AN INVESTIGATION OF THE EFFECT OF LIFESTYLE, SEX ROLES, AND DEMOGRAPHICS ON THE COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR OF NEW ZEALAND WOMEN

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ABSTRACT

Recent conceptualizations suggest that complaining behaviors represent one possible outcome of consumer decision-making as individuals attempt to manage their marketplace interactions. Yet it is surprising to note the weak relationships in the literature between variables reflecting various aspects of personality and consumer complaints--particularly in comparison to demographic variables. This paper examines the impact of two types of decision-making--problem-solving "style" and norm-referral. The first is predicated on the assumption that:

"... people are similar in many respects. The reasons for this may very well be that there are common problems that people face as they mature and, since groups of people within a culture or subculture face similar socializing agents, they may learn similar ways of adapting" (Merrill, 1985:7).

The second is based on the assumption that many decisions that consumers make during marketplace interactions are influenced to a large extent by reference to internalized sex role norms (Venkatesh, 1980; 1985). The purpose of this study is to examine the relationships between these variables, as well as demographic variables (IQ, store type, and so forth), and various consumer complaint behaviors. In addition, comparisons between the total sample and a subset of respondents who acted on their product dissatisfaction ("do somethings") will be made. To this end, a sample of 197 New Zealand women were surveyed regarding their consumer grocery product experiences.

INTRODUCTION

As Robinson has observed, "complaining is a basic human activity" (1978:47). Yet a review of the literature regarding consumer complaint behavior suggests that the bulk of the research interest has been directed at U.S. samples. Robinson's (1978) article is quite illustrative in this regard (see also: Olander, 1977). Of twenty-eight articles reviewed, only five were conducted with non-U.S. samples(two were cross-cultural). Since then, the results of a few additional international studies have been reported. Among them: Thorelli and Puri (1977-Norway); Day, et al. (1981-Canada, United States): Grabicke, Schaetzle and Staubach (1981-West Germany); Meffert and Bruhn (1982-West Germany); Thorelli (1982-China); Francken (1985-Netherlands); and Richins (1987-Netherlands). However, to date it seems fairly safe to say that relatively little has been published to seriously call into question Cavusgil and Kaynak's observation that the "measurement of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction in differing cultures has received relatively little attention" (1980:80).

In light of the preceding observations, this study reports the results of a survey on consumer grocery product use and complaint behaviors for a sample of New Zealand women. Specifically, this article has two principal goals in the New Zealand context:

- 1. To examine the relationship between alternative ways of complaining and aspects of a consumer's decision-making style.
- 2. To systematically examine the relationship between complaint behaviors and several demographic variables.

VARIABLES OF INTEREST

Aspects of Personality

According to Grabicke, Schaetzle and Staubach (1981:30), there remains "great interest in the consumer research area in adequately describing behavior relevant to the personality characteristics of consumers" (See: Twedt, Dawson, Wales and Brunner, 1977). To some extent this is true of consumer complaint behaviors (Day, 1977; Landon, 1977; Hunt, 1977; Plummer, 1977; Nantel, 1985; Richins, 1985; Singh and Howell, 1985; among others). However, attempts to relate personality variables with antecedents and consequences of consumer dissatisfaction have produced mixed results. Several studies have found no link at all (Pfaff, 1977; Zaichkowsky and Liefeld, 1977; Gronhaug and Zaltman, 1980; Strahle and Day, 1985) while others have reported weak but persistent relationships (Faricy and Mazis, 1975; Wall, Dickey and Talarzyk, 1977; Westbrook, 1977; Fornell and Westbrook, 1979; Kassarjian, 1979; Kernan, 1979; Grabicke, Schaetzle and Staubach, 1981; Meffert and Bruhn, 1982; Bearden and Mason, 1984; Richins, 1983; 1987). Nevertheless, interest persists in exploring the relationship between aspects of personality and complaining because "there are good uses in marketing for relationships that are too weak for accurate prediction of consumer behavior. Marketing decisions are made about groups of consumers, not about individuals, and information about group characteristics can be helpful" (Wells and Beard, 1971: 190).

A number of reasons have been posited for the relatively poor performance of personality factors in accounting for consumer behaviors in general (Wells and Beard, 1973; Kassarjian and Sheffet, 1981), complaint behaviors in particular. Among them:

(i) there is little a <u>priori</u> thought as to why various aspects of personality should be linked to complaining (Fornell and Westbrook, 1979).
(ii) "the procedures used for measuring personality in consumer research are based either on specially constructed questions that have been constructed specifically for a given study, and therefore haven't been sufficiently tested before being used, on existing

personality tests that have been non-critically accepted, or self-modifications of these tests" (Grabicke, Schaetzle, and Staubach, 1981:26). (iii) the use of many statistical techniques assumes that "personality is comprised of a packet of discrete, independent traits which do not interact or exert interrelated influences" on a consumer's complaint behaviors (Worthing, Venkatesan and Smith, 1973:179).

It is hoped that the use of Merrill's problem-solving ("lifestyle") scales and Venkatesh's sex role scale, which relate aspects of a consumer's personality with his/her product decisions and which have been developed and validated for use specifically with women seeking to manage their marketplace interactions (Merrill, 1982; Venkatesh, 1985) will help minimize the effects that these three alternative explanations may have on our results.

