

MEASUREMENT AND EVALUATION OF SATISFACTION PROCESSES IN A DYADIC SETTING

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ABSTRACT

Research on consumer satisfaction with products has traditionally focused the individual satisfaction with individual decisions ignoring group satisfaction with individual or joint purchases. This paper seeks to address issues related to group satisfaction by using the symbolic interaction perspective to integrate the literature on the family decision-making and the satisfaction/dissatisfaction process. The discussion is presented in terms of the familiar concepts of expectations, disconfirmation or the fulfillment of expectations, and satisfaction/dissatisfaction. Each of these concepts is defined, related to the satisfaction framework, and operationalized for empirical testing and practical application.

INTRODUCTION

The concept of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) has received considerable attention in the marketing and consumer behavior literature (Oliver and Swan 1989; Cadotte et al. 1987). Part of the concern for the satisfaction of the consumer stems from the realization that, in the long run, satisfied customers are critical to the successful practice of marketing and to the overall profitability of the firm. Customer satisfaction with a product often leads to repeat purchase, acceptance of other products in the product line, and favorable word-of-mouth. Marketers are also concerned with consumer satisfaction because of the many adverse effects which can result from consumer dissatisfaction (Richins 1983; Engel and Blackwell 1982).

Unfortunately, the concern with consumer satisfaction has focused upon the individual satisfaction with individual decisions. This has caused the research into consumer satisfaction to become an individualized concept in the sense that any attempt to meet the needs of the customer

must focus on individual satisfaction. However, the relatively large number of purchasing decisions that are made by groups suggest that the notion of group satisfaction may be a concept with which the marketer needs to be concerned. Indeed, joint or syncratic decisions, resulting in possible joint rewards, may modify the satisfaction outcome in some manner. These issues, however, have not been significantly addressed leaving a void in the literature and providing the rationale for this study.

The paper has three major objectives. First, there is the need to present a conceptual basis for understanding joint consumer satisfaction processes. This provides a review of current satisfaction research and allows for the introduction of the notion of joint satisfaction. Second, some hypotheses will be advanced in the light of the foregoing discussion. Finally, the paper will discuss concept measurement and a methodology for examining the process of satisfaction within a joint decision-making situation.

Conceptual Basis

In studying the family as the unit of analysis, researchers have used a number of different frameworks (McDonald 1980; Holman and Burr 1980). These perspectives can be classified under three broad headings: intra-individual (Gelles and Straus 1979), socio-cultural theories (Beavers 1981; Broderick and Smith 1979), and social psychological (Scanzoni 1979a, 1979b; Stryker 1980; Burr et al. 1979; Blumer 1969).

Intra-individual theories explain family dynamics in terms of biological or acquired characteristics of the individual actor. Socio-cultural theories focus on macro-level variables such as social structures, values, norms, systems operations, and subcultures or social systems. Social psychological theories examine the interaction of the individual with other individuals,

with groups, and with the environment. Of these three broad groups of theories, the social psychological theories facilitate research at the micro level and are therefore best suited for this study.

Of the various frameworks advanced under social psychological theories, the symbolic interaction perspective comes closest to viewing the family as a primary social group (Bagozzi and Van Loo 1978). Within this perspective, the family is viewed as a system of dyads that is marked by face-to-face contacts, small size, and frequent and intense contact. When compared to the other social psychological theories the interactionist approach integrates the less general propositions of consumer behavior more understandably and more information can be subsumed under the interaction approach than under the other approaches.

Holman and Burr (1980) assert that there are several indications that the interaction approach continues to be the most influential framework in family studies. However, despite this emphasis and the fact that much of the research concerned with the "satisfaction" variables have borrowed concepts and proportions from symbolic interaction theory, the interaction theory has remained outside of the realm of marketing inquiry (Burr et al. 1979).

The symbolic interactionist approach focus on the subjective, symbolic side of social life. It focuses upon the nature and meaning of human behaviors, how these behaviors are built up, how they persist, how they are modified, and the consequences of the meanings in situations (Stryker 1980). Applied to the family situation, the approach is concerned with the evolving social meanings of satisfaction among family members. In group settings the interactions of the parties affect their individual behavior. Thus, satisfaction within the family might reflect the shared meanings and role expectations of the individual family members (Gelles and Straus 1979).

