

A STUDY OF THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN  
BY COLLEGE STUDENTS RELATIVE TO  
PRODUCT DISSATISFACTION

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of Problem

To be a consumer in today's society is not an easy task. A person is not exempt from the role because of age, sex, income, social or ethnic background. Children, teenagers, young adults, the middle-aged and the elderly are all a part of this consumer group. Just as each of these groups represents consumers, each can also become dissatisfied when goods and services do not function as expected or as promised.

One segment of this group, the young adults, or more specifically the college student population, is becoming increasingly important due to their numbers and to their buying power. In 1960, the number of college students in the United States was 5.7 million, but in 1973 there were 8.2 million college students, an increase of 44 percent. Attendance at colleges and professional schools in 1980 is projected at 10.3 million for an increase of 26 percent over the 1973 number (Booth, 1974). The enrollment figures at Oklahoma State University are no exception, with a steady increase in students for the past seven years. The Registrar's Office at OSU reports that in 1972 the fall enrollment figure for the main campus was 18,213 students. In the fall of 1978, this number had increased to 22,276 students at the main campus.

An important aspect of this increase in numbers is the increase in

spending power of the college student population. In 1968, the 18-24 age group collectively spent somewhat more than \$40 billion (Mayer, 1969). This money is spent on a variety of items, ranging from fast-foods to stereo systems to automobiles. The average college student owns an array of entertainment and personal-care items. With the purchase of any of these consumer goods, problems can arise due to faulty materials, poor workmanship, or other built-in deficiencies.

According to Herrmann (1970), each generation is shaped by its own unique experiences and, in a fast-changing world, the experiences of one generation may differ from those of the next generation. The experiences of the young adults in the 18-24 age group are different from those of their parents, which in turn results in different attitudes and different behavior. One aspect of behavior which is especially likely to differ between these two generations is their behavior as consumers.

Herrmann (1970) describes three major forces which have played a role in shaping the consumer behavior of today's young adults. These are: (1) the experience of growing up in a period of almost unbroken prosperity, (2) permissive techniques of child-rearing and (3) a high level of education and heavy exposure to the mass media.

Not only is the behavior of today's young adults as consumers an important topic for researchers, educators, and business, but also the behavior of young adults as dissatisfied consumers is just as timely and necessary. Himes and Mason (1973) believe a basic need exists to develop profiles of the specific nature of consumer complaints. Also needed are socio-economic profiles of the individuals most likely to

express dissatisfaction and the results of efforts to achieve satisfaction.

The need exists to determine the extent to which action is taken by college students in dealing with their dissatisfaction. With the cost of a college education on the rise, the average college student is not financially able to absorb the cost of constantly replacing goods which do not perform. According to Haller (1978), the four-year cost of sending a child to a state university is \$10,250 for room, board and tuition. Cost at a private college is roughly \$24,250. Because of their income, it is essential that college students know where to take their consumer complaints and more importantly, how to follow through with any course of action they might decide upon.

Several other questions need to be answered when examining college students as dissatisfied consumers. These are: (1) to what extent do college students decide to take action when they experience a problem with a consumer good or service, (2) once the decision is made to act, what action is then taken, (3) are students aware of their rights as consumers, (4) are students aware of consumer protection services available at OSU, and (5) what factors influence the decision to take no action at all?

#### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to determine the extent to which university students take action or no action in dealing with consumer product complaints.

The specific objectives of the study are as follows:

1. To determine if selected variables: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) classification, (d) academic major, (e) size of community where raised, and (f) parent's annual net income influence university students to take action in dealing with consumer complaints.

2. To determine if the type of corrective action used by university students in dealing with consumer complaints is related to the student's sex.

3. To determine if the primary reason for university students not taking action in dealing with consumer complaints is related to the student's sex.

4. To determine if university students overall satisfaction with the consumer products they own is related to the student's sex.

5. To determine if the completion of a course or unit on consumer education is related to university students taking any action in dealing with consumer complaints.

### Hypotheses

To meet the objectives of this particular study, the following hypotheses have been formulated for assessing the variables for this study:

$H_1$ : Taking action relative to product dissatisfaction with major products will not differ by selected characteristics: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) classification, (d) academic major, (e) size of community where raised, and (f) parent's annual net income.

$H_2$ : Taking action relative to product dissatisfaction with minor consumer products will not differ by selected characteristics: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) classification, (d) academic major, (e) size of

community where raised, and (f) parent's annual net income.

H<sub>3</sub>: The type of corrective action relative to product dissatisfaction will not differ by student's sex.

H<sub>4</sub>: The reasons for not taking corrective action will not differ by student's sex.

H<sub>5</sub>: University student's satisfaction with owned consumer products will not differ by student's sex.

H<sub>6</sub>: Taking action relative to product dissatisfaction will not differ in relation to completion of a course or unit on consumer education.

#### Assumptions

The assumptions of the study included:

1. The college students at Oklahoma State University living in the Residence Halls are representative of all students at OSU.
2. The information given by the students was complete and accurate.

#### Limitations

This study was limited by the following factors:

1. The data collected were limited to the students' ownership of any of 14 pre-determined consumer products.
2. Data on college students at OSU who did or did not take any corrective actions relative to product dissatisfaction and did not live in a Residence Hall were not collected.
3. The data collected were not representative of upperclassman students as the Residence Halls' population is largely freshmen.

## Definition of Terms

For the intentions of this particular study, the following terms were defined:

1. College or university students--those young adults who are attending a college or university.
2. Complaints--actions that take place when buyers complain to sellers about the shortcomings in purchases (Andreasen and Best, 1977).
3. Consumer dissatisfaction--the degree of disparity between expectations and perceived product performance (Anderson, 1973).
4. Consumer satisfaction--conceived as the extent to which consumers feel subjectively pleased with their ownership and usage of products (Newman and Westbrook, 1978).
5. Discretionary spending--an expenditure made at the discretion of the consumer. One that does not have to be made in order to survive.
6. Young adults--considered to encompass that segment of the population being female or male, 18-24 years of age, and single.

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Consumer behavior has been the subject for much research in the past several years. A great deal of attention has been focused on behavior related to the satisfaction or dissatisfaction of consumers. Such attention has been given low-income consumers, minority consumers, and elderly consumers. However, the behavior of young adults in their role as consumers has not been evident in past research. In order to fully develop the scope of this study, a review of literature has been conducted, evolving around four areas of concern: the importance of college students as consumers, consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, consumer complaint actions, and demographic characteristics of dissatisfied consumers.

#### College Students as Consumers

Today's young adults are a unique group due to a multitude of changes in the American way of life. Leon (1978) states:

Products of the postwar baby boom, the more than 20 million young men and women face more job competition and a different economy than did their predecessors. They also have more schooling and have been trained in new areas, and understandably, their expectations are not like those of earlier generations (p. 3).

Beyond question, the number of young adults, defined here as the 18-24 age group, has been growing steadily. According to Mayer (1969)

the rapid increase in young adults traces back to the rise in births during the 1940's, from 2,600,000 in 1940 to a temporary peak of 3,800,000 in 1947. Beginning in 1958, a swelling tide of people began to reach 18 years of age. Consequently, the number of 18-24's took off from 15,308,000 in 1958 to hit 22,843,000 in 1968. This growth brought doubled college enrollment, a 50 percent increase in the number of 18-24 year olds in the labor force, and the formation of a large number of young households. Table I reports the number of singles in the 18-24 age group ("The Swingin' Singles," 1977).

TABLE I  
21 MILLION SINGLES 18-34 IN 1976

Age Group	Male	Female	Total
18-24	9,225,000	7,472,000	16,679,000
25-34	2,849,000	1,684,000	4,533,000
18-34	12,074,000	9,156,000	21,230,000

Research by Wortzel (1977) indicates that as of 1975, this age group numbered some 44.5 million, making up 30 percent of the over-18 population. Mayer (1969, p. 75) further states: "In just ten years 1957 to 1967, the number of 18-24's enrolled in college more than doubled from 2,200,000 to about 5,100,000."

The U.S. Bureau of the Census (1978) notes that in 1975, 49 percent



of the 3.3 million high school seniors who reported on college and vocational school plans expressed definite plans to attend college. An additional one-fourth of the 1975 seniors indicated that they "may" attend college.

The young adult segment of the population, more specifically the college students, is one which demands the attention of consumer specialists. Booth (1974) finds the number of college students was 5.7 million in 1965 but in 1973 there were 8.2 million college students, an increase of 44 percent. Furthermore, attendance at colleges and professional schools in 1980 is projected at 10.3 million for an increase of 26 percent over the 1973 number. The U.S. Census Bureau (1978) indicates that in the fall of 1976, about 8.1 million persons 18-24 years old were enrolled in school. Since 1970, large increases have occurred in the enrollment of the college-age population.

With the increase in the young adult or college-age group comes an increase in the amount of money they spend. The 18-24 bracket's most important characteristic is that it has loads of discretionary income and is probably first in discretionary spending in the United States ("The Swingin' Singles," 1977). This particular age group has the means to pour out money for clothes, automobiles, cosmetics, leisure sports, liquor, and travel. The group leans toward premium-priced goods, is luxury-oriented and is a big media influential--especially magazines. Mandell (1972) points out two features of discretionary expenditures that could apply to the spending of these young adults. The first is that there is no compelling need to make these expenditures at a given time. The second is that these expenditures are usually not governed by habit. "The present 25-34 segment may be the wealthiest in

discretionary spending in the next few years, even though right now it is the 18-24 group which is so positioned" ("The Swingin' Singles," 1977, p. 103).

