LOYALTY'S INFLUENCE ON THE CONSUMER SATISFACTION AND (RE) PURCHASE BEHAVIOR RELATIONSHIP

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ABSTRACT

While consumer satisfaction has been a topic of significant scholarly interest in recent years, continued studies that further our understanding of satisfaction and its association with (re)purchase behavior are valuable because such knowledge will enhance theorists' and practitioners' ability to develop more effective marketing strategies. Interestingly, current literature indicates that consumer loyalty may have an association with satisfaction, (re)purchase behavior and the predictive relationships between these phenomena. To this end, we present here an empirical study which finds that consumer loyalty is two distinct constructs (*behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty*) and that they mediate the predictive relationships between the *meets expectations* and *feeling state* satisfaction constructs and *(re)purchase behavior*. The study employed two well-known brands and Structural Equation Modeling methodology.

INTRODUCTION

Consumer satisfaction has been a topic of notable scholarly attention in recent decades, and continued studies that further enlighten our understanding of satisfaction are warranted because of its importance to consumers, theorists and practitioners (Oliver 1997, 1999). An insight into the satisfaction phenomenon that is indicated in literature, but one which has received limited empirical study is its potential linkage with consumer loyalty (Pritchard, Havitz and Howard 1999), and the likely predictive relationships between these constructs and (re)purchase behavior (Jacoby and Kyner 1973).

In seeking to better understand the satisfaction, loyalty and (re)purchase behavior constructs and their potential relationships, an in-depth literature review was conducted. The review revealed that some (e.g. Tucker 1964) view loyalty as reflecting one's *behavioral loyalty* toward a product (purchase frequency of the product), and others (e.g. Berger and Mitchell 1989) suggest it refers to individuals' *attitudinal loyalty* (favor/ disfavor toward a product). Some (e.g. Russell-Bennett, McColl-Kennedy and Coote 2007) view that *attitudinal loyalty* has a predictive path that leads to *behavioral loyalty*, and some (e.g. Dimitriades 2006) believe that *attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* merge into an overarching macro construct. Regardless of one's view, however, literature appears to be consistent in suggesting that *loyalty* influences the predictive relationship between satisfaction and (re)purchase behavior (Pritchard, et al. 1999).

Based on the importance of loyalty (Bandyopadhyay, Gupta and Dube 2005), of satisfaction (Pritchard et al. 1999) and of one's (re)purchase behavior of a product (Reichheld 1994), we assert that additional research is needed to further our under-standing of these constructs and their potential relationships. Such studies would likely yield new knowledge that scholars can disseminate to practitioners to help them develop more successful marketing strategies (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele 2004).

The empirical study discussed in this article builds upon an exploratory study

conducted by Ross, Broyles and Leingpibul (2008), which revealed that consumer satisfaction entails two distinct constructs that are linked only by a certain degree of covariance. Drawing from literature on the loyalty phenomenon in order to conduct a study that furthers our understanding of satisfaction, this article will address the following research questions: i) Is consumer loyalty two distinct constructs, and ii) Does consumer loyalty influence the predictive relationship between the two consumer satisfaction constructs and (re)purchase behavior?

The article begins with a discussion of consumer satisfaction and consumer loyalty, after which it presents hypotheses to examine the noted research questions. The article provides details of a study that tests the referenced hypotheses, using two well-known brands, after which the findings that loyalty is two distinct constructs is discussed, and that their association with consumer satisfaction -> (re)purchase behavior is one in which *attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* mediate this predictive relationship. We close by discussing the study's implications, and by offering ideas for future research.

CONCEPTUAL DEVELOPMENT

The Importance of Consumer Satisfaction

While scholars take disparate views, extant literature contains frequent discussion of consumer satisfaction as being an important phenomenon. We believe that furthering our understanding of satisfaction's significance, such as its predictive relationship with (re)purchase behavior, is important for one to fully comprehend the phenomenon. While scholarly studies in recent decades have greatly enhanced our understanding of satisfaction, we need continued research that further expands our knowledge of satisfaction and its influence on (re)purchase behavior. This belief is based on awareness that there have been an inadequate number of studies which have studied the outcomes of satisfaction (Szymanski and Henard 2001; Pappu and Quester 2006). However, we would be remiss if we failed to recognize some consequences of satisfaction that are noted in current literature. For example,

i) If a firm has satisfied consumers, it will have an enhanced ability to extend its brand(s) to other products and product categories, which saves the firm money by reducing its cost of launching new products (Reast 2005; Thamaraiselvan and Raja 2008);

ii) Satisfied consumers exhibit positive word-of-mouth (Soderlund and Ohman 2003; Golicic, Broyles and Woodruff 2003; Lymperopoulos and Chaniotakis 2008), which "…is one of the most important factors in acquiring new customers" (Jones and Sasser 1995, p. 94);

iii) Satisfied consumers enable a firm to charge higher prices for its product(s) because consumers will typically tolerate higher prices (Reichheld 1996; Oliver 1997);

iv) Consumers' (re)purchase decision process is simplified if they are satisfied (Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher 1978) ;

v) And, satisfied consumers have a greater likelihood of (re)purchasing a firm's product(s) in the future (Cardozo 1969; Oliver 1980, 1997; Vanhamme and Snelders 2001).

