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/QUALITY COMPARISON OF READY-MADE DRAW CURTAINS/

By

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A PROBLEM

Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of

MASTER OF ARTS

Department of Textiles, Clothing and Related Arts

1969

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background Information

As early as the Renaissance period, windows were small and made of thick, opaque glass. There was little concern for window coverings to secure privacy, to control ventilation, to provide insulation, or to obstruct an undesirable view. Only the wealthy attained aesthetic enrichment by draping enormous amounts of lavishly designed velvets, brocades, and damasks throughout the rooms, with the exception of the windows. During the seventeenth century, country houses replaced the castles; larger windows with a type of curtaining became fashionable. French silks were used more extensively than the Oriental imports. The luxurious fabrics were draped effectively on the walls, as well as over and along the sides of windows. Light cotton muslins imported from India became more popular and economical than the French and Oriental fabrics. The style of window coverings also changed, with the sheer fabric arranged across the complete window and along the sides. In order to admit ventilation or disclose a view, the entire curtain had to be drawn to one end. A later innovation was to cut the curtain into two parts to achieve a more aesthetic

appearance when the curtain was drawn for various purposes.¹

France set the fashion of interior design as a result of the reign of the three Louis. Throughout each sovereignty, full length curtains of elaborate fabrics created a formal impression. However, the fashion changed from the lambrequin of Louis XIV to an elaborate trimming of loops and draping with fringes and laces by the reign of Louis XV. Louis XVI established a more conservative treatment, with lighter weight materials and smaller amounts of fabric. All the European countries and the British Isles followed the French fashion of window treatment, but each country made its own adaptations. As a result, numerous curtain styles as well as a variety of fabrics have developed.

In 1760, with the beginning of the Industrial Revolution in England, great strides in industrial developments were taking place. Inventions such as the spinning jenny, the power loom, and the steam engine called for new production methods. Products were no longer made in the homes of the workers, because they could not afford the expensive new machinery. Workers were brought into factories by wealthy owners and supplied with the equipment and raw materials to produce a finished product. Division of labor and specialization increased production and wealth. Throughout the revolution, corporations were formed, with various

¹Helen Churchill Candee, Weaves and Draperies (New York: Frederick A. Stokes Co., 1930), p. 262.

rights and duties for employers and employees.² Gradually, automated machines replaced the earlier models.

During this modernization process which spread to other countries, furniture and fabrics became accessible to the working class. It is possible that mass production methods and consistency of window sizes made it practical for curtains to be pre-constructed for immediate use. Curtains were mass produced in simplified construction and style. Some basic styles included traverse curtains, tie-back curtains, tier curtains, and criss-crossed curtains. Variations of basic styles were achieved by weight of the fabric used and the pattern or type of design.

Statement of the Problem

The focus of this study was to develop the criteria by which ready-made, living room draw curtains can be analyzed for quality, using the information obtained from the literature, a home furnishing specialist, and market samples of various characteristics distinguishing the quality of ready-made curtains associated in different price ranges in one retailing outlet, and among the three retailing outlets.

Definition of Terms

Several terms will be defined to help clarify their meanings, as used in this study.

²"Factory System," Encyclopedia Americana, International Edition, Vol. X (1965), p. 669.

1. Structural design - visual or tactile quality derived from the intrinsic character of the materials, the way in which they are fabricated, or the sensitivity with which the object and its component parts are shaped.³

2. Applied design - adornment added to an object after it is structurally complete.⁴

3. Special purpose finishes and treatments - type of finish incorporated into a fiber or applied to the fabric to add desired properties.

4. Discount store - retail outlet originally offering nationally advertised brands at retail prices lower than those suggested by the manufacturer. However, today nationally advertised brands as well as inexpensive merchandise are sold at discount stores. The keynote of the operation is mass production, with minimum service and emphasis on bargains.⁵

5. Department store - retail outlet offering a wide variety of merchandise, including wearing apparel and household furnishings for consumers of all ages and both sexes. This collection of merchandise is offered for sale in separated departments, each of which is administered

³Ray Faulkner and Sarah Faulkner, Inside Today's Home (3rd ed.; New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), p. 116.

⁴Ibid.

⁵J. Gordon Dakins, The Buyers Manual (New York: Merchandising Division of National Retail Merchants Association, 1965), p. 6.

by a buyer or department store manager who is a specialist in his field.⁶

6. Chain store - retail outlet selling the same kind of merchandise as a department store. It is administered by a centralized management under a single ownership, but the number of store units varies.⁷

7. Branch store - retail outlet differing from chain store units in that it is dominated by the parent store; its more specialized and smaller counterpart, the "twig," is a natural development in view of the decentralization of shopping areas. Branch operations are not as autonomous as chain operations.⁸

8. Curtain - any sizeable piece of fabric window covering, light or heavy, sheer or opaque, constructed with or without lining.

9. Drapery - commonly refers to a heavy weight curtain, with or without lining, and made to hang in folds, but sometimes restricted to a draped effect in a window treatment.

Operational definitions specific to this study include the following:

10. Ready-made draw curtain - a general term describing a window treatment of the pull or draw type, with

⁶Ibid., p. 2.

⁷Fred M. Jones, Retail Management (Homewood, Ill.: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1963), p. 114.

⁸Delbert J. Duncan and Charles F. Phillips, Retailing Principles and Methods (6th ed.; Homewood, Illinois: Richard D. Irwin, Inc., 1963), p. 114.

pinch-pleated heading, and made of opaque, unlined or self lined fabric; suitable for use in a living room and ready for immediate use.

11. Fabric construction - refers to type of fiber, and structural and applied design.

12. Curtain construction - regular three-inch pinch pleated curtains with three- to four-inch spacing between pleats.

13. Low cost curtain - a representative sample curtain within the lowest price range in a given store.

14. Medium cost curtain - a representative sample curtain within the middle price range in a given store.

15. High cost curtain - a representative sample curtain within the highest price range in a given store.

16. Characteristics - in this study refers to characteristics or individual properties of a curtain, such as fiber or size of stitches.

17. Quality - in this study refers to the property of the curtain due to a combination of characteristics.

Importance of and Need for the Study

A comparison of curtains in a variety of retailing outlets is important to any professional in the field who wishes to keep informed of consumer choices and the services that are available in retailing outlets. Home economists such as interior designers, home furnishing specialists, and consumer consultants will be better prepared to advise consumers in making more appropriate decisions in selecting

suitable ready-made curtains, if they have information based on analysis of what is available. This information could also be helpful to consumers themselves in obtaining ready-made curtains that will be satisfactory to them in appearance as well as being economical and functional.

Factors that might be considered to contribute the most to low, medium, and high price levels are fiber content and size of the curtain. Some of the readings suggested this was true; however, they gave no substantial evidence to this effect. The characteristics of the material and construction are related to the quality of appearance over a period of time, although these factors may not be evident when the merchandise was initially displayed.* The performance of curtains in daily use, in laundering, in dry cleaning, and with change in humidity may affect the quality of appearance and serviceability. Therefore, it is important that the consumer know the qualities to look for in ready-made curtains.

*These factors are being considered under appearance characteristics and economic factors because they affect the length of satisfactory use.

CHAPTER II

DEVELOPMENT OF CRITERIA FOR EVALUATING READY-MADE DRAW CURTAINS

In each type of window treatment, the factors emerging as generally important in making a decision are the appearance characteristics, the economic factors, and the functional requirements of the curtains. The critical decision in the choice of a curtain is to select the factors that are most important to the particular installation. A number of factors are usually combined in order to achieve a high level of satisfaction. In an article in the 1966 issue of Progressive Architecture, the author mentioned that a balance between openness and view, on the one hand, and insulation and privacy, on the other, is important. This effect depends upon the type and density of the fabric. Selection of harmonious window coverings from both the inside and the outside view contributes to a pleasing appearance. In the review of window treatments, the author found that the traverse curtains have remained the most common type of window covering in residential installations.⁹

⁹"Window Coverings," Progressive Architecture, Vol. 47 (November, 1966), p. 146.

Appearance Characteristics

Appearance factors involved in curtain decisions are: design features of fabric, dye process, general quality of the fabric itself, construction features, and over-all appearance of the curtain, including hanging quality.

Factors that contribute to the over-all appearance of curtains are the design features of the fabric and the curtain itself. Pattern that matches with the grain of the fabric throughout the entire curtain contributes to the over-all appearance of the window treatment. Curtains may be cut off grain, or a pattern added to the fabric after the material is constructed may not have been applied on the straight of the grain. The curtain must be constructed on the grain in order to hang evenly. An off-grain applied design will be impossible to match because of the degree of variation, and its unevenness will detract from the appearance of the window treatment.