Family life consists of the spouses adjusting or fitting their individual actions to each other. These individual actions give rise to and are combined to make up "joint action." But joint action, while made up of diverse individual acts, is different from the individual acts and from the mere aggregation of those acts in that joint actions

possess a distinctive character in their own right. In this respect, joint action is really an interlinking of separate acts of the actors. This interlinking always has to undergo a process of formation in each instance of joint action. Because of its unique nature, a joint action may be identified as such and addressed without any attempt to break it down into the separate acts from which it is constituted (Blumer 1969).

Thus, the interaction approach focuses attention upon how the responses of others constrain the action and satisfaction of individuals. The approach is concerned with the process involved in the "construction of consumer satisfaction," the dynamics of the situation, life cycles of satisfaction episodes, and the encounters between actors in satisfaction situations (Burr et al. 1979). As such, symbolic interaction provides more than a ceremonious nod to social interaction by recognizing such interaction as being of vital importance in its own right (Blumer 1969). This importance exists because human interaction is a process which forms behavior instead of merely being a setting for behavior.

The interaction framework provides a common thread for integrating the satisfaction and the family decision-making literature. While much attention have been focused on these two areas of interest, no attempt has been made to link them or to study the degree to which joint decisions affect individual satisfaction or lead to joint satisfaction.

The Notion of Consumer Satisfaction

Although satisfaction is recognized as an important facet of marketing, there is no general agreement of how the concept should be defined. This lack of a concise definition further validates the supposition that satisfaction does not mean the same thing to everyone (Oliver 1980a). Of the various models advanced to explain consumer satisfaction, the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm has received the most widespread acceptance among researchers. This model assumes that consumer expectations create a standard or frame of reference against which consumers compare product performance. Accordingly, satisfaction is the outcome of confirmation or positive disconfirmation and dissatisfaction is the result of negative

disconfirmation. Researchers now include the disconfirmation of expectations variable as a mediating concept in the satisfaction process rather than attempt to provide a direct link between expectation and satisfaction.

Generally, researchers have defined satisfaction in terms of need fulfillment, pleasure/displeasure, cognitive state, attribute or benefit evaluation, and subjective evaluation of experience. Currently, satisfaction is viewed as an emotional response to a product experience. However, while researchers have used a number of different definitions for satisfaction, they generally agree that satisfaction involves a set of interrelated variables rather than a single variable.

The Family Decision-Making Process

Decision-making, a central construct in models of individual consumer behavior, is an important part of family life. However, despite the importance of family decision-making, it has not received as much attention as individual decision-making. Two main reasons may be advanced to explain the continued focus on individual decision-making. First, the cost of conducting joint or family decision-making research far exceeds the cost associated with conducting individual studies. Second, the family, as a unit of analysis, is considered to be a poor decision-making unit.

Past research in the area of family decision-making has used a number of theoretical models: resource theory, social exchange theory, role theory, and the process-oriented model. Resource theory posits that, within the family, the relative power of each spouse varies with the socio-economic resources contributed by that spouse. The social exchange theory is most often used to assess family power and decision-making. This theory assumes that people act in a manner which will maximize benefits to them. Role theory focuses on the traditional versus modern gender roles of the spouses to explain their relative power in the family. Traditional roles give more power to the husband, the children are second and the wife is last. Modern roles are not clearly defined according to gender and all decisions are negotiable. Unlike the other approaches, the process-oriented model does not focus only on decision outcomes. Instead, it analyzes the family

decision-making process in conjunction with the effect of changing sex roles.

Family decisions can be classified according to who makes the decision and how the decision is made. The typology of family decisions includes husband dominant, wife dominant, autonomic, and syncretic decisions. A major criticism of this typology is that it focuses upon the outcome of a decision rather than on the decision-making process. Generally, families tend to use two models in their decision-making. In the first model, the consensus model, family members agree about goals and then arrive at a decision using either role structure, budgets/rules, or problem solving strategies. Agreement about goals results in family problem solving behavior and does not rely on individual rules. In the second model, the accommodation model, family members disagree about goals and choose between persuasion and bargaining to arrive at a decision. If a decision cannot be reached, or if one family member tries to impose a decision, conflict results.

In studying the family as a unit of analysis researchers have questioned the adequacy of using one spouse to report on the family decision-making process because husbands and wives do not always agree in their responses to questions related to a given decision (Thompson and Walker 1982). The general belief is that instruments administered to only one spouse tend to ignore the reality that family decision-making is a joint enterprise (Thomson and Williams 1982). Because of the many problems encountered in family research, it remains an intriguing but yet under-researched area of study. Further, researchers have not addressed the issue of consumer satisfaction with joint decisions. This study attempts to fill this void in the literature.