Herrmann (1970) feels since the families of the young adults provide the basic necessities, they (young adults) are under little pressure to manage their money carefully and are free to spend as they please. Although the discretionary purchases may provide some training in the selection of merchandise, it seems unlikely that much motivation will be provided for learning to be a really wise and educated consumer.

According to Shannon (1978) spending by young adults in the United States totaled a record \$28.7 billion in 1977, up \$2.6 billion from 1976.

The discretionary spending that is done by college students is funded by parents, summer income, or employment, or a combination of these while attending college. The U.S. Census Bureau (1978) provides data which reveals that student's earnings and aid from parents are the most common sources of income for undergraduate college students. In addition, 44 percent of post-secondary students (excluding graduate students) worked while attending school to pay at least partly for the costs of their education. Forty-two percent of students are aided by their parents.

Leon (1978) finds that whether in school full- or part-time, most college students are employed at some time during the year. Even among students who consider school their major activity, about 40 percent work year round. It is also interesting to note that, "White-collar employment was prevalent for students of both sexes, especially in professional fields" (Leon, 1978, p. 6).

Because of their size in numbers and their spending power, college students are worthy of serious consideration by researchers in the consumer field to determine their awareness to the various aspects of their role as consumers. In addition, the overall satisfaction of the college students with their purchases is important in order to determine their capabilities in dealing with dissatisfaction in the marketplace.

#### Consumer Satisfaction/Dissatisfaction

The dramatic growth of consumerism with its massive expressions of dissatisfaction with goods and services has underscored the need for more and better research on the consumer's post-purchase evaluation process (Day, 1977, p. 149).

In the last few years a number of studies have attempted to sketch profiles of consumers who are satisfied or dissatisfied. Nevertheless, Day (1977) believes that the amount of published research on consumer satisfactions and dissatisfactions is growing but is still small in quantity and limited in scope. According to Aaker and Day (1970) the discontented consumer is not a part of a homogeneous group with easily described complaints. Actually, great variation exists among consumers in the extent of their discontent and there is a wide variety of underlying causes. Hemple and Rosenberg (1976, p. 261) pose this question, "Is consumer satisfaction a neglected link in the study of consumer behavior?"

Despite the great material wealth that American consumers command in contrast to many other nations on earth, the phenomenon of dissatisfaction appears to be widely spread throughout all strata of society. Evidence is found almost everywhere: in the numerous publications on consumerism, in the volume of newly emerging consumer

legislation, in the activities of consumer associations, in the work-load of consumer complaint bureaus (Scherf, 1974). Newman and Westbrook (1978) note that information about dissatisfied consumers as well as the nature of their dissatisfaction should be useful to marketers and public policymakers concerned with consumer welfare.

Many types of consumer surveys have been conducted including surveys of the general public, surveys of the poor, surveys of minorities, and explorations of the practices of business organizations. More pertinent to this study, however, are surveys concerning consumer response to unsatisfactory purchases (Andreasen and Best, 1977; Newman and Westbrook, 1978; Himes and Mason, 1973) and surveys examining behavioral profiles of dissatisfied consumers (Anderson, 1973; Bodur and Day, 1978; Edgecombe, Liefeld and Wolfe, 1975; Hempel and Rosenberg, 1976; Herrmann, Warland and Willits, 1975). According to Steele (1977) these studies indicate that people experience many problems which they neither act upon nor take to third parties.

Previous studies of dissatisfied consumers can be divided into two types (Herrmann, Warland and Willits, 1975). First, there are those studies which are concerned with identifying personal characteristics of consumers who are unhappy about certain business and marketing practices. Second, there are those studies which have investigated who complains about their treatment in the marketplace and the things they complain about. In these studies, the dependent variable is behavior, either action or inaction, whereas in the first type of study the dependent variable is attitude.

Hime and Mason (1973) feel a basic need exists to develop profiles of the specific nature of consumer complaints, socio-economic profiles

of the individuals most likely to express dissatisfaction, actions taken as a result of dissatisfaction, and the results of efforts to achieve satisfaction.

### Consumer Complaint Actions

As indicated previously, consumer dissatisfaction with products and corrective actions will ultimately determine the future for the consumer movement. Complainants are, for the most part, a heterogeneous group, coming from all socioeconomic classes, geographic locations and age groups (Gaedeke, 1972).

Andreasen and Best (1977) have investigated their "tip-of-the-iceberg" notion which claims that the complaints people make about their purchase of products and services represent only a fraction of the problems they perceive concerning those purchases.

A variety of reasons exist as to why consumers complain. In general, while there is little relationship between the dollars involved and the likelihood that a problem will occur, there is a relationship between expense and the likelihood that a complaint will be expressed (Andreasen and Best, 1977). Himes and Mason (1973) find that more than 89 percent of consumer dissatisfaction is related to performance.

The life cycle of consumer complaints can be divided into three stages, according to Andreasen and Best (1977). These are: (1) perception of a problem, (2) voicing a complaint, and (3) resolution of the complaint.

Various alternative courses of action are available to today's consumers who have experienced dissatisfaction, ranging from doing nothing to suing a seller or manufacturer for millions of dollars. Bodur and

Day (1978) classify the options that dissatisfied consumers have as follows:

1. Take no action at all
2. Take some form of private action
  - A. Change brands or supplier
  - B. Stop using the product class
  - C. Warn family or friends
3. Take some form of public action
  - A. Seek redress from the seller or manufacturer
  - B. Take legal action against the seller or manufacturer
  - C. Register a complaint with the seller or manufacturer, a public consumer protection agency, or a private consumer organization

As stated previously, there are those consumers who choose to take no action in voicing their dissatisfaction. Andreasen and Best (1977) believe those who do not bother to complain at all may represent an even more potentially explosive group. People who are upset but who take no action, are a frustrated and even possibly alienated group.

Herrmann, Warland and Willits (1975) classify three consumer dissatisfaction-action groups: (1) Upset-Action group, (2) Upset-No Action group, and (3) Not Upset group. Their research indicated that the Upset-No Action group is a frustrated group of consumers, who exhibit low social involvement, the most political alienation and relatively little experience in consumer complaining.

Consumers appear to be reluctant to view themselves as having problems or complaining about them, which may make them reluctant to perceive or assert grievances. Consumers may be hesitant to perceive most

situations that they encounter as problems because they view their problems as relatively insignificant when compared to the dramatic cases publicized by the consumer movement and the mass media (Steele, 1977).

Bruce and Pickle (1972, p. 98) believe consumers fail to take action since unresponsiveness of the business community in the past has produced an attitude of not expecting any results, "therefore, why go to the trouble." A 1976 study for the Office of Consumer Affairs also confirms this attitude by finding that 56 percent of those who reported taking "no action" regarding complaints, said they did not feel any action was worth the time or effort (Diener and Greyser, 1978). In addition, the cost of the product may be low enough to not make it worthwhile to complain.

While many consumers decide not to voice their dissatisfaction, there are a large number who do decide to take action. Herrmann, Warland and Willits (1975) classify this group as the Upset-Action group. This particular consumer is younger, and above average with respect to social status, income, education, and group membership. They also possess a relatively wide range of complaining experience in both the consumer and political area. Research by Bodur and Day (1978) indicates that increases in voiced complaints and redress-seeking have been both causes and effects of the dramatic growth of consumerism over the past decade.

Consumers who choose to take action have a variety of avenues at their disposal to relieve their problems. According to consumer responses to a survey conducted by Andreasen and Best (1977) some type of corrective action was taken in 39.7 percent of perceived problems. The most common action was to voice a complaint to the seller, either

a local retailer or service outlet, or a manufacturer. In communicating with sellers, consumers asked for refunds, replacements, repairs, and sometimes refused to pay or delayed payment. In the latest Study of American Opinion, 70 percent of those replying said that during the past year they had returned products to the places where they were bought because the products were unsatisfactory ("Why People Gripe About Business," 1978). In the 1976 survey, the return percentage for unsatisfactory products was 59. Andreasen and Best (1977) also report that of all the techniques consumers use in voicing their complaints to sellers, the most frequent is returning the item to the seller. Findings by Himes and Mason (1973) indicate that 80 percent of the respondents surveyed initially expressed dissatisfaction to the place where the product was purchased. However, only slightly more than 55 percent received satisfaction at that point.

The use of a third party to handle a consumer complaint is utilized less frequently than the previously mentioned methods. Andreasen and Best (1977) believe that people use complaint handlers in circumstances where the seller is inaccessible. "Why People Gripe About Business" (1978) discusses the Study of American Opinion, which finds about one-quarter of survey participants had personally lodged a complaint with a local, state or federal government agency in the past year. This figure compares with 19 percent in their survey the year before.

Characteristics which lead to relatively high use of third parties reveal that third-party complaint handling mechanisms, as they now operate, disproportionately serve the better educated, better informed, and politically more active households (Andreasen and Best, 1977).



## Demographic Characteristics of Dissatisfied Consumers

Past research has attempted to determine whether the incidence of dissatisfaction is related to select demographic characteristics of consumers (Andreasen and Best, 1977; Bruce and Pickle, 1972; Gaedeke, 1972; Herrmann, Warland and Willits, 1975; Himes and Mason, 1973; Langrehr and Mason, 1977; Newman and Westbrook, 1978). However, inconsistencies exist as to the results of the analysis of these variables. Himes and Mason (1973) find that those consumers who take action because of dissatisfaction are from larger households, have higher incomes and are primarily middle-aged. Research by Miller (1970) indicates that those who complain are younger and more mobile. These findings contrast with those of Gaedeke (1972) as cited previously, which conclude that consumers who complain constitute a heterogeneous group, coming from all classes, geographical locations and age groups.

