CONSUMER SURVEYS: TWO SUGGESTED PROCEDURES

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Consumer researchers often are faced with the need to collect their own data. Two ways to streamline the process are outlined.

Random listings of potential respondents can be obtained with the assistance of computer programs which generate random numbers. If a telephone survey is needed, random listings of phone numbers can be generated.

One modification for phone numbers is the following. The number of phones per exchange can be determined and used to estimate percentages of useable listings entries per exchange. Random phone numbers can then be set to conform to these percentages. This is a variant of that used by Waksberg [3], and it reduces the proportion of calls to nonresidences.

A different methodology is needed for face-to-face interviews. City directories (e.g., [1]) have geographic listings of residents from which a sample can be drawn. The output of a random number generator can be tailored to the number of pages, columns per page, and lines per column.

The set of values used to identify an address may locate unusable entries, such as blanks, more than one line used for an address, or the listing could be undesirable (e.g., a business). Use only those addresses which are located exactly by the computer algorithm. This is more desirable than a decision to take the entry above or below such occurrences. The latter would lead to changing the probability of selecting addresses in favor of those just above or below the useable entries.

Advances in computer software are facilitating the coding of responses. One package permits the direct coding of responses via terminals. It is part of SAS and is called the full screen product (FSP) [2]. FSP runs on an IBM computer under MVS/TSO or VM/CMS using an IBM 327x or compatible display. FSP locates data entries as specific locations on the display. These locations are then related to a SAS data file. The cursor moves automatically from one data position to the next as the coder fills all of the data entries on the screen.

Display screens can be edited to conform to pages of questionnaires. Formats of the response locations can be set, thereby making it more difficult to record responses incorrectly (e.g., numeric vs. alphanumeric).

A single screen can have up to 64 variables. Questionnaires having more variables can be handled in two ways. Multiple screens can be associated with a data file or separate files can be created. We recommend the second alternative. Multiple screens for a single data set require a little more interaction on the part of a coder. With the second alternative a questionnaire is divided into data/screen sets. Each is coded separately. Every respondent is given an identification number. After all questionnaires have been coded into the files, they can be merged.

Another desirable coding feature is the ease of editing the data once it has been entered into a file. Since SAS data files are created automatically, the usual SAS procedures can be used. Mistakes can be corrected by returning to the data set via the data entry screen. The computer can locate the erroneous entries, and the coder can type in the correct values.

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A JOURNAL FOR APPLIED CONSMER AFFAIRS: YOUR INPUT TO AN ACCI PROJECT

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Monroe Friedman, Eastern Michigan University[2]

PURPOSE

The purpose of this roundtable was to obtain suggestions, comments, and other input from ACCI members concerning the audience, funding, physical format, journal title, editorial policy, budget, and journal content of a proposed applied journal for ACCI. This roundtable was chaired by the Chair of the _ad hoc_ committee to study the feasibility of this journal and by the Chair of the Future Directions Committee of ACCI. Twenty four persons attended the roundtable.

AD HOC COMMITTEE MEMBERS

John Burton, Chair, University of Utah
Charlotte Baecher, Consumers Union
Hayden Green, Oak Park and River Forest High School
Robert Kroll, Rock Valley College
Jean Lown, Utah State University
Glen Mitchell, Virginia Tech
Charles Monsma, Eastern Michigan University
Nancy Rudd, Ohio State University (ex officio member)
Mel Zelenak, University of Missouri

ISSUES DISCUSSED

Audience
- Should the new journal be aimed primarily at ACCI members or some combination of ACCI members and other groups?
- Who are the other groups (may be included in ACCI membership)? Extension, public school teachers, community college teachers, consumer advocacy groups, business, government agencies, financial counsellors, journalists, consumer consultants, students in consumer science classes.
- How does the committee decide who the perspective audience is?

Funding
- Foundation support? If so, what foundations?
- ACCI--bundling or unbundling of membership fees?
- Subscription fee separate from membership?
- Added membership fee?
- Some combination of the above?

Physical Format
- What should be the size in pages and physical dimensions?
- Should the journal look, flashy or staid (e.g., _Psychology Today_ or _American Economic Review_ or somewhere in between? Where in between?)
- Should the journal accept advertising? If so, what type?
- How much graphics would be appropriate?

Frequency of Publication
- How many issues each year?
- Should each issue be a special topic and be printed at irregular intervals?
- Should the printing times alternate with the _Journal of Consumer Affairs_?

Title of Journal
- How should title be determined?
- Should title reflect the audience or proposed content?
- Should title reflect association with ACCI and/or the _Journal of Consumer Affairs_?

Editor
- Who should choose the editor and/or editorial board?
- What should be the criteria for editor selection?
- What should be the length of tenure of the editor?

Journal Content
- Is the journal to be refereed totally, partially, or should acceptance be based solely on the editor's perogative?
- How should contributions be encouraged?
- Who should be encouraged to contribute?
- Will some or all journal issues be directed at a special topic?
- Should journal content be determined by survey of ACCI members and/or some other marketing technique?
- What departments should this journal include? Below is an exhaustive list that has been suggested:
  1. applied research not appropriate to _JCA_ (whatever that may be)
  2. review of literature articles (invited?)
  3. position papers (invited?)
  4. pro-con papers on consumer issues (similar to what is published by the Direct Selling Association) (invited?)
  5. consumer news (what would not be appropriate for the _Newsletter_, whatever that may be)
  6. legislative reports with an analysis of implications for educators and policy makers
  7. book reviews
  8. selected extension reports and guidesheets
  9. the application of research
  10. educational methodology
  11. description of education, extension, and other programs
  12. evaluation of education, extension, and other programs
  13. guest articles on current issues (e.g., James Miller III on the contribution of regulation to efficient government)

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14. editorials, letters to the editor
15. rebuttals of previous articles
16. abstracts of articles that appear in other journals (e.g., Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics)

How many and what type of departments should be included in the journal? Should this be consistent from one journal to the next?

Budget and Press

How many copies do we plan to have per issue?
How much will it cost per copy?
What are the economies of scale?
What are the other expenses and how much will they be?
Should there be page and/or submission charges?

MEASURING THE VALUES OF PRODUCT CHARACTERISTICS

Christine J. Hager, Stockton State College[1]

The following discussion is a summary of the research conducted on product characteristics for my doctoral dissertation (Hager, 1985). The main questions addressed by such research are:

1) What do households pay for various characteristics of the products they buy?

2) How can the implicit prices of these characteristics be estimated?

3) Do the implicit prices of these characteristics affect the amount of the characteristic purchased and used?

Theoretical Model

Hedonic models are often used to relate prices to quantities of characteristics (Rosen, 1974). The purposes of the hedonic approach are to analyze implicit markets for characteristics; and to identify the structure of the demand for the characteristics by including the implicit prices in the demand models. Hedonic models are estimated in two steps as follows:

Step One:

Prices are related to characteristics of each product bundle given the assumption that consumers select individual products based on the price of the product bundle and on the characteristics of the product bundle. The product bundle is indivisible and purchased once during the time period.

If markets are separated given the assumption that supplies differ across markets, prices of the products and of the characteristics differ across these markets (Palmquist, 1984).

If the price function is linear, the implicit prices of the characteristics can be estimated as the first derivatives of the function and are constants.

Step Two:

The total quantities of the characteristics contained in the bundle were related to the implicit prices estimated in the first stage, household income and other factors that affect tastes and preferences.

Extensions and Applications

There are several theoretical and econometric extensions of this reasearch, including analysis of the importance of the functional form of the price equation in the estimation of the implicit prices.

The empirical applications of the hedonic approach are diverse. They include studies of housing, food, and other consumer products (textiles, lawn mowers, refrigerators, automobiles, and other appliances).

Hedonic research on housing has been conducted as a way to determine the cost of deterioration in air, water, or noise quality in neighborhoods. Other environmental and product liability issues involve compensation for risk and willingness to pay for safeguards. The method of determining comparable worth in pay disputes is a characteristics or hedonic approach. Other applications include products and services, such as health services or even child care, for which consumers are willing to pay for differences in quality. It will be a challenge for consumer economists and others to define these quality differences.

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THE CONSUMER EXPENDITURE SURVEY:
DATA MANAGEMENT AND ANALYSIS DECISIONS

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ABSTRACT

Microdata from the Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey are available. Decisions related to management and analysis of these data are discussed from the perspective of household economic analysis.

DATA MANAGEMENT

The Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey (CES) provides an important source of data for analyzing economic behavior of households. Conducting household-level, instead of aggregate, analysis of the data presents special concerns and questions. This discussion explores aspects of data management and data analysis that are unique to analysis of the household data.

Data on the CES user tapes are organized by quarter. Each quarter of data is contained in four files: family, member, expenditure, and income files. For example, the first year of data were arranged as shown below.

FMLY.Q801	FMLY.0802	FMLY.Q803	FMLY.Q804
MEMB.Q801	MEMB.Q802	MEMB.Q803	MEMB.Q804
MTAB.Q801	MTAB.Q802	MTAB.Q803	MTAB.Q804
ITAB.Q801	ITAB.Q802	ITAB.Q803	ITAB.Q804

Q801 refers to Quarter 1 of 1980. The 1980-81 tapes contain Quarters 80-1 to 82-1. The 1982-83 tapes contain Quarters 82-2 to 84-1. MTAB refers to the expenditure files, and ITAB is the name for income files.

