview of the environment in these 3 types of stores follows.

Department stores

In a word, "turmoil" may be the best way to describe the retail environment in the department stores. All of these organizations had experienced major changes in the last five years. One had been on the brink of financial disaster, brought in new management, closed several stores, and restored order. Another had merged with another large department store division which resulted in the consolidation of the merchandising divisions in one city and the development of all new operating systems. Another had been taken over by a large non-retail corporation. Since the data collection for this research was completed, the department store that gave the impression of being extremely dynamic and having the highest level of satisfaction and security among its employees has merged with another department store division and moved the headquarters to another city. Another department store had its long-time president asked to step down and that move was followed by dramatic shake-up of middle and upper management. Thus, organizational changes have had a dramatic impact on job opportunities and career development in these department store organizations.

Many informants pointed out the pressures that were present in the retail environment. The expectations of superiors were one source of pressure.

We do an annual meeting in November which is really a "state of

the union" when various assorted directors of the company talk about their various accomplishments and look to the future. In that meeting every year the chairman gives the ending address. Each year he speaks about the track getting faster. The reaction in the organization is always very stimulating. Good people are very challenged by that. Mediocre and bad people are threatened. (#45)

These predictions set up the definition for success. To be successful, managers and executives must move quickly up the career ladder. Movement was success.

...you had to play this role for them and pretend you wanted the divisional (divisional merchandise manager) when all you really wanted to be was a good buyer. Really, the man, a president, who said, "Enough of this nonsense. Let's appreciate people who are really doing a good job in the areas that they are in and are happy, let them use their expertise and their talents instead of making them feel that they have to keep moving in order to be successful." He is no longer there (with the company) but that philosophy is still there...that was when that senior buyer position was created. The people in the divisional positions were not leaving and therefore there was no place for the ambitious buyers to go. The turnover was much slower (at the divisional level) than the buyer area. (#41)

Another source of pressure was created by major changes such as mergers and reorganization. These changes forced executives to deal with larger volume, more stores, and more departments. At the same time, cost

cutting moves like reduction in clericals and assistant buyers and withdrawal of sales people from the selling floors had been implemented. The result was less assistance for executives during stressful times and in less customer service to support badly needed sales. Buyers indicated that it was very frustrating to "... put all that energy into selecting, assorting, and distributing the merchandise only to have no one available to sell it." One major retailer had reversed the trend of fewer people on the sales floor and had ordered dramatic increases in sales staff for the Christmas season of 1985. The profitability of that move is yet to be reported.

Specialty stores

The ten different specialty stores were located in several different urban areas. The type of ownership and organization of the specialty stores varied. Some were independent, single unit, privately owned stores; others were multi-unit privately owned stores; still others were corporately owned chain organizations. Some of the single unit stores were very small, others were comparatively large. The number of stores in each organization ranged from 1 to 150. Two female informants and three male informants owned or co-owned their stores.

Turnover of store management personnel seemed to be the most disruptive influence in the specialty stores. Recruiting, training, and motivating store personnel to perform at a level deemed necessary to stay in business was an on-going problem. Young people with or without college degrees sometimes became store managers after less than 6 months on the job. That may seem desirable from a career standpoint, but only

if he/she could actually handle the job. Insufficient training and too much responsibility too soon appear to be major contributors to the turnover problems in some organizations. In specialty chain organizations, district managers, who supervised a group of store managers, played key roles in the longevity and effectiveness of store managers.

Some organizations tried to deal with inexperienced managers by centralizing decision making. Then some store managers felt under-utilized and ineffective because their jobs were to implement instructions that "come down" from corporate. They felt their opportunity for innovation and flexibility was limited. At the same time, some specialty stores had the ability to generate a fierce loyalty among their employees. They told "war stories" about long hours and unreasonable demands and then, in the next breath, would swear they did not want to work for anyone else.

Discount store

Seven informants that worked for one major discount chain complete the list of 42 informants. Three worked in one store, the others worked in the corporate headquarters. These informants talked of long hours and hard work, as did most informants, but they were also very enthusiastic about their employer, their work environment, and their career opportunities. As with the specialty chain stores, there was clear separation between career paths in stores and merchandising. Informants reported that it was very unusual for someone to make a transfer from stores to the corporate division buying organization. This limitation in

career opportunities was not seen as a problem. They not only liked their jobs but thought they worked for the best retail organization in the country. On a job for job basis, they had the highest salaries among the informants. They had implicit faith in management, merchandising policy, advertising programs, training, and profitability; everything that made the organization strong.

Promotion

The orientation of individuals within the organizations was extremely vertical. For example, when an informant was asked who he/she worked for, he/she often reported the immediate superior's name rather than the retail organization's name. When asked who he/she worked with, he/she reported a combination of the superior and his/her assistants. Seldom was there very much formal interaction with others at his/her own career level either within or outside their division or pyramid. This vertical orientation may be responsible in part for the impatience of informants toward advancement.

Many informants reported that they had experienced increases in salary and/or job title every 9-18 months during their retail careers. Retail organizations create job titles to give the illusion of advancement in situations where it is not possible to advance people to the next career level. For example, if the ranks of buyer and divisional merchandise manager were relatively stable, with low turnover, it became a problem to sufficiently reward buyers who are doing a good job. In that situation, some stores created a position of "senior buyer." It meant the individual had given long and/or superior service to the

organization. It may also have involved additional responsibility, more dollar volume, and/or more people to supervise. One of the department store organizations had associate buyers and senior buyers instead of assistant buyers and buyers. The responsibilities, background of the individuals, training, etc. seem to be similar between buyers in one organization and senior buyers in another organization. Thus, when there was a question of titles, associate and senior had a higher status sound to them. It was difficult to know if the distinction was real in terms of responsibility or artificial, meaning, endowing status only. One informant said that the title "senior buyer" gave the buyer more impact in the market when working with resources (#26).

Some organizations used the title "vice-president" as a status reward for people in upper management. One informant, when asked what the title, vice-president, meant in her retail organization said, "It means that you get better football tickets" (#133). In another organization, when describing the conditions under which a woman was made vice-president, "...now vice-president of trend merchandising and fashion coordination...her title increased, job description remained about the same" (#105). Other organizations used the vice-president title much more stringently. The numbers of vice-presidents in the organizations studied ranged from 0 to 33.

The merchandising division was regarded as the place to be, the place where the decisions were made, where the action was. The buyer's job was often regarded as the "best job", the job that was closest to the pulse, the heart of the business. One organization was described as a "buyer run" organization (#132). The concept, though, seemed a little

dated because in recent years several layers of management had been added between buyer and president and buyers had decreasing responsibilities in stores. Buyers had increasingly become selectors of merchandise. Other people had taken on the responsibilities of how much to buy, how it was distributed to stores, how it was merchandised on the floor, and even when it was marked down for clearance. It no longer appeared to be a buyer run organization.

Strength of management direction seemed to be a very important factor in career satisfaction. Informants who worked for dynamic, growing organizations, in spite of the chaos that tended to accompany those conditions, were happier in their jobs and in their careers than those who worked for complacent or floundering organizations.

It was unusual for informants to move between the major types of store organizations (department, specialty, and discount) when they changed jobs. And, job changing was very common. Sixteen informants had had three or more retail employers. Only 14 of the informants had been employed by the same organization throughout their retail careers. For the most part, informants tended to seek or be sought by stores of similar organization and merchandise type when they were changing jobs.

The major exception to "staying within the store type" was the discount store which hired regularly from the department store ranks for their corporate organization. The people who were able to accept the opportunity and challenges in the discount organization had disassociated themselves from what was sometimes a strong merchandise orientation in the department and specialty stores. The orientation, instead, was "on the numbers" rather than on the beauty, fashionability, or quality of the

merchandise. They recognized that the purpose of being in business was to make money. Money was made by serving the customer and by having the most effective merchandising and stores organizations. The "best" merchandise was the merchandise that provided the necessary gross margin to cover costs and sufficient turnover to make a profit.

Management development

Retailers exhibited at least two theories of management development: 1) development of expertise through specialization, 2) development of expertise through broad job experience, "rounding out" the executive.

If an individual indicates potential beyond that job (now held), management is forced to make a decision. Do we want to let this person mature for another year and dot the i's and cross the t's or would we better benefit from his taking the 85% and then growing into a larger job that would not only benefit him in terms of his growth and development but also have his knowledge impact a greater area of our business....The question is what are you trying to produce? Are you trying to produce managers for larger portions of your business or are you interested in developing a cadre or team or real expert, long term buyers....They are hungry for those people (managers). Retailing is a business that can respond very specifically and very dramatically to an individual's efforts.... (#42)

The trend seemed to be towards the theory of specialization, particularly as firms became larger. Each employee became responsible

for more dollars so there was a need to be very good at what he/she does. For example, in some department stores, the buyer's job had been split to create a parallel position of planner/distributor. The role of the planner/distributor was to analyze the business, plan assortments, and distribute merchandise to stores. The planner/distributor also handled all communication with the stores about the merchandise (#40). One buyer, when told about this organizational plan, thought that is the way it should be. "That frees you to do your job, buying" (#19). It also meant that the only time the buyer saw or was involved with the merchandise was at the market or when he/she worked with the sales representative. It seemed that the buyer would have an extremely narrow view of the organization with such a narrow definition of responsibility.

Some retailers made it a point to move people from one division to another so that young executives could gain a broad experience. Other organizations, such as specialty chain stores, had most of their jobs in the stores organization with comparatively few in other divisions. Thus, exposure to other divisions of the business was nearly impossible. For example, one specialty chain had 150 stores and less than half a dozen buyers that supplied the merchandise for those stores (#4). Obviously, there were few jobs available in the merchandising division as compared with the stores division. The advancement path was frequently: trainee or manager in training (11), assistant manager (12), manager (14), district manager (17), regional manager (18), and vice-president of stores (19). Comparatively few people are able to make the jump from level 4 to level 7 in the stores organization. There were only approximately 10% of the number of jobs at level 7 as level 4. Promotion

at the manager level normally involved moving to a store with larger volume. District and regional managers (career level 17 and 18) traveled daily while a promotion to regional manager usually would also involve a move to the corporate headquarters.

Another view of the breadth of career path was provided by a vice-president of control administration.

...having worked in the financial side for a number of years...I took the opportunity to go out to store line. I worked both merchandising and operations. Quite frankly, I probably would be in that line today had it not been for circumstances in '73 when the recession hit....They cut back greatly on their staffing. I was in the store line at the time and found myself working minimum of 65 to 80 hours and 6 days a week. It was really taking a toll on me and my family....However, that experience has probably lasted through my career even though I am in the financial world now I am very sympathetic to the needs of the merchants and store line people....having someone who has been on both sides of it, even limited, has allowed me not to have that tunnel vision and keep in mind what merchants need. I know what the guts of the business is about. It is a merchandising business. We have to respond to their (stores and merchandising) needs. My areas here are purely a support function and its hard sometimes to keep that perspective in our area of the business. (#109)

The strategy of specialization may be effective in the short run but may create problems in the long run. Who will occupy those top management

positions that require a broad view of the total operation?

Commitment to a retailing career

Regardless of store type, a retail career required a total commitment to the business. Few retail informants were involved in any kind of community activities, only those at the very top of the executive ladder where such involvement was expected as a part of their job. When executives were asked how many hours they worked in a week, most had to figure it out and many did not include the hours that they worked at home. The job was not viewed from the standpoint of how many hours that were worked in a week but rather "whatever it takes to get the job done." "Not enough time" was no excuse. A divisional merchandise manager said she usually stopped at a "branch" on the way home (#18). The president of one department store reported that he often spent Sunday afternoons walking the floors of the competition--with his family. He said he did not regard that as work (#90). One informant reported that the most important thing an executive had to learn to be successful was how to relax, how to leave the job, and not allow the job to dominate her life 24 hours a day (#41). Strangely, the firm where the executives worked the fewest hours per week expressed the greatest dissatisfaction with their employer, their jobs, and their careers.

Computers and the retail environment

Many informants regarded computer systems as a burden that slowed down processing of information, limited their options, and provided information that they didn't need and didn't want. One informant had

recently changed jobs, moved from a firm that had one of the most advanced computer systems to a firm with very little computer support. The computer system of the former employer was regarded as "nice" but not essential to the job success of the informant (#41).

Perhaps the resistance to computerization was based on the fact that computerization was just happening within retail organizations. A few firms had fairly well developed systems. But all were in some state of development or improvement. Some had just purchased new hardware and were phasing in the use of it over a one- or two-year period. Others were making major changes because of mergers and the computer systems were not compatible. Others were making existing systems more sophisticated to better meet the need for decision making. Only one office, among the many that were visited while conducting interviews, had a computer terminal in it. This suggested that, while executives and managers were receiving computer output on a daily or even hourly basis, few were actively using the computer, or at least, they would have to go someplace else to have use of a terminal. All firms were in some state of transition regarding computers.

POM (purchase order management) and MPS (merchandise processing systems) have been around for the better part of 10-12 years. All of our divisions have had MPS for probably 10 years. But, they are very fragmented systems. Most of them are batch driven. The last few years IBM developed their PARIS (Planning Advanced Retail Information Systems)....That is the software which we have acquired and are working with to jointly develop a system that is tailor made for us....We have very large

computer applications right now. Our payable systems are all automated, our information systems are all automated but how these systems feed each other and the interfaces is what we are streamlining and getting into a data base environment....Of what they (IBM) have provided in software, maybe 80% can be applied generally to all retailers across the country. The other 20% we have to develop and tailor in house with our processing staff to meet our needs. That takes a lot of time and with 200 plus departments we will phase in each of our group's departments over a period of time as we bring them onto the system. So we will not turn-key all of the departments at the same time. It would be virtually impossible to do. (#109)

The necessity of phasing in and phasing out various computer systems is one of the sources of frustration for the executives. It meant that some maintained their old manual, "black-book" systems on the side because the computer generated data were regarded as unreliable. Thus, technology contributed to the other sources of turmoil in the environment.

Summary

Many of the same old stereotypes of careers in retailing were reflected in the experiences of the informants: high pressure, fast pace, long hours, lots of travel in some jobs, and total involvement with the business. However, present market conditions, management and organizational changes, and developing technology have created additional

dimensions of stress as well as opportunities for people in retailing careers. In spite of the pressures, most informants were thriving in the retail environment and would seek a retailing career if they were to begin their careers all over again.

Taxonomy of Retail Careers

A Taxonomy of Retail Careers was developed as interviews were translated through a process of continuous comparison. After translating about 15 interviews from audio-tape to word-processor, the dimensions of a retail career taxonomy began to take shape. It included the divisions of responsibility within a retail organization, job titles, career levels, and the relationship of career levels between divisions. The taxonomy was sketched out and as the remaining 27 interviews were translated, the career experiences of those executives were compared with the proposed taxonomy. Then the taxonomy was modified and developed accordingly. During the translation of approximately the last 10 interviews, the taxonomy changed very little. Since about two-thirds of the informants for this research spent most of their careers in stores or merchandising divisions, the depth of comparison in that part of the taxonomy is much greater.

After interview translation was completed, the taxonomy was compared to the career summaries provided by the research participants, those who returned the preliminary questionnaires but who were not interviewed. This comparison both confirmed much of the taxonomy and suggested some minor modifications. The resulting taxonomy is offered in Appendix A, Figure 1.

In the taxonomy, a two-digit number is a career code representing both the division within which a job responsibility is held and the career level within the division. The first digit represents the division: stores, (1); merchandising, (2); personnel, (3); advertising and sales promotion, (4); management information systems, (5); and operations, (6). The divisions (or pyramids or lines as they are sometimes called) that are used in the taxonomy are not necessarily consistent with the organization of any particular store but rather represent a classification according to functions that must be performed in any retail organization, regardless of size or type. The traditional term, division, is used to describe these functions in this research.

The second digit, a number from 0 to 9, represents a career level with the corresponding potential job titles at that level. It is very convenient that ten levels seem descriptive of the opportunities for major advancement in each division because that allows the simple two-digit number to be used. For example, career code "15" means that the responsibility is in the stores division, (1), and the career level includes the jobs of personnel, group, operation, or assistant manager or small store manager, (5). All of these jobs are held by people that are on relatively the same career level in the division. It is also possible to know that the person's career status is similar to someone who has career code "25" in the merchandising division or "35" in the personnel division. Therefore, it is possible to describe moves from one job to another or one division to another in terms of major lateral or vertical changes in career status.

In order to complete the career ladder picture, job titles of

president or chief executive officer are identified by a 100 number, while jobs outside of retailing have a 200 number. It is possible to have a career of being president just as it is possible to have a career of being buyer.

Whether a retail organization actually has formal divisions similar to those identified in this taxonomy is probably dependent on the size and type of retailer. Smaller stores may not have the formal divisions but still must perform the functions that are identified by the divisions in the taxonomy. For example, a retail buyer (25) may perform the functions of department manager (13) and fashion director (45). Responsibilities that are a part of a particular job assignment are not necessarily all at the same career level, but the primary responsibilities are what determine the career status in the organization.

