

SOCIAL INFLUENCE AND THE DECISION TO COMPLAIN: INVESTIGATIONS ON THE ROLE OF ADVICE

Teresa N. Malafi, U.S. Army Natick Res., Dev. & Eng. Center
Marie A. Cini, University of Pittsburgh
Sarah L. Taub, U.S. Army Natick Res., Dev. & Eng. Center
Jennifer Bertolami, U.S. Army Natick Res., Dev. & Eng. Center

ABSTRACT

Two studies were conducted to examine the effect of advice on the decision to place a formal complaint. Study 1 was a simulation experiment in which participants read an essay describing a problem with food at a restaurant. The presence and nature of advice from a companion was manipulated within the essay. Results indicated that participants advised to complain were more likely to do so than those who did not receive such advice. In addition, compared to those advised to complain, participants advised not to complain were more likely to do nothing about the problem. Study 2 was a cross-sectional survey in which participants described a time they had experienced a problem with food at a restaurant. They then answered questions about their complaint behavior and the advice they received from family and friends. Results showed that, compared to non-complainants, complainants were more likely to receive advice to complain, less likely to receive advice to forget about the problem, and had fewer companions present. The results of both studies are discussed in terms of the usefulness of a multimethod research approach and the necessity of continued examination of the impact of social influence on complaint behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Research shows that dissatisfied consumers often talk to members of their informal social networks (e.g., family and friends) when they experience problems with products or services (Day & Ash, 1979; Day & Landon, 1977; Diener & Greyser, 1978; Malafi, 1990; Richins, 1983). Because this communication is reciprocal, i.e., consumers talk to family and friends who talk back to them, it may influence the decision to enact a formal response like placing a complaint to a seller or service provider (Malafi, 1991). One way such influence can occur is through the advice that dissatisfied consumers receive from family and

friends. Ruback, Greenberg and Westcott (1984) define advice as statements suggesting and advocating a specific course of action to solve a problem. In their research on responses to criminal victimization, victims who were advised by others to call the police were more likely to report a crime than victims not given such advice (Greenberg, Ruback & Westcott, 1982). Similar effects have been demonstrated with those seeking psychiatric and health care services (Gottlieb, 1976).

There is evidence that dissatisfied consumers, like individuals experiencing other negative life events (Wortman & Dunkel-Schetter, 1987), receive advice from their informal social networks. In one study (Malafi, 1990), 70% of respondents reported getting advice from friends and family about what they should do following a consumer problem. Like the decision to call the police or seek psychiatric or health care services, this informal communication may affect a consumer's decision to place a formal complaint. Depending on situational and individual factors, experiencing a problem with a product or service is likely to produce stress that can impede cognitive functioning. The result may be uncertainty about how to act (Ruback et al., 1984). Under these circumstances, the dissatisfied consumer may be particularly susceptible to the influence of other people (Darley & Aronson, 1966). Asking for and receiving advice can affect complaint behavior directly by providing information about how a problem should be solved or indirectly by helping to define a problem or determine its seriousness. Influence exerted in this way is similar to what Deutsch and Gerard (1955) call informational social influence. The consumer accepts the advice because it offers information about a solution and acts accordingly. Advice from informal others can also influence complaint behavior by providing the consumer with information about reference group opinions. Here, the consumer follows the advice of informal others not because of its content, but to gain approval or to avoid negative evaluation

(e.g., see Sorenson & Strahle, 1990). In this situation, advice functions as normative social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955).

The studies reported here were conducted to examine the impact of advice on consumers' decisions to place (or not to place) formal complaints. It was expected that the propensity to complain would be related to the advice consumers obtain from their informal social networks. Two methodologies - a simulation experiment and a cross-sectional survey - were used. The advantages of using a multimethod approach are twofold. First, the strengths of one method compensate for weaknesses in the other. A simulation experiment allows for the easy manipulation of independent variables. As a result, information about causal relationships is gained (Darroch & Steiner, 1970; Greenberg, 1967; Malafi, 1993). However, the problem with this technique is that the results may not reflect how individuals behave in the real world. A cross-sectional survey compensates for this weakness by tapping into people's actual experiences, although it cannot provide the kind of causal information that a simulation experiment can (Campbell & Stanley, 1966). The second advantage of a multimethod approach is that if convergent findings are demonstrated with two different methods, the likelihood that the findings can be attributed to the phenomenon in question rather than to errors in the individual methods is increased (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Greenberg et al., 1982).