The family and member files are arranged by consumer unit (CU) and therefore are easy to access with statistical packages such as SPSS and SAS. The income file data are repeats of data on the family file (except divided to provide monthly values instead of annual values). The expenditure file requires more attention. Each record contains a consumer unit identification (CUID), expenditure code (UCC), dollar value, and month of expenditure. The records are ordered by CUID, but they are not ordered by UCC within the CUID. When using the SPSS aggregate procedure (Break=CUID UCC), the UCC must be ordered first. Otherwise, extracting the data from the tape produces a file with multiple records for a CUID for a single UCC (example: telephone).

There are no summary expenditure category variables (such as housing, transportation) on the tapes. To construct categories identical to those in the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS) published reports, the individual UCC codes must be assigned to an expenditure category and summed. The Label, Title, and Aggregate files on the 1980-81 tapes are designed for this purpose, but they are very tedious to use. BLS has corrected the problem; therefore, to assign the UCC codes on the 1980-81 tape, contact BLS (202-272-5060) for their listing of UCCs by categories. The 1982-83 documentation contains that information for the 1982-83 tapes.

DATA ANALYSIS DECISIONS

Annual Estimates From Quarterly Data

A primary question of household expenditure analysts using these data is, "How can annual expenditures be constructed for households from quarterly data?" This question arises because the CUIDs in each quarter of data are not the same from quarter to quarter.

The table illustrates the rotation schedule. Data from questionnaire 1 are not on the tape since they were used for bounding purposes only. In Quarter 1 of 1980, panels B, C, D, and E (which had the bounding questionnaires previously) were assigned to questionnaires 2, 3, 4, and 5. In Quarter 2, panel F was added and panel E was deleted. The rotation continues with each panel surveyed for the bounding and four quarters, then dropped. Each quarter has a total of about 4,800 consumer units.

Rotation Schedule for Consumer Expenditure Interview Survey, 1980-81

Questionnaire Number		1	2	3	4	5
1980	Quarter 1	A	B	C	D	E
	Quarter 2	F	A	B	C	D
	Quarter 3	G	F	A	B	C
	Quarter 4	H	G	F	A	B
1981	Quarter 1	I	H	G	F	A
	Quarter 2	J	I	H	G	F
	Quarter 3	K	J	I	H	G
	Quarter 4	L	K	J	I	H
1982	Quarter 1	M	L	K	J	I

There are several ways to estimate annual expenditures from quarterly data. Each has potential concerns. Possible treatments include:

(1) Use only CUs that have been in the survey four quarters. (There is a CUID variable that allows linkage over quarters if the CUID does not drop

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out for a quarter.) This reduces the sample size substantially. The outlined area on the table indicates the panels that would be included. Panels C, D, E, J, K, L, and M would be lost, reducing the sample size one third (from 36 to 24 sample component sets). This problem is more severe for shorter time periods. In 1980, only panel B is in the sample for four quarters. Data for panels A, C, D, E, F, G, and H would not be used. Population weights cannot be used since CES weights are designed to provide population estimates for each quarter. If the data from the box in the table are used, only three of the quarters will have appropriate weights (Quarter 4 of 1980, and Quarters 1 and 2 of 1981). Also, the researcher must determine whether family characteristics from Quarters 1, 2, 3, or 4 will be assigned to the CUs.

(2) Combine four quarters of data to make an annual file. Some CUs will be in the file as four separate CUs; some will be represented once, twice, or three times. Thus, four quarters of data will yield nearly 20,000 CUs, but many will be repeats of the same CU (with a different quarter of expenditures and perhaps some changes in family characteristics). In 1980 all but panels E and G (and dropout CUs) will be represented more than once. If there are unusual family characteristics or expenditures in a CU, multiple entries treated as different CUs may be undesirable.

(3) Analyze one quarter of data and annualize. Multiplying a quarter of data by four is not appropriate for seasonal expenses such as fuel costs or annual payments such as insurance premiums. A modification of this treatment is to impute missing quarters of data. On the basis of data for panel D's two quarters, impute the remaining two quarters. This also will be affected by seasonal differences and annual payments, however.

(4) Analyze each quarter of data and present results for four separate quarters.

Weighting

The translation of the sample to the U.S. urban population for each quarter is accomplished with Weight 21 from the family file of the data tape. CES weights adjust for region, housing tenure, race, and size of consumer unit in 1980-81. For example, the sample is underrepresented in the South, so the weights are used to create appropriate representation of the regions. Tests of statistical significance often are based on the weighted sample size. If the weighted number of cases exceeds the sample size, tests of significance are inflated. Since the CES Weight 21 weights to the U.S. population, statistical significance may be overstated. To correct for this, it may be useful to adjust the CES weight back down to the sample size.

Other Analysis Considerations

Because CES is a continuing survey, data may be used from quarters that are quite diverse in price levels. Adjustment in expenditure levels by the Consumer Price Index may be necessary. Also, with quarterly data, there are many CUs with zero values even for categories of expenditures such as clothing or health care. Tobit analysis may be better suited than ordinary least squares for dependent variables of this nature.

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DETERMINANTS OF ALLOCATION OF WOMEN'S TIME TO MARKET AND NONMARKET PRODUCTION IN MALAYSIA

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Introduction

Women in Malaysia, as in most other countries, generate income indirectly through household production but also directly through self-employment or employment in the labor market (42,48,11). By engaging intensely in both types of production women in developing countries frequently spend more hours per day in work than men (32,45,33,26).

This time use pattern enables women to contribute substantially to household income, particularly when returns to both types of production are taken into account (2,26,36,34, 1,47,14,28,15). It has been estimated that the average contribution of women to Malaysian households is approximately 38 percent (28). In the context of the relatively low levels of living prevalent in developing countries, women's contributions loom in salience to family well-being.

The lack of physical capital in Malaysia and other developing countries accentuates the importance of human capital inputs and thus health, to both market and household production and the consequent well-being of the family. The extraordinary reliance on human capital is potentially draining to health with the result that, "In Asia in general, women often have continuous exhaustion" (48).

While several studies have been done on time use of women in developing countries they have been largely descriptive and qualitative due to sample size limitations (10,23,33). Of the samples large enough to permit more rigorous multivariate analyses indicating how specific factors affect allocations of time only one, to our knowledge, have employed a measure to account for the impact of health on time use (26).

The purpose of this paper is to identify determinants of allocation of women's time to market and nonmarket production activities, including health. Today's discussion will focus on model development [illegible] specification as the data from the 1978 Malaysian Family Life Survey are as yet unavailable (5). The units of analysis will be ever-married women in Malaysia, less than 50 years old.

BACKGROUND

Health and Time Use

Ill health, regardless of its cause, will potentially reduce time in both paid and unpaid work as well as its intensity and duration. Measures of health tend to be requisite in predicting labor supply but not in predicting time in household work. Health tends to have a negative effect on hours American women supply to the labor force but the effect is small and may vary by age and race of women (17,40). Analyses of U.S. labor market participation have also shown that women have more short term disabilities and sick days than men. However, this may be attributable more to child care responsibilities than to health.

Much evidence has accumulated documenting the impact of nutritional inadequacy on productivity (25,27,46,3,24,29,13,9). However, most of these studies have been conducted on men and may not be applicable to women.

In estimating the health effects on time use of women in developing countries King and Evenson (26) used sick days to predict time in household and market work. The variable did not significantly influence time use [illegible] either farm or nonfarm women but the cell sizes were small and thus the results may be spurious. Furthermore, the concept of sick days was used only in an exploratory sense as it is much less likely to capture the extent of health problems in an agrarian workplace than in a highly industrialized economy.

Ngambeki and Ikpi (35) analyzed 250 farmers for the impact of their health on time use, however, it was unclear whether the sample contained farmers of both sexes. Their measures of health included illnesses as well as nutritional intake and indicated that illness reduced farmers' time in farming "to a damaging extent" (p. 315). Nutritional adequacy increased physical performance and farm profitability hinged on both. Their factor analyses of health determinants were particularly effective as any single

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determinant is relatively weak and multicollinearity and sample size constrain use of individual predictors.

Determinants of Health

While both men and women in developing countries frequently have serious health problems women's tend to be worse than men's (41,16,18). Women's poorer health is likely a consequence of nutritionally stressful pregnancy and lactation; physically demanding, never-ending market and household work; and the multiplicity of demands spawned by their divers roles.

Malaysian women may spend a large proportion of their adult life pregnant or lactating. Lactation requires even more nutrient intake than pregnancy so may be especially draining on women's health. In Malaysia, as elsewhere, women continue to perform all normal duties until onset of delivery; however, traditionally they do not work for 40 days after (42).

In developing countries in general, women frequently lack not only sufficient number of calories but also particular nutrients, especially iron. They are more likely than men to have iron deficiency anemia which may lessen productivity even more than caloric insufficiency (4).

