A METHOD OF DIAGNOSING CUSTOMER SHOPPING HABITS AND PREFERENCES OF RETAIL FOOD STORES

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A METHOD OF DIAGNOSING CUSTOMER SHOPPING HABITS
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By

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

An Approach to the Study of Diagnosing Customer Shopping Habits And Preferences of Retail Food Stores

Most retail food stores of today show very little resemblance to the old fashioned grocery store of 30 years ago. During the early 1920's the decision to install a new store by a food chain often came from the fact that the supervisor or some other member of management had noted a vacant store. If it was decided that the chain needed a store in the neighborhood, a lease was arranged with the owner of the building. The painters and carpenters were sent in to renovate the old store which might very well be put in operation within two weeks, at a cost of from $1,000 to $2,000.[1]

The grocery departments in these stores were of the service type with the grocer servicing each customer. The produce departments were small and often displayed the produce in the original shopping containers. These stores frequently carried smoked meats but the cutting of fresh meats in those days was regarded as a specialized job and not adaptable to the chain store system.

Since the early 1930's the trend of chain store organizations has been away from this old service type operation toward the large self-service, cash and carry super markets. Although the first super markets were started by individuals, the chains were quick in seeing their advantages,

1 Twenty-Five Years of Progress in Store Buildings. Chain Store Age. June, 1950. p. J 13.

and adopted them. These food giants have made obsolete the old fashioned poorly lighted service store of yesterday. The super market of today is a complete food store with gleaming expanses of self-service refrigerated displays of meat, produce, dairy and delicatessen sections. It also makes use of self-service bakery departments and mass displays of a wider variety of packaged goods than ever before.

With these improvements in the stores of today, there are as many different designs and as many different methods of operation as there are operators in the food industry. All, no doubt, have some commendable features, but essentially they are constructed to attract traffic to the store and serve the customer in the most efficient and pleasing manner.

While the small old fashioned food store of the 1920's represented an investment of from $1,000 to $2,000, it was small when compared to the investment of from $200,000 to $300,000[2] in a super market of today.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to present a research technique which can be used to investigate the shopping habits and preferences of the customers of any store. This technique was to take personal interviews in the immediate area of the store by using the adopted questionnaire. This will show which customers the operator is attracting and the reasons for not attracting others. As the approach to the study mentioned, the size of the food store of today and the investment in these stores have, in some instances, reached $300,000. Indications are that it will become

2 Paul Sayres. Super Markets Are Here to Stay. Food Marketing. William Albers, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1950. p. 46.

larger. With this large investment in each outlet, it is important to the operator that each market be a success.

Although much time, effort and money are spent on the planning of the super market, it has often been found that; (1) many times the store does not do the business expected after it has been opened, and (2) if the store is doing the volume expected, there is still more potential sales to attract. This study will present some of the reasons why customers like and dislike certain super markets. Reasons such as these determine the success or failure of a market.

The author's primary purpose is to present a technique of finding out the characteristics of consumers, their preferences habits and opinions which are important to the development of any store. Lansing is not, of course, an exact duplicate of every other city in the country and generalizations on the results cannot be made. However, the results of this survey will show operators what they can find out about their customers in similar surveys. With increasing competition among super markets, and margins on the decline, the food store operator must resort to the most efficient and economical manner of distribution. The author feels that this can be accomplished only by continuous research, and making improvements that the consumer demands.

The many improvements and varieties of food stores which have been mentioned have developed because of a monopolist. This monopolist is the consumer, who is the real boss. The food store operator must cater to the whims and fancies of this boss. The consumer is the person who has the money to spend, wherever she pleases, and, therefore, allows the operator to stay in business.

Competition for the "boss consumer" is becoming more intense each day. The food store operator is trying every means available to attract the consumer. This report was made possible by the response from this "boss consumer."

The present study was taken because the author has long had an appreciation of various research techniques, and feels there is a great need for more marketing research in the food industry. It is hoped that this study will bring to light some of the consumer satisfactions and dissatisfactions of food stores in an unbiased survey. It may help to provide information of value to independent operators, chain store operators and educators in marketing and retailing. The results of this and similar surveys will help educators keep abreast with changes in the industry and, consequently, to improve their attempts to provide better leaders for the food industry.

Phases of the Study

There were four phases to the study. The first phase was to study the characteristics and shopping habits of the respondents. In order to test the respondents on this phase of the study, they were asked to discuss their characteristics and shopping habits by answering questions one through three in the questionnaire. They were also asked the amount of their family income and the interviewer approximated their ages. The second phase of the study analyzed the store preferences of the respondents and the reasons why they did or did not shop in the various outlets. This was done by answering questions four and five. The third phase of the study was to determine respondents' practices and opinions regarding self-

service meats. Respondents were questioned on this phase by answering question six. The last phase of this study covered the effectiveness of advertising media used by the Kroger Company, Market Basket Super Market, Schmidt's Super Food Market and the A & P Super Market. Information on all phases of this study is valuable assistance to the food operators in developing more effective merchandising practices.

Importance of the Study

Marketing research has made rapid strides in many industries in an attempt to settle many of their problems. In spite of this growth in other industries, marketing research has made slow progress in the food industry. Many have doubted the worth of it and have limited the use of it. Some operators have tried the trial and error method of improving a store through their own ideas of what was wrong. In this study an attempt was made to employ a technique which would take the guess work out of improving a store.

Place and Time of Study

The area chosen for the study was selected because of its highly competitive nature. This area contained four chain super markets, two of national chains - the Atlantic and Pacific Tea Company and the Kroger Company, while the other two were local chains in Lansing, namely; Market Basket Super Market and Schmidt's Super Food Market. Included in this area are a number of smaller independent food stores strategically located throughout. The area is bounded on the north by Saginaw Street; on the east by St. Francis; on the west by Hosmer Street; and the area to

the south extended to the homes which had addresses in the 500's.[3]

The survey was taken during the period April 23 to May 9, 1951. The majority of interviews were taken by the author. The rest were taken by another student of Michigan State College who was briefed as to the method being used prior to taking any interviews. All interviews were taken between the hours of 1:00 P.M. and 4:00 P.M.

Method

The material for the survey was obtained by 150 personal interviews. It was found that the income of the neighborhood was relatively homogeneous. The author felt a good cross-section of family shoppers could be obtained by selecting the third house in the southeast corner of every block. In the event the respondent refused to answer or could not be contacted, the next house south was used. In the event the person who did answer did not buy most of the food for the family, the interview was discontinued and once again the next house south was selected.

Questionnaire

A great deal of time was spent in constructing the questionnaire. It was done with the assistance and criticism of the seminar class in the Curriculum in Food Distribution. Three separate questionnaires were devised and pre-tested before the final questionnaire was found to be satisfactory. The first two questionnaires were considerably longer than the final one. The pre-testing showed a need for shortening it.

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3 See outline of this area on page 7. The retail chain super markets are identified by the following numbers:

1 - Kroger Super Market
2 - Market Basket Super Market
3 - A & P Super Market
4 - Schmidt's Super Food Market


1
2
3
4

Definition of Terms

Chain stores. The term chain stores in this survey refers to the four super markets in the area, namely; the A & P Super Market, Schmidt's Super Food Market, Kroger Super Market and the Market Basket Super Market. These stores all have a central buying organization.

Independent stores. All other stores in the area of the survey were independently owned. In the discussion of meats, people referred to June Dale and Bazleys as independents although they are actually retail units of a small retail meat chain. Since common opinion is that they are independents, they will be listed as such.

Respondents. This term refers to the person interviewed.

Review of Literature

Although many research surveys have been made to measure customer shopping habits and preferences, few have been published for distribution that cover all these phases. The literature listed here reports phases of similar studies. The Charles L. Rumrell Company[4] of Rochester, New York, conducted a survey for the E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company on "The Pro's and Con's of Prepackaged Meats." This survey covered 12 large cities throughout the United States which included 3,419 family meat buyers.

The extension service of the University of Maryland[5] conducted a survey on Consumer Shopping Habits in the Baltimore, Maryland market.

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4 "Pro's and Con's of Pre-Packaged Meats". E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company.

5 S. C. Schull and M. R. Godwin. Consumer Shopping Habits. Extension Service, University of Maryland. Extension Bulletin 137.

This covered 464 consumers and the study reports the characteristics of the consumers' preferences, opinions and habits as found in this market.

The Saturday Evening Post[6] in cooperation with the Winston and Newell Company and Six Super Value Stores in Minneapolis, Minnesota, conducted a study and found that in 64.6 percent of the families, the husband made purchases of grocery products for the family. The importance of the husband in the buying habits of the family can be found from the following reports.

One of the questions asked housewives during a survey conducted by Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborne in 1946, was, "When you plan the family meal, whose tastes, likes and dislikes are usually the most important or given the most consideration?" Seventy-seven percent of the women answered, "husbands", 15 percent answered, "some other member of the family", and only 8 percent answered, "themselves".

As far back as 1933 a survey published by Red Book Magazine showed that men influenced the purchase of coffee by kind (type of grind) in 48.6 percent of the families interviewed, and the brand in 71.0 percent of the families.

Food stores conduct 20 to 30 percent of their business with men and in the case of super markets, sometimes 38 percent, according to an article in Advertising and Selling, April, 1946.[7] Super markets, adding up purchases by men shopping alone and men shopping with women, find that men

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6 D. M. Kerr. Profits From Performance. The Voluntary and Cooperative Groups Magazine. March, 1951. p. 25.

7 Trends. Advertising and Selling. Moore and Robbins Publishing Company, Inc., April, 1946. p. 31.

are directly or indirectly responsible for more than 50 percent of their total volume. The male customer is a highly desirable one in a super market because his impulse buying seems to be sharper than that of women customers.

CHAPTER II

SHOPPING HABITS AND CHARACTERISTICS OF RESPONDENTS

The purpose of this chapter is to present pertinent facts about the families interviewed. This will cover both the economic conditions and shopping habits that exist in the neighborhood. These facts will be presented by taking into consideration:

1. Persons interviewed
2. Size of families
3. Age groups
4. Income groups
5. Members of family who purchase grocery products other than person interviewed
6. Trips to food store per week
7. Day of the largest purchase
8. Comparison of reasons for shopping on certain days
9. Methods of transportation

Persons Interviewed

Although 95.3 percent of the persons interviewed were housewives, it is not felt that any generalizations can be made from this fact. Since all interviews were taken between the hours of 1:00 P.M. to 4:00 P.M., it is only natural to assume there would be few men at home during these hours.

