

TABLE 4 Familiarity With Periodicals Related to Consumer Studies

Familiarity with Periodical	Percentage of each groups familiarity/unfamiliarity with listed journals		
	ACCI members (n=155) % ^a	ACR members (n=211) % ^a	Joint membership (n=20) % ^a
	<u>Home Economics Research Journal</u>		
Familiar	79.9	15.8	90
Unfamiliar	20.3	84.2	10
	<u>Journal of Consumer Affairs</u>		
Familiar	99.3	70.7	100
Unfamiliar	.7	29.3	0
	<u>Journal of Consumer Policy</u>		
Familiar	24.8	26.6	68.4
Unfamiliar	75.2	73.4	31.6
	<u>Journal of Consumer Research</u>		
Familiar	71.6	96.2	100
Unfamiliar	28.4	3.8	0
	<u>Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics</u>		
Familiar	30.7	12.9	60
Unfamiliar	69.3	87.1	40
	<u>Journal of Home Economics</u>		
Familiar	84.8	21.0	95.0
Unfamiliar	15.2	79.0	5.0
	<u>Journal of Marketing</u>		
Familiar	56.2	96.2	90
Unfamiliar	43.8	3.8	10
	<u>Journal of Marketing Research</u>		
Familiar	44.7	98.1	85.0
Unfamiliar	55.3	1.9	15.0
	<u>Journal of Retailing</u>		
Familiar	37.2	86.6	75.0
Unfamiliar	62.8	13.4	25.0
	<u>Proceedings of ACCI</u>		
Familiar	86.7	26.7	90
Unfamiliar	13.3	73.3	10
	<u>Proceedings of ACR</u>		
Familiar	39.6	98.1	100
Unfamiliar	60.4	1.9	0

^aPercentages are calculated for those who responded to questions.

TABLE 5 Relative Rankings of Periodicals Related to Consumer Studies

Relative ranking	ACCI members %	ACR members %	Joint membership %
	<u>Home Economics Research Journal</u>		
	n=114	n=32	n=18
Low quality	6.1	34.4	27.8
Average quality	27.2	31.2	27.8
High quality	66.7	34.4	44.4
	<u>Journal of Consumer Affairs</u>		
	n=146	n=144	n=20
Low quality	1.4	23.6	10.0
Average quality	17.8	51.4	15.0
High quality	80.8	25.0	75.0
	<u>Journal of Consumer Policy</u>		
	n=35	n=53	n=13
Low quality	5.7	37.7	7.7
Average quality	37.1	34.0	53.8
High quality	57.2	28.3	38.5
	<u>Journal of Consumer Research</u>		
	n=101	n=201	n=19
Low quality	5.9	1.0	10.5
Average quality	15.8	5.5	5.3
High quality	78.2	93.5	84.2
	<u>Journal of Consumer Studies and Home Economics</u>		
	n=42	n=26	n=12
Low quality	4.8	50.0	33.3
Average quality	42.9	46.1	25.0
High quality	52.3	3.9	41.7
	<u>Journal of Home Economics</u>		
	n=123	n=42	n=19
Low quality	39.0	47.6	73.7
Average quality	35.0	26.2	26.3
High quality	26.0	26.2	0
	<u>Journal of Marketing</u>		
	n=77	n=201	n=18
Low quality	6.5	2.0	16.6
Average quality	24.7	19.4	27.8
High quality	68.8	78.6	55.6
	<u>Journal of Marketing Research</u>		
	n=63	n=205	n=17
Low quality	4.8	1.0	11.8
Average quality	17.5	8.0	29.4
High quality	77.7	91.0	58.8

as a low quality journal by both groups. Generally, the home economics related journals

TABLE 5 Relative Ranking of Periodicals Related to Consumer Studies (Cont.)

Relative ranking	ACCI members %	ACR members %	Joint Membership %
<u>Journal of Retailing</u>			
	n=51	n=181	n=15
Low quality	9.8	21.0	26.7
Average quality	56.9	40.3	53.3
High quality	33.3	38.7	20.0
<u>Proceedings of ACCI</u>			
	n=124	n=50	n=18
Low quality	9.7	42.0	27.8
Average quality	32.2	42.0	61.1
High quality	58.1	16.0	11.1
<u>Proceedings of ACR</u>			
	n=55	n=205	n=20
Low quality	20.0	16.1	15.0
Average quality	36.4	40.5	55.0
High quality	43.6	43.4	30.0

were rated relatively high by ACCI members and relatively low by ACR members. ACR members rated both the journal sponsored by ACCI and the ACCI proceedings much lower than did ACCI members.

It might be hypothesized that a person who publishes in a particular journal would rate that journal more highly in order to bolster the credibility of his/her publication record. Therefore, a test was made of the correlations between the respondent's rating of the periodical and his/her likelihood to publish in that periodical. Only the following have a significant correlation:

<u>ACCI</u>		
<u>Journal of Retailing</u>	-.25*	(.05 level of significance)
<u>ACR</u>		
<u>Journal of Consumer Affairs</u>	.31***	(.001 level of significance)
<u>Journal of Marketing</u>	.13*	
<u>ACCI proceedings</u>	.25*	
<u>Joint Members</u>		
<u>Home Economics Research Journal</u>	.42*	
<u>Journal of Consumer Policy</u>	-.58*	
<u>Journal of Marketing</u>	-.42*	

Since some of the correlations are negative, that is, the higher the respondent ranked the journal, the less likely he/she would have published in that journal, it may indicate that the ratings were probably done objectively.

CONCLUSIONS

The findings indicated that the ACCI memberships and the ACR memberships are quite dissimilar. ACR appears to be homogeneous of mainly marketing-oriented individuals, whereas the ACCI membership is much more heterogeneous with the plurality of member with a home economics orientation.

Substantial differences emerge when we examine the publication record of each group. ACR members published, on the average, four fold that of ACCI members. Several factors may contribute to this difference. First, the ACCI group has a much higher percentage of persons with a masters as the terminal degree. One might expect the primary responsibility of these persons is teaching with very little time for research, if any. Secondly, more than 11% of the ACCI group is in extension positions and these positions may not require and/or provide resources for research. Also, as the number of years of experience indicates, the ACR members are at earlier stages in their careers than ACCI members are. It is often at the earlier stage of the academic career where there are greater demands on research productivity.

It is disappointing to note the general lack of familiarity of members of both organizations with the periodicals that are related to the area of consumer studies. ACR members showed more unfamiliarity with journals that do not pertain directly to marketing. ACCI members seemed to be relatively more eclectic in their knowledge of journals.

The differences between the two groups may have been described by Kroll and Hunt in their conceptual analysis of consumer science [4]. In this work, Kroll and Hunt made comparisons between consumer science and marketing. Since this paper found that ACCI members are primarily affiliated with consumer science and the consumer science component of home economics, and that ACR members are primarily affiliated with marketing, Kroll and Hunt's observations are somewhat applicable to this paper. They found that consumer science is in an interdisciplinary stage where the practitioners are educated in related disciplines but concentrating on consumer science. These authors define marketing as being in the uni-disciplinary stage (a field that has achieved unique disciplinary status and where the marketing professionals have generally been educated in marketing itself). If what Kroll and Hunt say is true, that marketing is more developed as a discipline, this may help explain the array of differences between ACR members and ACCI members. This may also lead us to speculate that as consumer science "matures" into a uni-discipline form, their journals, e.g., Journal of Consumer Affairs, will be more highly regarded outside consumer science and their practitioners will be more productive in the publishing arena.

It was disappointing to the authors of this paper to find so few of the respondents holding joint memberships. ACCI members may criticize ACR as being too marketing oriented and ACR members may criticize ACCI as not being disciplinary or

rigorous enough, however, if these two organizations are to more broadly serve the consumer interests, but yet maintain their own organizational uniqueness, it would be helpful for more people to become active members of both organizations in order to give input to foster this end.

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CONSUMER PROFESSIONALS FORECAST THE FUTURE OF
THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT

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ABSTRACT

Utilizing the Delphi technique, a national sample of consumer professionals was surveyed in order to examine prevailing views and opinions about the present status of the consumer movement. In the survey respondents were encouraged to forecast the likelihood of particular changes in the movement and possible impacts of those changes. Also examined were opinions about who should and who will be responsible for traditional consumer professional functions such as consumer information, complaint handling, and leadership direction. Results provide a professional perspective on the nature of issues that will be of greatest importance to consumers and consumer professionals in the future.

tioned to provide hundreds of consumer protection measures which have been passed at both the state and federal levels dealing with drug and transportation safety, financial and credit protection, regulation of marketplace competition and increased consumer information. (5).