Problem Solving "Style"

Recent conceptualizations suggest that complaint behaviors represent one possible outcome of consumer decision-making as individuals attempt to manage their marketplace interactions (Hunt, 1977; Richins, 1978; LeLievre, 1979; Bearden and Teel, 1983; Day, 1984; Strahle and Day, 1985). According to Meffert and Bruhn (1982:36):

"While using a product, problems may arise for the customer (e.g. lack of product performance). Depending on the importance of the problem, the consumer will try to find a solution (e.g. he will file a complaint). The consumer will go through a process of problem solving (consisting of expectations, measures taken and actual results of the solution to the problem) and will evaluate it."

On the one hand, it can be argued that this process of problem solving is a function of a consumer's socialization, and that consumers with similar life experiences will tend to exhibit similar patterns of decision-making in their marketplace interactions (Lazar, 1963; Hunt, 1977; Pfaff, 1977; Plummer, 1977; Bjorklund and Bjorklund, 1978; Grabicke, Schaetzle and Staubach, 1981; Richins, 1983). In fact, based on the earlier works of Murray (1938), McClelland (1951), and Briggs-Myers (1962), Merrill (1985) has postulated that:

(i) "there are three common problem situations with which individuals have to deal. The first is the problem of making value judgments by selectively using available information; the second is the problem of acting competently with respect to others; and the third is the problem of gaining some degree of control over one's circumstances" (1985:8).

(ii) "a person will prefer one of two essentially incompatible modes of reacting to each of the common problems. The modes for reacting to the problem of making value judgments are objective judgment v. subjective judgment. The modes for reacting to the problem of competent activity are practical activity v. analytical activity. The modes of

reacting to the problem of control are personal control v. control by the environment" (1985:9). (iii) "an individual's lifestyle is a superordinate cluster of activities, interests and values which are consistent with his or her particular combination of common problem-resolution modes" (1985:11).

These postulates permitted Merrill to derive a set of scales used in combination to identify eight generic "styles" of problem-solving (what he calls "lifestyles") in market interactions and to link these styles to consumer purchase patterns of various products in a stream of proprietary studies (Marketing News, August 28, 1987). He has labelled the decision-makers thus identified as: "achievers," "traditionalists," empiricists," "technicians,"
"ascetics," "avant gardes," "utopians," and "good friends."
The general descriptions of these styles are similar to the eight distinct types of grocery shoppers found in New Zealand (Supermarketing, May 1986.), and two of the scales used capture the powerlessness/competence dimensions previously shown to be related to consumer complaining (Fornell and Westbrook, 1979; Singh and Howell, 1985; Richins, 1983; 1987). It thus seems reasonable to expect the various-types of decision-makers to differ not only in terms of their purchasing patterns and shopping behaviors, but also in terms of their complaint behavior as well.

Sex Role Norms as Decision Guides

On the other hand, sociologists have operated for years on the observation that a good part of human behavior is governed by norms (Sumner, 1906; Morris, 1956; Gouldner, 1960; Blau, 1964; Clark and Gibbs, 1965; Gibbs, 1968; Smelser, 1973; Jacobsen and van der Voordt, 1980; Lindskold and Bennet, 1981; Shaffer, 1983; among others). That is, to some extent a consumer's choices are influenced by references to and conformity with these expectations. The possible impact of norms on complaint behaviors has been explicitly incorporated by some researchers (Morris, 1977; Heffring, 1978; Ortinau, 1978; Nantel, 1985; Bolfing and Woodruff, 1988) and implicitly by others as "attitudes" in general (See: Fishbein and Azjen, 1975; Oliver, 1980; Warshaw, 1980; Bearden and Teel, 1983) or more specifically as "attitudes toward complaining" (Day and Landon, 1977; Bearden and Mason, 1984; Day, 1984, among others). As Hunt (1977) has pointed out, however, a researcher exploring the relationship between norms per se and complaint behaviors must determine both what those norms are and whether (and to what extent) the consumer has internalized them. In terms of sex role norms, Venkatesh (1980; 1985) may have found a way to do just that.

Sex role norms themselves are acquired through the process of socialization, and they function as referents in decision-making. They are multidimensional in nature, reflecting social, religious, and achievement orientations (Scanzoni, 1975; 1978). Venkatesh (1980; 1985) validated and used a modified form of Arnott's Feminism Scale to capture these dimensions and to sort women into three generic decision-referent "types" (like Merrill, he calls them "lifestyles"). They are labelled "traditionalists," "moderates," and "feminists." He, as others before him

(Cadwell, 1971; Miles, 1971; Plummer,1977; Bartos, 1982), went on to observe that a woman's product decisions are to some extent dependent on the use of her sex role orientation as a decision guide. In terms of complaint behaviors, Strahle and Day apparently found sufficient differences among their sample of female college students—depending on their sex role orientation—to suggest additional research "either with a sample of the general population or with samples of other distinct segments of the population" (1985:65). It therefore seems reasonable that to the extent that New Zealand women refer to different internalized sex role norms in managing their marketplace interactions, we can also expect differences in complaint behaviors.

