

The Present Situation of Consumer Problems in Textiles and Clothings*

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(Received September 30, 1986)

Introduction

Recently, many troubles between a consumers and companies have occurred with progressing saience technologies, mass media and so on, so that so many informations of all kind things have been shown to consumers' faces, regardless of that whether they wish to have or not. We have been investigating the existing state of the consumer's problems on dietary life according to news related to consumer problems published in newspapers.

**Table 1. The name and the number of newspapers.
(in 1980 ~ in 1984)**

Name of Newspaper	Number of News paper	Name of Newspaper	Number of News-papers
1 Chunichi	32	11 Nikkei	8
2 Hokkaido	25	12 Sankei	6
3 Yomiuri	23	13 Kyoto	3
4 Tokyo	19	14 Kurashi no Shinbun	3
5 Asahi	15	15 Kawakita	2
6 Kobe	15	16 Kitaguni	1
7 Chūgoku	14	17 Kumamoto nichinichi	1
8 Niigata	13	18 Nihon Shōhi Keizai	1
9 Mainichi	13		
10 Okinawa Times	10		

This paper presents a study of the availability and the influence of the newspapers on daily life – the clothing life – according to news relating to consumer problems of the newspapers belonging to demonstrate at the National consumer center in Tokyo, and Understanding the existing state of the consumer problems in a similar manner as the previous study.

Materials and Methods

MATERIALS. The clothing has been grouped into three categories such as outer wear, inner wear and footwear. In this paper, the outer wear was investigated and analyzed.

METHOD. The news related to consumer problems concentering outer wear were extracted from eighteen newspapers such as the Yomiuri and the Asahi and for five years (from 1980 to 1984). The total number of articles was 204. The articles from the Chunichi press made up the largest figure (32 articles) followed by the Hokkaido press (25) and the Yomiuri (23) (See

Table 2. Ten categories from newspapers

Items of categories

1. Women's wear
2. Men's wear
3. Children's wear
4. Baby wear
5. School wear
6. { Training wear
Sport wear
7. Down jacket·vest
8. Fur
9. Hides (skins, leather)
10. Japanese clothes (Kimono)

* Presented at the Annual Japan Society of Home Economics Conference, Tokyo, June 2, 1985.

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table 1). All cases were grouped into ten categories such as women's wear, men's wear, children's wear and son on, and are shown in table 2.

These cases were classified as complaint or information and were further classified into five items¹⁾ consisting of the quality of goods, the indication, the cost, the distribution system and others such as items excluding quality, indication, cost, distribution system, respectively. "Quality" refers to cases concerning the components or the capabilities of goods which have been found useful when considered with objects of the consumer and a particular use. "Indication" refers to the contents of goods that were manufactured on the basis of standards as JIS, that is, the structures of materials, seizes, the shrinkage percentage, the label with instructions how to wash and iron. "Cost" refers to the proper prices for goods and profits earned by the companies and retail stores. "Distribution system" refers to the route of goods that were received from producers to consumers via wholesale houses and retail stores. "Other" refers to presentations of goods, services for after care, handling and maintenance of that and so on.

Results and Discussion

MOVEMENT OF THE MATTERS RELATED TO CONSUMERS ON COMPLAINT AND INFORMATION FOR OUTER WEARS. Figure 1 shows that 204 consumer related news items for outer wear, that were reported on eighteen newspapers from 1980 to 1984, were plotted as to complaint and information. The straight line in figure 1 means that the ratios between the number of the complaint and the number of the information are the same. When the plot of the complaint against the information is under the straight line, the ratio of complaints is larger than that of information. When the plot of that is over the straight line, the ratio of information is larger than that of complaints. In 1980 and in 1981, it can be seen that the value of the number of complaints was the larger one, and from 1982 to 1984, there was a little larger value for the number of information items for three years, respectively. The total number of complaints

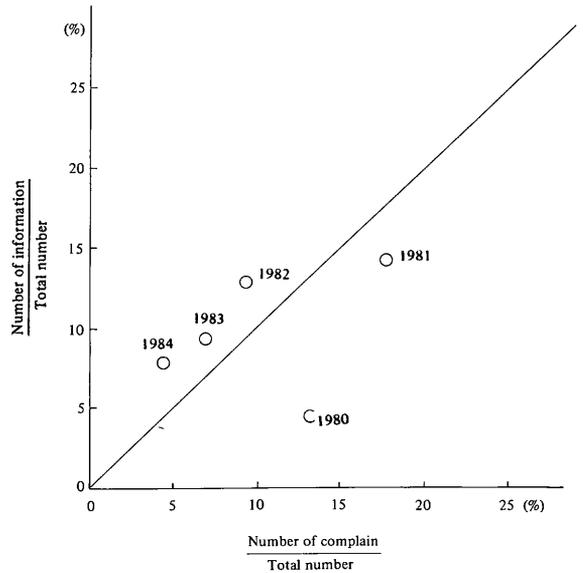


Fig. 1. Movement of the matters related to consumer on complaint and information for outer wear. (Number was represented years)

and information was the highest in 1981. Since 1982, it has tended to steadily decrease. Subsequently, the total number of five items, consisting of the quality, indication, cost, distribution system and others that are related to consumers, were 364 items. The matter of the quality made up the largest percentage at 31.3%, followed in order by indication, cost and distribution system – both regarding complaints and informations – except the item in the category "Others". Figure 2 shows the change for five years in