The overall significance of these outcomes of consumer satisfaction is captured by Oliver's (1997, 1999) discussion that they have predictive relationships with the level of a firm's sales, profitability, and market valuation.

What is Consumer Satisfaction?

Oliver (1999) captures the need for continued satisfaction studies by discussing that even if a firm's consumers are satisfied,

their defection rates with respect to (re)purchase behavior toward a firm's product(s) can be as high as 90%. The importance of (re)purchase behavior is captured by Reichheld (1994) noting it is a critical element in a firm achieving increased sales and profitability. He states "…a decrease in defection rates of five percentage points can increase profits by 25% - 100%" (p. 13).

While literature contains frequent discussion of satisfaction and its importance, it also includes an array of definitions of the phenomenon (e.g. Clerfeuille and Poubanne 2003). For example, Oliver (1980) discusses the expectancy disconfirmation satisfaction model in which he notes that satisfaction refers to the outcome of one's cognitive evaluation (disconfirmation) of whether a product usage experience (performance) meets their pre-usage expectations (*meets expectations*). As stated by Golicic, Broyles and Woodruff (2003), "If the perceived performance matches the comparison standard, confirmation occurs and satisfaction results" (p. 125).

Westbrook (1987) and Bei and Chiao (2001) take a somewhat divergent view of satisfaction by stating that it reflects one's affective feeling state (*feeling state*) toward a product. This view indicates that satisfaction is an internal frame of mind tied to one's mental (psychological) interpretations of a product's performance levels (Oliver 1997).

Others (e.g. Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987) suggest that *meets expectations* has a predictive path leading to one's *affective feeling state*, while some (e.g. Jun, Hyun, Gentry and Song 2001) discuss that *meets expectations* and *affective feeling state* likely merge into an overarching macro satisfaction construct. Oliver (1997) captures this thought by discussing that satisfaction is a construct that contains both "…components of judgment (e.g. cognition) and affect (e.g. emotion)" (p. 20).

To help clarify the satisfaction phenomenon, Ross et al. (2008) examined whether one's cognitive evaluation of a product's performance (*meets expectations*), and their affective *feeling state* toward a product are two distinct constructs related by a directional path, or whether they merge into a macro construct. They found the *meets expectations* and the *feeling state* perspectives of satisfaction are two distinct constructs that are related only by a certain degree of covariance.

Consumer Loyalty

Insight into loyalty is found in Oliver's (1997) discussion that the phenomenon entails cognitive, affective, conative and action aspects. He views cognitive loyalty as a reflection of a consumer feeling compelled to prefer "…one brand over another" (p. 392). Regarding the affective aspect, Oliver (1997) views this as attitudinal and a function of one experiencing dis-confirmation of their product usage expectations. With respect to the conative facet of loyalty, he discusses that it is a "behavioral intention dimension of loyalty" (p. 393) (referring to one's intention or commitment to buy a brand). Lastly, Oliver (1997) notes that loyalty also entails an action aspect, in that it reflects one's purchase of a brand. Interestingly, Oliver (1997) views these four aspects as stages of loyalty with his discussion that after an individual experiences cognitive loyalty toward a brand, they become attitudinally loyal (affective) toward that brand, which leads to one becoming committed to buy a certain brand, after which they embark on the actual purchase of that brand.

Recent literature emboldens the consideration that loyalty entails more than one construct. For example, Day (1969), Jones and Sasser (1995), and East, Gendall, Hammond and Lomax (2005) indicate that brand loyalty includes one's repeat purchase of a brand (behavioral aspect), and their attitudes toward that brand (affective aspect). Oliver (1997, 1999), Bandyopadhyay, Gupta

and Dube (2005), and Powers and Valentine (2008) denote the behavioral aspect (*behavioral loyalty*) by suggesting that consumer loyalty refers to the frequency and regularity of one's (re)purchases of a firm's product(s) over time. The affective aspect is found in Jacoby and Chestnut (1978), Berger and Mitchell (1989), Oliver (1997), and Powers and Valentine (2008), who discuss that loyalty entails one's attitudes (*attitudinal loyalty*) toward and beliefs about a product (i.e. favor/disfavor toward a product). The importance of this attitudinal perspective is noted in Dick and Basu's (1994) paper, in which the authors state that "Customer loyalty is…the strength of the relationship between an individual's relative attitude and repeat patronage" (p. 99). Interesting insights into *behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty* are found in Jacoby and Kyner 1973; Jacoby, Chestnut and Fisher 1978; and, Dimitriades 2006, who suggest they may merge into an overarching macro construct. East et al. (2005) appear to support this view by stating "…our findings should cause marketers to question whether loyalty should be seen as some combination of relative attitude and repeat patronage" (p. 21). With respect to the attitudinal and behavioral aspects of loyalty, East et al. (2005) further state that "..each component facilitates the other and one component on its own is insufficient" (p. 11).

