

THE CURRENT STATUS OF CONSUMER-RELATED
ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED TEXTILE
MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The current trend in the textile industry is toward giantism. Larger companies have become "multi-corporate giants," and smaller companies have found it necessary to merge in order to keep abreast with the competition (Giantism in the textile industry, 1967, p. 60). Physical size is not the only measure of greatness in the textile industry; dollar volume of sales is an important part of this image. In 1975, annual sales for the industry reached \$37 billion (Standard and Poor's Corporation, 1976, p. T30).

Growth has its advantages, but for the textile industry this financial expansion has brought about increased anonymity of the textile consumer. Fabric producers and consumers are further removed from one another due not only to the size of companies but also to the complexities of the operations within the network of fabric producers, apparel manufacturers and retailers. This separation between supplier and consumer requires added effort on the part of the textile manufacturers to communicate with the consumers of their products.

There are indications that an adequate two-way flow of communications between textile manufacturers and the ultimate consumer is lacking. According to Greenwood and Murphy (in press), giant fabric producers have found difficulty in maintaining a flow of communication with consumers because of the industry's immense size and scope.

A consumer advisory panel being used by one company is presently studying this problem. One conclusion reached by the Springs Mills Consumer Advisory Panel (1973, p. 4) is that the industry is able to communicate to the consumer, but there is an obvious void in relation to consumer feedback.

Textile manufacturers have several avenues available by which they can communicate with or inform the consumer (Springs Mills Consumer Advisory Panel, 1973, p. 4). They can advertise, give out information folders or booklets, include inserts along with their packaging, provide informative hangtags, make available educational materials for high schools, colleges and extension home economists, or sponsor fashion shows. An intermediary, who can also be a valuable carrier of information to the consumer, is the properly informed retail sales person.

The problem of consumers effectively expressing their needs and wants to the manufacturer, however, remains one of considerable concern. If consumers do not feel that textile purchases they have made meet with their expectations, what should they do? Is ample encouragement received from the manufacturer for consumers to express their dissatisfaction with his product? Are textile manufacturers making the effort to see that a direct flow of communication between the consumer and industry is facilitated? Consequently, are manufacturers conscious of specific objections consumers have toward their products? This study was designed to explore such questions.

Statement of the Purposes

The major purpose in this study was to investigate the current

status of certain consumer-related activities in selected textile manufacturing companies. Special emphasis was placed on the following subpurposes:

1. To compare the differences in the organization and responsibilities related to consumer activities between two selected groups of textile manufacturing companies.
2. To study the differences between complaint policies used by the two selected groups of textile manufacturing companies.
3. To identify the frequency and types of textile complaints received from consumers as indicated by the two groups of textile manufacturers participating in this study.

Justification of the Study

With the growing demands of the consumer movement, it is essential to see how the United States textile industry has responded. Within the last few years the business world has witnessed the birth of approximately 200 consumer affairs departments in corporations across the nation (The Springs Mills Consumer Advisory Panel, 1975, p. 116). The underlying purpose of this study was to describe the present status of consumer affairs in the textile industry.

A consumer affairs department as a part of the corporate structure allows the administration to focus attention on the needs and problems which confront the consumer of textiles. Manufacturers can utilize this information from the consumer to better meet the expectations of future customers. Consumer feedback may result in the improvement of products, changes in the quality control programs and revisions in advertising (Kendall and Russ, 1975, p. 40).

The student of clothing and textiles needs to become more aware of the ways in which consumer concerns are handled by textile manufacturers and how product improvements may result from consumer feedback at the manufacturing level. This study will update existing information relating to the status of consumer affairs in the textile industry.

Limitations

Consumer-Related Activities - Selected consumer-related activities were investigated in this study. The activities investigated were the organization and responsibilities related to consumer activities, the complaint policies used by textile manufacturing companies, and the types of consumer complaints received by textile manufacturing companies.

Textile Manufacturing Companies - For the purposes of this study the population was limited to those textile firms listed in two Dun and Bradstreet directories, Million Dollar and Middle Market, 1975. Only those companies which are involved in the fabric formation stages of production such as weaving, knitting or felting were used in this study.

Definition of Terms

Upper Market Firm - As defined by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (Dun and Bradstreet Million Dollar Directory 1975, 1974, p. IV), a business with an indicated net worth of \$1,000,000 or more.

Middle Market Firm - As defined by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. (Dun and Bradstreet Middle Market Directory 1975, 1974, p. IV), a business showing a net worth of more than \$500,000 but less than \$1,000,000.

Textile Complaint - Displeasure with a textile product reported by a consumer when expectations of the product are not met.

Complaint Handling Policies - Guidelines which a company follows in response to consumer complaints.

Consumer Relations - A range of activities performed for the purpose of improving a company's relations and communications with consumers and making the company more responsive to the needs and grievances of consumers (McGuire, 1973, p. 4).

Summary

Communication with the ultimate consumer remains one problem yet to be resolved by textile manufacturers. There are numerous ways in which manufacturers can transmit messages to the users of their products, but feedback from the consumer continues to be inadequate. The underlying purpose of this investigation was to identify consumer activities within textile manufacturing firms which attempt to encourage communication with consumers.

The purposes and justification of the study, the limitations and definition of terms were presented in this chapter. The following four chapters were organized in this manner: Chapter II - A review of related literature relevant to the study; Chapter III - The procedures followed in carrying out the study; Chapter IV - A presentation and discussion of the findings; and Chapter V - The summary, conclusions and recommendations for further study.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

By the mid-1960's, most American businesses were beginning to consider the effects of the consumer movement on their activities. Among the factors which persuaded business to act upon the challenge of consumerism were rising unemployment, continued inflation, higher expectations for consumer goods and the publicized efforts of consumer activists (Garman and Eckert, 1974, pp. 43-51). Customer services were increased by businesses in order to maintain a competitive edge over other firms (U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization and Government Research of the Committee on Government Operations, 1970, p. 5). As a result, consumer affairs units and many consumer-oriented programs began emerging throughout business and industry.

Consumer Affairs Departments

Some companies have voluntarily responded to consumers' demands by either establishing consumer departments or assigning executives the responsibility to act on consumer issues (Shafer, 1972, p. 22). The increasing number of consumer departments created by manufacturers indicates that there is ". . . substantial concern for corporate relations and public image in the marketing sector" (U. S. Committee on Commerce, 1972, p. 8). Particularly in the last few years, corporations have been establishing consumer affairs departments at a very

rapid rate (The Springs Mills Consumer Advisory Panel, 1975, p. 116).

Most often the title given such a specialized department is "consumer affairs," however, some companies use such terms as "consumer relations," "customer relations" or "customer service." Less frequently used titles are "consumer action," "corporate responsibility," and "consumer aid" (McGuire, 1973, p. 3).

Purpose

The attitude of top management toward consumerism is often reflected in the purposes the organization is attempting to achieve through its consumer affairs department. In some companies the purpose may be viewed as one of liaison between a company's management and its customers. The department attempts to bring attention to and make adjustments for defective products. Yet, in other companies the consumer affairs department may provide little more than "lip service" to the public. Some companies have chosen the latter alternative solely for the purpose of providing a better image in customers' eyes. A study conducted by McGuire (1973, p. 5), nevertheless, suggests that a steadily increasing number of companies are ". . . developing much more substantial programs to deal with consumer affairs."

Businessmen and consumerists alike have discussed specific objectives which firms might endeavor to achieve through the use of consumer affairs units. The following are areas of concern which corporations might consider.

Lessen Consumer Dissatisfaction. Consistently, governmental consumer agencies receive letters from consumers which cite corporations as paying little or no attention to their complaints (More talk than

action on consumer complaints, 1973, p. 66). Virginia Knauer (cited in Shafer, 1972, p. 22), Consumer Adviser for the White House, firmly believes that companies could lessen or eliminate one of the leading reasons for consumer dissatisfaction by delegating someone the authority to handle consumer complaints. As reported in Industry Week (What do consumers dislike? Ask, they're willing to talk, 1973, p. 16), the Council of Better Business Bureaus, Inc., New York conducted a study on consumer opinions and attitudes. The findings revealed that consumers want someone who will listen to their problems and provide reassurance that "affirmative action" will be taken.

Ease the Antibusiness Sentiment. Now is a time when corporations, especially the giants, are being affected by an antibusiness response expressed by the American public. To overcome the misconceptions regarding their activities, Kenneth Schwartz (America's growing anti-business mood, 1972, p. 101), an editorial director of Opinion Research Corporation, recommends that companies provide more direct action, encourage communication with customers and correct abuses for which they are responsible. If properly utilized, the services of a consumer affairs department could minimize the antibusiness sentiment.

Use Consumerism as a Marketing Tool. In the past, corporations have been criticized for acts which demonstrated a lack of social responsibility (Cravens and Hills, 1970, p. 23). To improve the situation, consumer ombudsmen are in the process of convincing business and industry that consumerism can be used as an effective marketing tool (Peterson, 1974, p. 91). According to Kotler (1972, pp. 54-55), the marketing concept involved requires ". . . customer orientation backed by integrated marketing aimed at generating customer satisfaction and

long-run consumer welfare as the key to attaining long-run profitable volume." He believes that consumerism can be profitable and that the alert company will recognize consumerism as the basis for achieving a competitive advantage in the marketplace.

In conclusion, the activities of consumer affairs departments may be focused on two major concerns. Some companies may attempt to improve their relations and communications with consumers, whereas others may direct their efforts toward increasing the company's responsiveness to the customer needs and grievances (McGuire, 1973, p. 4).

Organization and Responsibilities

The Conference Board (McGuire, 1973, p. 4), a non-profit business research organization, surveyed the consumer affairs departments of 149 companies. Some companies reported that they had to make only modest organizational adjustments to meet the pressures of both consumers and government. Previously these firms had maintained programs which monitored consumer attitudes and settled their grievances.