STUDY 1

Study 1 was a simulation experiment. Participants read an essay describing a problem with food at a restaurant. The independent variable, the degree and nature of advice from a companion, was manipulated within the essay. Participants were told either that (1) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who advised complaining; (2) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who advised not complaining; (3) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who offered no advice; or (4) the protagonist was at the restaurant alone. After reading the essay, participants indicated the likelihood that they would enact several responses

related to placing or not placing a formal complaint. It was predicted that those who were advised by a friend to complain would be more likely to talk to the server about the problem and to seek means to remedy the situation (ask for the food originally ordered) than those advised not to complain, those who were given no advice by a friend, and those who were alone. Similarly, those who were advised not to complain would be more likely to do nothing about the problem than those advised to complain, those who were accompanied by a friend who gave no advice, and those who were alone.

Method

Participants. Participants were 122 students (85 females; 37 males) in several lower level psychology courses who volunteered to take part in the study for extra credit. The mean age of the sample was approximately 26 years old.

Stimuli and Procedure. Participants were asked to place themselves in the position of the protagonist in an essay describing a problem with food at a restaurant. To control perceptions of the event and to minimize the impact of variables besides social influence that may affect responses, all participants read that the protagonist was having a very busy day, but would have a short break for lunch, something that he/she was really looking forward to. When lunch time finally arrived, the protagonist was described as going to a nearby restaurant that was very busy. After a short wait, a server took the protagonist's order, and, after another wait, he/she received the order. To generate dissatisfaction, all participants were told that the protagonist had received the wrong sandwich.

The independent variable, the presence and nature of advice, was manipulated within the essay. Through random assignment, participants read that either (1) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who advised him/her to complain [FRIEND - ADVISE COMPLAINT]; (2) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who advised him/her not to complain [FRIEND - ADVISE NO COMPLAINT]; (3) the protagonist was accompanied by a friend who offered no advice [FRIEND - NO ADVICE]; or (4) the

protagonist was at the restaurant alone [ALONE]. Condition (3) was included to determine whether the effects of advice could be attributed to the specific information it provides to consumers about how to handle a problem, or to the impact of the mere presence of other people on behavior. If the effects of advice are due simply to the presence of other people, then there should be no difference, for example, in intentions to complain between those who were advised by a friend to complain and those who were accompanied by a friend who offered no advice.

After reading the essay, participants estimated how dissatisfied they would be in response to the problem in the essay. Ratings were made on a seven-point scale (1 = not at all dissatisfied; 7 = very dissatisfied). Participants then indicated the likelihood that they would (1) talk to the server about the problem; (2) ask for the sandwich they had originally ordered; and (3) do nothing. All responses were made on seven-point scales (1 = definitely would not react in this way; 7 = definitely would react in this way).

Next, participants answered questions to determine if the information given in the essay to control their perceptions of the event was effective. On seven-point scales, they rated how much time they had for lunch (1 = not a lot of time; 7 = a lot of time) and how busy the restaurant was at the time of the meal (1 = not busy; 7 = very busy). Participants also rated how easy it was for them to place themselves in the situation described in the essay (1 = not easy; 7 = very easy). After completing the questionnaire, participants were given written feedback about the purpose of the study and thanked for their participation.

Results

Preliminary Analyses. The mean dissatisfaction score was 4.97, indicating a moderate level of dissatisfaction was generated by the problem in the essay. Preliminary analyses also revealed that the information provided in the essay to control perceptions of the event was effective. Participants believed they did not have a lot of time for lunch (mean = 2.39) and that the restaurant was busy (mean = 6.12). In addition, participants rated their ability to place themselves

in the situation described in the essay as easy (mean = 6.31). There were no significant differences in these three ratings or in the level of dissatisfaction across conditions of the independent variable.

