A COMPARISON OF CURRENT MODELS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION/DISSATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

There has been much literature in consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction in the last decade. Various models have been used to explain the construct for different consumption situations and different products. While a very respectable research base exists in the area, it is sometimes unclear which model is best applicable and suited for a particular situation. This paper compares the important models that have been developed in recent literature. Important theories underlying each model and major characteristics of the models are critically examined. Major developments in the models, and the applicability of each model to different situations, along with their strengths and weaknesses are discussed.

INTRODUCTION

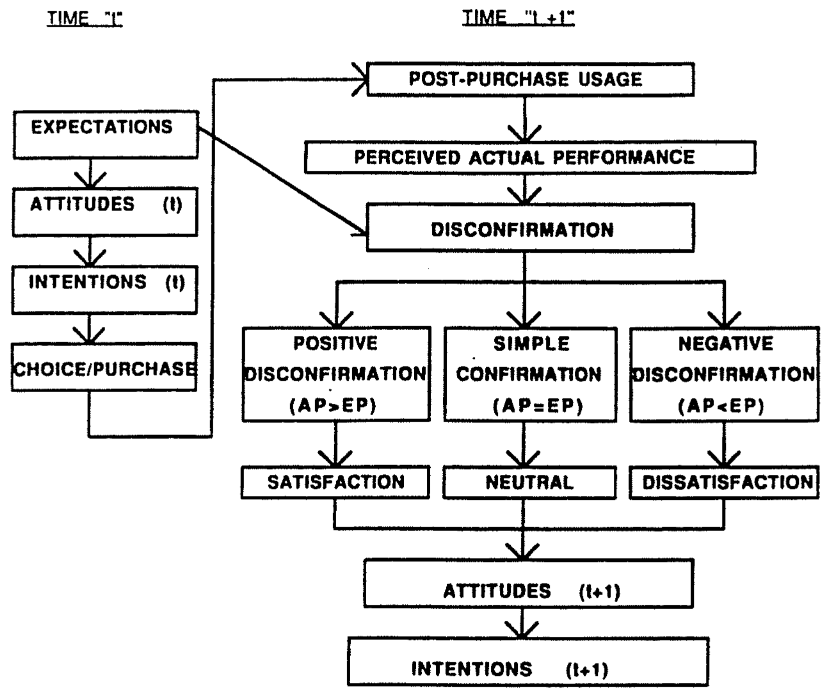
"Consumer satisfaction" is the central element of the marketing concept. As Pfaff (1976) eloquently put it: "There is but little doubt that the maximization of consumer satisfaction is considered by most to be the ultimate goal of the market economy." If "consumer satisfaction" is the fundamental element of the marketing concept, it follows that the need to develop adequate conceptual and empirical guidelines that can be applied in marketing practice is great. Thanks to the many efforts in the seventies, most notably those of H. Keith Hunt and Ralph Day, research in consumer satisfaction has grown rapidly in the eighties, and now includes various theoretical structures and models that discuss the issue of consumer satisfaction from various angles. This paper examines some of the more important models that have developed through the eighties and reports on their current status. An integration of various theories and paradigms in consumer satisfaction is badly needed, and it is hoped that this paper will, to a modest extent, help in achieving that goal.

THE EXPECTATIONS-DISCONFIRMATION MODEL

The paradigm that has dominated consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction research since its emergence as a legitimate field of inquiry in the early 1970's has been the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. According to this paradigm, consumers are believed to form expectations about a product prior to purchasing the product (Oliver 1980). The notion of consumers forming expectations is derived from expectancy theory (Tolman 1932) and is generally defined as a consumers' beliefs that a product has certain desired attributes. Subsequent post-purchase usage then reveals to the consumer the actual performance of the product. The consumer then compares this post-purchase evaluation with the expectations held prior to purchase. If the product performed better than expected (perceived actual performance > expected performance), positive disconfirmation is expected to occur. This leads to consumer satisfaction, and strengthens consumers' beliefs, attitudes and future purchase intentions. If however, in the consumers' evaluation, the product performs worse than expected (perceived actual performance < expected performance), negative disconfirmation occurs. This may weaken future dispositions towards purchasing the product, and the consumer may search for other products (Engel, Blackwell and Miniard 1990). If the product performs as expected (perceived actual performance = expected performance), the judgement of the consumer is labelled "simple confirmation" (Oliver and DeSarbo 1988).

