INSIGHTS INTO CS/D&CB FROM THIRTY YEARS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH IN THE *JOURNAL OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, DISSATISFACTION AND COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR*

Newell D. Wright
North Dakota State University

Val Larsen
James Madison University

ABSTRACT

We review thirty years of qualitative research from the Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior. *Four themes emerge from this analysis: 1) CS/D&CB as a process, not an end state; 2) CS/D&CB as a social process; 3) CS/D&CB causation outside of the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm; and 4) qualitative CS/D&CB studies driven by quantitative assumptions. These themes suggest a second-level interpretation of the results focused on theoretical complexity. We conclude the article by commenting on qualitative methodologies and proposing elements that should be required for qualitative research to be published in the journal in the future.*

INTRODUCTION

In 1992, John E. Swan published the first purely qualitative study in the *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior* (hereafter JCS/D&CB). This remarkable study produced some very counterintuitive results for the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm that was then and still is today a foundational theory in consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and complaining behavior (hereafter CS/D&CB) research. Examining patient expectations in a healthcare setting, Swan pointed out that patients often held unrealistic expectations about medical care (e.g., "I'm going to be cured by a surgeon"). Through a social process, expectations were negotiated by both the patients and the healthcare providers who had to help patients set more realistic expectations about what medical science could and could not do for them. As a result, Swan (1992) concluded, expectations are a joint product of work done by both providers and patients. In other words, "satisfaction work" (Swan's terminology) with healthcare is a social process. These insights came out of a series of 14 focus group studies in which both healthcare professionals and patients participated.

One year later, in an editorial in the JCS/D&CB, then editor H. Keith Hunt, no doubt inspired by Swan's 1992 study, made a call for more "storytelling" in CS/D&CB research. Hunt wrote,

> *As little children, most of us loved to listen to stories and tell stories. Too many of us set storytelling aside as childish as we "mature" into adults and scholars. I propose that it is only in the story context that the richness of CS/D&CB comes into focus. We can pass out all the questionnaires we want, but we will not really understand "what happened" or "what they think" until we hear consumers' stories in their own words.*

> *We need to write the stories down. The stories then become case histories. From a multitude of stories we can draw inferences about human behavior, inferences in which we are confident because we have heard (or read) that story theme so many different times that it is accepted as valid… Ten or twenty years from now the stories will still be there. As we learn more and understand more, we will gain additional, fresh insights from those same stories.*
>
> *At this conference, Dev Pathak told how the word "bothered" came to the fore in his research efforts. As people talked about their experience with pharmaceutical products, they weren't dissatisfied, they were "bothered." Asked if they were dissatisfied, consumers answered with fuzzy, unclear responses. Changing dissatisfied to the consumers' word "bothered" allowed them to respond more directly with less interpolation and transformation to try to bring their life experience (story) into the configuration of our asked question. We pick up these word choices when we listen to people tell their CS/D&CB stories in their own words* (Hunt 1993, p. 41).

Hunt is explicitly recognizing the richness that can be produced by talking to consumers or intensely observing their consumption experiences, rather than surveying customers or experimenting on them. Since his 1993 editorial, many more qualitative works have appeared in the JCS/D&CB. Beginning in 1995 and going through 2021, some thirty-one additional qualitative studies have appeared in the journal (see appendix 1).[1] In this article, we attempt to review each published qualitative article, provide an interpretive context for the body of qualitative work, and make methodological suggestions for future qualitative research.

This article is structured as follows. In the first section, we examine the substantive results of thirty years of qualitative studies and their impact on CS/D&CB theory. In the second section, we examine the qualitative methodologies used and make suggestions for future qualitative research. And we explicitly call for more qualitative CS/D&CB research.

INSIGHTS FROM THIRTY YEARS OF QUALITATIVE CS/D&CB RESEARCH

As Swan 1992 demonstrated, our understanding of CS/D&CB may be enhanced by deeply studying consumers using qualitative methodologies to achieve a "thick" (Geertz, 1973) understanding of consumer culture. This in turn drives our conceptualization and understanding of CS/D&CB phenomena. Qualitative research may also help marketing to achieve its ultimate goal or telos: aggregate consumer satisfaction (Larsen & Wright, 2020).

