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# **Customer's Ethical Considerations In Making Local Supermarket Purchases**

by

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## **Problem Addressed**

The primary purpose of this study is to define the ethical factors that come into mind when customers are purchasing products at a local supermarket and to determine the implications of these factors within and outside the retail supermarket organization.

## **Methodology**

In order to measure the ethical factors that come into mind when customers are purchasing products at a local supermarket, a critical incident technique instrument was mailed to 90 members of the Food Distribution & Research Society on February 15, 1991.

The members were asked to participate in the study and 15.7 percent responded with 42 critical incidents. Upon receipt of the critical incidents, they were analyzed for clusters of ethical factors that may be critical when purchasing products at a local supermarket.

## **Findings**

From the data, various ethical factors that come into mind when purchasing products at a local supermarket were apparent. There were three ethical factors cited most often - product handling, customer relations and product packaging each at 19.1 percent respectively. It also appears that lying about products 14.2 percent and product pricing 9.5 percent are important to some of the respondents.

There were responses relating to product advertising and checkout employees each at 7.1 percent respectively. There were two ethical factors cited least often - endangered species and veal/chicken farming each at 2.4 percent respectively.

## **Conclusion**

The results of this study suggest that ethical factors do come into mind when customers are purchasing products at a local supermarket. This study indicates that supermarket organizations need to examine their product handling, customer relations, product packaging and lying about products.