

# A DESIRES-AS-STANDARD MODEL OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION: IMPLICATIONS FOR MEASURING SATISFACTION

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## ABSTRACT

A critique of the disconfirmation of expectations model shows that there are a number of conceptual and empirical problems with this model, despite its widespread acceptance in both academic and applied research. Based on means-end theory, consumer's desires are suggested as an alternative standard. A desires-as-standard model of consumer satisfaction is presented that: a) describes the mechanism by which consumers make a judgment of the performance of the product; b) describes the impact of desires, expectations, and product performance on overall satisfaction; and c) proposes "satisfaction with the good" and "satisfaction with the information" as independent determinants of overall satisfaction. This model seems to solve many of the problems with the disconfirmation model. Implications for the measurement of all constructs are suggested, and it is argued that, from a diagnostic standpoint, these measures will indicate more precisely the source of the consumers' satisfaction.

## INTRODUCTION

The dominant model of consumer satisfaction and dissatisfaction is based on the disconfirmation of expectations paradigm. While there has been some support for this model, some important exceptions have been reported and a number of limitations and problems have been identified. Nevertheless, the disconfirmation of expectations model has received widespread acceptance in both academic and applied research. For example, based on the disconfirmation of expectations model, some marketing researchers and consultants have argued that businesses must "manage their customers' expectations" so that the customers' satisfaction can be maximized (Lele 1988). However, if expectations are not the standard that consumers use or if the whole process of satisfaction determination is more complex than the

disconfirmation model suggests, then practitioners need to revise their measures of satisfaction and its determinants.

Recently, researchers have explored comparison standards other than expectations (Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987; Olshavsky and Spreng 1989; Swan and Trawick 1980; Tse and Wilton 1988; Westbrook and Reilly 1983). Many of these alternative standards have been found to be good predictors of satisfaction, and a number of these standards share the common idea of utilizing what the consumer desires as the standard. This paper describes a model of satisfaction that uses consumer desires as the standard (Olshavsky and Spreng 1989). Based upon this model, some specific suggestions are made for the measurement of satisfaction and its determinants.

## THE DISCONFIRMATION OF EXPECTATIONS MODEL

According to the disconfirmation of expectations model (Oliver 1980; Churchill and Surprenant 1982) satisfaction is the result of a comparison between the pre-use expectations that a consumer has about the product and the post-use perception of product performance. This cognitive comparison is called disconfirmation, and the discrepancy between what is anticipated and what is received has been shown to be a predictor of satisfaction in some situations.

### Expectations

Expectations have generally been conceptualized either solely as pretrial beliefs about a product (Olson and Dover 1979), or as beliefs and a consumer's subjective evaluation of these beliefs. Thus, researchers have differed in how expectations have been operationalized, in that expectations can deal only with the probability of occurrence (e.g., Westbrook 1987; Westbrook

and Reilly 1983; Bearden and Teel 1983) or can also include an evaluative aspect that assesses how good/bad the occurrence is (e.g., Churchill and Surprenant 1982; Oliver 1980; Tse and Wilton 1988).

As an example of the first approach, Bearden and Teel (1983) measured expectations as beliefs, using six attribute items (e.g., reasonableness of cost, location, quality of repairs, etc.) with seven-point bipolar scales anchored by "unlikely-likely" and scored -3 to +3. As an example of the second approach, Churchill and Surprenant (1982) measured attribute specific expectations with items anchored with terms such as "Good sound-poor sound" and overall expectation items like "Not very good/Excellent." It is interesting to note that when measured in the first way, expectations were positively correlated with disconfirmation. Most satisfaction research using expectations that include an evaluative aspect has found a negative relationship between expectations and disconfirmation.

### Perceived Performance

Perceived performance has generally been included in the disconfirmation of expectations model as the referent against which expectations are compared. However, many past research studies have not included performance as a direct antecedent of satisfaction (e.g., Bearden and Teel 1983; Cadotte, et al. 1987; Oliver 1980; Oliver and DeSarbo 1988; Swan and Trawick 1980; Westbrook 1987; Westbrook and Reilly 1983). While some studies manipulate performance, and others measure the subject's perception of the product performance, few include a direct path from perceived performance to satisfaction.