In this same study, McGuire (1973, pp. 3-7) reported that most consumer affairs units are specialized departments which appear on the organizational charts of larger companies. Consumer units which are located at the corporate level are provided more status, visibility and marketing decision responsibilities (U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, 1972, p. 35).

Although the range of activities may differ from one consumer department to another, most units are involved in one or more of the following (McGuire, 1973, p. 5):

1. Handling, resolution, and analysis of customer complaints and inquiries;
2. Developing and disseminating to consumers better information on the purchase and use of products or services sold by the company;
3. Serving as an internal consumer 'ombudsman' and consultant on consumer matters within the company;
4. Providing liaison with consumer-interest organizations outside the company.

Complaint Policies

Most consumer units consider complaints and other communications from consumers as a primary concern of their department (McGuire, 1973, p. 12). For some units this may involve establishing policies and procedures that others are to follow. In other companies the consumer departments are given full responsibility for the handling of complaints.

Over the years the volume of consumer complaints has increased noticeably (U. S. Senate Committee on Commerce, 1972, p. 284). This is a trend which one might expect considering the growing number of business transactions which transpire in the market place daily. Inevitably some product defects occur. However, this fact provides little, if any, consolation for the consumer who has received a product which does not meet with her expectations (National Business Council for Consumer Affairs, 1972, p. 2).

Complaint Handling and Resolution

Recommendations

Uncorrected errors in the quality of products and services or the manner in which those products and services are sold tends to threaten

the consumer's goodwill toward the individual seller, the producer and sometimes toward the business community at large. With this in mind, the National Business Council for Consumer Affairs (NBCCA), composed of corporate executives representing American business, drew up a list of complaint handling guidelines which should be given serious consideration by every business enterprise. The recommendations are as follows (NBCCA, 1972, p. 6):

1. Consumer complaints should be coordinated by specialists within each company.
2. Management should provide adequate training to all personnel in direct public contact concerning the accepted techniques and procedures of handling consumer complaints and other communications.
3. For items of large initial consumer cost, complaint dispositions should be audited to assure that satisfaction has in fact been given.
4. Senior management should regularly review the volume, nature, and disposition of consumer complaints. This review should specifically include samples of actual complaints and some personal contact with consumers with grievances.
5. Trend analysis and other summaries of complaint data should be developed periodically in order to identify emerging problems and opportunities for improvement.
6. Consumers should be provided with information regarding available channels of redress, either at the point of purchase or on the package, in the use instructions, or in other literature accompanying the product or service.

Several recommendations which the NBCCA believed would facilitate the resolution of consumer complaints by business are (NBCCA, 1972, pp. 4, 7, 9):

1. The handling of consumer complaints should be swift, personalized, courteous, and as effectively managed as any other function of prime importance to the company, including increased personnel training in the handling of consumer communications, complaint follow-up and appropriate involvement by senior management.

2. The money-back policy should be fully explored by companies not now offering it, and should be adopted wherever feasible as a means to resolve directly disputes with consumers.
3. Where refunds are not a practicable course of action, the feasibility of third-party complaint settlement procedures such as mediation and arbitration should be considered by sellers as an alternative form of redress.

Established Complaint Handling Policies

Used by Non-Textile Manufacturers

The complaint handling policies of industries outside the textile field have been studied. Some surveys were conducted with the companies' knowledge (Kendall and Russ, 1975) while others (Crawford, 1970; Kendall and Russ, 1975) were an actual test of firms' complaint handling practices.

Kendall and Russ (1975, pp. 39-40) surveyed 53 consumer packaged goods manufacturers (CPGMs) and reported that CPGMs used the following complaint handling policies:

1. Proof of purchase. Seven out of ten manufacturers agreed that the word of the consumer would be acceptable for an adjustment. The remainder stated that some kind of proof of purchase would be required.
2. Speed of response. Promptness was stressed by many of the manufacturers. Three-quarters of the CPGMs have a stated policy of responding within a week, and the remainder specified "as soon as possible."
3. Form of response. All companies claimed that they responded with a personalized letter. Larger companies admitted that these "personal" letters were usually selected from a bank of letters or prepared paragraphs and typed on automatic typing machines.

4. Department responsible for responding to consumer complaints.

A consumer relations or public relations department was responsible for responding to consumer complaints in over half of the companies surveyed. In 20 percent of the companies, the sales or marketing department was in charge of handling consumer complaints; in another 20 percent the research department was responsible. Only four of the 53 companies cited the President's office as the source of response for consumer complaints.

5. Internal responses to complaints. All the companies stated that complaint information was circulated to those who should be concerned. Some companies compiled and analyzed the information by month or by season or by year, by type of complaint, by product, and sometimes by sales territories. A majority (53%) of the respondents claimed that consumer complaints did have an effect on the operations of their company in the last two years. Areas where changes were effected were identified as: changes in product, packaging, and quality control programs; improvements in production processes; and revisions in advertising.

In 1969, a study relating to complaint policies of manufacturers was conducted at the University of Michigan's Graduate School of Business (Crawford, 1970). The purpose of the study was to determine how companies actually handled customer complaints. Twelve complaints identified by consumers as problems commonly encountered in buying and using consumer goods were selected for the study. For each complaint, ten letters were sent to companies which either produced the goods or sold the service in question. In all, 120 complaint letters were sent. By the time the study was completed, 92 responses were received. Data

were analyzed in the following areas:

1. Speed of response. Responses were received from the companies in a period of 5 to 72 days after the complaint letters were mailed.

The average time of response was 23 days.

2. Individual responding to complaint. The person most often responding to the letter was a member of a special service department (42%) such as customer, product or sales service department. Top management executives represented 22 percent of the responses. The remaining replies were distributed among miscellaneous departments such as quality control, research and development, sales, and brand and product divisions.

3. Quality of response. Those responses subjectively judged to be more original and personal were most often written by a top management executive such as the president. In relation to the size of the company, such as giant versus medium-size, there appeared to be no difference in the quality of response. The non-giant companies generally used fewer form letters, but also customer satisfaction was typically less when compared to remedies or adjustments offered by the larger companies.

Kendall and Russ (1975, p. 39) sent 40 complaint letters to manufacturers of insecticides, oil additives, ready-to-eat cereals, shampoos and deodorants. Eighty-two percent of the companies responded and 68 percent of the responses were satisfactory. The responses considered to be unsatisfactory were those which asked for additional information, required proof of purchase, or stated company policy did not allow refunds. There was no noticeable difference in the response rate between products which bore a warranty and those which did not.

Importance of Consumer Complaints to Industry

Researchers who have studied customer complaints believe that such complaints are a useful form of feedback (Peach, 1969, p. 24; Myers, 1961, p. 25; Kendall and Russ, 1975, p. 42; Improving the new products equation, 1974, pp. 12-13). Such input can assist in product development in two ways: 1) by pointing out areas of customer concern and 2) by helping establish the degree of acceptability of certain characteristics which consumers expect to be maintained (Peach, 1969, p. 24).

Companies which respond to legitimate complaints will generally benefit from greater consumer satisfaction and increased sales (Shafer, 1972, p. 22). According to one marketing executive (cited in Be leaders in consumer movement, A. T. and T.'s Damkroger advises SME-I, 1971, p. 2): "A disgruntled consumer is an anticonsumer. He refrains from buying your products and works actively to keep others from buying."

Kendall and Russ (1975, p. 42) believe customer complaints should be solicited. Often consumers who have legitimate complaints do not express their dissatisfaction to the manufacturer but rather switch brands (Kendall and Russ, 1975, p. 42; Improving the new products equation, 1974, p. 12; Peach, 1969, p. 24; Wanted--educated consumers and a consumer-educated industry, 1969, p. 10). In a study conducted by the A. C. Nielsen Company (Improving the new products equation, 1974, p. 12), it was found that 69 percent of the customers who were dissatisfied did not register a complaint. Thirty-four percent stopped buying the product type altogether. This means that the manufacturer loses a significant volume of future sales. Some of this might have been avoided had the consumers been encouraged to voice their dissatisfaction.

Consumer Satisfaction With Textile Products

Although typically a textile manufacturer is far removed from the ultimate consumer of his goods, he is vitally concerned about the satisfaction of his customers. It is this satisfaction which brings the consumer back for more of his products and allows the manufacturer to remain in business.

Various surveys have been conducted which attempted to identify the overall satisfaction of consumers for textile products. Additional studies have focused on specific consumer textile complaints. The results of both types of studies are presented in the following sections.

Overall Satisfaction With Textile Goods

Independent researchers and organizations have studied the satisfaction of consumers with textile products. The results differ from one study to another, however, it is interesting to note the degree to which the findings vary.

In 1970, Steiniger (1970) of Cornell University found that over 70 percent of the participants in her study were generally satisfied with the textile product performance of clothing, linens and home furnishings. Approximately 20 percent expressed a fair satisfaction with textile products, while fewer than 10 percent were relatively dissatisfied.

The United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Service (1959, pp. 20-21) surveyed consumers in an attempt to ascertain the satisfaction which they had experienced from the use of five specific

fibers: cotton, wool, linen, rayon and nylon. Overall, the respondents indicated a general satisfaction with the performance of the various fibers. Wrinkling was the characteristic which caused dissatisfaction for the greatest number of participants. Other complaints included dimensional instability of the fabric and the feel of fibers such as wool against the skin.

The National Family Opinion, Inc. annually conducts a survey for the Conference Board relating to consumers' views of value received in that year (Linden, 1974, p. 48). In 1974, the survey indicated an increase in consumer dissatisfaction over previous years with value received for the money. Among the list of consumers' discontents were women's and children's apparel, preceded only by repair services and credit charges in order of importance.

Agent (1972, pp. 26-27) studied the opinions of 162 Kentucky homemakers regarding their satisfaction with five specific categories of apparel. Respondents were asked to indicate the degree to which they had received satisfaction from the following items: blouses and tops, skirts, slacks and shorts, dresses and pant suits. At least 60 percent of the participants expressed a general satisfaction with each of the five apparel items considered. Garments which achieved a highly satisfactory rating were dresses and pant suits. Slacks, shorts and skirts were indicated to be more unsatisfactory to the respondents than any other garments.