Women in rural areas of Malaysia continue to engage in strenuous farm and household work. Furthermore, they frequently hold two or more market jobs in addition to their household production responsibilities (43). The results of this on their own and their children's health are ambiguous as women's income in developing countries are often more likely than men's income used to increase food expenditures and otherwise contribute to family well-being (38,39,15).

However women's labor force participation may reduce time available for home production of food and thus may decrease nutritional well-being. A negative effect has been documented in Malaysia (8) and the Philippines (37). Other studies have found no impact (12,31).

Household income is related to many of the determinants of health; women's health tends to be inversely related to income (16). Income increases quantity of food available if not the quality of the food and thus improved nutritional status (7,30,21). Income may also influence prevalence of disease; low-income households have less adequate sanitation, water sources and housing which affect health status. For example, electricity in the household allows women to spend more hours in self-employment and thus increases household income (19).

Rural and urban locations vary substantially in opportunities for women and [illegible] community capital available to them. When electricity is introduced to a community women's perceived work opportunities and reported work time and household incomes had increased (19). Not only are women in rural areas less likely to have basic capital such as piped water and electricity but they are more likely to engage in strenuous agricultural or other physically demanding labor than those in cities.

Malaysia is a country of ethnic diversity; Malay, Indian and Chinese races live together in a country committed to economic modernization. Ethnically-related norms may influence women's time allocation not only through differing demands but also due to the division of labor and use and availability of other inputs within the farm and household. Cultural differences are related to location as the Chinese tend to live in or near cities while Malays reside primarily in rural areas. Indians reside in both places (42).

Household Economic Theory

Household members derive utility from market goods, household produced goods and leisure, and allocation choices are made jointly. In order to both maximize utility and minimize costs of production, household economic theory posits that people allocate their time among three categories of use: market production, household production and leisure (14). Household (home) produced goods are made at home using direct inputs of time of household members, unearned income, physical capital, including purchased goods, demands planned and unplanned and the indirect input of human capital, including health. Human capital is an indirect input as it affects the productivity of the direct inputs. The distinction between market and household production is that the former generates cash or in kind substitutes for cash while the latter generates real income. Constraints to the system include not only the inputs to the production process but also prices of market goods, wages, job costs and cultural factors.

Following this general framework and previous research the following model was derived to test the impact of health on time use.

$$T_{hij} = b_0 + b_1 w_{1i} + b_2 w_{2i} + b_3 V_i + b_4 H_i + b_5 K_i + b_6 A_{ij} + b_7 P_{ij} + b_8 C_i + b_9 J_i + b_{10} S_i + e \quad (1)$$

where: T = wife's time in household work or in paid work;
W_1 = wife's wage rate;
W_2 = husband's wage rate;
V = unearned income;
H = wife's health, age and education;

K = measure of housing quality;
A = measure of community capital, urban or rural residence;
P = price of market goods;
C = numbers and ages of children;
J = costs associated with wife's job;
S = season;
b_i = regression coefficients;
h = subscript referring to household or paid work;
i = subscript referring to households;
j = subscript referring to communities;
e = error term.

Data

The data for this analysis were collected in 1976-77 by The Rand Corporation for the U.S. Agency for International Development. Sample members were randomly selected from households in Peninsular Malaysia containing at least one ever-married woman less than 50 years old at the time of the first interview. Of the 1,262 initial households 1,207 continued throughout the data collection period.

The purpose of the survey was to study fertility but in the process much tangential information was also acquired. Data were collected on time use, housing, business, earnings, assets, communities and other topics. The research reported herein will use data from the Household Roster, Female Retrospective, and Female Time Budgets.

Variables in equation 1 are defined in Table 1. The time use data were collected with a recall method. Time in paid work was recalled for the past 7 days along with frequency over the last four months. For household time use a list of tasks was provided to the homemaker who responded with amount of time she recalled spending at that task in the previous 7 days.

Table 1. Definition of Variables

Time in household work	Sum of time spent in washing & ironing clothes, shopping, food preparation, cleaning, child care, producing products at home for home use, other.
Time in paid work	Sum of time spent in paid employment, self employment, producing products at home for sale.
Price of market goods	How prices have changed since 1970, 1=increased, 2=decreased, 3=same, judged by community leader
Human Capital	
Health	A set of factor scores[1]
Wife's education	Highest level completed (0-23)
Wife's age	In years
Physical capital	
Housing quality	A set of factor scores[2]
Farm capital	A set of factor scores[3]

Table 1. (continued)

Community Capital	
Urban/rural residence	Dummy variable coded 0,1
Size of community	
Employment opportunities	Employment opportunities compared with 1970, 1=as easy, 2=easy, 3=more difficult, as judged by a community leader
Standard of living	Compared with 1970, 1=better off, 2=not so well off, 3=the same, judged by a community leader
Unearned income	
Wife's wage	Amount of cash earnings per hour + amount of kind earned per hour in Malaysian dollars[4]
Husband's wage	Amount of cash earnings per hour + amount of kind earned per hour in Malaysian dollars
Husband's time in paid work	Hours worked per week X Number of weeks worked per year
Children	Number of children age nine and under; number of children aged 10-14
Farm residence	Dummy variable coded 0,1
Wife's ethnicity	Malay, Chinese, Indian, Other
Wife's work-related costs	Distance to work

[1]Variables used to construct the health factor(s) include number of live births, total number of births, number of living children, time between births, time in lactation, reasons for stopping lactation prematurely, income, distances to doctors, nurses, midwives, hospitals and public clinics, prevalent diseases in community in last 5 years.

[2]Variables used to create the housing factor(s) include rooms per person, tenure, wall materials, presence of toilet and bath facilities, presence of electricity and piped water.

[3]Variables used to create farm capital factor(s).

[4]These are earnings in the past 4 months.

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PROBLEM-RESOLUTION APPEALS IN TELEVISION ADVERTISING

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INTRODUCTION

Consumers are often criticized for having short time horizons. Individuals are advised to plan ahead and delay expected payoffs. Yet in one aspect of every day life -- the television commercial -- consumers receive exactly the opposite message. Commercials offer easy, immediate solutions to problems. Television advertising is of interest because of its high visibility, pervasiveness, persuasiveness, and potential for shaping beliefs, attitudes and behaviors.

Life portrayed on television is a persistent cycle of problems and solutions. Some of the problems are small and insignificant, others are so large they threaten life itself. On television, problems are solved, sometimes miraculously, within a short period of time.

In this study, a content analytical design was used to examine problems and resolutions presented in television commercials. The specific objectives of the study were: 1) to determine the extent to which problems are presented and 2) to analyze problem resolutions.

METHODOLOGY

A problem-resolution appeal is the presentation of a product or service as the solution for a problem. Resolutions were measured by the following criteria: presentation, time required, certainty, and complexity.

A sample of advertisements was obtained by videotaping all national commercials aired on three networks (ABC, NBC, CBS) during prime time for seven days and daytime for two weekdays, Saturday and Sunday. Taping occured in September, 1984.

Some 3,662 national advertisements were aired, including repeated advertisements. A total of 1,380 different national commercials comprised the sample. Commercials were coded by three trained coders; intercoder reliability was 0.89.

FINDINGS

Findings support the hypothesis that problems are presented in a majority of commercials and that when a problem is presented, a resolution is also shown. Problems were present in 72.8% of the advertisements, and in each case a solution was provided.

Not only did every problem in the sample have a solution, but the resolutions were presented as easy, quick and certain, requiring little from the consumer beyond the purchase of the product or service. No commercial left the viewer with an unresolved difficulty.

Findings are shown in the table above, right.

RESOLUTION			
presentation			
	explicit		69.2 %
	implied		30.8 %
time			
	seconds/minutes		81.6 %
	hours/days		16.4 %
	months/years		2.0 %
certainty			
	definite		76.1 %
	probable		23.9 %
complexity			
	accessibility	(local store)	66.2 %
		(special store)	28.0 %
	process	(one step)	76.8 %
		(> 3 steps)	7.9 %

Time refers to the time suggested or implied for resolution to occur. Compelexity defines the ease with which the viewer can obtain the product or service.

CONCLUSIONS

Television portrayals of problems create the impression that all problems can be solved easily, no matter how large or small they are. Many of the problems presented could be classified as common, everyday events (e.g. ring around the collar, dust on the furniture, or finicky cats). These everday events are escalated into major crises.

Other commercials present serious problems and trivialize them to the point of meaninglessness, (e.g. emotional disorders or physical ailments). Consumers are led to believe that there is a medicine or treatment for most ailments. Disillusionment can occur if consumers succumb to the allure of an easy quack cure. Another example, lonliness, is easily overcome by using the right toothpaste or drinking a certain soda. Emotional problems cannot be so easily solved.

Thus, television advertisements reinforce short time horizons by presenting simplified solutions to exaggerated problems. It is logical to ask: to what extent do consumers identify with the problems presented and believe in such easy solutions? It is plausible that television commercials have some impact. This study documents that problem-resolution appeals are the dominant form of advertisement. Further study could uncover what kind of effects these advertisements have upon consumers.