Jacoby and Kyner (1973) address the reasoning as to why literature contains various views of consumer loyalty by discussing that this stems from a situation in which "…inconclusive, ambiguous, or contradictory findings are the rule rather than the exception…which makes it difficult and hazardous to compare, synthesize, and accumulate findings" (p. 1) of the loyalty phenomenon.

Similar to Bennett and Rundle-Thiele (2004), we assert that to obtain knowledge which can help theorists and practitioners better understand loyalty and enhance their ability to develop more effective marketing strategies, it is necessary to explore whether loyalty entails two distinct aspects (attitudinal and behavioral) or if these aspects merge into a macro construct. On this basis, the following research hypothesis is put forth:

Hypothesis 1: *Attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* are two distinct constructs.

Another perspective regarding loyalty that is found in current literature is the belief that *behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty* are connected with a predictive path, with one's *attitudinal loyalty* toward a product leading to their *behavioral loyalty* for the item (Liska 1984; Russell-Bennett et al. 2007). Further insight into this is found in East et al.'s (2005) notation that Day's (1969) work left open whether the behavioral and attitudinal facets of loyalty are interactive (i.e. a predictive relationship path between the two constructs). To examine whether there is a relationship between *attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty*, the following research hypothesis is put forth:

Hypothesis 2: *Attitudinal loyalty* has a predictive path that leads to *behavioral loyalty*.

Potential Relationships between Satisfaction, Loyalty and (Re) purchase Behavior

Drawing from literature, it seems clear that consumer loyalty has an association with satisfaction (Pritchard et al. 1999), **and** with the predictive relationship paths between the *meets expectations* and *affective feeling state* satisfaction constructs and one's *(re)purchase behavior* of a product (Bennett and Rundle-Thiele 2004; Ross et al. 2008). For example, Oliver (1980) discusses that one's satisfaction with a product is associated with their future (re)purchase intention of that product, and indicates this relationship is likely to be mediated by one's loyalty toward the product. Oliver (1999) captures the importance of our

better understanding loyalty and its potential relationship with satisfaction and (re)purchase behavior by discussing that a loyal customer base positively impacts a firm's profits, and by stating that satisfaction and loyalty are inextricably linked. He states that satisfaction is "…an essential ingredient for the emergence of loyalty" (p. 42). Jones and Sasser (1995) lend support to this later view by noting that satisfied customers are more loyal to a firm and its products.

Based on these views, this study draws from scholars such as Oliver (1999) and Soderlund and Ohman (2005) to ask: 'Does loyalty have an association, such as mediation, with the relationship paths between the two consumer satisfaction constructs (*meets expectations* and *feeling state*) and *(re)purchase behavior'*? Before proceeding, the reader is asked to note that (re)purchase intent was employed in this study as a surrogate for (re)purchase behavior because of our belief that intent is a strong predictor of actual purchase behavior (Fishbein and Ajzen 1995; Jones and Sasser 1995; Keller 2003). Some might question employment of this surrogate. For example, in discussing findings of their consumer loyalty study, East et al. (2005) state "…the practice of using an intention measure as a proxy for retention seems unjustified" (p. 22). However, they also note that much literature contains various discussions of intent being a predictor of behavior. In discussing their own study, Chandon, Morwitz and Reinartz (2004) indicate that there is a degree of evidence that one's (re)purchase intentions of a product has some level of association with their (re)purchase behavior of that product.

Potential explanation for the mixed views as to whether intent reflects behavior is captured in Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) and East et al.'s (2005) discussion that there has been inadequate study of predictive relationships that lead to one's purchase behavior. In recognizing that empirical studies of the association between (re)purchase intent and actual behavior is limited, it was decided to employ the intent surrogate in this study, and to posit the need for future empirical studies that further examine the predictive weight of the relationship between intent and actual behavior.

If this study reveals that the relationship paths between the two satisfaction constructs (*meets expectations* and *feeling state*) and *(re)purchase intent* are mediated by *behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty*, this would enhance our understanding of the predictive relationship between satisfaction and (re)purchase behavior. It would also suggest that firms should not restrict their focus to increasing consumers' satisfaction. Rather, it would suggest that marketers should also strive to better understand what contributes to consumer loyalty, and incorporate this knowledge into their marketing strategies. To address these thoughts, we assert that the model shown in Figure 1, which builds upon Ross et al. (2008), should be employed in a study which examines satisfaction, loyalty, (re)purchase and the potential relationships between the constructs.

To this end, the following research hypotheses are put forth for determining whether loyalty influences the relationship between satisfaction and (re)purchase intent:

Hypothesis 3: The predictive relationship between *meets expectations* and (re)*purchase intent* is mediated by *behavioral loyalty*.