Consumer Textile Complaints

Four studies were used by the investigator as references for consumer textile complaints. These studies by Steiniger, Lowe, Agent and

Monday were the basis on which part of the questionnaire was developed.

Steiniger (1970) surveyed 279 citizens of the Syracuse, New York area in an attempt to identify: 1) problems encountered with apparel and household textile items; 2) initiative taken by the consumer when a product proved unsatisfactory; and 3) the handling of consumer textile complaints by distributors. Initially, the participants were asked to indicate their overall satisfaction with textile products. As noted earlier, a majority of the respondents expressed a general satisfaction with textile products. This did not suggest, however, that these consumers had not experienced problems with some of their previous textile purchases. Related to the wear and durability of fabrics, the most frequently mentioned problems were identified as pilling, raveling, low abrasion resistance, runs in fabric, fading, discoloration, whitening on creases or folds and the matting of plush pile. Commonly cited problems which related to the appearance and care of textile products were concerned with: no-iron fabrics that required touch up ironing; fabrics which wrinkled; and fabrics which were difficult to clean. Of the 172 respondents who had complaints about clothing, linens or home furnishing items, only 22.5 percent registered a dissatisfaction. The information which stores typically required upon the return of merchandise was the nature of the problem and date of purchase. Eighty percent of the consumers registering clothing and linen complaints were not required to produce proof of purchase.

In a study conducted by Lowe (1972) at the University of Washington, 117 women were surveyed in relation to consumer textile problems. A majority of the respondents indicated that lack of specified care instructions on labels caused the most irritation. Some respondents

also mentioned other consistent problems related to the textile fabric itself were "confusion in product similarity" and "spot or stain resistance," "shrinkage" and "loss of finish." These results were gathered prior to the passage of the 1972 Federal Trade Regulation Rule on permanent care labeling. This law requires that most textile fabrics and garments bear a permanently affixed label giving adequate care instructions.

Agent (1972) investigated the textile complaints of 162 Kentucky Extension Homemaker Association members. The complaints registered by the participants totaled 2,514. Indicated more frequently than any other complaint was "no-iron fabric that needs ironing." Other often mentioned problems were snags, pulls, runs, shrinkage and raveling.

Monday (1953) of the University of Missouri surveyed fifty homemakers in an attempt to identify textile dissatisfactions encountered by consumers over a two-year period. The four most frequently mentioned textile problems were discoloration, dimensional change (i. e., shrinkage and stretching), poor quality, and the poor performance of nylon hose. When this study was conducted, nylon was a newly marketed fiber. Consequently, it was responsible for several complaints identified by the participants.

Summary

The background information for this study was organized into three major sections: Consumer Affairs Departments, Complaint Policies, and Consumer Satisfaction With Textile Products. Most of the literature relating to consumer departments and complaint policies pertains to industries outside the textile field. McGuire (1973) and the U. S.

Senate Committee on Commerce (1972) investigated the consumer affairs units and consumer-oriented programs, respectively, of large corporations across the nation. Kendall and Russ (1975) and Crawford (1970) studied the complaint handling policies of companies. The National Business Council for Consumer Affairs (1972) compiled a list of guidelines which they believe businesses should follow when handling and resolving consumer complaints.

Numerous studies have been conducted regarding consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction with textile product performance. Research conducted by Monday (1953), Steiniger (1970), Lowe (1972) and Agent (1972) was instrumental in the construction of part of the questionnaire used for this study.

CHAPTER III

METHODS AND PROCEDURES

The purpose of this study was to investigate the current status of certain consumer-related activities within textile manufacturing companies. In order to accomplish this objective, a survey was conducted to identify the delegation of consumer affairs responsibilities within the organization of textile firms and the nature of consumer policies and complaints.

Sample Selection

A questionnaire was constructed and mailed to 195 textile firms selected for the study. The sample included textile manufacturing companies listed in the two Dun and Bradstreet directories, Million Dollar and Middle Market, 1975 (Appendix B). One hundred companies were selected to represent the upper market firms, and 95 companies were included to represent the middle market businesses. The upper market companies were selected randomly, whereas all of the 95 middle market manufacturing companies were used.

Textile firms are categorized according to product classification in one section of the Dun and Bradstreet directories. For this study the sample was limited to textile manufacturers involved in weaving, knitting and felting of fabrics. Companies were selected from ten categories listed in the directories (Appendix B). In order to

eliminate those companies not engaged in the weaving, knitting or felting of fabrics, reference was made to another section of the directory which listed the firms alphabetically and specified the products each company manufactured.

Construction of the Questionnaire

A questionnaire (Appendix A) was developed based on a review of available literature. It was divided into three parts: Part I - Background Information, Part II - Complaint Policies and Part III - Textile Complaints.

Part I of the questionnaire was designed so that companies participating in the study could provide the following kinds of information:

- 1) The assignment of consumer-related responsibilities within the company;
- 2) The responsibilities of the person(s) or department(s) accountable for consumer-related activities within the company;
- 3) The educational training of the person(s) in charge of consumer-related activities within the company;
- 4) The management executive responsible for consumer-related activities within the company and his affiliations with consumer organizations.

In Part II of the questionnaire, the respondents were asked to specify the complaint handling policies of their companies. Each respondent was asked to indicate:

- 1) The status of guidelines used in handling complaints;
- 2) The procedures followed in assuring consumer satisfaction.

Part III was constructed in order that the participants could indicate:

- 1) The types of textile complaints received from consumers or other sources;
- 2) The number of consumer complaints received periodically.

The concluding section allowed for additional remarks concerning the current status and future directions of consumer programs in the company.

Most of the items in the questionnaire were of a multiple choice nature with inclusion of a category for "other" alternatives not suggested. The final section primarily involved open-ended questions.

Pretest of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire was pretested using three companies selected from a list of firms not included in the sample. Two responses were received. Based on recommendations made by these two firms, changes were incorporated in Parts I and III of the questionnaire. Part I, Question 2 was revised in recognition that some companies assign responsibilities for consumer-related activities to several departments rather than to a person(s) or one department. The list of responsibilities assigned person(s) or department(s) included in Question 5 was also expanded to include two additional responsibilities:

- 1) Responding to consumer communications (other than product complaints);
- 2) Developing educational programs for schools.

In Part III, Question 2 was added upon the suggestions of one company. This question allowed companies to indicate how consumer

complaints are received:

- 1) Directly from the consumer;
- 2) From the retailer;
- 3) From the apparel manufacturer;
- 4) Other.

Administration of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire, with an accompanying cover letter (see Appendix A), was sent to the public relations officer of the company listed in the Dun and Bradstreet directories. The questionnaire was mailed to the Vice President of Marketing or the President of the company when no public relations officer was identified. A self-addressed, stamped envelope was provided for the return of the questionnaire.

On the bottom right-hand corner of the last page of the questionnaire, a number was printed. This was necessary in order to keep a record of the companies which did respond.

The participants were given 20 days in which to respond to the questionnaire. Companies which had not returned the questionnaire in that time period were sent a second letter as a reminder. A second questionnaire was also included with the follow-up letter. A total of 50 days was allowed for the return of the questionnaire before the data were analyzed.

Analysis of Data

A frequency count of the responses from Parts I, II and III of the questionnaire was taken and the results were computed in percentages. After the data were converted into percentages, comparisons between

upper market and middle market responses were made. Differences were identified in the organization of the consumer-related activities and complaint policies between the two market levels. The responses from all companies regarding consumer textile complaints were compiled and analyzed as one group.

Summary

The primary objective of this study was to identify the current status of consumer programs within selected textile manufacturing firms. To achieve this objective a survey was conducted which involved a sample of 195 American textile manufacturers listed in two Dun and Bradstreet directories, Million Dollar and Middle Market, 1975. The questionnaire developed for this study was first pretested on a pilot sample of three textile manufacturing companies. After needed revisions were made, the questionnaire was mailed to 100 upper market and 95 middle market firms. The participants were given a total of 50 days in which to respond before the results were tabulated and analyzed.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The consumer-related activities of textile manufacturing companies were surveyed in order to accomplish the purposes of this study. The analysis of data obtained by use of a questionnaire are presented in this chapter. The findings are discussed in four major categories: 1) Description of the Sample; 2) Background Information; 3) Complaint Policies; and 4) Consumer Textile Complaints.

Description of the Sample

The sample consisted of two groups of textile manufacturing companies. A total of 195 questionnaires were mailed to textile manufacturing firms, 100 to upper market companies and 95 to middle market firms as presented in Table I. Of the 195 questionnaires sent out, 38 (19.5%) were returned by an employee of the company. Those companies responding to the survey are indicated on the sample group list found in Appendix B.

Twenty (10.3%) of the 38 returned questionnaires were usable for the purposes of this study. From this group of usable questionnaires, ten were answered by upper market companies and ten were completed by middle market firms. Eighteen questionnaires (9.2%) were returned unanswered for the following reasons: sell to other manufacturers (6.2%); policy not to furnish information for surveys (1%); manufacture

TABLE I

SAMPLE INFORMATION: QUESTIONNAIRES SENT, RETURNED,
 USABLE, ELIMINATED AND NO RESPONSE
 (N = 195)

| Category | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|-------------------------------|--------------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Total questionnaires sent | 100 | 100.0 | 95 | 100.0 | 195 | 100.0 |
| Total questionnaires returned | 19 | 19.0 | 19 | 20.0 | 38 | 19.5 |
| Questionnaires usable | 10 | 10.0 | 10 | 10.5 | 20 | 10.3 |
| Questionnaires eliminated | 9 | 9.0 | 9 | 9.5 | 18 | 9.2 |
| No response | 81 | 81.0 | 76 | 80.0 | 157 | 80.5 |

textile equipment (0.5%); manufacture furniture (0.5%); manufacture industrial fabrics (0.5%); and deadline for the return of the questionnaire had passed (0.5%).