The Ubiquitous Demographics

A number of studies have sought to establish some relationships between consumer demographics and complaint behaviors. Although a few researchers found no relationships of import (Granbois, Summers and Frazier, 1977; Westbrook 1977; Meffert and Bruhn, 1982). others have found often conflicting linkages between consumer complaining and a variety of socio-economic variables such as age, income, sex, marital status, education, social class, race, household size and composition, home ownership, employment and mobility status, and type of store frequented (Mason and Himes, 1973; Stokes, 1974; Warland, Herriman and Willitts, 1975; Diamond, Ward and Faber, 1976; Handy, 1977; Kraft, 1977; Miller, 1977; Pfaff, 1977; Pfaff and Blivice, 1977; Thorelli and Puri, 1977; Wall, Dickey and Talarzyk, 1977; Zaichkowsky and Liefield, 1977; Day and Bodur, 1978; Lundstrom, Skelly and Sciglimpaglia, 1978; Bourgeois and Barnes, 1979; Gronhaug and Zaltman, 1980; Robinson, Valencia and Berl, 1980; Sauer, Chaiy and Schweitzer, 1981; Strahle and Day, 1985; among others). Given the level of interest in exploring consumer demographics as one set of "key predictors of CCB" (Singh and Howell, 1985:44), the relationship between several demographic variables and complaint behavior were also investigated.

METHODOLOGY

The results reported here for New Zealand were obtained as part of a comprehensive study of consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and complaining behavior conducted in Canada, New Zealand, and the United States in the Fall of 1988. The amount and type of data collected (IQ scores, test-retest and validation information), necessitated the use of the drop-off/pick-up survey methodology employed earlier by Day (See: Leigh and Day, 1978; Day and Bodur, 1978; Day and Ash, 1978). Aspects of the questionnaire itself have been presented in other contexts (Day, Grabicke, Schatzle and Staubach, 1981; Strahle and Day, 1985).

In order to minimize to some extent the problems of product selection in cross-cultural research (Cauvsgil and Kaynak, 1980: 83-84), within the context of the larger three country study the survey was framed in terms of the woman's purchase and use of consumer grocery products. This focus seems reasonable in light of 1) the "repetitive and indispensable nature of expenditures on food" (Mason

and Wilkinson, 1977), 2) the nature of grocery shopping in New Zealand:

"... for over a third of the people questioned, the shopping trip was regarded as a pleasant break in their routine. This socializing aspect is further evidenced by the fact that almost half the sample indicated that they enjoyed talking to salespeople and fellow shoppers. People also regard shopping for groceries as an important task, after all it is often the largest shopping expenditure incurred on a regular basis" (Supermarketing, May 1986: 18; emphasis ours)

and, 3) the number of previous studies utilizing grocery store items in CCB research (Granbois, Summers and Frazier, 1977; Handy, 1977; Miller, 1977; Pfaff, 1977; Pfaff and Blivice, 1977; Hager and Handy; 1978; Leigh and Day, 1978; Robinson, 1978; Swan and Trawick, 1978; Fornell and Westbrook, 1979; Maddox, 1979; Mason and Bearden, 1979; Telser, 1979; Robinson, Valencia and Berl, 1980; Levy and Supernant, 1981; Tom and Schutz, 1981; Bechtel, 1982; Thorelli, 1982; among others).

To the end that there remains some benefit in attempts "to identify whether there is a chronic complainer subset in the population and to identify the characteristics of that subset if it exists" (Hunt, 1977: 479. See also: Handy, 1977; Kraft, 1977), a subset of women who had had an unsatisfactory product experience and who had acted on their dissatisfaction was partitioned for comparative purposes. These women are referred to as the "do-somethings" in the following analyses. Interestingly, over three quarters of our sample (76.7%) are in this group.

RESULTS

All 197 respondents were female, the majority were either never married (46.7%) or currently married (46.7%) with the remainder separated/divorced (4.6%) and widowed (2.1%). Roughly a quarter were either homemakers (21.4%) or students (21.4%); 14.8 per cent listed their occupation as clerical/secretarial, and the remainder were generally professionals (9.2%), teachers (9.7%), or health/social workers (9.7%). About twenty percent (19.9%) were twenty years of age or younger with another 19.9 per cent between 21 and 24; 22.4 per cent were between 25 and 34, 23.5 per cent between the ages of 35 and 49, and the remainder (14.3%) were over the age of fifty. Most either owned their own home (60.4%) or rented an apartment/condominium (27.8%). Less than five percent lived alone (3.6%) and about half lived with three or four other people.

In contrast, of the 151 "do somethings," fewer seemed to be married or divorced. That is, over half were never married (55.0%), 40.9 per cent were married and the remainder were either widowed (3.4%) or separated/divorced (0.7%). Over a quarter (26.9%) of this group were students, 19.3 per cent were homemakers, and the remainder were again largely clerical/secretarial (13.3%), professional (10.2%), or teachers (8.7%). To the extent that there is a trend, the "do somethings" seemed to be somewhat younger. Over twenty-five percent (25.3%)

were twenty years of age or younger, 23.3 per cent were between 21 and 24, 24.0 per cent were between 25 and 34, and 22.0 per cent were between 35 and 49 years of age. Fewer seemed to own their own home (53.5%) and more rented an apartment/condominium (33.8%). Less than three percent lived alone (2.7%) and about half lived with more than three other people.