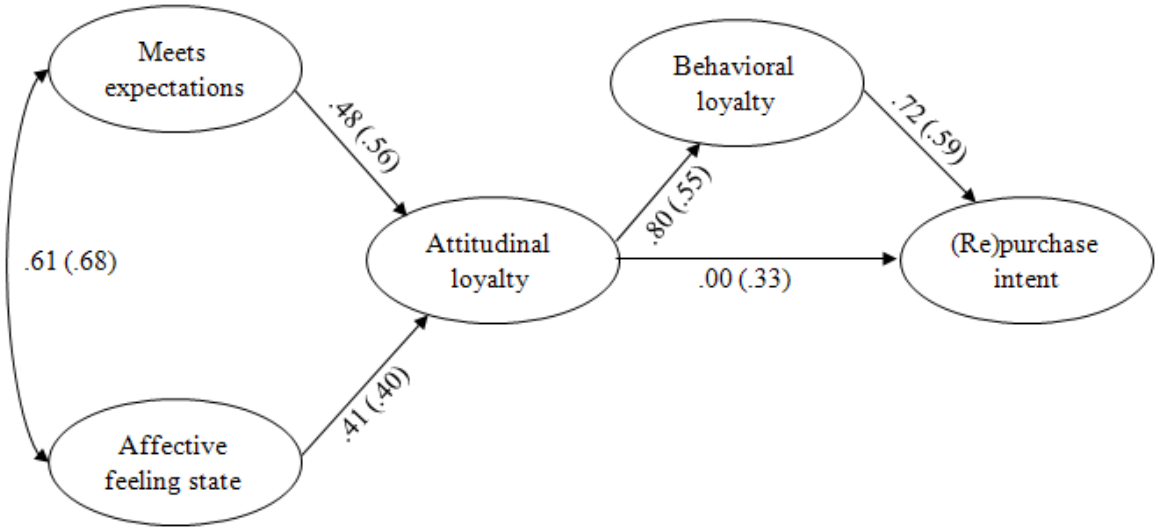
Hypothesis 4: The predictive relationship between *meets expectations* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *attitudinal loyalty.*

Hypothesis 5: The predictive relationship between *affective feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *behavioral loyalty*.

Hypothesis 6: The predictive relationship between *affective feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *attitudinal loyalty*.

FIGURE 1

Structural Model for Coca-Cola and the Gap



NOTE: Directional path weights are in the sequence of Coca-Cola followed by the (Gap) in parentheses

NOTE: Directional path weights are significant at the 95% confidence level

THE STUDY

Participant and Brand Selection

Due to their convenience, volunteer students from a Midwestern U.S. university were employed in this study. Qualitative interviews were conducted with 18 volunteers in order to identify some major brands with which they are familiar, and at least periodically use, which we assert are important factors for identifying brands that would be appropriate to use in this study. We further assert that our preference for using national brands in this study is supported, at least in part, by comments of scholars such as Aaker (1996), Yoo, Donthu and Lee (2000) and Keller (2003) about the importance of major brands to consumers, theorists and practitioners.

Of the brands named by samples, Coca-Cola and the Gap best met our familiarity and usage criteria, and were thus employed in this study. Support for selection of these brands is found in literature noting them as widely recognized by, available for and accessible to consumers (Farquhar 1994; Dawar 1998; Freling and Forbes 2005).

Survey Development

With regard to the measures employed for the *meets expectations* and *feeling state* satisfaction constructs and for *(re)purchase intent* for Coca-Cola, this study used items in Ross et al. (2008) because i.) established

satisfaction measures (such as found in the Marketing Scales Handbook) do not capture the complexities or contextualities associated with this brand (e.g. samples noted they view Coca-Cola as entailing one's evaluation of the degree to which it makes them feel refreshed, and its sweet taste); and ii.) data and analysis of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) in Ross et al. (2008) indicate that the measures loaded well to, and sufficiently reflect each construct, and that the constructs held up under empirical examination. Literature also reveals that established measures do not capture the complexities or contextualities associated with the Gap (such as offering an assortment of clothing desired by consumers).

To capture the contextualities and complexities of these two brands, new measures were developed by employing Churchill's (1979) guidelines. Care was taken to ensure that the items and the survey instrument were easy for respondents to understand and comprehend (Dillman 1978), were not vague or difficult to answer (Belson 1981), were not lengthy (Payne 1951), and did not include redundancies (Bradburn and Sudman 1978). In a similar vein as Ross, et al. (2008), because this study is confirmatory in its nature, it was determined that closed-end measures were best suited in order to avoid problems or misunderstandings that sometimes occur with studies that employ open-end questions.

Data secured through qualitative interviews conducted with volunteer student respondents and with employees of a Coca-Cola bottler and two Gap retail stores were used in developing new measures. The initial survey was reviewed by 4 subject-matter experts (SME's) to confirm the face validity of the measures, and to ensure that they adequately represent the constructs. The SME's also identified any measures that should be dropped, altered, or be added to the survey (Maurer and Tross 2000). The resultant measures were incorporated into a survey that uses a Strongly Disagree – Strongly Agree, 5-point Likert scale throughout, with the resultant questionnaire examined by various students to confirm that the survey, and its instructions and measures were easily understandable (Dillman 1978, 2000).