Of the 157 companies not responding, there were no current addresses for two companies and one company was no longer in business.

Background Information

Descriptive information regarding characteristics of the textile manufacturing companies surveyed was obtained from the questionnaire. This section presents a discussion of the findings relating to: the financial status of firms; assignment of responsibilities for consumer-related activities; responsibilities of person(s) or department(s) accountable for consumer-related activities; educational background of the person or persons in charge of consumer-related activities; and affiliations with consumer organizations.

Financial Size of Firms

According to the Dun and Bradstreet directories, 100 firms in the sample group were classified as upper market companies and 95 firms were considered to be middle market companies. As noted earlier, the usable questionnaires were distributed equally between the two market groups. However, 17 (85%) of the respondents from both groups perceived their companies to belong to the upper market category as shown in Table II. Eight of the middle market firms indicated their net worth was \$1,000,000 or better, and according to Dun and Bradstreet, Inc., this is the upper market level. Only one respondent from an upper market firm reported that the net worth of the company was in

TABLE II
 FINANCIAL SIZE OF FIRMS AS INDICATED BY RESPONDENTS
 (N = 20)

| Net Worth Reported by Company | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|-------------------------------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| \$1,000,000 and above | 9 | 90.0 | 8 | 80.0 | 17 | 85.0 |
| \$500,000 to \$999,999 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| Below \$500,000 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |

the \$500,000 to \$999,999 range, which is the middle market level. There was one middle market firm which the respondent believed was in the "\$500,000 or below" category.

In this study, the data will be reported according to the categories previously established by Dun and Bradstreet, Inc. The tables will report the findings for the two market levels separately; however, the total of the responses for the two market levels will be indicated.

Assignment of Responsibilities for Consumer-Related Activities

The manufacturers were asked to indicate the assignment of responsibilities for consumer-related activities within their firms. As shown in Table III, half (50%) of the companies surveyed assign the responsibilities for consumer activities to a person or persons. Nine companies (45%) assign these duties to several departments, while only one company assigns these responsibilities to one specific department.

In this survey, it was found that the middle market companies (70%) delegate these responsibilities to a person or persons, whereas the upper market companies (60%) assign these responsibilities to several departments. In those companies where consumer-related responsibilities are assigned to several departments, the titles of the departments were listed as follows: Communications, Consumer Service, Converting, Home Economics, Management, Merchandising, Quality Control, Research and Development, Sales and Testing. Only the Sales Department was mentioned by more than one company.

In companies where responsibilities for consumer activities are assigned to a person or persons, the President was reported to be in

TABLE III

ASSIGNMENT OF RESPONSIBILITIES FOR CONSUMER-RELATED
ACTIVITIES WITHIN FIRMS
(N = 20)

| Assignment of Responsibilities | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|--------------------------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Person(s) | 3 | 30.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| Several departments | 6 | 60.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 9 | 45.0 |
| Department | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |

charge of the responsibilities more than any other position mentioned. Three companies reported that the Vice President was accountable for these activities. Some companies indicated that these responsibilities were assigned to persons in the following positions: General Manager, Sales Manager, Executive Secretary, Assistant Manager, Production Control Manager, Print Coordinator, and Advertising employee.

Six of these positions were established between 1970 and 1975. Between 1960 and 1969, three other positions were established. Only one company reported that the consumer affairs position was set up prior to 1960. McGuire (1973, p. ii) reported in his study of consumer affairs departments that many (75%) of the departments were established within the last five years. In recent years businesses have focused much attention on consumer-oriented programs (U. S. Senate Subcommittee on Executive Reorganization and Government Research of the Committee on Government Operations, 1970, p. 5).

The company which reported that the responsibilities for its consumer-related activities are assigned to only one department specified the Marketing Department. The respondent indicated that the Vice President was in charge of that department. No date was given regarding the year of its establishment.

Senior Management Executive Responsible
for Consumer-Related Activities

In the questionnaire, the manufacturers were asked to indicate the top management executive responsible for consumer-related activities. Half (50%) of the companies again reported this person to be the President as shown in Table IV. Eighty percent of the middle market

TABLE IV
 TITLES OF TOP MANAGEMENT EXECUTIVES RESPONSIBLE
 FOR CONSUMER-RELATED ACTIVITIES
 (N = 20)

| Title | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|-------------------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| President | 2 | 20.0 | 8 | 80.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| Vice President | 3 | 30.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 4 | 20.0 |
| General Manager | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Communications Director | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| No response | 3 | 30.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 4 | 20.0 |

companies indicated that the President was responsible while only 20 percent of the upper market companies mentioned the same executive position. In the upper market firms, the Vice President was recognized most often (30%) as the top management executive responsible for consumer-related activities. Less frequently mentioned titles were General Manager and Communications Director.

Responsibilities of Person(s) or Department(s)

Accountable for Consumer-Related Activities

The manufacturers were asked to indicate the responsibilities associated with consumer-related activities within their companies. As shown in Table V, two of the most common responsibilities as indicated by 80 percent of the participants were: 1) responding to consumer complaints and 2) analyzing the complaints and inquiries. Responding to customer communications (other than product complaints) was indicated by 70 percent of the respondents to be a responsibility. Few companies (15%) indicated that educational programs were developed for schools. An additional responsibility mentioned by one manufacturer was the development of new fabrics.

Comparing the two market groups, a noticeable difference was evident regarding the responsibility to serve as consultant on consumer matters within the company. Half (50%) of the middle market companies reported this to be true of their situations as opposed to only 20 percent of the upper market companies. McGuire (1973, p. 5) reported this responsibility to be one of the four activities most commonly carried out by consumer departments in larger companies.

TABLE V
 RESPONSIBILITIES OF THE PERSON(S) OR DEPARTMENT(S)
 ACCOUNTABLE FOR CONSUMER-RELATED ACTIVITIES*
 (N = 20)

| Responsibility | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|---|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Respond to consumer complaints | 8 | 80.0 | 8 | 80.0 | 16 | 80.0 |
| Analyze consumer complaints and inquiries | 7 | 70.0 | 9 | 90.0 | 16 | 80.0 |
| Respond to customer communication (other than product complaints) | 7 | 70.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 14 | 70.0 |
| Conduct product testing | 7 | 70.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Develop and disseminate product information for consumers | 3 | 30.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Serve as consultant on consumer matters within the company | 2 | 20.0 | 5 | 50.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Initiate consumer studies for product preferences | 3 | 30.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 6 | 30.0 |
| Develop educational programs for schools | 2 | 20.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |

*The respondents were asked to indicate as many responsibilities as applied to their situations, therefore the percentages may or may not total 100 percent.

Educational Background of Person(s) in Charge
of Consumer-Related Activities

The educational training mentioned by 11 of the respondents for the person or persons in charge of consumer activities was Business. Five participants indicated Engineering. Other fields mentioned were: Arts and Letters, Communicative Arts, Consumer Services, Education, Home Economics, Natural Science and Social Science.

Eleven manufacturers indicated that the highest degree in education received by the above mentioned individuals was a Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Arts degree. Five companies indicated that they had employed individuals with a Master's degree for these positions. One respondent indicated that the person concerned had received his training from a Business School which was not a four-year institution.

Affiliations With Consumer Organizations

The participants were asked to indicate the affiliation with consumer organizations by either the company or company officials responsible for consumer activities. None of the respondents reported any affiliations. Ninety percent of the companies indicated there was no affiliation, and two companies (10%) did not respond to the question.

Complaint Policies

This section deals with the complaint handling policies followed by textile manufacturers participating in this study. The results will be reported separately for the upper and middle market companies

as classified by the Dun and Bradstreet directories. Also, the combined results for the companies in both market levels will be presented as a single category in each table.

Company Address Found on the Product Label

The respondents were asked to indicate if their products were labeled in order that a dissatisfied customer would know where to call, write or visit. The results of the inquiry are shown in Table VI. Eighty-five percent of the total number of companies responding reported labeling their products with either an address, telephone number or both.

Companies which reported making this information available to consumers also specified where this information could be found. Several respondents indicated more than one place where this information could be found. Half of the participants reported that this information is located on the product's label. Over half (60%) of the middle market companies indicated that the information could be found on the label, while less than half (40%) of the upper market companies indicated the same. Few companies reported that the information is available at the point of purchase (20%) or can be found in literature accompanying the product (10%). Two companies reported that the information can be obtained from the dealer or retailer, and a third company specified that the information is printed on the package.

The manufacturers were asked to indicate if their firms provided a toll-free telephone number for consumer use. Only one middle market company reported making a toll-free number available to consumers. Weiss (1971, p. 36) suggested that consumer goods corporations should

TABLE VI

POLICIES USED IN PROVIDING DISSATISFIED CONSUMERS
WITH INFORMATION NEEDED TO CONTACT THE COMPANY
(N = 20)

| Policies Used | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|---|--------------|-------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Is the address of company provided with the product? | | | | | | |
| Yes | 9 | 90.0 | 8 | 80.0 | 17 | 85.0 |
| No | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| No response | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| 2. Where is the company information provided for the consumer?* | | | | | | |
| On the label | 4 | 40.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| At point of purchase | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 4 | 20.0 |
| In literature accompanying the product | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| Other | 2 | 20.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| Not labeled | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| 3. Is a company toll-free number provided with the product? | | | | | | |
| Yes | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| No | 10 | 100.0 | 9 | 90.0 | 19 | 95.0 |

*The respondents were asked to indicate as many locations as applied, therefore the percentages may or may not total 100 percent.

provide a communication system such as a toll-free number of "hot-line" for their customers. He believes: "Listening to the individual in our society and reacting promptly, intelligently, and even sympathetically constitutes a major corporate social responsibility."