Table 1
Frequency and Reasons for Consumer
Dissatisfaction with Grocery Products

Frequency of Dissatisfaction (past six months)	Total Sample	"Do Somethings"
None at all Once or twice	16.5% 54.1%	 64.2%
More than twice, but less than ten times	27.8%	34.4%
More than ten, but fewer than twenty times Twenty or more times	1.5% 0.0% N=197	1.3% 0.0% N=151

In general, the results presented in Table 1 suggest that the respondents in our sample are anything but free of dissatisfaction, with about a third (29.3%) being "highly dissatisfied" more than once a twice during the past six months. In fact, only thirty-two women reported that they had not been dissatisfied at all during this period. Given the frequency of purchase and the high levels of dissatisfaction with grocery store items previously reported for U.S. samples, this is not that surprising. Nevertheless. by comparison, New Zealand shoppers seem less dissatisfied than their American counterparts (See: Leigh and Day, 1978; Strahle and Day, 1985). It was also not surprising that the most commonly mentioned reason for dissatisfaction was "quality poorer than expected" (55.3%), with "advertised special out of stock" (25.9%), "misleading advertisement" (25.9%), and "damaged or spoiled product' (25.4%) less frequently mentioned. What was not expected among the "store loyal" consumers in New Zealand (Supermarketing, May 1986) is the finding that about one in five (18.3%) mentioned "discourteous or unfriendly store personnel" as a source of their dissatisfaction.

A similar pattern of results was found among the "do somethings" (Table 1). While the overall frequency of dissatisfaction was marginally higher for this group as might be expected, it is interesting to note that 64.5 per cent had only been dissatisfied "once or twice in the past six months." Apparently women in this group are more likely to act on their product dissatisfactions if and when they occur rather than to act based on the effects of accumulated, unresolved instances. Although the pattern of reasons for dissatisfaction for the "do somethings" is similar to that in the total sample, more seemed to be unhappy with "poor product quality" (66.9%), "damaged or spoiled products" (31.1%), "misleading advertisements" (31.1%) and "unfriendly or discourteous store personnel" (21.2%).

Table 1 (cont.)

Reasons for Dissatisfaction ^a		Total Sample S	"Do methings"	
RDISS1	I was charged a higher			
	price than advertised	10.2%	12.6%	
RDISS2	The quality was poorer			
	than expected	55.3%	66.9%	
RDISS3	An advertised "special"			
	was out of stock	25.9%	27.8%	
RDISS4	The product was	05 10	01.10	
	damaged or spoiled	25.4%	31.1%	
RDISS5	The amount I got was			
	less than it was supposed	8.6%	11.3%	
DDICC(to be	0.0%	11.5%	
RDISS6	The product did not correspond to the general			
	impression created by an			
	advertisement	25.9%	31.1%	
RDISS7	The container was	2017 10	0 2112 10	
KD1007	damaged, unsealed, or			
	faulty	11.2%	13.9%	
RDISS8	A salesclerk made			
	false or misleading claims			
	about the product	1.0%	1.3%	
RDISS9	Store was unwilling to			
	provide a refund or			
	exchange	3.0%	4.0%	
RDISS10	Instructions for use		10.69	
	were unclear or incomplete	e 68.6%	10.6%	
RDISS11	The package was	0.60	11 207	
	misleading	8.6%	11.3%	
RDISS12	Store personnel were	10 201	21.2%	
	discourteous or unfriendly	18.3%	41.470	

*Since multiple responses were permitted, each entry represents the percentage of cases of reported reasons for dissatisfaction.

Table 2
A Comparison of Reasons
For Taking No Action

	Total Sample	"Do Somethings"
Didn't think it was worth		
the time and effort	60.0%	60.6%
Wanted to, but never got		
around to it	27.3%	27.0%
Didn't think anything I		
could do would make a difference	12.0%	11.7%
Unsure of where to get help	12.070	11.770
or what I could do	0.7%	0.7%

The results presented in Table 2 may be somewhat discouraging for those interested in consumerism issues in

New Zealand, as they indicate that apathy is the primary reason for consumer inaction for the sample as a whole and the "do somethings" as well. Although the products involved are low cost grocery items, sixty percent of the respondents in both groups indicated "not worth the time and effort" as an explanation for taking no action, with twenty-seven percent citing "never got around to it" and twelve percent giving "didn't think I could make a difference" as reasons. Only about one percent indicated "unsure of where to get help or what I could do" as their explanation for inaction.

Table 3
A Comparison of Responses to Dissatisfaction

Nature of	of Response*							
Private Actions		Total Sample	"Do Somethings"					
DO1	Quit the brand	61.4%	76.8%					
DO2	Quit the product	8.1%	9.9%					
DO3	Quit the store	5.1%	6.0%					
DO4	Warned family an	d						
	friends	38.1%	49.0%					
Public A	ctions							
DO5	Returned for refur	ıd						
	or replacement	23.9%	27.2%					
DO6	Contacted store to							
	complain	9.1%	9.1%					
DO7	Contacted manufac	cturer						
	to complain		7.9%					
DO8	Contacted Better							
	Business Bureau t	0						
	complain	1.0%	1.3%					
DO9	Contacted a gover	nment						
	agency or public							
	official to							
	complain	0.0%	0.0%					
DO10	Contacted a privat	e						
	consumer advocate							
	organization to	· -						
	complain	0.0%	0.0%					
DO11	Took legal action	0.5%	0.7%					

^{*}Since multiple responses were permitted, each entry represents the percentage of cases of reported actions taken.

