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CONSUMER RATINGS OF SUPERMARKETS IN
COLUMBUS, OHIO

A Confidential Report

Prepared by

Lois A. Simonds & Edgar P. Watkins
Extension Economists

Department of Agricultural Economics
& Rural Sociology
The Ohio State University
Columbus, Ohio

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Questionnaires were mailed to 2,000 residences in Columbus, Ohio the week of May 20, 1977. The sample was randomly selected from the Haines Criss-Cross Directory. Of these, approximately 60 were returned as undeliverable (for various reasons). About 420 usable questionnaires were received, resulting in a 22 percent return--considered very good for a mail survey .

The customer rating scale of food stores and the question asking them to list in order of importance the considerations important in selecting a store in which to shop were hand tabulated. The entire quantity of data will be put into the OSU computer for more complete analysis in the fall of 1977 and winter of 1978.

General Findings

- (1) Results of studies in the past decade indicate that firms with low ratings, as shown in the customer rating table, do not survive in the market over a five year period. The critical rating level appears to be around 2.5 - 2.6. Those supermarkets with strong ratings in several categories are in much stronger market positions than those with favorable ratings in only one or two categories. For each category, a rating below 2.6 equates with poor performance, 3.0 with average performance, above 3.3 with superior performance--except for price where 2.7 is an average level of performance.

Considerations important in store selection give some indication of relative importance of the categories, whereas ratings give no indication of relative importance. In this study, for example, quality and freshness, convenient location and cleanliness are of about equal importance, whereas friendliness and courtesy do not carry the weight the above three do.

Ratings give an indication of performance, while rankings give an idea of importance of the various categories for shoppers.

Specific Results

From the food store ratings, Fazio's strength seems concentrated in three categories: prices, specials and the availability of coupons. (The latter have since been discontinued.)

It is apparent in the Kroger ratings that their image is much more broadly based than is Fazio's. Their strong points include: fresh fruits and vegetables, in-store bakery/deli, selection of merchandise, specials location, cleanliness and neatness, ease of shopping, parking and availability of coupons.

Big Bear's ratings are mostly in the excellent category with the exception of two general areas. The in-store bakery/deli rating may be low due to the fact that only a portion of the stores have them, and respondents rated those stores without in-store bakery/delis low in this category. Low price image

has not been a strong feature of Big Bear's total merchandising program for many years.

Tom Tarp's weaknesses include: prices, location, parking and availability of coupons. Tarp's merchandising program has concentrated on service, quality and the fact that they have not used newspaper advertising extensively. With only three supermarkets available to Columbus customers, the location rating suffers. Parking ratings are strongly influenced by the very limited facilities at the North High Street store. The low rating on availability of coupons at Tarp's may reflect less emphasis on coupons.

In customer rankings of important considerations for store selection, there is a difference in both order rankings among major competitors and the relative relationship of these considerations.

Food Store Ratings by 400 Columbus, Ohio Shoppers, May-June, 1977

	Big Bear (N=270)	Fazio (N=170)	Kroger (N=285)	Tarpy (N=85)
Meat Quality	3.26	2.51	3.00	3.57
Fresh Fruits & Vegetables	3.48	2.83	3.19	3.36
In-Store Bakery/ Delicatessen	2.78	2.91	3.19	3.09
Selection of Merchandise	3.46	3.06	3.27	2.98
Prices	2.54	3.18	3.05	2.18
Low-Priced Weekly Specials	2.79	3.28	3.18	2.38
Convenience of Store Location	3.53	2.67	3.55	2.69
Courtesy & Friendliness	3.43	2.59	3.16	3.39
Cleanliness & Neatness	3.58	2.62	3.24	3.67
Ease of Shopping in the Store	3.44	2.45	3.23	3.10
Accurate, Quick Checkout Service	3.22	2.08	2.79	3.31
Parking Facilities	3.46	2.83	3.36	2.75
Availability of Advertised Specials	3.40	2.73	3.12	3.19
Availability of Coupons	3.42	3.15	3.45	2.92
Overall Rating of Store	3.37	2.67	3.18	3.19

- a/ Perfect score is equal to 4.00, or grade of A.
b/ One hundred fifty respondents rated 30 other food stores.
c/ Data were collected prior to the time Fazio's discontinued coupons.

Considerations Important in Store Selection, in Order of Importance, Columbus, Ohio
Shoppers, May-June, 1977

	Total (N=1211)	Rank 1 (N=418)	Rank 2 (N=403)	Rank 3 (N=390)
Prices	21.4 %	24.9 %	21.1 %	17.9 %
Quality & Freshness	15.7	19.4	18.1	9.3
Convenient Location	14.2	19.6	11.2	11.6
Clean & Neat Appearance	14.0	17.5	11.7	12.8
Selection	9.7	5.0	13.4	11.0
Friendly & Courteous	6.5	1.2	4.7	13.8
Service (checkout, parking, coupons, carryout, credit, delivery, hours, prices marked)	6.4	1.9	6.9	10.5
Meat Quality	3.2	3.6	4.5	1.6
Fresh Produce	2.8	3.1	3.2	2.0
Other*	2.2	1.7	1.5	3.6
Easy to Shop	2.1	0.9	1.7	3.6
Well-Stocked Shelves	1.8	1.2	2.0	2.3

*Other includes: habit, management, trading stamps, nutrition, bakery-deli, dairy, specials, value for money.

