

ADVERTISING AND LABELING  
AS PERCEIVED BY EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS

by 6791

JANET ROTMAN BJORKLUND

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## INTRODUCTION

Teenagers have become quite important as consumers today. They now have more money of their own to spend than ever before. They also exert a greater influence upon the family's spending patterns. As a result of these trends, marketing forces have concentrated their efforts on reaching the teenagers through various types of promotions (Remsberg, 1966). Advertising is one of the methods most frequently used to reach teenagers with information about products. Labeling is another means of presenting information about products on the market to teenage consumers. How are teenagers affected by these sources of product information? The concern of this thesis was to investigate the attitudes teenage girls have towards advertising and labeling.

Advertising has become an integral part of the American way of life. It is almost everywhere, in magazines and newspapers, on television and radio, and on billboards that line the highways. The advertising industry has grown so much that in 1970, 20.8 billion dollars were spent on advertising, an increase of 1.6% over 1969 (Banks, Reisman, Yange, 1971). With the advent of television, advertising became an even greater part of daily life, reaching all ages and all income levels. Margolius (1971) reported in The Machinist, "By the time your child reaches 18 he will have been exposed to about 350,000 TV commercials, advertising experts estimate." Thus, the importance of advertising cannot be denied.

There is a growing number of persons who are concerned over the effects of television and advertising. Robert Pitofsky, director of the Federal Trade Commission's Bureau of Consumer Protection testified before a Senate Committee, indicating his concern over the power and influence of television advertising. Pitofsky stated, "Because of its unique capabilities, TV

advertising can be and is, more subtle, more sophisticated, and much more persuasive, often achieving emotional rather than rational responses." In further comments, Pitofsky criticized advertising methods by saying that advertising is, ". . . primarily directed at breaking down consumer resistance, creating consumer acceptance and developing consumer demand" (Bernstein, 1971).

In his Message on Educational Reform to Congress, President Nixon described the significance of television in the United States. He indicated that much learning may take place outside of the schools (Nixon, 1970). "In the last twenty years, there has been a revolution in the way most boys and girls--and their parents--occupy themselves. The average high school student, for example, by the time he graduates, has spent 11,000 hours in school--and 15,000 watching television."

The influence of advertising has been discussed by various consumerists. Vance Packard, author of The Hidden Persuaders, entitled one chapter of his book, "The Psycho-Seduction of Children." In this chapter he points out that some advertising aimed specifically at children can be quite detrimental. He expressed concern over the inducement of children to desire vitamin pills whether they needed them or not. Another area of concern was the development of brand loyalties in children so that they would insist that their parents purchase particular brand name products (Packard, 1957).

Morse has frequently spoken out on the consumer's "right to be informed" and has expressed his views of advertising and labeling. In The University of Kansas Law Review article, "The Consumer's View of FTC Regulation of Advertising," Morse (1969) stated, ". . . the modern consumer has an expectation that the labels and advertising should be factual and informative, in addition to being free from deception. . ."

The point of view of the sponsor-seller should also receive consideration. Advertising and labeling do serve many valuable purposes. One area of concern has been over the possibility of deceptive practices. Are advertising and labeling truthful enough? Otis Pease (1958), author of The Responsibilities of American Advertising, considered the problem of truthfulness of advertising in this way. He stated, ". . . [The] question of literal truth or falsity is largely irrelevant, since the appeal of the advertisement lies not in factual assertions but in the association which it sets up in the mind of the reader." The people who see or hear the advertisements are themselves the determining factors.

Others have discussed the importance of the "person" in relation to the effects of mass communication. To Marshal McLuhan, the medium is an "extension of man" (Rosenthal, 1969). He has enthusiastically endorsed the newer forms of mass communication, particularly television. McLuhan declares that the "medium is the message." Thus, the content of television is much less important than the effects that it has on its audience. Thelma McCormack, in describing McLuhan's philosophy has said, "The 'audience' of the media is not the consumer; it is the producer" (Rosenthal, 1969). A type of audience participation is involved. The viewers of television shows and advertisements determine the effect that these have upon them.

Another area of concern has been the amount and quality of information presented in advertisements. Dunn (1969) in his textbook, Advertising, Its Role In Modern Marketing, indicated that people are interested in advertisements for many reasons other than just factual information. He states, "For example, people are usually interested in the psychological and esthetic associations of products and services." Advertisements let people know if

they would be happy using a certain product. Dunn indicated further that the information presented is also limited by time and space.

Burton and Miller (1970), in Advertising Fundamentals, said that product information was usually reliable and consumers themselves have the opportunity to make the right choices. "Most products live up to advertising claims made for them. Although consumers may be bewildered by rival claims, it would be much worse if no choice were given. Each product can but related its virtues; the consumer then elects the one he wants."

As previously discussed, increasing emphasis has been placed on teenage consumers. In "Wooing The 'Dimply Pimpily'," Charles and Bonnie Remsberg stated, ". . . our economy is mounting the biggest youth-kick ever." In this article they pointed out that teenagers have become conspicuous consumers through their purchases and their influence upon their parents buying. As a result of this trend towards a teenage market, advertising has encouraged teenagers to become brand conscious, glamour conscious, and purchasers of a line of products all their own (Remsberg, 1966).

Studies concerned with the opinions of advertising and labeling have been in relation to age groups other than teenagers. One of the most extensive studies was conducted as a collaborative effort between the American Association of Advertising Agencies and an advisory committee composed of Harvard and M.I.T. faculty members in 1964. This study consisted of a national sampling of 1,846 consumers over the age of 18. The purpose of the study was to determine what Americans think of advertising and why. The results indicated that Americans were generally favorable to advertising. A follow-up study in 1967 reported the same favorable attitude towards advertising (Bauer and Greyser, 1968).

Another study involved young children. This study was conducted by James U. McNeal to obtain information on children as consumers. The sample consisted of 60 children with 20 each of five-, seven-, and nine-year-olds. A part of this study was devoted to what these children thought of advertising. McNeal (1964) summarized, "There was an increasing dislike and mistrust of TV ads as the children increased in age. Half of the five- and seven-year-olds and over three-fourths of the nine-year-olds reported negative feelings towards television commercials."

Opinions of fifth graders were comparable to those of the young children reported by McNeal. Morse (1969), reported in "A Consumer's View of FTC Regulation of Advertising," the experience of a fifth grade teacher in Junction City, Kansas, who had obtained from her students their opinions of advertising and labeling. None of the students spoke kindly of either advertising or of labeling. They did express expectations of higher market ethics. These students revealed disenchantment with market practices, found labeling wanting in truthfulness, were suspicious of advertising motives, and were cynical about the effectiveness of market regulation. These findings suggested the need for further investigation to determine whether the results were unique to the locale and age group.

#### OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this study were:

1. to identify eighth grade girls' attitudes towards advertising and labeling.
2. to determine if there were any differences in the attitudes of girls from schools representative of three different socio-economic levels: higher, average, and lower.

3. to study the impact that advertising and labeling has on eighth grade girls.
4. to explore the extent to which eighth grade girls believe and trust advertising and labeling and use them as sources of information about products.

## PROCEDURE

### Development of Research Instruments

The initial instrument was one which had been used previously by a fifth grade teacher in her classroom in Junction City, Kansas (Morse, 1969). This instrument was tested under the direction of the researcher in two junior high school English classes and two Home Economics classes in Wichita, Kansas. Students were asked to write paragraphs stating their opinions of advertising and of labeling. The information obtained was carefully reviewed for concepts and word usage. From this information, a set of objective questions was developed; one utilizing the essay instrument and the other, the objective instrument. These research instruments were pre-tested in two eighth grade Home Economics classes, after which some minor revisions were made so that more definitive results could be obtained.