Several demographic variables will be considered here for the purpose of distinguishing typologies of college students who take action to express their dissatisfaction with consumer products. These are: (1) sex, (2) age, (3) classification, (4) academic major, (5) size of community where raised, and (6) parent's annual estimated income.

### Age

Consumer dissatisfaction knows no age limit as evidenced by Edgecombe, Liefeld and Wolfe (1975) in their findings that consumer complainers are greatly over-represented from the 25-34 age categories and greatly under-represented from the over-35 and 15-25 age categories.

Research by Bruce and Pickle (1972, p. 97) reveals that, "There is a significant relationship between age and product satisfaction-dissatisfaction." The younger the age group the higher the degree of dissatisfaction. This relationship may be due to several factors according to the aforementioned study: (a) more experience in purchasing produces more adequate purchases, and (b) the more experience a consumer gains in purchasing, the less the purchaser learns to expect of products. Barksdale and Darden (1971) report that younger persons tend to be more critical of marketing and more supportive of positions advanced by consumerists.

#### Sex

Survey findings indicate that women register more complaints than men in dealing with dissatisfaction. Gaedeke (1972) reports that approximately two out of every five complaints is filed by men. Himes and Mason (1973) find that wives initiated the action or complaint in approximately 57 percent of the cases, while husbands acted in slightly more than 39 percent of the cases. However, Edgecombe, Liefeld and Wolfe (1975) report no difference between the actual and expected rates of complaining between the sexes.

#### Income

Household income plays an important role in relation to consumer dissatisfaction. Income levels of the households which experienced dissatisfaction are higher than the households which did not experience dissatisfaction. Over 26 percent of the households which were dissatisfied had annual incomes in excess of \$12,000; conversely, 56 percent

of the households which did not report any dissatisfaction had incomes of \$6,000 or less (Himes and Mason, 1973). Edgecombe, Liefeld and Wolfe (1975) state that consumers with family incomes over \$8,000 per annum complain more than expected. Contrary to the findings above, Bruce and Pickle (1972) report that there is no significant difference in satisfaction-dissatisfaction of consumers in different income groups.

### Community Size

Due to the location of the sample population in past consumer surveys and of the ones cited in this review of literature, findings indicate that dissatisfied consumers are located in urban areas. This lack of geographical data suggests that a more complete and thorough study is needed in order to fully realize the geographical makeup of consumers who are dissatisfied.

### Summary

The consumer behavior of college students is becoming an imposing force in today's society. Their vast numbers and their discretionary expenditures qualify them for analysis and consideration by consumer specialists. College students have the means to purchase a variety of consumer goods and services, but may be lacking in the knowledge to support any serious attempt to relieve their dissatisfaction with such purchases.

The data that was searched during this review of literature clearly indicates that the young adult population has been overlooked when examining the behavior of dissatisfied consumers. Past research points out that a large number of consumer problems do exist, yet many of these

problems are never presented to business or to third parties as consumer complaints. To what extent then, do these unvoiced complaints represent the college student population? This particular generation certainly needs consumer education and information in order to be prepared for the future roles they will take. Herrmann (1970) accurately describes this young adult generation in the following manner:

The picture we have sketched of the new generation shows them full of optimism about their financial futures, experienced in spending money but lacking in any real experience managing it, inclined toward conformity with peer-approved consumption styles and skeptical of advertising and product claims (p. 26).

In order to fully and accurately assess the needs of the college student as a consumer, their attitudes and their behavior must be considered. To determine the level of dissatisfaction that they experience with consumer goods and services, it is imperative that both their verbal expressions, as well as their complaint actions be considered. This will in turn produce a more complete profile of college students relative to their actions as dissatisfied consumers.

The awareness of consumer protection services and the expertise in handling consumer complaints by college students are the two main areas of concern for this particular study. Upon analyzing the findings from these two areas, it will be possible to ascertain the consumer needs of the student and to determine the direction in which consumer information should follow at the university level.

The importance of the consideration and protection of college students as dissatisfied consumers at the university level can be further emphasized by Knight and Schotten (1976, p. 377), "At present, federal government activity in consumer protection of students is heavily

weighted toward protection of the federal education investment, more than protection of the student."

Consumer education is the key to alleviating the dissatisfied consumers by equipping them with the necessary competencies to effectively initiate a complaint. Chamberlain (1978) reinforces this by stating:

Such education is a life skill which assists individuals in identifying their needs, comparing competing goods and services, evaluating performance, and assessing sellers' representations in relation to wants (p. 296).

In addition, Haefner and Leckenby (1975) believe that consumer education needs to identify which consumers lack the necessary information about consumer protection.

It is the intention of this researcher to examine the actions of college students, in order that their needs as dissatisfied consumers can be made more apparent.

## CHAPTER III

### STUDY DESIGN AND SAMPLE CHARACTERISTICS

#### Sample

Since it was the goal of this study to examine the actions taken by college students in dealing with consumer complaints, the sample consisted of students at Oklahoma State University. The enrollment at OSU is approximately 22,000 students with about one-third of the total student population living on-campus in the Residence Halls. From this population, a sample of 483 female and male college students was drawn.

A combination of cluster and systematic random sampling was used. Four OSU Residence Halls, known to include students with varied backgrounds, were selected: Willham North, Willham South, East Bennett, and West Bennett. These represented two traditional halls and two high-rise halls. Every fifth name was taken from an alphabetical roster of residents for each of the designated halls. After the names were selected they were sorted according to floor. The Student Assistants were requested to distribute and to collect the questionnaires to the students on their floors.

#### Instrumentation

The instrument used to survey the sample consisted of a questionnaire constructed by the researcher. The questionnaire, titled College

Student Actions in Relation to Consumer Complaints, was divided into four sections: General Information, Major Consumer Products, Minor Consumer Products, and Consumer Education.

To pretest for clarity, the questionnaire was first administered to the Student Assistants in Willham North. Notations were made on the questionnaire regarding unclear wording, instructions, and phrases. An oral discussion was also conducted following the testing period to obtain additional suggestions.

The instrument was also reviewed for validity by members of the thesis committee who gave suggestions for improvement and clarity (see Appendix B for a copy of the questionnaire).

#### Data Gathering

The questionnaires were assembled according to the floor in each Residence Hall. Each questionnaire was accompanied by a cover letter explaining the purpose of the survey and giving instructions for returning the questionnaire to the Student Assistant. Each group of questionnaires was then placed in a manila envelope and addressed to the Student Assistant for the respective hall and floor. A letter of instruction was included in each envelope for the Student Assistant. The Student Assistants received the questionnaires on April 23, distributed and collected them, and returned them to the researcher on April 27.

#### Analysis of Data

First, the responses from the questionnaires were coded, then key punched onto computer data cards. Percentages were used to describe the

information. The chi-square statistic was employed to test the hypotheses associated with this study.

#### Characteristics of the Sample

The sample for this research consisted of 389 female and male college students from a potential sample of 483. This was an 80.5 percent return. Of the respondents, 50.9 percent were female and 49.1 percent were male. The age of the respondents ranged from 18 years to over 24 years. The 18-19 year old group accounted for 61 percent of the sample. In terms of classification, 49.36 percent of the sample were freshmen (Table II).

Almost 24 percent of the sample stated Business as their academic major, with 20.10 percent in Arts and Sciences, and 19.07 percent majoring in Engineering (Table II).

In terms of the size of the community where raised, 39.28 percent of the students reported community size as a city of 50,000 or more; 18.6 percent of the sample indicated a town of 5,000-25,000; and 17.57 percent reported being raised in a city with a population of 25,000-50,000 (Table II).

Concerning parent's estimated annual net income, 27.55 percent of the sample reported parent's income as \$10,001-\$20,000; 23.14 percent reported parent's income as \$20,001-\$30,000; and 20.39 percent reported parent's income as \$30,001-\$40,000 (Table III).

In regard to the percentage of educational expenses paid by the respondents, 54.64 percent indicated they paid 0-25 percent, while 39.18 percent of the respondents indicated paying 76-100 percent of their living expenses while attending college (Table III).



