

AN ANALYSIS OF DISSATISFACTION RELATIVE  
TO SELECTED HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCES

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An Abstract of a Paper

A search of literature related to consumer dissatisfaction with products purchased reveals a scarcity of empirically based research upon which to develop meaningful generalizations of use to both researchers and practitioners in responding to this problem. Because of the lack of generalizations on the research reported here was undertaken to accomplish the following objectives: (1) to determine the types of household appliances which consumers most frequently own and with which they most frequently experience dissatisfaction; (2) to determine the relationship, if any, of age, income, educational level, and similar socio-economic characteristics to the frequency of complaints relative to household appliances; (3) to develop tentative profiles of the type of consumer who does and does not take action relative to dissatisfaction with appliances purchased; (4) to determine from what type of outlet consumers tend to find satisfaction for their complaints.

As the basis for the research, 126 telephone interviews were completed. A systematic sample with a random beginning was utilized in selecting households, and appropriate statistical tests were applied to the data. Basic information to accomplish the above objectives was sought for the following twenty household appliances: central air conditioning, window air conditioning, dish washers, dryers, freezers, refrigerators, ranges, vacuum cleaners, washers, black and white television sets, color television sets, irons, radios, mixers, electric can openers, electric frying pans, electric coffee pots, toasters, trash mashers, garbage disposals, blenders, and sewing machines.

Selected findings based on the analysis are as follows:

1. Overall, 56 of the 126 respondents reported complaints sufficiently great to prompt them to seek satisfaction relative to appliances which had been purchased during the 12 month period covered by the study.
2. The percentage of respondents having a complaint about a specific appliance varied from more than 5 per cent in the case of color television sets and refrigerators to no complaints relative to can openers, frying pans, and coffee pots.
3. More than 89 percent of the complaints related to performance, followed by slightly less than 6 per cent related to the service life of the appliance, and approximately 4 per cent in terms of dissatisfaction with installation.
4. Approximately 23 per cent of the respondents found it necessary to complain twice before receiving satisfaction on their complaint, while almost 29 per cent complained three or more times before the matter was resolved to their satisfaction.
5. Approximately 80 per cent of the respondents originally complained to the place where they had purchased the appliance, however, only slightly more than 55 per cent received satisfaction at this level.

in the channel. More than 16 per cent received satisfaction from a service center other than that from which the appliance was purchased. More than 18 per cent of the complaints was still unresolved at the time of the study.

6. By way of a socio-economic profile, the heads of complaining households as contrasted to those of noncomplaining households were found to have higher levels of formal education, higher income levels, and greater occupational skills. Further, they depicted a greater percentage of home ownership than the noncomplaining households. The complaining household heads also depicted a different distribution in terms of age. The predominant age classification for heads of complaining households was 29-50, while a much higher percentage of noncomplaining households were over 50 years of age. Lastly, the complaining households contained larger numbers of children than the noncomplaining households.