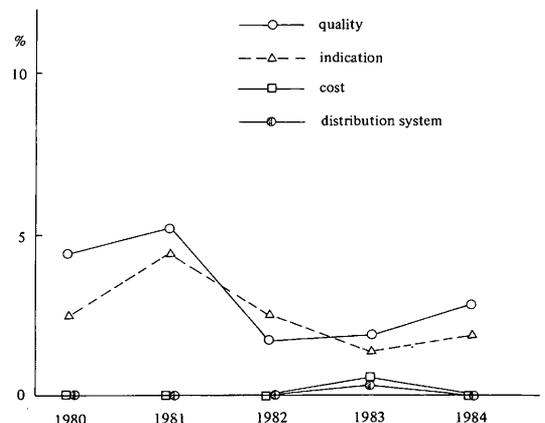


Fig. 2. Changes of the complaint contents on four items related to consumers

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the number of the complaints on four items except "others" related to consumers. Both of the quality and the indication showed maxima values in 1980, decreasing a little in 1981. Between 1982 and 1984, there was no appreciable change. Similarly, in the change for five years in the number of information items, it was shown quality items made up the largest percentage in 1981. After 1982, the values of that item were approximately constant. The items showed no appreciable change and these values were close to 0% or 0%.

THE COMPLAINT AND THE INFORMATION ON THE QUALITY OF OUTER WEAR. The quality with outstanding results will now be discussed in further detail. The content of the quality can be subdivided into fifteen items²⁾ as follows.

1. esthetic appeal (appearance)
2. comfort I (the function of the movement)
3. comfort II (hand drape)
4. comfort III (the function of health and hygiene)
5. form stability (deformation)
6. handling I (washing)

7. handling II (finishing)
8. safety
9. special function
10. physical strength (strength of fabric)
11. physical strength (strength of seam)
12. chemical resistance I (resistances of the discoloration denaturation)
13. chemical resistance II (other resistances)
14. planning and design
15. manufacturing process

Figure 3 shows the percentage of fifteen items of quality for the outer wear on the complaint and the information for five years (in 1980 – in 1984), and the planning and design items represented a significant difference in percentage of the complaint compared with that of the information, so that, it can be considered to be the result of the lack of the information. Next the manufacturing process items represented bigger difference between the complaint and the information as given in Figure 3. The esthetic appeal (appearance), the form stability and the handling I (washing) showed that the percentage of the com-

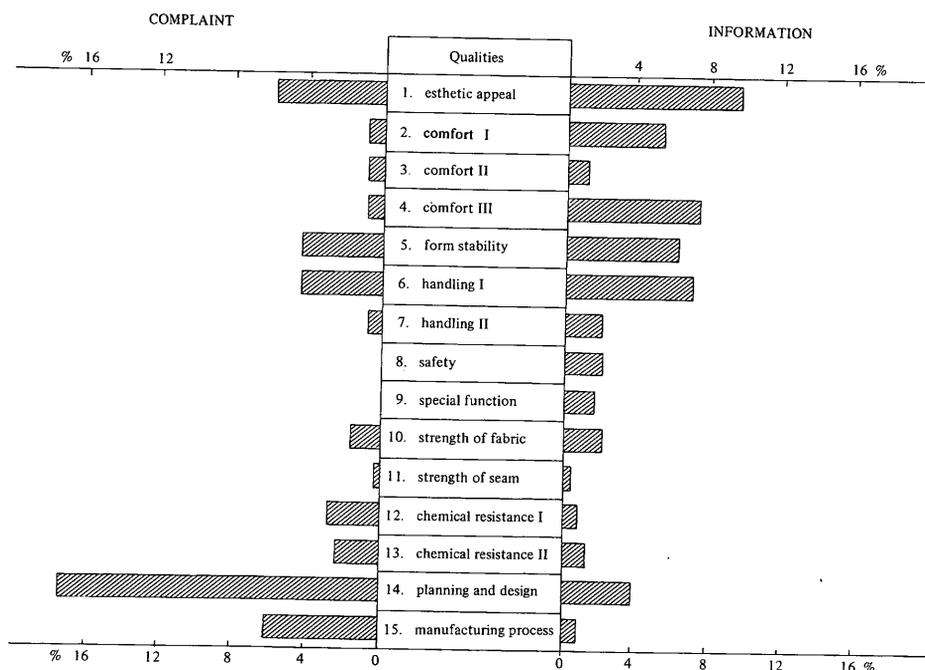


Fig. 3. The relation between the complaint and the information on the quality for outer wears