The purpose of this paper is to measure professional opinion in regard to the present status of the movement and its observed and anticipated changes. This information can serve as valuable input for future actions. Such a forum of thought can offer a forecast of where consumerism is headed, how professionals perceive that course may be changed, and the nature of issues that will be of greatest importance to consumers and consumer professionals for the next ten years.

INTRODUCTION

The phrase "consumer movement" refers to a loose coalition of community groups, senior citizens, cooperatives, labor unions, consumer affairs professionals in business, and consumer advocacy organizations who share a broad common objective to protect consumers' rights. In the dictionary definition of the word, "movement" refers to a series of organized activities working toward an objective or an effort to attain an end. Therefore, the concept of mobilization is implied in the definition of movement and consequently is required for any social movement.

However, as Boulding (1) pointed out, social movements are subject to the principle of the "increasingly unfavorable environment" as resistance is organized by those who hold other interests and beliefs. The principle of the increasingly unfavorable environment functions to make it difficult for any movement to expand past a certain point. One major concern of scholars and other professionals in the field today is that, as a social movement, consumerism is losing momentum, is diminishing in intensity, and, in general, seems to be waning. As outlined by Herrman and Warland (9), the resurgence of the movement will depend both on the revival of concern with consumer problems by professionals as well as consumers.

Authorities have documented how the consumer movements of the twentieth century have brought forth a greater awareness of the concepts of consumer sovereignty, consumer rights and consumer responsibilities. Previous movements have func-

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Since 1976, researchers of three major studies, all funded by the private sector, have examined the popularity of consumerism and the changes occurring within the movement. In Consumerism at the Crossroads, conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc. (7), a national sample from various backgrounds (activists, business representatives, regulators, and the public) was interviewed. In the second study, Consumerism in the Eighties, also conducted by Louis Harris and Associates, Inc., (8) a national sample of consumers was surveyed to obtain opinion about the success of the movement. Interviewing consumer advocates, government officials, educators and financial service executives, the most recent study, conducted by Meredith Fernstrom for American Express, (3) addressed the success of the movement and focused on trends that would specifically influence the financial services provider.

The three studies conducted in the area of forecasting trends in consumerism are not presently adequate for several reasons. The first study, which used a national sample of respondents from various backgrounds as well as consumers, is nearing its tenth anniversary and needs updating. In the second study only consumers rather than consumer professionals were surveyed. The third study focused on trends for a specific industry. Therefore, either existing research does not provide information for a broad consumer movement research format or it needs a contemporary reevaluation.

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METHODOLOGY

Method

The Delphi method, a technique used by business, industrial design researchers, military strategists, and futurists, was used to investigate the trends influencing the consumer movement. As outlined by Heyel (10), this method can be used for the systematic collection and collation of informed judgments obtained individually from members of a selected group of experts (often representing various disciplines or groups). Specific issues can be addressed while preserving anonymity, and refinement of judgments occurs through an iterative process to arrive at a "best possible" decision.

According to Pelton (11), the first step in a conventional Delphi is for the researcher or group of researchers to develop a list of questions based on trends they wish to investigate. Next, a group of professionals, knowledgeable on the issues or related topic areas, is selected and presented with the first round of questions.

After the first-round answers are received and analyzed, a second round of questions, based on the answers to the first, is submitted to the group. Participants are encouraged to review the results, consider dissenting opinion, and reconsider their own previously submitted opinion. At this point, they may revise or completely change their previous answers(s). Hence, a forum of professional thought is developed without requiring participants to physically meet at a central location.

Procedure

The Delphi method used for this study employs open-ended questions as well as some structured inquiries. The researchers elected this approach so as to gather the most information possible, without requiring the participants to use several hours in completing the questions. The structure of the questions was varied to keep the process an enjoyable and challenging experience for the participant.

The participants in the survey received two rounds of questionnaires. The first round was intended to gather expert opinion on the future of the consumer movement. The second round included the original copy of the completed first questionnaire, a blank copy of the same, and a detailed analysis of the collective opinion from round one. A cover letter clearly described the procedure to be followed by the second-round participants. Respondents were asked to react to the groups opinions and include second thoughts or altered views. There were four parts to the questionnaire.

As previously mentioned, the first part was designed to gather opinion about the likelihood of particular trends evolving within the next ten years. Further, the impact these trends would have on the future of the consumer movement was considered. The second and third parts were de-

signed to extrapolate opinion concerning where the responsibility of the movement lies. The success of this approach is documented in an article entitled "The Policy Delphi" by Murray Turoff (12). This method enables the participant to choose more than one answer by ranking their responses. In addition, an open-comment section, in the tradition of the Delphi approach, was provided. The final part of the survey included questions which allowed the freedom of open answers in order to fully utilize the views and knowledge of the respondents. There were only five open-ended questions in this section.

Sample

Similar to Goldstein's use of the Delphi method (6), the researchers selected 70 professionals employed in various sectors of the consumer representation industry. Participants' were chosen with the intent of obtaining a representative cross section of professionals from each sector. Names were obtained through the American Council on Consumer Interests record of participants, Proceedings of the National Consumer Science in Institutions of Higher Education Symposium, the U.S. Office of Consumer Affairs Consumer Resource Handbook, and the researchers' personal contacts.

Further, seven professional referees were consulted, each representing a specific sector, in an effort to develop a complete list of professional respondents. The responses yielded a final sample of 9 federal government representatives, 5 state and local government representatives, 2 consumer organization representatives, 7 media representatives, 11 business representatives and 10 educators. Seventy questionnaires were mailed. Forty-four professionals responded giving a 63 percent response rate.

Results

Questions were derived from several sources. The three major studies discussed in the review of related literature served as the primary sources. In addition to these studies, a proceedings from a conference focusing on consumer professionals' opinions about the future of consumer issues (4) and a speech discussing the shifting make-up of consumerism, (2) also served as a basis for several questions.

Respondents were asked to determine the likelihood of particular trends occurring before 1995. The responses were ranked: very probable, probable, improbable, very improbable or no judgment. Respondents were then asked to indicate, given their speculation on the probability of the trend, what the impact would be on the future of consumerism. In a second section, respondents were given a list of responsibilities and were asked which of several sectors would and should assume responsibility.

Results are reported by question with a summary of the group response.

Table 1

EIGHT MOST IMPORTANT TRENDS	PROBABILITY OF OCCURRENCE		IMPACT OF THE MOVEMENT			
		N	%*		N	%*
1. Active efforts toward establishing a comprehensive, federal consumer protection office.	Very Probable	1	2	Strong	9	20
	Probable	14	32	Moderate	16	36
	Improbable	19	43	Slight or None	15	34
	Very Improbable	10	23	No Judgement	0	0
	No Judgement	0	0			
	TOTAL	44	100	TOTAL	40	90
2. Introduction of new consumer leaders who would focus on the rights of the poor and minorities, replacing the previous middle class movement.	Very Probable	6	14	Strong	4	9
	Probable	17	39	Moderate	22	50
	Improbable	15	34	Slight or None	11	25
	Very Improbable	2	5	No Judgement	1	2
	No Judgement	2	5			
	TOTAL	42	97	TOTAL	38	86
3. Due to the recent recession and attention placed on the plight of the elderly, consumers of the future will be more likely to save today for tomorrow.	Very Probable	6	14	Strong	4	9
	Probable	16	36	Moderate	15	34
	Improbable	10	23	Slight or None	17	37
	Very Improbable	5	11	No Judgement	4	9
	No Judgement	6	14			
	TOTAL	43	98	TOTAL	40	89
4. The types of issues confronted by consumer professionals will arise due to business practices. (e.g. car, toy, and/or food manufacturers)	Very Probable	13	30	Strong	11	25
	Probable	23	52	Moderate	17	39
	Improbable	5	11	Slight or None	11	25
	Very Improbable	0	0	No Judgement	2	5
	No Judgement	3	7			
	TOTAL	44	100	TOTAL	41	94
5. Consumers of the future will not know how to seek redress.	Very Probable	2	5	Strong	5	11
	Probable	3	7	Moderate	9	20
	Improbable	8	18	Slight or None	16	36
	Very Improbable	25	57	No Judgement	3	7
	No Judgement	2	5			
	TOTAL	40	92	TOTAL	33	74
6. We should expect to experience increased government regulation of business.	Very Probable	0	0	Strong	10	23
	Probable	14	32	Moderate	12	27
	Improbable	13	30	Slight or None	9	20
	Very Improbable	13	30	No Judgement	1	2
	No Judgement	1	2			
	TOTAL	41	94	TOTAL	32	72
7. Industry will make attempts to regulate itself.	Very Probable	7	16	Strong	4	9
	Probable	23	52	Moderate	21	48
	Improbable	9	20	Slight or None	9	20
	Very Improbable	5	11	No Judgement	1	2
	No Judgement	0	0			
	TOTAL	44	99	TOTAL	35	79
8. Among consumers, trust in major institutions (i.e. government, education, religion, employers, business) will increase.	Very Probable	1	2	Strong	4	9
	Probable	10	23	Moderate	18	41
	Improbable	17	39	Slight or None	10	28
	Very Improbable	10	23	No Judgement	3	7
	No Judgement	5	11			
	TOTAL	43	98	TOTAL	35	85

* Percentage based on total sample size of 44; missing data were not included.

sidered city or local government to hold responsibility as well.