Pre-Test and Methodology

Employing the preliminary survey instrument, a pre-test was conducted with 204 respondents to confirm that the instrument and measurement items were readable, while also evaluating the levels of content validity and reliability. Using the pre-test data, descriptive statistics procedures in SPSS 15.0 were utilized for identifying whether any of the measures were problematic (e.g. were poorly worded or had high kurtosis). Any measures identified as being problematic were either corrected or removed if judged to be uncorrectable. Next, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), utilizing SPSS 15.0 was used to identify the degree of construct validity, and to confirm that no measures were cross-loading onto other measures, referring to a situation where "…a variable is found to have more than one significant loading" (Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham 2006, p. 130). CFA also ensured that no measures were loading weakly onto constructs. Results of the measurement model were then run in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), employing Amos 7.0 in order to confirm that the retained items are suitable for the actual study. The modification indices and normality test in SEM were also satisfied.

Conducting the Actual Study

The purified survey was completed by 298 respondents, of which fifteen were discarded due to missing data, incomplete surveys, outliers (using the multivariate data screening function in NCSS), and indifferent answer patterns. Item purification was performed using descriptive statistic results and CFA (confirmatory factor analysis). The use of descriptive statistics was to identify

any problematic measures with abnormally high kurtosis (i.e. weak item variance) or skewness (Hair et al. 2006). These items were removed. CFA was employed for ensuring the validity of the retained measures by identifying any abnormal factor loading (e.g. cross-loading and/or weak loading) (see Podsakoff and Organ 1986). In addition, results of the modification indices and abnormality tests using the measurement model in AMOS 7.0 satisfied the purification.

AMOS 7 in SEM was used to examine study data because of its appropriateness for studies that entail constructs that cannot be directly observed, but "…can only be measured via observable measures or indicators that vary in their degree of observational meaningfulness and validity" (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 2000, p. 196). Also, this method enables examination of goodness-of-fit statistics, and is apposite for studying a complex model such as employed here (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 2000). Further, SEM is an appropriate method for examining potential mediation effect on constructs with multiple measurement items (Holbert and Stephenson 2003). At the 95% confidence level, SEM with bootstrapping, and the bias-correction option was run (Shrout and Bolger 2002; Mallinckrodt, Abraham, Wei and Russell 2006), along with the causal steps (Baron and Kenny 1986) and product coefficient (MacKinnon, Lockwood, Hoffman, West and Sheets 2002) mediation testing procedures.

Since the model employed in this study is new and relatively complex, the following cut-off points for acceptability were adopted for the model: i) CMIN/DF $\leq$ 3; ii) RMSEA $\leq$ 0.08, and iii) CFI $\geq$ 0.9 (Hair et al., 2006). As shown in Table 1, the fit statistics for each brand's structural model met these standards, indicating that the measures employed in this study are sufficient (Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1998).

TABLE 1

Structural Models' Fit Statistics

Target (Hair et al. 2006)	**Chi-Square: DF**		**CFI**		**RMSEA**	
	$\leq$ 3: 1		$\geq$ .9		$\leq$ .08	
	Coca-Cola	Gap	Coca-Cola	Gap	Coca-Cola	Gap
Results	1.90: 1	2.56: 1	0.98	0.97	0.06	0.08

As shown in Table 2 (statistical results for Coca-Cola) and Table 3 (statistical results for the Gap), only strong measures were retained for each construct. All of the retained items achieved the goal of having a parameter weight $\geq$ .7 at a confidence level of 95% (Hair et al. 2006). These results indicate that the retained measures belong to the construct to which they loaded (Hair et al. 2006), which provides support that the constructs shown in each brand's structural model hold up as distinct constructs. Further support that the constructs hold up is found in Tables 2 and 3's indication that each construct's Cronbach's Alpha value met the oft cited value of $\geq$ 0.70 (Hair et al. 2006).

TABLE 2

Statistical Results for the Coca-Cola Structural Model

Constructs and items	Parameter Estimate	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Extracted
Meets expectations: Coca-Cola:					
Makes me feel refreshed	0.84	2.86	1.24	0.85	0.65
Has the sweet taste that I want	0.78	3.05	1.24		
Satisfies my thirst	0.80	2.82	1.19		
Affective feeling state: Typically, whenever I drink Coca-Cola, I feel:					
Content with the product	0.79	3.24	1.14	0.93	0.76
Good about my decision to drink the product	0.88	2.87	1.13		
Happy with my decision to drink the product	0.92	2.92	1.16		
Satisfied with my decision to drink the product	0.91	3.03	1.14		
Attitudinal loyalty: When I drink Coca-Cola, it is because Coca-Cola:					
Makes me feel good	0.79	2.77	1.31	0.88	0.72
Is a brand that I like	0.86	2.55	1.16		
Has a taste that I like	0.89	3.02	1.32		
Behavioral loyalty: Coca-Cola is the brand of soft drink that I:					
Buy whenever I am given a choice of soft drinks	0.95	2.28	1.41	0.96	0.89
Drink more frequently	0.92	2.23	1.37		
Drink whenever I want to treat myself with a soft drink	0.96	2.26	1.37		
(Re) purchase intent: In the future:					
I will drink Coca-Cola more often than other brands of soft drinks	0.96	2.32	1.35	0.91	0.79
The next time I want a soft drink I am likely to buy Coca-Cola	0.95	2.44	1.34		
I will buy a Coca-Cola within the next week	0.74	2.43	1.36		