During the three days of test interviewing it was found that the housewife was too busy between the hours of 12:00 and 1:00 P.M. serving lunch, and in no mood for interviewers. It was also found that after 4:00 P.M.

she was starting to prepare a meal and did not have the time to spend in giving a good interview. For best results interviews should not be taken during inclement weather. People were reluctant to let the interviewer in the house because of the rain and cold. Also, they did not wish to stand in the doorway during such conditions.

During the test interviews a much longer questionnaire was used which required a great deal of the person's time. It was found that to spend more than ten to fifteen minutes interviewing the housewife resulted in her becoming impatient and giving answers hurriedly to finish the interview.

Size of Families

The average size of the families interviewed was 3.6 persons. The largest percentage of families falling into any one group was the family of three, which was 26.6 percent of the families. Twenty-six percent of the families numbered four persons each.

TABLE 1

SIZE OF FAMILIES INTERVIEWED

Number of Persons	Number of Families	Percent of Interviewed
1	4	2.7
2	30	20.0
3	40	26.7
4	39	26.0
5	28	18.6
6	8	5.3
7	1	.7
Total	150	100.0

It was found that families of three, which comprise the largest group in this survey, made their largest purchases, in 75 percent of the cases, on Friday and Saturday. Thirty-five percent of this class made an average of three trips to the store, while 22.5 percent made an average of six trips to the food store each week.

Families of four averaged three trips to the food store in 41 percent of the cases, while 69.2 percent made their large purchases on Friday or Saturday.

Age Groups

Although the respondents were not asked to give their age, an estimate of the person being interviewed was made. Age groups covered a seven-year period which, in most instances, made it fairly easy to classify those who were interviewed.

The largest percent of the persons interviewed were between the ages of 25 and 48. This covered three age groups and comprised 62 percent of the total.

TABLE 2

AGES OF PERSONS INTERVIEWED

Age Group	Percent of Persons Interviewed
17 - 24	13.3
25 - 32	22.7
33 - 40	20.0
41 - 48	19.4
49 - 56	11.3
57 - 64	8.0
64 -	5.3
Total	100.0

The author feels that this distribution of age groups reflects a good cross-section of the family shoppers in the area. The age groups in this survey are distributed very closely to those which the E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company had in a nationwide survey on self-service meats, as shown in Table 3.[8]

TABLE 3

COMPARISON OF AGE GROUPS IN NATIONWIDE SURVEY VERSUS LOCAL LANSING NEIGHBORHOOD

Age Groups	E. I. du Pont Survey	Local Survey
20 - 34	35.0%	36.0%
35 - 49	40.0	39.4
50 plus	25.0	24.6
Total	100.0%	100.0%

The percentages for the local survey included persons falling within the age group of 17 - 32 years which is two years lower than the E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company figures. There is also a one-year difference in the other two groups. It is felt this difference is of little significance.

Income Groups

The income of families in this neighborhood was predominantly middle class income. It was found that 46.7 percent of the families had an income of $3,000 to $4,000 annually. This is approximately $57 to $77 weekly.

8 E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company, *op. cit.*, p. 5.

TABLE 4

INCOME GROUPS OF FAMILIES INTERVIEWED

Income Groups	Percent of Families
2,000 - 3,000	16.7
3,000 - 4,000	46.6
4,000 - 5,000	19.3
5,000 - 6,000	10.7
6,000 - 7,000	4.0
7,000 and over	2.7
Total	100.0

With our economic conditions today, it is impossible to say what the income trend in this neighborhood will be in the coming years. Industry is making rapid strides in the Lansing area with the government awarding a number of large contracts to various companies. Since many of the respondents were industrial workers, it is likely the income in this area will be considerably higher in the coming years.

Members of Families Who Purchase Grocery Products

Other Than Person Interviewed

If the person who was approached in this survey did not buy most of the food for the family, the interview was discontinued. Since all interviews were taken during the afternoon periods when most of the men were working, it was felt that a great number of these men who might do most of the family shopping were missed.

To compensate for this, to a certain degree, the consumers were asked if any other member of the family ever purchased grocery products. Only 24.7 percent of the interviewed (all housewives) said they did all the

shopping themselves. Table 5 shows the breakdown of the other members of the family who did this shopping.

TABLE 5

MEMBERS OF THE FAMILY THAT PURCHASE GROCERY PRODUCTS OTHER THAN THE PERSON WHO BOUGHT MOST OF THE FAMILY FOOD

Member of Family	Percentage of Instances
Husband	70.7
Daughter(s)	13.3
Son(s)	8.7
Housewife	4.7
Others	5.3
Total	102.7*

*This total equals more than 100 percent as some gave more than one person. This represents 75.3 percent of those interviewed. The other 24.7 did it all themselves.

Table 5 shows that, although men are not the major purchasers of the family food supply, in 70.7 percent of the families they do shop for grocery products at some time.

Trips to Food Store Per Week

It was found that the average number of trips to the food store by the respondents was 3.5 per week; the greatest percentage, 39.4 making an average of three trips per week.

The chief reason respondents in this neighborhood did not make more frequent trips to the food store was that they had their milk and bread delivered. This should be an indication to local independent store owners and chain store operations that there is a possibility of attracting this trade. Items such as bread and milk bring the customer into the store each day. One of the best ways to increase sales is to attract traffic to the store. A method for improvement of attracting traffic to stores in this area could be studied.

Table 6 shows there are but 6 percent of the families making one trip to the food store each week.

TABLE 6

THE AVERAGE NUMBER OF TIMES THE CONSUMERS SHOPPED FOR FOOD EACH WEEK

Average Number of Times Each Week	Percentage of Families
1	6.0
2	14.0
3	39.4
4	17.3
5	6.0
6	17.3
Total	100.0

Only 17.3 percent of the consumers averaged six trips to the food store each week. It is important to the food store operator to increase the number of trips because heavy traffic results in increased sales. The store that attracts more of the bread and milk families, which now have it delivered, will find their customers making more trips to the store, and a substantial increase in store volume as well.

Day of the Largest Purchase

Over 80 percent of the respondents indicated that they made their largest food purchase on either Friday or Saturday. Friday was selected by 48 percent of the respondents, while Saturday was favored by 33.3 percent.

One family stated their big shopping days were the 1st and 15th when their pay check was received.

TABLE 7

DAY OF THE WEEK ON WHICH CONSUMERS MADE THEIR LARGEST PURCHASE

Day of The Week	Percent of Families
Monday	1.3
Tuesday	.7
Wednesday	2.7
Thursday	13.3
Friday	48.0
Saturday	33.3
1st and 15th	.7
Total	100.0

Thirty and eight-tenths percent of the families who made their largest purchase on Thursday, did so in the A & P Super Market. The reasons given by these customers were "to avoid the crowds" and "because the bargains are given in Wednesday's papers". This could possibly be a new trend in which retailers could move some of their heavy weekend traffic to Thursday.

By shifting their promotions and advertising from Thursday to Wednesday both the chain stores and independents might find that Thursday could become a big shopping day.

Attempts have been made by some grocers in various parts of the country to switch store traffic to the early part of the week, but the results have not been encouraging. Retailers attribute this failure to the fact that most families shop heavily for the weekend and have enough food for the early part of the week.

Because of the heavy store traffic on Friday and Saturday, it is reasonable to assume that many of the faults of the food store develop because of the problem of handling such large crowds. The author feels that if other chains were to follow the A & P Super Market method and place their advertisements on Wednesday, a considerable amount of store traffic could be transferred to Thursday. Many consumers compare the advertisements of all four chains before shopping. It would, therefore, be necessary for all four to follow this method of advertising on Wednesday, to be most effective.

Comparison of Reasons for Shopping on Certain Days

Only 4.7 percent of the respondents indicated that their largest purchases were made on the first three days of the week. The reasons given by these shoppers are named in order of importance as follows:

1. Avoid crowds
2. Pay day
3. Transportation
4. Husband's day off

The reasons given by some of these shoppers indicate they are looking for leisurely shopping without being annoyed by a crowd of people. Others are forced to use the early part of the week due to the following reasons; (1) pay day, (2) access to the family car, and (3) husband's day off at which time he can help do the shopping.

The fact that the husband was home on the weekend was given by 24 percent of the families as a reason why they preferred to do their shopping

on the last three days of the week. Closely following this reason was that of waiting until pay day before doing the shopping for the large order each week.

TABLE 8

REASONS WHY CONSUMERS SHOPPED ON THURSDAY, FRIDAY OR SATURDAY

Reasons	Percent of Families
Husband home	24.0
Pay day	20.0
Weekend	16.7
Bargains	16.0
Access to family car	14.7
Night shopping	13.3
Habit	4.0
Other	7.3
Total	116.0*

*This total is more than 100 percent as some gave more than one reason.

Because a large order was needed to last over the weekend, 16.7 percent of the families listed this factor as one of the reasons for the large order on the last three days of the week. Bargains were also given as an important reason by 16 percent of the families. Access to the family car and night shopping also proved to have a strong influence on family shoppers.

Means of Transportation

The automobile was the means of transportation used by 88 percent of the consumers in their shopping trips. Of all the stores listed by the respondents in the area of this survey only the three large super markets; namely, A & P, Market Basket, and Kroger, provided parking lots. With the increased use of cars by consumers, adequate parking facilities are becoming more important.

Over 84 percent of the respondents walked to the store to purchase food products. Many times this was done only during the week for fill-in items at the nearby store.

TABLE 9

MEANS OF TRANSPORTATION BY WHICH CONSUMERS PURCHASED FOOD PRODUCTS

Method of Travel	Percent of Families
Automobile	88.0
Walking	84.7
Bus	11.3
Delivery	6.7
Cab	2.7
Total	193.4*

*This total is more than 100 percent as many families listed more than one means of transportation.

