Advertising Inserts and Folk Customs

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Koga City Museum of History has been collecting the following four types of advertising inserts in newspapers delivered to the museum since 2002: (i) advertisements on annual events and family ceremonies; (ii) advertisements of local shops and supermarket chains with national coverage; (iii) local living information; and (iv) seasonal advertisements.

Major supermarkets that are rarely closed throughout the year offer aggressive bargains and special discounts almost every day, depending on the season and the event calendar including annual events, family ceremonies, and other folk customs (e.g., housing, food, and clothing). On the other hand, retailers that target people living within a walking distance from their stores offer modest bargains by taking opportunities of local traditional events. These sales battles are recorded in local advertising inserts, among others. They also indicate the retailers' "interpretations of folk customs."

Each retailer's interpretations of folk customs can be seen in its calendar of marketing activities. Such calendars, disclosed to the public through advertising inserts in newspapers as well as food marketing magazines, tend to be standardized across the nation. According to their interpretations, the magical meanings of individual events have been lost, and the focus has been shifted to their usefulness in a present context. These interpretations seem to reflect the nature of products developed as desired by consumers. This paper illustrates a part of the lifestyle and culture seen in advertising inserts picked up from those delivered to the museum every day (though it may be biased toward the interest of the museum).

Key words: Advertising inserts, consumption and choice, interpretations of folk customs, retail and information, marketing plan and standardization