The taxonomy is a useful tool for tracing the career path of retail executives. It is possible to easily see the major area of responsibility and the steps in advancement by simply recording a series of two digit numbers. The career path of informant #133 may be described by 22, 12, 24, 16, 26. This means that the individual started in the merchandising division as an assistant buyer, went to stores as a sales manager, returned to merchandising as a buyer, went to stores as a store manager, and returned to merchandising as a merchandise administrator (#133). She made two changes between divisions at approximately the same career level as indicated by 22 to 12, and 16 to 26. The career path of informant #47 is 21, 22, 24, 24, 24. This individual started as a trainee, became an assistant buyer, and then held three different buying

positions. It is immediately evident by the numbers that the experiences of informant #133 interchange between the stores and merchandising divisions. All of the experiences of informant #47 are within the merchandising division and so far career advancement has stopped at the buyer level. The career paths of each of the informants is presented in Appendix A, Table 3. The implications of the career paths that have been experienced by the informants will be discussed throughout the findings.

It is important to note that a person does not have to move to the next career level in order to gain what is commonly called a promotion. A promotion was often identified by changed job title, increased responsibility, or increased pay in the same job. For example, a buyer may be promoted by being assigned an additional department for which to buy or by being transferred to a different area with a larger dollar volume or more difficult merchandise. The individual was still a buyer but was a higher status buyer because of larger dollar volume of buying responsibility. Promotions of this sort were common within career levels. However, the move to the next career level was regarded as a major change in career status.

All retail organizations did not have all the career levels indicated by the taxonomy. For example, the career ladder in the merchandising division in one department store may have included: trainee (21), associate buyer (23), senior buyer (25), merchandise counselor (26), general merchandise manager (27). The career ladder in another store may have included: allocator (21), assistant buyer (22), buyer (24), divisional merchandise manager (26), general merchandise manager (27). The taxonomy is intended to include all typical career levels and

divisions of responsibility within which any particular store's career path would be represented and evaluated.

It would appear that there was a growing status gap between the top executive levels and middle management which are levels 4 and 5 in the taxonomy. A buyer (24) is an example of a middle management position in the merchandising division. The president, chairman or chief executive officer, vice-president, and general merchandise manager were viewed as "top" management, or "key" management by retail organizations. In the taxonomy these are career levels 7 through 9 plus the presidential level of 100. The divisional manager, level 6, was the top rung of middle management or the lowest rung of top management. Sales managers (12), associate buyers (23), and others at career level 3 or lower were regarded as junior executives or entry level management. Career level 4 and above were regarded as senior management but not "top" or "key" management until level 7 was reached.

Although it was not the purpose of this research, the Taxonomy of Retail Careers may be a useful tool for organizational analysis in retail organizations. The levels of advancement are there, and the divisions of responsibility are identified. For example, it was observed that services that were being performed by the management information systems (MIS) division in one organization were being performed by a newly created distribution career path in the merchandising division of another organization. The taxonomy may also provide a basis for evaluation of job descriptions and responsibilities, management structures, and career paths in retail organizations.

The People in Middle and Upper Management

There seemed to be two primary ways that people got into retailing: they were born into it, grew up in families that ran retail stores, or they fell into retailing by accident. Some of the informants actually chose a retail career, planned their education for it, and pursued retail careers. However, those that chose it and those that were born into it were the minority. Retail jobs were comparatively easy to get. They were readily available in every community and because of the high turnover rate, there were always open positions. Thus, a potentially fine executive could "fall" into a retail career through part-time work, full-time work in a stores organization, or by campus recruiting.

According to the informants, people who were happy in retail careers had a sense of urgency, a strong self-image, high energy level, ability to take risks, viewed everything as a personal challenge, and were able to cope with intense involvement with people, and "not always pleasant people" (#17). Successful executives were opinionated, self-directed, innovative thinkers with a sense of humor. People in retail positions were allowed to make mistakes but had to rebound from mistakes to make the business better. People needed to be able to "talk up", communicate upward to their superiors, express their own ideas, and take action to make the ideas work.

Specialty stores provided intense involvement with people. Managers were responsible for hiring and motivating their sales force, satisfying customers, and carrying out the orders of the store owners or corporate executives. Unfortunately, adequate training did not always accompany the experience. In contrast, people in jobs in merchandising divisions

had little opportunity to develop people management or motivational skills until they reached the divisional level, level 6. It is a good argument for including experience in the stores as a part of merchandising training.

Executives had a strong entrepreneurial motivation and often aspired to ultimately owning their own stores someday. Motivation was often based on that entrepreneurial spirit. Department managers treated their business as their own business, buyers did the same. Success "in the numbers" depended on the decisions of the manager or buyer. Retailing was described by informants as being a tough, competitive, numbers oriented business.

In all store types, women predominated at entry level and men dominated the executive offices. Women moved as high as divisional merchandise manager (DMM), level 6, although it appeared normal that there were more men than women at that level. Informants reported that few women had ever attained a vice-president's title. Moving beyond DMM was extremely rare for women. As one female DMM put it, "I doubt that we will ever see a woman across the hall (in the top executive offices)" (#18). There seemed to be a significant barrier that was perceived by women who had aspirations toward moving beyond DMM, but there may not be many women who had those aspirations. Those jobs were sometimes seen by female informants as requiring too much commitment and involving too much stress.

From retail executives, it was not unusual to hear statements like: There are no barriers to women in this business, or I have not experienced any discrimination because I am a women. With deeper

retrospect, informants also said: "There are salary differences." "I know it took longer to reach this job because I am a woman." "I have an assistant buyer who has the ability to be a damn good buyer--but she is six months pregnant!" "If you (a female) want to make a lot of money, get into sales in a field that is male dominated, like tractor parts." "When I graduated from college, retailing was one of only a few fields open to women." Informants in 3 of the 6 department store organizations reported that their organizations had never had a female general merchandise manager.

...it is a barrier...women have always been accepted as divisionals as long as I have been in retailing. In the three organizations I have worked for I have never seen one (female general merchandise manager). (#105)

Female divisional merchandise managers either have been or have recently become common. However, there were still more male than female divisional merchandise managers.

We do not have any female divisionals with this company. We do have female store managers. I have been surprised to see that. I think that will change now with the management changes. I don't think we will see that same level of discrimination that we felt. (#14)

Between buyer and divisional (between level 5 and 6 on the career level scale in the taxonomy) was the point where female dominance turned to male dominance in most of the organizations studied.

The discount store was the only organization in this study that had more males than females at the buyer level. "In most department stores,

buyers are 80% female, in this organization buyers are 80% male. Even below buyer, there are more males than females" (#103). People in this discount store organization had higher than average salaries for each career level than in department stores. Because of greater dollar volume responsibility, it was regarded as a promotion to move from buyer in a department store with perhaps a \$5 million dollar department to assistant buyer with this discounter with perhaps a \$20 million buying responsibility. The move also represented a significant salary increase. This discount store organization normally had recruited buyers from the divisional ranks of major department stores. This would appear to explain the predominance of male buyers since the divisional merchandise manager positions in many department stores were filled primarily by men.

We have one woman vice-president and one woman divisional...being in those positions is a huge responsibility...you have to be better (than the men). We would like to think that things are changing but they are changing very very slowly....A lot of the discrimination has to do with women themselves. There are not a lot of women who are really really aggressive, the type of aggressiveness that it takes to get into upper-level management. There are a lot of excellent women who are very well qualified. But the men, they've got the experience when it comes to talking about themselves, promoting themselves, much more readily than women do. Women have much more humbleness, not as bold and outspoken. It's not a question of qualifications, it's a

question of presentation, how to promote yourself, how to conduct yourself in the business environment. (#103)

Part of the problem may have been that the "rules" of "how to conduct yourself" were not the same for men and women. Aggressiveness was a personal characteristic that was often mentioned as essential to be successful in retailing. One buyer said, however, that she thought her aggressiveness as a woman was a handicap, she felt she was regarded as "pushy and obnoxious" (#132).

...men and women play by different rules...they do not understand how your mind works, it is not their problem, it is not your problem, it is just a fact. I think that prevents them from promoting women to an equal level where they have to deal with them everyday. I have a very good friend who is a (female) vice-president. She is always the only woman at these higher corporate seminars and this type of thing, so you just cannot sit there with a drink and talk about football and how that woman looks and do dirty jokes and the whole thing. You are really surprised at that level that is what goes on. The guys at the top realize that so they do not feel comfortable with women in those positions because they cannot have a good time...when they sit in their meetings...and they are smoking and joking and you are saying, "where is the meeting." (#105)

Traditional expectations relative to male and female roles seemed to be a factor in professional relationships. "...A problem that I had when I was interviewing was the perception of what a woman does...their (male executives) correlation was their wives who are full-time homemakers..."

(#105). Some male executives seemed to have little understanding of the many demands on women who were involved in a successful career and who also had a family life including children, how those demands differed from the demands on men who had a family life including children, or how a business organization might support a family life for both men and women.

One buyer reported an incident where she and two other buyers returned late one Thursday night from New York after a week in the market. The airline had lost their luggage. In a moment of rebellion they decided they were not going to go into work the next day until they got their luggage. "We didn't have someone at home to go get our luggage for us whenever the airline found it. We knew we would be working all weekend anyway to get caught up from being away" (#19). As they expected, their male divisional merchandise manager was irate when they arrived at work at about two o'clock the next afternoon. He also had been in New York but his wife had picked up his luggage.

Male executives did not recognize the advantages that many of them had over female executives. Most male executives had wives who were full-time homemakers. It would appear that the higher an executive was on the career ladder, the more likely he was to have a wife who was a full-time homemaker. These women provided a multitude of services: child care, food, clothing and household maintenance, taxi service, etc. Women executives seldom had the advantage of these personal services or the contribution that the services made to the ability of an executive to concentrate on his/her career. The demands and expectations of a career in retailing were so intense in terms of time, energy, travel, etc. that

every retail executive needed a "wife" at home providing personal services and a private life that was available whenever that executive was available to participate in it.

The traditional role expectations for men and women are still clearly entangled in career development. None of the male informants reported postponing marriage or postponing having children because of the demands of their careers. Many female informants had remained single and/or postponed or decided not to have children in favor of perpetuating their careers. Clearly, women have to make choices between career and family that men did not have to make. Women who did both successfully were regarded as extraordinary whereas, for men, simultaneous career and family was commonplace.

Career Development

Few informants had explicit career plans with long term implications. Most established short-term (2 to 3 years), reachable goals. The career plan developed as the career developed. "Usually I do things in spurts of three years...you always have to prove yourself before you move on...once you get to those next levels you can decide whether those other jobs are for you or not..." (#105). Informants commonly worked with other managers and executives that were one and two rungs above them in the career ladder. It was when they worked with people in higher positions that they began to aspire to holding those positions and realized it was realistic to expect that they could do that job. One executive who did have a career plan reported it like this, "I

planned to be a buyer in 3 years and a divisional merchandise manager in 5 years. It would have worked if I had been a man. As a woman, it took 9 years. I always wanted to be a general merchandise manager. Now vice-president doesn't scare me. President looks like a lot of PR (public relations)" (#105).

Within the taxonomy, achievement of certain levels had more significance relative to career development than other levels. Level 6 in the career level hierarchy was a critical level. Examples of jobs in level 6 included a divisional merchandise manager (26) in the merchandising division, or a store manager (16) in the stores division. Level 6 was significant in retailing careers because it meant that a person had either just made a move into upper management or had reached the last level of middle management, depending on the structure of the particular retailer.

Level 6 was also significant because it represented a level that few women were able to move beyond. The proportion of women, for example, in the buying ranks was not reflected in the ratio of men to women at the divisional level. Thus, many retail careers for women stopped at level 4 or 5, in middle management as buyers (24) or senior buyers (25), area managers (14) or assistant store managers (15), or as fashion or sales promotion coordinators (44).

There were also many fewer positions for people at level 6 than at lower levels. In any merchandising division there were probably 10-20% as many divisional merchandise managers as buyers. Likewise, in a retail store, there might be 1 to 8 assistants for each store manager. So it was clear, that a major proportion of people who achieved career level 4

or 5 would never reach level 6. It was mathematically impossible. The opportunities to move beyond level 6 were equally difficult. There were usually only a few people at level 7 and 8 in any retail organization, often only one in each division, perhaps only one in the entire organization.

The time that was required to reach level 6 varied extensively. Some informants reached level (6) in less than 5 years and others took more than 20 years. However, it was not unusual for informants in some organizations, even women, to reach level 6 by the time they were 30 or 32 years old. "Fast track" people reached senior vice-president (level 9) or even president by that age. The vice-president's title was sometimes used to reward someone in level 6, 7, or 8 for good and/or lengthy service. That practice made the top executive ranks appear to swell and provided a career goal beyond level 6 where advancement opportunities may have been noticeably lacking otherwise.

It was common in the career experience of the informants to receive some sort of advancement every 9 to 18 months. Advancement was indicated by: 1) increase in salary, 2) move to a more difficult job, 3) increase in volume (dollars) in same area, 4) increase in responsibility by adding something to present job, 5) move to another area with larger volume or responsibility, 6) change in job title or addition of a title which may or may not change job description.

The retail environment promoted impatience with advancement. There was a high sense of urgency that seemed to permeate the organizations. People were expected to seek advancement and tended to be regarded as only moderately successful or unsuccessful if advancement was not granted

very frequently.

...for at least three years there were 120 buyers and 17 divisionals so the turnover even on the buyer level was high because they thought they were not moving fast enough. Everybody wanted to be a divisional or thought they wanted to be. Plus the whole structure was such you had to say that you wanted to be a divisional whether you wanted to be or not because if you didn't then you were not aggressive...you had to play this role for them and pretend you wanted the divisional when all you really wanted to be was a good buyer. (#41)

Mentoring and the fast-track

Superiors that took on a mentoring role provided important guidance and visibility to aspiring executives. Sometimes career moves that were recommended by superiors but disliked by informants turned out to be very good moves. When informant #133 was a buyer, at the insistence of her divisional merchandise manager, she transferred to the stores division as a store manager for a year. She then came back to the merchandising division as a merchandise administrator. She admitted that she hated making the change to stores but that it was one of the best career moves she ever made. In the stores division she had to learn how to get things done through other people. As a buyer, she had one or two assistants and therefore had little opportunity to manage or motivate a workforce. The young man who insisted on the transfer is informant #42, who became a vice-president at the age of 27 and senior vice-president and general merchandising manager when he was 28.

...A combination of factors contributed to speed of promotion. There was some major changes made in upper management in two different periods in my career where there was opportunity for highly motivated individuals to thrive in that environment....There were a lot of people in the organization that either didn't want to adapt or didn't want to make the changes in terms of the style of management or fell out of favor with management for one reason or another. It just made for opportunity. The other factor was that we were going through a dramatic growth period...had a pretty good appetite for individuals who could play a part.... (#42)

The career path of informant #42 according to the taxonomy was: 22, 24, 16, 18, 19, 29. By adding the specific job titles that were gained in the interview, it can be understood that he started out in the merchandising division as assistant buyer and then became a buyer; moved to the stores division as a store manager, then became vice-president of stores; then moved back to merchandising as senior vice-president and all within 8 years.

Some informants reported resentment toward young people who advanced very quickly or "outsiders" who were brought in and quickly moved up the career ladder. "I took over his department when he was promoted and it was a shambles" (#48). The conflict was apparent between criteria upon which the "fast track" type people were evaluated and the criteria upon which most people said they were evaluated, that was, the productivity and profitability of the departments for which they were responsible.

I think one of the most interesting persons I have ever seen in

retailing is our president. The man had never held a job for over 18 months so the performance factor is not necessarily how you judge somebody. How can you judge somebody in 3 months or 6 months in their capabilities on the job...it takes a month to move and get your files set up...he has risen further and faster than anybody I know. Does he have the eye of somebody at corporate? How do you get that eye? (#105)

The president to which participant #105 refers is informant #90 who was recruited by a major department store as a part of an MBA class of 14. He had no retail management experience when he was recruited. He spent two years in a marketing position with a national company before returning to school for his MBA. He has been in retailing now for 12 years employed by two different retailers. His salary has been above \$100,000 for 5 years. He said as far as he knew, there were only three of that MBA class that were still employed in retailing. Two were presidents, and the other was an executive vice-president.

...not everyone on the fast track has an MBA...personality and performance were the main factors. Who you know, number one, what your personality is, how fast you get to know the right people...not necessarily performance. (#105)

Even those who were not regarded as "fast track" were promoted very quickly according to expectations in other occupations, education for example. However, sometimes promotions were offered for the wrong reasons. Many executives dealt on a daily basis with replacing people because of high turnover or rapid growth. Under those conditions promotions were sometimes offered to people too soon. Taking a job that

was too big, too soon overwhelmed the young executive, created insecurities and the appearance of failure.