Table 9 shows that the bus was used by 11.3 percent of the respondents. This means of transportation was used primarily by those who purchased their meat products in the downtown shopping districts.

Delivery was given as a means of transportation by 6.7 percent of the families. This service was offered only by a limited number of the small independent stores. It must be noted that this is a significant factor. Some people will trade in a store if they can have their purchases delivered.

Of the 150 respondents, 119 gave two or more means of transportation on the purchase of food products. Ten families used no other method than walking, while 21 used only the family automobile.

Summary

It was found that 95.3 percent of the respondents were housewives, having an average-size family of 3.6 persons. The largest percent of persons interviewed were between the ages of 25 and 48. This comprised 62 percent of the persons interviewed. The income of families in this neighborhood was predominantly of the middle income group, with 46.6 percent in the $3,000 to $4,000 bracket.

Although men are not the major purchasers of the family food supply, it was found that in 70.7 percent of the families, men do shop for grocery products at some time. Store operators should take advantage of this in their advertising and merchandising programs. The author feels that the following suggestion could well be a step in the right direction to attract these men shoppers.

In the weekly advertisements devote a section which would be "pin-pointed" to the men of the family. This would be in the form of institutional advertising to tell the "men folks" how easy it is to shop in the stores and to stress the fact that they have also been designed to satisfy their wants. This space devoted to the "men folks" should bring a short, clear message each week. Some weeks could be devoted to the special departments which would be especially interesting to the male. Each week a special item could be "pin-pointed" to the men, at a special price. A selected section of the store could feature this item each week and "tie-in" with the newspaper advertising, but again repeating the advertisement which had appeared in the paper. This technique would make the "men folks" feel wanted and also provide an incentive to shop and read the weekly advertisements.

The average number of trips made to the food store by the respondents was 3.5 per week. It was found that 39.3 percent of the families averaged three trips to the food store each week. Many of the families in this neighborhood have their milk and bread delivered to their homes. By attracting some of this trade, food store operators will increase store traffic, which will show an increase in volume.

Although many methods have been tried by food store operators to obtain a larger percent of the milk and bread sales, the author believes the best method is obtained through the children. They can create a demand for milk and bread products and in most instances the parents will satisfy their demands. This may be created by either of the following suggestions:

1. Have the products endorsed by some "child-hero"; some examples of which are Hop-Along Cassidy and Jack Armstrong, and hundreds of others; both fictional and real-life characters.

2. The awarding of premium gifts by saving wrappers from bread or caps from milk bottles. This demand created by children will ultimately have a favorable effect on the sales of the stores.

Over 80 percent of the consumers indicated that they made their largest food purchase on either Friday or Saturday. Another 13.3 percent made their largest purchase on Thursday. Thirty and eight-tenths percent of those shopping on Thursday for their large order did so in the A & P Super Market. This is highly significant since the advertising of this store is done on Wednesday. Possibly, this is a new trend in the food business.

Seventy-four percent of the respondents indicated they made their large purchase of food supplies on the weekend because their husbands were home to help them. The receiving of the family pay check was responsible for 20 percent of the families choosing the weekend. Bargains were listed as a reason by 16 percent of the respondents. The consumer may not be entirely frank in admitting how important price is, but there is little doubt that price is a major consideration.

Eighty-eight percent of families used the automobile as a means of doing the family shopping. Delivery offered by a limited number of small independents was given by 6.7 percent of the consumers as a means of transporting food supplies.

CHAPTER III

CONSUMER PREFERENCES IN RETAIL FOOD STORES

In this chapter the store preferences of the consumer are analyzed. Store preferences are classified by three general groups; meats, produce and other groceries. The latter group includes all items found in the modern food store excluding meats and fresh fruits and vegetables.

The respondents were asked to indicate the retail store in which they usually made the largest purchase of meats, fresh fruits and vegetables and other groceries. To understand further their shopping motivations, they were also asked to state the reason why purchases were made in the stores mentioned.

The respondents showed a definite inclination to patronize more than one retail store in their shopping trips. Only 36.7 percent of the persons interviewed purchased most of their needs from the three departments of a single food store. There were 15 stores falling into this percentage, four of which were chain operators who, in this case, attracted 69 percent of the total of those respondents who apparently did little shopping around.

The 38 persons who purchased most of their food needs from all three departments of a single chain store listed the following reasons in order of importance for their store preference; (1) lower prices; (2) larger variety; (3) convenience.

The chief reasons why the other 17 shopped in one independent store most of the time, in order of importance were; (1) quality; (2) friendly, courteous service; (3) charge account; (4) delivery service.

The detailed breakdown of the stores in which the respondents bought most of their food needs in all three departments of the same store is given in Table 10 below.

TABLE 10

STORES PATRONIZED BY CUSTOMERS WHO PURCHASE BULK OF FOOD NEEDS IN ALL THREE DEPARTMENTS OF THE SAME STORE

Store	Number of Customers
A & P Super Market	11
Kroger Super Market	11
Market Basket Super Market	8
Schmidt's Super Food Market	8
Aldrich Food Market	5
Frederick Food Market	3
Rouse Super Market	1
Friar's Grocery	1
Kopietz, Otto	1
Curtis Food Market	1
Nakfoor, Sam	1
Childs and Company	1
C & B Market	1
C & S Food Market	1
Lindemann Food Market	1
Total	55

According to a survey conducted jointly by the Saturday Evening Post and several members of the Super Market Institute,[9] it was found that 45 percent of the customers shopped in all three departments of the same store, a figure which is considerably higher than was revealed in this survey. The large number of persons buying meat from independents, which will be described more fully later, is probably one of the major causes for the fact

9 D. M. Kerr. What is a Profitable Customer. How to Merchandise and Operate For a Profit. May, 1949. p. 10.

that there are not more customers buying in three departments of the same store. The Saturday Evening Post survey mentioned above disclosed that the 45 percent who shopped in all three departments spent 68 percent of the volume of the store with an average check of $7.03. Those who shopped in groceries and meats had an average check of only $3.68, while those who shopped only in groceries and produce had an average check of $3.29.

The most profitable customer, then, is the one who shops in all three departments. By intensive merchandising in each department of related items from the other sections of the store, the retailer may attract the customer to departments which have been previously by-passed. It should be much easier to get a customer, already in the store, into other departments than to get a new customer into the store.

Store Preferences for Meat Purchases

The respondents presented 220 reasons for their preferences of a store in which to purchase meat. Of these, 143 reasons were from customers who usually shopped in small, independent stores and 77 came from shoppers in the chain store super markets. Of the 220 reasons, quality was mentioned 40.5 percent of the time. The respondents seem to be looking for quality meat products. Retailers who are not getting their share of the meat business or have been carrying low quality meat may find their customers are getting superior quality elsewhere.

Friendly, courteous personnel was the chief answer in 15.5 percent of the instances. This was especially evident among the shoppers in the smaller retail stores. Of their 143 reasons, 21 percent listed personnel as a deciding factor in their selection of a store.

Only 14.5 percent of the respondents listed price as a major reason for considering a store when purchasing their meats. Since this is 26.0 percent lower than the percentage listed for quality, it is important that the retailer start putting more stress in his advertising on quality.

The comparison of reasons for meat purchases between chains and independents is shown in Table 11.

TABLE 11

COMPARISON OF REASONS WHY CUSTOMERS BUY MEATS FROM INDEPENDENTS AND CHAINS

Reason	Chain Customer (Percent)	Independent Customers (Percent)	Total (Percent)
Quality	32.9	44.7	41.6
Friendly personnel	3.9	21.0	15.9
Price	15.8	14.0	15.0
Convenience	18.4	8.4	12.1
Habit	9.2	4.2	6.1
Variety	6.6	4.9	5.6
Miscellaneous	13.2	2.8	3.7
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0

It might be noted, parenthetically, at this point that the respondents may not be entirely frank in admitting how important the pennies saved might be. Quality, of course, connotes a reasonable price. Few shoppers would be willing to pay the premium demanded for the highest quality prime beef. In areas which are predominantly middle income consumers are more apt to purchase choice grades of meat.

Listed fourth in importance to the respondents was convenient location. Only 11.8 percent of the answers fell into this category. This seems more important to the chain store customer than to the independent store shopper.

In a survey conducted in 1948 by the extension service of the University of Maryland,[10] it was found that 21.8 percent of the persons interviewed mentioned convenience as a major reason in the selection of a store in which to buy meats.

Variety and habit showed signs of being more important to the chain store customer than the independent customer. Price, when listed by independent shoppers, was given primarily by those who purchased meat in the retail meat stores of downtown Lansing, noted for low prices on meats.

Forty-three retail stores, which sell meat, were mentioned by those interviewed in answer to the question where they purchased most of their meats. Only 35.3 percent of those interviewed purchased most of their meat from the chain super markets.

To make a closer observation of why the chain super markets were doing such a low percentage of the meat business in this area, the reasons why a customer bought her meat in each market were tabulated. It was found that the reason that Schmidt and Kroger super markets drew the larger number of customers was attributed to having good quality meat. The chief appeal of A & P Super Market was convenience, while the Market Basket Super Market's biggest appeal was self-service meats. It is also interesting to note that not one person mentioned the quality of the Market Basket Super Market's meat.

It would appear that the chain stores are not getting their share of the business because the consumers believe that independent retailers have higher quality meats. Although it will be brought out in further detail

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10 Bulletin 137, op. cit., p. 5.

TABLE 12

STORES WHERE 149* CUSTOMERS PURCHASED MOST OF THEIR MEATS

Store	Number of Families
Schmidt's Super Food Market	15
Kroger Super Market	15
A & P Super Market	12
Market Basket Super Market	11
Aldrich Food Market	12
C & B Market	11
Reuther's Grocery and Market	8
Bazley Cash Market	7
Frederick Food Market	5
Kneip Markets	5
Junedale Cash Market	5
Shinners, E.G. and Company	4
Goodrich's Grocery	3
Kopietz, Otto	3
C & S Food Market	2
Home Dairy Company	2
Solomon's Food Market	2
Lindermann Food Market	2
Miscellaneous stores of 1 each	25
Total	149

*One family was strictly vegetarian.