Evenness of dyeing throughout the fibers and the fabric is important to the over-all quality of the window covering. Solution dyeing is ideal because it ensures even dyeing throughout the fiber, but it is limited to man-made fibers. However, there are other satisfactory acceptable color application processes such as screen printing, roller printing, and piece dyeing. Fabrics that have been piece dyed might vary in the amount of color absorption and fiber penetration, depending on the type of fiber, fiber blend, amount and quality of pigment, and length of dyeing time in each dye bath.

General quality of the fabric itself will further influence curtain choice. Quality of the fabric is affected by the fiber or fibers used in construction, yarn count, spaces between yarns, weight of yarn, looseness or firmness of weave, and the finish. These general components affect texture of the fabric. Textures may look and feel smooth or rough, pliable or stiff, slippery or harsh, lustrous or dull, soft or hard, springy or limp, warm or cool, and sheer or bulky. Textures also determine the drapability of curtains--whether they fall in soft folds or whether they hang in firm convolutions.¹⁰ Congruity of design according to lengthwise and crosswise grain further affects fabric appearance.

Construction details that add to quality are: neat, even stitching; correct thread tension; absence of loose thread ends and puckers; even pleats; suitable hem finishes; and adequate side and bottom hems, heading, and pleats.

Sufficient curtain fullness supplies beauty in the hanging quality of tailored curtains. In heavier weight draperies, plan for fabric width twice as wide as the window or the window and wall space to be covered, in order for curtains to hang in generous, soft folds.¹¹ To hang evenly, a curtain must be constructed on the straight grain

¹⁰Dorothy Clark, Window Treatment, Agricultural Extension Service (Pullman: Washington State University, 1960), p. 16.

¹¹Martha L. Hensley and Bess V. Morrison, "Window Curtains, Planning and Selection," House and Garden Bulletin No. 4 (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1951), p. 3.

of the fabric. If not, the material will not hang evenly, and the pleats will not fall in even folds. Self-lining¹² adds body and weight to light and medium weight fabrics; therefore, they hang better and have greater dimensional stability.

Economic Factors

Specific economic factors in the choice of ready-made curtains include: initial cost of the curtains, maintenance costs, insulative properties of heat and sound, and admission of exterior light.

One might expect that the initial cost of curtains will be affected by their dimensions, fiber content, and construction features. Larger curtains, although of the same fabric, require additional fabric, additional construction time, and larger amounts of special purpose finishes than the smaller sizes. It would appear, then, that the larger the dimensions of the same curtain type, the greater the cost would be. Cost of the curtain is also said to depend on the type and availability of its component fibers, construction features of the fabric, quality and type of dye process, and special purpose finishes and treatments. Quality construction features of the curtain might also influence cost. Such factors as absence of loose thread ends, use of correct thread tension to avoid puckering,

¹²Self-lining as referred to in this study includes a sprayed acrylic backing or a woven backing as a result of a double cloth.

and straight, even stitching indicate good quality construction but might add to labor costs. Ample hems also are an indication of good quality but conceivably could add to construction costs because of the additional fabric used.

Maintenance cost is another economic factor in the choice of curtains. Stability of color is an important characteristic influencing quality and maintenance. Curtains that have a specified length color guarantee.. assure to some extent the length of color fastness and replacement time. Solution or vat dyed fabrics are more color fast to sunlight, gas fading, and fading with washing and dry cleaning than are other dye processes of the same man made fiber. Research carried out by Todd et al on fading properties of certain fiber substrate indicated that "the structure of dyes is the overriding factor in regard to stability to light fading but fiber substrate, delusterant and depth of shade do have some effect on the stability of these dyestuffs."¹³ Curtains with self-lining and lined curtains may be more economical than unlined curtains because they protect the face fabric from fading and sun rot. Other maintenance costs include type of cleaning and pressing necessary. Curtains that are washable and require little or no pressing are more economical than curtains that require dry cleaning and the added labor

¹³R.E. Todd, R.S. Asquith, and A.T. Peters, "The Influence of Fiber Substrate on the Fading Properties of Nitrodiphenylamine Dyes," American Dyestuff Reporter, Vol. 55 (July 18, 1966), p. 562.

of pressing. Durable heading tape securely applied contributes to the length of service of the curtain.

Another economic factor in curtain choice is any saving which might accrue from regulation of heat. Dark colored fabrics, which tend to absorb and re-radiate solar energy, are practical in the colder months due to possible saving in heating costs. However, darker curtains would possibly increase air conditioning costs in the warmer months. Likewise, compact weaves and heavy fabrics are more heat absorbent than light, airy fabrics. Also, self-lined and lined draperies contribute to the insulative quality by retaining summer coolness and winter warmth.

Light colors and light weight, open weave admit more natural, diffused light to the room, thereby reducing electricity costs.

Functional Requirements

Physical requirements desirable in window coverings include: acoustical properties, ease of maintenance resulting from resistance to soil and "easy-care" properties, abrasion resistance, and resistance to fading and sun damage.

Exterior and interior noises can be effectively reduced by heavily textured fabrics. Adequate quantities of textured fabric in deep folds are more effective in sound absorption than flat coverings made of smooth material, which are sound reflective. The amount of fullness provides insulative properties in direct proportion to the depth of

of the folds and the size of the curtain. Draperies with self-lining, such as acrylic backed fabric, and draperies with a separate fabric sewn to the face fabric have greater insulative properties than unlined draperies because of air pockets formed between the face fabric and the self-lining or lining. Sound transmission and absorption also depend upon the number of warp and filling yarns per inch (yarn count), the amount of twist (turns per inch), the thickness of the yarns, and the size of the spaces in the fabric. The greater the yarn count, the closer the spaces between the yarns; therefore, the greater the amount of sound absorption.¹⁴

Special purpose finishes and treatments may be applied to fabrics or curtains once they are constructed to impart certain performance characteristics. Some finishes add wrinkle resistance; spot and stain resistance; soil resistance; resistance to fire and mildew. Others impart wash and wear qualities, permanent smooth qualities, dimensional stability, and body. These are referred to as functional finishes, as opposed to the general finishes added to greige goods.

May mentions that the fluorochemical and extended finishes such as Scotchgard and Zepel offer successful protection against water and oil borne stains. These finishes cling to each fiber by forming a chemical shield that pushes away watery or oily substances and prevents them from being

¹⁴A.W. Metzger, "Fiber Glass Fabrics Modify Environment," Architectural Record (November, 1964), p. 219.

absorbed. Scotchgard and Zepel finishes are durable to washing and dry cleaning, yet do not affect fabric hand or appearance.¹⁵ Scotchgard and Zepel are two fluorochemical stain repellents; however, there are other kinds of stain repellents such as silicones, waxlike derivatives, and pyridinium compounds.

Normally, fluorochemical finishes are used in conjunction with wash and wear resins and the permanent press finishes. Wash and wear fabrics with thermosetting resins impregnated into the fibers or blends have produced fabrics with good wrinkle resistance, crease retention, tear strength, and improved dimensional stability. Thus, a fabric that is washable and treated with special purpose finishes for minimum care is another functional quality that is desirable in curtains.

Abrasion resistance and strength are additional functional requirements of draw curtains. Faulkner specifies that "fabrics used for draw curtains need sufficient strength, durability, and flexibility to withstand being pulled back and forth and to hang gracefully when stretched or pulled together."¹⁶ For this reason, glass fiber is not used as extensively as other fibers in curtains because of low abrasion and cracking resistance when rubbed or creased.

¹⁵Michael J. May, "Water and Soil Repellent Finishes," American Dyestuff Reporter, Vol. 54 (October 25, 1965), p. 888.

¹⁶Faulkner, op. cit., p. 267.

Another functional property to consider in the selection of curtains is the resistance of the fabric to fading and sun damage. Lustrous fabrics are more resistant to the effects of light than delustered fabrics. Very fine yarns and loose weaves are less resistant to light than heavier yarns and firm weaves. Materials that are relatively highly resistant to the effects of ultra violet rays or a condition called sun rot include glass fibers, inert mineral fibers, Polyester (Dacron and Fortrel), acrylic (Creslan and Orlon), monocrylic (Verel), Saran, and nylon, which are highly resistant to sunlight and heat but will react to sunlight and heat.¹⁷ Fire resistance was provided only by the glass fibers; no additional flameproofing finishes were applied to the samples observed. Finishes added to fabrics to reduce damage by mildew producing fungi were not evident in any of the samples observed. The curtains containing cotton fibers may be attacked by mildew. Since there were no bases for discrimination among the curtain samples, resistance to fire and resistance to mildew will not be discussed further.

The above criteria relating to appearance characteristics, economic factors, and functional requirements were the classifications used to evaluate the quality of ready-made draw curtains of three cost levels,¹⁸ in three retail outlets.