Given the reasons for consumer grocery product firms to avoid brand switching and the multiplier effect of negative word of mouth (Richins, 1987), the results presented in Table 3 are of some interest. These data indicate that the respondents in our sample were more likely to engage in private than public complaining. Slightly over sixty percent (61.4%) indicated that they had "stopped buying the brand" with which they had become dissatisfied and 38.1 percent had "told their family and friends" about the unsatisfactory experience. On the other

hand, less than a quarter (23.9%) had invested the time and effort to "return the offending product to the store for a replacement or refund" and fewer still "contacted the store" (9.1%) or the "manufacturer" (6.6%) to complain before getting satisfaction or giving up. None of the women sampled "contacted a consumer advocate". "government agency", or "public official"--Hill's (1972) results notwithstanding. The "do somethings" seemed more likely to engage in private complaining than the sample in general, as three quarters (76.8%) "quit the brand," ten percent (9.9%) "quit the product," six percent "quit shopping at the store," and about half (49.0%) engaged in negative word of mouth by "warning their family and friends." Less than a third (27.2%) "returned the product for a refund or replacement." From the point of view of the New Zealand food marketer who regards a "public" complaint as an opportunity to resell the customer on the product, store, and company, this is disturbing news indeed.

In order to gain further insights into consumer complaint behavior, a series of contingency table analyses were carried out. The results of these analyses for both the total sample and the "do somethings" are found in Table 4. Because of the exploratory nature of the study and large numbers of cross-classifications involved, the Table only presents significance levels of the variables included in this research. In the analyses, variations in the frequency of dissatisfaction (FDISS), the reasons for dissatisfaction (RDISS1 to RDISS12), and the complaint behaviors themselves DO1 to DO11) by respondent's marital status (never married; married, widowed, divorced/ separated), category (student; career woman; working mother, traditional mother), type of grocery store (supermarket; "Mom & Pop"; convenience, "other" such as discount), age, problem-solving style, and sex role norm-referral decision-making were explored.

Marital Status

The results in Table 4A offer some support for the mediating role of marital status for complaint behaviors, although our fundings contradict those of Kraft (1977) and Robinson, Valencia and Berl (1980). Women who were never married were more likely than the others to "stop buying the brand" with which they had become dissatisfied and to "warn their family and friends" about it. In addition, single women ("never marrieds" and those who were separated/divorced) were more frequently dissatisfied than those who were married or widowed.

The "never marrieds" were also more likely than the rest to cite "quality poorer than expected," "amount less than it was supposed to be," "product did not correspond to ad impression," "unclear or incomplete instructions," and "discourteous/unfriendly store personnel" as reasons for the dissatisfaction. Widows, on the other hand, were more likely to cite "store unwilling to grant refund or exchange" than the others.

In general, the singles ("never marrieds," widows, divorced/separateds) shopped for their groceries in supermarkets while married respondents shopped in "Mom & Pops" (x² = 175.8, prob. = .00). "Never marrieds" tended to be "achiever," "empiricist," "avant garde" and "utopian" problem-solvers while the married respondents

Table 4A
Results of the Contingency Table Analyses

Total Sample	tal	Resp- ondent Categ- ory	t of	Age	Type of Prob- lem Solver	Refer- ral	Dissat- isfied "Do Some things"
Frequence Dissatisf (in past months)	action six	.094	NS	NS	NS	.041	.000
Reasons Dissat	for isfaction	<u>n</u>					
RDISS1 RDISS2 RDISS3 RDISS4 RDISS5 RDISS6 RDISS7 RDISS8 RDISS9 RDISS1 RDISS1 RDISS1	.001 .001 NS NS .072 0.028 1 NS 2.004	NS .000 NS NS .000 .036 NS NS NS .063 NS	NS	NS .000 NS NS .011 .009 NS NS .065 NS .000	NS .045 NS NS NS NS NS NS NS NS NS	NS N	NS .000 NS .015 .049 .012 .094 NS NS .049 .049
React							
DO1 DO2 DO3 DO4 DO5 DO6 DO7 DO8 DO9 DO10 DO11	.021 NS NS .000 NS NS NS NS NS NA NA	.075 NS NS .000 NS NS NS NS NA NA NA	NS NS .013 NS NS NS NS NS NS NS	NS NS .000 NS NS NS NS NS NS NA NA	NS NS .069 .081 .075 NS NS NA NA	NS NS .074 NS .058 NS NS NS NS NA NA	.000 NS NS .002 .046 NS NS NS NS NS NA NA