The Impact of Social Influence on Consumers' Responses. Participants' mean estimates of the likelihood that they would engage in each of the responses across the four conditions of the independent variable are displayed in Figure 1. Hypotheses were tested through a series of planned comparisons ($p < .05$). First, it was predicted that, compared to the other groups, those participants in the FRIEND - ADVISE COMPLAINT condition would be more likely to talk to the server about the problem and to ask for their original sandwich. These predictions were supported. Figure 1 shows that participants who were advised by a friend to complain were significantly more likely to indicate that they would talk to the server about the problem (mean = 6.51) than those in each of the other conditions. In addition, those in the FRIEND - ADVISE NO COMPLAINT condition were significantly less likely to believe they would display this behavior (mean = 3.03) than participants in the FRIEND - NO ADVICE (mean = 4.45) and ALONE (mean = 4.99) conditions. Similar results occurred when participants were asked to estimate if they would ask for their original order. As seen in Figure 1, those advised by a friend to complain were significantly more likely to believe that they would enact this behavior (mean = 5.60) than those in each of the other conditions. Moreover, those in the FRIEND - ADVISE NO COMPLAINT condition were significantly less likely to indicate that they would display this behavior (mean = 2.88) than participants in the FRIEND - NO ADVICE (mean = 4.63) and ALONE (mean = 4.09) conditions. Interestingly, Figure 1 also shows that there were no significant differences in intentions to talk to the server about the problem and to ask for the original sandwich between those participants in the FRIEND - NO ADVICE condition and the ALONE condition.

Participants' estimates of the likelihood that they would do nothing about the problem were also examined. It was predicted that those in the FRIEND - ADVISE NO COMPLAINT condition