TABLE 13

REASONS WHY CUSTOMERS BOUGHT MEAT IN THE
VARIOUS CHAIN SUPER MARKETS
(In Percentages)

Reason	A & P Super Market	Kroger Super Market	Schmidt's Super Food Market	Market Basket Super Market	Total
Quality	25.0	38.1	44.8	-	32.9
Price	18.8	9.5	17.2	20.0	15.8
Self-Serve	-	-	-	40.0	5.3
Freshness	-	9.5	13.8	-	7.9
Variety	12.5	14.3	-	-	6.6
Convenience	37.5	19.1	6.9	20.0	18.4
Personnel	-	-	10.3	-	3.9
Habit	6.2	9.5	6.9	20.0	9.2
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

later on, it might be timely to mention here that there was quite a bit of prejudice against self-service meats as used in this area by the Kroger Super Market and Market Basket Super Market. This fact might have influenced some potential meat customers of these two chains to buy their meat elsewhere.

Store Preferences for Buying Produce

Substantial differences were found in the reasons why consumers purchased fresh fruits and vegetables from the chain super markets and the small independent stores. Among the independent store customers, personal service followed by quality merchandise were of the greatest importance. To the chain store customers convenience was most important, followed by freshness. Convenience, as used by many of the respondents, meant that fruits and vegetables were picked up in the same store as was the main grocery order. Personal service was mentioned 24 percent of the time by consumers who shopped at the independent stores while among the chain store customers this was mentioned only 1.3 percent of the time.

TABLE 14

COMPARISON OF REASONS WHY CONSUMERS PURCHASE PRODUCE FROM INDEPENDENTS AND CHAINS (In Percentages)

Reason	Chain Stores	Independent Stores
Quality	12.9	21.7
Convenience	24.5	15.2
Price	18.7	4.3
Personal Service	1.3	24.0
Freshness	21.3	10.8
Variety	14.8	8.7
Charge Account	-	8.7
Miscellaneous	6.5	6.6
Total	100.0	100.0

Price was of major importance in 18.7 percent of the cases mentioned by chain store customers, but this dropped to 4.3 percent among those who shopped in independent stores.

While the chain store super markets were able to attract only 35.3 percent of the customers into their meat departments, they had a better standing in the attraction of customers to their vegetable departments. The chain super markets were able to attract 74 percent of the respondents to buy most of their fresh vegetables in their stores.

TABLE 15

CUSTOMERS WHO BUY MOST OF THEIR PRODUCE IN VARIOUS STORES

Store	Number of Shoppers
A & P Super Market	36
Market Basket Super Market	33
Kroger Super Market	26
Schmidt's Super Food Market	16
Aldrich Food Market	6
Everybody's Fruit Market	5
Frederick Food Market	4
Central Fruit Market	4
City Market	3
C & B Market	2
Miscellaneous stores of one each	15
Total	150

In shopping for fresh vegetables, customers selected but 25 different stores, as compared to the 43 selected in the purchase of meats. It was found that the major reason varied in each of the four chain stores as to why customers bought most of their produce in the particular stores. The chief appeal of the A & P Super Market was convenience, the Kroger Super Market's was freshness, Schmidt's Super Food Market's was quality and the

Market Basket Super Market's was price. A comparison of these reasons is shown in Table 16.

TABLE 16

COMPARISON OF REASONS WHY CUSTOMERS BOUGHT PRODUCE IN EACH OF THE FOUR CHAINS

Reason	A & P Super Market	Kroger Super Market	Market Basket Super Market	Schmidt's Super Food Market	Total
Price	9.6	21.4	28.9	17.4	18.7
Quality	9.6	4.8	13.2	34.8	12.9
Freshness	26.9	26.2	13.2	13.0	21.3
Variety	19.2	19.0	13.2	-	14.8
Convenience	28.9	23.8	23.7	17.4	24.5
Personnel	-	-	2.6	4.4	1.3
Habit	5.8	4.8	5.2	13.0	6.5
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

In the selection of fresh vegetables, consumers consider freshness and variety as major assets in the chain super markets, next to convenience. Price ranked third, although it is felt that some customers are reluctant to make this statement as a reason for selecting a store.

Store Preferences for Other Grocery Products

It was also found that there was a diversity of reasons why the consumer patronized a particular store in obtaining grocery products. The chief reason for the independents' attracting customers for groceries was convenience with 33.3 percent of the answers falling in this category. In 36.4 percent of the instances price was the major factor in selecting a chain store for the purchase of groceries. Chain store customers listed convenience 27.8 percent of the time as the reason for selecting their particular store for groceries. The importance of convenience to both the chain store

shopper and the independent customer may be partially ascribed to the bulky, heavy nature of the grocery order.

TABLE 17

COMPARISON OF REASONS WHY CONSUMERS PURCHASE GROCERIES IN INDEPENDENTS AND CHAINS

Reason	Independent	Chain
Convenience	33.3	27.8
Personnel	26.7	2.5
Quality	20.0	10.5
Charge Account	13.3	-
Price	-	36.4
Checkout Speed	-	4.3
Variety	-	10.5
Miscellaneous	6.7	8.0
Total	100.0	100.0

The quality of grocery products handled by the chain super markets was listed only in 10.5 percent of the instances by chain store shoppers. Independent store grocery shoppers gave this reason 20 percent of the time.

It was found that 80 percent of the persons interviewed bought the bulk of their grocery products from the chain super markets. This is an extremely good job of grocery merchandising, especially when it is contrasted with the fact that only 35.3 percent of the respondents bought most of their meat from a chain super market. In all, there were but 19 stores mentioned as getting the bulk of the customers' grocery orders. It will be noted that the grocery purchases are much more concentrated than the meat purchases, since 43 different meat markets were mentioned as getting the bulk of various customers' meat purchases. Market Basket Super

Market attracted 28 percent of the customers, followed by A & P Super Market which attracted 26.3 percent of the customers.

TABLE 18

STORES WHERE CUSTOMERS BOUGHT BULK OF GROCERIES

Store	Number of Customers	Percent of Total
Market Basket Super Market	42	28.0
A & P Super Market	40	26.7
Kroger Super Market	23	15.3
Schmidt's Super Food Market	15	10.0
Aldrich Food Market	6	4.0
Frederick Food Market	4	2.7
C & B Market	3	2.0
Miscellaneous stores of two customers each	10	6.7
Miscellaneous stores of one customer each	7	4.6
Total	150	100.0

Kroger Super Market and Schmidt's Super Food Market did not have the increase in the number of customers in their grocery departments as did the other chain super markets. In the case of Schmidt's Super Food Market, this is probably attributed in large measure to the small dimensions of the store on Michigan Avenue. In comparison to the size of the other super markets, it seems that Schmidt's Super Food Market is doing a good job. It seems that Kroger Super Market with its new modern store should attract a higher percentage of customers in its grocery department than it does.

Price was the reason given most frequently as the basis for choosing the Market Basket Super Market and the A & P Super Market for groceries. Convenience was given as much weight as price by Kroger Super Market customers. The chief appeal of the Schmidt's Super Food Market was once again quality merchandise, as shown in Table 19.

TABLE 19

COMPARISON OF REASONS WHY CONSUMERS BUY GROCERIES FROM VARIOUS CHAINS

Reason	A & P Super Market	Kroger Super Market	Market Basket Super Market	Schmidt's Super Food Market
Price	37.5	34.5	41.8	22.7
Habit	7.1	6.9	7.3	13.6
Quality	10.1	6.9	5.5	27.3
Variety	10.7	17.2	9.0	4.6
Convenience	32.2	34.5	21.8	22.7
Personnel	1.8	-	1.8	9.1
Fast Checking	-	-	12.8	-
Total	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

Personnel was an important factor in the selection of Schmidt's Super Food Market, as was indicated by 9.1 percent of the answers. With the other chains, this was a negligible reason for attracting customers. Although many chain super markets pay little attention to this important reason, many customers will travel to a store to receive friendly, courteous service from the personnel.

Quick checkout was given in 12.8 percent of the reasons for shoppers patronizing the Market Basket Super Market. The Market Basket stores have a new type of checkout system which uses a maximum of five persons on each check stand during rush periods. Considerable space has been given to this fact in the company's advertising. Once the consumer has finished shopping, she looks forward to being checked out promptly and not standing in long lines. The quality of merchandise at the Market Basket Super Market drew a lower percentage of answers than it did in regard to any of the other chains. Convenience and price had the greatest support among the customers in the Kroger Super Market and in the A & P Super Market.

Store Used Mainly for Fill-ins

Respondents were asked to indicate any other stores where they occasionally buy their food requirements. These stores were primarily used for the sake of convenience in filling-in during the week. The respondents had no particular likes for this alternate store outside of convenience. The chief dislike was toward the small independent stores in their limited variety of merchandise. Table 20 shows that, of the 131 who answered this question, the largest percentage went to Schmidt's Super Food Market, followed by A & P Super Market, Market Basket Super Market and the Kroger Super Market in that order.

TABLE 20

SECONDARY CHOICES OF FOOD STORES

Store	Number of Customers
Schmidt's Super Food Market	24
A & P Super Market	22
Market Basket Super Market	18
Kroger Super Market	13
Home Dairy	4
Aldrich Food Market	4
De Marco Brothers Grocery	3
B & L Market	3
C & S Food Market	3
Other stores with one or two customers	37
Total	131

The comments made by the respondents about the various stores run into the hundreds. There were, however, certain comments which were repeated often enough by different persons to be significant. These comments were as follows:

1. A & P Super Market - easy to find desired merchandise
2. A & P Super Market - long checkout lines on weekends
3. A & P Super Market - go there to buy exceptionally good A & P coffee
4. Kroger Super Market - like complete line of 8 oz. cans for small families
5. Kroger Super Market - good quality meats but prices are high
6. Schmidt's Super Food Market - have very high quality meats
7. Schmidt's Super Food Market - no parking lot
8. Market Basket Super Market - poor quality meats
9. Market Basket Super Market - quick checkout, no waiting

Comments such as these show that each market has certain characteristics which may be used to advantage in attracting customers. There are others, such as poor quality meats in the Market Basket Super Market, which should receive a high degree of attention.

Consumers were questioned as to how many of them have been in each of the four chain super markets. Table 21 shows the number of respondents who have been in each of the markets.