Additional evidence that the constructs depicted earlier in Figure 1 hold up as distinct constructs is found in most of the constructs having an average variance extracted value $\geq$ .7. The only exception is the *meets expectations* construct which has an average variance extracted value of .65 for Coca-Cola and .69 for the Gap. These two values do not meet the target of being $\geq$ .7 (Garver and Mentzer 1999), but the values are very close to that goal. In drawing from Churchill (1979) and Hair, Black, Babin, Anderson and Tatham (2006), we posit that a study, such as discussed here, that examines new models and entails new measurement items calls for reasoned flexibility, instead of rigid adherence to statistical goals. In addition, because each construct's average variance extracted was greater than the squared correlation between that construct and the other constructs, discriminant validity for all the constructs was established (Fornell and Larcker 1981).

TABLE 3

Statistical Results for the Gap Structural Model

Constructs and items	Parameter Estimate	Mean	Standard Deviation	Cronbach Alpha	Variance Extracted
Meets expectations: The Gap:					
Sells clothes that fit me well	0.80	3.06	1.09	0.87	0.69
Sells clothing that fits my needs for work and for leisure	0.82	3.28	1.02		
Has a selection of products that seem like they are designed for me	0.88	2.91	1.09		
Affective feeling state: Typically, whenever I shop at the Gap, I feel:					
Content with their products	0.89	3.37	0.94	0.96	0.86
Good about buying their products	0.95	3.35	0.97		
Happy purchasing their products	0.90	3.37	0.95		
Satisfied with my decision to buy their products	0.97	3.37	0.96		
Future purchase intent: In the future:					
I will shop at the Gap when I want to buy clothes that are comfortable	0.85	2.63	1.33	0.91	0.78
I will shop at the Gap within the next month	0.86	2.31	1.23		
The next time I shop for clothes, I am likely to shop at the Gap	0.94	2.42	1.30		
Attitudinal loyalty: The Gap					
Offers an assortment of clothing that I want	0.85	2.99	1.16	0.91	0.72
Sells clothing that makes me feel good	0.91	2.96	1.11		
Is a brand that I like	0.87	3.09	1.22		
Sells products that I trust	0.77	3.31	1.06		
Behavioral loyalty: Compared to other places where clothing items are sold, I:					
Shop at the Gap whenever I am given a choice	0.91	2.42	1.20	0.97	0.81
Am a loyal Gap consumer	0.86	2.08	1.19		
Buy clothing at the Gap whenever I want to treat myself with some new clothes	0.93	2.34	1.19		

Drawing from Fishbein and Ajzen (1975), it seems intuitively logical that this study's model would have predictive relationship paths from the cognitive-oriented "*meets expectations*" construct leading to the affective "*feeling state*" construct for each brand. To this regard, it was necessary to explore whether the model and the directional paths between its constructs hold up similarly with each brand. The result was determination that *meets expectations* and *feeling state* are distinct constructs for each brand that are related only by a certain degree of covariance (standardized value of .61 for Coca-Cola and .68 for the Gap).

Next, it was necessary to explore whether the model and its directional paths between the constructs hold up with the two brands. The result was determination that the directional paths shown in Figure 1 held up with Coca-Cola and the Gap, and that no different or additional paths emerged. The conclusion is that the structural model and findings are accepted as sufficiently strong for this study.

As suggested by Judd and Kenny (1981) and Baron and Kenny (1986), causal steps were performed to indicate a series of requirements which must be true for the mediational model to hold up. All requirements for causal steps 1-3 were satisfied for the Gap, in that the results for the Gap showed partial mediation. At a confidence level of 95%, two zero-order correlations for the *attitudinal loyalty -> behavioral loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty -> (re)purchase intent* were significantly different from zero. Further, multiple regression supports the partial effect of *behavioral loyalty* (controlling for *attitudinal loyalty*) at 95% confidence level. Thus, partial mediation was revealed with the Gap brand.

With respect to Coca-Cola, all four causal steps were conducted, and the results of the two zero-order correlations (*attitudinal loyalty -> behavioral loyalty*, and *behavioral loyalty -> (re)purchase intent*) revealed that all paths are significantly different from zero at a 95% confidence level. Further, multiple regression for the partial effect of *behavioral loyalty* (controlling for *attitudinal loyalty*) was significant, while the predictive relationship path weight for the *attitudinal loyalty -> (re)purchase intent* was not significant. Thus, complete mediation exists with the Coca-Cola brand.