Respondents indicated that while state officials will be responsible for assuring that consumers get a fair deal, federal officials should be responsible.

Open-Ended Responses

Five open-ended questions were included in the last section of the questionnaire. The following represents a synopsis of the group's response:

What changes in the movement would best benefit consumerism within the next ten years?

More consumer education was viewed as a point that would greatly benefit consumerism, according to 20 percent of the participants. Other points frequently mentioned that would benefit the movement included:

- a switch in the adversarial relationship shared between consumer organization representatives and business. (11%).
- more consumer awareness focused at the local, grassroots level. (11%).
- a change in the executive officeholders at the federal level. (7%).
- more effective complaint handling. (5%).
- federal officials who would work cooperatively with state officials. (7%).
- more responsiveness on the part of business. (5%).

What are your reactions to the federal administration's handling of consumer protection between 1981 - 1984?

Professional reaction to the federal administration's handling of consumer protection between 1981 - 1984 was split, by fifty percent. While business and federal officials felt reactions have been positive to neutral, state and local government representatives, media representatives, and educators felt the movement had suffered. Fewer recalls and investigations by federal agencies as well as deregulation of industries were cited as problems.

Do you view the consumer movement as monitoring small businesses, corporate business or the public sector most closely within the next ten years?

Professionals viewed the future movement as monitoring corporate business most closely. Further respondents stated that the public sector will receive almost as much attention, with small business receiving the least attention.

Is there a particular state(s) which has made significant strides toward serving consumers

within the last five years? If so, please illustrate your answer with reasons why you cite the state(s).

Twenty-three percent of the group rated Wisconsin as highest among states in making significant strides toward serving consumers within the last five years. Cited were the formation and success of the Citizens Utility Board, a well organized mediation process through several state agencies, new rustproofing and lemon laws, and successful court settlements with Thorp Finance and Amway.

New York was given high marks for its lemon law, seat belt law, and its super fund. Other states frequently mentioned were California, Massachusetts, Florida, Connecticut, and Maryland (specifically Montgomery County).

Do you view the consumer movement as losing momentum in comparison to other social movements? Please cite which movements you see gaining popularity. They may or may not be related to consumerism, but please indicate why.

According to 36 percent of the group, the consumer movement has lost momentum in comparison to other social movements. The other movements seen as taking a hold were the environmental movement and a right-wing, Moral Majority movement. Also listed frequently were the anti-nuclear - disarmament movement, a movement against deregulation and a right-to-life movement.

What specific consumer issues do you see gaining the most attention within the coming ten years and why? Please categorize your answers as being a very important issue, an important issue or a tangential issue.

Among the very important issues gaining increased attention within the coming ten years were:

- medical and health care issues (30%).
- safety issues (25%).

The cost and quality of health care was a major concern as well as the safety of autos, the workplace, chemical hazards, children's products, and over-the-counter drugs. Also listed as very important were:

- environmental issues (18%).
- rights and care of the elderly (16%).
- personal money management (16%).
- distribution of income nationwide (14%).
- government spending (14%).
- international trade (11%).

Those important issues listed frequently were:

- environmental/pollution (21%).

Trend 1: The emergence of active efforts toward establishing a comprehensive, federal consumer protection office.

Sixty-six percent of the group felt that it is very improbable to improbable that there will be active efforts toward establishing a comprehensive, federal consumer protection office. However, they indicated that this trend will only create a moderate impact on the movement. (Table 1).

Trend 2: The introduction of new consumer leaders who would focus on the rights of the poor and minorities, replacing the previous middle class movement.

Fifty-three percent of the group agreed that there will be a steady increase of new consumer leaders who will focus on the rights of the poor and minorities. Respondents indicated that these leaders, creating a moderate impact of the movement, will not fully replace the previous middle-class movement leaders. Federal government and consumer organization representatives felt that this trend was improbable and no change in leadership would create only a slight impact on the movement. (Table 1)

Trend 3: Due to the recent recession and attention placed on the plight of the elderly, consumers of the future will be more likely to save today for tomorrow.

Consumers of the future will be more likely to save according to half of the group. This trend, respondents reported, is in large part due to the recent recession and attention placed on the plight of the elderly. While the total group felt the impact will be moderate to slight (71%), consumer organization representatives felt the impact will be strong. (Table 1).

Trend 4: The types of issues confronted by consumer professionals will arise due to business practices. (e.g. car, toy, and/or food manufacturers).

It is a clear probability, according to 82 percent of the group, that the types of issues confronted by consumer professionals will arise due to business practices. Business representatives were in full agreement with this probability and felt that all business practices will continue to be scrutinized with a greater emphasis placed on services. State and local government representatives attributed this trend to less involvement on the part of government. (Table 1).

Trend 5: Consumers of the future will not know how to seek redress.

Three-fourths of the group felt that consumers will continue to know how to seek redress. Respondents indicated that consumers will do so in a traditional format (i.e. filing letters with agencies, calling the business, seeking further information). However, they felt that it is improbable that consumers will exercise actions

such as boycotts, pickets, or whistleblowing. Class action suits were expected to be the most active form of protest by consumers. (Table 1).

Trend 6: We should expect to experience increased government regulation of business.

Sixty-percent of the group felt that increased government regulation of business should not be expected in the next decade. However, health and welfare issues were expected to receive more regulatory attention, according to 52 percent of the group. (Table 1).

Trend 7: Industry will make attempts to regulate itself.

The group indicated that they expected industry to make attempts at self regulation. While some business representatives say this trend is in light of an increasingly socially responsible sector, media representatives attributed business self-regulation as a strategy to increase business profits. (Table 1).

Trend 8: Among consumers, trust in major institutions (i.e. government, education, religion, employers, business) will increase.

Sixty-two percent of the group did not foresee an increase in trust in major institutions. They added that this trend will only create a moderate impact on the movement, and that the increased sophistication of consumers and the complexity of society will create a more skeptical public.

Responsibilities

In section two, respondents were given a list of responsibilities and asked which of the following sectors assume responsibility and which should assume responsibility for certain tasks within the next ten years. (Appendix 1). The following is a list of the sectors: federal government officials, state government officials, city or local government officials, consumer organizations, media, business, low income/legal groups, universities, consumers, independently.

Consumer organizations were viewed as carrying the most responsibility in matters such as initiating legal action against business, uniting consumers in an effort to achieve action, and emphasizing the need for consumer legislation. Further, consumer organizations were viewed as best organized to fight for consumer rights and best at addressing the concerns consumers perceive themselves as having. While consumer organizations were considered the best source of consumer information, professionals felt that business should be the best source for information.

Business was seen as being the best source for information on technological advances in consumer products and services. The media was perceived as the second best source. While state government agencies were seen as becoming responsible for running complaint bureaus, business should be responsible. However professionals clearly con-

--medical services (quality/cost) (14%).

--cost of necessities such as public utilities, credit, telephones, energy (11%).

Those tangential issues listed frequently were:

--solar energy (5%).

--product labeling and disclosures (5%).

--government spending (5%).

--comparable worth (5%).