Informant #4 discussed just such a problem in his specialty chain organization. Rapid growth plus high turnover in store management positions put a great deal of pressure on district managers to fill those management positions, just so the stores could be open. "As a result, we have hurt some people" (#4). He then explained that several people were going to be asked to step down from their store management positions in favor of more training at the assistant level or else they would be asked to leave the organization all together.

Participant #11 discussed the pressure that was put on young specialty store managers to manage people, merchandise, sales, customers, and their own careers. She mentioned that in her career, she had passed up opportunities for promotions because she did not feel ready for new responsibilities. Thus, in some circumstances, the person who was secure enough to turn down opportunities was better off. It gave them time to mature in their job, regulated career advancement, and contributed to their own success.

Sometimes the speed of advancement resulted in a very short career path in terms of years. Informant #133 reached the merchandise administrator position by the time she was 30 years old. While few women in her department store organization held positions above merchandise administrator, she thought she would get a vice-president's title at the merchandise administrator level. There were only two other women vice-presidents, however, out of 33 vice-presidents. What is the future for this young executive? She had accomplished all of the career goals

she had established. The options for her really were fairly limited at that point. Promotions could have been accomplished by moving to larger volume departments as a merchandise administrator. Would this provide the challenge and stimulation necessary for the next 35 years of her working life? Rapid advancement looks like a mixed blessing in terms of a total career life-span.

Rapid upward movement was often seen as a very desirable characteristic for a career. The results of rapid advancement included 1) early termination of an otherwise productive career because of lack of further advancement opportunities, 2) demotion or being fired, 3) leaving retailing because of overwhelming responsibilities, 4) dedication to a challenging career with generous financial rewards.

The "fast track" informants had three things in common.

- 1) The length of time at a career level was seldom more than 3 years and more likely less than two years. Some informants regarded 3 years as a minimum time to learn a job, others thought it took at least five years. The first year was used to learn and analyze the business; the second year, to make changes and improvements; and the third year to polish and grow the business. Therefore, it appeared that they were being pulled through the normal career experiences at an abnormal rate.
- 2) Sponsors or mentors at key management levels in the organization played important roles in creating visibility and opportunities for young executives. The mentoring role often involved consulting with the aspiring executive and making recommendations as to career path and employer changes. Sometimes mentors took young executives with them when they (the mentors) made a career move.

3) A broad perspective of retail organization(s) was created by working in more than one division and/or being employed by more than one retailer.

Patterns of employment

Examination of career summaries on the Preliminary Questionnaires and discussion with informants about employment patterns revealed three common patterns of employment in retailing careers:

- 1) all one firm,
- 2) one firm for an extended period, then change to another firm,
- 3) many changes of employer, 2-5 years each.

There were 14 informants in this study that had only one retail employer. Four of those were in the personnel divisions in charge of college recruiting. These recruiters had been in retailing for 2 to 8 years. Some executives emphasized the importance of having young, attractive people in the recruiting role on college campuses. The limited exposure to other retail organizations may have contributed to the recruiter's ability to promote their own employer.

Some firms had an amazing ability to generate loyalty in their employees. Informant #7, after relating what seemed like unreasonable demands on time and irrational management expectations, conveyed that her present employer was the only retailer she wanted to work for. She was convinced that the firm she worked for was the "best" in terms of merchandise, merchandising, and serving their customer. Thus, longevity, can sometimes be attributed to loyalty.

Another four informants that had only one employer were either buyers or divisional merchandise managers who were all employed by the same firm. Their time of employment ranged from 11 to 21 years. While these informants found retailing careers, for the most part, to be challenging and rewarding, they expressed considerable dissatisfaction with the lack of direction that they were receiving from management. The management was criticized for complacency, lack of innovation, and misreading the target customer and the economic environment. These informants each named some other firm when they were asked who their ideal employer would be. It was common for informants to name the firm that they presently worked for. While the employer's management was being criticized for complacency, perhaps these informants were equally complacent toward their own careers.

When informants worked for one firm for an extended period before changing employers, special circumstances often accompanied that move. Those circumstances included changes in a firm's merchandising practices, a mentor leaving the firm, changes in upper management, and burnout.

Informant #42 was an example of people in retail careers who did not have to change organizations in order to be promoted very quickly. In a 12 year retail career, he had only one retail employer and became senior vice-president and general merchandise manager. He had a salary over \$75,000 for 7 years. However, he left the retail firm last year to build a consulting business. A number of circumstances contributed to that employment change. The organization brought in a new president and chairman and instituted some changes in merchandising policy. Thus, some key people that #42 had worked with throughout his career departed the

organization. Rather than seeking a position with another retailer, he chose to make a career change.

Some retail careers have benefited by changing employers. Informant #17, over a 30 year period, had been employed by seven different corporate divisions (some of them were part of the same conglomerate), and had been president for three different organizations. He said he had moved around very little compared to some of the people he knew in the retail business. His income had surpassed the \$100,000 mark for over 10 years.

Informant #105 had been in retailing 10 years, has had three different retail employers (in addition, she worked for one of them twice), was a divisional merchandise manager with a salary range of \$50,000-\$75,000. Informant #46 was a vice-president in an organization that has only 2 female vice-presidents among 33 vice-presidents in the organization. Over a 14 year period, she had 3 different retail employers. She left the merchandising division of a prominent department store to broaden her retail experience with a specialty store. She recognized that move as a mistake and returned to the same department store in the stores division. She had achieved a salary in the \$50,000-\$75,000 range. The move from the merchandising division of a department store to a specialty store and then to the stores division of the department store was a very unusual series of career moves. However, it worked for informant #105.

Informant #109 had four different retail employers over an 18 year period. He completed an MBA degree, became a vice-president, and had achieved the \$50,000-75,000 salary range.

I have had a strong inventory control background and payables background (as well as about four years of merchandising and stores experience). Now the internal audit background and the shortage control background. I hope my career path here will lead me more to the financial areas sooner or later. That will allow me, number one, to be more rounded in terms of the corporation, and certainly the potential to grow into some of the larger divisions....The movement in my particular case has definitely improved my salary, there is no question about it. (#109)

People move very quickly through the ranks, if you look at the president, I don't think he is 40 yet....A lot of them achieve a very high point in their career and all the sudden they decide that it is not for them....a lot of them go into their own businesses because then you do not have to deal with all the corporate structure...if you want to do something, you do it. (#105)

Clearly, any of the three career patterns could lead to a satisfactory career. Two factors that were critical to career development, however, were 1) the intent of the organization toward an individual, and 2) the intent of the individual toward the organization. The intent of the organization was interpreted by the executives. Thus, knowing and generating the support of executives was a key factor relative to speed of advancement. If executives had confidence in an individual, for whatever reason (educational background, performance with

the company, breadth and depth of experience, personality, etc.) opportunity for advancement was enhanced. It then was the responsibility of the individuals to plan and regulate advancement in a manner that served his/her own best interest.

Careers that sputter, burnout, derail, and stall

Some careers advanced at a phenomenal rate to the satisfaction of both the employer and the employee. Other careers developed more moderately but were still satisfactory. Some careers, however, did not develop as either the employer or employee thought they should. What causes careers to sputter, burnout, derail and stall?

A number of informants had careers that might have been described as sputtering, not really going anywhere. Informant #15 had been in retailing 11 years. She had 6 different retail employers in several different geographical areas. As her career path shows (10, 10, 14, 16, 11, 14) she had spent all of her career in stores. Some of her employer changes had resulted in starting over instead of moving on with her career. She had worked primarily for very small retail organizations that had limited opportunity for advancement. After 11 years of experience, she was an assistant manager of an exclusive specialty store and was being paid between \$10,000 and \$15,000 a year. She seemed happy with her job but was seeking guidance in career planning.

Informant #7 had been in and out of retailing for 16 years. She had 4 different specialty store employers. She explained that, as a manager, she was paid less on a per/hour basis than the sales people. People in sales positions were paid an hourly wage while management was on a

salary. At the same time, the hours per week were often far greater for managers. She estimated that she was being paid \$2.23 per hour when she calculated her salary on an hourly basis. She was on leave from her present employer suffering from "burnout." When asked who she would work for if she could pick any retailer, she named her present employer.

Informant #134 had been in retailing 11 years and has had three different retail employers. Her career path was 12, 22, 23, 63, 23, 13, 53, 55. She had held multiple jobs in entry level management, her career appeared to be stalled there, but she had found a very satisfactory position primarily, it appears, because of the guidance of a mentor. She had achieved the \$20,000-\$25,000 income bracket during the last 2 years. Informant #136 had her career stalled in the store's division of a regional department store. Her career path was 13, 13, 13, 14, 14. She also has been in the \$20,000-\$25,000 income bracket for 2 years but was very uncertain that she wanted to pursue her retail career. She resented the demands against her personal time, particularly during the holiday season. Her own uncertainty about her career may have been reflected in the stores use of her skills.

Sometimes what appears to be a step-down in a career was actually a step-up. Informant #103 went from a department store buying position to an assistant buying position with a discounter with a salary increase to the \$40,000-\$50,000 income bracket. She had been in retailing 8 years. Informant #158's career path was 21, 12, 22, 24, 25, 22. She went from a senior buying position with a major department store to an assistant buyer position with a discounter. She was impressed by the professionalism in the discount organization and also appreciated her

\$40,000-\$50,000 salary. She said she was approaching burnout in the department store buying position when she decided she needed a career change. She was seeking a career strategy that would allow her to have a child and a reasonable family life while continuing her career. She had been in retailing 6 years.

Burnout was a phenomenon experienced by those in both the merchandising and stores divisions. Too many hours, too many demands, too much pressure, unreasonable supervisors, too little private life, too much travel, too few new challenges; these were all factors identified by informants that contributed to burnout.

I bought dresses, different dress areas for 8 years. I had probably 15 combinations of departments and worked for 6 or 7 different divisionals. Every divisional had a different way of doing business so I had to learn all over again with each one. I had every dress department at some time or other. Each time it changed it was additional responsibility, bigger volume, or more difficult area to buy. It was always a step up. After 8 years I really just burned out. I said I love buying but I would like another challenge. There is nothing in dresses that is challenging anymore. I have seen it all. Every trend has come back and I would like to go on with something else. I was lucky at the time I went to personnel there happened to be a sportswear job open. I was offered that job in a week and moved to sportswear. The rest of my buying career at (my previous employer) I was a sportswear buyer. I bought moderate separates, then eventually gained better blouses and better

sweaters....Two years ago they created a position called senior buyer (which I got). It was basically the same responsibilities, a little more authority, more clout, more prestige in the market and within the stores. (#41)

This buyer left the department store and a responsibility for \$7 million worth of business to take a pay cut and a less prestigious job with a better specialty store. She was buying dresses and sportswear but was also involved in merchandising the floor and selling to customers. She found that a welcome relief from the pressures of the department store job.

One thing that buyers identified that had helped prevent burnout was learning a new business. At the same time, frequent moves of buyers to different areas was described as a waste of time and talent.

Every time you change buying positions you have to learn the business, you do not use the same principles. Going from dresses to sportswear is a different philosophy. Dresses is wide and shallow, sportswear was narrow and deep assortment. In dresses you buy a huge assortment but not 25 of a style. In sportswear it is just the opposite. You had to understand why. You had to understand why customers did not respond to a circle rack of one dress but they would respond to a circle rack of one turtle neck. I was amazed how many people didn't understand that. They wanted to apply a sportswear philosophy to dresses and vice versa. It used to amaze me at the waste of energy and talent. You spent so much time relearning what is going on.

To a degree a good buyer can buy anything. But just because I am a good dress buyer does not mean I would be a good housewares buyer. I could buy housewares but I would have to figure out the timing, the whole markdown timing, the delivery time, the reorder timing. The nature of the business is different. It is different buying budget sportswear than buying better sportswear. Even that is enough of a difference to wipe out a year by making some bad decisions. I have seen buyers that were excellent buyers in areas that were predictable, controllable, non-fashion areas and were horrible fashion buyers. I have seen fashion buyers who would never survive in another area but they had the gut feel, the timing, that's what we needed there. We didn't need someone to run the numbers. You give them a strong assistant that goes over those numbers with them. That was something that I thought was not recognized or appreciated. Of course, they never asked me my opinion. (#41)

An MBA did not prevent having a career stall and derail. Informant #44's career path was 22, 13, 24, 54, 35. Although he appeared to have had regular advancement during his 8 year career and was making between \$30,000 and \$40,000 a year, he was not doing what he wanted to be doing. He started out as a MBA trainee, on a fast-track with a southeastern retailer. He advanced to buyer with that organization but not as quickly as he would have liked. Right after he became buyer, he moved to a midwest-based department store with a strong management information systems (MIS) division. He worked for 5 years in that division, gained

excellent experience, and liked it very much. He described it as being the "pulse of the business." However, there was no upward movement available to him in that division because the vice-president of MIS was very good and one of the chairman's primary advisors. Thus, his career was stalled in the MIS division. He inquired about a change to personnel and in a few months made that change. Recognizing the move to personnel as a mistake, he resigned in favor of a MIS position with another firm. However, his fellow workers convinced him to pass up that opportunity. So he stayed on in the personnel division but he was feeling left out of the mainstream of the company. He saw the personnel division as critical to the company but not a priority area from a financial standpoint. Thus his career stalled in MIS and then he felt derailed in personnel.

Summary

These career histories demonstrate some of the many ways that careers fail to advance in a satisfactory manner as well as how some advance at an astounding rate. Factors that are critical to upward movement in retail career development include: 1) beginning a career with a firm and/or division that has a desirable career path and offers advancement potential, 2) being promoted or moving to the job or jobs that will provide growth experiences and visibility, 3) being in an area of responsibility where the organization has room for people to grow and advance, 4) taking advantage of past experience and expertise when changing jobs, 5) seeking jobs that will broaden and strengthen background and skills, 6) recognizing the necessity for self-marketing

in the career development process.

Educational Background and a Retail Career

Retailers continually tell each other and other people that academic background is not a factor in success in retailing although most emphasized that a four-year degree was necessary. When the informants were sorted on income level it was immediately apparent that most of those without academic degrees fell into the bottom of the income range. This was one of those "revelations" of the data. This researcher had been told so many times by so many informants, and with such certainty, that education did not matter that the correlation between education and income was a complete surprise. One college relations manager said that education did not matter and immediately followed that up by saying that they only recruited at business schools (#160). He seemed completely unaware of the inconsistency of those statements. The attitudes toward education seem so embedded in the culture that even a manager of college recruiting didn't realize the conflicts.

When I go out on campus to recruit or talk to students when they come in, there are retail majors. We purposely recruit from business management courses....I am not convinced that it (academic preparation) makes a difference. Retailing is an enormous equalizer. In any one training class we are going to have anthropology majors, education, pre-law. I don't know anybody on our executive committee that started out to get into this business. It draws more on your traits, your personality

traits, than it does on your academic background and particular skills. So I don't think it (business education) hurts any, I'm not really convinced yet that it helps. Our Chairman started out in engineering....It's people. It is a totally people driven business. It's more of a personality business than most.... (#45)

Informants emphasized that advancement, either in the form of salary increase and/or job title was based on performance ("the numbers," "the bottom line") rather than educational background, personality, or any other factors. "I don't think the type of degree means anything. I don't care if they have a degree in history, English, or business management....It would certainly hurt your upward mobility not to have a (four-year) degree" (#90). In contrast, another informant asserted, "You do not have to have a college degree to be successful in retailing" (#58).

This overview of his attitude toward a college education was provided by a company president who has an MBA,

We really do not hire anyone today that does not have a four-year degree. They have so much more experience, so much more mature. On the other hand, we do not hire the MBA today. We can hire one and three-fourths individuals today for the price of an MBA. And we are very people intensive right now. That's a change from years ago. We can't afford the luxury of hiring the MBA. What we see is this tremendous fallout in this organization, probably 30-50% of who you hire in 12 months. So if you are going to hire an MBA you are better off hiring one

that has been in the business 3-5 years. You are paying a significant premium but at least you know he is well-seasoned and can relate to this business. (#90)

Informants for the most part were unable to articulate benefits of a college degree or to specify components of a curriculum that would benefit a career in retailing. In contrast, informants easily listed the personality characteristics that were desirable for a career in retailing and the lists had a great deal of consistency. One point of agreement was that the college program should include an internship, an apprenticeship, or a field experience program. Inadequacies of retail managers that were identified by informants include skills in mathematics and negotiation. It was repeatedly emphasized that the best training was on the job.

Some of the larger retailers had elaborate organizations for providing "in-store training" for everything from sales techniques to personal relationships. Training was provided by executives in the personnel division, executives in other divisions, sales representatives, and outside consultants. Employees from clerks to presidents were given the opportunity to participate. Informant #44 described a series of product information seminars that were conducted for sales people and department managers (career codes 10 and 12) in the electronics departments. Employees were paid to attend the sessions at a nice hotel. The sales in those departments reflected the effectiveness of the investment. He said that, at first, there was a lot of resistance to the training sessions. But, because of their success, he was being sought out by many executives for a variety of programs.