### Selection of Schools

Three junior high schools in Wichita, Kansas, representing three different socio-economic levels, higher, average, and lower, were selected for the collection of data. The Director of Home Economics Education and The Research Division of the Wichita Public Schools were consulted for the selection of the schools. The basis for the ranking of the schools by

socio-economic levels is confirmed by a letter of June 28, 1971. A description of each school's student population is included (Appendix A). Two eighth grade Home Economics classes were used from each school so that the differences between classes, as well as, the differences between schools could be compared.

The school administrators and teachers were contacted and they indicated their willingness to participate in the research study. A research proposal was then submitted to the Research Council of the Wichita Public Schools, which granted approval for the study.

#### Collection of Data

The research instruments were distributed to the Home Economics teachers in the three participating schools. They administered them to the 123 eighth grade girls in two phases during May, 1971. The essay instruments and the objective instruments were given on different days within a single week. All schools followed the same pattern with the essays being written first. Approximately 30 to 40 minutes were spent on the essay instrument; approximately 20 to 30 minutes were spent on the objective instrument. The amount of time spent varied somewhat from school to school.

Regular class time was used for the administration of the research instruments. The girls were very cooperative and responded to nearly all of the questions asked.

#### Analysis of Data

The research instruments completed by each girl were coded by class period and school for tabulating purposes. An (H) designated the school representing a higher socio-economic level, (A) was used for the average level school, and (L) was used for the school representing a lower socio-

economic level. An (X) or (Y) code was assigned to differentiate between the two class periods from each school. Each instrument was coded numerically so that the responses of each girl, to the essay and objective instruments, could be coordinated.

The data from the objective instruments were tabulated and summarized by class periods and schools. This facilitated the comparison of classes within each school and a comparison between schools. The related questions were correlated and summarized in separate tables for discussion purposes.

The essay instruments were analyzed and evaluated on the basis of the favorable and unfavorable attitudes expressed towards advertising and labeling. The evaluation was made subjectively by the researcher. The essays were scored on a point scale ranging from 99 for a very favorable attitude to 1 for a very unfavorable attitude expressed towards advertising or labeling. Representative comments were selected from the essays for use in summarizing the results.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 123 eighth grade girls participated in the study. Of this number, 47 attended the school representing a higher socio-economic level; 43 attended the school representing an average level; and 33 attended the school representing a lower socio-economic level.

A numerical count of the responses to each of the objective questions was made. These results are reported in Appendix C, presented on a copy of the research instrument as it was used in the study.

The results have also been reorganized and summarized by areas of emphasis and presented in Tables 1 through 7, 10, and 11. The results from the essay instruments were analyzed and presented in Tables 8 and 9. Representative comments have been quoted in the Results and Discussion.



For purposes of simplification and analysis, the responses to questions with rating scales have been combined so they conform to a binary system. All questions are presented in the tables as being favorable (positive) or unfavorable (negative) expressions of attitudes. They are designated by a plus (+) or (-) sign.

A discriminatory factor has been computed for each pair of items as presented in the tables, by classes and schools. It expresses the majority number of responses in relation to the minority number, and is computed by dividing the former number by the latter. The affixed sign indicates whether the factor is positive or negative. This factor indicates only the relationship between positive and negative responses and is not affected by those who were neutral or non-committal. A factor value of 1.0 signifies that there were as many positive as negative responses, regardless of the number not responding.

#### Objective Instrument

This instrument was composed of questions concerning attitudes towards both advertising and labeling. Results from the advertising questions were organized according to the following areas of emphasis: honesty, usefulness, interest, and other attitudes. Results from the labeling questions were organized according to the following areas of emphasis: honesty, usefulness, and clarity.

Some of the questions have been edited to facilitate presentation. The full text of each question and the full count of responses to each question are presented in Appendix C.

### Honesty and truthfulness of advertising

Results of the questions or items from questions relating to the honesty and truthfulness of advertising are summarized in Table 1. Generally, the girls indicated that they thought advertising was neither very honest nor very truthful. Of the total number of responses, 150 indicated that advertising was honest and truthful; 361 indicated that it was not. These responses, when computed as a discriminatory factor, established an overall factor of -2.4. In other words, there were 2.4 negative responses for every one positive response.

Of the six items included in this area of emphasis, only Question 9 elicited a positive discriminatory factor (+2.4). For this particular question, a binary classification may be somewhat misleading. On the objective instrument, the girls were given the opportunity to respond to the question on a five point scale. Only one of the 64 girls who indicated that advertising was truthful, rated it as "very truthful;" the other 63 rated it as "fairly truthful." Thus, half of the girls rated advertising as only fairly truthful (Appendix C).

The most critical response to any of the items in this area of emphasis was elicited from the paired phrases of Question 2. These responses established a -9.4 discriminatory factor, with 9.4 responses indicating that advertising "doesn't show things as they really are" to every one response indicating that "it tells what I need to know about products."

The attitudes did vary by schools. The highest negative discriminatory factor (-3.1) came from the higher socio-economic school. The average school had a factor of -2.4 and the lower socio-economic school, a factor of -1.7. Thus, it would appear that the girls from the higher socio-economic school

Table 1. Honesty and truthfulness of advertising

| Item                                | Girls by classes in schools |     |     |     |     |     | By schools |     |     | All |
|-------------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                                     | Hx                          | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H          | A   | L   |     |
|                                     | 26                          | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47         | 43  | 33  | 123 |
| (Responses)                         |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| (Question 1)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Honest                              | + 1                         | 2   | 3   | 3   | 3   | 2   | 3          | 6   | 5   | 14  |
| Fake                                | - 15                        | 10  | 9   | 7   | 6   | 7   | 25         | 16  | 13  | 54  |
| (Question 1)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Informative                         | + 1                         | 3   | 5   | 4   | 2   | 2   | 4          | 9   | 4   | 17  |
| Misleading                          | - 13                        | 12  | 12  | 9   | 11  | 5   | 25         | 21  | 16  | 62  |
| (Question 1)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Truthful                            | + 0                         | 2   | 1   | 3   | 4   | 2   | 2          | 4   | 6   | 12  |
| Exaggerated                         | - 14                        | 16  | 16  | 10  | 6   | 11  | 30         | 26  | 17  | 73  |
| (Question 2)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Tells what is needed                | + 1                         | 3   | 0   | 1   | 4   | 0   | 4          | 1   | 4   | 9   |
| Things not shown as they really are | - 15                        | 16  | 20  | 12  | 9   | 13  | 31         | 32  | 22  | 85  |
| (Question 4)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| It should be believed               | + 8                         | 8   | 4   | 6   | 5   | 3   | 16         | 10  | 8   | 34  |
| Should not be believed              | - 13                        | 9   | 13  | 12  | 6   | 7   | 22         | 25  | 13  | 60  |
| (Question 9)                        |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| It is truthful                      | + 11                        | 8   | 12  | 11  | 11  | 11  | 19         | 23  | 22  | 64  |
| It is not truthful                  | - 6                         | 8   | 6   | 3   | 1   | 3   | 14         | 9   | 4   | 27  |
| Sum of responses                    | + 22                        | 26  | 25  | 28  | 29  | 20  | 48         | 53  | 49  | 150 |
|                                     | - 76                        | 71  | 76  | 53  | 39  | 46  | 147        | 129 | 85  | 361 |
| Discriminatory factor               | + --                        | --  | --  | --  | --  | --  | --         | --  | --  | --  |
|                                     | - 3.4                       | 2.7 | 3.0 | 1.9 | 1.3 | 2.3 | 3.1        | 2.4 | 1.7 | 2.4 |



products; and Question 3 (+2.6) which indicated that advertising was useful for many girls. In the study reported by Bauer and Greyser (1968), two of the main reasons adults had for liking advertisements were, "learn about new products on the market" and "gives a better understanding of products sold."

The responses varied by the socio-economic levels of the schools. The lowest positive factor (+1.3) was from the higher socio-economic school. This was decidedly lower than the factors of the average (+2.8) and lower (+2.4) socio-economic schools. However, there was greater variation between classes of the same socio-economic level, so no inferences can be made.

#### Interesting qualities of advertising

For this area of emphasis, a discriminatory factor of 1.0 prevailed, indicating there were nearly as many positive responses as negative responses to the interesting qualities of advertising. Furthermore, three class periods had a negative factor and three had a positive factor with the division occurring between the two classes within the average school.

Advertising was considered to be more clever than stupid, more interesting than boring, and, in general, interesting rather than not interesting. However, advertising was apparently much less interesting than the program it supports, as indicated by the negative discriminatory factor (-4.3) for the paired phrases of Question 2. For every response that indicated advertising was "clever and interesting," there were 4.3 responses that indicated that it "interrupts TV too much." McNeal (1964) reported similar findings in his study. Those children thought that advertising "took too much time from the program in progress."

The girls least inclined to give the interesting qualities of advertising a favorable rating were those from the higher socio-economic school

Table 3. Interesting qualities of advertising

| Item                   | Girls by classes in schools |     |     |     |     |     | By schools |     |     | All |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                        | Hx                          | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H          | A   | L   |     |
|                        | 26                          | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47         | 43  | 33  | 123 |
| (Responses)            |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| (Question 1)           |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Clever                 | + 7                         | 11  | 8   | 8   | 7   | 12  | 18         | 16  | 19  | 53  |
| Stupid                 | - 12                        | 6   | 7   | 4   | 3   | 7   | 18         | 11  | 10  | 39  |
| (Question 1)           |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Interesting            | + 4                         | 6   | 5   | 13  | 6   | 8   | 10         | 18  | 14  | 42  |
| Boring                 | - 8                         | 9   | 7   | 3   | 3   | 4   | 17         | 10  | 7   | 34  |
| (Question 2)           |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Clever and interesting | + 6                         | 2   | 3   | 3   | 2   | 2   | 8          | 6   | 4   | 18  |
| Interrupts TV too much | - 15                        | 17  | 12  | 13  | 8   | 12  | 32         | 35  | 20  | 77  |
| (Question 5)           |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| It is interesting      | + 11                        | 6   | 13  | 15  | 12  | 11  | 17         | 28  | 23  | 68  |
| It is not interesting  | - 11                        | 10  | 7   | 1   | 1   | 3   | 21         | 8   | 4   | 33  |
| Sum of responses       | + 28                        | 25  | 29  | 39  | 27  | 33  | 53         | 68  | 60  | 181 |
|                        | - 46                        | 42  | 33  | 21  | 15  | 26  | 88         | 54  | 41  | 183 |
| Discriminatory factor  | + --                        | --  | --  | 1.8 | 1.8 | 1.3 | --         | 1.2 | 1.5 | 1.0 |
|                        | - 1.6                       | 1.7 | 1.1 | --  | --  | --  | 1.7        | --  | --  | 1.0 |

with a discriminatory factor of -1.7. The girls from the average and lower socio-economic schools gave the interesting qualities of advertising positive factors of +1.2 and +1.5, respectively.

#### Other attitudes towards advertising

Five other items grouped as "other attitudes towards advertising" generally elicited a negative response with a discriminatory factor of -1.2. The major contributing items to the negative factor were the preponderance of

Table 4. Other attitudes towards advertising

| Item                  | Girls by classes in schools |     |     |     |     |     | By schools |     |     | All |
|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                       | Hx                          | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H          | A   | L   |     |
|                       | 26                          | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47         | 43  | 33  | 123 |
| (Responses)           |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| (Question 1)          |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Cute                  | + 7                         | 6   | 5   | 7   | 4   | 8   | 13         | 12  | 12  | 37  |
| Silly                 | - 10                        | 11  | 6   | 7   | 6   | 8   | 21         | 13  | 14  | 48  |
| (Question 1)          |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Entertaining          | + 2                         | 5   | 1   | 7   | 5   | 7   | 7          | 8   | 12  | 27  |
| Repetitious           | - 5                         | 5   | 4   | 9   | 2   | 4   | 10         | 13  | 6   | 29  |
| (Question 1)          |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Exciting              | + 1                         | 3   | 0   | 4   | 3   | 3   | 4          | 4   | 6   | 14  |
| Sickening             | - 5                         | 7   | 4   | 5   | 2   | 3   | 12         | 9   | 5   | 26  |
| (Question 2)          |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Like it               | + 4                         | 2   | 2   | 6   | 5   | 3   | 6          | 8   | 8   | 22  |
| Dislike it            | - 5                         | 4   | 8   | 2   | 4   | 4   | 9          | 10  | 8   | 27  |
| (Question 2)          |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Want new things       | + 7                         | 8   | 3   | 8   | 6   | 8   | 15         | 11  | 14  | 40  |
| A harmful influence   | - 6                         | 6   | 14  | 9   | 5   | 5   | 12         | 23  | 10  | 45  |
| Sum or responses      | + 21                        | 24  | 11  | 32  | 23  | 29  | 45         | 43  | 52  | 140 |
|                       | - 31                        | 33  | 36  | 32  | 19  | 24  | 64         | 64  | 43  | 175 |
| Discriminatory factor | + --                        | --  | --  | 1.0 | 1.2 | 1.2 | --         | --  | 1.2 | --  |
|                       | - 1.5                       | 1.4 | 3.3 | 1.0 | --  | --  | 1.4        | 1.5 | --  | 1.2 |

the responses to the word "sickening" in contrast to "exciting," and "silly" in contrast to the word "cute." The numerical results are presented in Table 4.

The discriminatory factor varied by the socio-economic levels of the schools. The higher and average schools indicated negative discriminatory factors of -1.4 and -1.5 respectively while the lower school had a positive

factor of +1.2. The girls from the higher socio-economic school were more inclined to consider advertising "silly," "repetitious," and "sickening," than did the girls from the lower socio-economic school.

#### Effects of advertising (Questions 6, 7, and 8)

Most of the girls indicated that they were affected by advertising. When asked the question, "Does advertising make you want new things?" only 11 responded that they were not affected by advertising. All the others responded that it had some affect. A majority (67%) of the girls indicated that advertising made them want new things "many times" or at least "sometimes." There were no extreme differences in the way the girls from different schools responded to this particular question (Appendix C).

Question 7 asked, "How often do you try teenage products that you see advertised?" Again, most of the girls were influenced by advertising and did try the products they saw advertised. Only 13 responded that they "never" tried any of the advertised products. The remainder responded in one of the following three ways: "very often," "fairly often," or "occasionally." The largest response was from the 72 girls (58%) who indicated that they "occasionally" tried the products they saw advertised (Appendix C). The responses to this question were quite similar from school to school. McNeal (1964) reported similar findings in his study of young children. He summarized, "Despite their dislike for TV commercials, over half of each [age] group bought, or asked their parents to buy, many of the goods they saw advertised."

Question 8 asked, "What type of advertising do you pay the most attention to?" As was to be expected, television received the greatest number of responses. Over half the girls indicated that they paid the most attention



to television advertisements. There were 18 girls who indicated "magazine" advertisements, 17 who indicated "radio" advertisements, and just two who said, "billboards." Only eight indicated that they paid no attention to any of these types of advertisements. Thus, most of the girls admitted that they were affected by advertising even though they had previously expressed various negative attitudes towards advertising.

The girls from the lower school were particularly receptive to the television advertisements. Over 60% of these girls indicated that they paid the most attention to TV advertisements. In the other two schools, only half of the girls indicated that they paid the most attention to television advertisements (Appendix C).

#### Honesty and dependability of labeling

The results of the questions concerning labeling indicated a more favorable response than there was to advertising. Results of the items pertaining to the honesty and dependability of labeling are reported in Table 5.

Of the total number of responses relating to the honesty and dependability of labeling, there were 182 that were favorable to labeling in contrast to 61 that were not favorable, resulting in a discriminatory factor of +3.0. That is, for every three positive responses to the honesty and dependability of labeling, there was just one negative response.

The paired items from Question 1 had a -1.6 discriminatory factor and did not contribute to the overall positive response. More responses indicated that labeling "doesn't give enough information," than indicated labeling "tells all you want."

The results of Question 4 as summarized in Table 5 in the binary classification form, may be somewhat misleading. The question as originally stated

Table 5. Honesty and dependability of labeling

|                                 | <u>Girls by classes in schools</u> |     |     |     |     |     | <u>By schools</u> |     |     | <u>All</u> |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|------------|
|                                 | Hx                                 | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H                 | A   | L   |            |
| Item                            | 26                                 | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47                | 43  | 33  | 123        |
| (Responses)                     |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| (Question 1)                    |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Usually dependable              | + 11                               | 14  | 18  | 13  | 9   | 8   | 25                | 31  | 17  | 73         |
| Can't depend on them            | - 3                                | 4   | 2   | 2   | 1   | 1   | 7                 | 4   | 2   | 13         |
| (Question 1)                    |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Tells all you want              | + 2                                | 3   | 5   | 8   | 2   | 3   | 5                 | 13  | 5   | 23         |
| Doesn't give enough information | - 9                                | 5   | 10  | 5   | 4   | 5   | 14                | 15  | 9   | 38         |
| (Question 4)                    |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Labels can be trusted           | + 17                               | 11  | 18  | 17  | 12  | 11  | 28                | 35  | 23  | 86         |
| Shouldn't be trusted            | - 3                                | 2   | 2   | 2   | 0   | 1   | 5                 | 4   | 1   | 10         |
| Sum of responses                | + 30                               | 28  | 42  | 38  | 23  | 22  | 58                | 79  | 45  | 182        |
|                                 | - 15                               | 11  | 14  | 9   | 5   | 7   | 26                | 23  | 12  | 61         |
| Discriminatory factor           | +2.0                               | 2.5 | 3.0 | 4.2 | 4.6 | 3.1 | 2.3               | 3.4 | 3.7 | 3.0        |
|                                 | ---                                | --  | --  | --  | --  | --  | --                | --  | --  | --         |

was: "How much of what is written on a label can a person trust?" The girls indicated "how much" on a five point scale. Only seven girls indicated that "all of it" should be trusted. There were 79 who indicated "most of it" and 10 who said "not very much" of it should be trusted (Appendix C). Thus, a majority may have distrusted at least "some" of what is written on labels.

The attitudes did vary by schools. The higher socio-economic school had the lowest positive factor of +2.3, in contrast to +3.4 for the average school and +3.7 for the lower socio-economic school. Thus, it would appear that the girls from the higher socio-economic school did not have as great a faith in

the honesty and dependability of labeling as did the girls from the lower socio-economic school.

### Usefulness of labeling

A generally favorable attitude was expressed towards the usefulness of labeling, with a discriminatory factor of +3.0. The girls indicated that labeling was usually quite helpful to them when shopping and making purchases.

Only one pair of items relating to the usefulness of labeling elicited a greater negative response, with a discriminatory factor of -2.0. These two items from Question 1, contrasted "helpful and informative" with "just tells good things." The girls indicated that even though labeling was usually helpful and informative, unfortunately it only includes good things about products. Perhaps labeling could be more helpful to them if more of the disadvantages or hazards of using products were included on the labels.

Results from Question 5 were condensed to conform to the binary classification. It was originally answered on a five point scale and somewhat different results were indicated than are shown in Table 6. The question stated, "Do labels tell enough about the products?" Only three girls indicated that labels "always" tell enough. There were 87 (70%) of the girls who indicated that labels "sometimes" tell enough. Thus, even though the overall response to this area of emphasis indicated that labels were useful, a majority of the girls did indicate that labels only tell enough about products "sometimes" (Appendix C).

The attitudes did vary by schools but no particular pattern developed. The lowest positive factor, a +2.2 came from the higher socio-economic school while the average and lower schools both had a +3.8 discriminatory factor.

Table 6. Usefulness of labeling

| Item                    | Girls by classes in schools |     |     |     |     |     | By schools |     |     | All |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------------|-----|-----|-----|
|                         | Hx                          | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H          | A   | L   |     |
|                         | 26                          | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47         | 43  | 33  | 123 |
| (Responses)             |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| (Question 1)            |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Usually quite helpful   | + 14                        | 8   | 13  | 14  | 9   | 11  | 22         | 27  | 20  | 69  |
| Doesn't do much good    | - 3                         | 2   | 0   | 1   | 1   | 1   | 5          | 1   | 2   | 8   |
| (Question 1)            |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Helpful and informative | + 6                         | 4   | 5   | 8   | 2   | 3   | 10         | 13  | 5   | 28  |
| Just tells good things  | - 11                        | 10  | 12  | 7   | 6   | 9   | 21         | 19  | 15  | 55  |
| (Question 3)            |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Helpful for shopping    | + 16                        | 14  | 22  | 18  | 13  | 11  | 30         | 40  | 24  | 94  |
| Not helpful             | - 2                         | 3   | 0   | 3   | 0   | 1   | 5          | 3   | 1   | 9   |
| (Question 5)            |                             |     |     |     |     |     |            |     |     |     |
| Tells enough            | + 16                        | 13  | 19  | 16  | 14  | 12  | 29         | 35  | 26  | 90  |
| Doesn't tell enough     | - 5                         | 6   | 3   | 4   | 0   | 3   | 11         | 7   | 3   | 21  |
| Sum of responses        | + 52                        | 39  | 59  | 56  | 38  | 37  | 91         | 115 | 79  | 281 |
|                         | - 21                        | 21  | 15  | 15  | 7   | 14  | 42         | 30  | 21  | 93  |
| Discriminatory factor   | + 2.5                       | 1.8 | 3.9 | 3.7 | 5.4 | 2.6 | 2.2        | 3.8 | 3.8 | 3.0 |
|                         | - --                        | --  | --  | --  | --  | --  | --         | --  | --  | --  |

Clarity of labeling

Labeling was considered to be clear and easy to understand with a discriminatory factor of a +3.6. All paired items elicited a positive response from each of the classes.

The results of Questions 2 and 8 may appear to be more favorable in Table 7, than the actual responses indicated. These questions were answered on a five point scale (Appendix C). In answering Question 2, only 15 girls indicated that labels were "very easy to understand." There were 78 (63%)

Table 7. Clarity of labeling

|                          | <u>Girls by classes in schools</u> |     |     |     |     |     | <u>By schools</u> |     |     | <u>All</u> |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------------------|-----|-----|------------|
|                          | Hx                                 | Hy  | Ax  | Ay  | Lx  | Ly  | H                 | A   | L   |            |
| Item                     | 26                                 | 21  | 23  | 20  | 16  | 17  | 47                | 43  | 33  | 123        |
| (Responses)              |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| (Question 1)             |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Easy to understand       | + 5                                | 3   | 8   | 9   | 5   | 6   | 8                 | 17  | 11  | 36         |
| Too many big words       | - 9                                | 6   | 1   | 2   | 4   | 6   | 15                | 3   | 10  | 28         |
| (Question 1)             |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Print is clear           | + 5                                | 5   | 9   | 10  | 3   | 6   | 10                | 19  | 9   | 38         |
| Print is too small       | - 2                                | 6   | 3   | 5   | 3   | 4   | 8                 | 8   | 7   | 23         |
| (Question 2)             |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Easy to understand       | + 18                               | 15  | 20  | 16  | 12  | 12  | 33                | 36  | 24  | 93         |
| Difficult to understand  | - 1                                | 2   | 0   | 1   | 2   | 1   | 3                 | 1   | 3   | 7          |
| (Question 8)             |                                    |     |     |     |     |     |                   |     |     |            |
| Information easy to find | + 18                               | 16  | 20  | 18  | 14  | 10  | 34                | 38  | 24  | 96         |
| Difficult to find        | - 3                                | 4   | 2   | 1   | 0   | 4   | 7                 | 3   | 4   | 14         |
| Sum of responses         | + 46                               | 39  | 57  | 53  | 34  | 34  | 85                | 110 | 68  | 263        |
|                          | - 15                               | 18  | 6   | 9   | 9   | 15  | 33                | 15  | 24  | 72         |
| Discriminatory factor    | + 3.1                              | 2.2 | 9.5 | 5.9 | 3.8 | 2.3 | 2.6               | 7.3 | 2.8 | 3.6        |
|                          | - --                               | --  | --  | --  | --  | --  | --                | --  | --  | --         |

of the girls who answered that labels were "fairly easy to understand." In answering Question 8, there were 20 who indicated that the information on labels was "very easy to find" while a much larger number, 76 (62%) of the girls indicated that the information was only "fairly easy to find." Thus, even though the overall response was quite favorable, many girls did indicate some difficulty in finding and understanding the information on labels.

The attitudes varied by schools but no pattern developed. The lowest positive factor, a +2.6 was elicited from the higher socio-economic school.

In contrast, the average school had a +7.3 factor and the lower socio-economic school a +2.8 factor.

#### Effectiveness of labeling (Questions 6 and 7)

The data from Question 6 indicated that the girls who participated in the study were in the habit of reading labels at least some of the time when they purchased new products. There were 58 girls who answered that they read labels "very often" and 34 girls who read them "fairly often" (Appendix C). Thus, nearly three-fourths of the girls made fairly regular use of labels as they shopped.

Question 6 was related to the effects of advertising as well as labeling. The question asked if it were a good idea to look for a nationally advertised brand name on the label. Many girls were quite conscious of nationally advertised brand names, with 88 indicating that it was a "good" or "fairly good" idea. Only seven thought it was a "poor" or "fairly poor" idea. Apparently the term "nationally advertised brand" was not meaningful to a sizeable number, for there were 28 who expressed "no opinion." There was no particular variation in the responses by schools (Appendix C).

#### Essay Instrument

The results from the essay instruments revealed the same general attitudes towards advertising and labeling as were indicated by the objective instruments. For the purpose of analysis, each was scored on the basis of the number of positive and negative attitudes expressed. A higher numerical score denoted a favorable (positive) attitude, and a lower numerical score denoted an unfavorable (negative) attitude. Essays which expressed an equal number of positive and negative attitudes were scored 50. The numerical results of the essay instruments are presented in Tables 8 and 9.

It is the opinion of the researcher, based on careful reading and scoring of each essay, that the girls were quite sincere and earnest in expressing their opinions. Some had so many opinions to express that they required more space than had been provided for the writing of essays. Only two girls had "no comment" to make.

#### Attitudes expressed towards advertising

The overall attitude expressed towards advertising on the essay instruments was unfavorable. Twenty-seven of the essays were favorable to advertising, 87 were unfavorable, and nine were neutral or received a median score. The discriminatory factor was -3.2.

The attitudes did vary by schools. The highest negative factor of -4.8 was from the girls of the higher socio-economic school. The factor values were -3.2 for the average school and -2.1 for the lower school. The girls from the higher socio-economic school were the most critical of the three schools in the essay expression of attitudes towards advertising.

The individual comments illustrate the word usage and attitudes. The researcher has selected comments which she considers to be typical.

Many expressed the idea that advertising was not truthful:

Some of the advertisements aren't truthful. Like on one commercial, it says that cigarettes make you feel like spring. Or another that says toothpaste gives you sex appeal.

I like what they advertise but I wish they'd put it to you straight. It does not really tell you everything you need to know.

I think that advertising today is not all truth. Most of it is rigged.

One of the most main advertisements that wasn't true, was the one on smoking.

Table 8. Attitudes towards advertising, essay scores

|  | <u>Girls by classes in schools</u> |           |           |           |           |           | <u>By schools</u> |           |           | <u>All</u> |
|--|------------------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
|  | Hx                                 | Hy        | Ax        | Ay        | Lx        | Ly        | H                 | A         | L         |            |
| <b>Scores</b>                          | 26                                 | 21        | 23        | 20        | 16        | 17        | 47                | 43        | 33        | 123        |
| 90-99 +                                | 0                                  | 2         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 2         | 2                 | 3         | 3         | 8          |
| 80-89 +                                | 2                                  | 1         | 0         | 1         | 2         | 0         | 3                 | 1         | 2         | 6          |
| 70-79 +                                | 0                                  | 0         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 2         | 0                 | 2         | 4         | 6          |
| 60-69 +                                | 2                                  | 0         | 2         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 2                 | 4         | 1         | 7          |
| 51-59 +                                | 0                                  | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0                 | 0         | 0         | 0          |
| 50 ±                                   | 6                                  | 0         | 1         | 0         | 1         | 1         | 6                 | 1         | 2         | 9          |
| 40-49 -                                | 3                                  | 7         | 3         | 7         | 0         | 1         | 10                | 10        | 1         | 21         |
| 30-39 -                                | 0                                  | 0         | 1         | 1         | 2         | 0         | 0                 | 2         | 2         | 4          |
| 20-29 -                                | 3                                  | 3         | 8         | 1         | 4         | 4         | 6                 | 9         | 8         | 23         |
| 10-19 -                                | 5                                  | 2         | 1         | 2         | 0         | 2         | 7                 | 3         | 2         | 12         |
| 1-9 -                                  | 5                                  | 6         | 5         | 3         | 3         | 5         | 11                | 8         | 8         | 27         |
| <b>Sum</b>                             | + 4<br>- 16                        | 3<br>18   | 4<br>18   | 6<br>14   | 6<br>9    | 4<br>12   | 7<br>34           | 10<br>32  | 10<br>21  | 27<br>87   |
| <b>Discrimi-<br/>natory<br/>factor</b> | + --<br>- 4.0                      | --<br>6.0 | --<br>4.5 | --<br>2.3 | --<br>1.5 | --<br>3.0 | --<br>4.8         | --<br>3.2 | --<br>2.1 | --<br>3.2  |



Most all aspirins are the same, all contain about the same things. It is just the build up of the advertisement which makes you think one is better than the other.

I do not approve of advertising in the sense that it is another form of lying.

Many girls commented that some advertisements were misleading:

In some stores their advertising isn't true. Once when I went shopping at this one particular store their ad said one price but you were charged a higher price.

In the newspapers they put a coupon in the paper for example, "facial tissue." Then when you go to the store to buy it, they say they're out of it. I don't think that stores or newspapers should get away with this.

Nearly every cigarette advertisement says that they are the lowest in tar and nicotine. Which one is?

Sometimes the truth doesn't always come out. What I mean by that is they might say something about the object on T.V. and then you go to the store and it's really not that way.

Those who made favorable comments still thought that advertising should meet certain standards:

In my opinion advertising is and can be helpful if the person or persons who own this product will tell the consumer all the advantages and disadvantages of their products.

Advertising is O.K. as long as the product does as the advertisement says it'll do.

There are only a few commercials we really need, such as the ones saying to stop smoking and ones about drugs, the U.S.O., savings bonds, and the Air Force, Navy, and Army for recruiting.

We need advertising to be aware of new products, sales, new stores, etc. Advertising is a necessary thing. However, I feel that the advertisers should be completely honest with their ads.

### Attitudes towards labeling

The essays on labeling were scored and evaluated in the same manner as the essays on advertising. The tabulation is reported in Table 9. A greater number of essays expressed favorable attitudes to labeling than were unfavorable, producing a discriminatory factor of +1.4. Sixty-seven of the essays were favorable, 46 were unfavorable, eight were neutral, and two expressed no opinions.

The attitudes did vary by schools, but did not follow the socio-economic sequence. The lowest discriminatory factor of 1.1 was from the lower socio-economic school which had nearly an equal number of favorable and unfavorable essays. The higher socio-economic school had a +1.3 factor and the average school had a factor of a +2.0.

These essays were also read and summarized by the researcher for typical attitudes expressed. Some of their comments which express their attitudes are presented.

The following favorable comments indicated the importance of labeling to the girls and some of their expectations of labeling:

Labels are important in our world. Without them we would be lost.

I think labels are good. If you're going to buy a product, you have a right to know what it contains, or what its made of. I think a product shouldn't be for sale if the label doesn't tell you enough about it.

Labeling is a good way to include information on some products. The more complete the better! Lots of times people "forget" to put calories on food labels, the result, I gain five pounds. I believe one should label clearly, concisely, artistically, but most of all truthfully. (I hate dishonesty!)

I think on every product or item you need a label of some kind. On a label you need to know what's in the product or how you use such an item.

Table 9. Attitudes towards labeling, essay scores

|                               | Girls by classes in schools |           |           |           |           |           | By schools |           |           | All       |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|-----------|------------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
|                               | Hx                          | Hy        | Ax        | Ay        | Lx        | Ly        | H          | A         | L         |           |
| Scores                        | 26                          | 21        | 23        | 20        | 16        | 17        | 47         | 43        | 33        | 123       |
| 90-99 +                       | 5                           | 5         | 6         | 8         | 4         | 4         | 10         | 14        | 8         | 32        |
| 80-89 +                       | 1                           | 3         | 4         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 4          | 6         | 1         | 11        |
| 70-79 +                       | 2                           | 1         | 4         | 1         | 2         | 0         | 3          | 5         | 2         | 10        |
| 60-69 +                       | 1                           | 1         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 0         | 2          | 3         | 1         | 6         |
| 51-59 +                       | 1                           | 3         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 4         | 4          | 0         | 4         | 8         |
| 50 ±                          | 6                           | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1         | 0         | 6          | 1         | 1         | 8         |
| 40-49 -                       | 2                           | 3         | 0         | 1         | 2         | 1         | 5          | 1         | 3         | 9         |
| 30-39 -                       | 0                           | 0         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 0          | 2         | 2         | 4         |
| 20-29 -                       | 1                           | 1         | 0         | 1         | 1         | 0         | 2          | 1         | 1         | 4         |
| 10-19 -                       | 3                           | 1         | 3         | 1         | 1         | 1         | 4          | 4         | 2         | 10        |
| 1-9 -                         | 3                           | 3         | 4         | 2         | 2         | 5         | 6          | 6         | 7         | 19        |
| No comment                    | 1                           | 0         | 0         | 0         | 0         | 1         | 1          | 0         | 1         | 2         |
| Sum                           | + 10<br>- 9                 | 13<br>8   | 15<br>8   | 13<br>6   | 8<br>7    | 8<br>8    | 23<br>17   | 28<br>14  | 16<br>15  | 67<br>46  |
| Discrimi-<br>natory<br>factor | + 1.1<br>- --               | 1.6<br>-- | 1.9<br>-- | 2.2<br>-- | 1.1<br>-- | 1.0<br>-- | 1.3<br>--  | 2.0<br>-- | 1.1<br>-- | 1.4<br>-- |

I'm glad they have labeling, especially on the clothing.

Most labels say what is necessary. They generally are true.

Some expressed skepticism about the truthfulness of labeling:

Some labels are truthful and some aren't.

Some labels don't tell you anything. You cannot always believe what they say.

I believe that labels are more truthful than advertisements because there is a law against putting something on a label that is not true.

In my opinion, some labels do tell you what you need to know but some don't. On most things you can believe what they say but on others you can't. I think that advertising and labeling are closely related in this way.

Many commented that labels do not give enough information or that certain information was very difficult to find:

Labels tell most of what you need to know. Sometimes they leave some things out.

Some labelings are good but some don't tell you if they shrink or not - like pants or sweaters.

I think that the food labeling is just fine. But the labeling on clothes is something else! Most garments don't give any washing instructions. I have had several things fade because of this.

Not all labels tell you what you need to know. Sometimes you have to hunt all over the box or can to find out what's in it or how much it weighs. Either it's not there at all or in some tiny corner.

Usually they write so small that it takes you forever just to figure out what the product is. They should make it big so people can know the products.

#### Comparison of Essay and Objective Instruments

The use of two research instruments for the collection of data proved quite worthwhile, adding validity to the results. The objective instruments were easier to tabulate, analyze, and organize. The essay instruments

provided opportunity for the candid expression of opinions. It was advantageous to have the essays written first. Most of the attitudes expressed on the essay instruments were reinforced by the results of the objective instruments.

#### Advertising results compared

The results from both instruments indicated that unfavorable attitudes towards advertising predominated. The overall discriminatory factor for the essay instruments was -3.2 (Table 8). By areas of emphasis drawn from the objective instrument, two factors were negative, one was neutral, and one was positive (Tables 1 - 4).

Further support for the complementarity of the two instruments is obtained from an analysis of the 18 words on Question 1 of the advertising section. These words were selected from the pre-test of the essay instrument and incorporated in the objective instrument. They cover all areas of emphasis detected on the pre-test and are balanced with an even number of favorable and unfavorable aspects of advertising. These words are listed in Table 10 and have been ranked in order from most frequently to least frequently checked, as words most descriptive of advertising. The three most frequently checked were "exaggerated," "misleading," and "fake." The three least frequently checked were "exciting," "honest," and "truthful." This information supported the previously analyzed results which indicated that the girls were the most critical of the honesty and truthfulness of advertising (Table 1). Comparable results were obtained from the essay instruments. Some criticisms of the truthfulness of advertising were such comments as: "it sometimes misleads you," "it's just too fakey," and "the truth doesn't always come out."

Table 10. Words descriptive of advertising

|              |      | <u>Girls by schools</u> |    |    | <u>All</u> |
|--------------|------|-------------------------|----|----|------------|
| (Question 1) |      | H                       | A  | L  |            |
| Words        | Sign | 47                      | 43 | 33 | 123        |
| (Responses)  |      |                         |    |    |            |
| Exaggerated  | -    | 30                      | 26 | 17 | 73         |
| Misleading   | -    | 25                      | 21 | 16 | 62         |
| Fake         | -    | 25                      | 16 | 13 | 54         |
| Clever       | +    | 18                      | 16 | 19 | 53         |
| Silly        | -    | 21                      | 13 | 14 | 48         |
| Interesting  | +    | 10                      | 18 | 14 | 42         |
| Helpful      | +    | 11                      | 17 | 12 | 40         |
| Stupid       | -    | 18                      | 11 | 10 | 39         |
| Cute         | +    | 13                      | 12 | 12 | 37         |
| Ridiculous   | -    | 20                      | 7  | 7  | 34         |
| Boring       | -    | 17                      | 10 | 7  | 34         |
| Repetitious  | -    | 10                      | 13 | 6  | 29         |
| Entertaining | +    | 7                       | 8  | 12 | 27         |
| Sickening    | -    | 12                      | 9  | 5  | 26         |
| Informative  | +    | 4                       | 9  | 4  | 17         |
| Exciting     | +    | 4                       | 4  | 6  | 14         |
| Honest       | +    | 3                       | 6  | 5  | 14         |
| Truthful     | +    | 2                       | 4  | 6  | 12         |

Both instruments detected a comparable variation in attitudes between the three socio-economic schools. The discriminatory factors indicated a greater tendency to consider advertising dishonest and untruthful by the students from the higher socio-economic school, than by girls from the lower school. Likewise, the selection of words in Question 1, (Table 10) varied by socio-economic schools. Among the ten most frequently cited words by the girls in the higher, but not the lower school were: "ridiculous," "boring," and "sickening;" the words cited by the girls in the lower, but not the higher school were: "interesting," "helpful," and "entertaining." The word most frequently checked by the girls in the lower socio-economic school was "clever."

The girls did respond favorably to the "usefulness" of advertising, on both instruments. The term "helpful" ranked seventh or within the top half of the items listed in Table 10. Many essays also mentioned the useful aspects of advertising. The comments indicated that, "it's a way to find out where there's a sale or a good place to eat," or "it's a good way to learn about new products on the market." The girls also included items of public service nature, such as anti-smoking messages and Army recruitment, as helpful advertising.

#### Labeling results compared

Both instruments indicated that girls had favorable attitudes towards labeling. The discriminatory factor for the essay instrument was +1.4 (Table 9), and centered around +3.0 for the objective instruments (Tables 5 - 7).

As in the previous analysis of advertising, Question 1 of the labeling section also proved to be a good indicator of the general attitudes towards

labeling. This question included a list of 12 phrases; six were favorable to labeling, and six were unfavorable. They are listed in Table 11 and ranked in order from most frequently to least frequently checked, as phrases most descriptive of labeling.

The two most frequently cited phrases were: "usually dependable" and "usually quite helpful." This was consistent with the attitudes expressed in the essays. Typical comments were: "labeling on a dress is very useful," and "labeling is a good way to include information," and "labels are important."

One criticism from the essays was that labels do not give enough information. The girls thought that more of the hazards or disadvantages of using certain products should be included. A number of girls said that clothing labels should include more care and cleaning instructions. This is consistent with the results of the objective instrument. The phrases about labeling, "just tells good things," and "doesn't tell enough," ranked third and fourth in the analysis of Question 1 (Table 11). Thus, even though the girls were favorable to labeling, they did indicate that certain aspects could be improved.

On the essay instruments the girls seemed, to the researcher, to be more critical of labeling than the discriminatory factor values from the objective instruments would indicate. This was particularly true of the girls from the lower socio-economic school which had the highest positive discriminatory factors (Tables 5 - 7) on the objective instruments. These differences could have been due to the different methods used to evaluate the results. Also, attitude expression may have been easier for this group in essay form than in the objective form which had the appearance of a test.



Table 11. Phrases descriptive of labeling

|                         |      | <u>Girls by schools</u> |    |    | <u>All</u> |
|-------------------------|------|-------------------------|----|----|------------|
|                         |      | H                       | A  | L  |            |
| (Question 1)<br>Phrases | Sign | 47                      | 43 | 33 | 123        |
| (Responses)             |      |                         |    |    |            |
| Usually dependable      | +    | 25                      | 31 | 17 | 73         |
| Usually quite helpful   | +    | 22                      | 27 | 20 | 69         |
| Just tells good things  | -    | 21                      | 19 | 15 | 55         |
| Doesn't tell enough     | -    | 14                      | 15 | 9  | 38         |
| Print is clear          | +    | 10                      | 19 | 9  | 38         |
| Easy to understand      | +    | 8                       | 17 | 11 | 36         |
| Helpful and informative | +    | 10                      | 13 | 5  | 28         |
| Too many big words      | -    | 15                      | 3  | 10 | 28         |
| Tells all you want      | +    | 5                       | 13 | 5  | 23         |
| Print is too small      | -    | 8                       | 8  | 7  | 23         |
| Can't depend on labels  | -    | 7                       | 4  | 2  | 13         |
| Doesn't do much good    | -    | 5                       | 1  | 2  | 8          |

## CONCLUSIONS

The main purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes eighth grade girls have towards advertising and labeling. Results of the study indicated that girls' attitudes were generally favorable to labeling and generally unfavorable to advertising.

An expressed purpose of the study was to determine if the girls believed and trusted advertising and labeling. In general, the girls thought that advertising was neither very honest nor very truthful. Instead, they indicated that it was misleading, exaggerated, and fake. The girls did respond favorably to the usefulness of advertising, indicating that it was helpful for learning about products on the market.

The girls responded favorably to labeling, indicating that it was usually quite dependable and helpful for shopping. The major criticisms of labeling were that it just tells good things about products and sometimes not enough information is given.

Another purpose of the study was to determine if girls from schools of different socio-economic levels responded differently. Generally, the girls from the higher socio-economic school were more critical of advertising; and girls from the lower socio-economic school were less critical and were more inclined to consider advertising clever, helpful, entertaining, and interesting. Differences in attitudes towards labeling did vary by the socio-economic level of the schools, but formed no general pattern.

The impact of advertising was included as a part of this study. Girls were affected by advertising and labeling and did make some use of them as sources of information.

The two research instruments were complimentary and produced generally consistent results, thereby adding greater validity to the conclusions.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

Follow up studies are recommended to determine if these attitudes are typical of only this age group, sex, and locale. Such questions as those that follow, would be worthy of exploration. Are there differences in attitudes of boys and girls of the same age group? Are the attitudes age-specific or do they represent the environment that each age group has experienced? That is, will the attitudes of teenagers of 1975 be similar to those of 1971? How do attitudes change by age level attained, or when does awareness of advertising and perception of its "untruthfulness" take effect?

Also worthy of investigation would be studies which focus attention on specific consumption areas in advertising, such as: food, clothing, cosmetics, and household products. Other studies could investigate particular types of advertising media, such as television, radio, newspapers, and magazines of various types.

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## APPENDICES

Wichita Public Schools  
DIVISION OF VOCATIONAL AND CONTINUING EDUCATION  
Vocational-Technical Center  
301 South Grove  
WICHITA, KANSAS 67211

*Home Economics Education*

June 28, 1971

Coleman, Roosevelt and Truesdell Junior High Schools' student bodies are made up of students from all socio-economic and cultural levels according to information from the Research Division of Unified School District No. 259, Wichita.

Coleman Junior High School with an enrollment of 1,081 shows 222 students from homes with income less than \$4,500.00 or 20.5%, with the remainder of students being from homes with incomes of \$15,000.00 up, with the largest group being from homes of \$25,000.00 and higher.

Roosevelt Junior High School with an enrollment of 857 students shows 15.8% of the students being from homes with incomes of \$4,500.00 or less, with the remainder of the students coming from homes of \$5,000.00 to \$11,000.00 and a very minimal number with incomes above \$15,000.00.

Truesdell Junior High School has an enrollment of 2,133 students, with 5% of the students being from homes with incomes of \$4,500.00 or less, with the remainder from homes with incomes ranging from \$4,500.00 to \$20,000.00, with a small percentage over \$20,000.00.

Ranking as to socio-economic level would be as follows:

Coleman - From the very high to the very low with a higher number at the high income level

Roosevelt - From the very low to the upper-middle with very few, if any, in the upper-high level

Truesdell - Well spread between the lower-middle and the upper-middle levels with few at either the very low or the very high





## Labeling

Every product has some type of label which gives information about the item, whether it is a box of breakfast cereal or an item of clothing. Labels can and do give a great variety of information. The information is found in various places - anywhere from the side panel of a box to an attached cardboard tag. You are asked to think about labels that are familiar to you. Then write a paragraph giving your opinion of labeling. For example, do labels tell you what you need to know? Can you believe what they say? Is the important information easy enough to find, read, and understand? Try to use some examples of labels you have seen when giving your opinion.

Grade Level \_\_\_\_\_  
 School's Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 Your Name \_\_\_\_\_  
 (optional)

## QUESTIONS ON ADVERTISING

1. Which of the following words best describes advertising as you hear and see it? (check one or more)

H A L

|                                 |                                  |                                 |
|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| (18+16+19) <u>53</u> clever     | (11+17+12) <u>40</u> helpful     | (13+12+12) <u>37</u> cute       |
| (18+11+10) <u>39</u> stupid     | (20+7+7) <u>34</u> ridiculous    | (21+13+14) <u>48</u> silly      |
| (10+18+4) <u>42</u> interesting | (2+4+6) <u>12</u> truthful       | (4+9+4) <u>17</u> informative   |
| (17+10+7) <u>34</u> boring      | (30+26+17) <u>73</u> exaggerated | (25+21+16) <u>62</u> misleading |
| (3+6+5) <u>14</u> honest        | (7+8+12) <u>27</u> entertaining  | (4+4+6) <u>14</u> exciting      |
| (25+16+13) <u>54</u> fake       | (10+13+6) <u>29</u> repetitious  | (12+9+5) <u>26</u> sickening    |

2. Which of the following phrases accurately describes what you think of advertising? (check one or more)

(6+8+6) 22like it  
 (9+10+8) 27dislike it  
 (6+7+7) 20think it is a complete waste of time  
 (14+22+14) 50think it is a good way to learn about new products  
 (12+23+10) 45think some advertising could be a harmful influence  
 (15+11+14) 40it makes me want new things  
 (31+32+22) 85it doesn't always show things as they really are  
 (8+6+4) 18it's usually clever and interesting  
 (32+25+20) 77interrupts television shows too much  
 (4+1+4) 9tells what I need to know about products  
 (2+4+6) 12it's a good way to learn what other people are using

3. Which of the following best describes the usefulness of advertising to you as a shopper? (check just one)

(7+6+4) 17it is very helpful  
 (18+23+13) 54it is fairly helpful  
 (9+4+12) 25no opinion  
 (10+8+4) 22it is of little help  
 (3+2+0) 5it is a complete waste of time

4. How much of what is said in advertisements should a person believe? (check just one)

0 all of it  
 (16+10+8) 34most of it  
 (9+8+12) 29no opinion  
 (22+25+33) 60not very much of it  
0 none of it

5. How interesting do you find advertising? (check just one)

(5+0+0) 5very interesting  
 (12+28+23) 63fairly interesting  
 (8+7+6) 21no opinion  
 (19+7+4) 30rather uninteresting  
 (2+1+0) 3completely uninteresting

-2-

6. Does advertising make you want new things?  
(check one)

H A L

(7+4+1) 12 yes, many times  
(24+24+22) 70 yes, sometimes  
(4+4+2) 10 not affected by it  
(11+11+8) 30 not very often  
(1+0+0) 1 never

8. Which type of advertising do you pay the most attention to? (check one)

(0+2+0) 2 billboards  
(3+7+1) 17 radio  
(5+3+0) 8 none  
(10+6+2) 18 magazines  
(6+3+3) 12 newspapers  
(24+22+20) 66 television

7. How often do you try teen-age products you see advertised? (check one)

(0+3+4) 7 very often  
(11+8+10) 29 fairly often  
(29+25+18) 72 occasionally  
(5+7+1) 13 never

9. How truthful is advertising? (check one)

(1+0+0) 1 very truthful  
(18+23+22) 63 fairly truthful  
(14+11+7) 32 no opinion  
(13+9+4) 26 fairly untruthful  
(1+0+0) 1 very untruthful

10. (a) What advertisement have you heard or seen lately that you thought was a good one?

(b) Why did you think it was good?

11. (a) What advertisement have you heard or seen lately that you thought was a poor one?

(b) Why did you think it was a poor one?

-3-

## QUESTIONS ON LABELING

1. Which of the following terms best describe what you think of labeling?  
(check one or more)

H A L

(25+31+17) 73 usually dependable  
 (7+4+2) 13 can't really depend on labels  
 (22+27+20) 69 usually quite helpful  
 (5+1+2) 8 doesn't do much good  
 (8+17+11) 36 easy to understand  
 (15+3+10) 28 too many big words  
 (5+13+5) 23 tells all you want to know  
 (14+15+9) 38 doesn't give enough information  
 (10+19+9) 38 print is clear and easy to read  
 (8+8+7) 23 print is too small and difficult to read  
 (10+13+5) 28 very helpful and informative  
 (21+19+5) 55 just tells good things about products

2. Are labels written so that people can understand them?  
(check just one)

(8+5+2) 15 very easy to understand  
 (26+31+22) 78 fairly easy to understand  
 (10+5+6) 21 no opinion  
 (3+0+2) 5 fairly difficult to understand  
 (0+1+1) 2 very difficult to understand

3. How helpful are labels to you as a shopper?  
(check one)

(12+16+9) 37 very helpful  
 (18+24+15) 57 fairly helpful  
 (12+1+8) 21 no opinion  
 (5+3+1) 9 not very helpful  
0 not helpful at all

4. How much of what is written on the labels can a person trust? (check one)

(3+4+0) 7 all of it  
 (25+31+23) 79 most of it  
 (14+4+9) 27 no opinion  
 (5+4+1) 10 not very much of it  
0 none of it

5. Do labels tell enough about the products? (check one)

(1+2+0) 3 yes, always  
 (28+33+26) 87 yes, sometimes  
 (7+1+4) 12 no opinion  
 (10+7+3) 20 no, not very often  
 (1+0+0) 1 no, never

6. When you see a new product you'd like to buy, do you read the label?  
(check one)

(21+25+12) 58 very often  
 (14+7+13) 34 fairly often  
 (4+0+4) 8 no opinion  
 (6+10+4) 20 occasionally  
 (2+1+0) 3 never

7. Is it a good idea to look for a nationally advertised brand name on the label?  
(check one)

(18+21+13) 52 very good idea  
 (15+13+8) 36 fairly good idea  
 (11+8+9) 28 no opinion  
 (1+1+2) 4 fairly poor idea  
 (2+0+1) 3 very poor idea

-4-

8. Is the information you need easy to find on most labels?

H A L  
 (6+8+6) 20 very easy to find  
 (28+30+8) 76 fairly easy to find  
 (6+2+5) 13 no opinion  
 (5+1+4) 10 fairly difficult  
 (2+2+0) 4 very difficult

9. (a) When considering good labels, which product line do you think usually has good labels? (for example, canned foods, packaged foods, clothing, cosmetics, etc.)

(b) What label can you recall as being an especially good one?

10. (a) When you think of inferior (poor) labeling, which product line do you think of?

(b) Which particular label can you recall as being an example of a poor one?

ADVERTISING AND LABELING  
AS PERCEIVED BY EIGHTH GRADE GIRLS

by

JANET ROTMAN BJORKLUND

B. S., Kansas State University, 1967

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AN ABSTRACT OF A MASTER'S THESIS

submitted in partial fulfillment of the

requirements for the degree

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Department of Family Economics

KANSAS STATE UNIVERSITY  
Manhattan, Kansas

1971

Advertising and labeling are two major sources of product information available to the present day consumer. Teenagers have become quite important as consumers today. What attitudes do teenage consumers have towards advertising and labeling?

The main purpose of the study was to determine the attitudes that eighth grade girls have towards advertising and labeling. A second purpose was to determine if there were any differences in attitudes of girls attending schools representative of different socio-economic levels.

The data were gathered from three junior high schools representative of three different socio-economic levels: higher, average, and lower. The selection was based upon information obtained from school authorities in Wichita, Kansas. Two eighth grade Home Economics classes in each school participated. The study involved a total of 123 eighth grade girls.

Two research instruments were used for the collection of data. They were used in two phases: first, the essay instrument and within a week, the objective instrument. A Home Economics teacher in each school administered both research instruments, following the same pattern.

The results of the study indicated generally unfavorable attitudes towards advertising. The girls were the most critical of the honesty and truthfulness of advertising. Advertising was considered to be "exaggerated," "misleading," "untruthful," and "fake." The girls did respond favorably to the usefulness of advertising, indicating that it was a fairly helpful way to learn about products on the market.

The girls from the higher socio-economic school were usually more critical of advertising than were the girls from the other two schools. The girls from the lower socio-economic school considered advertising to be more

clever, helpful, interesting, and entertaining than did the girls from the higher socio-economic school.

Results of the study indicated that favorable attitudes towards labeling predominated over the unfavorable attitudes. The girls' favorable response indicated that they thought labeling was "usually dependable," and "fairly easy to find and understand." Some girls were critical of labeling, however, because it "just tells good things about products," and because it "doesn't give enough information."

The two instruments were complimentary and produced generally consistent results thereby adding greater validity to the conclusions, than either instrument alone would have yielded. Follow-up studies are recommended using these instruments to determine if these attitudes are typical only of the age group and locale.