TABLE II  
GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Variable	Classification	Female		Male		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Age	18-19 Years	148	74.75	90	47.12	238	61.18
	20-21 Years	46	23.23	67	35.08	113	29.05
	22-23 Years	3	1.52	27	14.14	30	7.71
	24 Years or Over	1	.51	7	3.66	8	2.06
	TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00
Class	Freshman	119	60.10	73	38.22	192	49.36
	Sophomore	50	25.25	52	27.23	102	26.22
	Junior	21	10.61	31	16.23	52	13.37
	Senior	6	3.03	28	14.66	34	8.74
	Graduate Student	2	1.01	7	3.66	9	2.31
TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00	
Major	Home Economics	20	10.15	3	1.57	23	5.93
	Business	45	22.84	48	25.13	93	23.97
	Agriculture	11	5.58	24	12.57	35	9.02
	Physical Education	9	4.57	6	3.14	15	3.87
	Arts and Sciences	52	26.40	26	13.61	78	20.10
	Engineering	10	5.08	64	33.51	74	19.07
	Communications	10	5.08	8	4.19	18	4.64
	Education	17	8.62	1	.52	18	4.64
	Undecided	23	11.68	11	5.76	34	8.76
	No Answer	1	--	--	--	1	--
	TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00

TABLE II (Continued)

Variable	Classification	Female		Male		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Size of Community	Rural, farm	17	8.67	24	12.57	41	10.59
	Rural, non-farm	5	2.55	7	3.66	12	3.10
	Small Town, under 5,000	26	13.27	16	8.38	42	10.85
	Town of 5,000- 25,000	38	19.39	34	17.80	72	18.60
	City of 25,000- 50,000	39	19.90	29	15.18	68	17.57
	City of 50,000 or More	71	36.22	81	42.41	152	39.28
	No Answer	2	--	-	--	2	.01
	TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00

TABLE III  
ECONOMIC CHARACTERISTICS OF THE SAMPLE

Variable	Classification	Female		Male		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Parent's Net Income	Less than \$10,000	13	7.10	15	8.33	28	7.71
	\$10,001-\$20,000	40	21.86	60	33.33	100	27.55
	\$20,001-\$30,000	42	22.95	42	23.33	84	23.14
	\$30,001-\$40,000	46	25.14	28	15.56	74	20.39
	\$40,001-\$50,000	18	9.84	19	10.56	37	10.19
	Over \$50,000	24	13.11	16	8.89	40	11.02
	No Answer	15	--	11	--	26	--
TOTAL		198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00
Percent of Educational Expenses	0-25%	134	67.68	78	41.05	212	54.64
	26-50%	24	12.12	37	19.47	61	15.72
	51-75%	9	4.55	18	9.47	27	6.96
	76-100%	31	15.66	56	29.47	87	22.42
	No Answer	-	--	2	.53	2	.26
	TOTAL		198	100.00	191	100.00	389
Percent of Living Expenses	0-25%	88	44.44	38	20.00	71	18.25
	26-50%	19	9.60	31	16.32	50	12.89
	51-75%	25	12.63	34	17.89	59	15.21
	76-100%	66	33.33	86	45.26	152	39.18
	No Answer	-	--	2	.53	2	.25
	TOTAL		198	100.00	191	100.00	389
Major Source of Income	Part-Time Job	38	19.19	33	17.28	71	18.25
	Work-Study	5	2.53	4	2.09	9	2.31
	Scholarship	4	2.02	5	2.62	9	2.31
	Grant	7	3.54	9	4.71	16	4.11

TABLE III (Continued)

Variable	Classification	Female		Male		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Loan	12	6.06	4	2.09	16	4.11
	Summer Income	50	25.25	81	42.41	131	33.68
	Weekly or Monthly Allowance	70	35.35	30	15.71	100	25.71
	Other	12	6.06	25	13.09	37	9.51
	TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00
Monthly Net Income	Under \$50	65	33.51	43	23.12	108	28.42
	\$50.01-\$75.00	35	18.04	31	16.67	66	17.37
	\$75.01-\$100.00	11	5.67	10	5.38	21	5.53
	\$100.01-\$125.00	15	7.73	13	6.99	28	7.37
	\$125.01-\$150.00	10	5.15	12	6.45	22	5.79
	\$150.01-\$175.00	7	3.61	5	2.69	12	3.16
	\$175.01-\$200.00	13	6.70	18	9.68	31	8.16
	Over \$200.00	38	19.59	53	28.49	91	23.95
	No Answer	4	--	6	.53	10	.25
	TOTAL	198	100.00	191	100.00	389	100.00

The students were asked to give their major source of income while attending college, of which 33.68 percent of the sample reported summer income as the major source; 25.71 percent indicated their major income source as a weekly or monthly allowance from their parents or other relative; and 18.25 percent reported a part-time job as their major source of income. It is interesting to note that more female students reported a "weekly or monthly allowance" as their major source of income, while more male students indicated their major source of income resulted from "summer income" (Table III).

The amount of approximate monthly net income for the students ranged from under \$50 to over \$200. According to their monthly earnings, 28.42 percent of the students reported income of under \$50 and 23.95 percent reported income of over \$200 a month, while 17.37 percent reported an income of \$50.01-\$75.00 a month (Table III).

## CHAPTER IV

### RESULTS

In order to explore the behavior and characteristics of college students and the ways in which they handle consumer complaints relative to product dissatisfaction, this chapter examines the data collected through the use of the instrument.

#### Ownership of Consumer Products

The students were asked to indicate ownership of selected consumer products listed in two separate questions (see questionnaire in Appendix B, Questions 11 and 18). Each question contained a list of seven consumer products that the researcher believed to be common to the majority of college students. The items listed in Section B, Question 11, of the questionnaire were designated as Major Consumer Products. Those items listed in Section C, Question 18, were designated as Minor Consumer Products. The students were instructed to check all the items which they owned. As might be expected for this particular population, ownership was high for the majority of the consumer products listed. Table IV shows the number and percentage distribution of the products named in Section B. Of the respondents, 77.84 percent owned a calculator; 68.30 percent owned a clock radio; and 62.83 percent owned a stereo.

The number and percentage distribution for ownership of the items named in Section C are shown in Table V. From those items mentioned in

TABLE IV  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF MAJOR PRODUCT OWNERSHIP

Type of Product*	Product Ownership	
	Number	Percent
<u>Section B</u>		
Stereo	243	62.63
Tape Deck	192	49.48
Calculator	302	77.84
Tape Recorder	184	47.42
Television (color)	45	11.60
Television (black/white)	134	34.54
Clock Radio	<u>265</u>	68.30
Total Responses	1365	

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.

TABLE V  
 NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF MINOR PRODUCT OWNERSHIP

Type of Product*	Product Ownership	
	Number	Percent
<u>Section C</u>		
Electric Coffee Maker	72	18.56
Popcorn Popper	170	43.81
Electric Hair Curlers	131	33.76
Curling Iron	144	37.11
Lighted Makeup Mirror	102	26.29
Blow Dryer	339	87.37
Electric Shaver	<u>118</u>	30.41
Total Responses	1076	

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.



Section C, 87.37 percent of the students owned a blow dryer and 43.81 percent owned a popcorn popper.

#### Students' Product Complaints

The students were asked to respond concerning whether or not they had experienced any problems with any of the consumer products listed in Section B or Section C (see questionnaire in Appendix B, Questions 12 and 19). In response to ownership of items given in Section B, 39.59 percent of the female students and 43.98 percent of the male students indicated having had problems with at least one of the items (Table VI). These differences were not statistically significant.

TABLE VI  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS HAVING PROBLEMS  
WITH MAJOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Respondents' Sex	Did Have Problem		Did Not Have Problem		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	<u>Section B</u>					
Female (n=197)	78	39.59	119	60.41	197	100.00
Male (n=191)	84	43.98	107	56.02	191	100.00

$$x^2 = .767, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .3812.$$

Concerning the items listed in Section C, 39.29 percent of the

female students and 15.43 percent of the male students reported having any problems with any of the products (Table VII). The data indicate a higher percentage of problems with those items named in Section B than those in Section C. It is assumed that this is a result of higher ownership by the students of the products listed in Section B. Also, Section C contained several items which were more likely to be owned by only the female students, such as: electric hair curlers, curling iron, and lighted makeup mirror. As Table VII shows, 39.29 percent of the female students had problems with this particular group of products, whereas, only 15.43 percent of the male students reported any problems. Males were significantly different from females in terms of having problems with the items in Section C ( $p < .0001$ ).

TABLE VII  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS HAVING PROBLEMS  
WITH MINOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Respondents' Sex	Did Have Problem		Did Not Have Problem		Total	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	<u>Section C</u>					
Female (n=196)	77	39.29	119	60.71	196	100.00
Male (n=188)	29	15.43	159	84.57	188	100.00

$$\chi^2 = 27.336, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .0001.$$

### Students' Utilization of Corrective Actions

Those students who reported experiencing any problems with any of the items in Section B or Section C, were then asked to indicate whether or not any corrective action was taken. In regard to the items listed in Section B, 76.92 percent of the female students and 78.57 percent of the male students took some corrective action (Table VIII). In terms of the total sample, over 75 percent of the respondents took some type of corrective action when they experienced a problem with a major consumer product. Eighty-two percent of the sophomores and 78.05 percent of the freshmen reported taking corrective action. In terms of academic major as related to whether or not corrective action was taken, 87.50 percent of the Home Economics and Engineering majors reported taking action (Table VIII). For those products given in Section B, 85.71 percent of the respondents who were raised in a rural, farm community took action, while 84.62 percent of those raised in a city of 25,000-50,000 took action. Furthermore, 77.03 percent of those respondents raised in a city of 50,000 or more took corrective action (Table VIII). When considering parent's net income in relation to action, 84.85 percent of the students who indicated parent's income as \$20,001-\$30,000 took action. Eighty-four percent of the respondents who reported parent's income at over \$50,000 took some corrective action, while 80.77 percent took action whose parent's income was \$30,001-\$40,000. These differences in terms of the selected characteristics relative to whether or not action was taken, were not statistically significant. The first hypothesis stated that taking action relative to product dissatisfaction with major consumer products will not differ by selected characteristics: (a) sex,