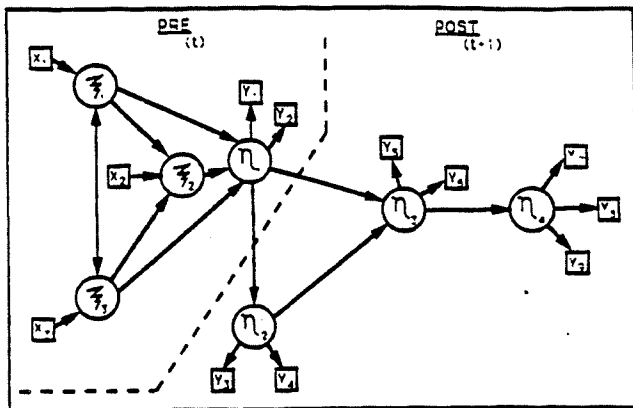
Developing Programmatic Research

The proposed inclusion of the family as the unit of analysis for the experienced-based norms model of CS/D provides fertile ground for future research. Therefore, the next few sections suggest a systematic approach by raising conceptual questions, offering suggestions for addressing measurement related issues and proposing research priorities.

A MODEL OF THE JOINT-DECISION JOINT-SATISFACTION PROCESS

The following discussion explains how the joint decision making process can be used to extend the basic confirmation/ disconfirmation paradigm. This requires that family consensus, family cohesion and the nature of the family decision process be understood in relation to the confirmation/disconfirmation process.

Figure 1
Joint Decision/Joint Satisfaction Process



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| <p>F_1 = Perceived Syncratic Decision</p> <p>F_2 = Perceived Cohesion</p> <p>F_3 = Perceived Consensus</p> <p>Endogenous Variables</p> <p>Y_1 = Attribute Expectations</p> <p>Y_2 = Global Expectations</p> <p>Y_3 = Attribute Specific Performance</p> <p>Y_4 = Global Performance</p> <p>Y_5 = Attribute Specific Disconfirmation</p> <p>Y_6 = Global Disconfirmation</p> <p>Y_7 = Attribute Satisfaction (beliefs/cognitive)</p> <p>Y_8 = Attribute Satisfaction (affective)</p> <p>Y_9 = Global Satisfaction</p> | <p>N_1 = Expectations</p> <p>N_2 = Perceived Performance</p> <p>N_3 = Disconfirmation</p> <p>N_4 = Satisfaction</p> <p>Exogenous Variables</p> <p>x_1 = Syncratic Scale
Global Attribute</p> <p>x_2 = Cohesion Scale</p> <p>x_3 = Consensus Scale</p> |
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Figure 1 outlines how family interaction and decision processes are related to basic consumer satisfaction. As depicted, family members are thought to have some level of cohesion and to

arrive at some degree of consensus about decisions which are to affect them all. This, in turn, would be reflected in the degree to which the family relies upon the syncratic decision-making process as a means of problem solving. These factors, in turn, affect evaluation criteria or attribute importance ratings (product norms), group expectations, and even perceptions about product performance.

The model further suggests that the confirmation/disconfirmation process may be influenced not only by individual factors but also by the interaction between the parties to the decision. Implicit in model that notion that the confirmation/disconfirmation process results from the interaction between the spouses and reflects each spouse's willingness to forego some individual satisfaction in order to please the other spouse.

CONCEPTUAL ISSUES

This study seeks to extend the work of Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1987) and others by investigating the applicability of the symbolic interaction framework to the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction process. The major objective of the paper is to analyze the relationships between family decision-making and consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction. The paper will also address some of the methodological issues which appear in the current literature on family decision-making.

In the field of family decision-making, the use of responses from a single respondent tends to ignore the reality that decision-making is a joint enterprise (Hill and Scanzoni 1982; Thompson and Walker 1982; Thomson and Williams 1982). Researchers are now virtually unanimous in their belief that the "final-say" or outcome-focused technique is not the best way to assess family decision-making. They argue that it is necessary, for theoretical and substantive reasons, to address family decision-making as a process. While complex, the measurement of processes is an essential next step to further understanding of decision-making in particular, and family dynamics in general (McDonald 1980; Klien and Hill 1979; Cromwell and Olson 1975).