Limitations

Several factors did contribute to biases in this study which are necessary to note. The complex nature of the first round questionnaire became a deterrent in gaining more than the ultimate 63 percent response rate. A few comments from both participants and non-participants indicated that due to the broad-based nature of the research, there was almost too much information for participants to digest within the course of the survey. Moreover, the open-ended nature of the study made some participants feel obligated to elaborate on their answers to every question. This format, required a time commitment of up to one hour to complete the survey.

The second-round questionnaire, a comprehensive overview of the first-round material, required respondents to review their original answers and note any changes. Only 11 people responded to this second round which may have been due to the fact that some did not care to change their original answers. However some noted that the length was overwhelming.

Out of five consumer organization representatives contacted, only two responded. This was only 40 percent of that sector and only 5 percent of the total group. A more significant response by these leaders may have shed more diverse opinion on particular questions. Those consumer organization representatives who did respond only partially completed the study, nearly completely avoided the open-ended questions. The researchers feel that such opinion to these issues would have been beneficial to the study and may have altered the results.

Discussion: Unanswered Questions

Several implications can be derived from this study. The broad nature of the study leaves us with a myriad of ideas to consider. The following represent future research topics:

A great amount of professional respect is placed on independent consumer organizations for furnishing proper information, education, and as a force to unite consumers. However, these groups are the first to be plagued with low operating budgets, overworked staffs, and a high attrition rate. What would best benefit consumer organizations, both nationally and at the grassroots level, in an effort to maintain strong

leadership and quality resources? What funding sources are available? Are consumers willing to directly contribute time and/or financial resources to such organizations?

Professionals felt that consumer organizations do offer the best consumer information, but that business should offer the best information. Furthermore, while business was considered to offer the best information regarding technological advancements, media representatives felt they were the best sources. Who does the consumer consider the best source? Who will the consumer turn to first for information and/or education? What is the cost of obtaining it? What other obstacles may prevent the consumer from obtaining it? How is the information accepted/used?

Professionals from a variety of sectors agreed that the adversarial relationship shared by consumer organization representatives and business people is detrimental to the movement's progression. A survey or interview of professionals in these sectors might best address what factors contribute to this behavior and how the attitudes can be changed to benefit the movement.

While this study had a distribution of responses from professionals from various sectors, it did suffer from low participation on the part of consumer organization representatives. Who are the autonomous and recognized consumer leaders of today? Which sectors are breeding the consumer information, protection, and education leaders of tomorrow? If it is not the consumer organization representative, what factors have contributed to the evolution of another sector having dominance?

A large assumption of this research has been that consumer professionals are capable of assessing the present status and future directions of the consumer movement. While this study has provided an overview of the consumer movement, it leaves unanswered the important question of whether consumer professionals can recognize the stages of their movement and plan strategically for these periods in the future. Perhaps other groups of professionals or possibly the public would represent a better gauge, or at least a supplemental index, of the health of the present and future of the movement.

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Will best address the concerns consumers perceive themselves as experiencing.

Can potentially offer the best consumer information.

APPENDIX 1 RESPONSIBILITIES

Explanation of technological advancements in consumer products/services.

Legal action against business which violates consumer rights.

Advocate for consumers to unite in order to achieve action.

Is best organized to fight for consumer rights.

Will emphasize to the public the need for additional consumer legislation.

Will be running complaint bureaus.

Will have the primary responsibility for assuring that consumers get a fair deal.

TEACHING ETHICS AND HUMAN VALUES THROUGH CONSUMER EDUCATION:
CONTRIBUTIONS OF ARISTOTLE, KANT AND MILL

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ABSTRACT

The overall objective of consumer education, according to a recent description by David Schoenfeld, is to "help individuals develop a sense of values, to determine what they most want from life, to set their goals and see them in proper proportion, and then to act according to their own principles" [7, p. 6]. Since consumer education is sensitive to contemporary issues, it offers students a good opportunity to engage in sharp, critical thinking about choices which are real and pressing to them at the time. Through consumer education we can get at ethical quandries and value choices which are daily realities having long-range impacts. But the contemporary environment is confusing. In a time of cultural transition, assumptions which have served as cornerstones for previous decisions are no longer completely trustworthy. Turning to ethical theory for guidance at this time of transition is both reasonable and helpful.

For advanced, industrialized nations like the United States, the last decades of the twentieth century, we are told, will be a time of profound transition, paralleled only by the shift earlier from the agricultural to the industrial society. The new age toward which we are inevitably moving has been termed both the "information age" and the "postindustrial society", and is characterized in part by prolific communications technology, a service-based economy, and alterations in the assumptions on which our current notions of culture rest. While on the one hand the movement toward the new society is a reaching out to embrace the new opportunities ahead, it is also a movement being pushed along by inescapable changes in the environmental, economic and political realities of the industrial era.

In 1978, Ronald Stampfl projected a timeline for the values shifts accompanying the cultural transition from an industrial to a postindustrial age [9, p. 25]. If his predictions were correct we are now experiencing the transitional era, sandwiched between the pursuit of "the American dream" on the one hand and a sincere concern for efficient and responsible consumption on the other. Stampfl described transitional consumers as being torn between the wants stimulated by the industrial age values they have assimilated and the marketing practices which encourage acting on those values, and the shoulds which are more supportive of the world condition as they have more recently come to understand it. Transitional consumers are no strangers to value conflict and are likely to be ambivalent and unsure about the proper consumption decisions to make. In the last analysis, they are involved in a question of ethics: In this instance, what is the right thing

to do, think, or advocate?

THEORIES OF ETHICS

The study of ethics is the study of theories of human conduct. It is a continuing dialogue reflecting attempts of many philosophers over the centuries to describe behaviors that "ought to be"; to establish the criteria as to what actions are right and wrong, or to consider the nature and causes of virtue. In particular, the writings of Aristotle, Immanuel Kant and John Stuart Mill represent the great traditions which have shaped the secular visions of morality in our society. These authors have established the notions of moral and civic excellence, of equality and human dignity, and of tolerance and social activism.

Theories of ethics, or moral behavior, separate into two major types: deontological (from the Greek deon, meaning "that which is obligatory"); and teleological (from the Greek telos, meaning "end"). Deontological ethical theory is duty-based. It contends that duty involves a moral law and that the right thing to do is therefore derived from duty or obligation. Deontological theory asserts that human conduct is governed by a moral code which transcends culture and is universally true, and that the faculties of human reason imbue us with the knowledge of what is right to do, regardless of the consequences. The "categorical imperative" developed by Immanuel Kant ("Act only according to that maxim by which you can at the same time will that it should become a universal law") is a classic example of deontological ethics because Kant believed that this principle described a duty for moral behavior which was binding at all times and places [5, p. 39]. Deontological theory asserts that since we have control only over the will and not over the consequences or ends of actions, it is the intent of the action which is the subject of moral criticism, not the outcome. While the importance of the individual autonomy of the moral actor is stressed in Kant's ethics, such autonomy is limited by the overriding principle which requires that to remain consistent we must treat others as autonomous individuals like ourselves. This means we must respect their lives, treating them as ends and never as means.

Teleological ethics is goal-oriented and is composed of moral theories which assert that human conduct is rightly organized around and naturally motivated by the pursuit of a desirable end--a "good", or a goal. The challenge for any teleological moral code is to define the "good" or the goal deemed worthy of focused human behavior. Aristotelian ethics and Mill's utilitarianism are two predominant theories which are teleological. Aristotle defines the goal of all human action as

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personal excellence, which he says can be acquired partially through the practicing of personal virtues at the appropriate level of balance, between the extremes of excess and deprivation. For example, the virtue of generosity represents a position of balance between the extremes of extravagance and stinginess [1, p. 83]. For Aristotle, personal excellence is acquired primarily through the doing of the virtue--the practice of it--rather than from the end result of the action [1, p. 68]. He is thus more concerned with persons coming to be good, than with the good they will do once they are good. He asserts that through the voluntary practice of the virtues, we will eventually become virtuous. Utilitarian philosophy, which is also teleological, is more concerned with the satisfaction of desires than with virtuous dispositions. In utilitarian philosophy there must be some way to measure satisfaction, because an analysis of the costs and benefits of competing utilities is necessary for decision-making. For a utilitarian, one's motive is of little moral concern. If the end result improves satisfaction, then the good thing was done. A crucial component of utilitarianism, however, is that satisfaction is to be secured not only individually, but "to the greatest extent possible, secured to all mankind; and not to them only, but, so far as the nature of things admits, to the whole sentient creation" [6, p. 16]. Because of this emphasis on aggregate utility, utilitarianism is susceptible to individual injustice or inequality--not by intent, but through practice. For example, forfeiting the needs or desires of a few may be required as a sacrifice if the gains of the many are maximized. All that classical utilitarianism requires is that there be a net gain in utility. It does not require that the utility which is gained be distributed such that everyone shares in the gain.