[1] This number excludes studies that used the content analysis method where results were analyzed quantitatively (e.g., Bechwati & Nasr 2011; Blodgett et al. 2015; Bunker & Bradley 2007; or Gardial, Flint, & Woodruff 1996; this is not a comprehensive list). It also excludes studies like Warren and Swan (2004) that are basically quantitative studies with qualitative elements. But it does include one study, Wright & Larsen (2012) that was published in another outlet, *Marketing Education Review*. Wright and Larsen are two of the most published authors in the JCS/D&CB (Larsen and Wright 2017, p. 8) and the research published in MER in 2012 was presented at the 2018 CS/D&CB biennial conference in New York City, as its explicit focus was on students who experience intense satisfaction from a study abroad program.

CS/D&CB as a Process, Not an End State

Several articles discovered that CS/D&CB constructs were more of a process than an end state as originally conceptualized (Oliver, 1980). Parker, Pomerantz, & Fehr, (1995) analyzed transcripts of twenty 911 calls during an emergency in Philadelphia and concluded that satisfaction arose out of the entire process of answering or not answering emergency calls, rather than with the outcome (police presence or no police presence). Callers expected that 911 calls would be taken seriously and answered promptly and when that did not happen, callers expressed dissatisfaction with the entire process.

Wright (1996) used a longitudinal series of depth interviews and the autodriving photoelicitation technique (Heisley & Levy, 1991) to interview couples who had recently purchased their first home or who had moved from a smaller home to a larger home. Wright contends that a house purchase is not a static possession, but a dynamic possession that changes over time. When first purchased, a house may or may not provide satisfaction, and satisfaction with the house may wax or wane over time as the homeowners change the house through divestment and possession rituals, fantasizing, and by acquiring possessions for the home. As with others, he also concludes that satisfaction is not simply an end state, but a dynamic consumption process in which consumers can experience feelings of satisfaction and dissatisfaction that can last for years or even decades.

Wright, Larsen, & Higgs (1995) suggest that the final consumer, the recipient of the product, may not be the most important party in the satisfaction process. In an ethnographic study of homebuilding by volunteers for low-income consumers who purchased homes at reduced prices, they concluded that the organization volunteers, not the future homeowners, were the most important customers. There were many potential homebuyers but relatively few skilled volunteers. Keeping the volunteer segment satisfied over the long haul was critical to the success of the organization, more critical than satisfying the buyers who ultimately purchased the product. The researchers conceptualized keeping the volunteers satisfied as a long-term, ongoing process. This finding puts the focus of satisfaction efforts on the organization rather than on the consumer of the product.

Perhaps the best example of satisfaction as a process comes from Durgee (1999). According to Durgee, satisfaction and delight can be ephemeral and fleeting, whereas some possessions can provide deep, "soulful" satisfaction, a type of satisfaction that is long-lasting and, as Wright (1996) indicated, can change over time. Durgee uses examples from literature to flesh out the concept of deep, soulful satisfaction, which is tied to the soul of the individual. He describes such satisfaction with the following words and expressions: "slow, contemplative consumption; hands-on, hand-made; connected to nature, natural forces; designed by someone who know *temenos*[2]; tied to the past, to archetypes; can involve unhappiness; often has imperfections; versatile, multi-sensory; do out of own volition; feel alive; represent higher order values; mutual caring between person and object; and character, which can [be] represented in metaphor; gestalt" (p. 60). He points out that such consumption is like sacred consumption, but that sacred consumption is grounded in religion, whereas the deep, soulful consumption he describes may be rooted in religion or in philosophical, psychological, historical, or various other perspectives. Sacred consumption focuses on objects, but soulful consumption focuses on the soul of the person, not the object. As such, soulful satisfaction is a very subjective and potentially long-lasting experience. And deep, soulful satisfaction definitely happens as a process, over time, not fleetingly, e.g., when perceptions exceed expectations.

[2] Or the spiritual context.