Conceptually, the model raises a number of major research questions. These questions are:

1. What is the relative advantage, if any, of using the dyad of the family as the unit of analysis in gathering data on consumer satisfaction?
2. If joint decisions lead to joint satisfaction, how is the joint satisfaction to be measured? (Note that the joint satisfaction may be different from the sum of the individual satisfaction (Burr et al. 1979; Blumer 1969).
3. Is there a significant difference between the individual satisfaction of the spouses and their "joint" satisfaction with a joint or syncretic decision?
4. To what extent can the findings from studies using an individual family member as the respondent be generalized to other family members as being representative of their perceptions, attitudes, or satisfaction?

Answers to these questions can have implications for consumer behavior and marketing management. The results can be used in designing the marketing communication effort. Indeed, marketers would have some idea of the extent to which they should appeal to all parties to a joint decision. Each of these general questions lead to several research hypotheses. These hypotheses are presented under the headings of dyadic-related hypotheses and confirmation/disconfirmation model related hypotheses.

DYADIC RELATED HYPOTHESES

As discussed in the review of the literature on family decision-making, there is some controversy concerning the family member from whom data should be gathered (Hill and Scanzoni 1982; Scanzoni 1983; Thompson and Walker 1982; Thomson and Williams 1982). These researchers assert that wife-reported data does not adequately report on the family decision-making process. They argue that wife report does not adequately reflect the opinions of husbands. Indeed, when only one spouse is the respondent, under or over reporting on the decision-making process may be occurring. Therefore, to determine if there is a significant difference between the self-reported satisfaction of husbands and wives, it is hypothesized that:

H1: With respect to their principal place of residence, there will be a significant difference between the individual satisfaction of husbands and the wives.

The formulation of this hypothesis prompts the development of two other hypotheses. These hypotheses take into account the dyadic interaction which occur between couples and implies that joint action may result in joint or dyadic satisfaction with the results from a decision. Heffring (1978) asserts that the social exchange which occur within these dyads result in shared rather than individual attitudes of the parties in the group.

Symbolic interaction theory postulates that group decision-making results from a "give and take" between the parties to the decision. As applied to the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction (CS/D) process, expectations and evaluations are hypothesized to be due in part to various forms of give and take resulting from group interaction. This interaction occurs because of the roles and expectations of the parties to the decision. Similarities in goals between husbands and wives result in the development and reinforcement of family roles (Davis and Rigaux 1974; Min 1983; Waldruff 1988). This proposition provides the basis, first, for the hypothesis relating to the manner in which the notion of joint satisfaction is to be measured, and second, for the hypothesis relating to the relationship between joint satisfaction and the satisfaction of the individual spouses.

H2: There is no significant difference between the sum of the individually expressed satisfaction of husbands and wives and their jointly expressed satisfaction.

H3: There is no significant difference between the individual satisfaction of either the husband or the wife and their joint satisfaction with respect to their principal place of residence.

Among the factors which affect group interaction and decision-making are family congruence and family cohesiveness or connectedness. These factors act as mediators of decision-making and CS/D. Family congruence is an indication of shared attitudes and meanings of

family members with respect to purchases. It reflects the degree to which family members have knowledge of and agree with the perceptions and likes and dislikes of other family members. This implies that the parties have overlapping frames of reference and not that they have the same likes and dislikes. If family members participate effectively and help to establish joint expectations prior to the purchase, then each person should share or have knowledge of the beliefs, perceptual biases, buying motives, and predispositions of other family members. The symbolic interactionist framework implies that individual and group attitudes are constantly being modified because of the dyadic interaction. Thus, congruence can improve as a result of increased interaction or because of the cumulative effects of interaction. It is therefore hypothesized that:

H4: Couples with high congruence (higher indicated agreement as to knowledge of spouse's likes and dislikes) would have high levels of joint consumer satisfaction.

While congruence represents the degree to which family members share common attitudes and meanings about a product, solidarity reflects the degree of cohesiveness or "oneness" and consensus regarding those attitudes and meanings. At the dyadic level, Spanier (1976) notes that this connectedness or solidarity is reflected by the degree to which there exist:

- troublesome dyadic differences,
- interpersonal tensions and personal anxiety,
- dyadic satisfaction as an indication of cohesion and,
- consensus on matters of importance to dyadic functioning.