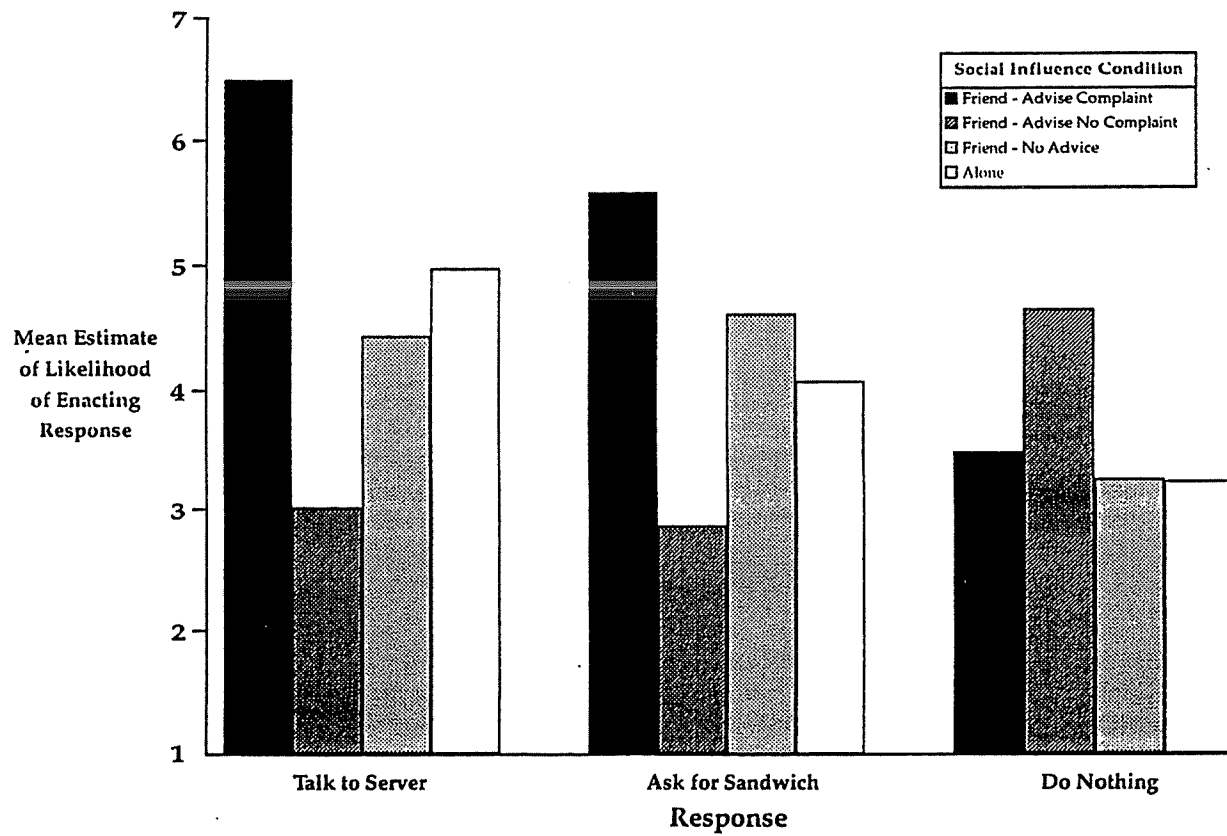


Figure 1. Participants' mean estimates of the likelihood of enacting each response for each social influence condition (1 = Definitely would not react that way; 7 = Definitely would react that way).

would be more likely to believe they would enact these responses than those in the other conditions. This hypothesis was supported. As depicted in Figure 1, when compared to participants in each of the other conditions, those who were told not to complain were more likely to estimate that they would do nothing (mean = 4.66). Figure 1 also reveals that the estimated likelihood of doing nothing about the problem did not differ significantly among those in the FRIEND - ADVISE COMPLAINT (mean = 3.50), FRIEND - NO ADVICE (mean = 3.27) and ALONE (mean = 3.25) conditions.

Discussion

The results of this simulation experiment support the role of advice in determining complaint behavior. This was the case despite a situation in which participants were led to believe that the restaurant they were attending was busy and that they had little time for lunch, conditions that would presumably increase the cost of complaining and therefore discourage it (Richins, 1979). Advice about what to do was especially influential on responses related to making a complaint. Those accompanied by a friend who suggested that they make a complaint were significantly more likely to believe that they would talk to the server about the problem and ask for their original order than those accompanied by a friend who advised against complaining, those accompanied by a friend who offered no advice, and those who were alone. Conversely, participants who were advised not to complain were significantly less likely to enact the two responses above, but significantly more likely to estimate that they would do nothing about the problem than the remaining groups.

It is also interesting to note that there were no significant differences between the responses of those in the FRIEND - NO ADVICE condition and the ALONE condition. Those accompanied by a friend who gave no advice were no more likely to complain (or not to complain) than those who were at the restaurant alone. These data suggest that it is the information the consumer receives from advice, whether it provides direction about solving the problem or about reference group opinions, that influences complaint behavior rather than simply the mere presence of other people. Also

supporting the importance of advice is the fact that the level of dissatisfaction did not differ significantly across the four conditions and therefore did not contribute to any differences in intentions to complain evidenced among the groups.

To summarize, the findings of Study 1 showed support for the effect of advice on complaint behavior. In addition, the use of a simulation experiment suggests that the relationship between the two could be a causal one. However, because this method often lacks realism, it is unclear if the effects found here are specific to the hypothetical situation under study, or if they accurately portray the influences on dissatisfied consumers' behavior in the real world. Examining the impact of advice on consumers' actual complaint behavior would complement the findings of Study 1.

STUDY 2

Study 2 was a cross-sectional survey in which participants described a time they had been dissatisfied with food in a restaurant and then answered questions about the influence of advice on their decision to place or not to place a complaint. The goal of Study 2 was to determine the ability of variables related to advice and social influence to discriminate between consumers who responded to a problem with a complaint and those who did not. It was predicted that, relative to the consumer's level of dissatisfaction and the number of people present when the incident occurred, advice to complain would hold the greatest power to discriminate between complainants and non-complainants. Moreover, complainants would be more likely than non-complainants to report receiving advice to complain, while non-complainants compared to complainants would be more likely to indicate receiving advice to forget about the problem.

Method

Participants. Sixty-two students in two lower-level psychology courses volunteered to participate in the study for extra credit. The responses of five students were eliminated due to incomplete data. Of the remaining 57 participants, 80% were female. The mean age of the sample

was approximately 22 years old.

Procedure. Using the critical incident technique (Curren & Folkes, 1987), participants described a time they had experienced a problem with food served at a restaurant. They rated how dissatisfied they were at the time the incident occurred on a seven-point scale (1 = not dissatisfied; 7 = very dissatisfied). Next, they indicated whether they had made a complaint to the server about the problem by circling "yes" or "no".