Each study reviewed above describes satisfaction as more than merely an end state. Satisfaction is, rather, a process that may endure over time, one that may wax and wane as consumers become more or less involved. And as we shall see in the next section, satisfaction is not merely a process, it is a *social* process, where meaning is negotiated in a social setting.

CS/D&CB as a Social Process

Swan's seminal (1992) article is a good example of satisfaction as a social process. As noted above, the study showed that patients and practitioners negotiated a socially constructed set of expectations concerning healthcare treatment. But Swan (1992) is not alone in that discovery.

Friend and colleagues (Friend & Rummel, 1995; Fitzpatrick, Friend, & Costley, 2004) following Hunt's (1993) call for more storytelling, added layered dimensions to the conceptualizations of the CS/D&CB process by interpreting a single phenomenological memory. Friend & Rummel's (1995) interpretation is informed by Oliver's (1980) expectancy disconfirmation model of satisfaction, but feelings of justice and moral injustice frame their interpretation. They produced a complicated model of feelings of dissatisfaction that included the consumer's actions, goals, values, attributions, feelings, behaviors, and emotions, all of which contribute to satisfaction and dissatisfaction. And like Swan (1992), they concluded that satisfaction is a social process in which one or more parties negotiate an outcome that is much more complex than a simple measure of consumer expectations and perceived outcomes.

In a second analysis of phenomenological memories, this time involving an accusation of shoplifting, Fitzpatrick, Friend, & Costley (2004) show how distrust between a service provider and a customer is both a dissatisfaction response mode and a dissatisfaction trigger. In a very thick description of distrust, the authors show that humiliation, disbelief, surprise, guilt, embarrassment, frustration, outrage, fear, panic, helplessness, and distress are all emotions triggered by employee distrust of the consumer. They conclude that in real life, people experience distrust, dissatisfaction, and exit as dynamic, multifaceted, and highly specific phenomena. And other people were always involved in the creation of distrust. In short, distrust and related manifestations of dissatisfaction are the products of a social process. Consumer distrust, they conclude, is very destructive of market relationships and goes well beyond mere dissatisfaction.

In an ethnographic study focused on birding (bird watching), Swan, Martin, & Trawick (2003) demonstrated that even when expectations are not met and dissatisfaction occurs, a sort of "compensatory satisfaction" may arise through social relations. These social relations are what Arnould & Price (1993) called *communitas,* or an evolving feeling of communion with family, friends, service providers, other consumers, and even strangers. So even though the primary goal of the service encounter was not realized (seeing new and different birds during birding excursions)—which naturally led to participant dissatisfaction—a compensatory satisfaction occurred through *communitas,* leaving the respondents with an overall sense of satisfaction from the service encounter. The social process, the *communitas,* of the outing overshadowed the otherwise disappointing outcome of the event.

Wright & Larsen (2012) explicitly mention *communitas* in a study of intense satisfaction experienced by participants in a study abroad program. Many students (and even the students' parents!) sent unsolicited comments to study abroad leaders such as, "This Belgian experience is now the greatest experience of my life!" (See Wright & Larsen, 2012, p. 123 for a score of such comments). Why would participants say these things? What kind of service encounter led to comments like these that framed the experience as exceptional in the broader context of an entire life? The authors use a novel dataset, graffiti left by students in the student residence, as well as

13 in-depth interviews with the participants, some conducted years after the experience, to answer these questions. After analyzing photos of the graffiti and the transcripts of the depth interviews, the authors describe three emergent themes—travel trophies, magic moments, and *communitas*—and then reinterpret these themes as an extraordinary experience. Arnould & Price define extraordinary experiences as "intense, positive, intrinsically enjoyable experiences" that create "a sense of newness of perception and process," and are defined by "high levels of emotional intensity" that emerge from the dynamic interaction with other participants (1993, p. 25). According to Wright & Larsen, extraordinary experiences "are spontaneous, authentic, and lead to intense satisfaction and delight. They are life-changing, self-defining episodes that are interpreted within the broader context of consumers' lives" (2012, pp. 122-123). The service providers share the experience in an authentic and spontaneous way with the participants. "These are not scripted service encounters" (1993, p. 123). Extraordinary experiences are social experiences and the social aspects of the study abroad program was a major driver of the intense satisfaction experienced by participants.