Key: RDISS1 = Charged higher price than advertised

RDISS2 = Quality poorer than expected

RDISS3 = Advertised "special" was out of stock

RDISS4 = Product was damaged or spoiled

RDISS5 = Amount received less than it was supposed to be

RDISS6 = Product did not correspond to ad impression

RDISS7 = Container damaged, unsealed, or faulty

RDISS8 = Salesclerk made false or misleading claims

RDISS9 = Store willing to provide refund or exchange

RDISS10 = Unclear or incomplete instructions for use

RDISS11 = Package was misleading

RDISS12 = Store personnel discourteous or unfriendly

Table 4B

Total Sample	tal	Resp- ondent Categ- ory	tof	Age	Type of Prob- lem Solver		
Frequency Dissatisfa	y of						
(in past s							
months)	NS	NS	.003	NS	NS	.064	
Reasons	for						
Dissatis		1					
RDISS1	.067	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
RDISS2	NS	.002	NS	.004	NS	NS	
RDISS3	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
RDISS4	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
RDISS5	.012	.003	NS	.057	NS	NS	
RDISS6	.006	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
RDISS7	.073	NS	NS	NS	.026	NS	
RDISS8	NS	NS	.000	NS	NS	NS	
RDISS9	.000	NS	NS	.031	NS	NS NC	
RDISS10		NS	NS	.098	NS	NS NS	
RDISS11		NS	.031	NS .001	NS NS	.005	
RDISS12	2 .013	.002	NS	.001	149	.005	
Consume	<u>er</u>						
Reaction	ons						
DO1	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
DO2	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	
DO3	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS NC	
DO4	.017	.000	.014	.015	.081	NS NS	
DO5	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS NS	NS NS	
DO6	NS	NS	NS NS	NS NS	NS NS	NS NS	
DO7	NS NS	NS NS	NS NS	NS NS	NS	NS	
DO8 DO9	NA NA	NA NA	NA	NA	NA	NA NA	
DO10	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	
DO10	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	NS	

Key: DO1 = Quit the brand

DO2 = Quit the product

DO3 = Quit the store/supplier

DO4 = Warned family and friends

DO5 = Returned for refund

DO6 = Contacted store to complain

DO7 = Contacted manufacturer to complain

DO8 = Contacted the Better Business Bureau to complain

DO9 = Contacted public official

DO10 = Contacted private consumer advocate

DO11 = Took legal action

were "traditional," "technical," "ascetic" and "good friends" $(x^2 = 48.7, \text{ prob.} = .00)$. In terms of the degree of control the respondents felt they had over their life circumstances (one of Merrill's subscales with

alpha = .78), "never marrieds" scored the highest, followed by those who were separated or divorced, the marrieds and, understandably, the widows (F = 22.9, prob. = .00). Finally, in terms of IQ (the Wonderlic short form A. See Dodrill, 1981), "never marrieds" and "separated/divorceds" tended to have higher scores than either the "marrieds" or the "widoweds" (F = 5.0, prob. = .00).

Category

The results also suggest a mediating role for parenthood in complaint behaviors, though the mechanism is subject to speculation. Students and career women (both without children) were more likely to "stop buying the brand" with which they had become dissatisfied and to "warn their families and friends" about the product or shopping experience than working and traditional at-home mothers. In addition, women without children were more frequently dissatisfied than the respondents who had children.

Career women and students were also more likely than working and stay-at-home mothers to cite "quality poorer than expected," "amount received less than it was supposed to be," "product did not correspond to the ad impression," "unclear or incomplete instructions for use," and "discourteous or unfriendly store personnel" as reasons for their unsatisfactory product or shopping experiences.

In general, the students tended to shop for their groceries in supermarkets and the career women preferred convenience stores, while working mothers and traditional mothers shopped in the "Mom & Pop" family grocery stores ($x^2 = 18.3$, prob. = .03). Not surprisingly, traditional mothers were "traditional" in terms of their sex role standards, working mothers were "modern, and the students and career women were "feminist" in orientation $(x^2 = 47.4, \text{ prob.} = .00)$. As far as problem-solving style, the mothers tended to be "traditionalist," "technicians," "ascetics," and "good friends" while the career women and students were "achievers," "empiricists," "avant gardes, and "utopians" ($x^2 = 52.5$, prob. = .00). Finally, the mothers seemed to feel that they had less control over their life circumstances (F = 27.9, prob. = .00) and to score lower on the IQ measure (F = 5.7, prob. = .00) than the students or career women. In both instances the students were higher in IQ and sense of control, followed by the career women, working mothers, and traditional stay-at-home mothers in that order.

Store

In light of the mediating role in CCB postulated by Day and Landon (1977) and empirical support found in an earlier study on grocery shoppers in the United States (Strahle and Day, 1985), the results for type of outlet were disappointing. Supermarket shoppers were more likely than the others to "warn their family and friends" about an unsatisfactory experience and shoppers at the "other" outlets (discounters, dairy bars) were more likely than the rest to cite "salesclerk made a false or misleading claim" as a reason for their dissatisfaction. Period. This relatively poor showing for store type as a mediator in complaining may well reflect a difference in orientation towards grocery shopping in New Zealand versus the

United States.

Age

The results also offer some support for the mediating impact of age in accounting for differences in consumer complaint behaviors. For Lundstrom, Skelly and Sciglimpaglia (1978) and Francis and Dickey (1981), "complainers" tended to be older than "noncomplainers." On the other hand, for Robinson, Valencia and Berl (1980) and Sauer, Chaiy and Schweitzer (1981), "complainers" tended to by younger than those who did not complain. In our sample, "complainers" did tend to be younger in age. That is, the younger shoppers were more likely to "warn family and friends" about an unsatisfactory product experience than older shoppers. Too, younger respondents were more likely than the older shoppers to cite "quality poorer than expected." "amount received was less than it was supposed to be," "product did not correspond to the impression given in advertising," "unclear or incomplete instructions for use," and "store personnel were discourteous or unfriendly" as reasons for their dissatisfaction. They were not, however, more frequently dissatisfied than their older counterparts.

In general, the younger shoppers were more likely to shop in supermarkets ($x^2 = 28.2$, prob. = .06, to feel that they have more control over their life (F = 13.3 prob. = .00), and to score higher on the Wonderlic IQ test (F = 4.3, prob. = .00) than older respondents.