Culture in the United States in the 20th century subscribes primarily to the utilitarian moral view, a code consonant with a capitalistic, democratic society. The goal could be described as the achievement of aggregate satisfaction through the industrial efficiencies of a free growth economy. If enough can be produced, eventually it will be distributed, either directly or through transfer or trickle-down, so that all will enjoy living levels of sufficiency and decency. U.S. culture thus assumes that a fair distribution of maximized utility will be accomplished. The emphasis on economic growth and on material gain as the "good" throughout the industrial era has led naturally--although perhaps not logically--to a use of the Gross National Product and other national economic indicators as measurements of aggregate satisfaction. These indicators allow us to track our progress over time and provide a relative estimate of our net economic well-being, the assumption being that more is better. And consumption theory, of course, parallels utilitarianism. For consumers as well as utilitarians the goal of purposeful behavior is to maximize satisfaction by gaining the greatest amount of utility from available resources.

However, the abbreviated form of utilitarianism practiced in the United States has some ethical shortcomings. It is limiting in the sense that

satisfaction tends to be measured predominantly in economic terms. The "bottom-line" mentality so prevalent today overshadows other potentially rewarding and possibly more sensitive ways of measuring human satisfaction and well-being. In addition, utilitarianism in the United States reflects the tendency toward inequality. For example, if satisfaction is measured in the aggregate, the rich may be encouraged through fiscal policy incentives to get richer because the overall increase in wealth maximizes national measurements of satisfaction, even though the basic needs of the poor may remain unmet. Worse, U.S. utilitarianism is also culture-centric in that concern about and measurement of satisfaction in the aggregate is limited to U.S. society, and not expanded to all of creation as Mill envisioned utilitarianism in 1861. With no measure for the rest of the world in the notion of the aggregate, and with the power that accrues to wealth, there is a tendency for the United States to take and use a larger proportion of world resources than its population size would justify in order to maximize its own national and cultural satisfaction. To the extent that consumption behavior reflects this culture-centrism, it manifests these ethical shortcomings.

CHALLENGES FOR EDUCATORS

During these years of transition, the challenges are many for educators attempting to effectively and responsibly address consumer issues. The increasing amount of cultural questioning as to whether industrial-age values are legitimate, justifiable, and sustainable for consumers of our time makes difficult and perhaps even outdated the teaching of the more traditional growth-oriented value assumptions. On the other hand, there is little that is concrete toward which one may focus attention. Those of us who feel a responsibility to address ethical questions will likely be hesitant and unsure about doing so since there appear to be no particular sanctions beyond personal conviction and previously developed, often contradictory, systems of moral thought to endorse particular viewpoints.

It is helpful to realize that as we go about our daily lives there are two sets of rules which govern our moral conduct. One is embodied in legality--in the laws we have agreed on to codify certain "shoulds" and "oughts" within our society. The other is described by the notion of ultimate concerns--those large convictions deeply held by individuals and about which we generally agree to disagree. Legalties and ultimate concerns can be viewed as being at two ends of a continuum, for there tends to be a gap or a sharp distinction between these two ways of dealing with morality: one is public, enforced, binding, obligatory; the other is private, voluntary, perhaps ideological, and to a great extent arbitrary. There are two unfortunate results of this gap. One is that there is a lack of moral discourse in our society. We tend to withhold from each other our ultimate concerns and to feel it is inappropriate to put our individual values on the line in the larger community. The other result is the tendency to

want to solve moral problems through law--to increasingly regulate our interactions with one another. Consumer educators experience the same dichotomy. Taking a classroom stand based on one's personal values puts one on the end of the continuum closest to ultimate concerns--an important but somewhat arbitrary position. On the other hand, representing consumer responsibility as simply the legal obligations of consumers in this society seems limited indeed.

One solution to these moral polarities is to strengthen the middle ground, which could be called civility. Civility is the basis of our shared morality, and by way of civility ethical behavior is enforced informally through such mechanisms as peer group expectations and tolerance levels. As a culture we need to talk about our commonalities as well as our differences, for through respectful dialogue we can find the overlaps as well as the variations in our ultimate concerns. The commonalities of heritage and conviction need to be noticed and reinforced; otherwise, they run the risk of atrophy and death, especially in a time of cultural transition. An objective, then, of any study of ethics is to encourage the dialogues of civility. This is done by (1) helping persons develop a clarity of consciousness about their own ultimate concerns, and (2) providing individuals with a set of concepts and a degree of confidence so that they will be willing and able to express their convictions.

Both of these goals are important for consumer educators venturing into this realm. Ethical behavior does appear as a sub-concept in consumer education in the monograph Classification of Concepts in Consumer Education [2, p. 42], but it is not well defined as to what that should involve. Other consumer literature is equally lacking in direction and content about ethics. One notable exception is the description by Ronald Stampfl of a consumer code of ethics inferred from the four basic consumer rights clarified by John F. Kennedy. In summarizing his attempt to define a consumer code of ethics, Stampfl said, "These ethical prescriptions for consumers are suggestive of guidelines which must be developed by those in consumer affairs with a philosophical orientation. Fairness, justice and logic require that consumers must have an ethical framework to guide them in their marketplace behavior if they are to expect other marketplace participants to act ethically" [10, p. 19].

In my opinion, as consumers we have been more in the habit of blaming the system for our difficulties than in attempting to define our own responsibilities. The central consumer problem facing us now is not found in the headlines or on the congressional agenda. It is the problem of repositing our cultural values and expectations so that they reflect the realities of the contemporary environment and result in consumer decisions which are appropriate and sustainable for our future in a changed world. Consumer educators do indeed need a set of concepts which help move discussions about values to the middle ground of civility, where issues can be examined from that common heritage and set of concerns recognized as being bind-

ing on us all. Ethical theory provides some of those concepts.

GUIDELINES FOR CONSUMER EDUCATION

Based on the preceding cursory analysis of ethical theory and in light of the contemporary consumer environment, the following guidelines for the application of ethics to consumer education seem reasonable and defensible as a starting point:

1. Insist on a concern for the well-being and satisfaction of other persons as a consideration in consumer decision-making. The obligation to include a concern about others as a component of one's own satisfaction is well documented in ethical theory as being morally sound. In fact, it is the common denominator in all Western moral thought. Consideration for the well-being of others mirrors both Aristotle and Kant in that it reflects good will toward each individual, and of course aggregate satisfaction is a cornerstone in utilitarian theory. These are both appropriate levels of concern for consumers.

Economic theory is not helpful as a model in addressing this issue because of its emphasis on individual utility and satisfaction. Scitovsky notes, "Economists will not analyze the motivation of consumer behavior, claiming that that would be beyond their competence and that it would inevitably involve an improper judgment: that of judging one man's way of making the best of his life by another man's standards. As a result, the economist's approach to his subject tacitly assumes that consumers know what they are doing and are doing the best they can, so that the economist's only task is to see that the economy delivers what consumers want" [8, p. 5]. Theories of consumption thus begin with the assumption that any decision which maximizes a consumer's satisfaction--makes him happy at the time--is a rational consumer decision. In responding to this assumption, Lester Thurow observes, "Whether individuals buy good X or good Y they are still rational individual utility maximizers. By definition, there is no such thing as an individual who does not maximize his utility. But if a theory can never be wrong, it has no content" [12, p. 218]. Such a standard for rational decision-making endorses consumer choices which are short-sighted, wasteful, self-indulgent--indeed, even self-destructive. Still, it is viewed as a perfectly legitimate teachable concept about use of resources.

To the extent that economic theory dominates consumer education, micro decision rules will continue to be taught which emphasize personal/private utility as the major criterion for satisfaction. To that extent as well, the potential exists for consumer education to advocate self-serving behavior which is culture-bound, ideological and narrow in scope, and virtually useless as a decision model for consumers of our time. Global aggregate welfare and basic human justice must become com-

ponents of rational consumer decision-making. If this one guideline were carefully followed by a majority of American consumers, we would move much closer to ideal consumer sovereignty --the state in which a culture or a market consciously decides how its resources will be used.