¹⁷"The Institute Answers Your Questions on Draperies," Good Housekeeping, Vol. 156 (February, 1963), p. 160.

¹⁸Although data were obtained for three cost levels only two were analyzed; this is explained on page 17.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

The concern of this study was to determine the criteria that contributed to quality in ready-made curtains. Information found in the literature, observations of market samples, and consultation with a home furnishings specialist provided a guide for constructing a data sheet for categorizing, recording, and analysing the data. Data are presented in their entirety in the Appendix.

Because one type of each curtain available was displayed in Store A and Store B, it was difficult to determine which curtain was the most representative curtain in each price range. The manager was consulted in each retail outlet to determine the most representative curtain in each price range. In Store C, the most representative sample was determined by choosing the curtain with the largest number of samples in a particular design, color, and dimension in each price range.

Because of the over lapping of costs among the stores, it was impossible to define clearly the middle price range. Therefore, for the purposes of this study representative samples in the low and high cost ranges in each retail outlet were selected for evaluation and comparison.

In Store A, a locally managed, international department store chain, the low cost range was considered to be from \$3.99 to \$6.98. The most representative sample in this price level sold for \$6.98. High cost range in Store A was from \$9.99 to \$12.98. The most representative sample in this cost range sold for \$12.98.

In Store B, a locally managed department store with two branches, low cost range was considered to be from \$4.99 to \$6.99. The most representative sample in the low cost range sold for \$6.99. High cost range in Store B was from \$7.99 to \$10.99. The most representative sample in the high cost range sold for \$10.99.

In Store C, a discount store and a member of a chain, low cost range was considered to be from \$2.44 to \$3.22. \$2.99 was the price of the most representative low cost sample. High cost range in Store C was from \$4.99 to \$6.99, and the most representative sample in this range was \$5.88.

Appearance Characteristics of Low Cost Curtains

Under the category of appearance characteristics, factors that constituted the criteria were: design features, dye processes, general construction of the fabric, construction features of the curtain, and over-all appearance of the curtain, including hanging quality.

In Store A, the low cost sample was constructed in a structural Jacquard design, with a loose, closed

weave. Yarn count was 100 warp yarns by 32 pick yarns per square inch. The quality of the dye application appeared even throughout the fabric. A heavy weight yarn composed of 67 per cent cotton and 33 per cent rayon was used in construction, imparting a non-lustrous, rough textured surface quality to the fabric. The fabric hand appeared flexible, resilient, and compressible. In general, construction details appeared to be of fair quality. Stitching was neat and even, done with matching thread in a basting length stitch. However, side hems were puckered slightly, probably as a result of incorrect thread tension. Ample side and bottom hems with blind stitched finish were provided. Heading tape was of 4" buckram and its application was neat and secure. The curtains contained 3" pinch pleats with 4" spacing between pleats. Double fullness construction provided generous folds. The over-all hanging quality of the curtain was poor. It sagged to one side because the curtain was constructed off grain.

In Store B, the low cost sample was constructed in a structural novelty design, having a loose, open weave. The yarn count was not stated. Dye application appeared consistent throughout the fabric. A medium weight yarn composed of 100 per cent cotton was used in construction. The fabric had a rough, non-lustrous texture; it was flexible but appeared limp and lacked resilience. Construction details generally appeared to be of high quality. Basting-length stitching done with matching thread was neat, even and secure throughout; correct thread tension

was used. Side and double bottom hems were ample and were finished with blind stitching. Heading tape was 4" buckram, and was applied securely and evenly. The curtains contained 3" pinch pleats with 4" spacing between pleats. Curtains were constructed with double fullness and fell in even folds. Hanging quality was good because the curtain was constructed on grain.

The low cost sample in Store C had a structural novelty construction with a loose, open weave. Yarn .. count was not given. The fabric appeared to have an even dye application. A medium weight yarn was used in construction, composed of 57 per cent rayon and 43 per cent acetate. Surface quality was rough in texture and non-lustrous. The fabric hand was limp and lacked dimensional stability. Construction features were of poor quality throughout. Stitching was uneven, and some places were stitched twice. There were many loose thread ends, as well. Matching thread in a basting-length stitch and correct thread tension were used. Side and double bottom hems were skimpy. The bottom hem was poorly constructed and the inside of the hem was stretched and showed on the outside of the curtain. Heading tape was 3" flexible cardboard paper; it was applied securely, but with uneven stitching and loose thread ends. The curtain contained 3" pinch pleats with 4" spaces between pleats. Double fullness pleating was used; however, the curtains did not hang in even folds because they were not constructed on grain.

Economic Factors of Low Cost Curtains

Within the major category of economic factors are included the factors of initial cost of the curtain, maintenance costs, insulative properties of heat and sound, and admission of exterior light.

The initial cost of the most representative curtain in the low cost category in Store A was \$6.98. It was composed of cotton and rayon, two readily available fibers. The fabric was constructed in a firm, Jacquard weave which is costly as a result of expensive machinery that is complicated to operate.¹⁹ Low cost samples in Store B and Store C were both constructed in loose, open weaves with a novelty design. It is likely that the novelty design technique is less costly with less complex operating machinery than the Jacquard design technique. Dimensions of the low cost curtain in Store A were 48" x 84"; the length was 21-inches more than the low cost curtains in Store B and in Store C. Special purpose finishes and treatments included a perma-smooth finish, a two-year fade resistance and less than 3 per cent shrinkage guarantee. Quality of construction reached an acceptable standard as stated in the description under appearance, indicating that a reasonable amount of care and labor had gone into the construction process. Maintenance costs would also affect the choice of curtains. The "easy-care" features and fade resistance guarantee added to the economy of this

¹⁹Joseph, op. cit., p. 276.

particular sample. Dimensional stability was provided by less than 3 per cent shrinkage control; therefore, the curtains would be less affected by changes in humidity and washing than untreated curtains. As a result of dimensional control, the curtains would appear attractive for a considerable period of time. Heading tape made of 4" buckram, neatly and securely applied contributed to the serviceability of the curtain. This curtain was judged to possess fairly adequate heat retention value due to the medium weight, closely woven fabric used in construction. The rather dark colored fabric would make it more suitable for colder weather because of heat absorption. However, these same features would limit its functionality as a source of diffused light. The delustered surface and the loose weave would increase slightly the effects of light.

Original cost of the most representative sample in the low cost level in Store B was \$6.99. Fiber content was 100 per cent cotton, a readily available fiber; dimensions were 48" x 63". Special purpose finishes and treatments included a perma-press finish which decreased maintenance cost because it was washable and required little or no ironing. Construction features indicated a reasonable amount of time and labor were involved in making the curtains, thereby increasing the serviceability of the curtain. There was no indication of treatment to increase dimensional stability; consequently, the amount of shrinkage could not be ascertained. The type of dye process and colorfastness were not specified; therefore, the stability of color could

not be determined. Self-lining was not present in the low cost curtain in Store B, but the cotton fibers are fairly resistant to sun damage. However, the curtain itself and the construction of the curtain indicated a long length of service. Serviceability of the curtain was provided by heading tape made of 4" buckram securely applied. The most representative sample in Store B was a rather dark colored, medium weight fabric which would give it a small amount of heat absorption. However, properties of diffusion of natural light would be minimal in spite of the fairly open weave because of the dark colored, medium weight fabric.

Original cost of the most representative curtain in the low cost level in Store C was \$2.99. Fiber content included 57 per cent rayon and 43 per cent acetate, both readily available fibers. Price of the low cost curtain in Store C was less than one-half the cost of the other two curtains in Store A and in Store B. Dimensions were 48" x 63". Absence of special purpose finishes and treatments, as well as inexpensive fibers likely accounted for the low price. Poor quality construction features described under the section of appearance characteristics would indicate lower serviceability. Heading tape made of non-durable cardboard would shorten the life of the curtain. Maintenance costs of this curtain would be expected to be higher than the two low cost samples in Store A and Store B because it required more frequent cleaning, dry cleaning, and pressing. Evidence of dimensional stability was not specified; therefore, the degree of fabric change could not

be predicted. Some rayon fibers tend to stretch in use and care and may shrink in high humidity. Lack of special purpose finishes and treatments as well as absence of the type of dyeing process and guarantee of dye fastness made the life of the curtain questionable. Lack of self-lining and weak fibers would make the curtain susceptible to sun damage and fading. This curtain was light colored, with a loose, open weave, thereby making it poor in heat retention properties. However, the light color of the fabric, as well as its loose, open structure, would make it excellent in the diffusion of natural light.