TABLE VIII

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO DID AND DID NOT TAKE  
CORRECTIVE ACTION WITH MAJOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Variable	Classification	Did Take Action		Did Not Take Action		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sex	Female (n=78)	60	76.92	18	23.08	78	100.00
	Male (n=84)	66	78.57	18	21.43	84	100.00
$\chi^2 = .064, d.f. = 1, p < .8009.$							
Age	18-19 Years	82	79.61	21	20.39	103	100.00
	20-21 Years	35	77.78	10	22.22	45	100.00
	22-23 Years	9	64.29	5	35.71	14	100.00
	24 Years or Older	-	--	-	--	-	--
$\chi^2 = 1.675, d.f. = 2, p < .4328.$							
Class	Freshman	64	78.05	18	21.95	82	100.00
	Sophomore	32	82.05	7	17.95	39	100.00
	Junior	19	76.00	6	24.00	25	100.00
	Senior	10	71.43	4	28.57	14	100.00
	Graduate Student	1	50.00	1	50.00	2	100.00
$\chi^2 = 1.681, d.f. = 4, p < .7942.$							
Academic Major	Home Economics	7	87.50	1	12.50	8	100.00
	Business	27	69.23	12	30.77	39	100.00
	Agriculture	10	66.67	5	33.33	15	100.00
	Physical Education	3	60.00	2	40.00	5	100.00
	Arts and Sciences	27	81.82	6	18.18	33	100.00
	Engineering	28	87.50	4	12.50	32	100.00
	Communications	7	77.78	2	22.22	9	100.00
	Education	5	71.43	2	28.57	7	100.00

TABLE VIII (Continued)

Variable	Classification	Did Take Action		Did Not Take Action		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Undecided	12	85.71	2	14.29	14	100.00
	No Answer	1	--	-	--	-	--
		$x^2 = 6.807, d.f. = 8, p < .5576.$					
Size of Community	Rural, farm	12	85.71	2	14.29	14	100.00
	Rural, non-farm	3	100.00	-	--	3	100.00
	Small Town, under 5,000	11	73.33	4	26.67	15	100.00
	Town of 5,000-25,000	20	68.97	9	31.03	29	100.00
	City of 25,000-50,000	22	84.62	4	15.38	26	100.00
	City of 50,000 or More	57	77.03	17	22.97	74	100.00
		$x^2 = 3.552, d.f. = 5, p < .6156.$					
Parent's Net Income	Less than \$10,000	8	72.73	3	27.27	11	100.00
	\$10,001-\$20,000	30	71.43	12	28.57	42	100.00
	\$20,001-\$30,000	28	84.85	5	15.15	33	100.00
	\$30,001-\$40,000	21	80.77	5	19.23	26	100.00
	\$40,001-\$50,000	14	70.00	6	30.00	20	100.00
	Over \$50,000	21	84.00	4	16.00	25	100.00
		$x^2 = 3.483, d.f. = 5, p < .6260.$					

(b) age, (c) classification, (d) academic major, (e) size of community where raised, and (f) parent's annual net income. Based upon the data collected, the first hypothesis was accepted.

In response to those items listed in Section C, 64.47 percent of the females and 48.28 percent of the males reported taking action when a problem occurred (Table IX). In terms of classification, 69.57 percent of the sophomores and 59.02 percent of the freshmen took some corrective action. Concerning academic major, 75 percent of the Education majors reported taking action, whereas, 74.07 percent of the Business majors and 71.43 percent of the Home Economics majors took corrective action (Table IX). In response to the size of community where raised, 65.22 percent of those students raised in a town of 5,000-25,000 took action; 65.12 percent of the students took action who were raised in a city of 50,000 or more; and 100 percent of those raised in a rural, non-farm community took action (Table IX). In relation to parent's net income, 72.73 percent of the students who reported parent's income as \$40,001-\$50,000 took action; 70.59 percent of the students whose parent's income was over \$50,000 took action; and 68.18 percent of the students whose parent's income was \$10,001-\$20,000 took some action (Table IX). A larger number of students indicated taking corrective action with the products in Section B, as opposed to those in Section C. It is assumed that this is due to the difference in the cost of the items, with those in Section C generally being less expensive than those in Section B. These differences in terms of the selected characteristics relative to whether or not action was taken, were not statistically significant. The second hypothesis stated that taking action relative to product dissatisfaction with minor consumer products will not differ by selected

TABLE IX

NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF STUDENTS WHO DID AND DID NOT TAKE  
CORRECTIVE ACTION WITH MINOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Variable	Classification	Did Take Action		Did Not Take Action		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Sex	Female (n=76)	49	64.47	27	35.53	76	100.00
	Male (n=29)	14	48.28	15	51.72	29	100.00
		$x^2 = 2.295, d.f. = 1, p < .1298$					
Age	18-19 Years	45	61.64	28	38.36	73	100.00
	20-21 Years	16	59.26	11	40.74	27	100.00
	22-23 Years	2	50.00	2	50.00	4	100.00
	24 Years or Older	-	--	-	--	-	--
		$x^2 = 1.755, d.f. = 3, p < .6248$					
Class	Freshman	36	59.02	25	40.98	61	100.00
	Sophomore	16	69.57	7	30.43	23	100.00
	Junior	9	56.25	7	43.75	16	100.00
	Senior	2	40.00	3	60.00	5	100.00
	Graduate Student	-	--	-	--	-	--
		$x^2 = 1.828, d.f. = 3, p < .6088$					
Academic Major	Home Economics	5	71.43	2	28.57	7	100.00
	Business	20	74.07	7	25.93	27	100.00
	Agriculture	2	20.00	8	80.00	10	100.00
	Physical Education	1	25.00	3	75.00	4	100.00
	Arts and Sciences	14	56.00	11	44.00	25	100.00
	Engineering	9	64.29	5	35.71	14	100.00
	Communications	1	50.00	1	50.00	2	100.00
	Education	3	75.00	1	25.00	4	100.00

TABLE IX (Continued)

Variable	Classification	Did Take Action		Did Not Take Action		Total	
		Number	Percent	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	Undecided	7	63.64	4	36.36	11	100.00
	No Answer	1	--	-	--	-	--
		$x^2 = 12.066, d.f. = 8, p < .1483$					
Size of Community	Rural, farm	6	60.00	4	40.00	10	100.00
	Rural, non-farm	2	100.00	-	--	-	100.00
	Small Town, under 5,000	4	40.00	6	60.00	10	100.00
	Town of 5,000-25,000	15	65.22	8	34.78	23	100.00
	City of 25,000-50,000	8	50.00	8	50.00	16	100.00
	City of 50,000 or More	28	65.12	15	34.88	43	100.00
		$x^2 = 4.404, d.f. = 5, p < .4928$					
Parent's Net Income	Less than \$10,000	3	50.00	3	50.00	6	100.00
	\$10,001-\$20,000	15	68.18	7	31.82	22	100.00
	\$20,001-\$30,000	10	50.00	10	50.00	20	100.00
	\$30,001-\$40,000	11	47.83	12	52.17	23	100.00
	\$40,001-\$50,000	8	72.73	3	27.27	11	100.00
	Over \$50,000	12	70.59	5	29.41	17	100.00
		$x^2 = 4.632, d.f. = 5, p < .4624$					



characteristics: (a) sex, (b) age, (c) classification, (d) academic major, (e) size of community where raised, and (f) parent's annual net income. The second hypothesis was accepted.

Students who took corrective action were asked to designate the types of corrective actions utilized. For the products mentioned in Section B of the questionnaire, 45.90 percent of the female students and 50.00 percent of the male students indicated returning the item to the store where it was purchased. This finding agrees with research conducted by Andreasen and Best (1977) concerning the techniques used by consumers in voicing their complaints. Complaining to the store where the item was purchased was utilized by 36.36 percent of the male students, while 39.34 percent of the female students indicated "other" (Table X). The majority of the female students who gave "other" as a course of action stated that the item was repaired by her father. Responding to the items listed in Section C, the majority of the students also indicated "other" as the type of action used: 36.73 percent of the female students and 64.29 percent of the male students selected this form of action. In addition, 40.82 percent of the female students also indicated returning the item to the store where it was purchased (Table XI). Concerning these particular products in Section C, "other" was specified by the students as replacement of the item. The females were significantly different from the males in terms of returning the items to the store where purchased as reported in Section C ( $p < .0184$ ). The third hypothesis states that the type of corrective action relative to product dissatisfaction will not differ by student's sex. The third hypothesis was partially accepted based on the data collected.

Table XII reports the method which the respondents preferred to use

TABLE X  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF THE TYPE OF CORRECTIVE ACTION USED BY  
THE RESPONDENTS WITH MAJOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Type of Corrective Action*	Female (n=61)		Male (n=66)		$\chi^2$	d.f.	p
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
<u>Section B</u>							
Complained to the store where the item was purchased	13	21.31	24	36.36	3.479	1	< .0622
Complained to the manufacturer	6	9.84	5	7.58	.205	1	< .6509
Returned the item to the store where purchased	28	45.90	33	50.00	.213	1	< .6442
Returned the item to the manufacturer	6	9.84	10	15.15	.813	1	< .3671
Other	24	39.34	18	27.27	2.087	1	< .1486

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.

TABLE XI  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE OF THE TYPE OF CORRECTIVE ACTION USED BY  
THE RESPONDENTS WITH MINOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Type of Corrective Action*	Female (n=49)		Male (n=14)		$\chi^2$	d.f.	p
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
<u>Section C</u>							
Complained to the store where the item was purchased	9	18.37	2	14.29	.126	1	< .7227
Complained to the manufacturer	5	10.20	-	--	1.552	1	< .2129
Returned the item to the store where purchased	20	40.82	1	7.14	5.556	1	< .0184
Returned the item to the manufacturer	8	16.33	2	14.29	.034	1	< .8538
Other	18	36.73	9	64.29	3.375	1	< .0662

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.

to carry out their particular corrective action. The majority of both the female and male students indicated they would most likely complain in person; 53.30 percent of the female students and 64.45 percent of the male students. The respondents also reported they would write a letter of complaint. It is interesting to note that three times as many female students as male students would depend on a friend or parent to take care of the product complaint. Also, only eight students indicated they would have a consumer agency take care of the problem.