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VIEWS ON CONSUMER FOCUS GROUPS AS EXPLORATORY RESEARCH TOOLS

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Betty Abbas, Gordon S. Black Corporation,[3] Mary Carsky, University of Connecticut[4]

ABSTRACT

The design and use of focus groups as an exploratory research tool in the consumer field were discussed and illustrated with a videotape of a focus group on "The Ideal Pharmacy" conducted at Syracuse University to generate research hypotheses. Perspectives on this technique were given by a corporate consumer affairs professional, a marketing specialist and an academic. All the speakers urged quantitative researchers in the consumer field to use more qualitative research, especially focus groups, to generate hypotheses and ideas, to pre-test questionnaires and to target their audiences.

OVERVIEW AND A CASE IN POINT

A focused group interview, more commonly called a "focus group," is a "qualitative tool for collecing information in which a number of respondents simultaneously discuss a given topic under the guidance of a moderator" [2]. Calder outlines three distinct approaches to the use of focus groups. 1) The exploratory approach which we are looking at today is undertaken to generate theoretical ideas and hypotheses that can be verified with quantitative research. 2) The clinical approach attempts to conduct qualitative research as a scientific endeavor; to get at the underlying causes of behavior that are not directly available from self-reports. 3) The phenomenological approach provides the opportunity for researchers to put themselves in the position of the group participant and thus understand the everyday experience of the group members, i.e., to talk to the customer [1].

The processes used in focus groups have some elements in common with group problem-solving, group brainstorming, discussion groups and psychotherapy groups. The evidence from research studies examining these techniques appears to contradict some of the commonly held assumptions about focus groups. There has been only one study directly testing focus group assumptions [3].

Some of the common beliefs about focus group methodology, that relate to the focus group that will be viewed this morning are as follows:

1. Focus groups provide more information that is qualitatively better than that provided in individual interviews. Fern, however, found in a comparison of focus groups with individual interviews that the latter produced more ideas and ideas of higher quality [3]. The focus group that we will observe illustrates considerable synergism as the group members build on each other's ideas. There were many points that emerged from this group focusing on an ideal pharmacy, that had not occurred to me after reading the literature and talking with individuals. Pharmacists were also surprised at the direction of the discussion. The reaction to the physical layout of pharmacies and the confusion of consumers about the training and expertise of pharmacists relative to physicians were unexpected and revealing. Sometimes the lack of discussion of a factor assumed to be important can be significant in eliminating preconceived hypotheses.

2. The ideal focus group size is between eight and twelve members. Opinion varies greatly about this in the literature however, from those who prefer 20 or more to Fern who found that the incremental number of ideas per person decreased as group size increased from one to eight members [3]. The focus group that you are about to view includes 16 people. A group of eight would not have provided the cross-section of age, sex and family type that was desired. The matrix illustrated provided the basis for the selection of participants in the focus group to be viewed. The level of discussion was excellent.

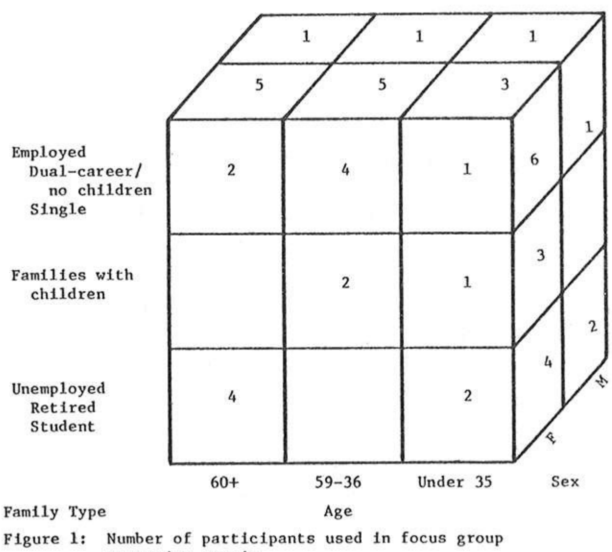

Figure 1: Number of participants used in focus group screening matrix

[1] Presenter: Director of Consumer Studies Program.

[2] Discussant: Director of Consumer Affairs.

[3] Discussant: Management Associate.

[4] Discussant: Asst. Professor Dept. of Design and Resource Management.

3. The third belief is that the moderator plays a crucial role in focus groups. The moderator's expertise, personality traits and focus group procedure are critical to promoting group interaction [3]. Fern found, on the other hand, that moderated focus groups did not generate more or better ideas than unmoderated groups. He worked with group sizes under eight. The most important role of moderator as I used it in the focus group we will view was to give everyone an opportunity to speak and not to force any ideas on them; to ask open-ended questions that could not be answered by a "yes" or "no." An effective moderator must never become argumentative even when the discussion does not produce the expected results. Calder states that involvement of the moderator depends on the type of approach to focus groups. For exploratory purposes it is not so important because the group is a convenient way to interview a number of people, any one of which may stimulate the moderator's scientific thinking. When using the phenomenological approach, the moderator is part of the interaction, but is not when the clinical approach is used [1].

4. The fourth belief is that within-group homogeneity of members should be maintained in focus groups. The homogeneity recommended differs among authors, but includes occupation, age, education, intellectual and social status, lifestyle, and life-cycle stage. Heterogeneous groups may be good for exploratory focus groups; homogeneous groups are more important for clinical and phenomenological groups, according to Calder [1]. The group you are about to hear represents different ages, family income patterns, life-cycle stages and family size. They are, however, all middle class and college educated. They included the following: 4 women from empty-nest dual-income families; 2 single career women, one male; 3 homemakers, one with 3 children and a new baby, one with a new baby only, and one with teenagers; two retired single women, one retired married male; and two students, one male and one female.

The focus group entitled "An Ideal Pharmacy" was conceived to generate ideas for a research project to study ways to improve consumer compliance with drug regimens by working in a pharmacy setting. The group was to be videotaped so that it could be transported to groups of pharmacists for feedback as to the practicality of the suggestions generated. An attempt to recruit participants at pharmacy sites to come to campus for taping was not successful although people were willing to answer questions on the spot. Recruiting was done by telephone through organization representatives, i.e., senior citizen groups, church and professional clubs. A small gift certificate was offered in the recruiting process. A box-supper was held in the studio to enable the focus group members to get comfortable with the studio environment and meet each other before the taping. Free parking was arranged. The meeting time was scheduled from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. including supper and taping. The time flew and a wealth of new ideas was generated.

[Selections from the videotape were shown.]

VIEW FROM A CONSUMER AFFAIRS PROFESSIONAL

Peggy Haney, the Director of the Consumer Affairs Office at American Express discussed how and why they use focus groups. A primary use is to provide insights for developing surveys and other research techniques. A major function of the Consumer Affairs Office is to listen to the customer and keep management up-to-date on consumer trends and issues. They have used consumer panels which are somewhat different from focus groups to achieve these ends.

American Express has diversified very quickly and two years ago undertook a massive image study to discover how their customers perceived them following their acquisitions. The market research department conducted about 45 focus groups all around the country with some very select homogeneous groups just to get some initial ideas. Although consumer affairs people may sit in on these via one-way mirrors and have access to this kind of information if they need it, they do not get involved in product specific nor bottom-line specific focus group research.

If focus groups are seen along a continuum from the very formal market research groups to informal ongoing consumer leader panels, the type of groups that the Consumer Affairs Office has been experimenting with at American Express the past two years falls somewhere in the middle. Four Consumer Leader Panels have been conducted during the last two years, each one being conducted a little bit differently to see which works best. The first group was in Westchester, N.Y. led by a professional consumer advocate facilitator. They discussed financial deregulation issues for two and one-half hours. Consumer Affairs staff participated in the group discussion. The second and third groups met in Minneapolis and used a one-way mirror for staff observation. These panels were drawn from the Minneapolis-St. Paul community representing various constituencies, i.e., League of Women Voters, Hispanic Organizations, Governor's Office of Consumer Affairs. Participants were chosen because they had some knowledge in the financial area and were thought to be outspoken about their constituents' needs. The final group was conducted in California. This group met for a full day, starting with an evening reception for people to get acquainted. The consumer leaders were drawn from all across California, and were very knowledgeable about financial matters. Half of them were public interest lawyers. Some American Express corporate executives also sat in on the discussions. This gave management a direct feel for what this leading-edge group had to say. We recognize that one or two comments do not make a trend, but such groups provide insights to take back to our management or to the market research group and say, "I think we ought to look into this."

The Consumer Affairs Office is currently exploring the farthest end of the focus group continuum described, that is, setting up an ongoing Consumer Advisory Panel, made up of a nationwide group of consumer leaders to provide us with insight on a regular basis. The model for this is Pacific Bell's Consumer Panel which is one of the oldest ongoing consumer panels in the country. The objective of the panel is to identify and evaluate consumer issues, attitudes and priorities as they impact a given corporation, and to provide counsel to corporate staff on policy initiatives. Such a panel might be fairly autonomous; include some company management; provide for rotation on and off the board; set the agenda for each bi-monthly meeting; and receive feedback from the company about their recommendations. The Pacific Bell Panel also issues an annual report for in-house circulation on the issues the panel has dealt with and how the company has responded as well.