Functional Requirements of Low Cost Curtains

Functional requirements, another major factor in curtain choice, consisted of acoustical properties, ease of maintenance resulting from resistance to soil and "easy-care" properties, abrasion resistance, and resistance to fading and sun damage.

In Store A, the most representative low cost sample appeared to be fairly sound absorbent. The medium to heavy weight fabric with a closed weave and a rough textured surface would absorb noise. Ease of maintenance as a result of resistance to soil and "easy-care" properties would be provided by the cotton and rayon fibers. The closely woven fabric would allow little penetration of soil and stains; however, the rough textured surface would attract and hold soil and water and oil-borne stains. The curtain was

washable and required little pressing as a result of the perma-smooth finish. No additional spot and stain repellent finishes were provided.

Abrasion resistance was increased by the strength and flexibility of the cotton and rayon fibers. The closed weave and the heavy weight of the fabric further added support. On the other hand, the rough surface texture and the loose weave may become easily snagged. A two-year fade resistance guarantee, specified on the label, would tend to indicate the dye was fairly stable. There was no indication of the type of dye process that was used. Although the low cost curtain in Store A did not have a lining-like treatment, the high percentage content of cotton fibers that have fairly good resistance to heat would prevent excessive sun damage. Therefore, the curtain should not require early replacement.

The most representative low cost curtain in Store B possessed some insulative properties of sound from the rough texture and the medium weight of the fabric, although the loose, open weave would tend to decrease the amount of sound absorption. A backing was not present which would contribute to the insulative value. "Easy-care" features would be provided by the cotton fibers; the curtain was washable and required little pressing because of the perma-smooth finish. However, the loose, open weave and the rough textured surface would likely allow penetration of soil and oil and water-borne stains into the fabric. No additional spot and stain repellent finishes were provided to improve the

performance of the curtain. Dimensional stability was not controlled.

Abrasion resistance was provided by the strength and flexibility of the cotton fibers and the medium weight of the fabric. In Store B, the low cost sample would likely be more readily damaged by abrasion because of the loose, open weave and the rough textured surface. There was no guarantee to cover fading and sun damage; the cotton fibers have fair resistance to sunlight and the medium weight of the fabric would lessen sun damage. A loose, open weave and a delustered surface would contribute to fabric deterioration.

The low cost sample most representative in Store C would appear to have certain sound absorption properties as a result of the rough textured, medium weight fabric. Lack of a self-lining and a loose, open weave prevented extensive sound absorption.

Curtains in the low cost level in Store C required dry cleaning and pressing which would add to the cost and upkeep. Surface characteristics contributed to penetration of soil and stains because of a loose, open weave fabric construction with a rough surface texture. Absence of spot and stain resistant or "easy-care" finishes decreased the performance of the curtain. Dimensional stability was not controlled in the sample and the rayon fibers might shrink or stretch with fluctuations in humidity. Abrasion resistance of the curtain would be low, due to the comparative weakness of the fibers, the medium weight fabric, the loose

and open weave; and the rough surface area. Fading was not controlled by a fade resistant finish; the loose, open weave fabric with a delustered finish contributed to sun damage of the poor quality fibers.

Appearance Characteristics of High Cost Curtains

The high cost sample in Store A was constructed in a structural, two-tone Jacquard design and a firm, compact weave. Yarn count was 100 warp yarns by 28 pick yarns per square inch. A heave weight of yarn made of 54 per cent cotton and 46 per cent rayon created a semi-lustrous and smooth appearance; the high percentage of rayon fibers contributed to the shiny finish. Fabric hand seemed flexible and resilient. Additional body, as a result of the sprayed acrylic backing, made the fabric appear bulkier than the actual weight of the fabric. Dye application appeared consistent in each of the yarn types in the curtain; however, it was difficult to ascertain the evenness of dyeing because of the muted colors. Over-all construction details seemed to be of high quality. Neat, straight basting-length stitches, executed with matching thread and correct thread tension, were consistent in the curtain. Blind stitching on adequate width side and double bottom hems indicated good quality. Corners were mitered neatly. A 4" buckram heading tape was applied carefully. Three-inch pinch pleats with a 4" spacing between pleats supplied double fullness. The pleats hung in even folds, indicating the curtain was constructed on straight grain.

The high cost sample in Store B was constructed in an antique satin weave. A heavy slub was created on the surface by the double cloth and yarn left untwisted at irregular intervals. A firm, compact weave resulted in a flexible, resilient and bulky texture. Added dimensional stability was provided by the double cloth. Medium weight yarns of 61 per cent rayon and 39 per cent acetate produced a non-lustrous, rough textured appearance. Yarn count was not labelled. Fabric hand seemed flexible and resilient. Dye application appeared consistent throughout the fabric, but it was difficult to ascertain the evenness of dyeing because of the rough slub texture. Over-all construction details appeared to be of high quality. Basting-length stitch that was neat and straight, done with matching thread and correct thread tension, was consistent throughout the curtain. Side and double bottom hems were adequate in width and finished off with blind stitching. A 4" buckram heading tape was applied carefully. Three-inch pinch pleats with a 4" spacing between pleats supplied double fullness. Pleats hung evenly, indicating the curtain was constructed on the straight of the grain.

Economic Factors of High Cost Curtains

The initial cost of the most representative curtain in the high cost level in Store A was \$12.98 and in Store B was \$10.99. The high cost sample in Store C was almost one-half the cost of the high cost sample in Store B and less than one-half the cost of the high cost sample in Store A. High

cost samples in Store A and Store B had a self-lining which would add to the cost; the high cost sample in Store C did not have a self-lining and consequently it was lower in price. Dimensions of all the three high cost samples in the three retail outlets were 48"-50" wide by 84" long.

A sprayed acrylic backing added to the cost of the curtain in Store A, but provided crease resistance and dimensional stability. The backing provided less soil and stain penetration and therefore, the curtain required less maintenance. The curtain was washable with a perma-smooth, "easy-care" finish requiring little or no ironing, thus decreasing the cost of upkeep. Pleats were supported by 4" buckram accurately and neatly applied, thereby increasing the length of service of the curtain. Quality of construction was high as stated under appearance characteristics section, giving promise of long service. The curtain was constructed of a dark colored fabric. These qualities would favorably affect the insulative value of the curtain in warm and cold seasons. However, because of dark color, close and firm weave, heavy weight fabric, and self-lining the amount of diffusion of natural light would be minimal.

The most representative curtain in the high cost level in Store B was composed of 61 per cent rayon and 39 per cent acetate, which are easily produced. A self-lining backing as a result of the double cloth added to the cost but provided crease resistance, fade resistance, and dimensional stability. There was no color guarantee specified or any indication of the type of dye processes used. No

additional special purpose finishes and treatments were provided besides the self-lining. Less soil and stain penetration would take place as a result of the self-lining; consequently, the curtain would require less maintenance. But maintenance cost would be increased with the required dry cleaning and pressing. High quality construction features mentioned under appearance characteristics added to the initial cost, but the curtain would appear to be serviceable for a substantial period of time. Life of the curtain was increased by pleats supported with 4" buckram tape securely applied. Because of the firm, compact double cloth, this curtain would have good insulative properties of heat. The dark colored fabric would be more suitable for colder months because it would act as a barrier to both heat and cold. Conversely, as a result of the dark color, close and firm weave, and self-lining, the diffusion of natural light would be minimal.

The original cost of the most representative curtain in the high cost category in Store C was \$5.88. It was composed of low cost 100 per cent glass fibers. No special purpose finishes and treatments were added, thus contributing to the low cost of the curtain. Properties possessed by the glass fibers, however, include fade resistance and dimensional stability. Serviceability of the glass fiber curtains over a period of time was questioned due to the low abrasion resistance of the fibers. Dyeing process was not stated but would most likely be solution dyeing because the fibers are man-made. Because the curtains were washable

and required no ironing, maintenance costs would be minimum. Quality construction as stated in the description under appearance characteristics indicated an acceptable standard was reached due to considerable amount of care and labor involved in the construction process. Heading tape was made of 4" flexible plastic in the high cost sample in Store C which would provide less support than the 4" firm, buckram heading tape in the high cost samples in Store A and Store B. The loose, open weave, and light weight fabric as well as the absence of a backing would make this curtain low in heat retention value. But the light colored fabric would give it a small amount of heat absorption. Similarly, because of the loose, open weave, the light weight fabric, and light color, the curtain would be excellent in diffusion of natural light.