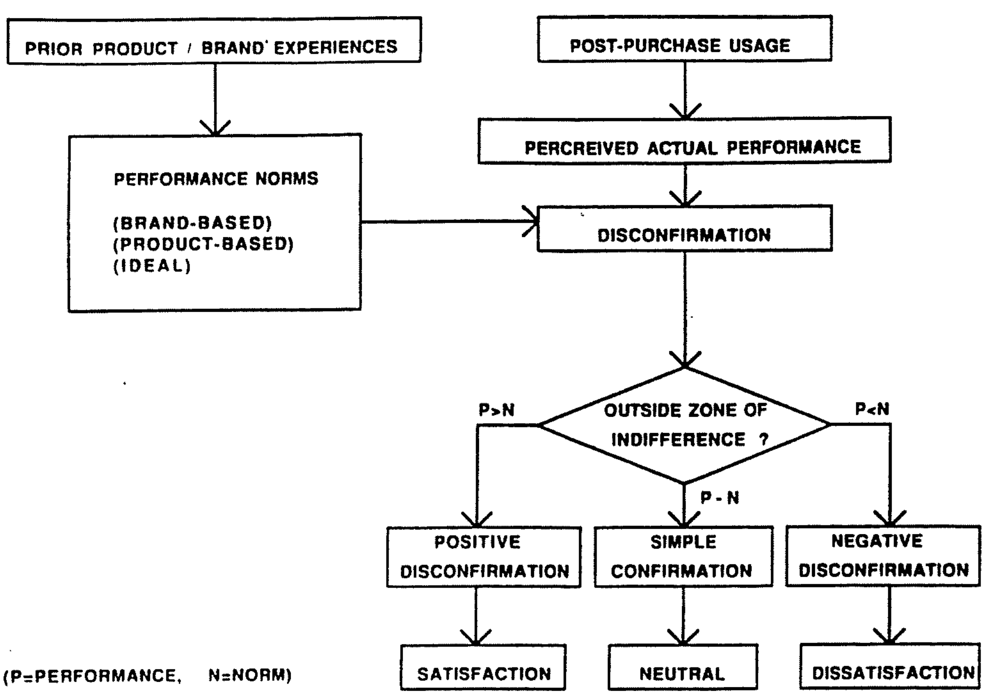
Two processes at two different time periods affect the expectations-disconfirmation process. Expectations may be affected by marketer dominated stimuli like advertising (Olson and Dover 1979) or by non-marketer dominated experiences like average product performance (Miller 1977). Disconfirmation on the other hand

Figure 1
The Expectations-Disconfirmation Model



Note: AP = Perceived Actual Performance
EP = Expected Performance

Figure 2
A Simple Representation of Norms in Consumer Satisfaction Models



(P=PERFORMANCE, N=NORM)

follows from consumers' perceptions of the usage experience. The disconfirmation of expectancies paradigm has found wide support in past research (Oliver 1980, Bearden and Teel 1983, LaBarbera and Mazursky 1983).

A separate expectations effect that is thought to operate independently of the disconfirmation effect has been hypothesized by Oliver (1980, 1981). According to this line of thought, this expectation effect works by providing an anchor for future satisfaction judgements. More recently, Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) have found some support for this argument. They observed this effect as the third most significant effect in consumers' satisfaction judgements after a disconfirmation effect and performance effect, although they add that the expectation effect may interact with the disconfirmation effect in the common direction of influence. The disconfirmation effect is thought to be the stronger factor in satisfaction judgements perhaps because the expectation effect may decay over time (Oliver 1981). Disconfirmation effects are believed to originate from the emotional experiences associated with usage (Swan and Trawick 1981). Positive emotions associated with positive disconfirmation increase the likelihood of a satisfaction judgement while negative emotions associated with negative disconfirmation decreases it. Simple confirmation maintains the adaptation level (Oliver and DeSarbo 1988).