At American Express, we taped three of the panel discussions and will show the ten minute edited version to in-house management to effectively underscore the message we will deliver. Along with very valuable insight into financial industry issues, we also may have witnessed a classic process of issue development. In 1984, when we conducted the New York panel deregulation was just getting started. People didn't know what it meant except that fees were being charged for things that had been free. They had an uneasy sense of a problem emerging, but couldn't articulate it. The Minneapolis groups were very articulate and said a lot about the issue of trust and financial institutions. Then in California, in late 1985, the group was talking about lifeline, lawsuits and legislation and hearings. We questioned whether these differences reflected the pattern of an emerging issue or whether it was just the different constituencies. It was probably some of both.

Benefits to the company of setting up such an ongoing panel appear to be obvious. They provide warnings, far in advance on the issues that are developing so we can be responsive before we have to meet someone in court. The corporation wins and the consumer wins. Consumer leaders also find some benefit in the fact that they can help influence what major corporations do. They have a direct channel into management for their concerns. The credibility of management is increased with consumer leaders, and the credibility of consumer leaders is increased with management through this face-to-face communication.

VIEW FROM A MARKET RESEARCHER

The Gordon S. Black Corporation in Rochester where Dr. Abbas is a management associate is a full service market research firm which uses the full range of techniques from focus groups to quantitative research. It is also the exclusive polling firm for U.S.A. TODAY. From this background, she stressed the benefit of focus group work as qualitative research. University people have a good understanding of what research is and what quantitative research can do. However, the are not as aware as are those in industry that qualitative research, which is not projectible, can provide insight and help in the development of quantitative research.

Qualitative research is the only way to explore consumer attitudes, really explore them. How many times have you gotten a questionnaire back, or the results of your survey back, and your reaction is "I wonder why that is"? If you didn't think to ask why when you designed the instrument the answer is lost. Or even if you did ask why, did you get the complete reason? As the data are coded, you might know that I didn't go to that bank because the lines are too long, but <u>what about</u> the lines being too long....<u>what is too long?</u> Too long may not be the same for each of us. In a focus group situation you can explore what words mean to individuals so that you can understand what consumers are doing, and why they are doing it.

Focus groups often capture the first indicators of social trends. You begin to see them happening early. For example, we saw the relaxation of yuppyism two years ago, before it was coming out in quantitative data. In quantitative data you are asking "What are you doing?" and that is what people are telling you. In qualitative research they will tell you what they are doing but they also will tell you that they are beginning to wonder if this is really what they want to do. You hear such things as "I work an 80 hour week and I don't know if I want to do that any more." "I think I want to cut back to 60 hours." "I have a baby now and I'm not going to work every weekend." They are redefining their goals.

Another trend we've seen that is especially important for consumer affairs professionals, is that people are tired of having to be good consumers. They are saying, "All this deregulation is too much work!" "I don't want to bother about it." We have found in working with as diverse products as vegetables, telephones, and the financial services industry that people are willing to pay more if they don't have to think. We saw this trend four years ago and I expect that quantitative research is picking it up now.

In industry, qualitative research is the first step in quantitative research. Our company almost never does a quantitative project without first conducting a qualitative project to generate the hypotheses, understand the language, and get some ideas as to how we can phrase the questions. At the university, we never did qualitative research. Researchers all sat around and said "Well, we know what the issues are, we know what we want to ask." The consumers were never asked what things concerned them about the topic to be researched. By doing qualitative research first, we have found surprises. We found things that we thought everybody knew, and when we went out to the consumers, they didn't know and they didn't care. In order to get the information we wanted, we had to phrase the question in a completely different way.

Qualitative research gives you the consumers' vocabulary. This is especially important when you are working with special interest groups, but it can be true across the board.

Qualitative research also helps to assure that when you go out for the quantitative study that you have the right group targeted. You might think for example that divorcees would be the perfect target group for financial services information. Not necessarily so. We did focus groups among divorcees and discovered their attitude was "I never did anything on my own before and now I'm going to do it all. No one is going to make plans for me." Even if we still want to give divorcees financial information, we discover from the focus groups that we should not target them in the same way as we do other groups. You wouldn't get this information through quantitative research; they would just say no and hang up the phone.

Another use for focus groups is in questionnaire re-design. If you are using a tracking project and you find that you aren't getting the kind of information that you think you want, take time to step back and do a focus group on the topic. Get the people who are filling out that instrument and sit down and talk about it. I thought about this as a strategy at the Bureau of Labor Statistics group yesterday when they were talking about their diary collections. We did some focus groups with one manufacturer on invoices. They were getting complaints that people couldn't understand the invoices. We worked with the billing groups and asked how they would redesign the forms. The result was an invoice that included the required information in an understandable way. You can't do that sort of thing with a quantitative study.

When using qualitative research in the University setting, you may not always achieve the ideal situation. Circumstances sometimes dictate what is possible. In industry we would never have 16 people, nor as diverse a population group as Margaret collected. However, I urge you to get started, even if you have to break some of the rules. There are a few things to remember: 1. You do need to be clear about what your objectives are, 2. define which audience you want to target.

Screen for the people in your groups. Don't go out and pick your friends and neighbors, as that will not give you the interaction you want. Establish not only the demographic criteria, but the attitudinal and behavioral criteria for picking your group. For example, you might want to determine whether an individual was the decision-maker about drug purchases, the drug-user, or only the person who picks up the prescriptions. We advise keeping the groups small, usually not more than ten...twelve as an absolute maximum. Smaller groups provide much better interaction.

One final comment about focus groups in academia. I think faculty members can become excellent moderators for focus groups. They are used to asking questions, and controlling group settings. The only thing they are not used to doing, which must be done when using this technique, is taking the back seat!

Consider using some qualitative research with your next project. Experience from industry would indicate that focus groups and other forms of qualitative research can improve quantitative research.

VIEW FROM AN ACADEMICIAN

The focus group as a research tool appears to be highly underutilized in academia. While the focus group idea is rooted in social psychology, marketing is about the only discipline that uses it. Marketing's use is frequently associated with applied marketing research.

Exploratory focus groups can be used either for idea generation or for testing. In terms of the inter-disciplinary scope of the ACCI membership, we could use focus groups for hypothesis generation and also for the determination of attributes. We are moving very much more to the use of secondary data sources in our research. In designing our studies we develop hypotheses and measure the effects of selected variables. We generate hypotheses based on our conceptualization of the issue and on the literature--literature which we ourselves produced. Particularly when working with secondary data sets, it would behoove us to conduct focus groups with people who are far removed from academia in order to generate testable hypotheses.

When generating attribute lists, we tend to use literature reviews and thus find attributes that other groups of academics have discovered. Based on this, we give closed-end questions to come up with irrelevant attributes.

Exploratory focus groups can also be used for testing, and pre-testing our questionnaires. I don't know how you do it, but I develop my questionnaire and administer it to a group of people drawn from the population under study. These subjects are asked to make comments about any question which appears problematic in some way. We would probably obtain much more information that is not readily verbalized if we conducted focus groups to pretest our instruments. Today many of us are attempting to study elderly consumers who are not typically good survey respondents. For this target population, we would probably do well to start by using focus groups.

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FUN AND GAMES IN THE MARKETPLACE

Consumerism and You

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ABSTRACT

Consumers should not take themselves too seriously, and yet seriously enough to get the marketplace to shape up. This paper is really a "show-and-tell" type of presentation with many examples of inadequate labeling, misleading advertisements, packaging problems, conflicts over the consumer's right to know, and the question of too much or too little government regulation of the marketplace. All presented in a light-hearted manner, but with a message.

A woman who took my consumer economics course said that she wished she had never taken it. "Shopping used to be fun, now you have made it work for me . . ." Now she has to first ask herself does she need the item. She has to check Consumer Reports. She must check the ads in the newspapers carefully. She must read the labels with greater care and do much comparison shopping. The fun is gone. One of my students told me that his mother asked him not to go shopping with her any more. He said she would take something off the shelf; he would check it, point out why she should not buy it and put it back on the shelf. She wanted no more of that.

There are fun and games to be had in the marketplace. Consumers should not take themselves too seriously, and yet they should take the task of shopping seriously enough to get the marketplace imperfections, misleading practices and frauds cleaned up. Let's look at some of the kinds of problems that have confronted consumers over time and ask ourselves how many of these kinds of things should be allowed to continue.

Pity the mother whose child had a fever and was reading a copy of a woman's magazine that had an ad that stated: "It works like children's aspirin. . . but it's safer. Introducing new TYLENOL chewable tablets." Then just a few pages further on in the same magazine a Bayer Children's Aspirin ad stated: "No, Mother, Tylenol is not found safer than aspirin." After these two ads appeared, the Council of Better Business Bureaus' National Advertising Division accepted the safety superiority claim for children's Tylenol non-aspirin compared to aspirin. Little good that did the mother at the time she needed good, reliable information.

"You can receive a guaranteed life income of up to 14%, depending on your age," was the claim of a religious organization's annuity ad in a religious magazine. What the ad did not tell you was that you would qualify for the 14% rate, if you were ninety years old.