Proof of Purchase

The manufacturers were asked to indicate if a proof of purchase is required upon the receipt of a consumer complaint. As illustrated in Table VII, nearly half of the companies (45%) do require customers to provide some form of proof of purchase when registering a complaint with the company. Seventy percent of the middle market companies expect this, whereas only 20 percent of the upper market companies enforce this policy. Of those companies requiring proof of purchase, 40 percent expect the return of the merchandise.

More of the upper market companies (40%) expressed that the firm's policy was to accept the word of the customer. Overall, 35 percent of the firms surveyed reported that a proof of purchase was not necessary. One company reported that this particular policy depended upon the type of goods being sold. Another company stated that the customer must receive authorization to return the goods.

Speed of Response

The respondents were asked to indicate the time period within which their companies attempt to respond to customer complaints. As shown in Table VIII, 70 percent of the respondents indicated that it is the policy of their company to respond within a week. Companies belonging to industries other than textiles have reported that they also

TABLE VII

PROOF OF PURCHASE REQUIRED BY TEXTILE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES
(N = 20)

| Proof | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|--|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Required of customer | 2 | 20.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 9 | 45.0 |
| return of purchase | 2 | 20.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 8 | 40.0 |
| sales slip | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| both | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Not required | 4 | 40.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Required as well as proof from the retailer | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Other | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |

TABLE VIII

SPEED OF RESPONSE TO CONSUMER COMPLAINTS BY
 TEXTILE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES
 (N = 20)

| Time Period | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|------------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Within a week | 7 | 70.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 14 | 70.0 |
| Within two weeks | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| Within a month | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Not at all | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Other | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| No response | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |

attempt to respond to consumer complaints within a week's time (Kendall and Russ, 1975). One middle market company noted that it attempts to respond within the hour which the complaint is received. Only one upper market company indicated that it is not the company's policy to respond to customer complaints. Another company specified that the company would respond after the faulty item had been tested.

Crawford (1970) learned from his study that the company's speed-of-response practices may differ considerably from the policies set down by the company. His study revealed that in actual practice some companies will take as long as two months to respond to a complaint.

Manner of Response

In relation to the form of communication utilized when responding to a consumer complaint, some respondents indicated several means which their companies use. As shown in Table IX, 65 percent of the companies respond to a customer complaint with a personalized letter. Fifty percent of the companies employ the use of the telephone to communicate with the dissatisfied customer. More middle market companies (60%) use this means than do upper market companies (40%).

In this study, 70 percent of the upper market companies reported using personal letters while 60 percent of the middle market companies indicated this to be their policy. Crawford's study (1970, p. 30) of complaint handling practices revealed that medium-sized companies tend to use more personalized letters for response than do giant companies.

Money-Back Policy

A majority (55%) of the companies, as indicated in Table X,

TABLE IX
MANNER OF RESPONSE TO CONSUMER COMPLAINTS BY
TEXTILE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES
(N = 20)

| Manner | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|---|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| With a personal letter | 7 | 70.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| With a telephone call | 4 | 40.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| With a form letter | 2 | 20.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| With a letter selected from a bank of prepared letters | 1 | 10.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |

TABLE X
MONEY-BACK POLICY OF TEXTILE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES
(N = 20)

| Policy | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|------------------------------------|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Exchange or replacement | 6 | 60.0 | 5 | 50.0 | 11 | 55.0 |
| Cash refund | 3 | 30.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| No refund, exchange or replacement | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Coupon for replacement | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 |
| Other | 2 | 20.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 5 | 25.0 |

reported that an exchange or replacement of the unsatisfactory goods usually is offered customers. A cash refund is offered by 35 percent of the companies. Only one middle market firm reported that it does not allow for a refund, exchange or replacement of faulty items. Additional remarks by the participants included: 1) the refund or exchange depends upon the type of complaint registered; 2) a credit is sent to the retailer or dealer who will pass the same along to the customer; and 3) usually no refund is necessary but will be offered if the customer suffered a loss.

Follow Up on Complaint Dispositions

The manufacturers were asked to indicate if complaint dispositions are followed up to assure that satisfaction has been given to the customer. As shown in Table XI, more companies (55%) do follow up on complaint dispositions than those which do not (35%). Seventy percent of the middle market companies reported that they follow up on complaint dispositions as compared to 40 percent of the upper market companies. Ten percent of the respondents did not respond to the inquiry. The National Business Council for Consumer Affairs (1972, p. 6) believes the auditing of complaint dispositions by every business should be given serious consideration.

The Use of Complaint Information by a Company

The respondents were asked to specify how complaint information is used once it is received by their companies. According to the findings presented in Table XII, 65 percent of the companies surveyed indicated the information is circulated to the departments concerned. Few

TABLE XI
 FOLLOW UP ON COMPLAINT DISPOSITIONS BY
 TEXTILE MANUFACTURING COMPANIES
 (N = 20)

| Followed Up | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|-------------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Yes | 4 | 40.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 11 | 55.0 |
| No | 5 | 50.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| No response | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |

TABLE XII
 COMPANY USE OF COMPLAINT INFORMATION
 (N = 20)

| Use | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|--|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Circulated to the departments concerned | 6 | 60.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Compiled and analyzed according to time period, product or sales territory | 5 | 50.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Presented to senior management for review | 3 | 30.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |

companies (35%) compile and analyze this information according to time period, product or sales territory or present this information to senior management for review. Upper market companies (50%) tend to analyze the complaint information which they receive more than do middle market companies (20%). One company reported that the complaints it receives are so few in number that this does not warrant any special study.

Company Operations Affected by

Complaint Information

When asked if consumer complaints had an effect on company operations, a majority (70%) of the respondents indicated this to be true in their companies as shown in Table XIII. Eighty percent of the middle market companies reported that their operations were affected, while 60 percent of the upper market companies indicated the same. Overall, 20 percent of the manufacturers did not believe consumer complaints had an impact on company operations, and 10 percent did not respond to the inquiry.

The manufacturers also indicated those operations previously influenced by the receipt of complaint information. Of those companies which did note an effect, half reported that changes were made in their quality control programs. Eight respondents (40%) indicated that product changes were investigated upon the receipt of valid customer complaints. Middle market companies reported more frequently than upper market firms the following operations to be affected by consumer complaint information: consumer relations policies, packaging and advertising. One company reported that at one time it was necessary

TABLE XIII

RESPONSE IN TERMS OF EFFECT OF CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
ON COMPANY OPERATIONS
(N = 20)

| Response | Upper Market | | Middle Market | | Total | |
|--|--------------|------|---------------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| 1. Were company operations affected by consumer complaints during the past two years? | | | | | | |
| Yes | 6 | 60.0 | 8 | 80.0 | 14 | 70.0 |
| No | 2 | 20.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 4 | 20.0 |
| No response | 2 | 20.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.0 |
| 2. Which company operations were affected by consumer complaints during the past two years?* | | | | | | |
| Quality control program changes | 4 | 40.0 | 6 | 60.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| Product changes | 4 | 40.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 8 | 40.0 |
| Improved production processes | 2 | 20.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 5 | 25.0 |
| Improved consumer relations policies | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| Package changes | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 30.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| Advertising changes | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 5.0 |
| No effect | 4 | 40.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 6 | 30.0 |

*The respondents were asked to indicate as many company operations as they believed were affected by consumer complaints, therefore the percentages may or may not total 100 percent.

to change the management in one department because the individual was not sensitive to the customers' needs. Researchers (Myers, 1961; Peach, 1969, p. 24; Kendall and Russ, 1975, p. 42) believe consumer feedback can play a valuable role in a company's operations.

Personal Contacts Made With Dissatisfied

Customers by Top Management

The manufacturers were asked if a top management executive makes personal contacts with disgruntled customers. Half (50%) of the companies reported that top management does make some contacts with dissatisfied customers as indicated in Table XIV. Thirty-five percent of the companies reported that top management had no involvement with displeased customers. Three companies did not respond to the inquiry. The National Business Council for Consumer Affairs (1972, p. 6) suggested that senior management of all businesses be continually informed of the volume, type and disposition of consumer complaints. Also, some personal contacts should be made with dissatisfied customers.

Consumer Textile Complaints

This section provides the opportunity for discussion of: 1) textile complaints received by textile manufacturers, 2) the volume of complaints registered, 3) the person or persons who transmit these complaints to the manufacturer, and 4) the current status and future directions of consumer affairs in textile manufacturing companies. The data gathered from the two market levels are reported in Table XV as one group. The information presented in this table illustrates the frequency with which textile complaints were received by textile

TABLE XIV

PERSONAL CONTACTS MADE WITH DISSATISFIED
CUSTOMERS BY TOP MANAGEMENT
(N = 20)

| Contacts Made | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|---------------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Yes | 5 | 50.0 | 5 | 50.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| No | 3 | 30.0 | 4 | 40.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| No response | 2 | 20.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 3 | 15.0 |

TABLE XV

FREQUENCY WITH WHICH SPECIFIC CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
ARE RECEIVED BY TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS
(N = 20)

| Textile Complaint | Frequently | | Sometimes | | Never | |
|---------------------------------|------------|------|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Shrinkage | 2 | 10.0 | 10 | 50.0 | 7 | 35.0 |
| Flaw in fabric | 1 | 5.0 | 13 | 65.0 | 4 | 20.0 |
| Runs in fabric | 1 | 5.0 | 9 | 45.0 | 8 | 40.0 |
| Felting of woolen goods | 1 | 5.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Colors run | 0 | 0.0 | 13 | 65.0 | 4 | 20.0 |
| Fading and discoloration | 0 | 0.0 | 12 | 60.0 | 6 | 30.0 |
| Pilling | 0 | 0.0 | 10 | 50.0 | 8 | 40.0 |
| Improper processing | 0 | 0.0 | 10 | 50.0 | 6 | 30.0 |
| Crocking | 0 | 0.0 | 8 | 40.0 | 10 | 50.0 |
| Stretching and sagging | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 30.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Whitening on creases and folds | 0 | 0.0 | 6 | 30.0 | 9 | 45.0 |
| Confusion in product similarity | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 25.0 | 12 | 60.0 |