Functional Requirements of High Cost Curtains

In Store A, the most representative high cost sample curtain had a firm, compact weave, imparting good sound absorption qualities. A considerable amount of sound would be absorbed by the heavy weight of the fabric and the additional insulation of the sprayed acrylic backing. Noise would further be controlled by folds of double fullness in the curtains. Dimensions of all samples were 48"-50" wide by 84" long. Special purpose finishes and treatments such as the perma-smooth finish required little pressing after the curtains were laundered. The sprayed backing, the smooth texture, and the firm compact weave would inhibit penetration

of soil and stains; therefore laundering would be less frequent. Dimensional stability was provided by the firm, compact weave and the backing. Resistance to abrasion would be provided by the strong, flexible cotton and rayon fibers; the firm and compact weave; the smooth texture; the heavy weight fabric; and the sprayed acrylic backing. Heat damage and fading would tend to be minimal because of heat resistant fibers, lustrous surface, heavy weight fabric, firm and compact weave and a sprayed backing in spite of the fact there was lack of a color fastness guarantee.

The curtain most representative in the high cost range in Store B was a double cloth curtain. A considerable amount of sound would be absorbed by the firm and compact double cloth, the rough surface texture, and the heavy weight of the curtain. Acoustical control would be increased as a result of the folds of double fullness in the curtain. Maintenance cost would be considerable because the curtain required dry cleaning as well as additional pressing due to lack of "easy-care" finishes. Some degree of wrinkle resistance would be provided by the self-lining of the double cloth. Soil and stain penetration would be inhibited by the compact and firm double cloth; the rough surface texture would attract soil and stains. Dimensional change of the fabric would be inhibited by the firm, compact double cloth although the rayon fibers would change with changes in humidity. Abrasion was controlled to some extent by the fiber flexibility, the firm and compact double cloth, and the heavy weight of the fabric; weakness of the acetate fibers,

a non-lustrous and rough textured surface would increase abrasion damage. Fading would be inhibited by the firm, double cloth fabric of heavy weight. However, the delustered surface and the low heat resistant acetate fibers would increase the possibility of color fading and sun damage.

The glass fiber curtains in the high cost range in Store C would provide little in acoustical absorption because the fabric was light in weight, with a loose, open weave and a smooth, shiny surface. Lack of self-lining also.. decreased sound control. Some sound insulation would be provided by folds of double fullness. Economy of maintenance was minimal as a result of little soil and stain absorption by the smooth and slippery surface. The curtains were washable but would require care in handling to avoid damage due to abrasion; no pressing was required. Dimensional stability was provided to some extent by the glass fibers. Resistance to abrasion was low because glass fibers have a natural tendency to break. The smooth surface would resist snags. There would probably be little sun damage because of the lustrous glass fibers which are highly resistant to heat and fading; the loose, open weave, and light weight of the fabric would only slightly increase the chance of damage to the curtain from intense sunlight.

Findings

Low cost samples

Although the low cost sample in Store A had the highest appearance quality of fabric as a result of the high

quality fiber and larger number of special purpose finishes and treatments, the low cost sample in Store B had the best general hanging quality of the curtains because it was constructed on grain. In general, the over-all construction quality of the sample in Store B was higher than that of the sample in Store A. In Store C the low cost sample had poor quality fabric, no special purpose finishes and treatments, and poor quality construction.

Both the low cost samples in Store A and Store B were similarly priced, but the curtain in Store B was of a smaller dimension. The curtains in Store A and Store B were washable, with perma-smooth finishes, requiring little upkeep. However, the curtain in Store A had additional qualities, including fade resistance guarantee and dimensional stability, which would likely make it more economical because the curtains would not require replacement as soon as those from Store B. The low cost curtain in Store C was less than half the price of the samples in Store A and Store B. However, it required dry cleaning and pressing, therefore adding to maintenance cost. It was made of poor quality fabric with no special purpose finishes and treatments, and poor quality construction. Therefore, this curtain would require replacement sooner than the samples from Store A and Store B.

The samples in Store A and Store B were judged to be nearly equal in heat retention value. Both were rather dark colored, medium weight fabrics. But the sample in Store B had a more open weave, somewhat lowering its heat

regulation properties. The low cost sample in Store A appeared to possess the best acoustical properties as a result of a closed weave, heavy to medium weight fabric, and the large dimensions. The sample in Store C was light colored, with a loose, open weave, thereby making it the poorest of the samples in heat retention properties. Least acoustical properties were present in the low cost sample in Store C because of the loose open weave and the light to medium weight fabric. However, because of this construction, diffusion of natural light would be the greatest in the sample in Store C.

The characteristics of the low cost curtain sample in Store A appeared to be the greatest in functional and economical qualities; however, these positive attributes were greatly offset by the fact that it was cut off grain and detracted from the quality of its appearance. This fundamental deficiency meant that additional attributes are of little value unless the sample was not representative of all the curtains of this type. In a comparison of the sample in Store A with the sample in Store B, which possessed fewer positive characteristics in the categories of functional and economic qualities, the fact that it was cut on grain would seem to make the sample in Store B the curtain with the most important characteristics of quality. Because the sample curtain from Store C was so much lower in cost than either the curtain from Store A or Store B, it is unfair to make comparisons. However, the quality of this sample was low in every dimension which would make it seem appropriate

only in a very temporary situation and only if no other curtain with superior attributes in this price range could be located.

High cost samples

The representative high cost curtain in Store A had the best over-all appearance. It was composed of a higher quality fabric, had a more luxurious weave and more special purpose finishes and treatments than the other two samples. Both the samples in Store A and Store B had self-lining, contributing to a good over-all hanging appearance of the curtain. The sample in Store C was unlined but hung in fairly even folds; over-all hanging quality was not as good as for the samples of Store A and Store B. In general, construction features such as neat, even stitching, correct thread tension, and ample hems appeared consistent throughout the three samples.

The high cost curtain in Store A had the largest number of "easy-care" features, including washability and a perma-smooth finish, and dimensional stability provided by the acrylic backing which made this curtain the most economical to maintain. The curtain in Store B designated dry cleaning, which would increase maintenance costs. The high cost curtain in Store C was one-half the cost of the other two samples, but had a poor over-all appearance as a result of slightly uneven hanging quality and low quality fibers used in construction. Because of poor abrasion resistance, the curtain in Store C would probably have to be replaced earlier than the other two samples.

Savings accruing due to the sprayed acrylic backing in the high cost curtain in Store A acted as an insulator, retaining winter heat and summer coolness. In Store B the high cost curtain, with backing of the double cloth, also provided insulative quality. Both samples were dark colored, heavy fabrics with a firm weave, further contributing to heat insulation. The sample in Store C was constructed of a light colored, unlined, open weave fabric; thus its insulative properties would be far lower than those of the other two samples. This sample, though, would provide the greatest diffusion of natural light.

The high cost samples in Store A and Store B both possessed adequate acoustical control, dimensional stability, and serviceability as a result of self-backing. The sample in Store A was washable, whereas the sample in Store B required dry cleaning. The sample in Store C had less acoustical control because it was lighter in weight, had a loose, open weave, and was unlined. Because it was unlined, dimensional stability and length of life would also be lower. The curtain was washable; however, care would be required in maintenance to avoid abrasion of the glass fiber fabric. All three samples were judged to be fade resistant. The samples in Store A and Store B had self-backing, which would reduce sun damage. Since glass fiber is impervious to sunlight, the sample in Store C would probably be the most resistant to sun damage of the three samples.

In the samples from Store A and Store B, soil and stain penetration would be inhibited because of the self-back

backing, and compact, firm weave. In Store C, soil and stain penetration would be minimal because of the smoothness of the fiber and the fabric.

The price was higher in the curtain in Store A than Store B, but the high cost sample in Store A had the best appearance, the largest number of functional attributes, and it was more economical to maintain. Sample from Store C was approximately one-half the cost of the samples from Store A and Store B, but it would be fairly comparable in qualities of appearance but inferior in functional attributes and economical factors.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY

Criteria were developed for evaluating ready-made draw curtains according to appearance characteristics, economic factors, and functional requirements of the curtains.

Criteria involved in rating appearance factors were: design features of the fabric, dye process, general quality of the fabric itself, construction features, and over-all appearance of the curtain, including hanging quality.

Criteria used to appraise economic factors were: initial cost of the curtains, maintenance costs, and saving which would accrue from regulation of heat, and admission of exterior light.

Functional requirements were rated by the following criteria: acoustical properties, ease of maintenance resulting from resistance to soil and "easy-care" properties, abrasion resistance, and resistance to fading and sun damage.

Appearance characteristics

General findings showed the following similarities among the curtain samples:

1. All curtains were structural in design only.
2. Results of the dyeing process appeared even in all the samples.

3. All curtains were constructed with double fullness pinch pleats, 3" - 4" spacing between pleats, application of heading tape, side hems blind stitched.