When perceived performance is included in the model, a strong relationship between perceived performance and satisfaction has often been found. For example, Churchill and Surprenant (1982) tested two products, and while perceived performance was a significant predictor of satisfaction for both products, for one of the products perceived product performance was the only variable related to satisfaction. They concluded that the only way to increase satisfaction for this product would be to increase product performance. Tse and Wilton (1988) came to a

similar conclusion, saying "... then whenever a product performs well a consumer is likely to be satisfied, regardless of the levels of the pre-existing comparison standard and disconfirmation." (p. 205) They found that a model that included perceived performance as the only antecedent of satisfaction outperformed any other single variable model, including a disconfirmation model. When estimating a multiple determinant model that included performance, disconfirmation, and expectations as direct antecedents of satisfaction, performance continued to dominate the formation of satisfaction (standardized coefficients of .55, .27, and .23 respectively). Spreng and Olshavsky (1991) also found strong effects of performance on satisfaction.

As important as the "perceived performance" concept appears to be, the nature of this perception is usually not clearly defined. For example, in an important article on consumer satisfaction, Churchill and Surprenant (1982) provided conceptual definitions that have been widely adopted in subsequent research, yet they did not provide a definition of "perceived performance." Likewise, Tse and Wilton (1988) argued for the importance of perceived performance in explaining satisfaction, but did not define this term. They did, however, attempt to specify the causal determinants of perceived performance and reported standardized coefficients for expectations (.18), ideal performance (-.25), and manipulated performance (.67); these three variables explained 56% of the variation in perceived performance.

In addition, not all satisfaction researchers agree that an examination of the performance of the product is likely to be a fruitful approach. Oliver (1989) suggested that a focus on the specific attributes that drive satisfaction is not sufficient: "While this 'attribute basis' of satisfaction/dissatisfaction is intriguing, it says little, however, about the specific thought processes triggered by the product features. In particular, it fails to identify the mechanism by which performance is converted into a psychological reaction by the consumer." (p. 2)

In terms of operationalization of the construct of perceived performance, most past research has used measures similar to attitude measures. That is, scales have been evaluative in nature, whereby the scales measure how good/bad the performance

was. For example, the performance of the VDP in Churchill and Surprenant (1982) was assessed by scales such as "The quality of the color reproduction was: terrible...excellent." Cadotte, et al. (1987, p. 313) criticized these types of scales:

Standard scaling approaches, such as the semantic differential or Likert-type scales, commonly are used, but these scales all too easily include anchor words that connote evaluation--good/bad, fast/slow, friendly/unfriendly. Because a standard is implied by such words, such scales can confound the measures of norms/expectations, brand performance beliefs, and disconfirmation. Thus, scales that measure true beliefs rather than evaluations should be used.

They suggest developing scales that "cue the respondent to an object's objective level of an attribute."

We believe that the construct of "perceived performance" should be separated into two distinct constructs. The first is "Perceptual Performance," which is the "evaluationless" cognitive registering of the product attributes, levels of attributes, or outcomes. These are beliefs (i.e., subjective probabilities) that the aspect in question is associated with the product (also see Fishbein and Ajzen's (1975) "descriptive beliefs").

The second construct will be called "Evaluative Performance," which is defined as an evaluation of a product's attributes or a product's outcomes that is made by comparing one's desires with one's perceptions of the product outcome. This is what we believe has commonly been operationalized as "perceived performance" in past research. By separating this evaluation into its components (i.e., desires and perceptual performance), the present model provides a more complete understanding of an assessment of product performance, and provides the "...mechanism by which performance is converted into a psychological reaction by the consumer" called for by Oliver (1989).