TABLE XV (Continued)

| Textile Complaint | Frequently | | Sometimes | | Never | |
|-------------------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Snagging | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 25.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Off grain | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 25.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Finish performs unsatisfactorily | 0 | 0.0 | 5 | 25.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Raveling | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Difficult to clean | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Low abrasion resistance | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| White fabrics turn yellow | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| Water spotting | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 12 | 60.0 |
| No-iron fabrics need ironing | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Graying of light colored fabric | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Wrinkling of fabric | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Retains perspiration stain and odor | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Loss of body | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Heat sensitivity | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 14 | 70.0 |

TABLE XV (Continued)

| Textile Complaint | Frequently | | Sometimes | | Never | |
|----------------------------------|------------|-----|-----------|------|-------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Shifting of yarns | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Bonded fabrics separate | 0 | 0.0 | 3 | 15.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Hotness, stiffness, stickiness | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.0 | 14 | 70.0 |
| No specific care instructions | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.0 | 15 | 75.0 |
| Fabric generally of poor quality | 0 | 0.0 | 2 | 10.0 | 15 | 75.0 |
| Matting of pile fabrics | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 | 14 | 70.0 |
| Clinging fabrics | 0 | 0.0 | 1 | 5.0 | 16 | 80.0 |
| No fiber content specified | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 16 | 80.0 |
| Incomplete information on label | 0 | 0.0 | 0 | 0.0 | 16 | 80.0 |
| Other | 0 | 0.0 | 4 | 20.0 | 0 | 0.0 |

manufacturers participating in this study. This arrangement was carried out in order that some similarities could be established between this study and previous ones which dealt with textile complaints as expressed by consumers. The data in the final table, Table XVI, are reported according to upper market, middle market and the total of the combined markets.

Frequency With Which Specific Consumer

Complaints Are Received by Textile

Manufacturers

The manufacturers were asked to rank the frequency with which they received the textile complaints listed in the questionnaire. As shown in Table XV, the respondents mentioned only four textile complaints which were received frequently by their companies. Two companies indicated that they frequently received complaints relating to shrinkage problems. Only one company indicated frequent complaints relative to fabric with flaws, fabric with runs, and the felting of woolen goods.

At least half of the companies indicated that they sometimes received the following kinds of complaints: shrinkage, flaws in fabric, colors run, fading and discoloration, pilling and improper processing. Investigators who previously studied consumer textile complaints found similar complaints to be frequently mentioned by their participants:

- 1) Shrinkage (Agent, 1972; Lowe, 1972; Monday, 1953)
- 2) Fading and discoloration (Steiniger, 1970; Monday, 1953)
- 3) Pilling (Steiniger, 1970)

TABLE XVI
 INDIVIDUAL WHO REPORTS CONSUMER COMPLAINTS
 TO THE TEXTILE MANUFACTURER
 (N = 20)

| Individual | <u>Upper Market</u> | | <u>Middle Market</u> | | <u>Total</u> | |
|----------------------|---------------------|------|----------------------|------|--------------|------|
| | N | % | N | % | N | % |
| Retailer | 6 | 60.0 | 7 | 70.0 | 13 | 65.0 |
| Consumer | 6 | 60.0 | 2 | 20.0 | 8 | 40.0 |
| Apparel manufacturer | 2 | 20.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 3 | 15.0 |
| Other | 1 | 10.0 | 1 | 10.0 | 2 | 10.0 |

Seventy percent or more of the respondents indicated the following textile complaints were never received by their companies. They were: heat sensitivity; hotness, stiffness, stickiness; no specified care instructions; fabric generally of poor quality; matting of pile fabrics; no fiber content specified on label; incomplete information on label; and clinging fabrics. Other studies conducted on consumer complaints revealed differing results. The following textile complaints were mentioned frequently by the participants of the previous consumer studies:

- 1) No specified care instructions on labels (Lowe, 1972)
- 2) Fabric generally of poor quality (Monday, 1953)
- 3) Matting of pile fabrics (Steiniger, 1970)

Volume of Registered Textile Complaints

The manufacturers were asked to indicate the number of complaints their companies receive on a monthly, quarterly and yearly basis. Ten of the 11 manufacturers responding indicated that they typically receive fewer than six complaints per month. Nine out of 11 manufacturers reported that they typically receive ten or less over a three-month period. On a yearly basis, 11 out of 13 companies reporting indicated that they receive fewer than 25 complaints.

As these figures indicate, few consumer textile complaints are made known to the manufacturer. Kendall and Russ (1975, p. 40) found that the Consumer Packaged Goods Manufacturers also receive few consumer complaints in relation to the number of units sold.

The Receipt of Consumer Complaints
by Textile Manufacturers

The respondents were asked to indicate the various individuals who report consumer complaints to their companies. As shown in Table XVI, over half (65%) of the companies reported that some of their complaints came from the retailer. Forty percent indicated that complaints came from the consumers themselves. Sixty percent of the upper market companies reported that textile complaints come directly from the consumer, while only 20 percent of the middle market companies indicated the same. Few companies (15%) reported that they were notified of textile complaints by the apparel manufacturer. Other individuals mentioned by the respondents were the agent and fabric converter.

Current Status and Future Directions for
Consumer Programs in Textile Companies

The manufacturers were asked to elaborate on the kinds of consumer-related activities in which their companies had been involved within the last two years. The respondents indicated their efforts had been directed in the following areas:

- 1) Educating consumers about trademarks and reasons why they should pay more for goods bearing such a symbol
- 2) Developing school programs, especially for home economics departments
- 3) Conducting fabric wear tests
- 4) Participating in consumer talks related to the knitted outer-wear industry

- 5) Keeping in constant touch with retailers regarding product complaints and readily responding to product complaints with letters and telephone calls
- 6) Testing flame retardent finishes
- 7) Working on the minimization of waste and pollution
- 8) Coordinating testing with the United States Department of Agriculture to develop better washable and easier-to-care-for woolen fabrics.

Four manufacturers indicated that they had not carried out any consumer-oriented activities within the past two years.

In terms of future directions for consumer activities within their companies, some of the manufacturers responded with these comments:

- 1) More concern for the consumer will be shown
- 2) Nonflame retardency stock will be phased out
- 3) Consistent complaints will be further investigated
- 4) Consumers will be informed as to the difficulties involved in meeting higher standards when the Environmental Protection Agency does not allow the use of chemicals which are necessary to achieve this level of performance.

Three respondents reported that their companies were not anticipating any major changes in their programs, while three other companies indicated that they would not be developing any consumer activities in the next five years.

Summary

In this chapter, the responses of the 20 textile manufacturing firms participating in this study were reported. The findings were

presented and discussed in categories pertaining to company information, complaint handling policies used by textile manufacturers, and consumer textile complaints received by the manufacturers.

The information presented in each table was analyzed in percentages. All tables, except Table XV, reported the findings according to upper market, middle market and the total of the combined markets. The results for both market levels in Table XV, Frequency With Which Specific Consumer Complaints Are Received by Textile Manufacturers, were reported as one group.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study was designed to investigate some of the consumer-related activities which are currently being carried out by two selected groups of textile manufacturers. A discussion of the procedure, conclusions and recommendations are presented in this chapter.

Summary of Procedures

To achieve the objectives of this study, 100 upper market and 95 middle market textile manufacturing firms were selected to participate in the survey. The list for the sample group was obtained from the 1975 Dun and Bradstreet Million Dollar and Middle Market directories. Only companies involved in the weaving, knitting and felting of textile fabrics were included in this study.

A questionnaire was developed to obtain responses to the following:

- 1) the organization and responsibilities related to consumer activities;
- 2) the complaint handling policies used by textile manufacturers; and
- 3) the frequency and types of consumer complaints received by textile companies.

Of the 195 questionnaires mailed to the manufacturers, 38 (19.5%) were returned. Twenty (10.3%) of these were usable for the purposes of this study. The findings were reported separately for the two market levels according to the Dun and Bradstreet listings. The combined

results for both levels were also presented as a single category in each table. One exception to this was the analysis of consumer textile complaints received by the manufacturers. In this section the data from all the respondents were compiled and analyzed as one group.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, several conclusions can be made regarding the organization and responsibilities of consumer activities for the textile manufacturing companies participating in this survey:

- 1) A majority of these companies assigned the responsibilities for consumer-related activities to a person(s) or several departments rather than to one specific department. More of the middle market companies delegate these responsibilities to a person or persons, whereas the upper market companies tend to assign the duties to several departments.
- 2) The senior management executive responsible for consumer activities in middle market companies was generally the President. However, more respondents in the upper market category indicated that the Vice President was responsible for these activities than the President.
- 3) Major responsibilities of individuals or departments involved in consumer activities were: a) responding to consumer complaints; b) analyzing consumer complaints and inquiries; c) responding to customer communications (other than product complaints); and d) conducting product testing.

Several statements can be made about the complaint handling policies followed by the textile manufacturers in this study:

- 1) A majority of the companies labeled their products in order that a dissatisfied customer would know where to call, write or visit.
- 2) Most manufacturers attempted to respond to consumer complaints either by letter or telephone call within a week after the complaint was registered with the company. More middle market companies required some form of proof of purchase from their dissatisfied customers than did upper market companies. An exchange or replacement for the faulty merchandise was offered by approximately half of the companies.
- 3) Complaint information received by a company was generally circulated to the departments concerned. Personal contacts were made with dissatisfied customers by top management in approximately half of the companies. Approximately half of the companies followed up on their complaint dispositions to ensure that customer satisfaction had been given.
- 4) A majority of the manufacturers believed consumer complaints have had an effect on company operations. Most companies indicated that complaint information has brought about improvements in their quality control programs and consumer products.