Decision-Making Style

In light of the discussion regarding the relevance in examining problem solving style and the use of the Merrill and Venkatesh scales that were developed and validated for women consumers, the general absence of direct links between problem solving style and complaint behavior seems discouraging. "Achievers," "empiricists," "technicians," and "utopians" were more likely than the others to "warn their families and friends" about an unsatisfactory product encounter. The "technicians" and "avant gardes" were more likely to "return the product for a refund," and they (along with the "good friends") were also more likely to "contact the store" to complain than the other categories of decision-makers. On the other hand, it was the "achievers," "empiricists," and "utopians" who were the most likely to cite "product quality poorer than expected" as a reason for dissatisfaction.

In addition to the relationships reported in the discussions of other variables, the "achiever," "empiricist," "avant garde" and "utopian" decision-makers exhibited "feminist" sex role norms, while the "technicians," "ascetics," "traditionalists," and "good friends" were more "traditional" in orientation ($x^2 = 44.9$, prob. = .00). The "achievers," "empiricists," "avant gardes" and "utopians" also scored higher than the others on the IQ measure (F = 4.8, prob. = .00).

There is also a general absence of direct links between the different norm-referrent groups in Table 4A. Those in our sample who adhered to the "feminist" sex role norms were more frequently dissatisfied, more likely to "stop buying at the store" and/or "return the product for a refund," and more likely to cite "store personnel

unfriendly or discourteous" as a reason for their dissatisfaction than the others. Those with a "feminist" orientation felt that they had more control in their lives (F = 38.9, prob. = .00) and scored higher on the IQ instrument (F = 5.4 prob. = .01 than those with "modern" and "traditional" orientations.

"Do Somethings"

The results presented in Table 4A also suggest continued benefit in identifying and examining the complaint behaviors of consumers who are not satisfied and who act on their dissatisfaction relative to other groups of consumers wherever possible. In general, these "do something" shoppers were more frequently dissatisfied than the respondents in the general sample. They were more likely than those in the total sample to "quit the brand" (private), "warn family and friends" (private), and "return the product for a refund" (public). They were also more likely to cite "quality poorer than expected," "damaged or spoiled product," "amount received less than it was supposed to be," "product and not correspond to an ad impression," "damaged, unsealed or faulty container," "unclear or incomplete instructions for use," and "misleading packaging" as reasons for their dissatisfaction. Finally, in general, the "do somethings" were largely single ($x^2 = 9.3$, prob. = .02) and younger in age ($x^2 =$ 11.6 prob. = .03) than the respondents in the total sample.

Since these differences were not considered trivial, a second set of analyses were carried out similar to the first on this "do something" subset. (Table 4B).

Marital Status

The results continue to offer support for the mediating role of marital status for complaint behaviors. Respondents who had never been married were more likely than others to "warn their family and friends" about an unsatisfactory experience. In addition, they were more likely to cite "amount received less than it was supposed to be," "product did not correspond to an ad impression," "damaged container," "unclear or incomplete instructions," and "discourteous or unfriendly store personnel" as reasons for their dissatisfaction. On the other hand, those who had been widowed were more likely to cite "store unwilling to provide a refund or exchange" and--coupled with those who were separated or divorced--"charged higher price than advertised."

In general, married "do somethings" seemed to adhere to the "traditionalist," "technician," "ascetic," and/or "good friend" problem solving style; those who were widowed to the "traditional" style; those separated or divorced to the "achiever" or "empiricist" style, and "never marrieds" to the "achiever," "empiricist," "avant garde," or "utopian" style ($x^2 = 42.0$, prob. = .00). In terms of sex role standards, "never marrieds" tended to be "feminists," those separated or divorced to be "moderns," and the married respondents were "traditionals" ($x^2 = 20.3$, prob. = .00). As in the total sample, single "do somethings" were more likely to shop in supermarkets ($x^2 = 14.9$, prob. = .09) and to feel (along with those who were separated or divorced) that they were more in control of their life circumstances than the other (F = 16.47, prob. = .00).

Category

The results in Table 4B continue to show some support for the role of parenthood in CCB. Student and career "do somethings" were more likely to "warn their families and friends" about an unsatisfactory product or shopping experience than either the working mothers or the traditional stay-at-home mothers. As was the case in the general sample, these women were also more likely than the mothers to cite "poor quality," "amount received less than what it was supposed to be," and "discourteous or unfriendly store personnel" as reasons for their dissatisfaction.

In addition, the students tended to exhibit an "achiever," "empiricist," or a "utopian" problem solving style; career women the "achiever," "empiricist," or an "avant garde" style; the working mothers the "technician," "traditionalist," or the "good friends" style; and the traditional mothers the "traditional," "ascetic," or the "good friends" style ($x^2 = 47.2$, prob. = .00). In contrast to the results in the overall sample, "do something" career women tended to frequent supermarkets (along with the students), the working mothers shopped at the convenience stores, and the traditional mothers frequented the "Mom & Pop" family stores ($x^2 = 26.2$, prob. = .00). In terms of sex role norms there were no surprises. Traditional mothers tended to to adhere to "traditional" norms, working mothers to the "modern" norms, and the students and career women to the "feminist" orientation ($x^2 = 29.7$, prob. = .00). Finally, as in the general sample, students and career women-in contrast to the working/ traditional mothers--tended to be younger ($x^2 = 130.4$, prob. = .00), single $(x^2 = 134.1, \text{ prob.} = .00)$, to feel that they had more control of their lives (F = 19.29, prob. = .00), and to score more highly on the Wonderlic IQ test (F = 2.65, prob. = .05).