Since all of the stores mentioned in Table 21 have three departments - grocery, meat and produce - it was possible to multiply the number of customers who had been in each store by three to find the maximum potential department shoppers. For instance, each customer entering a store is

TABLE 21

CONSUMERS WHO HAD BEEN IN VARIOUS SUPER MARKETS

Store	Number (Out of 150)
Market Basket Super Market	134
A & P Super Market	130
Kroger Super Market	129
Schmidt's Super Food Market	129

exposed to three departments. If this customer shops in each of the three departments, the store has a score of three out of a possible three - or in that case - 100 percent. Table 22 shows the maximum possible for each store, the actual number of customers who shopped in each department and the percentage of potential each store has of customers who have been in the store.

TABLE 22

PERCENTAGE OF TRAFFIC BECOMING DEPARTMENTAL CUSTOMERS

Store	Maximum	Score	Percentage
A & P Super Market	390	88	22.6
Market Basket Super Market	402	86	21.1
Kroger Super Market	387	64	16.5
Schmidt's Super Food Market	357	46	12.9

The above table shows that A & P Super Market has had a better record of inducing customers to buy the bulk of their merchandise in all three departments of the store. Once again Schmidt's Super Food Market is handicapped by lack of space.

Stores Having Largest Variety of Items

Only 60 percent of the respondents stated opinions on the store having the largest variety of items from which to choose. Only the four chain stores; namely, Market Basket Super Market, Kroger Super Market, A & P Super Market, and Schmidt's Super Food Market, were mentioned, with the largest percentage of persons stating Market Basket Super Market as the leader.

TABLE 23

STORES HAVING THE LARGEST VARIETY OF ITEMS FROM WHICH TO CHOOSE

Store	Percent of Families
Market Basket Super Market	28.0
A & P Super Market	18.7
Kroger Super Market	9.3
Schmidt's Super Food Market	4.0
Total	60.0
No opinion	40.0
Total	100.0

The Schmidt's Super Food Market in this neighborhood is handicapped by the lack of space. Possibly the newness of the new Kroger Super Market is the reason for only 9.3 percent of the respondents naming this store. Forty percent of the respondents had no opinion on this question.

Best Store in Opinion of the Consumer

The A & P Super Market, in the opinion of 18 percent of the consumers, was the best store to shop in. The Kroger Super Market was listed by 17.3

percent of the consumers. Figure 24 shows that 10.7 percent of the consumers named various independents as being the best stores.

TABLE 24

BEST STORE IN OPINION OF THE CONSUMER

Store	Percent of Consumers
A & P Super Market	18.0
Kroger Super Market	17.3
Market Basket Super Market	12.7
Schmidt's Super Food Market	6.7
Independents	10.7
Total	65.4
No opinion	34.6
Total	100.0

There were 65.4 percent of the respondents who expressed an answer to this question. The term, "best store", covered numerous ideas of the consumer, such as; the store was close by, the store was newer, the store had lower prices and other similar reasons. It would be necessary to make a study of these reasons to make any specific conclusion on this subject.

Stores Having the Lowest Prices

Since many consumers were reluctant to mention price as the reason for shopping in the various stores, they were asked, "What store in your opinion has the lowest prices?" The Market Basket Super Market was mentioned by 23.3 percent of the respondents. Many consumers attribute low prices to this chain store but many also feel they carry lower quality merchandise. The A & P Super Market gave the Market Basket Super Market the most competition in this category although they were mentioned by only 11.3 percent of the consumers.

TABLE 25

STORES HAVING THE LOWEST PRICES

Store	Percent of Consumers
Market Basket Super Market	23.3
A & P Super Market	11.3
Schmidt's Super Food Market	8.0
Kroger Super Market	6.7
Independents	2.0
Chains	12.7
Total	64.0
No opinion	36.0
Total	100.0

Chain super markets were given by 12.7 percent of the consumers interviewed as having the lowest prices. They felt there was little, if any, difference between the chain stores in their pricing. Kroger Super Market and Schmidt's Super Food Market, collectively, were only mentioned by 14.7 percent of the consumers with Schmidt's Super Food Market receiving 8 percent of this total.

There were 36 percent of the consumers who had "no opinion" on which store had the lowest prices. A common expression given by this group was, "none of them are low enough". Since 36 percent had "no opinion" and 12.7 percent listed chains, which is a combined total of 48.7 percent, it appears to be a large group of families for the chains to appeal to individually.

It is felt that particular emphasis on advertising, sales and displays should be directed toward these families.

Summary

There were many significant facts found in the reasons why consumers purchased food products from independent stores and others purchased from chains. Most customers had a choice among several stores when it came to doing the bulk of shopping in all departments. It was found that there are other important considerations that the customers recognize besides price. They prefer certain stores because of quality, convenience, personnel and other reasons, often at the sacrifice of price.

There is evidence from this survey that the customers feel that the chain super market is a good place to shop for produce and grocery items. These departments attracted 74 and 80 percent of the consumers, respectively. The major criticism of the chains was in regard to the meat department which attracted only 35.3 percent of the respondents.

None of the problems in regard to the meat departments appear insurmountable. It is evident that a strong educational program, stressing money-back guarantees on meat, will help to attract a lot of this business into the chain super market. An educational campaign on the merits of self-service meats might also help the position of those chains that merchandise meat in this fashion. It is important that only high quality meats be offered to the consumer to tie in with this educational program.

Price was the reason most frequently given by customers of the Market Basket Super Market. Quality was the chief factor given by the custome

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customers of Schmidt's Super Food Market. Convenience was the chief asset of Kroger Super Market and A & P Super Market.

Twenty-eight percent of the respondents felt that there was a larger variety of items from which to choose, in the Market Basket Super Market. The A & P Super Market was second, having been mentioned by 17.3 percent of the consumers.

In the opinion of 18 percent of those interviewed, A & P Super Market was the best store, followed closely by Kroger Super Market. Since the consumers had numerous ideas of what the phrase, "best store", meant, it is impossible to draw a valid conclusion on why they feel this to be the best store.

The Market Basket Super Market was the choice of 23.3 percent of the respondents as the store having the lowest prices. Collectively, 48.7 percent of the respondents had no opinion or mentioned chains as having the lowest prices. It appears that this is a large group of families for the chains to appeal to in this highly competitive neighborhood.

CHAPTER IV

CONSUMER PRACTICES AND OPINIONS REGARDING SELF-SERVICE MEATS

In the past few years there has been a rapid growth of self-service meat departments. It is the latest development in the evolution of marketing meats which provides the shopper with direct access to cuts of meats and meat products of consumer sizes, wrapped in a transparent film and displayed in open-top refrigerated cases. The customer can then make a selection from the case without the help of a butcher or clerk. The majority opinion among the chains favors complete self-service meats, especially in new stores and stores with heavy traffic. Other chains are of the opinion that partial self-service is the answer. In the area covered by this survey, two of the larger super markets; namely, Kroger and Market Basket, had complete self-service meat departments.

Purpose

The purpose of this chapter is to consider the consumers' reaction regarding self-service meats. While it has already been stated that the results of this survey are confined to this area and few generalizations can be made, it does show that there are still many areas in this country where self-service meats is a big "question-mark". The primary aim of this thesis is to present principles and practices which could be applicable to many other territories of the country.

Persons interviewed were questioned to determine; (1) the number who were familiar with self-service meats, (2) the number who had purchased this type of meat, (3) their regularity of purchase, and (4) specific likes

and dislikes of this method of retailing fresh meats. The answers to these questions were amazing; forty-five percent of those who had purchased self-service meats actually disliked it as presently merchandised.

Familiarity to Self-Service Meats

It was found that 139 respondents were familiar with self-service meats. This comprised 92.6 percent of the total interviewed. This is somewhat lower than the national average of 95.9 percent as established by E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company[11] in its survey of 11 cities across the nation. The other 7.4 percent who were not familiar with self-service meats listed the following two reasons: one was a vegetarian and all others shopped exclusively in stores which did not have this type of merchandising. Sixty percent of the total not familiar with self-service meats shopped in independent stores, while the other 40 consisted of Schmidt's Super Food Market and A & P Super Market customers.

Of the 139 who were familiar with self-service meats, there were eight who had never purchased meat in this form. These eight were familiar with it through reading articles, talking to neighbors about it or having visited a store at one time and noticed it. Although these eight had never tried it, three voiced an opinion that they felt they would like it, three felt they would dislike it and two others had no opinion on the matter. All eight persons said they would try it, in the event their butcher did put in self-service meats.

Regular Consumers of Self-Service Meats

Nineteen and nine-tenths of the respondents who had purchased self-service meats at some time were found to purchase it regularly. The

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11 E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company, op. cit., p. 5.

Kroger Super Market was able to attract 11.4 percent of this trade and the Market Basket Super Market the rest, 8.4 percent. Everyone in this group showed a strong liking for it.

Table 26 shows that this group of respondents buy regularly mainly because of the convenience of shopping in this manner. The ability "to see what you are getting" was listed by 26.9 percent of the respondents as their reason for buying regularly at the self-service counter.

TABLE 26

REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS BUY SELF-SERVICE MEATS REGULARLY

Reasons	Percent of Respondents
Convenience	42.3
See what they are buying	26.9
Variety	19.2
Freshness	7.7
Cleanliness	7.7
Price	3.9
Other	11.5
Total	119.2*

*This total is more than 100 percent as some respondents gave more than one reason.

With the large number of display cases to shop from, 19.2 percent of the respondents felt there was a larger variety. Self-service displays offer the retailer a better opportunity to display and sell his variety meats.

Occasional Buyer of Self-Service Meats

It was found that 49.6 percent of the respondents who had purchased self-service meats at least once fell into this category of just buying it occasional

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occasionally. Table 27 shows that 46.2 percent of these families liked this method of merchandising.

TABLE 27

OPINIONS OF RESPONDENTS WHO OCCASIONALLY PURCHASE SELF-SERVICE MEATS

Opinion	Percent of Occasional Consumers
Like	46.2
Dislike	38.5
No Opinion	15.3
Total	100.0

Those persons who expressed "no opinion" did so because they felt they had not purchased enough self-service meats to make a decision. The consumers between the ages of 17 to 40 showed a greater acceptance to the purchasing of self-service meat in this group.