2. Promote an awareness of cultural limitations and global influences. "The ultimate goal of a study of consumer economics," says Swagler, "should be to familiarize students with the environment in which they as consumers must operate" [11, p. 4]. On the whole, as educators, we haven't done too badly here. The socialization of consumers has long been a part of recognized consumer education content, in the sense that consumers must understand their own environment and their role in it, and must learn effective ways of managing the cultural influences on their behavior, to the extent that these influences are recognized. But at this juncture, I am advocating a wider understanding of cultural influence.

American consumer education has been culture-centric. As we move into the postindustrial society, students' perspectives of the consumer environment must widen to include the global community. If we are serious about consideration of the well-being of others, we must be aware of the ways in which American consumer behavior affects people elsewhere in the world. One such influence relates to global resource use. Since all people draw on resources from nature, both directly and through technology, resource depletion and waste can be seen as inexcusable affronts to global satisfaction now and in the future, and as such are profoundly immoral. Further, from the standpoint of the environment itself, separate from its human utility, such behavior is homocentric. It is crucial in our time that U.S. consumers adopt a global perspective on resource use and learn to look at the U.S. as only one part of a larger whole.

Another global influence of American consumption is derived from the power that accrues to a market with a demand like that of the United States. The growing interdependence of world economics and politics is complex, but the lure of the American market can and does tempt impoverished countries to export to the U.S. necessities for life which their own native populations require at home to avoid deprivation and starvation. Nutritionist Joan Gussow illustrates this point when she states that she hasn't eaten a banana for several years because she can't find a politically acceptable one to buy [3, p. 57]. Students of consumer education have to begin learning what it costs people of other countries to supply the magnificent market to which American consumers have become accustomed.

The global market and international consumer issues represent an area of interaction which is complex and difficult to understand. Often, however, questions of war and peace center

around resource availability and distribution. It is imperative that American students be aware of the influence of their culture on the global community. They must come to realize that economic power of the magnitude experienced by the U.S. carries with it an overriding moral responsibility to make sure that power is not unwittingly abused. To this end, students need to see their roles as consumer, producer and citizen as being fully integrated and mutually responsible, and to be cognizant of the externalities of American consumption patterns both on persons living elsewhere in the world and on persons not yet born.

3. Include the virtues of sharing and giving in the list of consumer competencies taught. Sharing and giving are choices which can be made in the allocating of personal resources toward desired ends. They are not seen as priority behaviors for persons in a mass-consumption industrial society which stresses independence in activity and private ownership of possessions. Much more interest and attention accrues to spending, saving, borrowing and investing competencies. At present in the U.S., giving and sharing behaviors tend to be looked on as afterthoughts--as desirable options when one has something leftover or unused. Few people give "off the top" in response to a sense of moral duty to repay benefits gained or support a worthy cause. Part of the problem may stem from the sense of disillusionment so prevalent today among consumers. If one perceives that there never is enough for oneself, it is not likely that much will be shared or given away.

Both sharing and giving are practical ways of expressing concern for others beyond oneself, and are also ways of avoiding waste by gaining efficiency from resources which otherwise might be unused. But beyond their utility, the practice of these virtues can bring about an important attitude and value change in the person who is being good in the Aristotelian sense. Thus, even if one perceives himself to be alone in his efforts to conserve gasoline or act responsibly in other ways, there still are important reasons for doing so. Such practice also has the potential to replace the endless pursuit of one's own desires with activity which is meaningful and rewarding in a larger sense. And regardless of the outcome of a person's efforts to give or share, if the intent of the giver was in accordance with the categorical imperative, one has also acted morally from the standpoint of duty.

A corollary to the discussion of sharing and giving as ways of redistributing income or wealth is the consideration of justice as a moral priority in economic decision-making. Traditional ethical theories treat differently the supremacy of justice as a moral imperative. "Justice," says Aristotle, "is regarded as the highest of all virtues...It is complete virtue and excellence of the fullest sense, because it is the practice of complete virtue" [1, p. 114]. According to Aristotle, justice

is a complete virtue because he who possesses it can make use of his virtue not only by himself but also in his relations with his fellow men. "Of the offenses (to justice) the lesser is to suffer unjustly and the greater is to act unjustly" [1, p. 128]. Utilitarians maintain that on the whole equality between equals is commendable, but that there are times when utility requires inequality. Mill does not believe that justice implies a right to a specific treatment, and thus sees no duty on the part of others to honor such a right [6, p.62]. He points out that the notion of justice varies with the situation, and suggests that only through utility can justice be appropriately explained in a situation. On the other hand, Kant contends that justice is a duty which must never be traded away or compromised. The categorical imperative for the good will implies a concern for justice, and humans must always be treated as ends, not means [5, p. 49]. While agreement about the priority of justice may not be reached, at the least justice can be understood as a central social value concerned with the fair distribution of goods. Questions about justice need to be asked and discussed in consumer education. A sensitivity to justice as a consumer issue can be developed with any definition, and the quandries of justice presented to students for their own investigations and conclusions.

4. Advocate emerging values and position them positively. The values which Stampfl describes as characterizing the postindustrial age are largely the values which have grown out of an awareness of resource limitations and interdependencies and a concern for conservation [9]. They are typical of values given priority by previous generations of Americans and by people living now in less affluent countries; they appear new to present generations of Americans who have been socialized in a culture of affluence. Transitional consumers particularly need to see the alternative values as a movement toward something good rather than as a loss of something better. The voluntary simplicity movement is a good example of this kind of active value choice.

Concentration on teleological theory may be more effective here. Much of the writing on the global population/resource crisis has been somewhat Malthusian in tone. For example, in his book An Inquiry Into the Human Prospect, economist Robert Heilbroner describes as the central challenge the inescapable need to limit growth. But Heilbroner is pessimistic. He concludes that humankind will not willingly make the changes in lifestyle necessary to limit growth because of the paradox that such changes have to be initiated by those least motivated to do so. His assumption is that those in power will refuse to deny themselves pleasures; that consumption and production are seen as the most desirable ends by most people in power; and that any change toward a lifestyle which requires less consumption would be perceived as a reduction in well-being, which

would not be voluntarily sought by anyone [4, p. 135]. Heilbroner is probably correct that a sense of duty is not going to motivate the powerful in a capitalistic, consumption-oriented society like the U.S. toward corrective economic action. Self-denial for its own sake is seen as generally more stupid than virtuous, and few respond well to preaching, "guilt-trips" or doomsday threats. And Heilbroner and others may be right in suggesting that the needed changes will have to come through legalities or through wars of retribution. But it doesn't detract from the seriousness of the problem to present the alternatives in a positive manner. The disillusionment present among American consumers coupled with the global issues on the nightly news might just be enough to motivate some to voluntarily adopt some lifestyle changes and to become articulate in advocating the same to others.

CONCLUSION

The overall objective of consumer education, according to a recent description by David Schoenfeld, is to "help individuals develop a sense of values, to determine what they most want from life, to set their goals and see them in proper proportions, and then to act according to their own principles" [7, p. 6]. Since consumer education is sensitive to contemporary issues, it offers a good opportunity for students to engage in sharp, critical thinking about choices which are real and pressing to them at the time. Through consumer education we can get at ethical quandries and value choices which are daily realities having long-range impacts. But the contemporary environment is confusing. In a time of cultural transition, assumptions which have served as cornerstones for previous decisions are no longer completely trustworthy. Turning to ethical theory at this time is reasonable. Most people want to do the right thing, and ethics provides us with time-honored codes which can not only function as guides for choice but which also will widen our perspectives beyond "bottom-line" measurements. For as Fred Wilhelms has said, "What finally, more than anything else, determines the quality of our lives is the quality of our wanting" [13, p. 29]. Ethics provides a much needed dimension toward defining that end for consumers.

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THE CONSUMER FIELD
A DISCUSSION OF THREE PAPERS

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ABSTRACT

Three different subjects are addressed: a comparative study of ACCI and ACR members, a position paper on teaching values in consumer education and a Delphi study of opinions on the future of the consumer movement. Questions for ACCI members are raised for each paper.

INTRODUCTION

The papers presented are on three distinct topics. Although there are a few points of overlap in the paper on teaching values and topics noted in the Delphi study, the only common elements seem to be that they are papers of interest to ACCI members and have no particular common ground with papers in other sessions on this year's program. I will treat them as separate entities not meant to be contributing to a common theme.