Recruiting

Criteria for selecting recruits included education, experience, and personal qualities. Desired personal qualities included the ability to handle pressure, meet deadlines, assign priorities; a sense of urgency and flexibility; high motivation and enjoyment of making decisions. One informant said that a commitment to retailing may be more important than any capabilities because skills can be taught.

Another selection criterion that was frequently mentioned was grade point average. Grade point was regarded by several informants as a measure of dedication to a job; an indication of the ability to set out to do something and to complete it. Some informants suggested that the actual grade point was not as important as how the graduate felt about it. Thus, grade point was not seen as a measure of learning or academic achievement or even what the graduate might be able to bring, academically, to the job but rather as a measure of work ethic. What actually was the acceptable minimum level of grade point was vague, 2.8 or 3.0 or 3.2, even 3.5 for one retailer. Several informants, after expounding on the value of the grade point criteria in recruiting, then said that if there had been a similar requirement when they were recruited they could never have been hired.

The use of tests of various kinds to evaluate the potential of college graduates in retailing careers has become more common. Two informants (#14 and #105) discussed the use of testing in screening new recruits and in the promotion of executives to level 6 in the taxonomy. There seemed to be a great deal of mystery surrounding the use of the

tests and how the results were evaluated. Informant #14 felt very intimidated by the testing. She said that everyone had been "forced" to take the tests. The results were to be used to establish how to evaluate the tests when they were administered to job applicants. She thought the use of testing had a negative effect on morale. Most retailers, however, still conducted recruiting on college campuses in the traditional way, by personal interviews with potential candidates followed by a "gut" analysis, or used "instincts" in deciding who should receive offers (#45).

Decisions about what schools would be recruited was based on the tradition in the store and the preferences of the senior executives. One informant gave an example of how much influence one executive could have on who had an opportunity to interview with their organization. Informant #133, a merchandising graduate, said she was going to a Texas school of business on an interviewing trip. She suggested to the college relations manager that, while they were there, they should check out the graduates of the merchandising program. Therefore, they interviewed both business and merchandising graduates on that trip even though it was "store policy" to only recruit business programs.

The University of Wisconsin, Madison was frequently mentioned as one of the best schools for recruiting executive trainees but each store had its "favorites." Some executives developed relationships with certain schools and returned to recruit in those programs year after year. Some executives mentioned being on advisory boards for educational institutions. These activities provided some continuity that could otherwise be lacking because of turnover in the college relations manager

position. One vice-president reported that when she went on an interview trip to one certain school, it was common for her to spend a week interviewing, speaking to classes, and working with the students and faculty.

The job of finding, screening, and recruiting executive trainees was entrusted to junior executives, career level 3 and below, in most of the department stores and in the discount store. A college relations manager, career code 32 in the taxonomy, was employed in the personnel division and was usually in charge of communicating with the colleges, screening resumes, setting the recruiting schedule and identifying and making arrangements for executives, primarily at level 6 and above, to accompany the college relations manager on the interview trips. It was usually the task of the college relations manager to reduce the total number of applicants from perhaps something like 400 to perhaps 15 who might be brought into the store headquarters for second interviews. Rapid turnover among these young executives sometimes created continuity problems with the colleges and universities. For example, recruiting schedules were usually planned several months in advance. As a result, it was not unusual to have a different college relations manager actually carry out the interviews than who had planned the interview trip.

Merchandising programs

Each informant tended to prefer whatever type of educational background that he/she had experienced. The strongest exception to that was from those who had graduated from textiles and clothing merchandising programs. The informants that were merchandising graduates came from a

number of home economics, textiles and clothing merchandising programs located in the midwest. They said that if they were going to do their education over again they would take a straight business program or at least increase the emphasis of business in their program. "Ask those guys who are president how many textiles and fashion merchandising courses they have had. You can learn (enough of) that in the market in two days" (#105). "If I have two people to choose from that are otherwise alike, I will take the one with the retail management background. If I have two people to choose from, one textiles and one business, I will take business" (#160). "The advantage of retail management background is that they usually have retail experience (in the stores). Because of experience it (retailing) is the career choice....Retail major is too narrow...better as a minor...too many career changes..." (#105). "Schools need to change their programs gearing it more to mass merchandising" (#103). "I knew I wanted retail....Don't need textiles, need finance" (#19).

Because I majored in fashion merchandising, I think I use a little bit of everything. I had 48 hours of business. I think I use all of that. Learned a lot on the job: assortment planning, floor layouts, and store planning...Most revolutionary thing I did (from the standpoint of personal development) was go to New York and walk around the market with a couple of buyers...really get into developing a line now since I am buying pre-teens because I have to have special cuttings made....I wish I had a lot more finance background....Would probably do the same thing with maybe a

double major in a business area.... (#14)

Informant #14 identified the most important thing in her merchandising program as "getting into the market." She also identified the types of training that she was able to receive on the job.

My home ec background has not been a problem because the training program at (department store) is so extensive. On the job training is most valuable you can get. What the training program lacked you gain from other people...wonderful about sharing and helping out...I had a girlfriend who was a German major and another was an art history major...they were as successful if not more so than I was... but they have become more selective, it is more difficult to get on (the training program). My training program was 30 people and they had three programs a year. The turnover was incredible...within the first year half the group was gone, by the end of the second (year), 80% was gone. Now the training program has 7 or 8 total, once or twice a year. The selection is more directed at exact academic background (business)..." (#41)

Informant #41 also testified to the value of on-the-job training and to the importance of the support of colleagues. The next informant distinguished between store types relative to educational background.

I use more of my home ec background here (better specialty store) than at a department store. Here we have special orders, dresses that need to be altered. In moderate (medium priced clothing) everything was cotton or polyester blends. Here we deal with a lot of fabrics I haven't seen in years. (#41)

Informant #41 had just left a department store buying job for a buying position with a large, better specialty store.

The next informant identified what she saw as inadequacies and limitations in the merchandising programs while also pointing out what may be an initial advantage to merchandising graduates.

The program was too textile science oriented...the future is business. Maybe merchandising should be in the business school. We do not recruit in home ec programs, only business...retailing background is definitely an advantage....it doesn't mean in the long run they (graduates of retailing programs) will be better, initially they will be better.... (#133)

Education in retailing, it really does not make any difference, in six months time it does not make any difference. It hurts me to say that because I have had people with English and French degrees promoted over me and it hurt...but that's the way it is. I am very proud of my education but I don't know... (#134)

This informant expressed pride in college degree in merchandising but sees little evidence that it was linked to her career opportunities. The next informant discussed some the merchandising program components.

I am not elated with my academic preparation...may be improvements since I was there...focus must direct itself more

to the business mode and less of a home economics mode...too much home economics required courses and not enough business required courses. I prefer grads of retail programs (in my store). I have had others (grads of other programs) but have had lower success rates with them...It is a perception of reality.... (#46)

Informant #46 acknowledged that programs have probably had more business courses added since she had graduated. There was broad agreement among informants who were merchandising graduates that adding business was the correct way to make programs better. At the same time #46 suggests that executives that have a retailing component in their academic background had a better perception of what retailing was all about and therefore may be better prepared to persist in their career.

Informant #103 explained her perception of the stereotype of the fashion merchandising program. But then she explained how she became a merchandising major in the first place. It was not because of her desire to be a retailer.

Assortment planning is probably not that important...more of the business aspect...accounting, economics, business related courses. I had courses more geared to working the market. Those are not important, you can pick that up experience wise. I don't think the textiles and clothing part is important...makes everyone think they are going to have jobs in ready-to-wear...they don't have any hardlines courses...we are two-thirds hardline. Everything is so geared to clothing that it gives the whole merchandising degree a bad name...it becomes

almost a sissy program. It (fashion merchandising) is a business degree...need to get away from merchandising as a title, it should be incorporated into a business degree....I entered the textiles and clothing program because I like to sew. If someone had asked me if I wanted a degree in retailing I would have said no. I was not business minded....If I were to do my education over again, I would not do textiles and clothing, would do straight business. (#103)

Informant #158 was one of few informants that intended to have a career in retailing and planned and directed their college education toward that career.

I chose fashion merchandising because I wanted retailing....One strength of my background is my creative side....Creative sense is important but business sense is more important....Very small percentage of total people in merchandising work in situation where in-depth information in textiles is important. (#158)

The message of these fashion merchandising graduates was consistent in the focus on the importance of business courses. Business programs were preferable to merchandising programs. Almost every traditional component of a merchandising program was rejected in terms of value in the future careers. At the very minimum, according to the informants, merchandising programs should have greatly strengthened business components. If these informants were going to repeat their educational programs, a straight business program or at a minimum a greatly strengthened business component would be their choice.

The reasons for these strong opinions was not entirely clear. It

was unlikely that people with business degrees had testified to the appropriateness and superiority of their educational background because informants, in general, were not articulate about the value of education. The fact that many leading retailers only recruit at business schools could have been an intimidating factor although none of the informants who were merchandising graduates mentioned that as a reason for their preference for business. Some informants recognized that programs had probably changed for the better (better means more business oriented) since they had graduated.

Few informants at the higher career levels (level 6 and up in the taxonomy) were women. Since fashion merchandising programs have nearly 100% female enrollment, the merits of training in fashion merchandising may be unrecognized at executive levels because so few women were a part of those upper ranks. The interesting thing about this idea is that the lack of representation of fashion merchandising among executives would have *nothing to do with program quality or appropriateness to retail careers*, just the numbers of men and women in executive positions. However, if the informants in this study are typical of merchandising graduates, they would not champion their academic programs anyway.

Informants who took merchandising programs in colleges of home economics chose it because they liked clothes, they were involved with 4-H programs, they liked to sew, or, for one informant, she wanted a retailing career. Those reasons for the most part reflected little business orientation. Thus, fashion merchandising educators face the particular challenge of helping their students to realize the nature of the competitive business environment and of preparing the students to

compete with aggressive people who are graduates of business or other programs.

This, however, does not explain why merchandising graduates were not more supportive of their educational programs. The expressed need for stronger business background, particularly in the area of finance, was a consistent one from the informants. Every informant was expected to make his/her business profitable. The amount of money available to invest in their business was usually determined by some senior executive. Success of a business was based only on profits or "gross margin" and growth over last year. Thus, the strong emphasis on a need for understanding finance should not be surprising.

The job opportunities of fashion merchandising graduates were limited in on-campus recruiting because some major department stores, particularly for their merchandising and operations divisions, recruited only from business programs. This practice was contrary to the frequently avowed statement that educational background didn't make any difference.

For fashion merchandising and retail management graduates from both two- and four-year programs, graduates of non-retail oriented programs, and non-college graduates, job opportunities were readily available with stores divisions, with specialty stores, and with smaller retail organizations in general. Both the starting pay and the opportunity for advancement, however, could be necessarily less because of fewer steps in the career ladder within a small organization or within a single segment of the organization. The likelihood of moving from a stores division into a merchandising division or operations division and vice versa was

small because jobs were specialized and career paths were narrow, often limited within a division.

MBA and a retail career

The role of the MBA relative to retail careers was not a clear one. Some informants said that MBA was meaningless, that it was not a part of the "real world". Some said that they felt there was less emphasis on the MBA now than a few years ago. Others felt that those with MBA's were very impatient with the organization and didn't want to spend sufficient time to learn to do a job well. However, the informants who had MBA's had influential positions, career level 6 or above, and had moved very quickly up the career ladder.

The decision to go back for the MBA was kind of for my own satisfaction....It was more general management, I didn't really specialize...It was career motivating, but more so self motivating. Even today I look back and I have not limited myself. I have gone back and taken additional courses. The last course I took was probably a little over a year ago....I went back to school (for the MBA) because I really wanted to get more career advancement. The company that I worked for at the time would not reimburse for taking an MBA. They found that they were paying for MBA's and then the people were leaving the company. So I made the conscious decision that I would get my MBA. Consequently, I paid for it myself by taking out loans. I was kind of motivating. If you aren't going to do this for me I will do it for myself, and I will do it and I

will leave anyway. I just felt that if on the resume having an MBA behind my name gave that competitive advantage then that's what I needed and it worked very very well. I got my degree in June and six months later I left the company....As a matter of fact, the last of the loans were just retired about 18 months ago. It was hard. I had about a 2.3 undergraduate average and I was not sure I could do it....I had been out of school about 10 years. Plus, I had 2 small children and another on the way. It took me 3 or 3 1/2 years, it was very productive. It really built up a lot of confidence in me, plus forcing me to do a lot of reading that I had got out of the habit of doing....I really felt good about myself when I got out....I was really proud of it. (#109)

This vice-president (#109) testified to the effectiveness of the MBA in his own personal and professional development. Therefore, he was probably more influenced by the MBA credential than someone without that educational experience. He described the hiring of a young man that had the MBA.

I just hired a young man as a systems analyst in our administrative systems and procedures....He has a bachelor's degree in journalism, but an MBA from KU (University of Kansas). He's in the area right now where he touches every facet of this organization, systems and procedure wise. He is handling the paper work for the distribution center. He had been out there interviewing the administrator and the various participants, documenting so we can have some standardized

policies. He is probably going to gain more experience in a year to 18 months than some of his contemporaries will get in 5 years. He's getting into operations, stores, merchandising. But having an MBA, quite frankly made a difference. He is the one I hired. It is a nice credential. It doesn't give you the chance to write our own ticket. (#109)

His progress in the organization was being mentored by a vice-president of control administration so he was in an excellent position to assume the fast track. He had the educational credentials and the "eye and the arm" of a senior vice-president.

Individuals who have or plan to get an MBA and pursue a career in retailing would be well advised to choose an employer who already has MBA's in their employ and values their contribution to the organization. Some retailers have special training programs for MBA's but the number of those programs may be diminishing. Some informants indicated that their organizations were no longer hiring or could not afford a trainee with an MBA.

More than one informant said, "women had to be better in order to be equal." On those grounds, an MBA may be a useful credential for a woman. There were no female informants that had MBA's although two had advanced degrees in other areas. However, it would almost be a necessity to get the advanced degree before entering a retailing career. For example, informants from the buyer level up reported that they traveled at least one week of every month. Travel combined with irregular evening work hours make night school virtually impossible. The one informant that completed an advanced degree while employed in retailing worked in the

operations division where hours tend to be more regular and travel demands more modest.

Two-year programs

The only informants that really had opinions about two-year degrees were the three informants that had those degrees and a few specialty store operators who worked with internship programs. Other informants were unaware of the purpose or nature of two-year programs, either in retailing or any other area. Many informants just said they really didn't know anything about two-year programs or they said they just knew that their store didn't recruit from two-year programs.

Some specialty store owners spoke very favorably of working with internship programs from two-year retailing or merchandising programs and said "We really don't have that much of a chance at four-year graduates" (#5). The retail management training and sales training was appreciated by these informants. This was the one case where an educational program was seen as a substitute for "in-store" training. The specialty stores and the stores divisions of department stores have been, according to the career paths of the informants, and will probably continue to be the most likely career opportunities for two-year graduates.

Summary

Most retailers state that the best training is "on the floor," participating in day to day work experience and decision making. If store management sees a need for training for management personnel they provide it. Retailers, for the most part, do not consider academic

programs in fashion merchandising or retail management to be a substitute for either in store training or on the floor experience. Informants said the preference for four-year graduates over two-years graduates was based on maturity. The candidate was two years older and thus better able to cope with the responsibilities of a high pressure job. Gradepoint was frequently mentioned as a criterion for screening management trainees.

Those without academic degrees and those with two-year degrees were most likely to be employed in the stores divisions or in specialty stores. Those informants who had no college education or had not completed a degree said that they wished they had a degree. But, they emphasized that the degree was for their own personal satisfaction rather than professional need.

There are a number of apparent inconsistencies in retailers attitudes and practices relative to education.

- 1) It was repeatedly emphasized that educational background did not matter and then some retailers recruited only from four-year business programs.
- 2) Gradepoint average has become a selection criterion while some obviously successful informants admit that they never could have been hired if there had been a gradepoint requirement.
- 3) Some informants said that there was no need for a college education for a retail career and yet there was an apparent correlation between education and income.
- 4) Informants said an internship should be a part of the academic program but no preference was given to graduates of programs that included it.

Little credit was given to education for career success. There appeared to be some traditional attitudes toward education that were deeply embedded in the retail culture. These attitudes have been very slow to change as the role of education has been modified in the retail environment.

RETAIL CAREERS RELATIVE TO CAREER THEORY AND RESEARCH

The purpose of this section is to compare some of the career models and other previous research to the description of careers in retailing that has been generated here. The discussion will infer and interpret similarities and differences and identify a number of potential topics for future research.