This investigation revealed several findings regarding the frequency and types of consumer complaints received by textile manufacturers participating in this study:

- 1) Textile manufacturers' responses are not in complete agreement with responses received by investigators who previously

studied consumer textile complaints. Some of the complaints which the manufacturers indicated were never received by their companies were reported to have been frequently mentioned by consumers in other studies.

- 2) A majority of the consumer complaints which are registered with the textile company come from the retailer. However, upper market companies tend to receive more complaints directly from the consumer than do middle market companies.

Recommendations

Suggestions for the replication of this study and for further investigations are presented in this section. Recommendations for improving this study will be discussed first.

In order to refine the current study, one might consider the following recommendations:

- 1) If possible, make personal contact with members of the sample group. An indepth interview might prove to be a more desirable technique for gathering information from textile manufacturers than the mailed questionnaire due to the fact that such a small percentage of response was received with the questionnaire.
- 2) Determine the types of goods produced by the manufacturers and to whom their products are sold. This will serve as a double check on the companies which should or should not be included in the survey. Also, one could categorize data from companies which produce similar types of goods and sell to like customers.

It is recommended that replications of this study be done in five or ten year sequences. Changes in consumer programs might be more easily recognized over a time span such as this.

To further examine the area of consumer textile complaints, one could:

- 1) Investigate the consumer activities being conducted by apparel manufacturers and/or retailers.
- 2) Conduct an exploratory study regarding the action taken by retailers or apparel manufacturers in handling consumer textile complaints.
- 3) Investigate the differences in types of textile complaints registered by various sources such as the consumer, retailer, apparel manufacturer, and converter.

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APPENDIX A

CONSUMER-RELATED ACTIVITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

O K L A H O M A S T A T E U N I V E R S I T Y

DEPARTMENT OF CLOTHING, TEXTILES & MERCHANDISING

Stillwater, Oklahoma 74074
Home Economics West 312
(405) 372-6211, Ext. 487

January 27, 1976

Dear

Textile manufacturers have felt the mounting pressures of the consumer movement as have members of other industries. We are aware of various consumer-related activities which are being initiated throughout industry and would like to learn what you have done to meet this challenge.

We have designed a questionnaire to find out what textile companies are presently doing to better meet the needs of consumers and to identify some future directions in this area. The information which your company supplies will become part of a master's thesis in the Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising Department at Oklahoma State University. You can be assured that the information you contribute will be kept confidential.

It would be most helpful to this study if you would send additional information which describes some of the consumer-related activities in which your company is involved. If available, please include a copy of your organizational chart which shows the position of consumer affairs in your corporate structure.

Would you, or the individual you designate, complete the questionnaire by February 15 and return it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope. Please indicate on the questionnaire if you desire a summary of the results of this study.

Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Sue Peterson
Graduate Student

OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
MEMORANDUM
DATE February 20, 1976
TO
FROM Sue Peterson
SUBJECT Consumer-Related Activities Questionnaire

Earlier this month a questionnaire concerning consumer-related activities in the textile industry was sent to you, and I am still anxiously awaiting your reply. Since it is possible that your survey may have been misplaced, I am sending you another copy of the questionnaire and a self-addressed, stamped envelope for its return.

Your response to the questionnaire is an essential part of the data we are collecting. Won't you please help? Your efforts will be most appreciated.

Sincerely,

Sue Peterson
Graduate Student

TEXTILE INDUSTRY CONSUMER-RELATED
ACTIVITIES QUESTIONNAIRE

Name and title of respondent:

_____ (name)

_____ (title)

This questionnaire includes three parts: Part I - Background Information, Part II - Complaint Policies and Part III - Complaints Received. Based on the knowledge you have of your company, please indicate the most appropriate answer for each question with a check (✓) in the space provided, or fill in the information requested.

Part I. Background Information

1. In which of the following categories would your company be classified according to net worth?
 - a. ___ \$1,000,000 or better
 - b. ___ between \$500,000 and \$999,999
 - c. ___ less than \$500,000

2. In your company, how are the responsibilities for the consumer-related activities assigned?
 - a. ___ to a person(s) (If checked, proceed to Question 3.)
 - b. ___ to a department (If checked, proceed to Question 4.)
 - c. ___ to several departments (If checked, please list the departments below then proceed to Question 5.)

_____ (write in)

3. If you checked 2-a., please answer the following questions:
 - a. Indicate the name and title of the person(s) assigned responsibility for consumer-related activities in your company.

_____ (name)

_____ (title)

- b. When was this position established? _____

(year)

Now proceed to Question 5.

4. If you checked 2-b., please answer the following questions:
- Indicate the name or title of the department responsible for consumer-related activities in your company.

 (name or title)
 - Indicate the name and title of the person in charge of this department.
 _____ (name) _____ (title)
 - When was this department established? _____
 (year)
5. Responsibilities of the person(s) or department(s) within your company responsible for consumer-related activities include:
 (Check as many as apply.)
- ___ responding to consumer complaints
 - ___ analyzing consumer complaints and inquiries
 - ___ developing and disseminating to consumers information on the purchase and use of products or services sold by the company
 - ___ initiating consumer studies for product preferences
 - ___ serving as a consultant on consumer matters within the company
 - ___ conducting product testing
 - ___ responding to consumer communications (other than product complaints)
 - ___ developing educational programs for schools
 - ___ other _____

 (write in)
6. Indicate the educational background area of the person(s) in charge of consumer-related activities:
- | | |
|----------------------------------|-------------------------|
| a. ___ Agriculture | f. ___ Education |
| b. ___ Arts and Letters | g. ___ Engineering |
| c. ___ Business | h. ___ Home Economics |
| d. ___ Communicative Arts | i. ___ Natural Sciences |
| e. ___ Consumer Services | j. ___ Social Sciences |
| k. ___ Other _____ (write in) | |
- The highest degree in education this person(s) has received:
- ___ Bachelor of Science or Bachelor of Art
 - ___ Master of Science, Master of Art or Master of Business Administration
 - ___ Doctor of Philosophy or Doctor of Education
 - ___ Other _____
 (write in)

7. Indicate the name and title of the top management executive who has major responsibility for consumer-related activities within your company.

(name)

(title)

8. Is your company or the person(s) in charge of consumer relations in your company affiliated with any consumer organizations?

a. ___ yes

b. ___ no

If so, please list the consumer organizations below.

(write in)

Part II. Complaint Policies

1. Are the products of your company labeled so that a consumer, if dissatisfied, would know where to write, call or visit?

a. ___ yes (If so, indicate
where labeled.)

b. ___ no

1) ___ on the label

2) ___ at point of purchase

3) ___ in literature accompanying
the product

4) ___ other _____

(write in)

2. Does your company have a toll-free number which consumers can use?

a. ___ yes

b. ___ no

3. What are the guidelines your company follows upon receipt of a consumer complaint?

a. proof of purchase

1) ___ required of the customer (If this is true of your
company, also check one of the following.)

a) ___ sales slip b) ___ return of purchase c) ___ both

2) ___ required as well as proof from the retailer

3) ___ not required

4) ___ other _____

(write in)

b. time within which your company attempts to respond to the complaint

- 1) within a week
- 2) within two weeks
- 3) within a month
- 4) not at all
- 5) other _____
(write in)

c. your company's manner of response

- 1) with a telephone call
- 2) with a personal letter
- 3) with a form letter
- 4) with a letter selected from a bank of prepared letters
- 5) other _____
(write in)

d. money-back policy

- 1) cash refund
- 2) exchange or replacement
- 3) coupon for replacement
- 4) no refund, exchange or replacement
- 5) other _____
(write in)

4. Are complaint dispositions followed up to assure that satisfaction has been given?

- a. yes
- b. no

5. After complaint information has been received by your company, what is done with it? (Check as many as apply.)

- a. The information is circulated to the departments concerned.
- b. The information is compiled and analyzed by periods of time, product or sales territory.
- c. The information is presented to senior management for review.
- d. Other _____
(write in)

6. Has this information regarding complaints by consumers had an effect on your operations in the last two years?

- a. yes (If yes, please indicate how this has affected your operations.)
- b. no
- 1) improved consumer relations policies
- 2) product changes
- 3) package changes
- 4) quality control program changes
- 5) improved production processes
- 6) advertising changes
- 7) other _____ (write in)

7. Does top management make any personal contacts with consumers who have grievances?

a. ___ yes

b. ___ no

Part III. Complaints Received

The following are a list of textile complaints compiled from previous consumer studies. Indicate the frequency with which these complaints are received by your company.

| Complaint | Fre- Some- quently times Never | | |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|--|
| | | | |
| 1) <u>crocking</u> | | | |
| 2) <u>confusion in product similarity</u> | | | |
| 3) <u>pilling</u> | | | |
| 4) <u>raveling</u> | | | |
| 5) <u>runs in fabric</u> | | | |
| 6) <u>low abrasion resistance</u> | | | |
| 7) <u>stretching or sagging</u> | | | |
| 8) <u>shrinkage</u> | | | |
| 9) <u>snagging</u> | | | |
| 10) <u>fading or discoloration</u> | | | |
| 11) <u>colors run</u> | | | |
| 12) <u>no-iron fabrics need ironing</u> | | | |
| 13) <u>wrinkling of fabric</u> | | | |
| 14) <u>difficult to clean (staining or soiling)</u> | | | |
| 15) <u>clinging fabrics</u> | | | |
| 16) <u>hotness, stiffness, stickiness</u> | | | |
| 17) <u>no specified care instructions on label</u> | | | |
| 18) <u>no fiber content on label</u> | | | |
| 19) <u>incorrect or incomplete information on label</u> | | | |
| 20) <u>retains perspiration stain and odor</u> | | | |
| 21) <u>loss of body</u> | | | |
| 22) <u>heat sensitivity of synthetics</u> | | | |
| 23) <u>bonded fabric separates</u> | | | |
| 24) <u>off grain</u> | | | |
| 25) <u>fabric generally of poor quality</u> | | | |
| 26) <u>improper processing (odor, print holes, etc.)</u> | | | |
| 27) <u>shifting of yarns</u> | | | |
| 28) <u>whitening on creases and folds</u> | | | |
| 29) <u>white fabrics turn yellow</u> | | | |
| 30) <u>water spotting</u> | | | |
| 31) <u>matting of pile fabrics</u> | | | |
| 32) <u>felting of woolen goods</u> | | | |
| 33) <u>flaw in fabric</u> | | | |
| 34) <u>graying of light colored fabrics</u> | | | |
| 35) <u>finish performs unsatisfactorily</u> | | | |
| 36) <u>others (please list)</u> | | | |

1. Please estimate the number of consumer complaints your company receives during the following time periods.
 - a. monthly _____
 - b. quarterly _____
 - c. yearly _____

2. How do you receive consumer complaints? (Check as many as apply.)
 - a. ___ directly from the consumer
 - b. ___ from the retailer
 - c. ___ from the apparel manufacturer
 - d. ___ other _____
(write in)

Additional Comments and Remarks

1. What kinds of consumer-related activities has your company become involved in during the past two (2) years? Please list.