Greater solidarity should result in greater adherence to group norms. This in turn results in greater potential for acceptance of and satisfaction with purchase outcomes. Family solidarity may also reflect the degree to which one spouse supports the spouse who is dissatisfied with a purchase. Based on this discussion, it is hypothesized that:

H5: Couple connectedness or cohesiveness

(feelings of oneness) and consensus regarding attitudes and meanings about the product will result in higher levels of joint or couple satisfaction.

CONFIRMATION/DISCONFIRMATION MODEL RELATED HYPOTHESES

The second set of hypotheses relates the dyadic data to the confirmation-disconfirmation model. According to this model, the consumer forms norms or expectations about product performance. Using these norms or expectations, the individual consumer makes judgments about the product performance to determine if the norms were positively or negatively disconfirmed and if satisfaction results from the process (Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987).

While this model has been widely tested with data gathered from individuals, the model has never been tested with data gathered from dyads or larger groups. Therefore, this study focuses on testing the basic hypotheses inherent in the confirmation-disconfirmation model using data gathered from members of dyads. Support for these hypotheses should provide even greater confidence in the validity of the disconfirmation model.

Using data gathered from individual consumers, Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1987), tested four basic hypotheses. These hypotheses are modified to reflect dyadic interactions and applies the model to joint satisfaction.

H6: Product performance, as jointly reported by the spouses, is positively correlated with disconfirmation.

H7: The joint or dyadic standard of comparison is negatively correlated with disconfirmation.

H8: As assessed by both parties to the decision, product performance is positively correlated with the standard of comparison.

H9: Disconfirmation is positively correlated with group satisfaction feelings.

Disconfirmation theory postulates that satisfaction is related to the size and direction of the discrepancy between prior expectations and actual product performance (Swan and Combs

1976; Oliver 1980a; Barber and Venkatraman 1986). This implies that confirmation occurs when product performance is equal to prior expectations and this leads to satisfaction. Conversely, disconfirmation occurs when performance does not equal prior expectations. When product performance exceeds prior expectations, positive disconfirmation results and this also leads to satisfaction. On the other hand, negative disconfirmation results from performance being lower than expected and this leads to dissatisfaction. Based on the disconfirmation theory of consumer satisfaction, it is hypothesized that:

H10: Couples satisfaction with their principal place of residence is determined by the discrepancy between their joint rather than their individual expectations and their joint rather than their individual perception of product performance.

H11: The level of joint consumer satisfaction varies directly with the degree to which joint rather than individual norms or expectations are positively or negatively disconfirmed by performance.

Rivaling the confirmation-disconfirmation model, Oliver and Bearden (1983) found that the importance of expectations, as a determinant of satisfaction, decreases for high involvement products and the importance of outcomes or performance increases. Accordingly, performance becomes an independent determinant of satisfaction. This assertion has also been supported by Churchill and Surprenant (1982). They found satisfaction with a video disc player to be mainly determined by the product's performance. As a result of this conceptual and empirical research, an alternative hypothesis is proposed. This hypothesis states that:

H12: Satisfaction with principal place of residence is determined primarily by couples perception of how well the house performs or meets their needs.

After using the product on an individual and also on a joint basis the consumer will note performance along various attributes. Woodruff,

Cadotte, and Jenkins (1983) note that through a cognitive process, consumers form perceptions which result in a set of beliefs about how the product has performed along some set of performance dimensions. The consumer, however, may note overall performance independent of perceptions of the various attributes. High levels of perceived performance lead to high levels of satisfaction while low levels of perceived performance should lead to low levels of satisfaction. Examination of this hypothesis will provide further insight into the consumer satisfaction process.

Thus, for a given decision, the major issue is whether norms or expectations are necessary to explain variation in consumer satisfaction. Some researchers argue that there is more to satisfaction than can be explained by consumer perception of performance alone (Churchill and Surprenant 1982). The contribution of the disconfirmation model is that satisfaction results from a comparison between some standard or expectation and performance. The next two hypotheses compare the explanatory power of the performance-satisfaction model with that of the more detailed or complex disconfirmation-satisfaction paradigm.

H13: There is a direct positive relationship between individual and joint perceptions of performance and joint satisfaction.

H14: Couples perception of disconfirmation better predicts satisfaction than does couples performance perception of performance.

CONCEPT MEASUREMENT

Before the hypotheses can be empirically evaluated, procedures must be developed to explicate the key constructs in the model. Seven major concepts has to be measured if a comprehensive study of the joint satisfaction process is to be conducted. These concepts are attribute importance, expectation, performance, disconfirmation, satisfaction, degree of syncratic decision-making, husband-wife consensus, and cohesion.