Bantham (2010) used thirty-six unstructured interviews with both sides of the buyer-seller dyad to show that commitment to the partnership, communication, inter-organizational understanding, cooperation, joint problem-solving, and tangible and intangible outcomes all contributed to satisfaction. Partnership enablers, drivers, and performance directly led to relational outcomes, and he concluded that buyer-seller satisfaction is a highly social process. As in many of the other qualitative studies, this satisfaction arose outside of the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm.

Yan & Lotz (2009) studied consumer complaint behavior (CCB) from a social-psychological perspective to understand the impact of others on the complaining experience. Instead of complaining as a response to a dissatisfying experience, the dominant explanation of CCB, the authors concluded that the presence and absence of other consumers, both known and unknown to the potential complainer, influenced the decision to complain or to not complain in a service context. Using social facilitation theory, which predicts that the mere physical or psychological presence of others may influence a person's CCB, they identify four conditions in which CCB occurs. First, it occurs when acquainted customers are physically present; 2) when unacquainted customers are physically present; 3) when acquainted customers are mentally present; and 4) when unacquainted customers are mentally present. While traditional CCB theory has long recognized that the presence of others can encourage or hinder CCB, this study concludes that the mental presence of others, known or unknown to the consumer, may also hinder or encourage CCB. It concludes that social facilitation theory and interpersonal influence have an impact on the decision to complain. So CCB is not simply a function of a dissatisfying experience. A person may choose not to complain to avoid embarrassment or to avoid social comparison to an unfavorable other. Social facilitation theory suggests that feedback from others who are physically or mentally present may also encourage or inhibit complaining behavior.

Williams & Anderson (1999) also used social facilitation theory to explain consumer delight. They used a qualitative technique called "researcher introspection," where the researcher studies her- or himself (Gould, 1991). Their context was a drumming workshop for women. The themes that emerged were 1) expected verses unexpected workshop attributes; 2) participants' social motives; and 3) the complexity of consumption performance. They experienced delight with the workshop not only because of arousal and positive affect (Oliver, Rust, & Varki, 1997), but also as a result of a kind of peak experience (Schouten et al., 2007, pp. 357-358) while performing

in a social setting. The authors do link back to Oliver et al.'s (1997) conception of delight but again describe what they experienced as much more complex than the conventional accounts suggest.

Wright, Larsen, & Higgs (1995) gave an extended example of purchase behavior in embedded markets in their literary analysis of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. They looked at the role of social capital in these embedded markets and how they influenced service acquisition. Wolfe's descriptions of the "favor bank" is an illuminating example of social capital.

> *Everything in this building, everything in the criminal justice system in New York … operates of favors. Everybody does favors for everybody else. Every chance they get, they make deposits in the Favor Bank… A deposit in the favor bank is not* quid pro quo. *It's saving up for a rainy day. If you've been making your regular deposits in the Favor Bank, then you're in a position to make contracts. That's what they call big favors, contracts. You have to make good on contracts … because everybody in the courthouse believes in a saying: "What goes around comes around"* (Wolfe, 1988, p. 401).

The novel's protagonist, Sherman McCoy, ultimately hires a lawyer who has made regular deposits in the Favor Bank, deposits which, for a fee, then directly benefit Sherman McCoy. Though the short-term results of hiring this lawyer are disappointing, in the medium- and long-run, McCoy becomes satisfied with the legal services available to him thanks to his lawyer's regular deposits in the Favor Bank. Both the favor bank and Wright, Larsen, & Higgs' (1996) discussion of embedded markets in *The Bonfire of the Vanities* show that satisfaction is indeed a social process.

Johnson & Ross (2015) explicitly studied the impact of negative purchase experiences when using social capital in the marketplace. They conducted twenty-six in-depth interviews with informants who used social relationships in purchases. After a hermeneutical analysis of their data, the authors produced three emergent themes related to social capital and negative marketplace purchases. These themes are: 1) recourse constraint (the inability to rectify purchase problems because of the social relationships involved); 2) trust decay; and 3) relationship atrophy. In further analysis of these three themes, the authors show that if recourse constraint remains unaddressed, the rupture can cascade first into trust decay and then relationship atrophy when the problems associated with the purchase are attributed to an individual in the relationship. If the purchase problems are attributed to situational factors and not an individual, trust is compartmentalized, and the relationship can move forward. Their discovery of negative outcomes at the individual level is an important contribution to both social capital theories and CS/D&CB.