Table 28 shows that convenience is the great drawing power which attracts the largest number of the consumers.

TABLE 28

REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS WHO OCCASIONALLY BUY SELF-SERVICE MEAT LIKE IT

Reason	Percent of Respondents
Convenience	43.3
See what you are getting	23.3
Variety	13.3
No butcher	10.0
Cleanliness	6.7
Other - Price, Freshness, Quality	16.7
Total	113.3*

*This total is more than 100 percent as some respondents gave more than one reason.

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Once again, the respondents who liked self-service meat listed the same three reasons as had those who purchased it regularly. It was found that 10 percent of the consumers listed "no butcher" as a major reason for liking self-service meats. This group of people prefer to make their own selections without the assistance of a butcher.

Dislikes of Respondents

Table 29 shows the reasons why those who buy it occasionally dislike self-service. These reasons are of great significance as it shows the weak points of this merchandising technique and where the opportunities are available to improve it.

TABLE 29

REASONS WHY RESPONDENTS WHO OCCASIONALLY BUY SELF-SERVICE MEAT DISLIKE IT

Reason	Percent of Respondents
Doubt freshness	44.0
Cannot see what they are getting	40.0
Cannot get proper size	20.0
Prefer butcher	16.0
Price too high	12.0
Poor flavor	4.0
Others	8.0
Total	144.0*

*This total is more than 100 percent as some persons gave more than one reason.

Table 29 shows that 44 percent of the families in this group doubted the freshness of the meat. Many of the people felt the self-service operator just left the meat in the case until it was sold. Another major fault fo

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fault found by 40 percent of the families was the fact that they could not see what they were getting. Some typical comments by this group included, "They hide the fat and bones so they cannot be seen and they hide the poor side of the meat." Comments such as these are alarming and a hinderance to the growth of self-service meats.

Persons Who have Discontinued The Purchase of Self-Service Meats

It is this group of people who point out the great dislike for self-service meats in this neighborhood. It was found that 30.5 percent of those who had purchased self-service meats were in this group. Fifteen percent of the people did like self-service meats but the store in which they did all of their shopping did not merchandise in such a manner. Table 30 shows the reasons why the other 85 percent of the families have not been satisfied with self-service meats. This dissatisfaction was not predominate in any one age group, but was proportioned to all age brackets.

TABLE 30

REASONS WHY CONSUMERS NO LONGER PURCHASED SELF-SERVICE MEATS

Reasons	Percent of Families
Doubt freshness	41.2
Cannot see what they are getting	38.2
Cannot get right sizes	14.7
Poor quality	11.8
Prefer butcher	8.8
Other	17.6
Total	132.3*

*This total is more than 100 percent as some persons gave more than one reason.

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It can be seen that once again the major reasons for disliking self-service meats are the questions of freshness and the ability to see what is being purchased. Quality, as a reason for discontinuance, was mentioned by 11.8 percent of the consumers, who no longer purchase self-service meats.

Comparison of Local Survey to National Survey

Apparently self-service meats have not been able to receive consumer acceptance in this neighborhood. It is hard to believe the rapid progress self-service meats is making when there are conditions such as have been discovered here. The disappointment of self-service meats was not because of the consumer not trying the meat, but rather the inability of the merchant to satisfy the customer. Slip-shod practices in the meat department are more easily recognized in self-service. Such practices are far from general, but if allowed to continue would be detrimental to the progress of self-service meats. Table 31 shows a comparison of the acceptance of self-service in the local area compared to the national survey of E. I. du Pont De Nemours and Company.

TABLE 31

COMPARISON OF ACCEPTANCE OF SELF-SERVICE MEATS BY CONSUMERS WHO HAD PURCHASED IT AT LEAST ONCE

Acceptance	du Pont Survey	Local Survey
Now buy regularly	51.1	19.9
Now buy occasionally	40.8	49.6
No longer buy	7.7	30.5
No answer	.4	-
Total	100.0	100.0

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A study of this comparison shows the high percent of families who reject this new development in the food industry. The low percent of families who buy it regularly gives an indication of the "black-eye" which self-service meats has in this trading area.

Summary

In spite of the popularity, and in spite of the like of self-service meats, it has been found there is a substantially large number of families who still dislike this method of merchandising. It must be pointed out that these consumers have given it a fair trial and have been disappointed.

Table 32 shows that 45.1 percent of the consumers who had purchased self-service meats voiced a strong dislike for this type merchandising. The percent of consumers who liked self-service meats was only 47.3

TABLE 32

COMPARISON OF OPINIONS ON SELF-SERVICE MEATS BY CONSUMERS WHO HAD PURCHASED SELF-SERVICE MEATS

Frequency of Purchase	Like	Dislike	No Opinion	Total
No more	4.5	26.0	-	30.5
Occasionally	22.9	19.1	7.6	49.6
Regularly	19.9	-	-	19.9
Total	47.3	45.1	7.6	100.0

There were 7.6 percent of the purchasers who had no opinion on this question. They were consumers who had used this type of meat merchandising only occasionally. Although it is important to attract these customers, the big job of the operator lies with the 45.1 percent who dislike this type of merchandising.

This group of consumers, who had purchased self-service meats, was 87.3 percent of the total interviewed. The other 12.7 percent of the consumers had never made a purchase of self-service meats. The store operators must appeal to these groups who have no opinion, a dislike or have never purchased self-service meats through his advertising and sales campaigns. At the same time he must keep the consumers who already like this service satisfied with top quality fresh meats.

The author feels that the self-service meat business can only be as good as the quality and freshness of the meat that is packaged. For best results the store operator should buy only the three grades of meat; namely, prime, choice, or good, for prepackaging.

The biggest complaint voiced against self-service meats was the doubt of its freshness. What can be done about this depends upon the individual operator, but there must be one thing for sure - the operator must display only fresh meats. Some stores are cutting further in advance than they would have ever done in service departments. It is obvious that this advanced cutting has been overdone; cutting and packaging should be done nearer to the time of sale.

The appearance of freshness is frequently lost from the constant handling and mauling of the packages by the customers. By keeping the displays low and, with frequent servicing of the cases, this trouble can be eliminated. The person selected to service the cases should be conscientious and know the importance of this job. Many times this task is done by a hostess. She should check the rotation of all stock, remove all out-dated merchandise and remove for rewrapping all merchandise which does not make a good appearance. It is important that all meats be coded before

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before being placed in the case to assure the freshness of the product. The coding of the product is not a cure-all and means little if the codes are not observed.

The Penn Fruit Company found in a survey[12] conducted in the Philadelphia area of one of their stores, that 64 percent of the shoppers objected to buying ground meat that was already packaged. The reasons given ranged from unfreshness to excessive fat. Generally, there were grave suspicions of the contents. Hamburger should be ground daily and only for the day's demand. This apparently is the weakest point of self-service meats. Naturally, this is the point to start building customer confidence. If they can buy hamburger meat and feel assured of its freshness, the operator is on his way to a successful department. The big question is how to do it. The author feels that it must start right in the meat department by putting good quality meat into the hamburger without an excessive amount of fat. It is also important that fresh meat be ground each day. This is only one-half of the battle. It will also require an advertising campaign. Since the only stores in the neighborhood that are self-service are the Kroger and Market Basket super markets, they should be the ones interested in such a campaign. The type of advertising necessary would be one which would explain the advantages of self-service meat shopping. It should stress the quality of meat carried and the guarantee of the store that each and every piece is guaranteed fresh or money would be refunded. To be more tantalizing to the customer, the advertising could feature a coupon for a

12 J. Cooke. How to Merchandise Self-Service Meats. Super Market Convention, Illinois. May 12, 1949.

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ten or 15 cent discount on a pound of hamburger. This would encourage the consumer to purchase hamburger which has already been mentioned as the big item customers dislike in self-service. By selling this, it is the first step in the right direction. This means of merchandising will convince skeptics that the self-service meat is good meat, ground fresh, packaged fresh and sold fresh.

Another big objection to self-service meats was that the consumers could not see what they were buying. They complained of hidden waste of fat and bones. In self-service meats the package has to be appealing. This can come only from good cutting and packaging. It must show the product to be good and have that invitation to buy. It is, therefore, necessary that self-service meats must be more carefully and closely trimmed. Close attention must be paid to the bones and excess fat. The customer does not want to be fooled. It is best to package end cuts of luncheon meats, bones and fat separately for sale at a special price. Self-service packaging is under suspicion and the operator must "bend over backwards" to give a trim of meat comparable to, if not better trimmed than, that received at a service counter.

CHAPTER V

STUDY OF FOOD STORE ADVERTISING MEDIA

As a retail business becomes larger and its trading area is extended, the personal association with customers by the retailer becomes increasingly difficult. Accordingly, the retailer, through advertising media, seeks to keep in contact with his old customers as well as attract new ones.

Neil H. Borden gives the following definition of advertising:[13]

> Advertising includes those activities by which visual or oral messages are addressed to the public for the purposes of informing them and influencing them either to buy merchandise or services or to act or be inclined favorably toward ideas, institutions, or persons featured.

This chapter discusses the results of the ability of the media used in the local area by food chain operators to convey these visual or oral messages to the consumer. This study took into consideration the following media:

1. Advertising and price posters on store windows
2. Newspaper advertising
3. The Kroger Company's Alan Young television show
4. The Market Basket Super Market radio program, "Musical Jackpot"

Advertising and Price Posters on Store Windows

The respondents were asked if they look at the advertising and price posters on store windows when shopping. The respondents who answered yes to this question were also asked if they went into the store to make a

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13 Neil H. Borden. Advertising Text and Cases. Richard D. Irwin, Incorporated, Chicago, 1950. p. 3.

purchase as a result of seeing these advertisements.

Schmidt's Super Food Market, Market Basket Super Market, Kroger Super Market and practically every independent in the area did feature advertising and price posters on the windows. This was especially evident on the weekend. The A & P Super Market did not feature price posters on the store windows. Seventy-two percent of the respondents looked at the advertising and price posters on store windows when they were shopping. Only 28 percent of the respondents did not look at these advertising posters.