Store

Table 4B results for the type of outlet variable are just as disappointing as were those in Table 4A. Supermarket shoppers and those visiting the "other" category of store type (discounter, dairy bar) were more frequently dissatisfied and acted on their dissatisfaction by "warning their families and friends" than either the convenience store or "Mom & Pop" outlet shoppers. On the other hand, shoppers at these "other" stores were more likely to cite "salesclerk made false or misleading claims" and--with the "Mom & Pop" shoppers--to cite "misleading package" as reasons for their dissatisfaction. In addition, "do something" supermarket shoppers tended to be younger (x² = 28.5, prob. = .05) and to have higher scores on the IQ measure (F = 2.76, prob. = .07).

Age

The results for the "do somethings" continue to support the mediating role of age in accounting for variations in consumer complaint behaviors. Younger shoppers more than older ones "warned their families and friends" about their unsatisfactory experience, and gave as reasons for their dissatisfaction; "quality poorer than expected," "amount received was less than it was supposed

to be," "unclear or incomplete instructions for use," and "store personnel were unfriendly or discourteous." Older shoppers, however, did stress "store unwilling to make a refund or exchange" as a reason for their dissatisfaction.

In general, older "do something" shoppers tended to be "traditional" or "good friends" problem solvers ($x^2 = 61.0$, prob. = .03) and to adhere to "traditional" sex role norms ($x^2 = 22.8$, prob. = .03). The younger shoppers were more likely than the older ones to be single ($x^2 = 176.1$, prob. = .00), shop in supermarkets for their groceries ($x^2 = 28.5$, prob. = .05), and to feel that they have more control over the events in their lives (F = 8.63, prob. = .00).

Decision-Making Style

The results for the "do somethings" are just as meager as they were in Table 4A. In terms of problem solving "styles," "achievers," "empiricists," "technicians," "ascetics," and "utopians" were more apt than the others to "warn their families and friends" about their unsatisfactory experiences. "Traditionalists," "empiricists," and "technicians" were more likely to cite "damaged, unsealed or faulty containers" as a reason for their dissatisfaction. In addition, to those relationships cited elsewhere in this discussion, while the "achievers," "empiricists," "avant gardes," and the "utopians" indicated that they felt they had more control over their lives than the other types of decision-makers (F = 37.60, prob. = .00), the "achievers" and "technicians" had the highest scores on the Wonderlic IQ test--and the "traditionalists" and "good friends" the lowest (F = 3.36, prob. = .00).

In terms of sex role norms, feminist "do somethings" tended to be more frequently dissatisfied and to cite "unfriendly or discourteous store personnel" as the reason for their dissatisfaction. In addition to those relationships cited elsewhere, those with a "feminist" orientation felt that they had more control in their lives than those with "modern" and "traditional" sex role norms (F = 28.2, prob. = .00).

CONCLUSIONS

This study has explored the relationships between various aspects of consumer complaining and a variety of factors mediating the link between dissatisfaction and complaint behaviors in a sample of New Zealand women. Some support was found for the inclusion of the demographic variables such as age, marital status, and parenting in the list of factors that moderate the relationship between dissatisfaction and complaint alternatives. Some differences were also found between the subset of "do something" complainers and the respondents in the total sample. Furthermore, in general, grocery shoppers seemed less frequently dissatisfied in New Zealand than in the United States. For Kiwi shoppers, going to the market appears to be a more enjoyable experience than just "something to get over with and move on," though some evidence suggests that this is changing (particularly among young career women). These differences, and others noted in the text, may help explain the absence of support for considering type of store as a moderator in CCB.

Perhaps of more relevance to those interested in pursuing the relationship between aspects of personality and complaint behaviors are the results regarding the role of decision-making "style". Generally speaking, the problem solving and norm referral styles appeared to play a marginally wider role in accounting for what our sample of consumers did or did not do about their dissatisfaction than the demographic factors. The situation was substantially reversed, however, in examining the reasons given for their dissatisfaction. Rather than pass this relatively poor showing off to one of the three standard reasons cited in our earlier discussion--particularly since we tried to finesse them in our scale selection--it should be noted that:

- their impact as mediators was logically expected,
 "style" was significantly related to those factors that most clearly moderated the link between
- dissatisfaction 8with grocery porducts and complaining,
- (3) shopping for groceries largely involves making routine, or low-involvement decisions, and
- (4) in many of the studies reporting links between aspects of personality and consumer complaining, the products involved were consumer durables (high-involvement decision-making)

Future cross-cultural CCB research, therefore, might profitably focus on the role of decision-making style in the high involvement problem solving that characterizes durable goods purchases.

Lastly, in light of the role of the demographic variables in mediating the relationship between dissatisfaction and complaint behaviors and their logical intercorrelation (e.q. young women tend to be unmarried and career-oriented), future research in the grocery product area might well focus on developing sociodemographic profiles of different types of complainers. Are there differences for example, between "latent complainant" (Spalding and Marcus, 1981), non-complainer (Olshavsky, 1977), and chronic complainer (Humt, 1977) profiles? Although this is not a new suggestion, recent work on developing demographic consumer profiles for food expenditure patterns (Darian, 1987; Darian and Klein, 1989) may provide a renewed impetus to this line of research.

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