Wright, Horn, & Larsen (1999) use ethnography to explain a full year of purchasing experiences while running a study abroad program in Paris, France. They use the cultural concepts of being vs. doing, ingroup vs. outgroup (Trompenaars, 1993) and high vs. low context (Hall & Hall, 1989) to show how purchases made *within* rather than *between* embedded markets lead to satisfaction and purchases made *between* rather than *within* embedded markets lead to dissatisfaction. An embedded market is a market in which social relations like mutual trust and obligation are as important or more important than purely economic attributes like perception and expectation (Frenzen & Davis, 1990). In an embedded market, members of an affinity group build strong bonds of trust and, through mutual favors, a pool of social capital on which they can draw to ease the rigors of the pure market. If purchases are made *between* embedded markets, consumers have no affinity group or social capital with which to make purchases and are, thus, more likely to experience dissatisfaction. This analysis dovetails with the detailed description of embedded

markets (pp. 129-131) in Wright, Larsen, & Higgs' (1996) analysis of Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. Various cultural and social factors lead to the creation of embedded markets. Their creation is an inherently social process.

Cárdenas (2012) and Cohn (2016) both studied gift-giving behavior using qualitative methodologies. Cárdenas (2012) focused his study on a collectivist country laden with cultural overtones, Ecuador. He identified four emergent themes in the gift-giving and receiving process: 1) the gift as a common product; 2) the gift as a special product; 3) the gift as an inadequate product; and 4) the gift as an awkward product. Feedback to the giver in this collectivist culture consisted of both verbal and non-verbal communication and was comprised of both sincere feedback or lies, depending on the recipient's satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the product. In a collectivist country and culture, gift recipients felt compelled to lie if they did not like the product. And satisfaction or dissatisfaction with the gift directly influenced gift disposition behavior.

Cohn (2016) studied dissatisfaction and complaint behavior in a context where gift givers intentionally purchased unwanted gifts and studied the recipient's reactions to these gifts. Using phenomenological interviews and a "netnographic" study of an online community, Cohn identified five emergent themes related to unwanted gifts: 1) threats to one's self-concept; 2) to you—for me; 3) aggression; 4) ritual and obligation; and 5) bragging rights. The outcome of all five emergent themes was dissatisfaction with the gift and the gift-giver. The author points out that the giving of unwanted gifts is not always a mistake. In her study, unwanted gift giving was deliberate, and this deliberateness was the source of the dissatisfaction. Both studies point out that satisfaction or dissatisfaction with received gifts is very much a social process.

As these and other examples amply demonstrate, satisfaction is not just a process, it is often a very social process, involving other human beings who may be physically or mentally present or absent. The social nature of an experience can provide compensatory satisfaction; social relationships can deeply impact satisfaction; and social capital and embedded markets may directly lead to satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

CS/D&CB Arising Outside of the Expectancy/Disconfirmation Paradigm

One persistent result of the qualitative research reviewed for this paper is that there are many paths to CS/D&CB, not simply one. To affirm this, one need not deny the explanatory power of the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm (EDP), which has much empirical support. We will examine below several of these alternative paths to CS/D&CB phenomena.

A second birding ethnography by Swan & Trawick (1997) suggests that variety seeking may also be a source of satisfaction and may even lead to delight as the extended service encounter takes participants to new locations, near and far. For birders (bird watchers), seeing new and different birds is the expected outcome of the service encounter, but another factor, variety seeking, also explains satisfaction with the experience. In their postulation, the variety-seeking satisfaction arises out of experiences shared by the members of the birding community who travel together to see new birds. In this study, the researchers built upon the idea of *communitas* from their first study and offer additional support to the conceptualization of satisfaction as a social process. But they also show that variety seeking is a source of satisfaction that may arise outside of the EDP.