2. Considering the current status of consumer affairs in the country, what do you anticipate the direction will be for consumer-related activities in your company during the next five (5) years?

3. Additional Comments:

4. Please indicate if you would like to have a copy of the findings of this research study.

___ yes

___ no

APPENDIX B

LIST OF AMERICAN TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS
USED FOR SAMPLE

CATEGORIES IN THE DUN AND BRADSTREET DIRECTORIES
WHICH LISTED THE NAMES OF TEXTILE
MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

| <u>Number</u> | <u>Title</u> |
|---------------|--|
| 2211 | Broadwoven Fabric Mills Cotton |
| 2221 | Broadwoven Fabric Mills Silk |
| 2231 | Broadwoven Fabric Mills Wool |
| 2256 | Knit Fabric Mills |
| 2257 | Circular Knit Fabric Mills |
| 2258 | Warp Knit Fabric Mills |
| 2259* | Knitting Mills, Not Elsewhere Classified |
| 2291 | Felt Goods Except Woven and Hats |
| 2295 | Coated Fabrics, Not Rubberized |
| 2299* | Textile Goods, Not Elsewhere Classified |

* Cross checked with another section in the directory to determine the types of products which the companies manufactured.

TEXTILE MANUFACTURERS

Upper Market

| | |
|---|--|
| Abney Mills | Gibraltar Industries, Inc. |
| Albany International Corporation | Gilt Edge Textile Corporation |
| *Alice Manufacturing Company, Inc. | Graniteville Company |
| Ames Textile Corporation | Greenwood Mills |
| Anchorage Carolina Corporation | Guilford Industries, Inc. |
| Anglo Fabrics Company, Inc. | -HCA-Martin, Inc. |
| Samuel J. Aronsohn, Inc. | William Heller, Inc. |
| Avondale Mills | Hermitage Cotton Mills |
| *Beltex Corporation | Hill Hosiery Mills, Inc. |
| *Bemis Company, Inc. | Holt Williamson Manufacturing Company |
| Bibb Company | Hornwood, Inc. |
| Blair Mills, Inc. | Indian Head, Inc. |
| Blue Bird Silk Manufacturing Company, Inc. | Jaymee Industries, Inc. |
| *Burlington Industries, Inc. | Joan Fabrics Corporation |
| Cadillac Textiles, Inc. | Lebanon Woolen Mills, Inc. |
| Cannon Mills Company | Lehigh Valley Industries, Inc. |
| Canton Textile Mills, Inc. | Liberty Fabrics of New York |
| *Carleton Woolen Mills, Inc. | M. Lowenstein and Sons, Inc. |
| *Carolina Mills, Inc. | Manetta Mills, Inc. |
| *Caron International, Inc. | Monroe Group, Inc. |
| Chatham Manufacturing Company | *National Distillers and Chemical |
| *Collins and Aikman Corporation | *Norwood Knitting Mills, Inc. |
| Columbia Mills, Inc. | Oak Ridge Textiles, Inc. |
| Clinton Mills | Northhamptom Textile Company |
| Cowikey Mills | Orinoka Mills |
| Crompton-Highland Mills, Inc. | Ostow and Jacobs, Inc. |
| Dan River, Inc. | *Pendleton Woolen Mills, Inc. |
| Deering Milliken, Inc. | Philip Knitting Mills |
| Denison Cotton Mill Company | Plaza Mills, Inc. |
| Dacey Mills, Inc. | Puritan Fashions Corporation |
| Dora Yarn Mill Company, Inc. | Randtron |
| *Dorr Woolen Company | Raxon Fabrics Corporation |
| Draper Brothers Company | Riegel Textile Corporation |
| Eastland Woolen Mills, Inc. | Rindge Industries, Inc. |
| Fab-Lace, Inc. | *Robinson Manufacturing Company, Inc. |
| Fabricsamerica Corporation | Rockland Industries, Inc. |
| Fieldcrest Mills, Inc. | Rothschild Company |
| First Hartford Corporation | *Russell Corporation |
| Flexnit Company, Inc. | South Carolina Cotton Mills |
| Felters Company | Southern Mills, Inc. |
| Flint River Cotton Mills | Speizman Industries, Inc. |
| *General Felt Industries, Inc. | |
| *Glen Raven Mills, Inc. | |

*questionnaire returned by the manufacturer

-no current address available for the manufacturer

+manufacturer no longer in business

Upper Market (Continued)

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| Stem Industries, Inc. | Uniweave Corporation |
| Stern and Stern Textiles, Inc. | Ware Knitters, Inc. |
| *J. P. Stevens and Company, Inc. | Washington Group, Inc. |
| Stonecutter Mills Corporation | Wellington Synthetic Fibres |
| *Strickland Cotton Mills | West Point-Pepperrell, Inc. |
| Sunbury Textile Mills Corporation | Western Acadia, Inc. |
| Texfi Industries, Inc. | *Widder Brothers, Inc. |
| United Merchants and Manufacturers, Inc. | Woolrich Woolen Mills |

Middle Market

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| *Adventure Knits, Inc. | Flexlon Fabrics, Inc. |
| American Bag and Burlap Company | Fulton County Silk Mills |
| Apex Knitted Fabrics, Inc. | -Futura Fabrics Corporation |
| Archer Rubber Company | Garden State Laminating Company |
| Arosa Knitting Corporation | *Geltman Sponging Corporation |
| Associated Textiles, Inc. | Gloversville Continental Mill |
| Atlantic Knitting Corporation | *Murray A. Goldenberg Textiles |
| Harry Ball and Son, Inc. | Grand Strand Industries, Inc. |
| Bamberg Textile Mills, Inc. | *Grover Industries, Inc. |
| *Berwick Weaving, Inc. | Halifax Cotton Mills, Inc. |
| Brewster Industries, Inc. | Hanson Textile Company, Inc. |
| Bridgeton Dyeing and Finishing | Hart, Inc. |
| Brunswick Worsted Mills, Inc. | Holland Cotton Products Company, Inc. |
| Candy Textile Company, Inc. | Hood Sailmakers, Inc. |
| *Classic Weaving Corporation | Ideal Foam Corporation |
| *Coaters, Inc. | Industrial Polymers and Chemicals |
| *Crown Cadco | *Jackson and Jackson, Inc. |
| Darobsum, Inc. | Jasco Fabrics, Inc. |
| Dazians, Inc. | *Kemp and Beatley, Inc. |
| John Deal Company, Inc. | Klauber Brothers, Inc. |
| *Deep River Dyeing Company, Inc. | Kleen Test Products, Inc. |
| Dellinger, Inc. | Knit-Wear Fabrics, Inc. |
| Dependable Knits, Inc. | Jack Lenor Larsen, Inc. |
| Dickson Industries, Inc. | Lauren Fabrics Corporation |
| *Dixie Manufacturing Company | Lida Manufacturing Company |
| *Dyecraftsmen, Inc. | Lorber Industries of California |
| *Elfskin Corporation | Mastercraft Corporation |
| Fab-Rite Laminating Corporation | *Meese, Inc. |
| Fabri-Quilt, Inc. | Niki-Lu Industries, Inc. |
| Falcon Fabrics, Inc. | North Carolina Spinning Mills |
| Falcon Mills, Inc. | Novelty Textile Mills, Inc. |
| *Fallani and Cohn, Inc. | Oaknit Fabrics, Inc. |
| Farrington-Textol Corporation | Orangeburg Knitting, Inc. |
| M. J. Fassler and Company, Inc. | |
| Firestone Laces, Inc. | |

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Middle Market (Continued)

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|---|--------------------------------|
| *Paola Cotton Mills, Inc. | E. J. Snyder and Company, Inc. |
| +Park, Angus, Woolen Company, Inc. | Social Circle Cotton Mill |
| Pearce Woolen Mills | *Southern Hosiery Mill, Inc. |
| Post and Sherman Textile Company, Inc. | Stanley Woolen Company |
| Quiltex Company, Inc. | Stanwood Drapery Company, Inc. |
| Redmond Finishing Company, Inc. | Steven Knitting Mills, Inc. |
| Restline Products, Inc. | Sumner Company, Inc. |
| Roller Fabrics, Inc. | Textiles, Inc. |
| Sacobag, Inc. | *Thermopatch Corporation |
| Eli Sandman Company | Thorpe Weaving, Inc. |
| F. M. Saydah and Brothers | Tru-Knit Mills, Inc. |
| Schwartz Nonwovens Corporation | Union Supply Company, Ltd. |
| Don Shapiro Industries, Inc. | Wannalancit Textile Company |
| | Wanskuck Company |
| | 801 Greenleaf, Inc. |

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VITA

Janet Sue Peterson

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: THE CURRENT STATUS OF CONSUMER-RELATED ACTIVITIES IN SELECTED
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Major Field: Clothing, Textiles and Merchandising

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Payette, Idaho, October 11, 1949, the
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