TABLE 4
Total Effect, Direct Effect, and Indirect Effect

	Standard Total Effect	Standard Direct Effect	Standard Indirect Effect	Standard Indirect (Std Error)	Lower Indirect	Upper Indirect	Significantly different from zero at the 95% level (two-tailed).
COCA-COLA BRAND							
Behavioral loyalty ➔(re)purchase intent	0.718	0.718	0	..	..	..	..
Attitudinal loyalty ➔ Behavioral loyalty	0.804	0.804	0	..	..	..	..
Attitudinal loyalty ➔(re)purchase intent	0.777	(0.210)*	0.578	0.088	0.459	0.88	Yes
THE GAP BRAND							
Behavioral loyalty ➔ (re)purchase intent	0.587	0.587	0	..	..	..	..
Attitudinal loyalty ➔ Behavioral loyalty	0.555	0.555	0	..	..	..	..
Attitudinal loyalty ➔(re)purchase intent	0.655	0.329	0.325	0.089	0.189	0.475	Yes

* not significantly different from zero at 95% level

As shown in Table 4, bootstrapping with the SEM methodology indicated justification for the indirect effect from the mediation (Shrout and Bolger 2002; Preacher and Hayes 2008). The p-value from SEM revealed that *behavioral loyalty* serves as a mediator by carrying the influence of the *attitudinal loyalty* independent variable to the *(re)purchase intent* dependent variable. The unstandardized estimates and standard errors for each brand were calculated, followed by conducting of the Sobel (1982), Aroian (1944) and the Goodman (1960) tests. With Coca-Cola, the z-values for each of these tests are 6.98, 6.90, and 7.00, respectively, indicating that a mediator significantly carried the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable at a confidence level of 95% (z-value > 1.96).

With respect to the Gap, the z-values from the Sobel (1982), Aroian (1944) and Goodman (1960) tests are 4.15, 4.13, and 4.17, respectively, indicating that a mediator significantly carries the influence of an independent variable to a dependent variable at a 95% confidence level (Baron and Kenny 1986; Preacher and Hayes 2004).

FINDINGS

As depicted in Figure 1, hypothesis testing and data analysis yielded findings that enhance our understanding of *attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* and their influence on the predictive relationships between *meets expectations* and *feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent).* For example:

H1: ***Attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* are two distinct constructs.** The study found empirical support that *behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty* are distinct constructs for the Gap and Coca-Cola. Thus, **H1 is supported**.

H2: *Attitudinal loyalty* has a predictive path that leads to *behavioral loyalty*. The study found empirical support that *attitudinal loyalty* does have a predictive path that leads to *behavioral loyalty* (the standardized path weights for Coca-Cola and the Gap are .80 and .55, respectively). Thus, **H2 is supported.**

H3: The predictive relationship between *meets expectations* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *behavioral loyalty*. The study found that the relationship path between *meets expectations* and *(re)purchase intent* for each brand is mediated through a predictive path that *meets expectations* leads to *attitudinal loyalty*, which leads to *behavioral loyalty*, which in turn leads to *(re)purchase intent* (**see Figure 1**). For Coca-Cola the indirect effect (Hair et al. 2006) of this mediated path is .27 (.48 * .80 * .72), while the indirect effect is .18 for the Gap (56 * .55 * .59). Thus, **H3 is supported**.

H4: The predictive relationship between *meets expectations* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *attitudinal loyalty*. The study found that *attitudinal loyalty* does mediate the relationship between *meets expectations* and *(re)purchase intent* for each brand. As depicted in **Figure 1**, the mediating relationship differs with Coca-Cola and the Gap. **For Coca-Cola,** *attitudinal loyalty* mediates the relationship between *meets expectations* and *behavioral loyalty* (indirect effect of .28 (.48 * .80 * .72) for the mediated path). **For the Gap**, *attitudinal loyalty* plays a similar mediating role (indirect effect of .12 (.40 * .55 * .59)). In addition, for the Gap, *behavioral loyalty* mediates the relationship between *attitudinal loyalty* and *(re)purchase intent*, having an indirect effect of .18 (.56 * .55 * .59). Thus, **H4 is supported**. However as indicated, the mediation paths differ for Coca-Cola and the Gap.

H5: The predictive relationship between *affective feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *behavioral loyalty*.

The study reveals evidence that *behavioral loyalty* does mediate the relationship between *affective feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent* for both Coca-Cola and the Gap. However, the relationship path with each brand is one in which *affective feeling state* leads to *attitudinal loyalty*, which leads to *behavioral loyalty*, which in turn leads to *(re)purchase intent*. The indirect effect of this mediated path is .24 for Coca-Cola (.41 * .80 * .72), and .13 for the Gap (.40 * .55 * .59). Thus, **H5 is supported.**