Participants were also asked if anyone (e.g., family, friends) had accompanied them to the restaurant when the problem occurred. If they responded "no," they were advised to return the questionnaire. If they responded "yes," they continued with a series of questions related to the role of social influence and advice. Participants indicated (1) the number of people who had accompanied them, (2) whether their companion(s) had advised them to make a complaint ("yes" or "no"), and (3) whether their companion(s) had advised them to forget about the problem ("yes" or "no"). When participants completed the questionnaires, they returned them to the instructor, received written feedback about the study's purpose, and were dismissed.

RESULTS

All participants had at least one companion present when the event occurred. Fifty-seven percent of the sample reported making a complaint to the server about the problem. Columns 1 and 2 of Table 1 provide information about complainants and non-complainants relative to the four independent variables - level of dissatisfaction, number of people present when the incident occurred, the percentage receiving advice to complain, and the percentage receiving advice to forget about the problem. Although the two groups did not differ in terms of the level of dissatisfaction they had experienced, complainants were significantly more likely to receive advice to complain, significantly less likely to be advised to forget about the problem, and had significantly fewer companions present than non-complainants.

Table 1
Summary Statistics for Each Independent Variable in the Discriminant Analysis

Variable	Complainants		Non-Complainants		Discriminant Function Coefficient	Wilks' Lambda	r*
	M	%	M	%			
Level of dissatisfaction	5.64		5.60		.03	.97	.11
Number of companions	1.12		2.55		-.22	.53	-.39
Advice to complain	83%		42%**		.91	.35	.84
Advice to forget about problem	35%**		44%**		-.37	.69	-.23

* r=correlation between independent variable and the discriminant function.

** Percentages reflect the proportion of respondents who reported receiving this type of advice.

A discriminant analysis was conducted to determine the relative contribution of the four independent variables to discriminating between complainants and non-complainants. The coefficients for each variable in the discriminant function are listed in column 3 of Table 1. The function had a correct classification rate of 65%, a significant increase from the 50% rate based on chance alone ($X[1] = 9.00$; $p < .01$). The discriminant function also produced the following statistics: Wilks' Lambda = .63, chi-square = 18.44, $df = 4$, $p < .01$. These results suggest that, overall, the function discriminated reasonably well between those who had placed a complaint and those who had not.

The ability of the individual independent variables to discriminate between the groups was examined in two ways. First, Wilks' lambda was calculated for each variable. The smaller the value of lambda, the greater the difference between the groups (i.e., between complainants and non-complainants). As can be seen in Column 4 of Table 1, compared to the other variables, the smallest lambda emerged for advice to complain. This was followed by advice to forget about the problem, the number of companions present at the

time of the incident, and the amount of dissatisfaction generated by the problem. The discriminant ability of each independent variable was also examined by estimating the correlation between the variable and the discriminant function. These appear in Column 5 of Table 1. The largest correlation occurred between the function and advice to complain, followed by the correlations between the function and advice to forget about the problem and the number of companions present. Level of dissatisfaction had almost no relationship to the discriminant function. Examining this information about the discriminant ability of each independent variables with the figures in Columns 1 and 2 of Table 1 reveals that, compared to non-complainants, complainants were more likely to have received advice to complain, less likely to have been given advice to forget about the problem, and had fewer companions present. In contrast, non-complainants were less likely to have been advised to complain, more likely to have been advised to forget about the problem, and had more companions present than complainants.

DISCUSSION

Study 2 looked at the ability of variables related to social influence and the receipt of advice to distinguish between consumers who had complained to a server about a problem with food in a restaurant and those who had not. Overall, the combination of independent variables discriminated reasonably well between complainants and non-complainants. Moreover, three of the four variables proved to be good discriminators individually. Receiving advice to complain held the most discriminant value, followed by advice to forget about the problem. As expected, complainants were more likely than non-complainants to report receiving advice to complain, while non-complainants were more likely to say they were advised not to complain relative to complainants. The number of people present also made a significant contribution. Complainants had fewer companions with them when the problem occurred than non-complainants. Although the exact reasons for this are not apparent from these data, it is possible that this finding reflects a phenomenon similar to the bystander effect (Latane, Nida & Wilson, 1981).