Differences which were found in the curtains included:

1. Fiber content, fabric weave and fabric weight, and special purpose finishes and treatments.
2. Construction features such as type of heading tape, width of side hem and bottom double hem, neatness and care of stitching, and construction of curtain on the grain of the fabric.

Economic factors

Differences among the samples included the following considerations:

1. Initial cost of curtains varied as a result of fiber content, special purpose finishes and treatments, quality of construction, and dimensions.
2. Maintenance costs of various samples would vary according to type of cleaning and stability of color.
3. Savings accruing from heat regulation and admission of exterior light would vary according to color, weave, backing, and texture.

Functional requirements

Functional requirements of the curtain samples differed in four general categories:

1. Acoustical properties varied

1. Acoustical properties varied according to weave, texture, and weight of fabric.
2. Ease of maintenance varied according to special purpose finishes and treatments added to the fabric and the amount of soil and stain penetration of the curtain.
3. Abrasion resistance varied according to fiber content, weave, fabric construction; serviceability varied according to the fiber content, weave, fabric construction, dimensional stability, and the general construction quality of the curtain.
4. Resistance to fading and sun damage also varied according to fiber content, fade resistance guarantee, luster of the fabric, weaves, and backing.

This study focused on developing the criteria for evaluating ready-made draw curtains by using information obtained from the literature, a home furnishing specialist, and market samples of various factors contributing to appearance characteristics, economic factors, and functional requirements. The primary objective was to compare characteristics distinguishing the quality of ready-made draw curtains in different cost ranges in one retail outlet and among the three retail outlets. Because of overlapping of cost ranges the middle cost range was eliminated and only the low cost range and the high cost range were analyzed.

It was assumed that the quality factors that might be indicative of consumer satisfaction included appearance and ease of maintenance. Factors such as characteristics of construction of curtains, performance in daily use, and ease of maintenance were not related to price.

The curtain in Store A appeared to have the highest quality in appearance. Special purpose finishes and treatments varied in the high and low cost curtains in each retail outlet, so that these attributes would have to be chosen on an individual basis. The sample in Store C gave evidence of being inferior in all three categories. When the high cost sample in Store C was compared with the low cost curtains in Stores A and B on appearance characteristics, they seemed similar. Samples in Stores A and B of the low cost and high cost, and Store C of the high cost had comparable construction features. The difference between the high and low cost samples was largely to be found in weave and fiber.

This exploratory study indicated that there was considerable variation in qualities in both the low and high cost samples of ready-made draw curtains in all three stores. The amount of variation, however, should not be considered necessarily negative. Some desirable attributes are made available at the sacrifice of others. For example, both light diffusion and insulative properties are not supplied in one type of curtain. The study indicates that workmanship is not the determining factor in the cost of a curtain as one might be prone to believe.

In Store A, the price of the low cost curtain was approximately one-half the cost of the high price curtain. However, both the low and the high cost samples were of Jacquard weave of the same dimensions and double fullness; although the same type of fibers appeared they were present in different amounts. The high cost curtain was finely woven and had a sprayed acrylic backing which should add to the hanging quality. The low cost curtain lacked body due to the absence of any lining and its loosely woven construction. Both curtains appeared to have had an even dye application but laboratory tests would have to be conducted to determine the degree of color fastness. Over-all construction features of the high cost sample were judged to be superior because this curtain was constructed on grain, while the low cost sample was slightly off grain.

In spite of the fact that the initial cost of the high price sample in Store A was almost twice the amount of the low price sample, both curtains were washable, with "easy-care" features. The sprayed acrylic type of lining which was added to the high cost curtain might or might not contribute to the ease of maintenance because there is variation in the degree of soil penetration according to specific material used. The high cost curtain could be predicted to require less pressing, to contribute to increased insulative value, but it would permit less light diffusion.

The low cost sample in Store A possessed fewer functional attributes than the high cost sample. Because

the low cost sample did not have a lining, such as the acrylic backing, this curtain would be predicted to provide less acoustical insulative properties. In appearance characteristics, and functional features, the high cost sample was superior in most respects to the low cost sample. Except for the fact that the low cost sample was constructed off grain, consequently detracting from its appearance, both curtains would have made acceptable choices depending on the situation.

In Store B, the high cost sample had a lustrous appearance, created by the antique satin slub weave, the rayon and acetate fiber content, and the filament-fiber yarns. The low cost sample in the same store differed in the weave and fiber content; it was constructed of cotton fibers in a loose, open weave with a novelty design and without the addition of a type of lining material. The high cost curtain gave promise of being dimensionally stable as the result of a firm, compact weave. For this reason, and the addition of the backing, hanging appearance was improved. Both curtains were constructed to have double fullness. Construction features of these two curtains appeared to be of similar quality workmanship and the curtains were cut on the straight of the grain.

The initial price of the lower cost curtain in Store B was about half the price of the higher cost curtain. However, as mentioned above, the higher cost curtain was 21 inches longer than the lower cost curtain, thereby making it less costly than the actual price would indicate. The low

price sample, because of washability and "easy-care" features, would have a lower maintenance cost because the high cost sample would require dry cleaning and pressing. Additional heat retention was provided by the lining in the high cost curtain, but admission of exterior light would undoubtedly be decreased. While the acrylic lining in the high cost sample increased dimensional stability, the admission of exterior light was sacrificed. Some backings retain soil and therefore the soil resistant properties could not be assessed.

Insulative sound properties would likely be increased with the acrylic backing; thus the low cost curtain held less value for acoustical properties. The high cost curtain was made of low abrasion resistant rayon and acetate fibers, but abrasion resistance was probably increased by the firm weave. The low cost sample had strong cotton fibers which possess fairly high abrasion resistance. The high cost curtain possessed better appearance characteristics and functional attributes; the low cost curtain was superior in several economic factors.

In Store C, the high cost curtain had better appearance characteristics as a result of a more lustrous surface created by the shiny glass fibers; the low cost curtain was made of delustered rayon and acetate fibers that gave the impression of being limp. Both curtains were constructed in a loose, novelty weave in the same size and with double fullness. Construction features for the more costly curtain were judged to be higher in quality than those of the low cost curtain. Stitching in the high cost curtain was neat,

with absence of loose thread ends; uneven stitching and loose thread ends were evident in the low cost sample. Consequently, the general appearance of the high cost sample was judged to be better.

As in the case of previous comparisons, the high cost sample was almost twice the price of the low cost sample in Store C. The high cost sample seemed to be dimensionally more stable and more economical in upkeep. The high cost sample was washable and possessed an inherent wrinkle resistance. Dry cleaning and pressing would be desirable in the low cost sample; dimensional stability was questionable. Heat retention would be negligible in these samples and light admission great, due to the loose or open type of weave.

In Store C, insulative sound properties were slightly greater for the low cost sample due to a rough-textured surface. The high cost sample would probably require less upkeep than the low cost sample because the smooth surface of the glass fibers would soil less readily than the rough-textured surface of the acetate and rayon fabric. Resistance to sun deterioration would be higher for the glass fibers than for the rayon and acetate fibers. Length of service due to abrasion was lower in the high cost sample because glass fibers are somewhat lower in abrasion resistance than the rayon and acetate fibers of the low cost sample.

In a comparison of the low cost samples in all the retail outlets, the curtains in Store A and B were similar in price. However, the curtain in Store A was 21 inches

longer than the curtain in Store B, thereby lowering its cost per yard. The low cost sample in Store C was one-half the cost of the other two samples, but the quality was inferior in all aspects and it would be unfair to compare it with the other two low cost curtains in Store A and Store B. The classified high cost sample in Store C compared most favorably to the actual low cost samples in Store A and Store B in both price and quality; therefore, the low cost sample in Store C could be considered most comparable...When the low cost samples in Store A and Store B and the reclassified sample from Store C were compared, the sample in Store B was judged to have the highest quality in total appearance factors. Fiber content varied among all the low cost samples; the curtains in Store A and B were assessed as having more positive properties than Store C. Type of weave varied as well. The curtains in Store A were made by a Jacquard weave with rayon and cotton yarns; the other two samples were constructed in a novelty weave with the sample in Store B made of cotton yarns and the sample in Store C made of glass yarns. All the low cost samples were of a relatively loose weave type of construction.