H6: The predictive relationship between *feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent* is mediated by *attitudinal loyalty.* With respect to the Gap, the study reveals empirical support that *attitudinal loyalty* mediates the predictive relationship between *feeling state* and *(re)purchase intent*. However, there are two paths of mediation. One path is *feeling state -> attitudinal loyalty -> behavioral loyalty -> (re)purchase intent*, which has an indirect effect of.13 (40 * .55 * .59). The other mediated relationship path for the Gap is *feeling state -> attitudinal loyalty -> (re)purchase intent*, which has an indirect effect of.13 (.40 * .33). With respect to Coca-Cola, there is only one mediating relationship in that *feeling state -> attitudinal loyalty -> behavioral loyalty -> (re)purchase intent*, which has an indirect effect of .24 (.41 * .80 * .72). Thus, **H6 is supported**. However, the mediation paths are different for the two brands.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

The fundamental necessity for studies such as presented here is primarily based on the need to strengthen our understanding of the satisfaction, loyalty and (re)purchase phenomena and their potential relationships. Knowledge garnered from such research will aid scholar's and practitioners' efforts to develop more effective marketing strategies, which should lead to firms being better positioned to achieve competitive advantages, which would then strengthen their potential to realize enhanced long-term performance (Woodruff 1997).

For firms with profiles similar to Coca-Cola and the Gap, this study suggests that satisfaction strategies designed to increase consumers' (re)purchase intent also need to reinforce aspects of a firm's product(s) that are associated with consumers' loyalty toward that product(s). For example, most practitioners and theorists are aware that Coca-Cola awakened the wrath of their consumer base in 1985 when they introduced "New Coke" and did away with the traditional Coca-Cola that millions had come to love. Fifty-seven days later they returned to the original formula as "Classic Coke", and eventually withdrew "New Coke" (Collins 1995).

In addition, this study's structural model suggests that with a more complex brand (e.g. the Gap, as compared to Coca-Cola), the model becomes more complicated, suggesting that satisfaction and loyalty models which examine attributes and consequences have the potential to be dissimilar with disparate brands/products. What might be causing this dissimilarity? While Coca-Cola represents the soft drink category which is fairly restrictive and constant, the Gap represents a product class that is multifaceted and more complex, which is reflective of its products being more expensive, entailing greater exclusivity, being more conspicuous, and involving greater consumer involvement (as compared to Coca-Cola) (Bearden and Etzel 1982; Halstead, Jones and Cox 2007). This suggests that strategies for building and sustaining strong *(re)purchase behavior* should differ, in part, as a function of product complexity and involvement.

The greater complexity and level of consumer involvement associated with the Gap's products (e.g. the imagery and social status associated with their products, the various price levels for different products, the quality of service by the employees, and

cleanliness of their stores) may underlie why the structural model indicates that the mediating relationships between *attitudinal loyalty* and *behavioral loyalty* and *(re)purchase intent* are dissimilar for these two brands. Indeed, perhaps we should expect dissimilar models to be revealed across disparate product classes. Thus, marketers of more complex products should probably focus on (using Gap brand products as an example):

- Assuring that the quality of the products sold, including the fit of the clothing and the style and selection of products available, is as the consumer expects (*attitudinal loyalty*);

- Developing a shopping experience that is as "seamless" as possible, with product easily available, and a purchase process that is as simple and enjoyable as possible (*behavioral loyalty*);

- Enhancing the bond developed between the brand and its consumers (*behavioral loyalty* and *attitudinal loyalty*). For example, Chico's (an upscale women's clothing retailer) has built a strong consumer following by offering well advertised, high quality fashionable product assortments, as well as through the use of their "Passport" program, which encourages frequent patronage by offering special promotions and ongoing discounts to "Passport" holders.

Based on this study, we believe that future research should examine brands in various product groups in order to further enhance our insights with respect to dissimilar product complexity and different cognitive processes (Zinkhan and Braunsberger 2004). Further, our limited understanding of the relationship between one's (re)purchase intent and their actual (re)purchase behavior of a brand indicates that future studies should build upon the one discussed here in order to strengthen our understanding of the predictive effect of intent on behavior.

As with any study, ours was subject to limitations. Because we employed only two brands that are each well known and relatively affordable, it is conceivable that these aspects of Coca-Cola and the Gap played a role in the study's results. There is evidence in the literature that the outcomes of satisfaction vary in different sectors. For example, it has been shown that satisfaction can positively impact profitability for firms in sectors such as consumer staples, but not in the transportation sector (Yeung and Ennew 2001). By broadening the number and types of products that are studied, the ability to generalize the results of the consumer satisfaction model utilized in the current study will be enhanced. Thus, future study could include brands that are more expensive, less well-known, and are exclusive or conspicuous. This is because people are typically less influenced by others when deciding about purchasing and consuming brands such as used in this study, suggesting that our findings may not be reflective of other brands or product classes (Bearden and Etzel 1982). It may be that the different scales used for Coca-Cola and the Gap may have contributed to the somewhat different findings, and results obtained in a study conducted with university students may not be representative of other age or socioeconomic groups. And, lastly, to help address the limited amount of study that has examined the correlation between (re)purchase intent and actual (re)purchase behavior, future studies need to empirically test the predictive relationship between these constructs.

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