Another insight from Wright (1996) was that the house may meet all the homeowners' expectations, yet still cause dissatisfaction because it is not consistent with the homeowners' larger constellation of possessions. Purchasing a house often triggers the Diderot effect (McCracken, 1988) where a departure purchase (e.g., the new house) leads to the replacement of the entire existing constellation of possessions. Old possessions are replaced by new possessions that are

culturally consistent with the departure purchase. When a house is purchased, previous furnishings may no longer culturally "fit" the new purchase and may cause dissatisfaction with the existing possessions. Wright, Larsen, & Higgs (1996) also gave an extended example of how the Diderot effect works in Tom Wolfe's novel, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. They show how, over the course of the novel, two trigger purchases change the cultural meaning of and satisfaction/dissatisfaction with a Park Avenue apartment and criminal legal services. In both cases, dissatisfaction arises not because perceptions are lower than expectations but because the previous constellation of possessions lacked cultural consistency with the departure purchase, which ultimately led to the acquisition of a new constellation of possessions.

In addition to being a concrete example of satisfaction as a social process, the extraordinary experience construct also arises outside of the EDP. More than ten years after the data for the study on extraordinary experiences were collected, Wright and colleagues again studied the intense nature of satisfaction with study abroad programs. Petersen, Wright, & Aron 2020 revisit the study abroad experience. Using 11 in-depth interviews and extensive quotations from the interviews, they identify five new emergent themes: sight verses blindness; words versus actual experiences; emotional intensity; extreme enjoyment; and personal growth and awakening. Petersen et al. (2020) interpret the emergent themes as "transcendent customer experiences," or TCEs (Schouten, McAlexander, & Koenig, 2007, p. 358). TCEs are "characterized by feelings such as self-transformation or awakening, separation from the mundane, and connectedness to larger phenomena outside the self. TCEs may also be marked by emotional intensity, epiphany, singularity and newness of experience, extreme enjoyment, oneness, ineffability, extreme focus of attention, and the testing of personal limits" (Schouten et. al 2007, p. 358). While the extraordinary experience construct is similar to the TCE construct in many ways, there is one major difference: TCEs are *individual* experiences, whereas extraordinary experiences are *group* experiences. But in either case, intense satisfaction and delight arise in contexts outside of the EDP.

Wright and colleagues (Wright & Larsen, 1997; Wright, Larsen & Bolfing, 1999) expand Kowalski's (1996) theory of complaining. According to Kowalski, while expectations and their disconfirmation sometimes play a role in CCB, complaining is more complicated than the EDP posits. Kowalski defines complaining more broadly as "an expression of dissatisfaction, whether subjectively experienced or not, for the purpose of venting emotions or achieving intrapsychic goals, interpersonal goals, or both" (p. 180). Some people will complain to achieve social and psychic goals even if they are not dissatisfied. Wright and colleagues examine archived messages from a sports e-mail listserv (or a "netnography," to use Cohn's [2016] word) to expand Kowalski's model. They add to the model grudgeholding and retaliation behaviors. Their main point is that these behaviors can also arise outside of the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm.

After a series of focus groups and seven in-depth interviews with disadvantaged consumers, Halstead, Jones, & Cox (2007) discovered some limitations and deficiencies of the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. For example, they showed that disadvantaged consumers may not have any expectations at all but instead focus on interactional fairness. For these consumers, satisfaction is conceptualized as "here and now." That is, they focus on whether a service is available when they need it or not. If it is, they are satisfied and if not, they are dissatisfied. They have a passive acceptance of the world around of them and, following Kowalski (1996), because of the perceived low utility of complaining they do not complain. Their more typical responses were dependency and helplessness, not dissatisfaction, when no service options were available. The authors conclude that a satisfaction model that applies to disadvantaged consumers should include two primary antecedents: perceived performance and equity. The

performance measure should tap into current product or service performance only, not past performance. And the equity measure should include an overall measure of fairness as well as specific measures of procedural and interactive justice.