An almost full-page ad in an issue of the New York Times (you know, the newspaper that prints all the news that's fit to print) read, "World Atlas: $1.00." The ad pointed out that the atlas depicted nearly 100 nations--every continent, major political subdivision, city, etc., etc. "All in eye-popping full color. 16 pp., 2 5/8" x 4 1/4". The trifling $1 price even includes sales tax and shipping!" Well, when buyers got their atlases were they surprised. It was less than one millimeter thick, but 16 pages. Cut out a 3" x 5" index card and you will get an idea of how small 2 5/8" x 4 1/4" really is. The New York Attorney General filed a civil complaint that the company fraudulently misrepresented a small, paperback book of maps as a world atlas, and it omitted Antarctica, plus much more. Two hundred thousand of these tiny atlases were sold!

Beers-DeVries, Ltd., advertised a genuine diamond ring--only $5.00 plus $1.00 for shipping and handling--a hand-polished, 17 faceted, .25 point hand-cut diamond, mounted by professional diamond setters in a magnificent, fully adjustable Tiffany setting. And that is what you got--one four-hundredth of a karat, as the ad stated! And the ring was adjustable.

Another full-page ad in the New York Times headlined: "Free! Genuine 14-karat gold wash necklace, 16 inches long. Guaranteed to contain not less than .0254002 to .0762003 microns of genuine 14-karat gold." The necklace was "free" if you sent in $2.97 for a trial subcription to a magazine. I checked with a physics prprofessor and found out that a micron is a unit of length equal to one-millionth of a meter--about the size of an atom!

Then we have One-Stroke, a complete, one-step wood refinishing kit. The ad stated, "So easy a child can do it." And the ad also stated, "Keep out of reach of children."

The New York Times, not having a sense of humor, rejected an ad for Three-Mile Island Creamy Mushroom Dressing that purported to "melt down on your salad with a flavor explosion that will make your next salad an historical event." The New Yorker, Scientific America, and Chicago Magazine also rejected the ad, while Harvard Magazine, Bon Appetit, Omni and Metropolitan Home found it acceptable.

How many consumers have heard of the Good Housekeeping Seal of Approval? Almost all consumers say that they have, and then are surprised to find out that there is no such thing and hasn't been since a Federal Trade Commission ruling in 1941. It is merely a limited warranty seal, not a seal of approval.

[1] Chairman, Department of Economics and Business Administration and Editor, Newsletter, American Council On Consumer Interests

I am not sure whether this is true or apocryphal, but at least it illustrates fun and games. A person who had purchased a Cabbage Patch doll sent the doll back to the company after the arms had come off. Well, the company sent the person a death certificate.

In my consumer class I have the students find an ad that seems to claim too much and then write to the company requesting substantiation for the claim. One student saw an ad for Wrinkles Away, a gadget to use to press the wrinkles out of one's suit, skirt, or trousers. She wrote a polite letter to the president of the company asking for substantiation of the claim. The first paragraph of the letter she received from the company president said: "We appreciate your detailed interest in our product and since you need so many facts and guarantees we feel we can exist without your additional sale."

Then there are all kinds of items one can get for "free" in the marketplace. The Ramada Renaissance Hotel in Denver advertised "Free Hotel Room, Parking $55.00 a night. Parking is mandatory." Look what else "free" can get you:

> Buy 4 gallons of any one Olympic product (paint), get one more FREE.
>
> This coupon is good for a FREE $10 dining certificate. Just present your American Airlines ticket and this coupon when you rent a Lincoln-Mercury or other fine car (compact or larger) from Budget.
>
> Get the Ice Cream Scoop - absolutely FREE. Please enclose $1.00 to help with postage and insurance.
>
> L'Ermitage Hotel - Rooms start at $95 a night but include FREE Rolls Royce or similar elegant limousine service, FREE fruit basket, FREE perfume, FREE newspapers, FREE continental breakfast, FREE parking, and FREE snacks in the bar every night.
>
> ABSOLUTELY, POSITIVELY FREE - pay only $2.94 for postage, order acquisition, and handling - Giant Wall Calendar.
>
> "Totally free checking." $5.88 for 200 checks. Concord Liberty.

The next time you go shopping and you see something like a Glad package which states 15 free bags, take out the 15 "free" bags (when the store manager is looking), walk out the front door, and see what happens. Fun and games in the marketplace!

Then we have sweepstakes! Is there anyone who has not received a sweepstakes mailing from Reader's Digest? In a recent Reader's Digest sweepstakes, the odds of winning the top prize were one in 73,416,000. Kellogg's ran a sweepstakes in which the odds of winning the top prize were one in 65,000,000. In Burger King's sweepstakes the odds of winning $1,000 a month for life were one in 135,915,000 if you visited them once, but 1 in 11,326,250 if you made 12 visits. If you made 12 visits, your odds of getting a regular Pepsi were 1 in 1.

The next time you go shopping check out the sizes of toothpastes. One day when I did this I found 20 different sizes: .75 of an ounce; 1.4; 1.5; 2.6; 2.7; 2.8; 3.0; 3.25; 4.3; 4.6; 4.7; 5.0; 6.0; 6.1; 6.3; 6.4; 6.5; 7.0; 8.2; and 9.0. Now there is really freedom of choice!

What about the problem of slack fill. Generally when a container is transparent, the food processor seems to be able to fill the package up; but when the packaging material is opaque, it seems that many manufacturers have trouble filling the package to the top. The next time you go shopping check out the packages of macaroni products. If the package has a cellophane window, check and see how full the package is. If it is not full, and if the store manager is not looking, turn the package upside down so that the next person will be encouraged not to buy it, and then maybe the food processors will do away with slack fill packages.

Packaging does cost. Packaging and container costs for food and beverages often exceed the value of the food ingredients inside.

1. Ready-to-mix desserts, potato chips, table syrups, chewing gums, and soft drinks have a packaging value twice that of the food ingredients.

2. Breakfast cereals, soups, baby foods, frozen entrees and desserts have a packaging cost 1 1/2 times greater than the actual contents.

3. The packaging for cake mixes, condiments, cookies, and crackers amounts to about 90 percent of the food value. Red meats, raw produce, cheese, sugar, and butter packaging value is only 3 to 7 percent of the food ingredients.

4. On average, about $1 out of $11 consumers spend on food and beverages goes to packaging and containers.

When it comes to ingredient labeling, there is much to be desired. Consumers need adequate ingredient labeling for health reasons, for economic reasons, and also, just because they have the right to know what is in what they are buying.

1. Which food is more than one-quarter sugar?
   ( ) ketchup
   ( ) apples
   ( ) oatmeal cookies
   ( ) diet soda

2. Which food is more than 60% sugar?
   ( ) Hershey's Chocolate Bar
   ( ) Sugar Smacks
   ( ) Twinkies

3. Which of these is the sugariest?
   ( ) ice cream
   ( ) Shake'n Bake Barbecue
   ( ) thick shake

4. Which word does **not** mean sugar?
   ( ) sucrose
   ( ) dextrose
   ( ) tentose
   ( ) fructose

5. Who eats about 125 pounds of sugar a year?
   ( ) an American
   ( ) a pet horse
   ( ) an elephant with a sweet tooth

The correct answers are: 1. ketchup with 29%; 2. Sugar Smacks with 61%; 3. Shake'n Bake Barbecue with 51%; 4. Tentose (which is what you have at the end of your feet!); 5. an American.

Then we find products that are labeled with ALL the ingredients; for example, Lara-Lynn Fig Bars which contain: Figs, flour, modified corn syrup, corn syrup, sugar, corn starch, water, oat flour, a blend of partially hydrogenated animal and/or vegetable oils (beef tallow and/or soybean oil, and/or palm kernel oil, and/or palm oil, and/or cottonseed oil with BHA and/or propyl gallate used as an antioxidant), dextrose, corn cereal, malt syrup, salt, whey, potassium sorbate, leavening (baking soda and ammonium bicarbonate), citric acid, eggs, artificial flavor, pure lemon oil.

As for Coca-Cola - The New York Times reported a few years ago that a bottle of Coke apparently contained 99.8% water and sugar with the remaining .2% made up apparently of caramel, caffeine, phosphoric acid, cinnamon, nutmeg, vanilla, glycerin, lavender, lime juice, other citrus oils and fluid extract of guarana, coca leaves (with the cocaine removed) and cola nuts. A federal judge once listed 13 changes made in the formula between 1900 and 1980. Aside from the elimination in 1903 of the 1/400th of a percent of cocaine in Coca-Cola, however, most changes involved minor fluctuations in caffeine and sugar usage. Today's change is being billed by Coke as more significant than any of those.

Who knows what Coca-Cola contains today? The institute of Food Technologists reported that the number of milligrams of caffeine in a 12-ounce serving of soft drinks ranged from 58.8 in Sugar-Free Mr. PIBB, 54 in Mountain Dew, 45.6 in Coca-Cola, 38.4 in Pepsi-Cola, down to 1.2 in Canada Dry Diet Cola. While, as we all know, some have no caffeine, "never did, and never will."