Applied to the situation examined here, as the number of companions present increased, consumers were less likely to complain, possibly because responsibility for making a complaint was diffused among members of the group, especially if the problem involved more than one person's order. Finally, the only independent variable that did not distinguish between complainants and non-complainants was level of dissatisfaction. There was almost no difference between the groups on this variable.

The results of this survey study provide evidence for the presence and influence of advice in the real-world experiences of dissatisfied consumers. However, use of the survey technique warrants some caution in the interpretation of findings. Because of its retrospective nature, participants may have forgotten the details of the event or their recall of the event may have been biased. Complainants, for example, may have been more likely to remember receiving advice to complain because it supports what they actually did, or because it coincided with the belief that other people supported their actions. In addition, although advice discriminated between those who had complained and those who had not, information about causality cannot be inferred from a cross-sectional survey. Therefore, the results of Study 2 are best considered in conjunction with those of Study 1. The implications of the two studies are discussed next.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The results of the two investigations reported here provide support for the influence of advice on complaint behavior. In Study 1 and Study 2, consumers followed the advice they were given about how to respond to a problem with food at a restaurant. Those who were advised by a companion to make a complaint were more likely to talk to the server about the problem than those who had not received such advice. Similarly, those who were told to forget about the problem were more likely to refrain from complaining than those not given this advice. These studies also indicate that the impact of advice has more to do with the specific information it provides to consumers about solutions or reference group opinions than to the mere presence of other

people. In Study 1 those advised to complain were more apt to do so than those accompanied by a friend who gave no advice. Furthermore, there were no differences between the responses of participants accompanied by a friend who gave no advice and the responses of those who were at the restaurant alone. Also in Study 2, the advice consumers received about how to respond held greater discriminating value than the number of people who had accompanied the consumer. Lastly, in both studies, the amount of dissatisfaction generated by the problem exerted little influence over the decision to complain. This is consistent with previous research on factors affecting complaint behavior (See Robinson, 1979; Singh & Howell, 1985 for reviews).

The studies reported here also highlight the usefulness of a multimethod approach. The strengths of each method compensated well for the weaknesses inherent in the other. Study 1, a simulation experiment, revealed that the relationship between advice and complaint behavior could be a causal one. However, the potential lack of realism often characterizing a simulation experiment raises questions about the real-world validity of the findings. Study 2, a cross-sectional survey of consumers' actual experiences of dissatisfaction, replicated the findings of Study 1. Although the retrospective nature of the study makes it difficult to make causal statements, this deficiency was compensated for by use of a simulation experiment. In addition, the convergent findings of Studies 1 and 2 regarding advice support the importance of this variable in determining complaint behavior. Examining the two studies together reveals that advice to complain plays a causal role in consumers' actual responses to dissatisfaction.

In conclusion, the studies reported here suggest the importance of investigating the effects of social influence and informal communication on complaint behavior further. Most of the previous research on these topics (e.g., Curren & Folkes, 1987; Richins, 1983) has examined negative word-of-mouth (WOM), whereby a dissatisfied consumer relays information about a faulty product or service to informal others in an effort to warn them about the situation. However, few studies have looked at motives for informal communication besides negative WOM and if or

how this communication influences formal responses. The research reported here builds on an earlier study (Malafi, 1990) that found that consumers talk to informal others for a variety of reasons, among them to receive advice. Both studies discussed here show that informal communication in the form of advice can influence complaint behavior. Future research should assess the specific ways in which advice contributes to complaint behavior. Under what circumstances does advice serve as informational social influence and as normative social influence (Deutsch & Gerard, 1955)? In addition, because responses to dissatisfaction are multi-determined phenomena, the role of social influence should also be examined in conjunction with other variables (e.g., attributions about causality, attitudes toward complaining, etc.), in populations besides college students, and with other product categories. Finally, given the consequences of customer satisfaction in terms of discontinued patronage and negative WOM, a better understanding of the factors that influence how consumers react to dissatisfaction would benefit business, too.