### Other Problems With the Disconfirmation of Expectations Model

In addition to the definitional and empirical problems just reviewed, another problem with the disconfirmation model concerns several logical inconsistencies with the use of expectations as the comparison standard that were originally identified by LaTour and Peat (1979). The first logical problem is the situation in which a new product comes on the market with better values on certain attributes than existing brands. One could argue that even if the manufacturer created unrealistic expectations that resulted in negative disconfirmation, the consumer would still be satisfied because the product is better than anything else currently available. The second inconsistency deals with the situation in which a consumer expects a product to perform poorly, but buys the product anyway (being constrained to do so for some reason), and finds that the product does perform poorly, thereby confirming the consumer's expectations. The disconfirmation of expectations model would predict that this will result in neutral or satisfied feelings. Of course, intuitively one would anticipate that the consumer will be dissatisfied.

A second problem with the disconfirmation of expectations model is that to specify expectations as the central concept in determining satisfaction is to limit satisfaction to aspects of the product for which the consumer has pre-usage beliefs, that is, aspects about which the consumer has expectations. Yet it seems that consumers may be dissatisfied with an aspect of the product that they were not aware of before its use (Westbrook and Reilly 1983).

Another limitation, identified by Cadotte et al. (1987), is that the disconfirmation paradigm restricts satisfaction to being dependent on the focal brand only (i.e., the brand about which the expectations are formed). However, other factors, such as information about what others have received, other brands available, and one's favorite brand, might be expected to have an impact on one's satisfaction.

### DESIRES AS THE STANDARD

Because of the many problems that

characterize the disconfirmation of expectations model researchers have explored a number of comparison standards other than expectations such as "ideal expectation," (Miller 1977), "experience based norms," (Cadotte et al. 1987), "value-percept disparity," (Westbrook and Reilly 1983), "ideal product performance," (Sirgy 1984), "ideal performance," (Tse and Wilton 1988), "desired expectations," (Swan and Trawick 1980), and "consumer desires" (Olshavsky and Spreng 1989). Many of these alternative comparison standards have been shown to be antecedents of satisfaction, and distinct from expectations.

The standard that is proposed here is the consumer's desires. This standard is comparable to Westbrook and Reilly's (1983) "values." However, here the concept is differentiated at three levels: values, consequences, and attributes. Higher level desires refer to the values that guide a consumer's behavior. Peter and Olson (1990, p. 75) defined values as "...the mental representations of important life goals that consumers are trying to achieve." Feather (1982, p. 87) suggested that:

Values may be conceived as a particular class of motives. They are those motives that involve normative considerations of 'oughtness' and desirability, linked to an evaluative dimension of goodness and badness. Values serve as standards or criteria to guide thought and action in various ways, and they are linked to affect, as is evident when one's important values are frustrated or challenged.

These higher level values result in desires for goods with certain benefits or consequences, which are conceptualized at an intermediate level of abstraction. Finally, the more concrete level of desires deals with the product attributes and levels of attributes that consumers believe will provide them with the benefits that will in turn allow them to meet their higher level desires. A means-end chain represents these relationships, with higher level values leading to desires for products that will provide certain benefits, and these benefits in turn specifying the attributes and the levels of attributes desired in the product (Gutman 1982). As described by Perkins and Reynolds (1988, p. 122):

Products go beyond functional properties to have meaning in the consumer's life, according to means-end theory. Consumers move from the concrete level of product attributes to the positive benefits provided by consuming a product on to the highest level of abstraction, personal values (Reynolds 1985). Consumer preferences may be explained in terms of this chain from attributes to consequences to values.

Thus, "desires" will be defined as "The aspects and levels of aspects of a product or service that the consumer judges will lead to higher level values." At the level of attributes, a given consumer's desires are the attributes and the levels of attributes that he or she judges will lead to or produce the benefits that he/she desires. At the level of benefits, the consumer's desires are the benefits and levels of benefits that will lead to higher level life goals. For example, the highest level value might be to live a long and healthy life, and this manifests itself in part in a desire to eat foods that provide the benefit of reducing one's cholesterol level. This desired benefit will in turn be specified in terms of certain attributes (e.g., low in cholesterol) and/or levels of attributes (e.g., at least 5 grams of oat fiber per serving).