TABLE 33

COMPARISON OF RESPONDENTS WHO LOOK AT ADVERTISING AND PRICE POSTERS ON STORE WINDOWS

Answer	Percent of Respondents
Look at advertising	72
Never look at this type advertising	28
Total	100

It was found that 28 percent of the respondents who looked at window advertising never enter the store to purchase products. Upon further investigation, the writer found this small group shopped exclusively in the A & P Super Market and independents which did not advertise in such a manner. This group looked at the advertising of other stores to set in their minds the approximate price they expected to pay for similar merchandise when they shopped elsewhere.

Newspaper Advertising

The newspaper, because of its closeness to the public, in that it is read by the entire family, and the speed with which it can deliver an advertising message, will probably always lead the media field. There is scarcely a part of the United States, which cannot be separately and effectively reached by the newspaper. In the retail food business, more money is spent on newspaper advertising than any other media. This Week Magazine[14] reports that in 1948 the Kroger Company spent 59 percent of its total advertising expenditures on this media. They also report that Jewel Food Stores of Chicago, Illinois spent 86 percent of its advertising expenditures on newsprint, while National Tea Company, of the same city, spent 73.5 percent on this media. Obviously, advertising through the newspapers has always been a large share of the advertising expense of the food business and will undoubtedly continue to rate high year after year.

In the Lansing area, A & P Super Market advertises in the local paper in the Wednesday edition. The Kroger Super Market, Schmidt's Super Food Market, Market Basket Super Market and many independents carry their features in the Thursday edition. To determine the effectiveness of the four chain super markets which had appeared the previous week, they were asked; (1) if they had recalled seeing them, (2) if they made any purchases as a result of seeing them, (3) if there was any one read more regularly than the others, and (4) in their opinion what items they would like to see advertised more regularly than others. In the test interviewing, all food store advertisements were shown to the respondents that appeared in

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14 This Week Magazine's 1949 Report on Grocery Distribution. This Week Magazine. 420 Lexington Avenue, New York 17, New York.

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the paper. It was found they showed very little interest in looking at so many. In most cases the respondents only looked at the four chain super market advertisements and the particular store in which they shopped provided it was not one of the chain super markets and the store did advertise. Respondents often mentioned the other advertisements which they read but this number was too small to be of any significance.

Number Who Read Weekly News Advertisements

It was found that 60 percent of the respondents recalled reading the advertisements of all four chain super markets, 6.7 percent recalled reading three, 11.3 percent had read two, while 6.7 percent recalled just reading the one.

TABLE 34

COMPARISON OF NUMBER OF ADVERTISEMENTS RESPONDENTS WERE ABLE TO RECALL

Number of Advertisements	Percent of Respondents
4	60.0
3	6.7
2	11.3
1	6.7
0	15.3
Total	100.0

Table 34 shows that 15.3 percent of the respondents did not recall seeing any of the advertisements. Although many in this 15.3 percent never look at newspapers of the chain super markets, there were some who did read the advertisements each week, but when interviewed, for various reasons had missed that particular week. Some respondents read these advertisements each week although they did not shop in the chain super markets. These respondents said they did so because of habit and to have an approximate value of the merchandise when they shopped elsewhere.

Table 35 shows that 76 percent of the respondents recalled having read the Market Basket Super Market advertisement. The A & P Super Market advertisement was recalled by only 68 percent of the respondents. Since this advertisement appears by itself in the Wednesday edition, it is possible that all the respondents were not familiar with this policy of the A & P Super Market.

TABLE 35

COMPARISON OF PERCENT OF RESPONDENTS WHO RECALLED HAVING READ NEWSPAPER ADVERTISEMENTS OF LOCAL CHAIN SUPER MARKETS

Store	Percent of Respondents
Market Basket Super Market	76.0
Schmidt's Super Food Market	73.3
The Kroger Super Market	70.7
The A & P Super Market	68.0

These percentages show that the newspaper advertising of the local chains is attracting a large number of readers. Undoubtedly, these figures would be higher if the respondents were asked if they ever read the advertisements of the chain super markets. Since there were over 15 percent who had not seen the advertisements the previous week for various reasons, it is reasonable to assume these people, do on occasion, read the retail food advertisements.

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Respondents Who Read One Advertisement More Regularly

Than The Other Advertisements

It was found that 38.7 percent of the respondents did read one advertisement of the chain super markets more regularly than the other advertisements. Table 36 shows that a higher percent of respondents read the Market Basket Super Market advertisement more regularly than the other chain advertisements.

TABLE 36

STORE ADVERTISEMENTS READ MORE REGULARLY THAN OTHERS

Store	Percent of Respondents
Market Basket Super Market	39.7
Schmidt's Super Food Market	24.1
A & P Super Market	22.4
Kroger Super Market	13.8
Total	100.0

The reasons given by these respondents for reading the particular advertisement more regularly than the others were; (1) because of habit and (2) it was the particular store in which they did their shopping. The percentage of respondents who mentioned the Kroger Super Market advertisement is relatively small when compared with any of the three chain advertisements.

Items Purchased By The Respondents

There was little significance in the results of the items purchased by the respondents. Outside of Manor House Coffee which was advertised for

79 cents, the other items all received a good distribution of sales with no single chain store advertisementdoing a better job than the others. Items which were featured in a large square or in larger type print did result in more sales than did the other items. The Market Basket Super Market advertisements did not feature the number of items the other chain advertisements did, but the result of their advertisements among the respondents was as good as that of the other chains.

Items Respondents Would Like to See Advertised Regularly

In an effort to establish what items food retailers could use to increase the pulling power of these advertisements, the respondents were asked which items they would like to see advertised more regularly. Although many items were given by the respondents, there were eight which they mentioned more frequently than others. Those were items that they purchased regularly. The items listed by the respondents in the order of importance were:

1. Coffee
2. Sugar
3. Shortening
4. Soap
5. Butter
6. Eggs
7. Cigarettes
8. Frozen foods

These are items which respondents would like to see advertised regularly in conjunction with the usual assortment of grocery, meat and produce items. Frozen foods gained a spot in this select group which shows the demand for this relatively new item. Although many more items were given by the respondents, the small number for each item made them insignificant. Over 48 percent of the respondents gave a specific item in answer to this

question. The other 52 percent which included those who did not read the advertising, in most instances, felt the companies included a good variety of merchandise in their programs.

Market Basket Super Market Radio Advertising

Radio advertising is the "ear appeal medium" used by many food retailers to reach the housewife during the afternoon hours. In the local area the Market Basket Super Market sponsored one such program. Although this company does sponsor another program during the morning hours, the respondents were just questioned as to whether they listened to the afternoon program.

This program is on the air from 1:15 P.M. until 1:30 P.M. and is entitled, "The Musical Jackpot". It consists of "hit" tunes, a disc jockey session, asking questions and awarding of prices. Various telephone numbers which have been selected at random from local telephone directories, are called throughout the program. If the person called is able to answer the question asked, he is awarded a prize which usually consists of food items and may be picked up at the chain super markets. To stimulate more interest in this program, answer sheets to the questions asked are distributed in the stores each week.

Respondents were asked if they listened to this radio program. Table 37 shows that over 55 percent of the respondents did listen to the program. Less than 45 percent did not listen to the program.

TABLE 37

RESPONDENTS WHO LISTENED TO MARKET BASKET SUPER MARKET MUSICAL JACKPOT RADIO PROGRAM

Frequency of Listening	Percent of Respondents
Frequently	16.7
Occasionally	38.7
Total	55.4

The Kroger Super Market's Alan Young Television Show

Television is a new media of advertising. It is an improvement over radio in that it appeals both to the eyes and ears by adding a moving image to the spoken word. As an advertising media, television can reach the consumers in an effective and interesting manner.

The Kroger Super Market's Alan Young show is a "cooperative show". This means that it is paid for by different sponsors throughout the country. The Kroger Company sponsors the show in the Midwest, while Standard Oil Company of New Jersey sponsors it in the East. This method spreads production costs and enables a local sponsor to bring a national program to his customers.

The respondents were asked if they had a television set. Those who replied "yes" to this question were asked if they watched the Alan Young show. It was found that 41.3 percent of the respondents had television sets. Table 38 shows that all respondents watched this program either regularly or occasionally. Once again to make any generalizations on such a fact would be erroneous. Many of the owners of television sets in this area were unable to receive response from any other station other than the local one which carried this program.

TABLE 38

FREQUENCY OF RESPONSE TO THE KROGER ALAN YOUNG SHOW

Frequency	Percent of Respondents
Frequently	80.6
Occasionally	19.4
Never	-
Total	100.0

Table 38 shows that the program had the ability to draw over 80 percent of the possible television audience to view it frequently. Less than 20 percent only watched it on occasion, while there were no respondents, who had a television set, that did not watch it at all.

Summary

It was found that 72 percent of the respondents look at the advertising and price posters on store windows when they are shopping. Over 22 percent of this group of respondents often entered the store to make a purchase as a result of this advertising.

Chain store operators spend a larger percentage of their advertising expenditures for newspaper advertising than for any other media. It was found that 60 percent of the respondents recalled having read the advertising of all four chain super markets. This does not mean this group does not read the advertisements each week, but refers to the particular week in which they were interviewed.

It was found that the newspaper advertisements of all four chains were well read, ranging from a high of 76 percent who recalled reading the Market Basket Super Market advertisement to a low of 68 percent who read the A & P Super Market advertisement. It was also found that 38 percent of the respondents read one advertisement more regularly than the others. Over 39 percent of this group read the Market Basket Super Market advertisement more regularly than the others while a low of 13.8 percent read the Kroger Super Market advertisement more regularly than others.

The respondents voiced the opinion that coffee, sugar, shortening and soap were the items they would like to see featured more regularly than others. The eighth most popular item was frozen foods which indicates the growth of popularity for this item.

Over 55 percent of the respondents listened to the Market Basket Super Market radio program entitled, "The Musical Jackpot". It was found that 16.7 percent of the respondents listened to this program regularly while 38.7 percent listened occasionally.