The career stage models such as Levinson et al. (1974) have career development arranged in sequential stages with a certain time frame associated with each stage. Rush et al. (1980) described Levinson's stages before testing the model:

- 1) Getting Into The Adult World, from early to late twenties, is a time of exploration and provisional commitment to adult roles. ...The most frequent pattern is for the man to make a provisional commitment to an occupation and go through the initial stages of the career.
- 2) In the Settling Down stage which occurs in the early thirties, the person makes deeper commitments and begins to do some long range planning....
- 3) The Becoming One's Own Man stage is the peak of the Settling Down stage and a connecting link to the Midlife transition, and occurs from 35 to 39....
- 4) The great issue in the Midlife Transition concerns the disparity between the life structure that a person has attained and the one he really wants (the dream)....This period occurs

between ages 40 and 45.

5) The resolution of the Becoming One's Own Man and Midlife Transition will determine whether the future {after age 45} is marked by growth, maintenance, or decline in the career. (pp. 348-349)

Rush et al. (1980) concluded that there is a time-link to career development but not necessarily an age-link and that the stages are not necessarily experienced in the hypothesized sequence.

Stages of career development as described by Levinson have not been examined in this research. However, the framework for career progress in retail organizations is outlined in the Taxonomy of Retail Careers (Appendix A, Table 1). The career levels in the taxonomy mark the major steps in career advancement in retail organizations. The experiences of informants indicated a wide range in the rate of career advancement as well as in the sequence of career levels that were a part of the career path. The fast track people, as described earlier, moved up through the ranks like a rocket, usually skipping some of the steps. According to Levinson's time frame these people would still be in the Getting Into The Adult World stage when they reached career level 6-9 which were considered to be key management levels in their organizations. Top management looked to these young executives for sound management decisions. Because of their youth, according to Levinson's model, they would not have considered any long range plans for their own careers. Careers plans of the informants tended to be short range, up to 3 years at the most. How could these young executives think in terms of long range planning for an organization? Retailers are sometimes criticized

for doing little long range planning. The career stage of their executives may contribute to that problem. Thus, the rate of advancement for potential top executives may contribute to the instability of the workforce in retailing because the career could have topped out before the Settling Down stage is reached in the early thirties.

Evaluation of retail careers appears to occur multiple times and for a variety of reasons. Fast track people may have to decide whether to attempt to make that last step in career level into the presidential ranks. Some executives, such as informant #58, found it impossible to achieve that last step and thus spent the remainder of his career moving around in the executive ranks between several organizations. Informant #5 managed to buy and expand his own store but then was unable to manage the whole. He was forced to reduce the number of stores back to one and was very tenuously hanging on to it. Other informants had careers that start and stop, sputter; still others experienced careers that stalled at mid-management or entry level. Evaluation of career progress occurred several times and for a variety of reasons throughout the careers of the informants.

The Midlife Transition is described as a sort of evaluation stage where career priorities and other things are compared to life's goals. At this stage, readjustments are sometimes made between time and energy invested in career vs. personal life. Informant #133 referred to an evaluation of priorities when asked about career goals. She was a merchandise administrator (26), 31 years old, and single. She expected to be made a vice president within a year, and she was not sure she wanted to seek a higher career level. "I have some personal goals..."

(#133). This suggests a change in priorities, perhaps more emphasis on a personal life. Participant #46 was a vice president and store manager (18). She was 36 years old and had a one year old child. They (#46 and her husband) had elected to postpone having a family until they were established in their careers.

Career choices differ for men and women. Karelius (1982) found that the men in her study were primarily "life structure modifiers." Men tended to maintain their basic life structure while adding new roles as a result of developments like marriage, job transfer, or divorce. Women tended to be starting over rather than building on their previous life structure. None of the male informants in this study reported starting over because of change in life structure such as a marriage or divorce or even a job change. For the most part, change of employer and geographical moves were accomplished with a family in tow.

In contrast female informants #7 and #15 demonstrate the sputter pattern described earlier where each change in employer results in starting over instead of moving up in career level. For informant #7 the sputter pattern was caused by vacillation between giving a career the priority and giving the family the priority. Thus, #7 was in and out of the job market in and out of retailing. Informant #15 followed her husband across the country in several different geographical moves as dictated by his career. She was employed in each geographical location but was always starting over instead of progressing in her career. It is difficult to say if she would have had to start over if she had been more effective in marketing her skill and experience. There is also the possibility that she was satisfied with her career as it was. She

indicated that she was very happy with her present job. Informant #22 did not begin her career until after she had 5 children and a divorce. She had no college education and started as a cashier in a discount store to make some money for Christmas presents. Her capabilities were apparently immediately obvious to her employers even though she was very insecure in her new role. She had held many responsible positions in the store and had been financially rewarded for her efforts. When she ended a career as a wife, she began a career in retailing.

The research by Dalton et al. (1977) provides a description of career growth as a dynamic process that is the result of the interaction of three primary forces: the job(s) assigned the individual in the organization; the interaction of the individual with others inside and outside the organization; the personal development of the individual in these setting(s). Their theory suggests that each of these three aspects of careers must grow and change in order for an individual to continue to be productive in an organization.

The Taxonomy of Retail Careers provides a framework to discuss the relationships with people inside and outside the organization. Dalton's model suggests that people need to grow from apprentice to colleague to sponsor to mentor. In the Taxonomy, career levels 0 to 3 are apprentice type positions; level 4 is more of a colleague level; level 5 and 6 have more opportunities for sponsoring; and levels 7 and above are more likely to have the power to mentor an individual for career growth and development. There were relatively fewer opportunities to develop sponsoring relationships in the merchandising division than the stores division because each executive at level 4 or 5 in merchandising probably

had less than three assistants at any given time and may not have had any assistants at all.

Dalton says that psychological changes in the individual are necessary also for continued success in an organization. The individual needs to move from dependence to independence to assuming responsibility for others to exercising power. This series of developments would appear to be scrambled in the merchandising division. The buying position was one that was mentioned by many informants as being the "best" job. Factors that contributed to that evaluation were the feeling of responsibility in spending money and making money for the organization. Informants indicated a feeling of power associated with that responsibility. Advancement to a divisional merchandise manager position resulted in a decrease in the feeling of power while experiencing an increase in status and in responsibility for others.

The stress caused by exercising power at a comparatively early stage in the career may contribute to the symptoms of burnout, while advancement from the buyer level may result in a feeling of a decrease in job satisfaction. Some divisional merchandise managers were described as "super-buyers", executives that were unable to give up the buying role. In effect these divisionals made the buyers into their assistants. The divisional was unable to give up the power of the buying role in favor of delegating authority to the buyers and assuming an administrative or managerial role. Informants #18 and #157 became divisional merchandise managers after over 15 years as buyers. They both were asked to take the divisional positions after a shake-up in upper management. Neither actively sought the position. One of them was

described as a super-buyer by one of her buyers while the other seemed adjusted to the managerial role. Both took great pride in the success of the young people in their departments. Each emphasized the importance of being personally secure so that she did not feel threatened by ambitious, capable young people that came into their departments. Each also sought and took pride in having the young people promoted into more responsible positions. They regarded it as a measure of their own success.

These divisional merchandise managers exemplify Dalton's model for career development and satisfactory performance in organizations. One of the divisionals had successfully given up the power role of the buyer in favor of the managerial role of the divisional. (Dalton's model suggest that this is the reverse order for these experiences.) The other found that transition more difficult although she successfully moved from the colleague type of relationship to a mentor and assuming responsibilities for others. Additional research using Dalton's model to examine career levels in retailing is warranted.

Many companies use educational criteria as a screening device. Harlan and Weiss (1982) suggest that the use of educational credentials for higher level jobs, despite its typical low validity in predicting future job performance, is likely to discriminate against women and minorities. They are less likely to have completed a baccalaureate degree than Caucasian males and much less likely to have any college work beyond the bachelor's degree. The informants in this study that had MBA's had experienced some advantages over other informants in their career path and speed of advancement. There were no women in that

exclusive group although two female informants had master's degrees in non-business areas. The non-business masters degrees did not appear to have been a factor in career development. Informant #45 who had all-but-dissertation in political science had moved very quickly up the career ladder. It was impossible to judge how much her advanced education might have contributed to her job performance and career advancement.

Hollander (1978) says retail education in four-year colleges has always focused on department stores. Now, because of the growth of other types of retailing, educational programs need a broader orientation. Retailing firms are more diversified. However, "the promotional ladders of retail conglomerates still, for the most part, mount within divisions rather than criss-cross between branches" (p. 7). This suggests that although Hollander believes the educational programs should have a broader focus, the career path is still narrow.

This study has produced evidence to support Hollander's observation. When the career paths of the informants and participants were examined it became clear that most people who start in the stores division continue in that division. Likewise, an informant who started in the merchandising division is likely to end up in merchandising. Some informants had limited experience in other divisions as a part of the training program but then settle in for the duration of their careers. One department store, as a result of a merger, reformulated their career paths entirely within the merchandising division. A completely separate career path was established for the stores division including a separate recruiting organization. The narrowness of the career path puts

additional pressure on those choosing retail careers to select the most appropriate division in which to enter the organization. What are the goals and objectives of executives that are planning career paths within retail organizations? Is there a theory of human development or organizational interaction that is the basis of those career paths? Is the career development system in the organization providing the necessary talent for upper management?

Based on previous research, Harlan and Weiss (1982), when studying men and women in retail careers, hypothesized that women would aspire to lower positions than men. Their data supported this prediction. They also found that the majority "felt that their success was due to their hard work and good performance of responsibilities" (p. 73). They found that few people had done any long range career planning and most had drifted into retail positions in the first place. The informants in this research also had done little long range planning. An exception might be informant #17 had grown up in a retail environment. He worked in his uncle's store on all holidays and summers from the time he was 7 years old. He knew how hard his uncle worked, what kind of hours he kept, and experienced all dimensions of the retail business at a very young age. His career path was guided perhaps not by what one would call a long term plan, but rather an expectation that he would run an organization some day, preferably one he owned, and it turned out to be a retail organization. He had been president of several large corporate divisions and recently moved to a smaller, independently owned department store to get away from the corporate structure. He wanted more autonomy in decision making.

For this study, it is not possible to say whether women, in general, had lower career aspirations than men. Women in career level 4 or 5, mid-management, did not all aspire to move into key management positions, level 6 and above. Some wanted to stay at their present career level because they liked the work better than they perceived they would like the work if they moved up. They saw higher level jobs as involving too much pressure or too much time. One buyer reported this after saying that she worked 65 to 80 hours a week and traveled one week out of every month. Some saw the male dominance at upper levels and felt that it was a waste of energy to aspire to those positions.

The basis of advancement and promotion was repeatedly stated to be "hard work and good performance" just as Harlan and Weiss found. And perhaps that was the basis of advancement most of the time. The same informants would then discuss, somewhat to their frustration, the exceptions to advancement based on hard work and performance. The other critical factors including visibility and mentoring were sometimes equally important or more important than performance. Research by Burton (1977), Hennig and Jardim (1977), Levinson (1978), Sheehy (1976), and Stevens-Long (1979) all support the importance of mentoring in career advancement.

Barnier examined research and literature regarding mentoring and mentoring relationships in business and higher education. She concluded that the mentoring experiences of men and women differ. Men have easier access to the existing informal systems (sometimes called the "old boys network") and therefore easier access to mentoring and sponsoring relationships. Informant #42, who was the fastest of the fast-track

informants, emphasized the importance of informal interaction with colleagues and supervisors. He talked about participation on the softball teams and informal dinners and parties and said he was still involved in those activities. He admitted that he had been regarded as being sexist in his interactions with his colleagues but said it was "all in fun." Many of those informal activities were necessarily limited in female participation. How can women be more effective in establishing mentoring relationships in retail organizations? How do people who have been able to establish mentoring relationships differ from those who have not?

Pruden and Cunningham (1975) examined the anticipated career patterns of line and staff marketing employees. They found that "line marketing employees perceive themselves as being more mobile both inside and outside the organization than do staff marketing employees" (p. 37). The line executives have more of a "true executive focus" and see themselves as capable of managing diverse types of operations both inside and outside the company. The staff executives see themselves as specialists, tied much closer to present position and present organization (p. 39).

Most informants in this study were not familiar with the terminology, line and staff. When asked to identify their position as line or staff they asked the researcher which it would be. In the Taxonomy of Retail Careers, the merchandising and stores divisions were identified as line type divisions while the rest of the divisions were staff, support organizations for the line divisions. This identity of line and staff was assigned to the divisions as a result of the attitudes of the

informants toward the jobs in the various divisions of responsibility. As discussed earlier, those in the staff type positions sometimes felt that they were out of the "mainstream" of the business, not involved in making the decisions that matter. Chief executive officers (CEO) tended to come either out of the operations division or merchandising division. Organizations who had a dual executive structure, had both a president and chairman, tended to have one top executive from merchandising and one from operations or finance. Informants who worked for organizations who had CEOs who came out of other than the merchandising division tended to think that their CEO may have been a little out of touch with the real priorities of the business. What is the most effective route to the CEO's office? What are key educational, experience, or personality factors that qualify one to be a top executive?

Recommendations for Further Research

This comparison of previous research with the present study offers many topics for further research either of the quantitative or qualitative type. A study of career development produces information that is critical to both the individual and the organization.

1. Further study of career stage relative to rate of advancement and turnover. Retail executives expect rapid advancement. Since the career path is comparatively short, executives move up and out of organizations. Why do junior and senior executives leave retail organizations? A study based on exit interviews could contribute to further understanding of career level, job satisfaction and tenure. This study focused, for the most part, on the people in retailing who were comparatively successful.

Who are the people who are not successful and how could retailers make better use of their talents?

2. Examination of width and length of career path relative to job satisfaction, job performance, and/or potential for top management. The trend toward "narrowness" in career path has been mentioned several times. Is there a difference in breadth of career relative to organizational size, type, or structure?

3. Evaluation of relationship of educational background and job performance and career advancement. Little credit is given to education for career success. What does higher education contribute to making an executive successful? Critical thinking skills? Analytical thinking? Facts and figures on which to base decisions? Theoretical base for decision making?

4. Study further the careers in operations, promotion, and management information systems in order to more fully develop the Taxonomy of Retail Careers in those areas. Most of the executives in this study had their career experiences in the stores and merchandising divisions. With more data, finance and control could be split out of operations.

5. Explore the factors involved in the advancement of women beyond career level 5. Do some organizations advance women and others do not? Is advancement of females a function of people and personalities or organizational structures?

6. Examine, in depth, the attitudes of merchandising graduates toward their academic programs and the reasons for those attitudes. The informants in this study who were merchandising graduates were unanimous in their dissatisfaction with their education. What are the roots of

that dissatisfaction? Can merchandising programs change so that future graduates will not experience a similar dissatisfaction?

7. Explore the role of the MBA in today's retail organizations. What organizations are hiring MBA's? What is the expected role of the MBA in the organization? What are MBA salaries compared to salaries of people with a bachelor's degree?

8. Evaluate the relationship of career path and salary potential. Salaries and pay scales have had little attention from researchers. Retailing has a reputation for low pay. Is that reputation justified for retailing executives when entry level salary and rate of advancement are considered? What is the salary potential at different career levels in different types of retail organizations?

9. Evaluate the effectiveness of testing in recruiting and promotion. What organizations are using tests? What types of tests are being used? What is the basis of evaluation? What is measured? How are the results applied? How reliable are the tests?

10. Test Dalton's Model of career development in retail organizations. Do people in retail careers develop in the three areas identified in Dalton's model: job assignment, personal development, and relationships with others? Is turnover related to inadequate development in one or more area?

11. A task analysis of jobs at each career level would reveal capabilities required to achieve the various levels of career development. That in turn would provide information for construction of tests for aspiring executives, provide guidance to personnel responsible

for in-service training, and help educators in making decisions about curriculum.

SUMMARY

The purpose of this study was to describe the environment for and develop a basis for a substantive theory of careers in retailing based on experiences of retail executives. The perception of the participants was important because it was in the retail environment that each person made use of their academic background, took advantage of opportunities, experienced frustrations, and made career decisions. Participant observation or ethnography, as the methodology is now popularly called, was used to collect the descriptive data for this research. The outsider perspective was used with the purpose of describing aspects of the retail culture and retail careers about which the participants may have been unaware.

These were the goals of this research.

1. Develop an ethnographic description of career development in retail organizations grounded in data collected from selected retail executives.
2. Develop a basis for a substantive theory of retail careers which can be expanded in future research.
3. Compare careers in retail organizations with previously developed career theory and selected research findings.
4. Examine the relationship between educational background and retailing careers.

Data collection, coding, and analysis proceeded simultaneously as

much as possible. The ethnography was developed by using analytic induction and triangulation. It was written in narrative form and key points were illustrated by characteristic examples from the data.

The literature review was divided into three parts: 1) Theories of Careers, where theories of career development and selection were reviewed, 2) The Retail Curricula, where views of educators and retailers about educational preparation for retailing were reported, and 3) Careers in Retail Organizations, where research related to retail careers was explored.