#### Expectations Versus Desires

Several studies have made a distinction between expectations and desires. Swan and Trawick (1980) tested a construct called "desired expectations" which they defined as "the consumer's preusage specification of the level of product performance that would be necessary in order to satisfy or please the consumer." Desired expectations were operationalized by Swan and Trawick by showing subjects a piece of cloth with a coffee stain on it, then showing swatches of cloth with varying degrees of the stain removed. From these swatches the subject was asked to choose the sample that reflected her desired level of performance. Their results showed that highest satisfaction resulted when performance exceeded desires, was next highest when performance equaled desires, was indifferent when performance equaled predictive expectations, and was very low when performance was less than predicted (all

differences were significant). From this study it appears that desires can be used as a comparison standard, and that consumers can differentiate between expectations and desires.

In a second study, Swan, Trawick, and Carroll (1981) used questionnaires in a restaurant setting to measure expectations and desires. The questionnaire first asked for expectations on seven attributes relating to food and service. Then these same items were rated for what the subject wanted. Again, when performance was greater than or equal to desires, satisfaction was higher.

Other studies showing an empirical distinction between desires and expectations include Tse and Wilton (1988), who found very low, non-significant correlations between their measures of ideal performance and expectations, and Spreng and Olshavsky (1991), who found a clear discrimination between desires measures and expectations measures through confirmatory factor analysis.

Thus, it seems that there is some support for a comparison standard utilizing the consumer's desires, and that desires can be separated from expectations. However, in some cases we anticipate that desires and expectations will be highly correlated. For example, in the study by Swan et al. (1981), subjects were recruited from a restaurant, and filled out both expectation and desires measures. Most people that go to a particular restaurant would go there because they expect their desires to be met. Presumably, if they did not (i.e., if there was not a high correlation between their expectations and desires), they would not have chosen that particular restaurant, unless their behavior was constrained in some way. As Westbrook and Reilly (1983, p. 257) said, "Expectations, in the true sense, refer to beliefs about what will occur in the future. What is expected in a product, however, may or may not correspond to what is wanted or desired in that product." However, "In practice, values and expectations often coincide because consumers choose purposefully to achieve their goals." Therefore, although there may often be a high correlation between desires and expectations, it is argued here that these are distinct concepts, with independent impacts on satisfaction.

## THE DESIRES-AS-STANDARD MODEL OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION

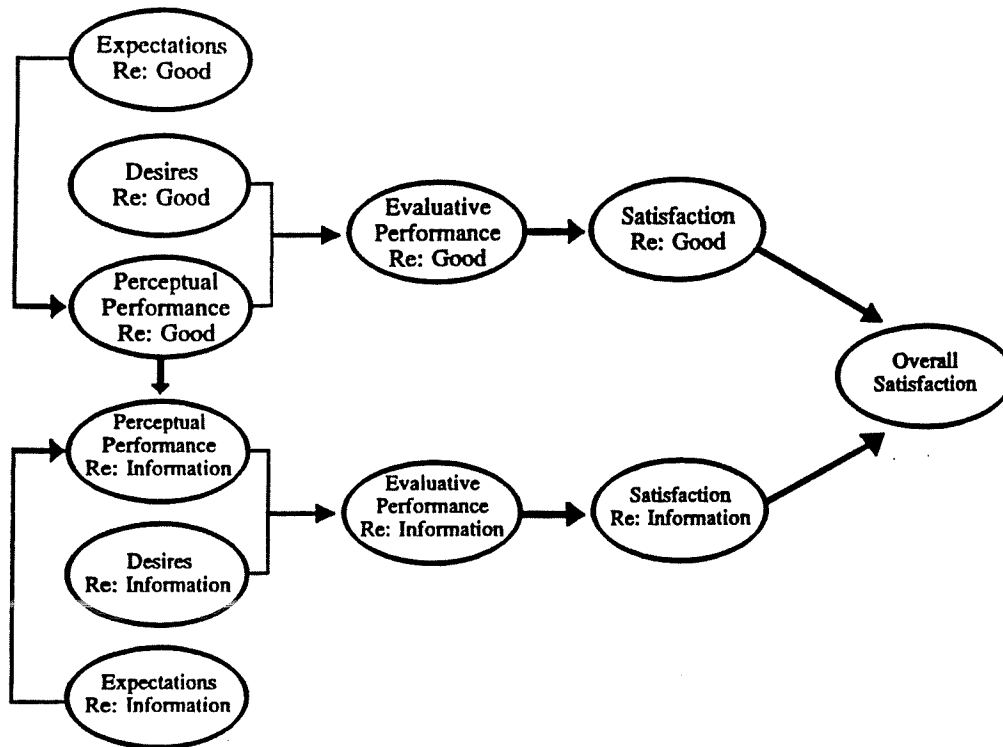
In place of the disconfirmation of expectations model, Olshavsky and Spreng (1989) proposed a new "Desires-as-Standard" model of consumer satisfaction. In their model the behaviors that determine satisfaction are characterized as occurring over two or more episodes. (An episode consists of all behaviors directed toward a good including formation of a desire, acquisition, consumption and disposition.) The most relevant part of the new model is presented in Figure 1. The figure only portrays those behaviors that are assumed to take place during Episode 2 (and later episodes).

In this model expectations do not serve as the standard against which product performance is evaluated, as this role is assigned to desires. During Episode 2, after purchase and use of a good in Episode 1, desires are compared to perceptual performance of the good. If perception of performance exceeds (equals) desires the consumer is very satisfied (satisfied) with the good. If perception of performance is less than desired the consumer is dissatisfied with the good.

An important additional feature of the Olshavsky and Spreng model is their assumption that "overall satisfaction" with the total shopping/consumption experience is influenced not only by satisfaction with the good but also by satisfaction with the information that pertains to the good. For information, as for goods, satisfaction is determined by the comparison that occurs between the desires that relate to information and the perceptual performance of the information. If a consumer's perception of the performance of the information exceeds (equals) the consumer's desires for information the consumer is very satisfied (satisfied) with the information. If perception of the performance of the information is less than desired the consumer is dissatisfied with the information.

It is also assumed that perceptual performance of the information is influenced, in part, by the perceptual performance of the good. For example, if a salesman informs a consumer that a product has a certain feature and it turns out, after purchase and use, that the feature is present, then the consumer will be satisfied with this aspect of

Figure 1



the information because "truthfulness" is typically one of the aspects desired in information about goods. Other aspects of information typically desired are "completeness," "accuracy," "timeliness," and specific types of format and form.

Because the figure only portrays those behaviors that are assumed to take place during Episode 2 or later episodes, the important role that expectations is assumed to play in influencing the initial purchase of an innovation in Episode 1 is not evident. Namely, in Episode 1 expectations about the innovation are compared to desires; if expectations equal or exceed desires the innovation is likely to be purchased and used. But, the figure does portray the possible influence of expectations re: good on perceptual performance re: good, particularly for so-called credence goods (Darby and Karni 1973). Specifically, goods or aspects of goods that are difficult to judge, even after use, may be influenced in the direction of the expectations held. The impact of expectations re: information on perceptual performance re: information is assumed to operate in a parallel

fashion.

To summarize, overall satisfaction with the total shopping and consumption experience is determined by both the satisfaction with the good and the satisfaction with the information received about the good. Satisfaction with the good and satisfaction with the information are each determined by a comparison between what was desired and perceptions of what was received. Any combination of outcomes is possible. A consumer may be satisfied with the good and satisfied with the information received. Or, a consumer may be satisfied with the good, but dissatisfied with the information. Or, a consumer may be dissatisfied with the good, but satisfied with the information. Finally, a consumer may be dissatisfied with the good and dissatisfied with the information received about the good. Given this model, it should be noted that expectations will always appear to play a major role in the determination of satisfaction with a good because expectations do play a major role in the initial decision to purchase and to use the good (during Episode 1). Once the good has been purchased

determination of satisfaction with a good because expectations do play a major role in the initial decision to purchase and to use the good (during Episode 1). Once the good has been purchased and used however, satisfaction is determined by desires (during Episode 2). Expectations re: good do play a role in Episode 2 and subsequent episodes, but only through their influence on perceptual performance re: good.

### IMPLICATIONS FOR THE MEASUREMENT OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The desires-as-standard model has some very different implications for the measurement of consumer satisfaction and its determinants than the disconfirmation of expectations model. First, an attempt should be made to measure "overall satisfaction" with the shopping and use experience to avoid confusing "overall satisfaction" with "satisfaction with the good." Second, separate measures of the constructs "satisfaction with good" and "satisfaction with the information" should be obtained. Third, measures of "desires re: good," "desires re: information," "perceptual performance re: good," "perceptual performance re: information," "expectations re: good," "expectations re: information," "evaluative performance re: good," and "evaluative performance re: information" must be obtained if the proposed relationships among the determinants of overall satisfaction are to be explored. Our suggestions for measuring each of these constructs are as follows:

**Overall Satisfaction.** Questions regarding overall satisfaction should attempt to capture the consumer's feelings not only about the good but also about the information received and used in choosing the good. For instance, "Thinking about how you feel about your overall experience of choosing and using this product, how do you feel:" with scales anchored such as: "Very satisfied/Very unsatisfied," "Very pleased/Very displeased," and "Delighted/Terrible."

**Satisfaction re: Good.** Satisfaction with the good or selected aspects of the product is assessed by asking, "Thinking just about the product

(aspect) itself, how satisfied are you with this good (aspect)?" with the measures anchored by "Very dissatisfied," "Very satisfied," with "Indifferent: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" as the midpoint. Note that the term "aspect" is used here to denote either the attribute or the benefit being considered.

**Satisfaction re: Information.** Satisfaction with the information or selected aspects of the information is assessed by asking, "Thinking just about the information (aspect) you received, how satisfied are you with the information (aspect)?" All scales should be anchored by "Very dissatisfied," "Very satisfied," with "Indifferent: neither satisfied nor dissatisfied" as the midpoint.

**Evaluative Performance re: Good.** This is a cognitive judgment (as "perceived performance" in past research) of the good or some aspects of the good. Subjects can be asked "In your judgment, how good was the product (aspect)?" anchored by "Terrible/Excellent."

**Evaluative Performance re: Information.** This is a cognitive judgment of the information or some aspect of the information, with subjects being asked, for example, "In your judgment, how good was the information (aspect) you received?" anchored by "Terrible/Excellent."

**Desires re: Good.** The desires measures should ask about the benefits (attributes) and levels of benefits (attributes) the consumer desires, with a question such as: "What aspect (level of aspect) do you desire in this product?," with anchors appropriate to each aspect.

**Desires re: Information.** The desires measures should ask about the benefits (attributes) and levels of benefits (attributes) the consumer desires, with a question such as "What aspect (level of aspect) do you desire in information about this product?," with anchors appropriate to each aspect.

**Perceptual Performance re: Good.** These measures will assess the consumer's perception of the product's aspects or levels of aspects in a non-evaluative way. The question would ask "What aspect (level of aspect) does this product have?"

These measures will assess the consumer's perception of the information's aspects or levels of aspects in a non-evaluative way. The question would ask "What aspect (level of aspect) does this information have?" with anchors appropriate to each aspect and each level of aspect.

**Expectations re: Good.** The position taken here is that expectations should be conceptualized as beliefs and not as evaluations, since this is more in line with normal uses of this term (Olson and Dover 1979). Therefore, expectations will be defined as "Beliefs (i.e., the subjective probability of association between two entities) about product attributes or performance at some time in the future." Thus, in order to avoid confounding expectations with desires or other constructs that are evaluative in nature, expectations measures should be designed to minimize the evaluative nature of the anchors (Bearden and Teel 1983; Cadotte, et al. 1987), and be constructed as belief scales, rather than with an evaluative component. Each aspect can be measured as "What aspect (level of aspect) do you expect this product to have?" with the anchors appropriate to each aspect and each level of aspect.

**Expectations re: Information.** As with goods, each aspect of information or level of aspects can be measured as, "What aspect (level of aspect) do you expect this information to have?" with the anchors appropriate to each aspect and each level of aspect.