ACCI AND ACR

We seem to have an interest in how we are doing compared to someone else. This paper feeds that interest by not only describing who we are, but what others think of our publications and what we think of theirs.

I'm not sure that the two groups are appropriate for head-to-head comparisons. The authors show reasons for considering the groups as different, and I would add that the timing of their respective foundings, the purposes for which they were founded and their differing histories put them in somewhat intersecting but largely disjoint sets. It is true that both organizations include research activities as a purpose, but for one it is one of several goals and for the other it is THE goal.

I wish the authors had given us some implications to discuss. They probably had some things they were expecting and have thought of uses for their findings. Perhaps they left this out so that the discussant then would have something to add. The exercise raises some questions for ACCI. Do we want to be more like ACR? If so, is it by having more room for marketing orientations or a more encompassing commitment to research as our *raison d'etre*? Do we want to encourage membership in ACCI for those in business positions? In Canada, we have an association for consumer affairs professionals from business, academe, government, and the volunteer sector of the consumer movement. I don't know of such a forum in the U.S.

Should ACCI become that forum? While it is nice to have a journal that is rated highly by non-members, the real test of quality is still the service rendered to readers. Nevertheless, we might ask if the high percentage of our members that considers the JCA a high quality journal indicates that we are catering to readers with lower standards of excellence or to readers with different standards tied to different goals. If the latter, we don't care about the 75% of the ACR members who rate the JCA as average or lower. If the former, we have an education task ahead. There are other questions that might be raised, but these will serve to show that the generation of hypotheses and strategic questions for our leaders is the main value of this paper.

CONSUMER EDUCATION AND VALUES

This paper raises an important topic and gives us a push in a fruitful direction. Values, goals and standards are implicit in every consumer decision; as the author points out, economic concepts are either "valueless" or have unacknowledged values implicit in them; pretending that values aren't important or that any sincerely held set of values will do is naive at best and malevolent at worst. Any shortcomings that I mention about the paper do not detract from the contribution the author makes by making the topic more visible.

The paper is a start, but, as the author acknowledges, not much more. The discussions of the philosophical background and of the nature of the values she sees appropriate to the postindustrial society are very limited. This is of necessity for the time available but carries a price - incompleteness and a lack of rigor. What we get for the price is four guidelines for consumer education and its role in the teaching of values. These are worth noting.

The first is the promotion of an awareness of limitations and influences. The author has a specific conclusion about what should be taught, but that aside, one role for consumer education is to make consumers aware of the influences around them, the alternatives to the values implicit or explicit in the influences and the need to take responsibility for their choices. This stage we could call "values clarification". The second guideline is really an ethical stand, "insist on a concern for the well-being and satisfaction of the aggregate ...". Nevertheless, this and guideline three, including the virtue of sharing and giving in consumer competencies, represents a second stage, "values evaluation". Some values are more valuable than others and consumer educators need to address this area in

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doing a complete job of values education. Finally, both values clarification and values evaluation require that we have the sense of history recommended in guideline four, the positioning of emerging values. Actually, Peterson calls for us to "advocate emerging values and position them positively", but the text seems to ask only for learning from the past. I don't think that consumer educators should be asked to advocate or position positively any values that happen to emerge.

In addition to the values that will emerge in a future age, we could take note of the values that seem important to every age. The author's point that history can help us position values is equally true for this area of consistently important values as for the understanding of values that show up occasionally.

If consumer educators are to perform in teaching (vs. inculcating) values, Peterson's paper also has some implications for ACCI. Obviously, the professional development of consumer educators needs to include the knowledge and skills to perform the tasks outlined. Materials that support this area of education need to be developed. At the very least, we need full sessions and expanded papers on both the values that we must understand and the approaches to teaching in this vital area. As I noted at the outset, the one thing we cannot do is ignore the area.

THE FUTURE OF THE CONSUMER MOVEMENT

The Delphi technique has its proponents. I have problems with it being any more than a laborious (albeit relatively inexpensive) conversation. When many drop out of the conversation, the promise of a comprehensive picture is further compromised. I think the authors understand these limitations, so I will jump to their suggestions for research. The main contribution of this technique is in this area, anyway.

The first set of questions is addressed to the viability of independent consumer organizations. This is a major concern, but I'm not sure that research is going to give us answers - the issues are philosophical in large part - but the leaders of the consumer movement will have to struggle with these issues in the realization that the answers of the 1960's and 1970's may have to be modified if not replaced. The anomalies noted by the authors help to realize that the status quo is not stable.

The authors state that the "study concluded that consumers are most concerned with benefiting their personal well-beings" and that "the increase in consumer leaders advocating the rights of the poor and minorities seems to contradict this". The study really concluded that consumer leaders think that consumers are only concerned with themselves. I would suspect that slowness to follow the leaders on rights of the poor would be the evidence supporting their view of consumers. Whatever the case may be for the lead-

ers, sorting out where consumers are on a self-others scale would be a useful base for putting Peterson's values education into effect.

I was encouraged by the reported perceived need for consumer education for all age groups. The proposed Delphi study is less likely to help them some basic needs assessments for various segments of learners. Whichever step is taken, it would seem to be a good time to enlist support from the various groups taking part in this study. Where we start is a political matter and may vary from state to state. As long as adults are included in the list of target groups in a significant way, it probably doesn't matter who else is included at the outset.

We can be sure that the questions about information search behavior will get attention - probably reported at ACR meetings or in the Journal of Consumer Research. It is one of the major areas of interest that has occupied marketing for some time.

The remainder of the questions suggested are also worthwhile. Sufficiently worthwhile to encourage me to suggest that we need a study of the consumer movement using a model of collective behavior such as suggested by Neil Smelser² or Daniel Yankelovich³. This will allow us to consider the social structure, generalized beliefs and likely precipitating events leading to the behavior that gave rise to the questions set out in this paper. Without this objective background, we can't go beyond pooling opinions.

²Smelser, Neil J. Theory of Collective Behavior. New York: The Free Press, 1962.

³Yankelovich, Daniel. New Rules. New York: Random House, 1981.

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ABSTRACT

"America at Risk: A History of Consumer Protest" is a one-hour documentary, funded in part by Consumers Union, which examines the history of the consumer movement. This discussion describes some uses of the documentary in a classroom setting, and offers several personal observations on the film's technical quality, content, and overall impact.

Let me begin by saying that I am delighted to have this documentary available for teaching about the consumer movement. It is timely and appropriate in the 1980s, and I consider it to be a most fitting project with which to commemorate a half-century of effort on the part of Consumers Union to further the consumer interest. This visual history provides a valuable perspective and context for contemporary consumer education, and will bring to life for today's students much of the passion and enthusiasm characteristic of social reform. Most of us use in our classes the excellent history compiled by Robert Hermann, and much of that is recognizable in "America at Risk". But having the history now in sound and living color provides considerable impact for students of the video age since they are used to getting information in that way. The comments which follow focus primarily on the potential uses for "America at Risk" in the classroom, and I have some observations to share about its technical quality, content, perspective, and overall impact.

TECHNICAL QUALITY

The radio-tv production staff at the University of Montana continually reminds the faculty that anything which is going to be shown on a television set must be a first-class production. Viewers are accustomed to technical excellence and excitement from general broadcasting and therefore expect the same quality whenever they watch a TV. The medium is indeed a great part of the message. Inferior or amateur technical work lacks credibility with an audience, inviting criticism and diminishing the impact of the content, no matter how important or profound. "America at Risk" measures up--it is educational television at its best. The documentary is rich, textured, colorful, active, exciting. It includes a wonderful collection of visual images: black and white, color, stills, action, current events, archival footage. Information is presented in a variety of ways: through narration, interviews, newsreels, ads. All are skillfully woven together in ways that capture interest and capitalize on the unique capabilities of television, using them to the greatest advantage. We can meet people, go places, experience the past,

become involved personally. It sparkles!

The script and format chosen will generally prevent "America at Risk" from becoming quickly dated, a problem with much of the audio-visual consumer education material presently available. The questions at the end about the effects of the deregulation of the 1980's on future consumerism may create some problems. However, I think those questions are open-ended enough that when the answers are known in the future, discussion can proceed forward from that point and the film will still be effective as a valuable summary of the consumer movement. At some points I did find the background music to be strident and intrusive, and wished that it would quit so I could pay attention to what was being said. But overall the documentary generates excitement and commands attention. My students were glued to the set as they watched it, demonstrating their involvement by laughing, wincing and otherwise responding to the events on the screen.