Some packages proclaim the absence of ingredients that were not there in the first place. Orange juice, for example, which does not need preservatives, is often labeled "Now, no preservatives."

The food industry sees the label as a billboard, while the FDA states that a label should not be an advertisement. The consumer is looking for understandable adequate information on the label.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture adds to the fun and games in the marketplace. Here are some USDA requirements, but the percentages are not required to be on the labels:

USDA label and content requirements, July 81

Beef with gravy .	at least 50% beef (cooked basis)
Gravy with beef .	at least 35% beef (cooked basis)
Ham salad	at least 35% ham (cooked basis)
Ham spread	at least 50% ham
Ham chowder	
Ready-to-eat ..	at least 5% ham (cooked basis)
Condensed	at least 10% ham (cooked basis)

Eat less fat to ward off heart disease and cancer. That's the advice of health and nutrition experts, including the National Cancer Institute and the Department of Agriculture. But the department's fat-labeling policy discourages healthier eating habits. It allows manufacturers of meat and poultry products to use the terms "lean," "extra lean," "low fat," "lower fat" and "lite" interchangeably. Products with those labels contain 25 percent less fat. Less than what? Well, it could be less than Agriculture's maximum standards, or less than another leading brand or less than the average fat content for that product. Indeed, some of the fattiest meat products, like frankfurters, bologna and sausages, may use the labels if their fat content is only 17 percent less than one of these standards.

And the USDA grading system leaves much to be desired. Here are some examples of the USDA grade confusion:

> For chickens, turkeys, ducks and geese USDA Grade A is the top grade, while Grade A is the second top grade for butter and eggs. For fresh fruits and vegetables U.S. Fancy is the top grade and U.S. No. 1 is the second top grade. Then for egg sizes based on weight we have Jumbo, Extra Large, Large, Medium, Small and Peewee.

Then I am amused as I read on the wrapper of an Oh Henry candy bar - "Quality Guarantee: If not completely satisfied with this Oh Henry Bar, simply return the unused portion stating when and where purchased, and we will gladly replace it." The cost of the 2-ounce bar--40¢. Postage to return it--39¢. A nice gesture on the part of the company, but rather meaningless.

But if packages are adequately labeled, will consumers read and use the label as a guide? Clorox is the number one seller among bleaches. It contains 5.25% sodium hypochloride and 94.75% inert matter (water), but check the label of other bleaches and you will find that this ratio is standard with almost all bleaches.

How concerned are we with what we eat? Here is a little poem that may answer the question.

COME FOR BRUNCH!

Have a piece of cherry pie,
Some coffee or some tea,
What does sodium caseinate
Mean to you or me?

A dash of carageenan
Xanthium gum or BHT
With polysorbate 60
Shall not spoil this snack for me.

A nicely gassed tomato
With a bit of watered ham,
Plus silicon dioxide...
(Who knows what they fed this lamb!)

Who cares if sorbic acid's mixed
With fluoride and bleached flour,
Carageenan, lecithin
All make for People Power!

Try a sandwich, won't you?
The red dye is so pretty...
Then hurry, we don't want to miss
The "EAT FOR HEALTH" committee.

ANGELA HATCH

What about the consumers' right to know? Do you and I have the legal right to know who makes what we buy? The answer is "No." Labeling regulations require that either the manufacturer's, distributor's, or retailer's name and address must be on most products we buy. If the distributor or retailer chooses to have his name and address on the label, then the consumer does not have the right to know who made the product. I find this disturbing. Do you realize that much of marketing is based upon deceiving the consumer? The identical product may be packaged in a manufacturing plant under a number of different companies' labels, and then each company tries to persuade the consumer that his product is better.

Fun and games in the marketplace. What should be the government's role? We neither want too much government regulation nor too little government regulation. Recently there has been a reaction against government regulation, even in the area concerning the sanctity of life. For example, there has been considerable negative reaction against the 55 miles-per-hour speed limit. The irony of that regulation is that it was put in place not to save lives, but to save gasoline. A by-product has been the saving of lives.

I thought possibly there might be some benefit in pointing out some benefits that have accrued from government regulation, particularly at a time when there is almost a knee-jerk reaction against any new government regulation, regardless of whether there is any validity to it or not.

Consider a few examples of the benefits resulting from some of today's health and safety regulations:

* In the regulated products groups, safety packaging requirements have produced a 40 percent drop in ingestions of poisons by children over a four-year period. There are children who would not be alive today but for those regulations.

* Since the safety standard for cribs became effective in 1974, crib deaths by strangulation have fallen by half and injuries by 45 percent.

* According to the G.A.O., 28,000 lives were saved between 1966 and 1974 because of Federal motor vehicle safety regulations. The same G.A.O. report showed that in one state where a detailed analysis was conducted there was also a substantial reduction in the frequency and severity of injuries. With auto accidents the number one cause of paraplegia in the United States, these figures are quite significant.

* The Shriners Burn Institute in Boston reported that in 1971--prior to the children's sleepwear standards--34 percent of its flame-burn injuries involved sleepwear. In 1977, the figure was 0.

Government regulations are not all bad or all good. We need to be selective if government regulations are to benefit the general public.

I think this letter to the governor of Maryland states in a most significant way that government does have a role to play in establishing regulations concerning what we buy and at times how we use what we buy.

Dear Acting Governor Lee:

A while back you vetoed a bill that would have allowed persons riding motorcycles to choose for themselves whether or not to wear a helmet. I, being a person who wholeheartedly believes in personal rights, and I might add, does not like helmets, was very disappointed in your decision.

I believe that as long as one is 18 or older he or she should be able to do as they please, as long as it does not infringe on the rights of others. To me, the government has taken away too many of our personal freedoms already.

Three weeks ago a friend and I were in a motorcycle accident. We are both still in the hospital recuperating. (We got pretty banged up.) If not for your veto, I would not have been wearing a helmet. According to the doctors, if not for the helmets, at 22 years of age we would have been dead.

My opinions on personal freedoms have not changed, but I guess there is a point in which some people need protecting. In other words, thank you for saving my life.

(Name Withheld)

I think this quotation makes one pause and wonder about our priorities. "Let us not be remembered as the generation that saved the whales and saved the trees, but ignored our own kind."

Well, we have covered a rather wide spectrum of the activities of the consumer in the marketplace. I would like to close on a light note.

TWO CAN PLAY THIS GAME

A farmer shopped around for a new car and became thoroughly disgusted with the pricing system, what with all the talk about optional equipment and "extras." But he settled on his purchase.

A few days later, the dealer who had sold him the car arrived at the farm to buy a cow for his small country place. The farmer sized up the situation and quickly scribbled the itemized bill:

Basic cow	$200
Two-tone exterior	45
Extra stomach	75
Production storage compartment	60
Dispensing device (4 spigots @ $10 each)	40
Genuine cowhide upholstery	125
Automatic fly swatter	35
Dual horns	15
Total (exclusive of tax and delivery)	$595

PUBLICATION AND ORGANIZATIONAL NETWORKS OF ACCI AND ACR MEMBERSHIPS

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ABSTRACT

An examination of the profiles of the two major consumer professional organizations, American Council on Consumer Interests and Association for Consumer Research, revealed differences between the members of each organization regarding the modal academic rank, academic degree and area of specialization, years of experience, current department affiliation, and memberships in professional organizations. The relative ratings of periodicals related to consumer studies by the membership of the two organizations were compared and their familiarity with these periodicals was examined.

INTRODUCTION

The American Council on Consumer Interests (ACCI) and the Association for Consumer Research (ACR) are the two major consumer professional organizations with their memberships mainly composed of educators. Among the purposes of the two organizations are the stimulation of research and dissemination of research findings on consumer problems, consumer education, consumer attitudes and behavior, consumer economics, and economics of consumption.

The objectives of this study were to examine: 1) the academic affiliation of consumer scientists in each organization; 2) the professional organizational affiliation and publication network of members of each organization; and, 3) the relative ranking of periodicals to consumer studies by member of each organization.

The literature does not reveal any previous studies specifically directed to the publication and organizational networks of ACCI and ACR members; however, ACCI member's academic backgrounds, specializations, academic rank, and publications patterns are discussed in an article by Davis, Abdel-Ghany, and Morse [2]. The data base for the Davis, et. al. article was from "Consumer Science in Institutions of Higher Education" [7] which is the report of an in-depth survey of 27 college and university programs. They found the modal area of specialization for full time consumer science faculty with terminal degrees to be economics and family economics. Also reported was that the greatest percentage of consumer science faculty held the rank of associate professor and that the journals where consumer scientists most published were the *Journal of Consumer Affairs*, the *Journal of Home Economics*, and the *Home Economics Research Journal*. The refereed proceeding most published in were the proceedings for ACCI and for the American Home Economics Association, Family Economics--Home Management Section. A conclusion of the article was that although consumer science educators are publishing frequently in interdisciplinary journals, especially those in home economics, they are not frequently publishing in general economics nor in business related journals.