Considerations Important in Store Selection, in Order of Importance, for BIG BEAR
Shoppers in Columbus, Ohio, May - June, 1977

	Total (N=349)	Rank 1 (N=120)	Rank 2 (N=118)	Rank 3 (N=111)
Clean & Neat Appearance	18.3 %	26.7 %	20.4 %	7.2 %
Quality & Freshness	16.9	20.8	18.6	10.8
Prices	16.3	8.3	17.8	23.5
Convenient Location	13.8	21.7	6.8	12.6
Selection	10.3	10.0	13.5	7.2
Friendly & Courteous	7.7	2.5	5.9	15.3
Service	6.0	0.8	6.8	10.8
Fresh Produce	3.2	4.2	1.7	3.6
Meat Quality	2.7	3.3	4.3	0.0
Easy to Shop	2.3	0.0	1.7	5.4
Other	1.7	1.7	0.8	2.7
Well-Stocked Shelves	0.8	0.0	1.7	0.9

Considerations Important in Store Selection, in Order of Importance, for FAZIO
Shoppers in Columbus, Ohio, May-June, 1977

	Total (N=122)	Rank 1 (N=41)	Rank 2 (N=41)	Rank 3 (N=40)
Prices	31.2 %	51.2 %	24.4 %	17.5 %
Quality & Freshness	19.7	17.2	31.7	10.0
Convenient Location	13.9	2.4	19.6	20.0
Clean & Neat Appearance	10.7	12.2	7.3	12.5
Selection	9.9	7.3	9.8	12.5
Friendly & Courteous	4.2	0.0	0.0	12.5
Service	2.4	0.0	2.4	5.0
Well-Stocked Shelves	2.4	0.0	2.4	5.0
Fresh Produce	1.6	2.4	2.4	0.0
Other	1.6	4.9	0.0	0.0
Easy to Shop	1.6	0.0	0.0	5.0
Meat Quality	0.8	2.4	0.0	0.0

Considerations Important in Store Selection, in Order of Importance, for KROGER
Shoppers in Columbus, Ohio, May-June, 1977

	Total (N=459)	Rank 1 (N=160)	Rank 2 (N=155)	Rank 3 (N=144)
Prices	23.3 %	28.7 %	24.6 %	16.0 %
Quality & Freshness	15.5	18.8	19.4	7.9
Convenient Location	14.2	21.9	10.3	9.7
Clean & Neat Appearance	13.9	15.6	6.4	20.1
Selection	11.1	4.4	16.1	13.1
Service	7.2	2.5	6.4	13.1
Friendly & Courteous	5.4	0.6	5.8	10.4
Meat Quality	2.7	2.5	3.2	2.1
Well-Stocked Shelves	2.4	0.6	3.9	2.7
Fresh Produce	1.7	1.9	1.3	2.1
Easy to Shop	1.7	2.5	1.3	1.4
Other	0.9	0.0	1.3	1.4

Considerations Important in Store Selection, in Order of Importance, for Shoppers
of "Other" Stores in Columbus, Ohio, May-June, 1977

	Total (N=257)	Rank 1 (N=89)	Rank 2 (N=86)	Rank 3 (N=82)
Prices	22.9 %	30.3 %	23.3 %	14.6 %
Convenient Location	16.3	23.7	12.8	12.2
Quality & Freshness	14.8	20.2	15.1	8.5
Clean & Neat Appearance	11.3	9.0	13.9	11.0
Selection	8.2	1.1	12.8	11.0
Friendly & Courteous	7.8	1.1	5.8	17.1
Service	7.0	3.4	8.1	9.7
Meat Quality	3.2	3.4	4.6	1.2
Other	2.7	3.4	0.0	4.9
Fresh Produce	2.3	2.2	1.2	3.7
Well-Stocked Shelves	2.3	2.2	1.2	3.7
Easy to Shop	1.2	0.0	1.2	2.4

May 16, 1977

To: Selected Food Store Customers in the Central Ohio Area

Food quality, prices, packaging, ingredients, convenience, selection of brands, employee courtesy, cleanliness, freshness, and many other items are of some importance to most food store customers. May I ask you to help me learn about your views and values and what is important to you when buying food?

This survey and its results will be very helpful to me, as a student, in completing requirements for graduation from Ohio State University. The results will be used in a research project I am conducting in my area of study-food marketing.