## DISCUSSION

Progress toward a better understanding of consumer satisfaction will only come with the development of better models of the satisfaction determination process. Olshavsky and Spreng (1989) have proposed a new model of satisfaction that appears to be superior to the disconfirmation of expectations model in several important respects. The desires-as-standard model does not have the logical inconsistencies previously noted for the disconfirmation model. For example, when using a product that one expects to perform poorly, using desires as the comparison standard will result in a negative discrepancy between what is desired and what is received. This should

produce dissatisfaction, not satisfaction as predicted by the disconfirmation of expectations model. Further, this new model seems to be able to handle the important empirical result that perceived performance (when measured evaluatively) plays a very important role in determining satisfaction. And, as just shown, the model suggests some very important and different directions for future theory-based studies of satisfaction and its determinants.

At the applied level we believe that the model can make several important contributions. First, in practitioner oriented research, a consumer's expectations and desires are often seen to be the same. For example, in an ad for a marketing research firm that appeared in *Marketing News* (May 28, 1990, p. H28) the following statements were made: "It's not a pretty picture when customers decide your quality isn't up to their expectations. The best way to head off trouble is to fully understand customer needs and measure how well you are meeting them." It appears that this firm is saying that expectations and needs (desires) are the same. While there is undoubtedly a high correlation between desires and expectations in some cases, there will also be many exceptions. Thus, it is important to make a conceptual distinction between expectations and desires, and specify how and when each will affect satisfaction.

Additional examples of this confusion abound. In his book *The Customer is Key*, Lele (1987) also emphasizes the importance of managing expectations. In providing evidence for the importance of this he quotes an executive from Maytag as saying "We put money behind the product to produce it in such a satisfactory manner that it is, in fact, very dependable, very reliable, and it *does what the customer wants the appliance to do*, without falling apart." (emphasis added) Thus, the keystone of this strategy does not seem to be managing expectations, but rather providing what the customer wants.

Second, the desires-as-standard model implies that while expectations play an important role in satisfaction it should not play the central role in managerial strategy. Currently, it seems to be widely accepted that "How satisfied customers are with a given product or service depends as much on their expectations and on their perceptions of performance, as it does on the actual, measurable



widely accepted that "How satisfied customers are with a given product or service depends as much on their expectations and on their perceptions of performance, as it does on the actual, measurable quality of the product or service itself." (Lele 1987, p. 64). To illustrate a more extreme position, a recent questionnaire distributed by Walt Disney Resorts introduced the instrument with the following comment, "WELCOME ... It is my pleasure to have you as a guest at our resort. My staff and I want your visit to be a dream come true. All of us believe that Disney Resort Experiences are Magic and we are here to ensure that all your *expectations* are met... (emphasis added)."

Third, if managers are to assess the actual state of consumers' level of satisfaction or dissatisfaction with their brand or store (and their competitors' brands and stores) and if managers are to identify the actual determinants of satisfaction/dissatisfaction with their brand or store, then they must revise their questionnaires to incorporate the types of measures suggested in the previous section. Currently most survey instruments of consumer satisfaction measure only "satisfaction with the good" and/or "evaluative performance." For example, a recent survey instrument used by Long John Silver's asked simply for a rating (from excellent to below average) on each of several store attributes (e.g., selection, cleanliness, speed of service). By including separate measures for desires and perceptual performance, managers can assess each consumer's perceptions of their product, and how these perceptions relate to the consumers' desires. From a diagnostic standpoint this should indicate more precisely the source of the consumers' evaluative performance judgment, and ultimately, his/her satisfaction.

Finally, measurement of changes in desires over time should provide guidelines for maintaining high levels of consumer satisfaction. Managers may find that over time overall satisfaction with their brand or store declines. By only measuring expectations or perceived performance, managers may not understand why overall satisfaction is decreasing. It may be that performance of the good is actually decreasing or it may be due to increases in the number of aspects or the type of aspects desired in the good. Or it

may be due to changes in the desire for the type of information provided. For example, McDonald's customers may become increasingly dissatisfied not because of increases in their desire for better products but because their desire increases for more information about the nutritional content of their foods and about the methods of preparation of these foods. Understanding changing desires for and perceptions of goods and information may therefore help in product improvement, new product planning, package design, point-of-purchase displays, promotions and training of the sales force.

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