There were at least four theoretical treatments of career development in the literature: psychosocial, sociological, vocational, and organizational (Rush, Peacock, & Milkovich, 1980). The research regarding careers has had two dominant themes: career choice and career development.

Careers in retailing were influenced by managerial turnover from 24% to 54% per year. Younger workers dominated the industry, with half the workforce under 25 years of age. Considerable disparity in earnings between men and women were reported. Women occupied most of the entry level positions while men occupied most of the executive offices.

Many companies used educational criteria as a screening device. Four-year retail education programs tended to be offered as a part of three different programs: 1) Business Administration, where the emphasis was on marketing and management, 2) Home Economics, where the focus was on the product and consumer, 3) Letters and Science, where a broad based education was emphasized (Stampfl, 1984). There were also many two-year retailing or merchandising programs offered by community, technical, and

junior colleges.

For this research, ethnographic interviews were conducted with 42 retail executives who worked for firms located in the upper midwest. Informants were employed by a variety of department, specialty, and discount stores. A Taxonomy of Retail Careers was developed through a process of continuous comparison. It includes the major divisions of responsibility within a retail organization, job titles, and the relationship of job status between divisions. (The taxonomy is in Appendix A.) In the taxonomy, a two-digit number is a career code representing both the division within which a job responsibility is held and the career level within the division. With the taxonomy it is possible to describe the career path of an individual from one job to another or one division to another in terms of major lateral or vertical changes in career status. Although it is not the purpose of this research, the Taxonomy of Retail Careers may be a useful tool for organizational analysis in retail organizations.

People who were happy in retail careers had a strong self-image, high energy level, a sense of urgency, ability to take risks, viewed everything as a personal challenge, and were able to cope with intense involvement with people. Successful executives were opinionated, self directed, innovative thinkers with a sense of humor. People needed to be able to "talk up", communicate upward to their superiors, express their own ideas, and take action to make the ideas work. Executives had a strong entrepreneurial motivation and often aspired to ultimately owning their own stores someday. Retailing is a tough, competitive, numbers-oriented business.

In all store types, women predominated at entry level and men dominated the executive offices. Women moved as high as divisional merchandise manager, level 6, although it appeared normal that there were more men than women at that level. A few women were beyond level 6. Informants reported that few women had ever attained a vice-president's title. There may not be many women who aspire to top positions. Those jobs were sometimes seen by female informants as requiring too much commitment and involving too much stress and too much sacrifice of personal life.

The traditional role expectations for men and women were still clearly entangled in career development. Many female informants had remained single and/or postponed or decided not to have children in favor of perpetuating their careers. Clearly, women made choices between career and family that men did not have to make. Women who did both successfully were regarded as extraordinary whereas, for men, simultaneous career and family was commonplace.

The retail environment promoted impatience with advancement. People were expected to seek advancement and it was common in the career experience of the informants to receive some sort of advancement every 9 to 18 months. There was wide variation in the rate of career advancement. The "fast track" informants had three things in common: 1) the length of time at a career level was seldom more than 3 years and more likely less than two years. 2) Mentors or sponsors at key management levels played important roles in creating visibility and opportunities for young executives. 3) A broad perspective of retail organization(s) was created by working in more than one division and/or being employed by

more than one retailer.

Even those who were not regarded as "fast track" were promoted very quickly according to expectations in other occupations, education for example. However, sometimes promotions were offered because of vacancies created by high turnover. Taking a job that was too big, too soon sometimes overwhelmed the person, creating insecurities and the appearance of failure. Thus, the person who was secure enough to turn down opportunities that were offered in order to have time to mature in his/her job could regulate career advancement and contribute to his/her own success.

Factors that were critical to upward movement in retail career development include: 1) commitment to a retail career, 2) beginning a career with a firm and/or division that had a desirable career path and offered advancement potential, 3) being promoted or moving to the job or jobs that would provide growth experiences and visibility, 4) being in an area of responsibility where the organization had room for people to grow and advance, 5) taking advantage of past experience and expertise when changing jobs, 6) seeking jobs that would broaden and strengthen background and skills, 7) recognizing the necessity for self-marketing in the career development process.

Criteria for selecting recruits included education, experience, and personal qualities. Some major retailers required a four-year degree and recruited only in business programs. Tests of various kinds were used by some companies to evaluate the potential of college graduates in retailing careers. Tests were also being used to evaluate the advancement of people into key management positions, level 6 and above in

the taxonomy. Several informants mentioned the use of grade point average as a screening device. Grade point was regarded as a measure of work ethic. Informants who had higher levels of education, for the most part, also had higher incomes. However, retailers tell each other all the time that education "does not matter." This attitude toward education was deeply embedded in the retail culture.

Graduates of fashion merchandising programs were dissatisfied with their educational programs. Business programs were preferable to merchandising programs. At the very minimum, merchandising programs should have greatly strengthened business components. If these informants were going to repeat their educational programs, a straight business program would be their choice. The reasons for these strong opinions were not entirely clear. It was unlikely that people with business degrees had testified to the appropriateness and superiority of their educational background because informants in general were not articulate about the value of education.

Organizations who sought or already had MBA graduates in their employ were better able to reward a young executive with an advanced degree. More than one informant said, "women had to be better in order to be equal." On those grounds, an MBA may be a useful credential for a woman. However, it would almost be a necessity to get the advanced degree before entering a retailing career. Travel combined with irregular evening work hours make night school virtually impossible.

Little credit was given to education for career success. There are a number of apparent inconsistencies in retailers' attitudes and practices relative to education. 1) It was repeatedly emphasized that

educational background did not matter and then some retailers recruited only from four-year business programs. 2) Grade point average had become a selection criteria while some obviously successful informants admitted that they never could have been hired if there had been a grade point requirement. 3) Some informants said there was no need for a formal education and yet there was a correlation between education and income.

The description of retail careers in the ethnography yields many potential topics for further research that would contribute to a substantive theory of retail careers. Other topics were suggested by the comparison of retail careers to career theory and previous research.

These include:

1. Further study of career stage relative to rate of advancement and turnover.
2. Examination of width and length of career path relative to job satisfaction, job performance, and/or potential for top management.
3. Evaluation of relationship of educational background and job performance and career advancement.
4. Further study of careers in operations, promotion, and management information systems in order to more fully develop the Taxonomy of Retail Careers in those areas. With more data, finance and control could be split out of operations.
5. Explore the factors relative to the advancement of women beyond career level 5.
6. Examine, in depth, the attitudes of merchandising graduates toward their academic programs and the reasons for those

attitudes.

7. Explore further the role of the MBA in today's retail organizations.
8. Evaluate the relationship of career path and salary potential.
9. Evaluate the effectiveness of testing in recruiting and promotion.
10. Examine retail careers based on Dalton's model of career development.
11. Conduct a task analysis of jobs at each career level to reveal the capabilities required to achieve the various levels of career development.

REFERENCES

- Adams, J. (1979). Women on top. New York: Hawthorne.
- Barry, M. E. (1985). Auburn's fashion merchandising program. In Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984. University of Alabama.
- Barnier, L. A. (1981). A study of mentoring relationship: An analysis of its relation to career and adult development in higher education and business. Dissertation Abstracts International, 42, 3012. (University Microfilms No. 81-28,366)
- Bernard, J. (1976). Historical roots of occupational segregation--Historical and structural barriers to occupational desegregation. Signs, 1, 87-94.
- Bluestone, B., Hanna, P., Kuhn, S., & Moore, L. (1981). The retail revolution: Market transformation, investment, and labor in the modern department store. Boston: Auburn House.
- Bogdan, R., & Taylor, S. J. (1975). Introduction to qualitative research methods: A phenomenological approach to the social sciences. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- "Born Free": A world of options. (1978, August). Department of Psychoeducational Studies, College of Education, University of Minnesota.
- Bray, D. W., & Grant, D. L. (1966). The assessment center in the measurement of potential for business management. Psychological Monographs, 17, Whole No. 625.
- Bruyn, S. T. (1966). The human perspective in sociology: The methodology of participant observation. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Burton, A. (1977). The mentoring dynamic in the therapeutic transformation. American Journal of Psychoanalysis, 37, 115-122.
- Coe, B. D. (1978, Fall). Business school faculty beliefs about retailing in the business curriculum. Journal of Retailing, 54, 45-52.
- Dalton, G. W., Thompson, P. H., & Price, R. L. (1977, Summer). Research: The four stages of professional careers--A new look at

performance by professionals. Organizational Dynamics, 6, 19-42.

Denzin, N. K. (1978). The research act: A theoretical introduction to sociological methods. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Dickerson, K. G., & Clowes, D. A. (1982). Curriculum movement of clothing and textiles programs from four-year to two-year colleges. Clothing and Textiles Research Journal, 1, 18-23.

Dickerson, R. A. (1978). The future of retail education: Four-year colleges. Journal of Retailing, 54(3), 87-93.

Dickerson, R., Hollander, S., & Mayer, M. (Eds.). (1985). Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984. University of Alabama.

Doeringer, P., & Piore, M. (1971). Internal labor markets and manpower analysis. Lexington, Mass.: D. C. Heath.

Douvan, E., & Adelson, J. (1966). The adolescent experience. New York: Wiley.

Erikson, E. (1959). Growth and crisis of the healthy personality. Psychological Issues I, 50-100.

Erikson, E. H. (1963). Childhood and society (2nd ed.). New York: Norton.

Forbes 500s--Jobs and productivity. (1984, April 30). Forbes Sixteenth Annual Directory, p. 204.

Ford, F. (1983). An analysis of store manager turnover. A presentation at 72nd Annual Meeting of National Retail Merchants Association, New York.

Freeman, R. B. (1976). Overinvestment in college training. Journal of Human Resources, X, 287-311.

Frieze, I. H. (1973). Studies of information processing and the attributional process in achievement-related contexts. Doctoral dissertation, University of California, Los Angeles.

Gable, M., & Hollon, C. (1984). Employee turnover of managerial trainees in a department chain. Retail Control, 52, 54-61.

Gable, M., Hollon, C. J., Dangelo, F. (1984). Predicting voluntary managerial trainee turnover in a large retailing organization from information on an employment application blank. Journal of Retailing, 60 43-63.

- Glaser, B. (1968). Organizational careers. Chicago: Aldine.
- Glaser, B. G., & Strauss, A. L. (1967). The discovery of grounded theory. Chicago: Aldine.
- Gould, R. (1972). The phases of adult life: A study in developmental psychology. American Journal of Psychiatry, 129, 521-531.
- Grotevant, H. D., Scarr, S., & Weinberg, R. A. (1978, March). Are career interests inheritable? Psychology Today, 11, 88-90.
- Guion, R. M., & Gottier, R. F. (1965). Validity of personality measures in personnel selection. Personnel Psychology, 18, 135-164.
- Hall, D. T. (1976). Careers in organizations. Glenview, Illinois: Scott, Foresman.
- Hammersley, M., & Atkinson, P. (1983). Ethnography: Principles in practice. New York: Tavistock Publications.
- Harlan, A., & Weiss, C. L. (1982). Sex differences in factors affecting managerial career advancement. In P.A. Wallace (Ed.), Women in the workplace, (pp. 59-100). Boston: Auburn House.
- Harmon, L. (1972). Variables related to women's persistence in educational plans. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 2, 143-53.
- Hennig, M., & Jardim, A. (1977). The managerial woman. New York: Doubleday, Anchor Press.
- Holland, J. L. (1973). Making vocational choices: A theory of careers. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall.
- Hollander, S. C. (Ed.). (1978). Retail education {Special Issue}. Journal of Retailing, 54(3), entire issue.
- Horn, M. J. (1981, Spring). Home economics: A recitation of definition. Journal of Home Economics, 73, 20.
- Hudson, J. H., Jr. (1978). What should be emphasized in retail education? Journal of Retailing, 54(3), 67-70.
- Jennings, E. (1971). Routes to the executive suite. New York: McGraw-Hill.
- Kanter, R. M. (1977). Men and women of the corporation. New York: Basic Books.
- Kaplan, A. K. (1964). The conduct of inquiry: Methodology for behavioral science. San Francisco: Chandler.

- Karelius, K. L. (1982). A study of early adult development and motivation for enrollment of women and men who enrolled in graduate school during the age thirty transition (ages 28-32). Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Michigan State University.
- Kelly, N. (1982, July). Zale corporation's career development program. Training and Development Journal, 36, 70-75.
- Kets de Vries, M. F. R. (1978). The midcareer conundrum. Organizational Dynamics, 7(2), 51.
- Kukla, A. (1972). Attributional determinants of achievement-related behavior. Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, 21, 166-74.
- Levinson, D. (1978). The seasons of a man's life. New York: Alfred A. Knopf.
- Levinson, D. J., Darrow, C., Klein, E., Levinson, M., & McKee, B. (1974). The psychological development of men in early adulthood and the mid-life transition. In D. F. Hicks, A. Thomas, & M. Roff (Eds.), Life history research in psychopathology, Vol. 3. Minneapolis, Minn.: University of Minneapolis Press.
- Lewis, D. M. & DeLozier, M. W. (1982). Retailing principles and practices. Columbus, OH: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company.
- Maccoby E. E., & Jacklin, C. N. (1974). The psychology of sex differences. Stanford, CT: Stanford University Press.
- Malveaux, J. M. (1982). Moving forward, standing still: Women in white collar jobs. In P. A. Wallace (Ed.), Women in the Workplace, (pp. 101-129). Boston: Auburn House.
- Marcus, S. (1978). Deficiencies in retail education. Journal of Retailing, 54(3), 77-80.
- Mason, J. B. (1985). Some observations on the status of retailing as an academic discipline. In R. Dickerson, S. Hollander, & M. Mayer (Eds.), Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984 (pp. 10-12). University of Alabama.
- McKay, Q. G. (1978). Different perspectives on retail education. Journal of Retailing, 54(3), 81-83.
- Miner, J. B. (1968). The early identification of managerial talent. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 46, 586-591.
- Mobley, W. H. (1982). Employee Turnover: Causes, consequences, and

control, Boston: Addison-Wesley.

O'Connor, M. J. (1985). Japanese management: A study. In R. Dickerson, S. Hollander, & M. Mayer (Eds.), Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984 (pp. 30-34). University of Alabama.

Osipow, S. H. (1973). Theories of career development (2nd ed.). Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall.

Paoletti, Jo B. (1985, May). The origins of fashion merchandising programs in home economics. ACPTC Newsletter, No. 8.

Porter, L. W. Crampton, W. J., & Smith, F. J. (1976). Organizational commitment and managerial turnover: A longitudinal study. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 15, 151-176.

Pruden, H. O., & Cunningham, W. H. (1975). Career strategies for marketing executives. Combined Proceedings American Marketing Association, 1975, 37, 36-40.

Recruiting for retailing. (1982, April). Stores, 64, 66-67.

Rudd, N.A.S. (1981). Textiles and clothing curriculum in higher education: Current trends and future outlook. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Ohio State University.

Rush, J. C., Peacock, A. C., & Milkovich, G. T. (1980). Career stages: A partial test of Levinson's model of life/career stages. Journal of Vocational Behavior, 16, 347-359.

Sales, E. (1978). Women's adult development. In I. H. Frieze, J. E. Parsons, P. B. Honson, D. N. Roble, & G. L. Zellman (Eds.), Women and Sex Roles: A social psychological perspective. New York: W. W. Norton.

Schlesinger, P. F. (1981). A study of the lives of women managers at mid-career. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, Boston University.

Shaeffer, R. G., & Lynton, E. F. (1979). Corporate experiences in improving women's job opportunities. New York: Conference Board.

Sheehy, G. (1976). Passages: Predictable crises of adult life. New York: E. P. Dutton.

Smelzer, N. J., & Erikson, E. H. (Eds.). (1980). Themes of work and love in adulthood. Cambridge: Harvard University Press.

Sofer, C. (1970). Men in mid-career: A study of British managers and technical specialists. London: Cambridge University Press.