TABLE XII  
RESPONDENTS' CHOICE OF A COMPLAINT ACTION

Type of Action	Female (n=198)		Male (n=191)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Complain by telephone	29	14.72	29	15.18
Complain in person	105	53.30	125	65.45
Have a consumer agency take care of it	1	.51	7	3.66
Write a letter of complaint	40	20.30	18	9.42
Have a friend or parent take care of it	21	10.66	7	3.66
Other	1	.51	5	2.62
No Answer	1	.51	-	--

Overall, the respondents indicated satisfaction with the outcome of the actions they took in dealing with their complaints. Satisfaction for

the items in Section B was indicated at 3.15 percent of the female students being Very Satisfied and 32.70 percent of the female sample being Satisfied. Concerning Section B, 24.24 percent of the male students were Very Satisfied, while 42.42 percent responded to being Satisfied (Table XIII). The students indicated an overall higher percentage for Very Satisfied for Section C in relation to the outcome of their actions in handling these product complaints, as compared to Section B. For the female respondents, 36.73 percent were Very Satisfied, while 57.14 percent of the male students also indicated being Very Satisfied (Table XIII). As noted previously, the items in Section C generally are less expensive than those mentioned in Section B, thus students often replace the defective item with a new product instead of taking any type of action to correct the problems that occur. Therefore, satisfaction could be expected to be higher with those items since little or no contact exists between the students and the retailer or manufacturer to settle any product dissatisfaction. The students were asked to indicate their level of overall satisfaction with the consumer products they own. As reported in Table XIV, 24.10 percent of the females indicated they were Very Satisfied, while 16.30 percent of the males reported being Very Satisfied. There were no significant differences between the females and males in terms of satisfaction at the .05 level. However, there is evidence that the females experienced a higher level of satisfaction than the males ( $p < .0597$ ). This particular aspect of the difference between female and male satisfaction warrants further research by consumer specialists. The fifth hypothesis states that university students' satisfaction with owned consumer products will not differ by student's sex. The fifth hypothesis was thus accepted based upon the data collected.

TABLE XIII  
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RANKINGS OF COLLEGE  
 STUDENTS' SATISFACTION WITH THE OUTCOME  
 OF THEIR CORRECTIVE ACTIONS

Respondents' Sex	Rankings					Did Not Rank
	Very Satisfied 1	2	Satisfied 3	4	Very Dissatisfied 5	
	Percent					
	<u>Section B*</u>					
Female	31.15	16.39	32.79	9.84	9.84	--
Male	24.24	22.73	42.42	6.06	4.55	--
	<u>Section C**</u>					
Female	36.73	22.45	24.49	8.16	6.12	2.04
Male	57.14	21.43	14.29	--	--	2.04

\* $\chi^2 = 3.800$ , d.f. = 4,  $p < .4338$ .

\*\* $\chi^2 = 4.507$ , d.f. = 5,  $p < .4789$ .

TABLE XIV  
 PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RANKINGS OF COLLEGE  
 STUDENTS' OVERALL SATISFACTION WITH  
 CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Respondents' Sex	Rankings					Did Not Rank
	Very Satisfied	Satisfied		Very Dissatisfied		
	1	2	3	4	5	
Female (n=198)	24.10	36.41	33.33	5.64	.51	1.53
Male (n=191)	16.30	31.52	40.76	8.70	2.72	3.80

$\chi^2 = 9.059$ , d.f. = 4,  $p < .0597$ .

Those students who chose not to take any corrective action relative to product dissatisfaction, were asked to specify their reasons for inaction. As Table XV illustrates in regard to Section B, 42.42 percent of the women students and 53.66 percent of the men stated that their reason for not taking action was that it "would take too much time." There were no significant differences between the females and the males in terms of their reasons for not taking corrective action with the items listed in Section B.

For those items from Section C, 42.22 percent of the female students and 46.67 percent of the male students indicated inaction was due to their replacing the item instead or that the item was not very expensive (Table XVI). Since most of these products were designed for women, a higher percentage of the female sample responded to this question. This researcher believes the relatively low cost for most of these particular items resulted in the high occurrence of product replacement. Diener

TABLE XV

THE REASONS COLLEGE STUDENTS DID NOT TAKE ANY CORRECTIVE  
ACTIONS WITH MAJOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Reason for Not Taking Action*	Female (n=33)		Male (n=41)		$\chi^2$	d.f.	p
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
<u>Section B</u>							
Would take too much time	14	42.42	22	53.66	.924	1	< .3365
Did not know where to go to complain	8	24.24	7	17.07	.581	1	< .4457
Decided to replace the item instead	3	9.09	7	17.07	.997	1	< .3181
Item was not very expensive	3	9.09	10	24.39	2.955	1	< .0856
No longer used the item	2	6.06	5	12.20	.803	1	< .3701
Other	10	30.30	8	19.51	1.157	1	< .2822

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.



TABLE XVI

THE REASONS COLLEGE STUDENTS DID NOT TAKE ANY CORRECTIVE  
ACTIONS WITH MINOR CONSUMER PRODUCTS

Reasons for Not Taking Action*	Female (n=45)		Male (n=15)		$\chi^2$	d.f.	p
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
	<u>Section C</u>						
Would take too much time	11	24.44	6	40.00	1.341	1	< .2469
Did not know where to go to complain	8	17.78	2	13.33	.160	1	< .6892
Decided to replace the item instead	19	42.22	7	46.67	.090	1	< .7635
Item was not very expensive	10	22.22	7	46.67	3.311	1	< .0688
No longer used the item	8	17.78	-	--	3.077	1	< .0794
Other	13	28.89	4	26.67	.027	1	< .8686

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.

and Greyse (1978) also indicate that inaction to relieve product dissatisfaction can be warranted because the cost of the product may be low enough to not make it worthwhile to take action or to complain. There were no significant differences between the females and the males in terms of their reasons for not taking corrective action with the items listed in Section C. The fourth hypothesis states that the reasons for not taking corrective action will not differ by student's sex. The fourth hypothesis was accepted.

Dissatisfaction with consumer goods can be caused by any number of reasons. In addition, experience with a faulty product can influence future purchasing habits. Tables XVII and XVIII show the distribution of the respondents' reasons for product dissatisfaction and their choice for expressing that dissatisfaction. "The product was poorly made" was the reason cited most by the female students, 54.17 percent, and by the male students, 64.29 percent, for their being dissatisfied. Over-pricing of the product was indicated by 41.67 percent of the female students and by 47.62 percent of the male students (Table XVII). The differences between the female and the male students in terms of their reasons for dissatisfaction were not statistically significant.

Table XVIII shows that students reported they would most likely tell their friends and family of their experience with an unsatisfactory product or they would refuse to purchase any future items made by the manufacturer. There were no significant differences between the females and the males in regard to the type of action they would most likely use.

#### Students' Input on Additional Consumer Topics

Section D of the questionnaire (see Appendix B, Questions 28-37)

TABLE XVII

REASONS COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE DISSATISFIED WITH  
THE CONSUMER PRODUCTS THEY OWN

Reasons for Dissatisfaction*	Female (n=24)		Male (n=42)		$\chi^2$	d.f.	p
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent			
Product does not work	4	16.67	5	11.90	.294	1	< .5876
Product was over-priced	10	41.67	20	47.62	.218	1	< .6404
Product does not do what was advertised or expected	6	25.00	10	23.81	.012	1	< .9135
Product was poorly made	13	54.17	27	64.29	.655	1	< .4183
Other	-	--	1	2.38	.580	1	< .4462

\*Respondents were instructed to check all that applied.

TABLE XVIII  
 ACTION COLLEGE STUDENTS WOULD MOST LIKELY TAKE  
 IF DISSATISFIED WITH A CONSUMER PRODUCT

Type of Action	Female (n=160)		Male (n=141)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Tell friends and family about the unsatisfactory product	81	50.63	81	57.45
Refuse to purchase products made by that manufacturer	79	49.38	59	41.84
Continue to purchase products made by that manufacturer	-	--	1	.71

$\chi^2 = 2.710$ , d.f. = 2,  $p < .2579$ .

sought the students' input concerning various consumer topics. Table XIX shows that a majority of the respondents, 55.84 percent of the female and 46.03 percent of the male, believe college students are lacking in awareness of their rights as consumers.

The respondents indicated that college students were also failing in their awareness of the available consumer services available at OSU (Table XX).

The students' complete unawareness as to the services provided at OSU for consumers became apparent when they were asked specifically if they were aware of the Consumer Action Council (CAC), and if they had ever contacted the CAC about a consumer problem. As to their response to the existence of the CAC, 81.82 percent of the female and 76.44 percent of the male respondents indicated they were unaware of the CAC (Table XXI). Furthermore, 99.49 percent of the female sample and 97.38 percent of the male sample reported not ever having contacted the CAC about any consumer complaint or problem (Table XXII).

The education of the consumer has been the subject for much discussion by all segments of today's society. The students representing this particular sample believe they are in need of more information concerning their legal rights as consumers and information on consumer buying tips (Table XXIII).