In an insightful study, Blodgett, Hill, & Bakir (2006) provide an alternate explanation for complaining behavior in cultures outside of the United States. After a textual analysis of email messages from twenty-five informants, representing twenty-three different countries, the authors conclude that complaint behavior across cultures is largely dependent upon the prevailing product return policies in a given country. They state that return policies, not cultural values, influence consumers' decision to seek or not seek a refund or exchange. If product return policies are permitted and relatively easy, they return products and complain. If no such policies exist, they do not return products and do not complain. This confirms some of the results of a previous qualitative study, Wright, Horn, & Larsen (1999), which described in detail the return policies in the United States and France and how they affected consumer behavior (p. 9-10).

Karani (2021) used four rounds of focus group data to study brand forgiveness. Her context was multiple listeria contaminations from a beloved brand of ice cream, and consumers' reactions to these contamination scandals. Each focus group consisted of four to seven informants, and each focus group session lasted approximately 90 minutes. She discovered four emergent themes: 1) regional loyalty (the brand was from Texas); 2) nostalgia; 3) value; and 4) doing the right thing. She did not provide a second-level interpretation. The loyalty arising from childhood consumption of the brand was apparently very durable and extended into adulthood. Nostalgia for the brand helped overcome the negative effects of the scandal. And pride in the Texas origin of the brand also contributed to brand forgiveness. Of note is that her finding arise outside of the expectancy disconfirmation paradigm.

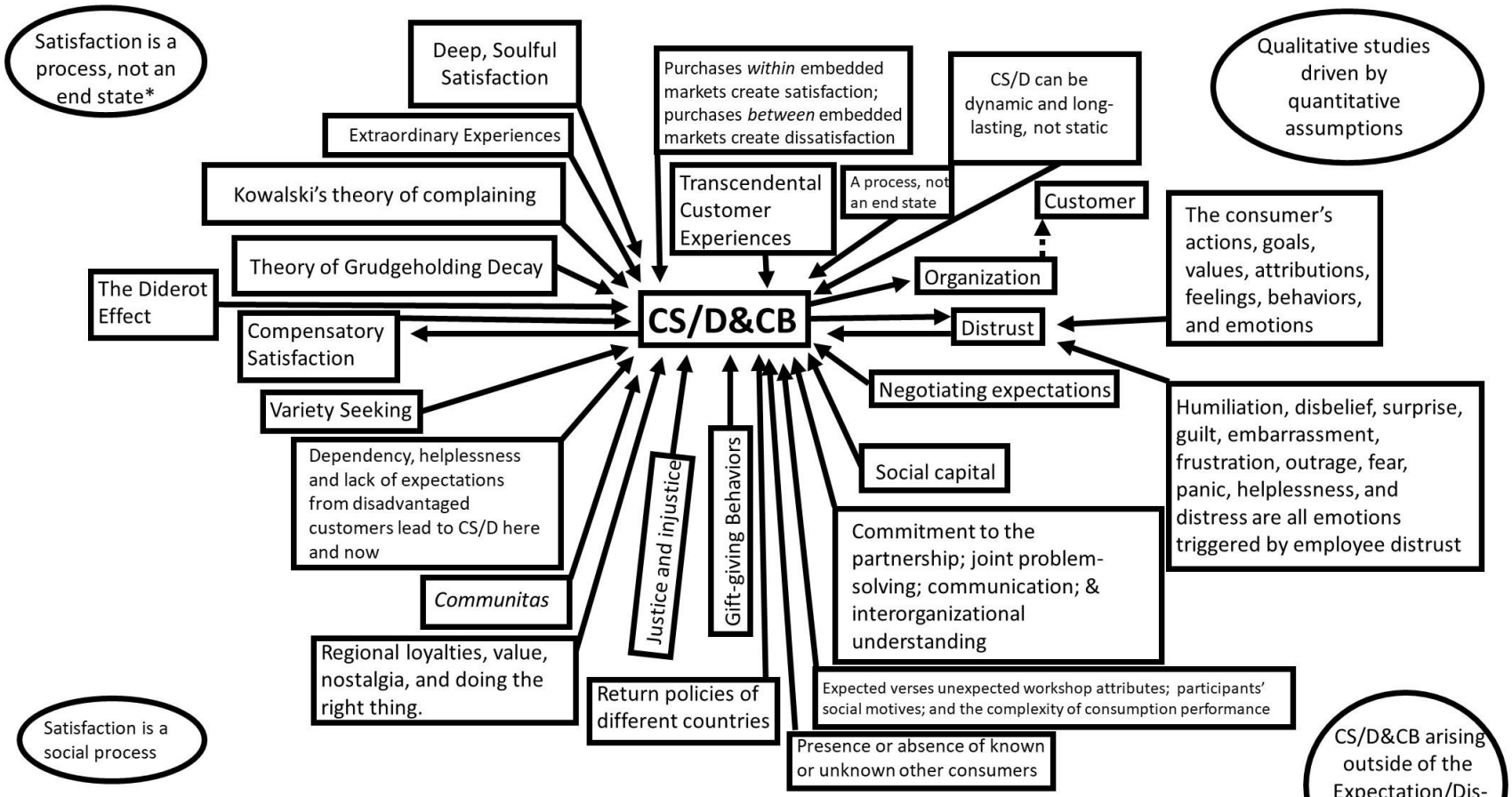
Nordstrom & Egan (2021) use a hermeneutic analysis of promotion material, descriptions of over 1,200 images, and blog posts to study how Ag More than Ever (AMTE) is trying to reverse negative images of Canadian farming. This research found eight emergent and three second-level themes that describe the goals of AMTE. The emergent themes were 1) promoting the economic and social benefits of agriculture; 2) data refuting misinformation; 3) death of expertise; 4) highlighting similarities; 5) building superiority; 6) multimodal images; 7) encouraging conversations; and 8) images of children. Second-level interpretation: 1) providing trustworthy information; 2) transforming farmers into credible sources; and 3) building positive affect. These second-level interpretations were used to extend Thota and Wright's (2005) theory of grudgeholding decay. We include this study in this section because, as Wright and colleagues have noted, grudgeholding behavior can arise in the context of Kowalski's (1996) theory of complaining, which is not rooted in the EDP (Wright, Larsen, & Bolfing, 1999; Wright & Larsen, 1997).