- Spradley, J. P. (1979). The ethnographic interview. Chicago: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.
- Stampfl, R. W. (1985). Retail management in an AACSB school: Some impressions. In R. Dickerson, S. Hollander, & M. Mayer (Eds.), Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984 (pp. 15-17). University of Alabama.
- Stevens-Long, J. (1979). Adult life developmental processes. Palo Alto, California: Mayfield.
- Stewart, W. A. (1977). A psychological study of the formation of the early adult life structure in women. Ph.D. dissertation, Columbia University, NY.
- Strawbridge, G. S. (1978). Common denominators among successful retailers. Journal of Retailing, 54(3), 84-86.
- Super, D. E. (1957). Psychology of careers. New York: Harper and Rowe.
- Sutton, A. K. (1984, Summer). Merchandising: A part of our mission. Journal of Home Economics, 76(20), 63-65.
- Swinyard, W. R. (1981, Winter). The appeal of retailing as a career. Journal of Retailing, 57, 86-97.
- Thompson, J. D., Avery, R. W., & Carlson, R. O. (1968, Winter). Occupation, personnel, and careers. Educational Administration Quarterly, 4, 6-31.
- Van Maanen, J. (Ed.). (1977). Organizational careers: Some new perspectives. New York: John Wiley and Sons.
- Van Maanen, J., Dabbs, J. M., Jr., & Faulkner, R. R. (1982). Varieties of qualitative research. Beverly Hills: Sage Publications.
- Vetter, L. & Lewis, E. C. (1964). Some correlates of homemaking vs. career preferences among college home economics students. Personnel and Guidance Journal, 42, 593-598.
- Watkins, Beverly T. (1984, April 25). Business schools told they should produce generalists, not specialists. Chronicle of Higher Education, 28(9), 13.
- Weisbrod, B., & Karpoff, P. (1968). Monetary returns to college education, student ability and college quality. Review of Economics and Statistics, 5, 491-497.
- Yudelson, J. E. (1985). The retail curriculum: A matrix approach. In

R. Dickerson, S. Hollander, & M. Mayer (Eds.), Proceedings of a Retail Workshop sponsored by Southwest Marketing Association, American Marketing Association, and American Collegiate Retailing Association, San Antonio, Texas, February 29-March 1, 1984 (pp. 38-40). University of Alabama.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Many people have provided valuable assistance with this project. As my first committee chair, L. Glenn Smith was instrumental in helping define the project and identifying the methodology. J. Stanley Ahmann took over as chair when Dr. Smith left Iowa State. Jim Ratcliff has provided guidance throughout my PhD program from the first planning of the coursework to a thorough critique of the dissertation. Charles Jones did a preview of the review of literature. Ruth Hughes and Jean Adams have been reliable sources of support and encouragement.

The members of the merchandising group, particularly Kim Williams, Ruth Glock, and Mary Naig have provided endless support. My daughters, Dana and Debi, and my Mother, Pearl Madson, helped in many functional ways like typing, proofing, laughing, and doing household chores.

The cooperation of the retail community was commendable. The ISU graduates who provided names of retail executives made excellent choices. The retail executives who became informants were cooperative and very enthusiastic about the project.

Iowa State University provided a faculty improvement leave in order to collect data for this study. The Home Economics Research Institute provided funds for the early stages of the review of literature including a computer search and other library fees. Agatha Huepenbecker and other members of the Textiles and Clothing Department have encouraged me throughout.

Thanks to you all.

APPENDIX A: TABLES

Table 1. Taxonomy of retail careers

Career	
Code	Functional division, career levels, and job titles
STORES DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR LINE	
10	sales associate; display, stock person; commission sales
11	intern; manager in training; assistant sales, department, counter manager; head of stock
12	department, receiving, customer service, sales manager; personnel coordinator; small store assistant manager
13	branch personnel, group sales, area manager or leader; customer service supervisor
14	merchandise, display, office, assistant, visual merchandising manager or coordinator; small store manager
15	personnel, group, operation, assistant, branch manager
16	store manager, store general manager, senior store manager
17	district, cluster store, creative display manager; senior district manager
18	vice-president; regional administrator or manager; visual merchandising manager, branch store director
19	senior vice-president, director of stores
MERCHANDISING DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR LINE	
20	merchandise clerical; merchandise detail; merchandise technician; advertising coordinator
21	intern; buying trainee, merchandising trainee; allocator
22	assistant buyer; supervisor of stores
23	associate buyer; planner-distributor; branch store coordinator
24	buyer
25	senior buyer; planning-distribution manager; merchandise counselor
26	divisional merchandise manager; merchandise administrator
27	senior merchandise manager
28	vice-president; general merchandise manager
29	senior vice-president; director; executive vice-president

Table 1. (continued)

Career Code	Functional division, career levels, and job titles
	PERSONNEL DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR STAFF
30	training instructor; employment clerical; employment coordinator; college relations representative
31	regional representative
32	college relations, assistant, training director or manager; personnel administrator
33	employment representative; training coordinator; associate manager staff training
34	executive training manager; senior recruiter
35	corporate training director or counselor; personnel, training, employee standards manager
36	divisional manager executive placement; executive development administrator
37	general manager of personnel
38	vice-president of personnel
39	senior vice-president; director of personnel or human resources
	ADVERTISING AND SALES PROMOTION DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR STAFF
40	advertising copy writer; color coordinator
41	account executive
42	advertising assistant
43	special events coordinator
44	fashion, advertising, sales, promotions, special events director
45	--
46	--
47	--
48	vice-president of sales promotion; vice-president of trend merchandising; special events director
49	senior vice-president; director of sales promotion
	MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEMS DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR STAFF
50	clerical
51	sales leader
52	supervisor; assistant manager
53	--
54	consumer affairs; telemail manager
55	--
56	administrator
57	--
58	vice-president
59	senior vice-president

Table 1. (continued)

Career Code	Functional division, career levels, and job titles
	OPERATIONS, CONTROL, FINANCE DIVISION, PYRAMID, OR STAFF
60	clerk; credit counselor
61	control trainee
62	auditor; credit, department manager or supervisor
63	accounts payable manager; systems, shortage, financial analyst
64	inventory control manager; shortage auditor
65	shortage, charge, controller or coordinator
66	divisional cash, shortage control manager or administrator or controller
67	assistant corporate controller
68	vice-president of control administration
69	senior vice president of operations
	TOP EXECUTIVES
100	president
101	chief operating officer
102	chief executive officer; chairman
103	co-owner
104	owner
105	owner-manager
106	owner, vice-president
107	owner, president
108	owner, chairman
109	--
	JOB'S OUTSIDE RETAILING
200	not in workforce
201	student
202	homemaker
203	secretary, receptionist, clerical
204	sales, showroom representative; social worker
205	merchandiser
206	marketing manager
207	self employed
208	other
209	other

Table 2. Demographic, employment, and education profiles of informants

Participant Number	Job Title	Store Type	Years in Retailing	Age	Marital Status	Ages of Childr
4	Owner, Vice-President	Specialty	21	44	m	17,16,13,7
5	Owner, President	Specialty	24	43	m	14,3
7	Store Manager	Specialty	16	44	m	24,21,16
11	Senior District Manager	Specialty	16	34	s	--
12	Co-owner, President, Manager	Specialty	13	32	m	3
14	Buyer	Department	12	30	m	--
15	Assistant Store Manager	Specialty	11	31	m	--
17	President, Chief Operating Officer	Department	30	52	m	23,21,16
18	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	24	50	m	31,29
19	Buyer	Department	5	24	s	--
22	Customer Service Manager	Discount	11	46	d	26,25,24,2
24	Operations Manager	Discount	13	35	m	9,9,5
25	Store Manager	Discount	13	30	m	2
37	Owner, Manager	Specialty	8	31	s	--
40	Planning, Distribution Manager	Department	14	36	s	--
41	Buyer	Specialty	15	38	s	--
42	Vice-President, Retail Consultant	Department	12	34	m	--
44	Training, Employment Standards Manager	Department	8	32	m	7,4
45	Vice-President, Merchandise Information	Department	9	34	d	--
46	Vice-President, Store Manager	Department	14	36	m	1
47	Senior Buyer	Department	11	33	m	5,2
48	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	11	33	m	1
58	General Store Manager	Department	25	??	m	??
74	Owner, President	Specialty	9	42	m	19,16
90	President, Chief Executive Officer	Department	12	36	m	7,4
103	Assistant Buyer	Discount	8	28	m	--
104	Group Manager	Department	19	37	m	17
105	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	10	33	m	4
109	Vice-President, Control Administration	Department	18	40	m	17,15,10
130	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	17	39	m	16,14,10
132	Senior Buyer	Department	16	39	m	7
133	Merchandise Administrator	Department	9	31	s	--
134	Telemail, Consumer Affairs Manager	Department	11	33	s	--
135	Buyer	Discount	11	33	s	--
136	Group Department Manager	Specialty	5	28	s	--
144	Employment Representative	Discount	4	25	m	--
150	Corporate Training Director	Department	6	35	s	--
157	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	21	43	m	--
158	Assistant Buyer	Discount	6	28	m	--
159	College Relations Manager	Department	3	24	m	--
160	College Relations Representative	Department	2	27	m	2
161	Acting Store Manager	Department	12	36	m	--

files of informants

Store Type	Years in Retailing	Age	Marital Status	Ages of Children	Sex	Income Range	College Degree	Major
Specialty	21	44	m	17,16,13,7	m	75-100	BS	Agriculture
Specialty	24	43	m	14,3	m	40-50	AA	Business
Specialty	16	44	m	24,21,16	f	15-20	--	--
Specialty	16	34	s	--	f	40-50	AA	Liberal Arts
Specialty	13	32	m	3	f	15-20	--	Merchandising
Department	12	30	m	--	f	25-30	BS	Design
Specialty	11	31	m	--	f	10-15	--	--
Department	30	52	m	23,21,16	m	75-100	BA	Business
Department	24	50	m	31,29	f	50-75	--	--
Department	5	24	s	--	f	20-25	BS	Merchandising
Accountant	11	46	d	26,25,24,20,18	f	20-25	--	--
Accountant	13	35	m	9,9,5	m	30-40	BA	Biology
Accountant	13	30	m	2	m	30-40	AA	Retailing
Specialty	8	31	s	--	m	20-25	BS	Business
Department	14	36	s	--	f	??	BS,MA	German
Specialty	15	38	s	--	f	25-30	BA	Merchandising
Department	12	34	m	--	m	75-100	BA	Psychology
Department	8	32	m	7,4	m	30-40	BS,MBA	Psychology
Department	9	34	d	--	f	75-100	MS+	Political Science
Department	14	36	m	1	f	50-75	BS	Merchandising
Department	11	33	m	5,2	m	30-40	BA	Sociology
Department	11	33	m	1	m	40-50	BS	Business
Department	25	??	m	??	m	??	--	--
Specialty	9	42	m	19,16	f	30-40	BES+	Business
Department	12	36	m	7,4	m	100+	BS,MBA	Marketing
Accountant	8	28	m	--	f	40-50	BS	Merchandising
Department	19	37	m	17	f	40-50	--	--
Department	10	33	m	4	f	50-75	BBA	Business
Department	18	40	m	17,15,10	m	50-75	BS,MBA	Business/Accounting
Department	17	39	m	16,14,10	m	75-100	BS,MBA	Economics
Department	16	39	m	7	f	25-30	BS	Merchandising
Department	9	31	s	--	f	40-50	BS	Merchandising
Department	11	33	s	--	f	20-25	BS	Merchandising
Accountant	11	33	s	--	f	50-75	BS	Merchandising
Specialty	5	28	s	--	f	20-25	BS	Merchandising
Accountant	4	25	m	--	f	30-40	BBA	Business
Department	6	35	s	--	f	25-30	BA+	Sociology
Department	21	43	m	--	f	40-50	BS	Home Economics
Accountant	6	28	m	--	f	40-50	BS	Merchandising
Department	3	24	m	--	m	20-25	BS	Accounting
Department	2	27	m	2	f	15-20	BBA	Business
Department	12	36	m	--	f	15-20	--	--

Table 3. Number of retail employers and career paths of informants

Participant Number	Number of Employers	Career path using career codes from the Taxonomy of Retail Careers
4	4	21,22,204,16,106
5	5	12,24,16,25,15,15,16,16,24,107
7	4	204,15,204,15
11	3	10,60,22,22,14,15,11,15,17,17,17
12	3	14,15,103
14	2	30,22,24,24,24
15	6	10,10,14,16,11,14
17	7	24,26,26,29,100,100,100
18	2	10,12,23,24,26
19	3	60,10,21,23,24
22	1	10,10,10,10,11,12,12,12,12,12,13
24	2	10,12,11,14,15,14,15
25	2	10,12,12,12,15,14,14,15,16
37	3	204,15,24,105
40	1	21,12,22,24,25,25
41	2	21,12,22,24,25,24
42	2	22,24,16,18,19,29,209
44	2	22,13,24,54,35
45	3	12,22,54,58
46	3	22,12,22,24,15,15,26,16,27,16,18
47	1	21,22,24,24,24,25
48	1	22,24,24,24,26
58	5	10,24,26,27,16
74	2	30,104
90	3	204,26,28,29,100
103	2	22,12,24,22,22
104	1	10,11,22,12,12,22,24,15,15
105	3	22,22,24,15,25,26
109	4	63,64,66,64,67,68
130	4	21,12,22,24,16,16,26
132	2	21,10,12,22,22,24,24,25
133	1	22,12,24,16,26
134	3	11,21,22,62,22,12,52,54
135	4	21,22,22,24,24,24
136	1	12,12,12,13,13
144	2	31,30,31,32,33
150	5	204,204,204,204,204,22,35
157	1	10,22,23,24,24,26,26
158	2	21,12,22,24,25,22
159	1	60,10,22,12,32
160	1	30
161	1	10,11,13,14,15

Table 4. Employment, education, and career paths of participants

Participant Number	Job Title	Store Type	Years in Retailing	Sex	College Degree	Major
01	Owner	Specialty	18	f	--	--
09	District Supervisor	Specialty	16	m	AA	Retail Market
16	Vice President, Merchandise Manager	Department	22	m	--	--
20	Buyer	Department	7	f	BS	Textiles & Cl
26	Merchandise Manager	Discount	10	f	BA	Business
27	Buyer	Department	7	f	BA	Merchandising
30	Owner	Specialty	20	f	BS	Home Economic
32	Vice President, Merchandise Manager	Department	28	m	--	--
36	District Pers Mgr	Department	19	m	BS	Education
49	Buyer	Department	43	f	--	--
57	Vice President, Personnel	Specialty	13	m	BS	Business
62	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	14	f	BS	Business
65	Director Fashion Promotion	Department	6	f	BJ	Journalism
66	Buyer	Department	12	f	BS	Merchandising
68	Buyer, Department Manager	Specialty	6	f	BS	Textiles & Cl
70	Vice President	Specialty	11	f	--	--
71	Director Special Events	Department	3	f	PhD	Psychology
76	Owner	Specialty	36	m	BA	Psychology
79	Store Manager	Department	12	f	BS	Secondary Edu
83	Clerk	Specialty	9	f	--	--
85	Store Manager	Specialty	10	f	BA	Art History
86	Owner	Specialty	14	f	--	--
87	General Manager	Department	35	m	--	--
89	Store Manager	Department	17	f	--	--
94	Buyer	Department	11	f	MS	Home Economic
106	Senior Buyer	Department	8	m	BS	Biology
124	Buyer	Department	9	f	BS	Home Economic
125	Buyer	Department	8	f	--	--
126	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	10	f	--	--
129	Senior Buyer	Department	11	f	BS	Merchandising
141	Senior Vice President	Specialty	24	m	BS	Business
143	Vice President, Management Information	Specialty	15	m	BS	Business
145	Vice President, Trend Merchandising	Department	19	f	--	--
146	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	10	f	BS	Marketing
147	Divisional Merchandise Manager	Department	20	f	--	--
152	Senior Vice President	Department	29	m	BA	Business
153	Vice President, Merchandise Manager	Department	12	f	BS	Marketing
155	Store Manager	Department	25	m	BS	Business Fina

Participants

Age	Years in Retailing	Sex	College Degree	Major	Number of Employers	Career path using career codes Taxonomy of Retail Careers
21	18	f	--	--	4	204,204,203,105
21	16	m	AA	Retail Marketing	2	23,15,17,18
21	22	m	--	--	1	13,25,27,29,29
21	7	f	BS	Textiles & Clothing	1	21,23,23,14,25
21	10	f	BA	Business	4	13,16,13,15
21	7	f	BA	Merchandising	3	11,11,23,25
21	20	f	BS	Home Economics	2	206,41,105
21	28	m	--	--	2	11---27,28,29
21	19	m	BS	Education	1	210,12,14,15,16,16,16,18,18
21	43	f	--	--	1	21,23,25
21	13	m	BS	Business	1	36,39
21	14	f	BS	Business	1	--25,27
21	6	f	BJ	Journalism	3	41,205,44,45
21	12	f	BS	Merchandising	1	22,23,25,25,13,25
21	6	f	BS	Textiles & Clothing	5	11,11,16,205,13,25
21	11	f	--	--	3	12,23,19
21	3	f	PhD	Psychology	1	44,45
21	36	m	BA	Psychology	4	25,27,28,29,105
21	12	f	BS	Secondary Education	1	23,24,13,25,17
21	9	f	--	--	3	16,17,11
21	10	f	BA	Art History	4	41,16,17,17
21	14	f	--	--	2	105,105
21	35	m	--	--	2	23,23,25,16,27,17
21	17	f	--	--	1	11,12,11,14,15,16,17
21	11	f	MS	Home Economics	1	22,23,25
21	8	m	BS	Biology	2	23,13,23,25,25
21	9	f	BS	Home Economics	2	11,15,11,25
21	8	f	--	--	1	11,25,25
21	10	f	--	--	2	105,25,27
21	11	f	BS	Merchandising	1	22,13,13,23,25,25,26
21	24	m	BS	Business	2	25,17,29,30,20,30
21	15	m	BS	Business	5	13,16,57,59,60,68,59
21	19	f	--	--	1	22,23,13,25,16,29
21	10	f	BS	Marketing	3	23,25,26,27
21	20	f	--	--	6	23,25,25,17,27,27,203,27
21	29	m	BA	Business	1	22---30
21	12	f	BS	Marketing	2	24,25,25,25,27,29
21	25	m	BS	Business Finance	1	25,37,17

APPENDIX B

	Page
Correspondence and Information Forms	157
Personal Interview Guide	163
Demographics Form	170
Thank You Letter	171

I O W A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

Grace I. Kunz
Assistant Professor

Office Address:
162 Lebaron
Ames, Iowa 50011
(515) 294-8518

Home Address:
Rt. #3
Ames, Iowa 50010
(515) 769-2265

September 22, 1984

Greetings to an ISU alum! Career development in retailing is probably a subject that you are very interested in at this time in your life, and so am I. I need your help in developing a research project that will explore career opportunities in retailing based on the actual experiences of college graduates here in the midwest. I want to talk to people from a variety of educational backgrounds that have been in retailing careers in management positions for 10-15 years. I need your help in identifying appropriate people. In exchange, I will send you a copy of the summary and recommendations from this study when it is completed, if you would like to have one.