In order to provide this information, the students cited the educational systems as being the most responsible for communicating with the consumer, and the consumer being second in terms of responsibility (Table XXIV).

A greater number of the students indicated receiving some form of consumer education at the high school level than at the college level

TABLE XIX

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF RANKINGS OF COLLEGE  
STUDENTS' AWARENESS OF THEIR LEGAL  
RIGHTS AS CONSUMERS

Respondents' Sex	Rankings					Did Not Rank
	Very Aware 1	2	Aware 3	4	Very Unaware 5	
	Percent					
Female	--	3.55	23.35	55.84	17.26	.50
Male	1.59	8.99	28.57	46.03	14.81	.01

TABLE XX

PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF COLLEGE STUDENTS' AWARENESS  
OF AVAILABLE CONSUMER SERVICES AT OSU

Respondents' Sex	Rankings				Very Unaware 5
	Very Aware 1	2	Aware 3	4	
	Percent				
Female	--	2.02	11.11	47.98	38.89
Male	.52	6.28	15.71	45.55	31.94

TABLE XXI  
 RESPONDENTS' AWARENESS OF THE OSU  
 CONSUMER ACTION COUNCIL

Respondents' Sex	Aware of CAC		Unaware of CAC	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female (n=198)	36	18.18	162	81.82
Male (n=191)	45	23.56	146	76.44

TABLE XXII  
 RESPONDENTS' CONTACT WITH THE OSU  
 CONSUMER ACTION COUNCIL

Respondents' Sex	Contacted CAC		Not Contacted CAC	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Female (n=198)	1	.51	197	99.49
Male (n=191)	5	2.62	186	97.38

TABLE XXIII  
 CONSUMER INFORMATION NEEDS OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

Information Needed	Female (n=198)		Male (n=191)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
The legal rights of a consumer	62	31.31	67	35.08
Local consumer services and agencies	19	9.60	25	13.09
How to complain and get results	50	25.25	47	24.61
Consumer buying tips	62	31.31	49	25.65
Other	5	2.53	3	1.57

TABLE XXIV  
 THE GROUP MOST RESPONSIBLE FOR EDUCATING  
 THE CONSUMER

Responsible Group	Female (n=198)		Male (n=191)	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
Government	26	13.20	16	8.38
Business and Industry	23	11.68	28	14.66
Educational Systems	103	52.28	86	45.03
The Consumer	40	20.30	58	30.37
Other	5	2.54	3	1.57
No Answer	1	.26	-	--



(Table XXV). However, it is assumed that this is reflective of the large number of freshman respondents in the sample who have not yet had an opportunity to complete a college course on consumer education. There were no significant differences between the females and males and their completion of a course or unit on consumer education. Those students who indicated completing a course or unit on consumer education in high school or college reported that the information was helpful to them as consumers (Table XXVI). There were no significant differences between the females and the males and their evaluation of consumer education as being helpful or not helpful.

TABLE XXV  
RESPONDENTS' COMPLETION OF A HIGH SCHOOL OR  
COLLEGE CONSUMER EDUCATION COURSE

Respondents' Sex	Completed Consumer Course		Not Completed Consumer Course	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	<u>High School*</u>			
Female (n=198)	93	46.97	105	53.03
Male (n=191)	72	37.70	119	62.30
	<u>College**</u>			
Female (n=198)	37	18.69	161	81.31
Male (n=191)	30	15.71	161	84.29

$$*x^2 = .606, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .4365.$$

$$**x^2 = 3.423, \text{ d.f.} = 1, p < .0643.$$

TABLE XXVI  
 RESPONDENTS' EVALUATION OF CONSUMER EDUCATION  
 COURSES AS BEING HELPFUL WITH  
 CONSUMER PROBLEMS

Respondents' Sex	Rankings					Did Not Rank
	Very Helpful 1	2	Helpful 3	4	Not Helpful 5	
	Percent					
Female	12.50	33.65	39.42	10.58	3.85	47.47
Male	19.54	27.59	44.83	6.90	1.15	54.45

$$x^2 = 4.427, \text{ d.f.} = 4, p < .3513.$$

Table XXVII reports the effect of consumer education in relation to whether or not the students took corrective action. For the items listed in Section B, 74.07 percent of the students who had any consumer education reported taking action with their consumer complaints. Of those students who did not have any consumer education, 81.48 percent indicated taking action (Table XXVII). There were no significant differences between the students who did and did not have any consumer education relative to their taking action with the items listed in Section B.

Concerning the items given in Section C, 70.59 percent of the students who had any consumer education indicated taking corrective action, while 29.41 percent who had any consumer education did not take corrective action (Table XXVII). A significant difference exists between those students who had consumer education in terms of whether or not they took corrective action ( $p < .0314$ ). The sixth hypothesis stated

that taking action relative to product dissatisfaction will not differ in relation to completion of a course or unit on consumer education. The sixth hypothesis was partially accepted based on the data collected.

TABLE XXVII  
NUMBER AND PERCENTAGE DISTRIBUTION OF CONSUMER  
EDUCATION AS RELATED TO COMPLAINT  
ACTIONS BY THE RESPONDENTS

Variable	Consumer Education		No Consumer Education	
	Number	Percent	Number	Percent
	<u>Section B*</u>			
Did take action	60	74.07	66	81.48
Did not take action	21	25.93	15	18.52
	<u>Section C**</u>			
Did take action	36	70.59	27	50.00
Did not take action	15	29.41	27	50.00

\* $\chi^2 = 1.286$ , d.f. = 1, p = .2568.

\*\* $\chi^2 = 4.632$ , d.f. = 1, p = .0314.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

#### Summary of Findings

The college-aged consumer places a definite force on the American economy due to their great discretionary spending power. As the number of college students increases, so does the need for educating the students as to their rights and responsibilities as consumers.

The purpose of this study was to determine the extent to which university students take action or no action in dealing with consumer complaints. This information will be valuable in assessing the educational needs of the students in relation to their roles as consumers.

To achieve this purpose, 483 students living in the Residence Halls at Oklahoma State University were surveyed. The sample included female and male students, ranging in age from 18 years to over 24 years.

The research method was a survey, and the data source was a questionnaire which was completed by the students in April, 1979. Computer analysis of the data was primarily by frequency distribution and by the chi-square statistic to test for statistical significance.

The sample included 50.90 percent females and 49.10 percent males. Sixty-one percent were 18-19 years of age and 49.36 percent were classified as freshmen. As to academic major, Business, Arts and Sciences, and Engineering were indicated most often. Over 86 percent of the

sample were raised in a community other than rural. Approximately 70 percent of the students indicated parent's net annual income at between \$10,001 and \$40,000. Regarding the percentage of educational and living expenses paid by the students while attending college, over half indicated paying only 0-25 percent of their educational expenses. In terms of living expenses, 32.47 percent of the students paid 0-25 percent, while 39.18 percent paid 76-100 percent of these expenses.

The major sources of income for the students were summer income, weekly or monthly allowance from parents or other relative, or a part-time job. Income of the students ranged from under \$50 to over \$200 per month.

Regarding the consumer products owned by the students, ownership was high for the majority of items. A blow dryer, calculator, clock radio, and stereo were the items owned most by the students. Almost 42 percent of the respondents indicated they had experienced a problem with the consumer products listed in Section B, while only 27.60 percent had experienced a problem with the consumer products given in Section C.

Over half of the students who indicated having a problem with the items they own, took some type of corrective action to handle their complaint. The respondents indicated they returned the item to the store where purchased as the major means for redress, and that they preferred to complain in person as opposed to other methods. The students also indicated being satisfied with the outcome of the corrective actions they used.

The respondents who did not take any corrective measures to relieve their dissatisfaction, cited that it would take too much time or that they had decided to replace the item instead.

The students indicated their dissatisfaction with the products was a result of the product being over-priced and that the product was poorly made. The respondents reported they would most likely express their product dissatisfaction by telling friends and family and by refusing to purchase products made by the particular manufacturer.

The awareness of college students about their legal rights as consumers and about the available consumer services at OSU was indicated as being quite low. This is further evidenced by the fact that only 20 percent of the respondents reported they were aware of the Consumer Action Council at OSU. Furthermore, only 1.55 percent indicated they had ever contacted the CAC with a consumer complaint or problem.

In terms of education, the respondents indicated that the educational systems, at all levels, were most responsible for providing the consumer with the necessary information they needed. The students believed that the consumer was also responsible for educating himself/herself, in terms of consumer information. The government and business and industry were indicated as being the least responsible for educating the consumer.

Over 50 percent of the students had not completed a course or unit on consumer education in high school, while over 80 percent indicated not completing a consumer education course in college. Nevertheless, those students who had completed a course in consumer education reported the information as being helpful to them with consumer problems.

The findings of this research indicate that the majority of college students who experience problems with consumer products do take some type of corrective action. Furthermore, they indicated that the responsibility for educating and informing the consumer rests in the hands of

educational systems. In terms of overall satisfaction with the consumer products they owned, the students registered a high level of satisfaction. It should be noted, however, that the data reflected a higher degree of satisfaction by the females as compared to the males. This finding was not significant at the .05 level, but it is an area which deserves further attention from those involved with consumer research.