The results will also be useful to other students studying food marketing, to consumers, and to managers of stores as they seek to better serve their customers.

The Central Ohio area represents a good cross-section of Ohio's food store customers. You have been included in the survey as a resident of this area.

You do not need to identify yourself on the questionnaire. A self-addressed, postage paid envelope is attached for your convenience in returning the questionnaire.

Your cooperation will enable me to complete my project. I would like to express my thanks to you for taking your time to help me by completing the enclosed questionnaire and returning it to me by May 30.

Sincerely,

Ann Huling

Ann Huling
Student, Food Marketing

Lois Simonds

Lois Simonds
Faculty Advisor
2120 Fyffe Road
Columbus, Ohio 43210

OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY MARKET SURVEY

1. Where do you buy most of your groceries?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

2. What other food store do you most frequently shop in?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

3. Where do you buy most of your meats?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

4. Where do you buy most of your fresh fruits and vegetables?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

5. Where do you buy most of your bakery-delicatessen items?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

6. If a friend asked your advice on the best place to buy food, what store would you suggest?

STORE NAME _____ LOCATION _____

7. What is the age of the person who does the food shopping?
(Please check one.)

UNDER 30 _____ 30-45 _____ 46-64 _____ OVER 65 _____

8. How much time does it take you to travel from your home to the store where you buy most of your groceries? _____ MINUTES

9. What considerations are the most important to you in selecting a food store? (List three reasons in order of importance.)

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

10. How often do you buy items from an in store bakery-delicatessen?

More than once a week? _____ Weekly? _____ 1-3 times a month? _____

Less than once a month? _____ Never? _____

11. What do you like about in-store bakery-delicatessens?

12. Have you changed stores within the past year to one that has an in-store bakery-delicatessen?

YES _____ NO _____

13. How important are the following ideas to you? Please circle A, B, C, or D for each item. (A=very important, B=important, C=not important, D=don't understand this.)

Open code dating of perishable foods	A	B	C	D
Unit pricing (Price per ounce or pound)	A	B	C	D
All ingredients listed on the package	A	B	C	D
Fewer chemical additives	A	B	C	D
Nutritional information on package	A	B	C	D
Item pricing (Price on each item)	A	B	C	D
Other (Identify) _____	A	B	C	D

14. I would be willing to change stores or brands to have the following: (Please check.)

	<u>YES</u>	<u>NO</u>	<u>UNCERTAIN</u>
Open code dating of perishable foods	_____	_____	_____
Unit pricing (Price per ounce or pound)	_____	_____	_____
All ingredients listed on the package	_____	_____	_____
Fewer chemical additives	_____	_____	_____
Nutritional information on package	_____	_____	_____
Item pricing (Price on each item)	_____	_____	_____
Other (Identify) _____	_____	_____	_____

15. Why do you feel some people prefer to shop at "warehouse food stores" rather than ordinary supermarkets? (Please check.)

_____ Lower prices
 _____ Selection
 _____ Bulk buying
 _____ Do not mind bagging own groceries
 _____ Do not mind price marking own groceries
 _____ Other (Identify) _____
 _____ Other (Identify) _____
 _____ Don't know

16. Have you shopped a "warehouse food store" in the last six months? _____

17. Do you shop "warehouse food stores" regularly? _____
 Once a month or more? _____

18. Why do you feel some shoppers may not like "warehouse food stores"?

19. What is the total number of people in your household, who usually eat at home? _____

20. About how much do you spend each week in food stores? \$ _____

21. What is your approximate family income per year? (Please check one.)

Under \$4,000	_____	\$16,000-19,999	_____
\$4,000-7,999	_____	\$20,000-23,999	_____
\$8,000-11,999	_____	Over \$24,000	_____
\$12,000-15,999	_____		

PLEASE RATE THE FOOD STORES WHERE YOU SHOP, BASED ON YOUR IMPRESSIONS OF THEM. PLEASE USE THE RATING SYSTEM BELOW.

EXAMPLE:

- (A) Excellent
 (B) Good
 (C) Fair
 (D) Poor
- Please circle A, B, C, or D for each rating.

	Big Bear	Fazio
Parking	A B C D	A B C D

Please write in the name of the food store you usually shop, if not identified.

	Big Bear	Fazio	Kroger	Tom Tarpy's	
Meat quality	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Fresh fruits & vegetables	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
In-store Bakery-Delicatessen	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Selection of Merchandise	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Prices	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Low priced Weekly specials	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Convenience of Store location	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Courtesy & Friendliness	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Cleanliness & Neatness	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Ease of shopping in the store	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Accurate, quick Checkout service	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Parking facilities	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Availability of Advertised Specials	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Availability of Coupons	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Other (IDENTIFY)	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D
Overall rating of store	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D	A B C D

THE ENCLOSED RETURN ENVELOPE DOES NOT REQUIRE POSTAGE

Thank you for taking your time to respond to my request for information.