The characteristics of construction of the curtains varied. The sample in Store A was constructed slightly off grain, while the curtains in Stores B and C were constructed on the straight grain of the fabric. From an initial cost point of view, the low cost sample in Store A was within a price range similar to the low cost sample in Store B and the high cost sample in Store C. However, the low cost sample in

Store A was longer than the curtains in Stores B and C, thereby making the cost for the amount of material lower than the price would indicate. All the curtains were washable, with some "easy-care" features present. Heat retention was estimated to be similar in all the samples; the curtain in Store C probably admitted the greatest amount of exterior light. Functional attributes would appear consistent. Acoustical properties would likely be fairly equal between the samples in the low and high cost levels. The curtain in Store C would likely soil the least, due to the smooth surface of the fiber, whereas the curtains in Store A and B had a rough textured surface that would attract and hold soil more readily. Color fastness was indicated by the fade resistance guarantee in the sample from Store A, and the samples from Stores B and C lacked a sun fast guarantee. Abrasion resistance was judged to be the lowest in the high cost curtain in Store C due to the glass fibers used in construction, while the other two curtains were made of somewhat higher abrasive resistant fibers.

High cost samples in Store A and Store B were regarded as having higher appearance quality. Both the fiber content and the type of weave varied between the samples and both curtains had a lining. Construction of the curtains was good in each case. The curtains were cut on grain and stitched securely with an even thread tension. The initial price of the curtain in Store A was slightly higher than that for the curtain in Store B, but the first curtain exhibited other economic-related factors such as washability and "easy-

care" features. Insulative value and admission of exterior light would likely be similar as a result of the lining in both curtains. The functional factors referred to acoustical properties and abrasion resistance would be predicted to be fairly equal. Ease in maintenance would probably be greater for the sample in Store A than the curtain in Store B because of the smoother fibers employed.

There was considerable range in the price of the low cost curtains and the high cost curtains, as well as in the characteristics under each quality category. Fiber content differed among both the low cost curtains and the high cost curtains, but all were constructed from relatively inexpensive fibers. The high cost samples in Store A and B had a type of lining which contributed to their appearance. Construction features of the high cost curtains were generally of better quality than those of the low cost curtains; the high cost curtains were all constructed on the straight grain of the fabric, while some low cost curtains were found to be constructed off grain. The length of the curtains varied in the low cost samples, but the length was consistent in the high cost curtains. Estimates of maintenance costs varied among the high and the low cost curtains. Washability was present in both the high and the low cost samples in Store A, the low cost sample in Store B, and the high cost sample in Store C; dry cleaning was required in the high cost sample in Store B and the low cost sample in Store C. Heat and sound insulative properties were generally greater in the high cost samples as opposed to the low cost samples. There

Therefore, these data suggest that a choice of curtain would best be made from a combination of factors most appropriate for the particular appearance and functional purposes demanded. It was observed that the economic properties were found to be less associated with cost than were the functional and appearance properties.

When considering quality of merchandise present in each type of retail outlet, several generalizations could be suggested. The low cost sample with the highest number of quality characteristics contributing to the functional and economical factors was found in Store A, the international department store chain. The low cost curtain with the highest quality characteristics contributing to appearance was in Store B, the locally managed department store with two branches. The high cost curtains in both Stores A and B had a higher total number of qualitative features than in Store C. However, the sample in Store A had a greater number of quality factors contributing to functional requirements and economic properties than Store B. Consequently, data from this study appeared to indicate that Store A, the international department store chain, had the best overall quality as judged from the curtain samples observed. Store B, the locally managed department store, appeared to have acceptable quality curtains. Store C, the discount department store chain, had curtains with the fewest quality characteristics, but at the lowest prices.

From this study there was support to indicate that price bears a relationship to quality in ready-made curtains.

There was also an indication that different retail outlets carry ready-made draw curtains which vary in their total qualities.

CHAPTER V

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES AND RELATED STUDIES

In light of the findings of this study, the researcher believes there is need to investigate further the criteria defining the quality of curtains in order to assess the merchandise available in retail outlets. Therefore, suggestions for improvement of the present study might include:

1. Using only high cost and low cost categories because of the difficulty of establishing a middle range. The narrow range among the costs within one retail store as well as the amount of variation in characteristics among curtains suggests that establishing any clear patterning is unlikely within the middle range included.

2. Devising simple rating scales to assure greater reliability and validity because gross judgements were used and consequently the possibility of subjective evaluations of characteristics were great. Rating scales could be designed to measure, for example, such factors as quality of construction of the curtain, degree of dimensional stability of the fabric, and aesthetic quality of the curtain.

3. Laboratory tests of various factors such as fiber content, fade resistance, breaking strength, and abrasion resistance which would contribute to concrete evidence and decrease subjectivity of the study. Such a procedure

would be possible if sufficient time and money were available.

4. Reliability of findings would increase if the sizes of the sample were increased.

5. Hold cost factor constant which would allow the investigation of quality comparison according to a classification of high and low cost ranges.

Suggestions for related studies which might be developed are:

1. Using representative custom-made and made-to-measure curtains as sources of data.

2. Comparing of applied and structural design fabrics in curtains.

3. Comparing custom-made, made-to-measure, and ready-made curtains available in a number of each type of local retail outlets.

The researcher also recommends that a market survey be randomly conducted in a local area to determine the percentage of curtains that are custom-made, made-to-measure, ready-made, and made at home. Included in the survey could be questions on consumer opinions of the curtain department according to type and dependability of consumer information, merchandise quality, display, and services.

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APPENDIX

Appendix

Table 1. Data Sheet for Observation and Analysis of Ready-Made Draw Curtains

Type of Store - Store A, a locally managed, international department store chain.

Price Range	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
	\$3.99-6.98	\$6.99-98	\$9.99-12.98
Most Representative Price	\$6.98	\$9.98	\$12.98
Fiber Content	67% cotton 33% rayon	71% cotton 29% rayon	54% cotton 46% rayon
Dimensions unit volume	48" x 84"	50" x 84"	50" x 84"
Fabric Construction	structural Jacquard weave; loose weave 100 warp x 32 pick yarns/ square inch	structural Jacquard weave; firm weave 100 warp yarns of 150 denier x 28 pick yarns of 3500 denier/sq. inch	structural Jacquard weave; (two-tone) firm weave 100 warp yarns x 28 pick yarns/ sq. inch sprayed acrylic backing
Applied Design Process	none	none	none
Color Range	amber gold white fern green	white amber gold ivory fern green cherry red mandarin orange	nugget (dark gold) bluegrass dessert bronze white sand russet
Hanging Appearance	sags a little near side hem	straight grain	straight grain
Special Purpose Finishes and Treatments	fade resistance 2-year guarantee; perma-smooth; shrinkage less than 3 per cent	fade resistance 2-year guarantee perma-smooth shrinkage less than 1 per cent	perma-smooth miliun acrylic sprayed backing

CONSTRUCTION OF CURTAINS

Size of pleating	3" pleats; 4" spacing	same	same
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	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Type of pleats	pinch	pinch	pinch
Thread	matching	matching	matching
Length of stitch	basting	basting	basting
Heading tape	4" buckram	4" buckram	4" buckram
Application of heading tape	tape basted to bottom edge of double heading. Top stitched at sides with basting stitch. Pleat basting stitched along fold length and across bottom width. Neat and secure.	same	same
Width of side hem	1"	1½"	1½"
Side hem finish	blind stitched	blind stitched	blind stitched
Size of bottom double hem	3"	3"	3"
Bottom hem finish	blind stitched neat and secure	blind stitched mitered corners neat and secure	blind stitched mitered corners neat and secure
Pressing	side hem slightly puckered	well pressed	well pressed
Labels	trade name registered identification no. % fiber content in package not on sample special treatments construction features-pinch pleats, blind stitched hem, at bottom and	trade name registered identification no. % fiber content in package not on sample special treatments <u>Washing Instructions</u> ; Wash and hang drapery. Wash automatically through	trade name registered identification no. % fiber content in package not on sample special treatments Acrylic foam backing insulation Construction features-4" heading, side hem blind stitched;

<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
sides; <u>Washing Instructions:</u> Washable by hand or machine at medium temperature. Tumble dry (medium). Touch up ironing. thread count	spin cycle. Use gentle action setting. Do not overload machine. Use mild soap or detergent and warm water. No bleach. Hang full length to dry pleats when damp. Little or no ironing needed. Tumble dry. thread count denier	May be hand or machine washed. Drip-dried, tumble-dried, or dry cleaned. Do not use bleach. thread count

Type and Dependability of Consumer Information and Services

The manager of the drapery department was well informed about his merchandise. He provided accurate information corresponding to the information supplied in the purchasing manual, in pamphlets, in bulletins, on the labels, and in newspaper advertisements. The type of information supplied included color range of curtains in stock and special order curtains, dimension, prices, types of dyes, fullness, fiber content of heading tape, curtain construction features, special purpose finishes and treatments, fiber content (%), and fabric construction.

If the customer was in doubt, the department manager estimated the size of curtains needed when the dimensions of the windows were given. Consumers are granted the privilege of taking a pair of ready-made curtains home on a trial basis to check color and pattern harmony, dimensions, and the over-all effect with the rest of the household furnishings and room accessories. The type of hardware is suggested if requested; however, there are no installation services provided.