#### Recommendations

The students indicated that the educational systems are most responsible for informing the consumer, as well as the consumer. Therefore, it is recommended by the author that:

1. Other studies be designed and implemented to further investigate the educational needs of the college students as pertaining to usable consumer information.
2. Increased emphasis be placed on implementing basic consumer education courses at the college level and at OSU.
3. Increased exposure for those consumer education courses now in existence at the college level and at OSU.
4. Increased emphasis and exposure for the Consumer Action Council at OSU be considered.
5. The Consumer Action Council utilize the Residence Halls at OSU by working with the Residence Halls Association to develop informational consumer programming for the students.
6. Special attention be directed towards informing the freshman students at OSU as to the consumer courses and services available to them.

This research has identified and explored the attitudes and behavior relating to the actions of the young adult consumers at OSU. Due to the limitations of this study, Residence Halls students comprised the sample population; however, the researcher believes the data to represent the majority of the students attending OSU. It is highly recommended that the students' awareness of the consumer education services at the university be increased by means of written literature and actual programming on campus. It must be the goal of university consumer educators to broaden the scope of the college students' awareness and to further their education in order that they be informed and competent in their roles as consumers.



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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

LETTERS TO THE STUDENT ASSISTANT  
AND STUDENT

Dear Student Assistant:

I would greatly appreciate your distributing this questionnaire for me. A list of the students on your floor/wing who are to receive one is given below. Please be sure that the number to the left of each name is also the number on the questionnaire which you give to the student. This is the only way I have of following-up on those that are not returned.

All questionnaires should be returned to you by Friday, April 27. A 100 percent return would be FANTASTIC! Place the completed questionnaires in the manila envelope and then return to your Head Resident.

Thanks so much for your time and effort with this project. With your help, I'll be able to obtain the necessary information that I need to complete my thesis.

Thanks again!

12.	Brake, Peggy	313
37.	Flusche, Nancy	307
40.	Gates, Ellen	315
42.	Givens, Gina	311
90.	Oldfield, Amy	303
99.	Reynolds, Pamela	304
125.	Wells, Catherine	302

Dear Student:

Please take a few minutes to fill out this questionnaire. With your help, the needs of college students as consumers can be determined by your responses. Information to aid students in dealing with consumer problems can then be provided.

After you have completed the questionnaire, return it to your Student Assistant by Friday, April 27.

Your time and effort in completing the questionnaire are greatly appreciated...thanks!

APPENDIX B

QUESTIONNAIRE



College Student Actions in Relation  
to Consumer Complaints

Section A--General Information

DIRECTIONS: Check (✓) the blank to the left of the appropriate answer.  
Your responses will be strictly confidential.

1. Sex
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Female	<input type="checkbox"/> b. Male
------------------------------------	----------------------------------
  
2. Age (as of your last birthday)
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. 18-19 years	<input type="checkbox"/> c. 22-23 years
<input type="checkbox"/> b. 20-21 years	<input type="checkbox"/> d. 24 years or over
  
3. Classification (at present)
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Freshman	<input type="checkbox"/> d. Senior
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Sophomore	<input type="checkbox"/> e. Graduate Student
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Junior	
  
4. What is your academic major? \_\_\_\_\_
  
5. Size of community where you were raised?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Rural, farm	<input type="checkbox"/> d. Town of 5,000-25,000
<input type="checkbox"/> b. Rural, non-farm	<input type="checkbox"/> e. City of 25,000-50,000
<input type="checkbox"/> c. Small town, under 5,000	<input type="checkbox"/> f. City of 50,000 or more
  
6. Parent's estimated annual net income:
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. Less than \$10,000	<input type="checkbox"/> d. \$30,001-\$40,000
<input type="checkbox"/> b. \$10,001-\$20,000	<input type="checkbox"/> e. \$40,001-\$50,000
<input type="checkbox"/> c. \$20,001-\$30,000	<input type="checkbox"/> f. Over \$50,000
  
7. What percent of your EDUCATIONAL expenses do you pay while attending college?
 

<input type="checkbox"/> a. 0-25%	<input type="checkbox"/> c. 51-75%
<input type="checkbox"/> b. 26-50%	<input type="checkbox"/> d. 76-100%



13. If you answered YES on Question 12, did you take any corrective action?

a. Yes  b. No

14. If you did take any corrective action, what did you do? (Check all that apply to you)

a. Complained to the store where the item was purchased

b. Complained to the manufacturer

c. Returned the item to the store where purchased

d. Returned the item to the manufacturer

e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

15. Were you satisfied with the outcome of your corrective action?  
(Circle the appropriate number)

Very Satisfied                      Satisfied                      Very Dissatisfied

1                      2                      3                      4                      5

16. Have you had any problems with any of the items checked on Question 11 but did not take corrective action?

a. Yes  b. No

17. For what reason(s) did you not take any corrective action? (Check all that apply to you)

a. Would take too much time

b. Did not know where to go to complain

c. Decided to replace the item instead

d. Item was not very expensive

e. No longer used the item

f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

#### Section C--Minor Consumer Purchases

DIRECTIONS: Check (✓) the blank to the left of the appropriate answer.

18. From the items listed below, which do you presently own? (Check all that apply to you)

- a. Electric coffee maker                       e. Lighted makeup mirror  
 b. Popcorn popper                                       f. Blow dryer  
 c. Electric hair curlers                               g. Electric shaver  
 d. Curling iron

19. Have you ever had any problems with any of the item(s) you checked above?

- a. Yes     b. No (if answer is NO, go to Question 25)

20. If you answered YES on Question 19, did you take any corrective action?

- a. Yes     b. No

21. If you did take any corrective action, what did you do? (Check all that apply to you)

- a. Complained to the store where the item was purchased  
 b. Complained to the manufacturer  
 c. Returned the item to the store where purchased  
 d. Returned the item to the manufacturer  
 e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

22. Were you satisfied with the outcome of your corrective action? (Circle the appropriate number)

- |                |   |           |   |                   |
|----------------|---|-----------|---|-------------------|
| Very Satisfied |   | Satisfied |   | Very Dissatisfied |
| 1              | 2 | 3         | 4 | 5                 |

23. Have you had any problems with any of the items checked on Question 18 but did not take corrective action?

- a. Yes     b. No

24. For what reason(s) did you not take any corrective action? (Check all that apply to you)

- a. Would take too much time  
 b. Did not know where to go to complain  
 c. Decided to replace the item instead

- d. Item was not very expensive
- e. No longer used the item
- f. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
25. Overall, are you satisfied with the consumer products you own?  
(Circle the appropriate number)
- |                |           |                   |
|----------------|-----------|-------------------|
| Very Satisfied | Satisfied | Very Dissatisfied |
| 1              | 2         | 3                 |
| 4              | 5         |                   |
26. If you are not satisfied with the products you own, what is your reason(s) for being dissatisfied? (Check all that apply to you)
- a. Product does not work
- b. Product was over-priced
- c. Product does not do what was advertised or expected
- d. Product was poorly made
- e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
27. If you were dissatisfied with a particular manufacturer's product, which of the following would you most likely do? (Check only one answer)
- a. Tell friends and family about the unsatisfactory product
- b. Refuse to purchase products made by that manufacturer
- c. Continue to purchase products made by that manufacturer

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Section D--Consumer Education

DIRECTIONS: Check (✓) the blank to the left of the appropriate answer.

28. Do you think college students are aware of their legal rights as consumers? (Circle the appropriate number)
- |            |       |              |
|------------|-------|--------------|
| Very Aware | Aware | Very Unaware |
| 1          | 2     | 3            |
| 4          | 5     |              |
29. Do you think college students are aware of the consumer services available at OSU?
- |            |       |              |
|------------|-------|--------------|
| Very Aware | Aware | Very Unaware |
| 1          | 2     | 3            |
| 4          | 5     |              |

30. Have you had a course(s) while attending college that included any consumer education? (Such as, buying tips, consumer rights...)

\_\_\_ a. Yes

\_\_\_ b. No

31. Have you had a course(s) or unit(s) in high school, 4-H, or other organizations that included any consumer education? (Such as buying tips, consumer rights...)

\_\_\_ a. Yes

\_\_\_ b. No

32. If you have had a course(s) or unit(s) that included consumer education, do you think it has helped you in dealing with consumer problems? (Circle the appropriate number)

Very Helpful

Helpful

Not At All Helpful

1

2

3

4

5

33. Which of the following consumer complaint actions are you most likely to use? (Check only one answer)

\_\_\_ a. Complain by telephone

\_\_\_ d. Write a letter of complaint

\_\_\_ b. Complain in person

\_\_\_ e. Have a friend or parent take care of it for you

\_\_\_ c. Have a consumer agency take care of it for you

\_\_\_ f. Other (please specify)

34. As a college student, which area do you think you need more information to be a better consumer? (Check only one answer)

\_\_\_ a. The legal rights of a consumer

\_\_\_ b. Local consumer services and agencies

\_\_\_ c. How to complain and get results

\_\_\_ d. Consumer buying tips

\_\_\_ e. Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

35. Who do you think should be most responsible for educating the consumer? (Check only one answer)

\_\_\_ a. Government

\_\_\_ d. The consumer

\_\_\_ b. Business and industry

\_\_\_ e. Other (please specify)

\_\_\_ c. Educational system (at all levels)

36. Are you aware that there is a Consumer Action Council located on the OSU campus to aid students with consumer problems?

\_\_\_ a. Yes

\_\_\_ b. No

37. Have you ever contacted the Consumer Action Council at OSU about a problem or complaint?

\_\_\_ a. Yes

\_\_\_ b. No

VITA<sup>2</sup>

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Master of Science

Thesis: A STUDY OF THE CORRECTIVE ACTIONS TAKEN BY COLLEGE STUDENTS  
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