Attribute Importance

The first step in satisfaction analysis is the identification of the salient attributes (Oliver 1981; Ajzen and Fishbein 1973, 1977). Attribute importance can be determined by asking the respondents to pick out the attributes which they used to purchase the product or to rate a number of product related attributes according to the degree to which each attribute was important in the decision to purchase the product.

Current attribute importance measurement is based upon the work of Fishbein and Ajzen (1975). They have suggested that attribute importance can be measured by asking the respondent to rate the relative importance of each attribute. This approach is in keeping with that used by a number of other researchers (Engel, and Blackwell 1982; Cunningham 1967; Bolting 1985).

In order to derive weighted summation scores for the attribute importance variable (norms) respondents can be asked to provide ratings for the product attributes considered to be important in the selection of a residence (Hempel 1976; Leigh 1987; Park 1982). Each respondent should rate each attribute along a 5 point semantic differential scale written to include non-evaluative judgment indicators.

Expectations

Ideally the measurement of expectations should be performed before the purchase and actual usage experience. However, expectations can also be measured in retrospect. Respondents can be asked to indicate what they expected concerning each of the product attributes. This approach, however, introduces some interaction between actual outcomes and prior expectations (Holbrook 1983).

Traditionally, expectations are viewed as the anticipation of positive or negative occurrences with respect to some future event or occurrence. The full set of attributes, restated as statements reflecting consumer expectations, can be used. Respondents can be asked to indicate level of expectation for each attribute using a five or seven-point scale. A single item measure of expectation should also be obtained from each respondent.

Current expectation measurement is based

upon the work of Oliver (1980a) and Olson and Dover (1979). They suggest that the Fishbein affect-belief scales be used to measure consumer expectations. The affective aspect of the scale can be measured on like-dislike, desirable-undesirable or good-bad type scales. The belief dimension can be measured using likelihood scales ranging from (0) certain not to occur to (5) certain to occur (Oliver 1981; Linda and Oliver 1979).

Disconfirmation of Expectations

Perceived and derived measures of disconfirmation can be computed for the standard of comparison for the typical product norm. As suggested by Oliver (1980a; 1980b) each perceived disconfirmation measure is a single item score, using the same wording and coding format (much worse = 1, worse = 2, slightly worse = 3, just as expected = 4, slightly better = 5, better = 6, much better = 7), to the question "Compared to your expectations for your present house, how did it actually rate on each factor?"

The derived measure of disconfirmation can be obtained by averaging the difference in the ratings on performance and expectations. This approach applies regardless of whether performance and expectation ratings are obtained on a unidimensional (single-item) or a derived multiattribute basis. Bolting (1985) used a similar scale with a reported coefficient alpha of .724. Further support for the use of this scale is also provided by a number of researchers (Churchill and Surprenant 1982); Cadotte et al. 1987; Tse and Wilton 1988). They reported that such a scale had high coefficient alphas and exhibited relatively high discriminant and convergent validity.

Satisfaction

This scale was developed to test the degree to which the consumer felt satisfied with the product. As discussed in the literature review, there is some controversy over how best to conceptualize and measure the satisfaction construct (Westbrook 1980, 1983). Some researchers assert that satisfaction is the consumer's complex emotional reaction to a disconfirmation experience. As they view it, satisfaction is an antecedent to attitude change and thus mediates attitudinal shifts

(Westbrook 1983; Oliver 1981).

Traditionally, researchers have asked respondents to simply state their level of satisfaction/dissatisfaction along a 5 or 7 point Likert-type scale. In such instances the interpretation of the term "satisfaction" is determined by the respondent and not by the researcher. Oliver (1981) notes that attempts to measure overall satisfaction using a scale ranging from "extremely satisfied" to "not satisfied" cannot accurately gauge satisfaction levels because it does not provide for degrees of satisfaction. Oliver (1980a, 1980b) asserts that asking a consumer to evaluate satisfaction on a typical satisfaction/dissatisfaction scale presents a construct validity problem because it is really asking the respondent to restate their perceived confirmation/disconfirmation. To the extent that satisfaction/dissatisfaction is something different from confirmation/disconfirmation, the traditional approach might fail to detect this difference. Given these criticisms, it is desirable that the satisfaction/dissatisfaction measure is deemed to be the result of the confirmation/disconfirmation of the normative standards or norms and not simply a restatement of the confirmation/disconfirmation evaluation. This approach captures the emotional response to the disconfirmation of normative standards (Oliver 1980a).