Customers were not informed of the type of guarantee or the time limit of the guarantee except the guarantee that was stated on the label. However, the manager provided a 100 per cent money refund guarantee on fading and fabric deterioration during the first year of "normal" usage. Each additional year, up to five years, there was an estimated percentage refund, depending on the manager's assessment.

Table 2. Data Sheet for Observation and Analysis of Ready-Made Draw Curtains

Type of Store- Store B, a locally managed department store with two branches.

Price Range	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
	\$4.99-6.99	\$6.99-7.99	\$7.99-10.99
Most Representative Price	\$6.99	\$7.98	\$10.99
Fiber Content	100% cotton	65% rayon 35% acetate	61% rayon 39% acetate
Dimensions	48" x 63"	48" x 84"	48" x 84" ..
Construction of Fabric	structural novelty weave; loose construction-open weave	structural antique satin with slub (raised slightly)-firm weave	structural antique satin with heavy slub; double cloth firm, compact weave
Applied Design Process	none	none	none
Color Range	avacado green pale gold beige antique gold special order: bone tangerine wedgewood blue royal blue pink	antique gold white avacado green oyster beige fern green royal pink orange	antique gold white avacado green light gold peacock fern royal
Hanging Appearance	pleats even	on grain	on grain
Special Purpose Finishes and Treatments	perma-press	fade resistance for life of fabric	none

CONSTRUCTION OF CURTAINS

Size of Pleating	3" pleats 4" spacing	same	same
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	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Type of pleats	pinch	pinch	pinch
Thread	matching	matching	matching
Length of stitch	basting	basting	basting
Heading tape	4" buckram	4" buckram	4" buckram
Application of Heading Tape	Tape basted to bottom edge of double heading. Top stitched at sides with basting stitch. Pleat basting stitched along length and across bottom width. Neat and secure.		
Width of Side Hem	1½"	1½"	1½"
Side Hem Finish	blind stitched	blind stitched	blind stitched
Size of bottom double hem	4"	3"	4"
Bottom hem finish	blind stitched; corners not mitered	blind stitched; corners not mitered; hem width uneven. weights in hem	blind stitched; corners not mitered; neat and secure
Pressing	well pressed	well pressed	well pressed
Labels	trade name(Cortina); registered identification number; % fiber content special treatments dimensions color	trade name (Coronet); registered identification % fiber content special treatments dimensions color	trade name (Kenneth); registered identification number; % fiber content special treatments dimensions color

Washing and Drying Instructions

Low— Shake lightly before laundering; machine wash in lukewarm water using mild soap; rinse thoroughly; do not use bleaching agents; tumble dry using wash and wear drying cycle; remove immediately

at completion of cycle; do not leave in warm dryer. This "No-iron" fabric never needs ironing if instructions are followed.

Medium--Dry clean only.

High-- Dry clean only. Ironing instructions: use cool iron or set iron on acetate setting; excessive heat damages fibers.

Type and Dependability of Consumer Information and Services

The manager of the ready-made curtain department provided information on sizes, dyes, colors, fullness, heading tape, construction of curtains, special purpose finishes and treatments, which corresponded with the information in the sales manual, pamphlets, labels, and newspaper advertisements. He stressed the aesthetic aspects of the draperies more than the functional and economic factors. Information on the type of drapery to fulfill a specific purpose, as well as the dimension of the ready-made drapery required, were provided by the manager when size of windows and the desired effect were stated. Customers were not informed of any guarantee. There was no specific guarantee but a percentage of the money was refunded, depending on the length of time since the curtains were purchased and on the individual circumstances. The manager stressed a fair store policy. Consumers were allowed to obtain curtains on a trial basis to determine whether they harmonized with their interiors. No installation services were provided with the purchase of ready-made curtains.

Advertisements were printed in the local newspaper two to four times a month, with fairly complete information on quality features, prices, sizes, colors, and special orders. Consumer information on coordination of household furnishings and accessories was attempted in the advertisements. Labels were provided with the merchandise. An inventory was taken every thirty days to insure accurate stock control and availability of merchandise. If the store did not have the merchandise in stock, it was obtained from another branch or a special order was made.

Table 3. Data Sheet for Observation and Analysis of Ready-Made Draw Curtains

Type of Store- Store C, a discount department store and a member of a chain.

Price Range	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
	\$2.44-3.21	\$3.22-4.98	\$4.99-6.99
Most Representative Price	\$2.99	\$3.88	\$5.88
Fiber Content	57% rayon 43% acetate	100 % glass fiber	100% glass fiber
Dimensions	48" x 63"	48" x 84"	50" x 84"
Construction of Fabric	structural design; novelty weave; loose weave	structural design; novelty weave; loose weave	structural design; novelty, nubby weave; loose weave
Applied Design Process	none	machine applied floral design	none
Color Range	white beige fern green orange	blue and green floral design on a white background. Red and green floral design on white background	white beige gold moss rust
Hanging Appearance	Not on grain Pleats don't hang evenly	Hem puckered; Bottom hem top stitched uneven and tension too tight; Curtain sags to one side	Fairly even folds of fabric
Special Purpose Finishes and Treatments	none	Shrink proof Wrinkle proof Hand washable Fire safe Sun safe No ironing ever	Shrink proof Mildew resistance Fade proof Fire proof

CONSTRUCTION OF CURTAINS

Size of Pleating	3" pleats; 4" spacing	3" pleats 4" spacing	3" pleats 4" spacing
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	<u>Low</u>	<u>Medium</u>	<u>High</u>
Type of Pleats	pinch	pinch	pinch
Thread	matching	matching	matching
Length of Stitch	basting	basting	basting
Heading Tape	Flexible cardboard paper 3"	3" bonded fiber	4" plastic
Application of Heading Tape	Tape basted to bottom of inside fold of heading. Pleats down 3" down and across bottom of pleat. Top stitched at sides. Basting stitches uneven; stitched twice, loose thread ends	Tape basted to bottom of heading. Pleats sewn 3" down and across bottom of pleat with basting stitches. Top stitched at sides. Double row of basting stitches; tension too tight.	Tape basted to bottom of heading. Pleats sewn 4" down and across bottom. Top stitched at sides. Neat stitching.
Width of Side Hem	$\frac{1}{2}$ "	$1\frac{1}{4}$ "	$1\frac{1}{2}$ "
Side Hem Finish	blind stitched	blind stitched	blind stitched
Size of Bottom Hem	$1\frac{1}{4}$ "	$1\frac{1}{2}$ "	3"
Bottom Hem Finish	Hem top stitched basting stitch; uneven; corners not mitered; Turned inside hem stretched-shows on outside; loose thread ends.	Top stitched-uneven; Tension too tight-seam puckering; Corners not mitered. Loose thread ends.	Blind stitched Corners mitered Fairly neat
Pressing	Not well pressed Creases	Not required	Not required
Labels	Pinch pleated draw draperies; Style 400 Size 48" x 63" Fiber content Made in U.S.A. No washing or cleaning instructions. Registered identification number	Registered identification number; Owens-Corning Fiberglass; Fiber content; Special treatments; launder and dry easily	Steven Wonder Glass fabric 2-year money back guarantee on fabric; never needs ironing; will not shrink or stretch; will not burn; moth proof; heat and fading resistant

Washing and Drying Instructions

Low-- No washing or cleaning instructions

Medium-- Hand wash by dipping gently in warm water. Use any mild soap. Rinse thoroughly in clear, warm water. Squeeze gently to remove excess water. Dry draperies and curtains by hanging them over a rod. Rehang while still damp. Smooth hem and let draperies and curtains hang naturally. Remember: hang fabrics so they clear ceiling, floor, and window projections, not against edges where they will be constantly rubbed, hit or handled. Just hand washing these fine fabrics keeps them beautiful since dirt cannot penetrate the glass fiber yarns. Do not bleach. Do not iron and do not dry clean. Do not machine wash. Do not machine dry.

High-- Hand wash separately--not with other fabrics. Rinse tub/basin thoroughly after each washing. Remove hooks. Wash separately in mild soap or detergent.- no bleach. Please do not scrub - rub - twist. Rinse in clear water - do not wring. Hang over curtain rod or clothes line to dry - do not use clothespins. Rehang at window while damp - no ironing needed. Caution: Do not dry clean; do not machine wash; do not machine dry; do not bleach. Washing or handling this glass fiber product may result in temporary skin irritation or discomfort. It is important, therefore, to follow instructions.

Dependability of Consumer Information

Labels provide the only consumer information available. The label on the lowest price sample contained very little information. There is no manager in the curtain department. A sales clerk orders samples needed. No additional services.

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