plaint / that of the information ratio suggested approximately the same, and the comfort I, III (the function of the movement, the function of the health and hygiene) showed that the percentages of information were about at 7 to 9 times that of complaints. However, generally all of fifteen items were shown low percentages in both complaints and information. The items concerning planning and design with the significant difference will be discussed further in Figure 4. Figure 4 shows the movement of both the com-

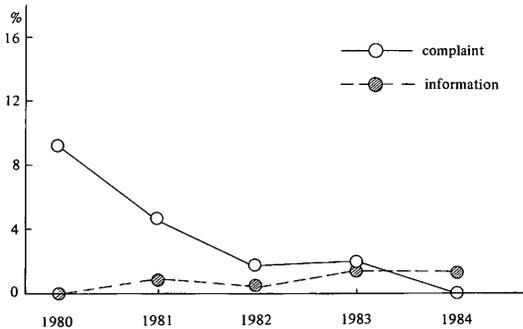


Fig. 4. Change of the complaint and the information on the planning and design

plaints and the information for five years (in 1980 – in 1984) on planning and design. The values of the complaint decreased considerably between 1980 and 1982. After 1982, the values of both the complaints and the information were about the same with being approximately constant. Because this is presumed to be due to the increase in informations available for consumers on planning and design.

COMPARISON OF THE COMPLAINT AND THE INFORMATION ON TEN CATEGORIES FOR THE OUTER WEAR. Figure 5 shows percentages of ten categories described previously, that consisted of 204 news related consumers on the outer wear for five years. It was comprised 45.1% of women's wear, and 36.7% of men's wear in ten categories, that represented appreciably high percentages. The value of other categories were less than ten per cent of the total. Figure 6 (A) shows the movement of the matter of the complaint and the information related to consumers on the total of five items – the quality, the indication, the cost, the distribution system and other

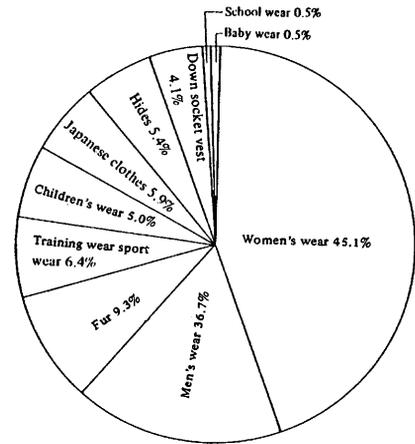


Fig. 5. Items of ten categories

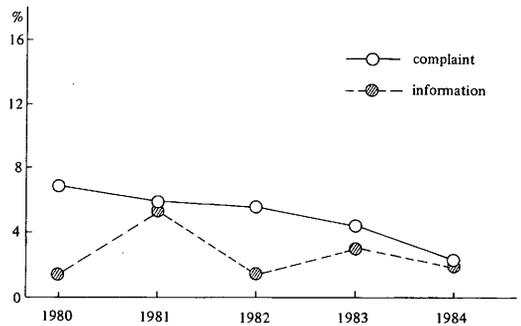


Fig 6 (A). Change of the complaint and the information on five items for the women's wear.

– for women's wear. From 1980 to 1984, the difference in the number of the matters related to consumer between the complaint and the information decreased in the movement between the complaint and the information, and appeared infrequently in 1984. It indicated that the percentage of the complaint slowly decreased for five years (from 1980 to 1984). In spite of this, the values of the information were almost the same in the cases of five items, the number of complaints concerning cost, quality and others (Fig. 6 (B)). That means there were more useful consumer informations as well as others. Therefore the ability to select informations seemed to have prevented complaints. Aside from ten categories, cleaning items making up about 30% of the total, was

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analyzed in a similar manner to Figure 6. For the values of the complaint they were large, but on the other hand, that for information items were extremely small, compared with the ten categories. However, the value of the complaint relatively decreased and the difference between the complaint and the information became small according from 1980 to 1984. Thus, it can be presumed that there is efficient information concerning cleaning.

APPROCHES OF THE COMPLAINT RELATED TO THE OUTER WEAR GOODS FOR CONSUMERS.