Westbrook (1981), for example, used a seven-point Delighted-Terrible scale to determine how consumers felt about a specific retailer related experience. He reported a coefficient alpha of .65, an indication that the scale was acceptably reliable. Further, the scale was also found to be valid in that it differentiated between those who shopped at a specific store most often and those who shopped at other stores most often ($F = 12.7$; $df = 1,195$; $p < .001$). Other researchers obtained reliabilities which are considerably higher. For example, Bolting (1985) used a five-item semantic differential (S-D) scale with a reported reliability of .886 and Churchill and Surprenant used a ten-point S-D scale with a reported coefficient alpha of .91.

A Likert-type scale has also been used to measure consumer satisfaction (Bolting 1985; Churchill and Surprenant 1982; Bearden and Teel 1983; Westbrook and Oliver 1981; Oliver 1980a). In all cases, this scale was found to be reliable.

As reported, coefficient alpha for this scale is consistently above .85 (Bolting 1985; Bearden and Teel 1983; Churchill and Surprenant 1982; Westbrook and Oliver 1981).

A second measure of satisfaction can be obtained using items which are affective or evaluative in nature (Churchill and Surprenant 1982). This approach measures the respondent's attitude or enduring affective orientation or feeling for a product. Oliver (1980a; 1981) notes that satisfaction is an antecedent to attitude change and therefore mediates attitudinal shifts. Unlike satisfaction, however, attitude is measured in terms that are more general to the product. Following the approach used by Cadotte et al. (1987), and Bearden and Teel (1983) a series of five-point bipolar scales can be used to encourage respondents to report on a variety of feelings about the various product attributes. Support for this approach could be found in the work of Westbrook and Oliver (1981) and Churchill and Surprenant (1982). They showed that Likert and semantic-differential scales had high reliabilities and convergent and discriminant validities.

Type of Family Decision-Making

Manipulation checks for syncratic decision-making determine the extent to which subjects are involved in jointly purchasing the house. The syncratic decision-making check include a series of Likert statements which covered possible contributions of the parties to the decision-making process. Following Blood and Wolfe (1960), and Davis (1970; 1971; 1976), eight decision statements are used to generate a measure of family decision-making with respect to the housing purchasing decision. These items are coded on a five-point Likert scale ranged from husband decided = 1 to wife decided = 5. Scores on all eight items can be summed to provide a multi-item manipulation check of syncratic decision-making. A single-item measure of decision-making can also be obtained.

Dyadic Consensus and Cohesion

The type and quality of the dyadic decision-making depends upon the degree to which the parties to the decision share common attitudes and

meanings (consensus/congruence) and are relatively cohesive or similar in their views regarding those attitudes (Spanier 1976; Heffring 1978).

The consensus and cohesion constructs can be measured using the scales developed by Spanier (1976). He reported using thirteen items, with a reported coefficient alpha of .90, to measure the dyadic consensus construct. A six-point Likert-type scale was used to gather this data. Coding for these items ranged from always agree = 5 to always disagree = 0. The cohesion construct measures the degree to which the dyad members do things together. Five items were used to measure the cohesion construct. This data was gathered on a six-point scale (never = 0, less than once a month = 1, once or twice a month = 2, once or twice a week = 3, once a day = 4, more often = 5). This scale had a reported coefficient alpha of .86. Both the consensus and the cohesion scales were found to exhibit high construct and criterion related validity.

CONCLUSION

This paper suggests that there is a need to assess the degree to which family decisions lead to joint husband-wife satisfaction. In a larger sense, the proposed model suggests an extension of the traditional CS/D model by including the dyad, rather than the individual, as the unit of analysis. This systematic approach to the joint satisfaction process revolves around the measurement of the individual and the joint expectations, disconfirmation, and resulting satisfaction of the parties to the dyad. In identifying the family as the unit of analysis, the model calls for a recognition of the interactions of group members in (1) product evaluation, (2) decision situations, and (3) use situation. Finally, any discussion of the notion of joint satisfaction must be based upon successful concept operationalization. To this end, several measurement related issues were discussed. Future research needs can be determined by empirically testing how this conceptualization affect consumer satisfaction.

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