Some articles have been written concerning the relative ranking of journals in fields other than consumer science. Moore ranked journals by a system of relating the quality of the journal to the quality of the academic department of the contributor [5]. Billings and Viksnins derived a system where they determined the quality of the economics journal by selecting the top three journals and then compiling a cross reference count to other economics journals [1]. Skeels and Taylor developed a "Quality Index" that ranked journals according to the number of articles published in that journal that were contained in graduate reading lists of ten academic fields [6]. In the physical science area, Garfield ranked journals by the frequency and impact of citations for science policy studies [3].

METHODOLOGY

The data were collected by mailed questionnaires that included three sections. The first section solicited information concerning the academic rank, years of professional experience, academic degree and area of specialization, current departmental affiliation, and professional memberships of the respondent.

The second section of the questionnaire requested information concerning the outlets for publications of the respondent. The respondent was asked to state the number of times he or she had published in each of the listed periodicals. In order to determine which journals to include in the list of where the respondents published as well as the list for ranking of quality, the authors chose to use journals that contained articles most cited in other articles in the *Journal of Consumer Affairs* and the *Journal of Consumer Research* and to use journals that contained articles most frequently citing *JCA* and *JCR*. The journal citation reports of the *Social Science Citation Index* for the years, 1977, 1978, and 1979 was used to determine the combined cited and citing totals for each of the two journals. The data from *SSCI* led to the compilation of a list that contained not only *JCA* and *JCR* but also the *Journal of Marketing*, *Journal of Consumer Research*, *Journal of Retailing*, and the *Advances*

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in Consumer Research (the proceedings of the annual meetings of ACR). The authors added five additional journals to this list. These journals are not referenced in SSCI but were considered by the authors to be important outlets for authors of consumer science. These journals are: Home Economics Research Journal, Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics, Journal of Consumer Policy, and Journal of Home Economics, and the annual proceedings of ACCI.

The last part of the questionnaire solicited two types of information. Using the same list of periodicals mentioned above, the respondent was asked to place an "x" next to any journal he or she was not familiar with. Also, the respondent was asked to rate the quality of the listed periodicals in terms of being outlets for scholarly articles in the consumer science area. This quality rating was accomplished by using a Likert type scale ranging from "1" representing low quality, to "5" representing high quality.

The questionnaire was pilot tested and refined. It was mailed to all members of the two organizations that are affiliated with higher education. Along with the questionnaire, a cover letter explaining the purpose of the study and a self-addressed envelope were included.

FINDINGS

Of the 823 questionnaires sent out, 386 usable ones (46.9%) were returned. These were divided into the following three categories according to the organization memberships: 155 ACCI members, 211 ACR members, and 20 who hold joint memberships in the two organizations.

The profile of the members of the two organizations and members who held joint membership is presented in Table 1. The largest percentage of ACCI members (34.2%) hold the rank of assistant professor, whereas, the largest percentage of ACR members (35.4%) hold the rank of associate professor. Half of the joint membership group hold the rank of full professor. Although Davis, et. al. [2] found that their data showed that the modal rank for ACCI consumer science educators was associate professor, their sample was from institutions with consumer science programs, whereas this study included all ACCI members in higher education whether they were in consumer science programs or not. A comparison of these results may indicate that those who are in consumer science programs usually have a higher academic rank than those who are not in consumer science programs. Also, these differences in findings between the Davis study and this study, along with other differences reported in this paper between the two studies, may be attributed to the possibility that a significant number of consumer science persons in the Davis study of 27 consumer science departments are not ACCI members.

Extension specialists represented 11.4% of ACCI memberships and only 0.5% of ACR memberships. Because ACCI has a significantly greater number of extension specialist members, this may have an effect on comparisons of the two groups and in several respects, e.g., academic rank, highest degree held, organizational affiliation, and publications.

Differences were noticeable for the highest academic degree held. Over 90% of ACR members have a doctorate degree, whereas, 64.3% of ACCI

TABLE 1 Profile of ACCI and ACR Members

	ACCI	ACR	Joint Membership
	%	%	%
	Current Rank		
	n=149	n=209	n=18
Instructor	7.4	5.3	0
Assistant Professor	34.2	31.6	27.8
Associate Professor	19.6	35.4	22.2
Professor	27.5	27.3	50.0
Extension Specialist	11.4	.5	0
	Highest Degree Held		
	n=154	n=211	n=20
Bachelor	.6	.5	0
Masters	35.1	8.1	5.0
Doctorate	64.3	91.5	95.0
	Area of Degree		
	n=142	n=188	n=16
Agricultural Economics	6.3	1.1	6.3
Business (excluding marketing)	2.1	5.9	6.3
Consumer Sciences	12.0	1.6	25.0
Economics	7.7	3.7	18.8
Education	12.7	4.3	0
Family Economics and Management	33.8	2.1	25.0
Home Economics	17.6	0	6.3
Marketing	7.7	81.4	12.5
	Academic Affiliation		
	n=133	n=195	n=17
Agricultural Economics	6.0	0	5.9
Business (excluding marketing)	4.5	7.7	5.9
Consumer Sciences	12.8	2.1	47.1
Economics	5.3	0	0
Education	3.8	3.6	0
Family Economics and Management	23.3	3.1	0
Family Studies	6.0	0	5.9
Home Economics	34.6	1.0	17.6
Marketing	3.8	82.6	17.6

members have such a degree. Ninety-five percent of the joint members have doctorates. Whereas most ACR members had been awarded terminal degrees in marketing, ACCI member's degrees were spread over several disciplines with family economics and management the most prevalent. The Davis study of Consumer Sciences professionals approximated this study's findings of the discipline of the ACCI member's degree but reported a much greater percentage (85.4%) who have doctorates.

The area of the academic degree seemed to be an indicator of the current academic affiliation (the type of department where the respondent had his/her primary academic appointment). Most ACR members were associated with marketing departments. ACCI members were affiliated with a variety of departments with home economics being the most mentioned. The average years of experience for joint members amounted to 14.1 years, whereas ACCI and ACR members averaged 12.2 and 8.9 years, respectively.

The organizational affiliation of the ACCI members and ACR members was quite divergent (see Table 2). The majority of ACCI members also belonged to the American Home Economics Association (AHEA) with only a few holding memberships in the American Marketing Association (AMA). The majority of ACR members, however, belonged to the AMA, with very few holding memberships in the AHEA. As might be expected, the number of organizational memberships was the greatest for joint members. Joint members averaged membership in 3.5 professional organizations. ACCI members average 1.84 and ACR members averaged 1.96.

TABLE 2 Organizational Affiliations

	Percent membership in other organizations		
	ACCI members %	ACR members %	Joint memberships %
American Economics Association	14.2	5.2	30.0
American Home Economics Association	61.3	6.6	45.0
American Marketing Association	8.3	55.4	30.0

Data concerning the number of published articles in periodicals related to consumer studies tended to reveal vast differences between the two groups. By examining Table 3, it is clear that whereas ACCI members tended to publish in Journal of Consumer Affairs, Journal of Home Economics and the proceedings of ACCI, the ACR members published mostly in the proceedings of ACR, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Consumer Research, and Journal of Marketing. Except for publications in JCA, there seemed to be only minimal overlap between the two groups. It is interesting to note that the small group of joint members published mostly in JCA and the proceedings of ACCI.

TABLE 3 Number of Published Articles in Periodicals Related to Consumer Studies

	ACCI	ACR	Joint Member
Home Economics Research Journal	.09	.03	.50
Journal of Consumer Affairs	.32	.20	1.40
Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics	.04	0	.20
Journal of Consumer Policy	0	.03	.15
Journal of Consumer Research	.06	.58	.10
Journal of Home Economics	.27	.05	.25
Journal of Marketing	.07	.56	.15
Journal of Marketing Research	.09	1.21	.05
Journal of Retailing	.05	.41	.50
Proceedings of ACCI	.28	.13	1.15
Proceedings of ACR	.21	1.91	.50

A substantive difference between the two groups is in the average number of publications per member per year. ACR members publish .66 articles per year, whereas, ACCI members published .16 articles per year. Joint members published .36 per year. Although in this study, data was not gathered on teaching load, it would be interesting if a difference in teaching load between the two groups would have accounted for the difference in publication productivity.

The results shown in Table 4 indicate a very narrow scope of familiarity with publications in the related consumer areas by the members of the two organizations. There were only two journals that both groups were quite familiar with and they were, not surprisingly, JCA and JCR. The majority of ACCI members were familiar with the Home Economics Research Journal, Journal of Home Economics, and the proceedings of ACCI. The majority of ACR members were familiar with the Journal of Marketing, Journal of Marketing Research, Journal of Retailing, and Advances in Consumer Research. Both groups were, to a large extent, unfamiliar with the Journal of Consumer Policy, and the Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics. The majority of joint members were very familiar with all periodicals listed.

The relative ranking of periodicals related to consumer studies is presented in Table 5. Only resonses of those who were familiar with a specific periodical were included in the analysis of the ranking of that periodical.

In analyzing the ratings of quality, the five point scale was collapsed into the following three groups: low quality, average quality, and high quality. The ratings of 2, 3, 4 were used to indicate average quality. The Journal of Consumer Research, Journal of Marketing, and the Journal of Marketing Research were rated highly by both groups. The Journal of Home Economics was rated