Table 3 shows that the approaches of the complaint related to outer wear goods for consumers were mostly negotiated by the consumer centers and there were relatively few where there were no solutions or answers. It damages for consumers can be prevented if there was an information exchange system among the

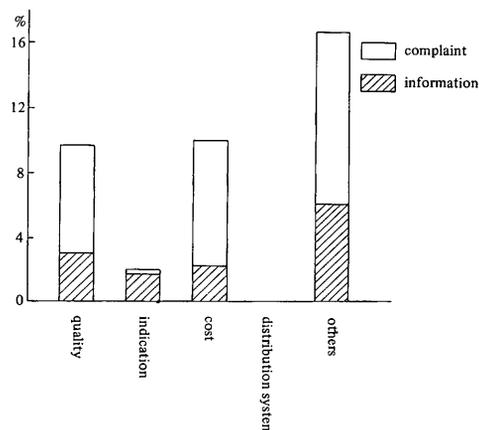


Fig. 6 (B). Comparison of the complaint and the information on five items for the women's wear (in 1980 ~ in 1984)

Table 3 Examples of the consumer damage's procedure on the complaint of goods for the outer wear according to the newspapers (in 1980 - in 1984)

Year	Items	Complaint contents from consumers	Origins of complaints	Procedures to investigate	Procedures of enterprisers
1980	one-piece	○ sleeve was stretched and teared.	○ unsuitable design. ○ problems of the fabric treatment.	○ consumer center determined response that the maker has been done the counterplan and management about it.	○ pay back it's purchase cost ○ no response about the design.
1981	skirt (Rayon 100%)	○ shrank by the cleaning ○ bad finishing	○ mistake of the cleaning on handling ○ the design of the cloths by the maker.	○ the association of Japan consumer negotiated the cleaning store.	○ correct the finishing under the negotiation
1982	cardigan	○ no return it after brought it to the cleaning shop.	○ no escape the obrigation of the cleaning trades.	○ consumer center negotiated the cleaning stores.	○ payed 5000 yen and was solved.
1983	one-piece	○ piping part of the collar was raveled after wearing one.	○ unsuitable sewing in the seam allowance.	○ consumer center negotiated the maker and stores.	○ the maker sew the new one as the same design and gave it to consumer. ○ the store escaped the obrigation.
1984	sweater with embroidering beads.	○ beads was discolored by the cleaning.	○ discolored by penetrating the solvent. ○ problem of care labels.	○ consumer center determined a view point to the maker.	○ pay back and returned goods.

consumer, the store and the manufacturer. There are some important points (the indication, the quality and the cost) according to the results of the research described above, that will be discussed as follows. As an effective indication, a suitable demerit indication can be a guide to selecting goods for consumers. However, an unsuitable demerit indication, "surplus", "overprotection" and others can result in negative efforts because they may confuse consumers' ability to select goods. Therefore, a suitable indication is desired to be as well as clear explanations to consumers to whom the seller sell goods.

In the case of the quality, practicability tends to be sacrificed because of an over priority on fashionability of the outer wear due to sales competition among manufacturers. It is desirable that consumers can select goods based on their functionability, their safety, and so on. Fashionability of the outer wear is simply an added plus. Although there are many problems with materials and sewing, it is to be desired that the manufacturers make goods on which deficiencies can be improved while advantages remain. At the same time, one problem that should be taken into consideration is the consumers' excessive demands for multifunctional goods. Another matter needing improvement is the communication between the consumer and the cleaners for clothes, which are behind the times in so far as the diversification of fibers and their goods. In the case of the cost, it has been reported that cleaning fees increase in the countryside as compared to city establishments because of the lack of competition in the countryside. There is also a big difference in costs depend on the store, especially for

lady's suits. Therefore, it is also desired that information is made more available since the cost mechanism is complex and hard to understand.

Summary and Conclusions

The purpose of this study was to investigate the existing state of the consumer's problems, and the function and the influence of the newspapers on clothing life. The research method was carried out by the news related to the consumer problems concerning outer wear in the newspapers and the following conclusions were obtained:

- 1) The news of newspapers, as a sample of the mass media, contains both efficient and less-efficient information.
- 2) It is most important that consumers should improve their ability of selection regarding the diversification of informations, so that the less-efficient information will be made more efficient.
- 3) It is also desired that the manufacturers carry out planning and design of goods a sensibly and intelligently.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS. The authors wish to acknowledge the help of colleagues for this study.

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被服一般に関する消費者問題の現状 (第1報)

—Outer Wear 一般—

石久保鈴子・大森和子

マスメディアの1つである新聞の消費者問題関連記事を通して、衣生活における新聞の役割とその影響及び現状を把握することを目的として調査し次の結果が得られた。

- 1) 新聞記事の情報には、有効な情報と同時にマイナスになる情報とがあり、全般的に適切な情報は消費者サイドから見ると不足していた。
- 2) 消費者自身が多様化してきている情報を選択する能力を養うことが一番重要に思われる。
- 3) メーカーサイドの常識ある製品の企画・設計等にたずさわる姿勢が望まれる。