THE PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE MODEL

While the expectations - disconfirmation paradigm has been widely used in satisfaction/dissatisfaction research, there may be certain conditions when this construct alone may fail to fully explain the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction formation process (LaTour and Peat 1979, Wilton and Tse 1983). Churchill and Suprenant (1982) argued that under certain conditions, it may not be necessary to include disconfirmation as an intervening variable affecting satisfaction. Their very interesting results indicate that the processes consumers use to reach satisfaction judgements may differ for durable and nondurable products. In the case of a nondurable product, the traditional expectation-disconfirmation relationships held. For a durable product, however,

Table 1
Major Developments of Various Models in the Eighties

Contributors/Year | **Paradigms Primarily Discussed** | **Brief Comment**

Oliver (1980) EXPECTATIONS, DISCONFIRMATION: Models consumer satisfaction as a function of expectations and disconfirmation. Consequences of satisfaction include attitude change and purchase intention.

Churchill and Surprenant (1982) PERFORMANCE, EXPECTATIONS, DISCONFIRMATION: Investigated whether disconfirmation is adequately captured by expectations and perceived performance for durable and nondurable goods.

Bearden and Teel EXPECTATIONS, DISCONFIRMATION: Used the expectations- (1983) disconfirmation model to examine the antecedents and consequences of consumer satisfaction.

LaBarbera and Mazursky (1983) EXPECTATIONS, DISCONFIRMATION: Conducted longitudinal study to assess the dynamic aspect of consumer satisfaction on intentions and repurchase behavior.

Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983) NORMS, DISCONFIRMATION, EXPECTATIONS: Proposes a modification to the expectations-disconfirmation model by replacing expectations with experience-based norms and postulating a "zone of indifference".

Folkes (1984) ATTRIBUTION: Examined consumer reactions to product failure using attribution theory.

Richins (1983) ATTRIBUTION: Examined negative word-of-mouth by dissatisfied consumers.

Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1987) DISCONFIRMATION, NORMS, EXPECTATIONS, MULTIPLE COMPARISONS: Compared disconfirmation models employing three alternative standards of performance.

Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) EXPECTATIONS, DISCONFIRMATION, PERFORMANCE, ATTRIBUTION EQUITY: Tested the effects of five determinants of satisfaction and examined individual differences.

Table 1 (cont.)

Westbrook (1987) AFFECT: Pleasant and unpleasant affective responses were related to satisfaction judgements. These relationships are independent of expectations-disconfirmation effects.

Singh (1988) ATTRIBUTION: Proposes a taxonomy for consumer complaint intentions and behavior.

Tse and Wilton (1988) PERFORMANCE, DISCONFIRMATION, EXPECTATIONS, MULTIPLE COMPARISONS: Examined the direct influence of performance on satisfaction, compared alternative disconfirmation and comparison standards, investigated multiple comparison processes.

Folkes (1988) ATTRIBUTION: Reviewed attribution research including consequences of consumers' attributions.

Oliver and Swan (1989) EQUITY, DISCONFIRMATION: Examined the "fairness" and "preference" concepts and their relationship with satisfaction. Also investigated disconfirmation and intentions and their relationship with satisfaction.

consumers' satisfaction judgements were solely determined by the performance of the product and were totally independent of their initial expectations. While the authors did find an expectations-disconfirmation effect, its magnitude did not translate into an impact on satisfaction. They thus proposed an extension to the expectations-disconfirmation model to include the direct effects of perceived performance.

The presence of the perceived performance effect has also been more recently confirmed in a study by Tse and Wilton (1988). This study provides strong theoretical and empirical support in favor of extending the expectations-disconfirmation model to include the direct influences of perceived performance and suggests that in many consumption situations, perceived performance may indeed outweigh expectations in determining consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction judgements. Expectations and product performance were found to assume distinctly different roles in satisfaction formation. It is therefore suggested that these effects be modeled separately.

This is also consistent with the fact that consumers often learn from experience, especially for new products. It seems likely therefore,that when a product performs well, the consumer will be satisfied regardless of any disconfirmation effects (Tse and Wilton 1988). On the other hand, there are products that have little or no instrumental performance dimension (Holbrook and Hirschman 1982), and in such cases, the perceived performance paradigm may be redundant.

NORMS IN MODELS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION

The use of norms in models of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is based on the notion that apart from expectations, consumers often use various other bases of comparisons to arrive at satisfaction judgements. As early as 1979, LaTour and Peat applied Thibaut and Kelly's (1959) comparison level theory to satisfaction research and suggested that standards or norms play a role in consumers' satisfaction judgements. Approaches to modeling product performance against pre-experience standards or norms have also been suggested by Swan and Trawick (1981). Norms serve as reference points for evaluating brands, and satisfaction judgements are based on the resulting confirmation/disconfirmation relative to these norms. Using a similar line of thought, Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins (1983) proposed to extend the traditional expectations-disconfirmation paradigm using experience-based norms instead of expectations as the standard of comparison. While the traditional expectations-disconfirmation paradigm limits comparison to experiences with the focal brand, Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkin's model takes into account consumers' breadth of experiences beyond the focal brand. Consumers may, for example, have a brand-based norm where one brand dominates a consumers' set of brand experiences, or a product based norm when the consumer has had experiences with several brands of a product type within a product class. In case the consumer uses brand-based norms to form satisfaction judgements, the reference brand may be the focal brand or any other brand, while in case the consumer uses product-based norms, the reference norm may be some overall level of performance perceived to be most likely or frequent. The authors propose a "zone of indifference" within some practical interval around the performance norm. "Confirmation" occurs when the performance of the focal brand lies within this indifference zone. Positive/negative disconfirmation occurs when the perceived performance of the focal brand is better/worse than the norm respectively, and lies outside the "zone of indifference".

A variation of this concept has been discussed by Sirgy (1984). However, instead of using normative performance as in the Woodruff-Cadotte-Jenkins model, Sirgy suggests "ideal" performance as the comparison standard. It may also be pertinent at this stage to compare models using norms with the expectations-disconfirmation model. The main difference lies in the conceptualization of the comparison standard and the disconfirmation paradigms used. The comparison standard in the former case is normative performance, while expected performance is used as the comparison standard in the expectations-disconfirmation model (Oliver 1980, Bearden and Teel 1983). In addition, in the former case, disconfirmation is modeled as a subtractive function (Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987), while in the later case, a subjective evaluation is used for the same purpose (Oliver 1980).

Various different disconfirmation models employing different standards of performance were compared by Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1987) using covariance structure modeling. General support was found for the disconfirmation paradigm. While the product-based brand model and the best brand norm model were consistently found to be superior to the expectations-disconfirmation model in explaining variance in satisfaction judgements and model fit, the expectations-disconfirmation model cannot be written off. It can however be concluded that expectations are not the only standard consumers use to reach satisfaction judgements, and product-based and brand-based norm models increase our ability to explain consumers' satisfaction/dissatisfaction judgements. Future research may need to determine more clearly what standards consumers use for different consumption situations and products.

MULTIPLE PROCESS MODELS

The discussion above, and data from some studies (eg. Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins 1987, Tse and Wilton 1988), suggest that no single model or unique comparison process may fully explain all consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction judgements. Instead a better description of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction may include multiple processes and standards of comparison. While many researchers (Sirgy 1984; Wilton and Niscosa 1986) have suggested multiple comparison processes to explain consumer satisfaction, some empirical evidence that consumers may use multiple standards to arrive at satisfaction judgements has been provided by Tse and Wilton (1988). Their findings suggest a multiple comparison process including complex interactions, which may take place either sequentially or simultaneously. Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) observed joint effects of various variables in the satisfaction/dissatisfaction formation process. They suggest, for example, that disconfirmation though objective, may be subjected to psychological interpretations that may dominate under certain conditions. Similar observations have been reported by Cadotte, Woodruff and Jenkins (1987) who suggest a multidimensionality of standards, where consumers use a standard that is a weighted composite of various standards. This multidimensional standard may be formed from past experience including experience with the focal and competing brands. Future research is much needed to clarify and better explain some of these issues.

ATTRIBUTION MODELS

In the last decade, attribution theory has been found to be very useful in explaining consumers' postpurchase behavior. Research in this area is based on the work of Kelley (1972) and is primarily developed from the Weiner (1980) schema. Attribution theory has been used more in dissatisfaction/complaining behavior models than in satisfaction models per se. According to this paradigm, consumers are viewed as rational processors of information who look for reasons to explain why a purchase outcome turned out the way it did (Wong and Weiner 1981; Folkes 1984).

More specifically, consumers tend to search for causes for purchase successes or failures and usually attribute these successes or failures using a three dimensional schema (Folkes 1989, Oliver and DeSarbo 1988, Krishnan and Valle 1979):

1. Locus of Causality (internal or external) - The purchase outcome can be attributed either to the consumer (internal) or to the marketer or something in the environment or situation (external).
2. Stability (stable/permanent or unstable/temporary) - Stable causes are thought not to vary over time, while unstable causes are thought to fluctuate and vary over time.
3. Controllability (volitional/controllable or nonvolitional/constrained) - Both consumers and firms can either have volitional control over an outcome or be under certain uncontrollable constraints.

These dimensions are generally thought to be dichotomous (Weiner 1980), although there has been some discussion of them being perceived on a continuum (Folkes 1984). A consumers' response to a situation depends on the attributions he/she makes.

The most common use of the causal dimensions above have been in understanding consumers' post-purchase behavior following product failure (dissatisfaction). While there has been research (Krishnan and Valle 1979; Richins 1983) that has examined the effects of one or two of these dimensions, Folkes (1984) analyzed all three causal dimensions and consumers' reactions to attributions based on those dimensions. With regard to locus of causality, it was found that consumers felt that they deserved a refund and apology more when failure was externally attributed (firm-related) than when it was internally attributed. Similarly, firm-related attributions elicited more feelings of anger and desire to hurt the firm than internal attributions. In such cases consumers also resorted to more negative word-of-mouth (Richins 1983). Such feelings of anger towards the firm were heightened when the responsiveness of the firm to the problem was considered less than adequate and hence resulted in more negative word-of-mouth. In fact, under conditions where the consumer perceived poor responsiveness by the firm, they were less likely to complain to the firm and more likely to use negative word-of-mouth to express their dissatisfaction (Richins 1983). Stability and locus affected whether consumers expected future product failure (Krishnan and Valle 1979; Folkes 1984) and whether they preferred a refund or an exchange. If the cause was perceived to be stable, consumers expected the product to fail again in the future, and hence preferred a refund to an exchange. Consumer attributed causes of failure were also considered to be less stable (more changeable) that firm attributed causes. Hence refunds were preferred to exchanges when causes for failure were attributed to the firm. As far as controllability was concerned, more anger was elicited when consumers perceived the cause of failure to be controllable by the firm and hence were more likely to seek revenge. Reactions to dissatisfaction with products has also been addressed by Singh (1988) that consumer complaining behavior is a three-faceted phenomena consisting of: (i) "Voice" consumer complaining behavior that is directly involved with the dissatisfying experience and directed externally (eg. manufacturer, retailer), (ii) "Third party complaining behavior" that is also externally directed, but not directly involved in the dissatisfying experience and (iii) private consumer complaining behavior that is directed to objects not external to the consumers' social circle.

As mentioned earlier, attributional models have, in the past been more useful in predicting consumers' reactions when they are dissatisfied than in explaining the satisfaction process itself. However, Folkes (1984) and Richins (1985) have obtained some evidence that support a relationship between locus of causality (internal or external attributions) and satisfaction judgements. The results, especially Folkes, show that the locus of causality dominates satisfaction judgements and that satisfaction is associated more with internal than with external attributions. Similar findings have been reported by Oliver and DeSarbo (1988), who compared the effects of five determinants of satisfaction (expectancy, performance, disconfirmation, equity and attribution) and found that the attribution dimension was the least significant of all effects in the situation tested.

However, what was interesting was that the subjects that responded to the manipulation were more satisfied when they felt they were responsible for the decision leading to satisfaction (internal locus of causality) than when they did not feel they were responsible for the decision.

AFFECTIVE MODELS

While most models of consumer satisfaction have implicitly assumed a very cognitive process in explaining consumers' satisfaction judgements, it has recently been recognized that affective variables may play an important role in consumers' post-purchase responses. As early as 1980, Westbrook found that for some product categories (eg. automobiles), consumer satisfaction judgements were, in addition to purchase-specific purchase factors, a function of the affective responses of the consumer after the purchase. Westbrook (1987) used Izard's (1977) taxonomy of affective experience and determined that independent positive and negative affective dimensions directly influenced consumers' satisfaction judgements, complaint behavior and word-of-mouth activity. The affective responses of the subjects were found to account for a significant variance in these post-purchase phenomena, over and above traditional cognitive explanations. Moreover expectation-disconfirmation effects did not mediate these relationships. More recently, Westbrook and Oliver (1991), investigated the interrelationship between consumption emotion and consumer satisfaction, and identified five discernable patterns of affective responses. Their findings indicate that past satisfaction measures do not adequately represent the affective component associated with consumption. For example, the measurement of satisfaction judgements may be enhanced if two experiential bases linked with high satisfaction, (pleasure over surprise with consumption and pleasure linked with high interest) are distinguished from each other in the measurement process. Overall, it appears that the satisfaction construct is quite complex, and, while past research on affect has helped clarify some issues, a great deal needs to be done for a thorough understanding of the area.

Table 2
Important Causal Dimensions and Their Reactions

Causal Dimensions	Attributions	Reactions
LOCUS	Internal	Less negative word-of-mouth. More likely to expect change in future.
	External	Refund expected. Apology expected. More negative word-of-mouth.
STABILITY	Stable	Do not expect change in future. (Expect product to fail again) Prefer refund to exchange.
	Unstable	Expect change in future. (May not expect product to fail again) May accept exchange.
LOCUS AND CONTROL-ABILITY	Volitional, External	Anger towards firm. Seek revenge against firm.
	Non-volitional	Less likely to seek revenge against firm.

EQUITY MODELS

Equity models of consumer satisfaction are different from the other models in consumer satisfaction in that they are based on the relationship between the costs an individual expends in the transaction and the anticipated rewards. Equity models are derived from equity theory (Adams 1963) and are based on the notion that inputs and outcomes have equity interpretations that are responsible for satisfaction judgements (Oliver and Swan 1989). According to this theory, parties to an exchange will feel equitably treated (satisfied), if in their minds, the ratio of their outcomes to inputs is deemed "fair" (Oliver and DeSarbo 1988). Whether a person feels equitably treated or not may depend on various factors including the price paid, the benefits received, the time and effort expended in the transaction and experience with previous transactions (Woodruff, Cadotte and Jenkins 1983; Tse and Wilton 1988). Equity models of consumer satisfaction are different from the other models, in that satisfaction is evaluated relative to other parties in an exchange and the outcomes of all parties are taken into consideration. Using equity theory, interpersonal phenomena can be modeled, and this adds a new dimension to past research in consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction.

Equity models may provide a much richer picture of consumer satisfaction in situations that may not be completely captured using traditional satisfaction models. For example, they may be especially useful in modeling situations where satisfaction with the other party in a transaction is important. Recent research has briefly considered such situations, but the scope for future research and extension of this model is considerable. Especially notable studies in this area have been those of Fisk and Coney (1982), Mowen and Grove (1983), Fisk and Young (1985), Oliver and Swan (1989) and Oliver and Desarbo (1988). Fisk and Coney (1982) found that consumers were less satisfied and had a less positive attitude towards a company when they heard that other consumers received a better price deal and better service than when they felt that they were equitably treated. In other words, their perceptions of equitable treatment by the company translated into satisfaction judgements, and even affected their future expectations and purchase intentions (Fisk and Young 1985). Similar findings linking equity/inequity with satisfaction judgements and future purchase intentions have been reported by Mowen and Grove (1983). Oliver and DeSarbo (1988) found that equity was the fourth most significant determinant of satisfaction (after disconfirmation, performance and an independent expectations effect), in spite of the fact that satisfaction was framed in terms of the purchase (investments) outcome alone. It is possible that if satisfaction with the other party to the transaction (the broker) had also been modeled, equity would have emerged as a more significant effect.