The Kroger Company's Alan Young Television Show had the ability to attract every one of the respondents who owned television sets. Over 80 percent of this group watched the program regularly. This result might seem amazing, but there are many television owners in the area who cannot receive other stations than the local one; possibly this is an important factor in this instance.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

Summary

The purpose of this study was to present a research technique which could be used to investigate the shopping habits and preferences of the customers of retail food stores. The section chosen for this study was in Lansing, Michigan and was selected because of the highly competitive nature of the area. This area contained four chain super markets and a large number of smaller independent stores strategically located throughout the area. The material for the survey was obtained by 150 personal interviews in this neighborhood. Although few generalizations on the results of this study can be made as Lansing is not a duplicate of all other cities, it does show the results which can be obtained in various areas by using the same technique.

The results of these interviews with the respondents were:

1. Over 95 percent of the respondents were housewives, having an average size family of 3.6 persons. The income of these families was predominately middle-income. Although men were not the major shoppers of the food supply in this area, in 70.7 percent of the families they did shop for grocery products at some time.

The average number of trips to the food store by the respondents was 3.5 trips per week. Many of these families had their bread and milk delivered which curtailed the number of trips to the store each week. Over 80 percent of the respondents made their largest food purchase on Friday or Saturday. Another 13.8 percent made their large purchase on

Thursday, with over 30 percent of this group doing so in the A & P Super Market. This is highly significant since this company advertises on Wednesday. Seventy-four percent of the respondents made their large purchase on the weekend because the husband was at home to help them. Only 16 percent felt that bargains were an important reason in selecting a day for shopping. The automobile was one of the chief means of doing the family shopping by 88 percent of the respondents. Walking was the next most important means. Delivery, which was offered by a limited number of small independents was used by 6.7 percent.

2. Only 36.7 percent of the respondents purchased most of their needs from the three departments of a single food store. The chain super markets attracted 69 percent of this group.

In the preference of a store for the purchasing of meat, 40.5 percent of the respondents based their choice on quality of the product. Price, once again, was not the major consideration. Forty-three retail stores which sell meat were mentioned by the respondents. The chain super markets were only able to attract 35.3 percent of the respondents. The Schmidt's Super Food Market was noted for its quality meat by its customers, as was the case with the Kroger Super Market customers. The chief appeal to the Market Basket Super Market customers was self-service, while convenience attracted the largest number of the A & P Super Market customers.

Convenience and freshness were the chief factors in attracting respondents to the chain super markets to purchase produce items. Quality and personal service were the major assets of the independents. The chain super markets were able to attract 74 percent of the respondents to buy most of their fresh vegetables in their stores. The A & P Super Market customers were attracted to its produce stand because of convenience; the Kroger Super Market because of freshness; the Market Basket Super Market for price; and the Schmidt's Super Food Market for quality.

Price was the major consideration of those who purchased grocery products in the chain stores. Convenience was the main attraction of the independent grocer. Over 80 percent of the persons interviewed bought the bulk of their groceries from the chain super markets. The Market Basket Super Market is noted for its low prices, while the reputation of Schmidt's Super Food Market in this area is on its quality merchandise.

3. Over 92 percent of the respondents were familiar with self-service meats. Eighty-seven and three-tenths percent of the respondents had ever made an actual purchase of it. Over 45 percent who had purchased self-service meats disliked this method of merchandising at the present time.

The greatest complaint voiced against self-service was the doubt of its freshness. This was followed by the fact that consumers could not see what they were getting. The chief liking for this type of merchandising, was the convenience factor.

4. Seventy-two percent of the respondents looked at the advertising and price posters in store windows when shopping. Over 22 percent of these respondents often entered the store to make a purchase as a result of this advertising.

Sixty percent of the respondents had recalled having read the advertisements of all four chain super markets. The newspaper advertisements of all four chains were well read, ranging from a high of 76 percent of the respondents who recalled the Market Basket Super Market advertisement to a low of 68 percent who recalled having read the A & P Super Market advertisement. The Market Basket advertisement was read more regularly than any of the other advertisements.

Coffee, sugar, shortening and soap were the items respondents would like to see featured more regularly. Frozen foods was the item listed eighth in their desire to see certain items featured.

Over 55 percent of the respondents listened to the Market Basket Super Market radio program. The Kroger Company's Alan Young show had a 100 percent viewing audience among the respondents who owned television sets. Over 80 percent of this group watched the program regularly.

Conclusion

The results of this study show that it is possible to obtain the shopping habits and preferences of the consumers in an area by using such a technique. Many significant facts were found in the reasons why consumers purchase food products from the many stores. There are other important considerations that the customers recognize besides price.

There is evidence that the customers feel that the chain super market is a good place to shop for grocery and produce items, these departments having the ability to attract 80 and 74 percent of the respondents, respectively.

The meat departments of the chain super markets are not attracting the number of customers they should. There seems to be a dislike for chain store meats. There is also evidence that these respondents do not like self-service type of meat merchandising, at the present time.

None of the problems in regard to the meat departments appear insurmountable. It is evident that a strong educational program, stressing

high quality meat with a money-back guarantee will help to attract a lot of this business into the chain super market. An educational campaign on self-service type of meat merchandising should also be stressed by stores employing this method.

Recommendations

Throughout the body of this text a number of recommendations and suggestions have been made which would be applicable to all the chain super markets in the area of this survey. For each individual store the results of this survey also give some significant facts about the likes and dislikes of the customers for them. To illustrate recommendations which can be attained from such a survey the author presents an example for each of the super markets.

Market Basket Super Market. More customers bought the bulk of their groceries in this store than in any other market. It also ranked second in attracting produce customers and had the ability to make the largest percent of respondents feel it had the lowest prices. The main failure of the Market Basket Super Market was in attracting customers to the meat department.

Since many of the homes in the area do have television sets and local station WJIM in many instances, is the only station to reach these homes, it is suggested that the Market Basket Company contract for space on this station. Their advertising would be of the institutional nature to impress on the people that they do carry quality merchandise in all departments of the store. To tie in with this program they may also feature nationally known brands of merchandise in the campaign. They have very definitely created a favorable price impression on the public, they must now establish themselves as a store of quality merchandise.

A & P Super Market. A problem associated with this super market was found to be the long check-out lines on weekends. To eliminate this bottleneck it is felt that a new mechanized type of check-out could be utilized to increase production and minimize this objection.

Kroger Super Market. Kroger has created an impression of quality merchandise. Many also stated that they were very favorably impressed with the beauty of the Kroger Super Market. While such favorable comments were being made often, in the next breath the respondent attributed high prices to this store. It is suggested that, in the immediate area of this store, a campaign be started to eliminate this feeling. This could be done with a handbill or circular each week which would feature the "low-every-day" prices to be found in this super market. It is felt this method will tend to break down the resistance to the store because of high prices.

Schmidt's Super Food Market. The main limitation of this store is the small dimensions of the store. This fact limits the variety of merchandise they can carry. Possibly in future years this can be overcome by expanding this store or moving to a larger store nearby where they can utilize to best advantage the good will already established. Until such a change can be made, this market must keep stressing its two chief attributes which are amazingly higher than are attributed to the other chain super markets. These two assets are quality merchandise in all departments of the store and friendly courteous personnel. These two factors are the main features in attracting consumers to this store. For the continued success of this store, the selection of personnel and the quality of merchandise must be kept at the high level which they have attained.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX

QUESTIONNAIRE

1\. (a) Do you buy most of the food for your family? Yes____ No____
(If answer is 'No' discontinue the interview)

(b) Do any other members of your family ever make purchases of grocery products? Yes____ No____ Who____

2\. How many people do you buy for?____

3\. (a) How often do you shop for food each week?

once a week____ three times a week____ five times a week____
twice a week____ four times a week____ six times a week____
more than six times a week____

(b) Which day of the week do you make the largest purchase?

Mon.____ Tues.____ Wed.____ Thurs.____ Fri.____ Sat.____

(c) Why do you make the largest purchase on that day?

(d) What means of transportation do you use when shopping?

Walk____ Auto____ Bus____ Other____

4\. (a) In what store do you usually buy most of your:

	Name of store	Address	Why have you shopped here?
Meats?			
Fresh Vegetables?			
Other Groceries?			

(b) Is there any other market you occasionally buy your other food requirements from? Yes____ No____
Name and address -

What is it you like or dislike about this store?

5. Which of the following stores (1) Schmidt, (2) Market Basket, (3) Kroger, (4) A & P, (5) Others (mentioned above)________

	1	2	3	4	5
(a) Have you been in?					
(b) Which have the largest variety of items to choose from?					
(c) In your opinion which is the best store?					

6. (a) Are you familiar with self-service meats? Yes___ No___

(b) Have you ever purchased self-service meats? Yes___ No___

If 'Yes' ask: Do you still purchase self-service meats?
Regularly _______ Occasionally _______ No_______

(c) What is your opinion of self-service meats?
Like_____ Dislike_____
Comments:

7. (a) Do you look at the advertising and price posters on store windows when you are shopping? Yes___ No___

(b) Do you sometimes go into a store to make a purchase as a result of seeing these advertisements? Yes often___ Yes occasionally____ Never___

(c) What store, in your opinion, has the lowest prices?______________

8. (a) Do you recall seeing any of these advertisements in your newspaper last week? (sample of each is shown)

A & P____ Kroger____ Market Basket____ Schmidt____

(b) Did you purchase any items as a result of reading these advertisements? Yes___ No___
(If 'yes' what items?)

(c) Is there anyone of these advertisements that you read more regularly than others? Yes___ No___
(If answer is 'yes') Which one and why?

(d) Are there any items in particular you would like to see advertised more regularly than others?

9. (a) Do you listen to the George Smith Market Basket radio program, "Musical Jackpot"?
Yes frequently___ Yes occasionally___ No___

(b) Do you have a television set? Yes___ No___
(If 'yes') Do you watch the Kroger's Alan Young show?

Yes frequently___ Yes occasionally___

Occupation of head of the family________________________________

Income group:

2,000 - 3,000___
3,000 - 4,000___
4,000 - 5,000___
5,000 - 6,000___
6,000 - 7,000___
7,000 and over___

Approximate age of the person interviewed:

17 - 24___
25 - 32___
33 - 40___
40 - 47___
48 - 55___
56 - 63___
64 and over___

Address: