Research Brings Better Buymanship

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SCIENTIFICALLY speaking, there are two distinct types of shoppers. This is one of the many items of everyday interest gleaned from recently written theses on various phases of home economics.

Miss Mildred Stokes, who received her master of science degree in textiles and clothing last August, places shoppers in two classes. The first type is easily influenced by sensational advertising. He is readily swayed by so-called bargains, novelties and popular fashions. The other class investigates and evaluates nearly as it can the true value of the article before purchases are made.

Women, especially, need actual help in determining the true worth of advertisements. Outstanding appeals made in advertisements are quality, prestige and style. Miss Stokes' study showed that style and illustration in clothing and textiles usually catch the eyes of the

women first, whereas price and description are generally disregarded.

Miss Stokes' thesis was based on a survey among 150 middle class women in Illinois. These women studied 50 textile and clothing ads found in newspapers and magazines.

The newspaper was considered the outstanding medium of advertising by the women in determining their first choice of a commodity. Window displays and style are often factors which influence choice but radio advertising and the method of sending letters were considered poor. Door-to-door soliciting and telephoning were frowned upon by these women and considered of no value.

Nationally advertised goods were considered more reliable than either local or non-advertised goods in the opinion of a majority of the women participating in the survey.

Miss Stokes wrote on "Advertising as an Aid to the Consumer of Textiles and Clothing," hoping that it would help the consumer to interpret more accurately textile and clothing advertisements. She feels there is a need for more reliable advertising to aid the consumer in intelligent buying.

Actually, the survey was of value to the women who assisted in the study, for it called to their attention what is available in a given commodity, aided them to recognize good advertisements and suggested the need of critical evaluation of advertising. Furthermore, it cited the need of seeing when ads are fraudulent or evasive, recognizing that many appeals are emotional and result in the making of unsatisfactory purchases.

Poor design is more easily recognized than that of superior quality by the average woman," claims Miss Ellen Dahl in her thesis on "Design as a Factor in the Selection of Fabrics." Miss Dahl's study agrees with George L. Gunter, author of Decorative Textiles, who says, "Texture is the most distinctive quality of textiles."

Miss Dahl found college girls to be conservative in rating fabrics. Also it was found that the average consumer prefers a conventional design to a naturalistic pattern.

From the literature she reviewed, Miss Dahl concluded that a decided improvement has been made in the field of fabric design in the last 10 years. Because of the wide selection of textile fabrics that are continually appearing on the market, the consumer who has had no special training in selection of fabrics becomes confused.

She often purchases material which is unsuited for the purpose intended, the result being a wasted piece of material and a dissatisfied customer. Miss Dahl believes ability in selecting fabrics can be improved by a study of design principles with an endeavor to apply the principles after they are understood.

"When women are able to recognize and demand quality in design, manufacturers will make an effort to supply it," concluded Miss Dahl in her study which she presented last August when she received her master of science degree in textiles and clothing.