Oliver and Swan (1989) address the issue of "intervening approaches" (as opposed to "nonintervening frameworks") to satisfaction

Table 3
Primary Characteristics of Current Models of Consumer Satisfaction

Model	Primary Characteristics
1. THE EXPECTATIONS DISCONFIRMATION MODEL	Consumers pre-purchase expectations are positively or negatively disconfirmed resulting in satisfaction or dissatisfaction judgements respectively.
2. THE PERCEIVED PERFORMANCE MODEL	For some products, consumers' satisfaction judgements are primarily determined by the perceived product performance and are independent of initial expectations.
3. NORMS IN MODELS OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION	Norms serve as reference points for evaluating brands and satisfaction judgements are based on the resulting confirmation/disconfirmation relative to these norms.
4. MULTIPLE PROCESS MODELS	Consumers sometimes use multiple standards or multiple comparison processes which may take place either sequentially or simultaneously to arrive at satisfaction judgements.
5. ATTRIBUTION MODELS	Consumers tend to search for causes for purchase successes or failures and attribute these successes or failures using a multidimensional schema. Consumers post-purchase responses depends on the attributions made.
6. AFFECTIVE MODELS	In addition to cognitive factors, satisfaction is a function of consumers' post-purchase affective responses. Positive and negative emotions directly affect satisfaction judgements, complaint and W-O-M behavior.
7. EQUITY MODELS	Consumers' satisfaction judgements are based on equity interpretations derived from the costs an individual expends in the transaction and the anticipated rewards.

judgements. Nonintervening frameworks are characterized by a direct path from the output-input ratio to satisfaction judgements. The intervening approach, on the other hand, is based on the notion that a party to an exchange derives some "meaning" from the output to input ratio that cannot exactly be construed as satisfaction, but rather as a variable that affects satisfaction judgements. Two intervening approaches commonly used are "fairness" and "preference" or advantageous inequity. The concept of "fairness" requires that both parties to a transaction get "what is right" or "what they deserve (c.f. Oliver and Swan 1989). "Preference" or advantageous inequity on the hand is based on the notion that the focal party in a transaction strives to maximize his outcome so that he has inequitable benefits over the other party. This view suggests a self-centered view of the parties to an exchange and assumes that parties strive to obtain advantageous inequity. The results of this study are interesting from a number of viewpoints. Overall, it was found that there was a relationship between perceptions of high outcomes and high levels of fairness and preference. However, when satisfaction with the salesperson was modeled, the fairness dimension mediated the effects of the output-input ratio on satisfaction while the preference dimension did not. Interestingly, apart from fairness, disconfirmation was found to have an independent effect on satisfaction, underscoring the need to have an integrated view of satisfaction models. Another interesting finding of this study was that intention was solely a function of satisfaction.

From recent research, it seems obvious that equity models offer an interesting interpretation of satisfaction judgements. Clearly a lot more research needs to be carried out in order to have a thorough understanding of equity in transactions. The benefits, however, seem to be plenty. Equity models of consumer satisfaction may have applications in sales management, retailing and channel strategy because of their nature of capturing the interpersonal component in the transactions. In conjunction with the other models of consumer satisfaction they should provide a better and fuller picture of the satisfaction construct in general.

CONCLUSION

From the discussion above, it is clear that much has been done in consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction research since the early work of Cardozo (1965). While a very respectable research base exists as we enter the nineties, a number of issues need further clarification. One of the most important directions for future research in consumer satisfaction research may be in determining which models are best applicable in different consumption situations and for different products. While the advances in consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction literature in the eighties have been quite impressive, it is still not very clear which paradigm may best model consumers satisfaction/dissatisfaction judgements in various situations. An understanding of situations in which one model dominates others will be give both academics and practitioners a more comprehensive view of the construct. For example, much work needs to be done using both equity and attribution theory. Equity theory holds a lot of potential in modeling satisfaction in situations where interpersonal affects are important. Attribution theory on the other hand, may be useful in explaining satisfaction in situations where it is important for a consumer to determine the cause of an outcome, or when the formation of such attributions enhance the consumption experience. More research examining consumer satisfaction at an individual level rather than at an aggregate level is also necessary to get a better picture of the various judgements involved. Most satisfaction/dissatisfaction models have in the past concentrated on aggregate level data (A notable exception is the work of Oliver and DeSarbo 1988).

This paper has traced the development of models of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction, growth of the body of literature and major changes in the content of literature in the eighties. It is hoped that this integration of the various approaches in the area will identify where we stand today and create a sense of direction for future research. Intense local as well as global competition underscores the need to have a well documented body of research in consumer satisfaction. While understanding the phenomena of consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction is important, it should not be considered an end in itself and efforts should be made to incorporate developments into marketing strategy.

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