REFERENCES

- Campbell, D. T. and J.C. Stanley (1966), *Experimental and quasi-experimental designs for research*. Chicago, IL: Rand-McNally.
- Curren, M. and V. S. Folkes (1987), "Attributional Influences on Consumers' Desires to Communicate About Products," *Psychology and Marketing*, 4, 31-45.
- Darley, J. M. and E. Aronson (1966, Supplement 1), "Self-Evaluation vs. Direct Anxiety Reduction as Determinants of the Fear-Affiliation Relationship," *Journal of Experimental Social Psychology*, 66-79.
- Darroch, R. K. and I. D. Steiner (1970), "Role-Playing: An Alternative to Laboratory Research," *Journal of Personality*, 38, 302-311.
- Day, R. L. and S. B. Ash (1979), "Consumer Responses to Dissatisfaction with Durable Products," in W. L. Wilkie (Ed.) *Advances in Consumer Research*, (Vol. 6), Ann Arbor, MI: Association for Consumer Research.
- Day, R. L. and E. L. Landon (1977), "Toward a Theory of Consumer Complaining," in A. G. Woodside et al.; (Eds.), *Consumer and Industrial Buying Behavior*. New York: North-Holland.
- Deutsch, M. and H. B. Gerard (1955), "A Study of Normative and Informational Social Influences Upon Individual Judgment," *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*, 41, 629-636.

- Diener, B. J. and S. A. Greyser (1978), "Consumer Views of Redress Needs," *Journal of Marketing*, 42, 21-27.
- Gottlieb, B. H. (1976), "Lay Influences on the Utilization of Health Services: A Review," *Canadian Psychological Review*, 17, 126-136.
- Greenberg, M. S. (1967), "Role-Playing: An Alternative to Deception?" *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 7, 152-157.
- Greenberg, M. S., R. B. Ruback and D. R. Westcott (1982). "Decision-Making by Crime Victims: A Multimethod Approach," *Law & Society Review*, 17, 47-84.
- Latane, B., S. A. Nida and D. W. Wilson (1981), "The Effects of Group Size on Helping Behavior," in J. P. Rushton and R. M. Sorrentino (Eds.), *Altruism and Helping Behavior: Social, Personality and Developmental Perspectives*, Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Malafi, T. N. (1990), *Informal Communication Following Consumer Dissatisfaction*, paper presented at the annual conference of the Eastern Psychological Association, Philadelphia, PA.
- Malafi, T. N. (1991), "The Impact of Social Influence on Consumer Complaint Behavior," *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 4, 144-150.
- Malafi, T. N. (1993), Consumer-seller Relationships and Responses to Dissatisfaction, Manuscript under review.
- Richins, M. L. (1979), "Consumer Perceptions of the Costs and Benefits Associated with Complaint Behavior," in R. L. Day and H. K. Hunt (Eds.), *New Dimensions of Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Richins, M. L. (1983), "Negative Word-of-Mouth by Dissatisfied Consumers: A Pilot Study," *Journal of Marketing*, 47, 68-78.
- Robinson, L. M. (1979), "Consumer Complaint Behavior: A Review with Implications for Future Research," in R. L. Day and H. K. Hunt (Eds.), *New Dimensions of Consumer Satisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Ruback, R. B., M. S. Greenberg and D. R. Westcott (1984), "Social Influence and Crime-Victim Decision-Making," *Journal of Social Issues*, 40, 51-76.
- Singh, J. and R. Howell (1985), "Consumer Complaining Behavior: A Review and Prospectus," in H. K. Hunt and R. L. Day (Eds.), *Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, Bloomington, IN: Indiana University.
- Sorenson, R. C. and W. M. Strahle (1990), "An Analysis of the Social Aspects of Complaint Reporting: A Survey of VCR Owners," *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior*, 3, 82-91.
- Wortman, C. B. and C. Dunkel-Schetter (1987), "Conceptual and Methodological Issues in the Study of

Social Support," in A. Baum and J. E. Singer (Eds.), *Handbook of psychology and health, Vol. 4 - Stress*, (pp. 63-108), Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Send correspondence regarding this article to:

Teresa N. Malafi
U.S Army Natick R,D & E Center
CRB/BSO/SSD
Kansas St., Natick, MA 01760-5020.