My students thought the program was redundant in returning again to each of the three cases described at the beginning. We discussed why the script was done that way, and decided that probably the intent was to take us from the present to the past and then forward again, showing that there are continuing situations which put American consumers at risk. (As one student said, "I thought legislation had solved most of these problems. I see now that it hasn't.") Despite all that, my students still thought the first ten minutes could be omitted. Perhaps shortening the presentation in that way would be an option, since the full hour length may present a problem in many classroom situations.

Even if the full program can be squeezed in, there is likely to be little time for immediate classroom discussion. One way to keep ideas fresh for the next class meeting is to encourage students to take "word notes". These are one-word concepts which students write down while viewing to remind themselves later of an idea they found interesting. Before the next class meeting, they are to select 5 of those concepts, put them in sentences, and complete one of these two statements: I could use this idea by . . . or, I wonder Another technique which is helpful in recalling ideas to mind later for discussion is to ask different students to look for different things as they watch the film. One might watch for something he agrees with, another for something which surprised her, another for something with which he disagrees, and so on. Some bias may be built in as a result of the focused viewing, but identifying diverse viewpoints will spark a later discussion.

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CONTENT

"America at Risk" is packed full. If you blink, yawn or try to take a note or two, you miss something. I use it at the beginning of my course since virtually anything we discuss during the term can be related back to a visual image planted in the students' minds by the film. I can then continually use the documentary, repeatedly referring to it for context and perspective on classroom topics.

The presentation of material, while certainly liberal and pro-consumer, is not strongly adversarial or radical or heavily propagandized. The documentary is, of course, a history of the consumer movement, and some editorial bias is unavoidable simply by nature of the events which are selected to be described and highlighted. On the whole, though, I think the film is essentially a factual portrait of the evolving American marketplace, ripe with issues to analyze and questions to ponder. In my opinion, the facts speak for themselves and there is editorial strength in allowing them to do so. "America at Risk" emerges as proof, living and in color, that the consumer movement has indeed been the "shame of marketing" without anyone belaboring the point. Perhaps if I were an arch-conservative corporate executive with budget problems rather than a consumer educator I would see the film as being more extreme, but I am comfortable using it in the classroom with its current balance of viewpoints.

Some of my reactions to the content can be traced to my own personal demographics, particularly the descriptors of sex, occupation and age. As a woman, I was particularly delighted to see the acknowledgment and portrayal of the role of women in the consumer movement. The number of women interviewed, shown as leaders, and depicted in stills and news footage is both unusual and welcome. Young women today need to see role models of this sort--strong, articulate, committed, intelligent women who have made and are continuing to make contributions in the best of the feminine tradition. Women can see in the documentary that their grandmothers and great-grandmothers were instrumental in shaping this part of the American tradition, and that there are many effective ways for them as well to influence decisions and gain power over their lives.

As a home economist I was also very pleased to see the contributions of the home economics profession to the consumer movement acknowledged and highlighted. Many viewers unfamiliar with the beginnings of home economics may be surprised to learn that it has its roots in social reform and environmental concern, not in conservative tradition. Home economics students and professionals who see "America at Risk" should feel quite proud of their heritage. Hopefully, they will also be prompted to examine their own roles and goals in light of the original thrust of the movement, the work that remains to be done, and the way in which they want the profession to be viewed now and in the future. I for one intend to ask some of these questions in my classes.

Finally, since I am an elderly "baby-boomer", I was in college and graduate school in the 1960's. Viewing "America at Risk" took me back. I was there again, seeing the same things on television that I saw twenty years ago. Reliving the excitement and activism of those years was both nostalgic and disturbing. The nostalgic part was that I found myself swept up all over again in the heady visions and youthful enthusiasms characteristic of the Kennedy years and that time in my life--the convictions that people could make a difference and the willingness and even eagerness to group together and work for something meaningful. Then when the tape was over, I was struck with the vast difference in mood and spirit characteristic of young people today, and that was the disturbing part. The passivity and conservatism which pervade our contemporary society seem almost stifling by contrast. What has happened to the sense of vision and purpose which have been the catalysts for so much of American history? How do we give it back to our young people?

I think "America at Risk" has part of the answer. I had hoped the students who watched it would be swept up in the excitement like I was--but I guess you had to be there. Probably the history of the consumer movement pales next to what they are used to in video excitement! But the part of the answer which is here is through role modeling. By way of this film, students can meet real people who have given a lifetime of professional energy, effort and intelligence to a cause in which they found meaning. They can see those lifetimes unfold, observe those people in action, and see the ways in which influence came to bear. Ultimately they can see that one person here and one person there, man or woman, young or seasoned, can make a difference. If we can convince our students through consumer education that they can make a difference, we too will have made a difference. For out of that will grow the grass-roots action necessary now for maintenance of the consumer movement in the 1980's and beyond. "America at Risk" is an invaluable tool toward that end.

CONCLUSION

In dealing with the pressures and distractions of daily life, it's easy to lose one's sense of direction. For consumer educators I think this is especially true. There are so many issues crying for attention and interesting to explore which relate to our consumer mission. The longer we teach, the harder it is to squeeze everything into the time allotted. I have reached the point again in my classes where I need to go back to the beginning, select the most important concepts, and re-focus course content and objectives. The consumer movement is also somewhat diffused and in a state of transition due to the contemporary political and economic environment. In choosing new directions now for the future it is especially important to recall the foundations of the past. Looking back always provides important perspectives for moving forward--we see where we've been and why, and what we choose to do next takes its meaning and sense from the momentum already established.

AMERICA AT RISK--One Educator's Views

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"America at Risk: A History of Consumer Protest" is an outstanding portrayal of many of the main events which, woven together, constitute a major portion of the U.S. consumer movement. However, the film makes no claim to having tried to portray the totality of the consumer movement. Therefore, it doesn't deal with the social science research or the educational dimensions which also are a part of that movement, as the very existence of the American Council on Consumer Interests attests.

An aspect of social conditions today which bears additional comment is the matter of trust which is indirectly raised by Michael Pertshuk. Too often, I feel, we don't take stock of how much society pays (that is, we pay) for deteriorating trust levels. The added costs which are incurred and built into pricing structures, in turn to be paid by consumers, because of lack of trust are substantial. And, unless we can find ways to stem the deterioration of trust levels, those costs are likely to continue to mount. No amount of protest per se will deal with that. It requires a willingness to examine our moral and ethical commitments as well as a willingness to act upon those. And we humans don't seem always to be willing to do that.

Although the National Consumer League's motivation was to overcome exploitation of workers during the 30s and 40s, it illustrates an action with roots back into moral and ethical considerations--they felt it was wrong to exploit human beings so that other humans could benefit. Also, Ralph Nader's appeal for moral accountability as an ideology is in line with this need to be concerned about the moral and ethical foundations of the consumer movement.

The film does a good job of showing how coalitions can be effective politically--e.g., the American Home Economics Association and feminist leaders joining together to protest in the mid-30s. Perhaps we need to be reminded of the saliency of coalitions to bring about reform. Coalitions sometimes of individuals and organizations with radically different views about certain subjects but which happen to agree on issues of substance in the consumer interest. We need to be willing to join forces on an issue-by-issue basis.

One is reminded in viewing the film of the difference between technological risk and economic risk. It seems to me that we've been better at arousing public concern about consumer issues that involve technological and health risks than we have about stirring concern over economic risks. That may simply be stating a challenge for us to keep in mind and work on.

Our interdependence--both on one another domestically and between countries internationally--is well taken (ala Michael Pertshuk's comments). As consumers and in our citizen roles more generally we need reminding from time to time of our great dependence on one another. Perhaps if we are reminded often enough we will take action to find ways to implement quality standards which facilitate international movement of goods as well as bring about more rational monetary and fiscal policies which do not have the effect of impeding international movements of goods and even services.

As an editorial aside, I would like to make a plea for those of us in the consumer movement, perhaps especially those in the educational arm of the movement, to consider its impact on the development of human resources. The extent to which human beings are free to develop their potential is dependent, at least in part, on the realization of the goals of the consumer movement. If we perceive it that way, it may help us to keep our perspective of the consumer movement and its constituent parts more in balance and comprehensive.

"America at Risk" is a fine film. It should be useful in arousing interest as well as understanding among traditional students (secondary, college, university) and with adults and others in informal educational programming as well. It is well done.