I have attached a form and on which you can write names, addresses, phone numbers, and employers of people that you think could make an important contribution to this study. A self addressed, stamped envelope is also included to return the form. Your contribution of the names will be totally confidential. I may contact the people you recommend but I will not tell them how I received their names. You may tell them if you wish.

Your promptness in returning this information will be very helpful to me so I can move on to the next stage of the study. It will be several months before the study is completed so don't expect your copy of the summary and recommendations real soon.

Thanks in advance for your help. If you have time, add a note to let me know how you are and what you are doing.

Sincerely,

Grace I. Kunz

Let 1002
Attachments

Form 1002. Potential contributors to research: Career Development of College Graduates in Retailing.

So that I can update our career files, would you please give me the following information about you:

Your Name: _____ Your present employer: _____
 Address: _____ Your present position: _____
 city _____
 state _____ zip _____ Date of graduation from ISU _____

Please suggest men and women who have been in retailing careers for 10-15 years that you think could make an important contribution to this research study. You need not contact them and ask if they will participate. I will do that if you will tell me who they are. Give as many names as you can and as much of the requested information as possible about each subject. Use the back of the form if you can give me more than 4 names.

#1 Name _____	#3 Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
city _____	city _____
state _____	state _____
zip _____	zip _____
Employer _____	Employer _____
Position _____	Position _____
Home phone _____	Home phone _____
Office phone _____	Office phone _____
#2 Name _____	#4 Name _____
Address _____	Address _____
city _____	city _____
state _____	state _____
zip _____	zip _____
Employer _____	Employer _____
Position _____	Position _____
Home phone _____	Home phone _____
Office phone _____	Office phone _____

I O W A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

Grace I. Kunz
Assistant Professor

Office Address:
162 Lebaron
Ames, Iowa 50011
(515) 294-8518

Home Address:
Rt. #3
Ames, Iowa 50010
(515) 769-2265

September 29, 1984

Human resource costs of a typical retail store represent up to 70% of a store's total expense dollars. As you know, this investment frames the lives of millions of retail employees. How well do retailers make use of their human resources, and in particular, their people employed in management? Do colleges and universities provide appropriate training for individuals entering and progressing in retail careers? Why are most women still concentrated in lower level positions? Why do some retail recruiters show no preference for retail management trained college graduates?

I need your help in order to provide some answers to these questions for retailers and for educators. You are an expert on careers in retailing because of your experience in the retail environment. The attached preliminary questionnaire is the first phase of this research project. It will be followed by in-depth interviews about career development in retailing with some participants as well as interviews with personnel directors of major retail stores. Does career development in retailing work the way the personnel director says it does?

Please fill in the answers about your background on the attached form and return it to me in the attached self addressed, stamped envelope. You can contribute to a better understanding of careers in retailing by participating in this study. I hope you will agree to share your expertise. In exchange, I will share the summary and recommendations with you when the study is concluded, if you would like. Thank you for your help.

Sincerely,

Grace I. Kunz

Let 2002
Enclosures

Form 2003. Preliminary Questionnaire: Career Development of College Graduates
Employed in Retailing.

Please answer the following questions. Neither you nor your employer(s) will be identified by name in the publications that might result from this research.

Fill in the blanks or circle the correct response.

1. #P2003 (To assure confidentiality in the records, your responses will be identified by number instead of by name.)
2. Present position/title: _____
3. Present employer _____ Location _____
4. How many years have you been employed in retailing? _____
5. What is your sex? male female
6. Are you a graduate of a college or university? Yes No Degree(s)? _____

If answer to #6 is "no", skip to #12.

7. What year did you graduate? _____
8. At what school did you receive your undergraduate degree?
Name: _____
Location: _____
9. What was your major? _____
10. What was the length of your program? 2 years 3 years 4 years 5 years or more
11. In what department was your major? _____
12. List and define two terms that you use in your daily work that would not necessarily be known by people in other professions.

13. Summarize your career in retailing using reverse chronological order:

Employer	Location(s)	Start-End	Job Title(s)
(Example)Macy's	Kansas City	1982-1984	buyer, store manager

Use the back of the form if you need more space. Please return this questionnaire within 5 days in the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your help.

Iowa State University

R E M I N D E R

Please excuse my impatience, but, a few days ago you received a request for names of people who might assist with a research project dealing with career development in retailing. Have you mailed your suggestions? Your assistance is essential to the success of the project. Thanks.

Grace I. Kunz
RR #3
Ames, Iowa 50010

Rem 1003

Iowa State University

R E M I N D E R

Excuse my impatience, but, a few days ago you received a request for information about your career in retailing. With your help, this research project could assist both educators and retailers to better understand use of human resources in retailing. Your assistance is essential to the success of this research. Please contribute your expertise by returning the form. Thanks.

Grace I. Kunz
RR #3
Ames, Iowa 50010

rem 2002

Intro 3002. Introduction of Research Project for Personal Interviews:
Career Development of College Graduates Employed in Retailing.

I am Grace Kunz from Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa. As a faculty member and a graduate student, I am conducting a research project to learn about careers in retailing and the contributions of academic programming toward those careers. I selected you for an interview because of your experience in retailing. You have an insider's perspective that is very difficult for an educator like me to observe. Therefore, I would like to talk with you in some depth about your retail experiences and opportunities. Your participation will help me to reach my objectives for this research which include:

1. examining the stages of career development in several retail environments,
2. identifying and comparing the contributions of academic programs for retailing careers,
3. comparing the stages and timing of career development for men and women,
4. making recommendations for academic programs,
5. developing hypotheses for further study of career development.

I have prepared a guide to the topics that I want to discuss with you, so I may scribble on it from time to time as we talk if it isn't too distracting. All records of the information that you share with me will be identified by number only, no names will appear on any information from you. Any publications from this research will be written without identification by name of stores, cities, or people.

Events, experiences, and impressions will be reported as accurately as possible reflecting the perspectives of the participants, that's you. I will be writing a Ph.D dissertation from the data and hopefully some articles will be written that will appear in publications like "Journal of Retailing". Therefore, if you do not object, I would like to tape record this interview. The information is much more valuable when it is available to me in your words instead of being immediately translated into my impressions of your words. No one but me will hear this tape. Its purpose is to record the information that you have to share with me. Any references within the tape to people or firms will be made anonymous when data are published.

I would be happy to send a copy of the summary and recommendations of this research to you if you would like it. Thank you for your help.

Grace I. Kunz
RR #3
Ames, Iowa 50010
515-769-2265

Interview 3008. Personal Interview Guide: Career Development of College Graduates
Employed in Retailing.

#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____
#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____
#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____
#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____
#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____
#P2002	_____	Date	_____	Time	_____	Place	_____

BASIC INFORMATION

I would like to begin by just getting some basic information about you and your job. Because many teachers like me have limited experience the retail environment we need your help in understanding what retailing is really like. Therefore, I would like you to tell me what you do, what kind of responsibilities you have, and how you go about getting your work done.

1. First can I check with you on your formal job title and the name of your department, division, and company?

2. Is this store a part of a parent organization, or a holding company?
What is it's name?

3. How long have you been with this firm?

4. How long have you been in your present position?

Now I would like you to describe how you got to your present position.

5. ...the jobs have you held before this one?
...the timing associated with you advancement?
...the steps in advancement to your present position?

6. How did you get into retailing in the first place?

Was retailing your preferred occupation when you entered the world of work?

JOB DESCRIPTION

165

Now, I'd really like to get a feeling for what it is like to be a _____: your responsibilities, the pace, the kind of decisions that you make, and who you work with. Perhaps you can give me an idea of how a typical day goes, perhaps yesterday. Try to describe it as if you were talking to another retailer.

7. When did you arrive at the office? What did you do when you arrived?

8. Which of the things you've mentioned take up your main time and energy?

9. How much freedom do you have to organize and make changes?

10. How would you describe your management style?

Would you call it management style? How did you learn your management style?

Would you describe a situation where your management style has an impact on the environment here?

11. How do you motivate your people?

One of the things that students and parents are most concerned about is money. I am not so concerned about level of salary (I will ask you to indicate your salary range a little later) but rather how your salary is structured.

12. What is the basis of your pay?

Do you receive and base salary plus commission or bonus?

13. Are you satisfied with your salary?

Do you get paid as much as you feel you should given your expertise and time with the company?

Do you think retailing deserves its reputation for long hours and low pay?

I think I have an idea about what your present position is like, but I want to be sure I understand how your position fits into the hierarchy of this organization and whether you feel that the company has you properly placed.

14. Describe the positions that are directly above you?

What is the job title of your immediate superior?

How would you describe the level of your position within the total hierarchy of this organization?

Do you regard yourself as a part of mid-management or top management?

15. What positions are directly below you?

Who do you have reporting to you?

What contact do you have with him/her and over what kind of thing?

16. Do you work closely with any one at the same level as yourself?

How does his/her/their work fit in with yours?

17. In your organization, what kind of a background does one need to move from middle to upper management?

Who is likely to be able to make that move?

Can you give me an example of that?

18. Describe the opportunities for advancement is available to you in this organization?

19. If you could choose to work for any retail firm, what firm would you pick

What are the advantages that your ideal firm offers?

ATTITUDES

I have been trying to get an idea what your job is and what you really do. Now I'd like to turn to the way you feel about it.

20. First, describe what you like about your job?

What do you find about it that is interesting or challenging from your personal point of view?

Which of your many responsibilities are the most rewarding?

21. Is there anything else about the job that you find challenging or interesting?

22. Do you enjoy being challenged, having your capabilities tested?

Do you like problem solving?

23. Is there anything about your job that you dislike, that you find unrewarding or boring?

What is the most frustrating?

24. Is there anything else on the negative side?

25. How many hours do you work a week?

26. How long do you expect to remain in this position?

27. If you were offered another position here or with another firm, what features of the job would matter most in your decision?

ROLE OF EDUCATION

I think I have an idea of what your job is, how it fits into the organization and how you feel about it. Now I would like to turn our attention to the role of your educational background in the selection of your job and the path that your career has taken.

28. Does this job make use of your academic preparation?
29. In what ways did your academic background prepare you for a retailing career?
What is the greatest strength and weakness in your academic background?
30. Have there been times in your retailing career when your academic background has been a factor in whether a job or an opportunity for advancement was open to you?
Have you considered getting (What is the value of) an advanced degree?
31. Do you do any recruiting on college campuses?
Does your company have guidelines for recruiting management trainees?
What criteria would you use for selection of management trainees?
32. Do you prefer trainees that are graduates of a retailing or merchandising programs as opposed to other majors? Can you give me an example of that?
33. Do opportunities differ for graduates of 2 year and 4 year retailing programs?
34. Describe the greatest strengths and the greatest weakness (developmental needs) of current management trainees that you work with?
35. Describe the major components that should be in the academic background of a retailing management trainee? Internship?

CAREER PLANNING

Now I would like for us to talk for a moment about career planning and the relationship between you work and your personal life. We are interested in seeing how one's career fits in with the rest of what one does and I'd like to take this up with you.

36. Do you have a career plan?

Has any one in this or any other retail organization ever talked with you about setting goals for your own career?

37. Did you consciously decide that you would have a career?

When and under what circumstances did this come about?

Are you committed to a career in retailing?

38. Have you made choices between your personal and professional life?

Have marriage and children been ruled out or postponed because of work?

39. Do you have a person that you regard as a mentor or role model?

What kind of influence has that person had on you?

40. What position in this organization would you most like to have?

What would you have to do to reach that position?

Is this something that you are really striving for?

41. As you look back on your past career, are there any decisions or moves

that you are now particularly pleased about or particularly regret?

ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE OF WORK

42. Can you give me an idea of your other main activities and interests outside your job?

How would you rank those activities in terms of priority?

43. What part do you feel your work plays in this overall pattern?

44. Do you think your family would say the same about you?

45. If you were 18 years old today and knew what you know today about the world of work, what academic opportunities would you choose?

What school would you attend and what kind of a program would you select?

46. Would you seek a career in retailing?

47. Is there anything else which you consider particularly important about careers like yours that we should take into account in this study?

What have I neglected to ask that I should have?

Thank you for participating so generously with your time and expertise. Please fill out this form with a few demographics while I gather up my equipment.

Form 3005. Demographics: Career Development of College Graduates Employed in Retailing.

Please answer the following questions. Neither you nor your employer(s) will be identified by name in the publications that might result from this research.

Fill in the blanks or circle the correct response.

1. #P2002 (To assure confidentiality in the records, your responses will be identified by number instead of by name.)
2. What is your age? _____
3. What is your marital status? single married divorced widowed separated other
4. If you have children, what are their ages? boys _____ girls _____
5. At present, what managerial level describes you?
 - a. _____ Chief Executive or Operating Officer, corporation
 - b. _____ Owner/Partner
 - c. _____ Senior (top) management reporting to CEO/Line function
 - d. _____ Mid-management/Line function
 - e. _____ Senior (top) management reporting to CEO/Staff function
 - f. _____ Mid-management/Staff function
 - g. _____ Other _____
6. What statement(s) describe(s) the ownership structure of your retail organization?
 - a. _____ Proprietorship
 - b. _____ Partnership
 - c. _____ Corporation
 - d. _____ Privately owned corporation
 - e. _____ Part of a retail conglomerate or holding company
7. How many stores does your retail organization have? _____
8. Where are they located? _____
9. What statement(s) describe the merchandising strategy of your retail organization?
 - a. _____ Single unit specialty store
 - b. _____ Multi-unit specialty store
 - c. _____ Single unit department store
 - d. _____ Multi-unit department store
 - e. _____ Discount store
 - f. _____ Off-price store
 - g. _____ Other _____
10. What is your current base salary range?
 - a. _____ less than \$10,000
 - b. _____ \$10,000-\$15,000
 - c. _____ \$15,000-\$20,000
 - d. _____ \$20,000-\$25,000
 - e. _____ \$25,000-\$30,000
 - f. _____ \$30,000-\$40,000
 - g. _____ \$40,000-\$50,000
 - h. _____ \$50,000-\$75,000
 - i. _____ above \$75,000
11. What is the range of your bonus?
 - a. _____ less than \$1,000
 - b. _____ \$1,000-\$3,000
 - c. _____ \$3,000-\$5,000
 - d. _____ \$5,000-\$10,000
 - e. _____ \$10,000-\$15,000
 - f. _____ \$15,000-\$20,000
 - g. _____ \$20,000-\$30,000
 - h. _____ above \$30,000
 - i. _____ no bonus
12. How many years have you had an income within the range indicated above? _____

I O W A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

Grace I. Kunz
Assistant Professor

Office Address:
162 Lebaron
Ames, Iowa 50011
(515) 294-8518

Home Address:
Rt. #3
Ames, Iowa 50010
(515) 769-2265

December 10, 1984

Thank you for participating in my research about careers in retailing. Your generous allocation of time for the personal interview was particularly important to me. I have now completed the interviews, 42 in all, and have begun to work with the data. It was a fascinating experience for me to meet you and to learn about career development in retailing. Your frankness and honesty were particularly valuable to me. I hope the publications from my data will give insight about retail careers not only to educators and students but to retailers as well.

I plan to have a summary of the data prepared by May which I will send to you. Since I will be returning to full time teaching in Spring semester, the writing of the study will be a little more prolonged than the data collection was.

I have enclosed a token of my appreciation for your help. I hope you can "write your ticket" for a continuation of your successful retailing career.

Sincerely,

Grace I. Kunz

Let 3001, enclosures