

3228 ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITY ACT AMENDMENTS OF 1967

There were insufficient data for each kind of consumer durable to use either chi square or Student's "t" tests extensively. However, after brief examination of the expenditures upon each of the various kinds of consumer durables, the total and mean expenditures by both applicants and participants were analyzed in the summary which follows:

Television Sets

The purchase of a television set was viewed as a developmentally significant expenditure in this study. Although it is elusive and difficult to measure the impact of television viewing upon members of impoverished families is probably beneficial in the long run. Despite some "intellectual's" concern over the "wasteland" panorama, it is maintained herein that television viewing could help mitigate some of the cultural barriers to economic development which Messrs. Weller and Caudill, in particular, have described as characterizing the impoverished in Appalachia. If one accepts Weller or Harrington's contention that low-income people are not part of the cultural mainstream of America, then one of the easiest and most available ways of bringing a vibrant part of the mainstream of American Society into Appalachian homes would appear to be via television receivers. For an isolated family, a television offers the opportunity to view what is happening in other parts of the Commonwealth, the Nation, and even, the world. It offers a basis of communication with members of the middle class, and at the minimum, it affords the opportunity to hear noncolloquial English pronunciation and construction. Ideally perhaps, it would show some of the advantages of the nontraditional life outside the mountains, and stimulate the desire to incorporate the better aspects thereof.

TABLE 3.7.—Summary of consumer durables expenditures—Data for applicants and participants

Durable	Total prices paid		Mean price paid by those purchasing		Total indebtedness		Payments per month		Total over the developmentally significant upper limit	
	Applicants	Participants	Applicants	Participants	Applicants	Participants	Applicants	Participants	Applicants	Participants
Television.....	\$1,983	\$1,480	\$164	\$114	\$542	\$703	\$63	\$64	\$150	\$150
Refrigerator.....	90	2,142	45	126	25	1,035	10	128	0	298
Washing machine..	0	1,133	0	162	0	470	0	66	0	10
Stoves.....	811	2,103	(1)	(1)	590	836	15	105	0	139
Others.....	393	447	(1)	(1)	393	88	0	32	(1)	(1)
Furniture:										
Living room....	0	1,316	0	146	0	592	0	47	0	308
Kitchen.....	0	646	0	72	0	82	0	16	0	86
Bedroom.....	93	1,150	93	1,196	0	566	0	77	0	125
Miscellaneous..	500	817	(1)	(1)	496	120	26	26	(1)	(1)
Total.....	2,870	11,234	(1)	(1)	2,036	4,492	114	561	150	1,116

¹ Not available.

The developmentally significant upper limit was \$200 which was a fair price for a new portable model television set capable of good reception in the mountains. Thus color television and the larger console models with prices over \$200 were not considered any more developmentally significant than less expensive portable models.

Twenty-six participant families reported owning television sets at the time of the survey while only 11 applicant families did: 13 of the participants and six of the applicants had purchased television sets in the previous 12 months. Only one applicant and one participant spent more than the arbitrary \$200 developmentally significant upper limit. The mean price paid was \$114 by participants and \$164 by applicants. Thus, while more than twice as many participants as applicants had purchased television sets, their purchases seemed to have been more "prudent" investments in used or lower priced television sets than the applicants. "Prudent" in this context could have meant either cautious and deliberate expenditures, that is, rational behavior, or purchases made with the anticipation of possible loss of WE and T Program benefits, that is, minimizing future liabilities.