Figure 1 shows the sources of satisfaction and dissatisfaction from the studies detailed above. An important takeaway is that much, if not most, of the satisfaction or dissatisfaction arises outside of the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm. Thus, these studies suggests that the antecedents and consequences of satisfying or dissatisfying experiences are complex and arise from many theoretical perspectives. The expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm explains many aspects of CS/D&CB, but many others arise outside of this dominant paradigm.

Qualitative Studies Driven by Quantitative Assumptions

Sometimes qualitative results are driven by the theoretical perspective of the researchers before the qualitative data are collected. In these cases, the theory drives the questions that are

Figure 1



Insights from Thirty Years of Qualitative CS/D&CB Studies

*Circles represent emergent themes from the qualitative literature review.

asked and the results that emerge, rather than letting the themes emerge from the data and then subsequently interpreting the data. In other words, the results followed the theory building. This, in our opinion, is not the best use of qualitative research, for it usually does not add anything to what quantitative methods have produced.

Swan and colleagues seem to have fallen into this trap. Despite the very novel and insightful interpretations from his first study (Swan, 1992), some subsequent studies did not provide the deep, rich, and thick insights his first study provided, insights which are usually generated by qualitative research. For example, Swan, Powers, & Hansen (1995) claim to have used four years of intermittent engaged observation and ten in-depth interviews. But the emerging results seemed very straightforward and followed the theoretical outline of the first part of the article. Swan & Trawick (1999) used ethnographic methods and produced an "ethnography" of delight arising from a trip down the Nile River in Egypt. Despite the opportunity for interesting results to emerge, the article merely confirmed the affect, arousal, and surprise dimensions of delight originally described by Oliver et al. (1997).

Other studies had the same problem as the studies by Swan and colleagues. Malafi (1996) used data from five focus groups to study complaining behavior among military personnel. Her analysis resembles the exit, voice, and loyalty categories proposed by Hirschman (1970). Though she did discuss a military culture that discouraged complaining, she did not really add anything beyond what Hirschman already hypothesized.

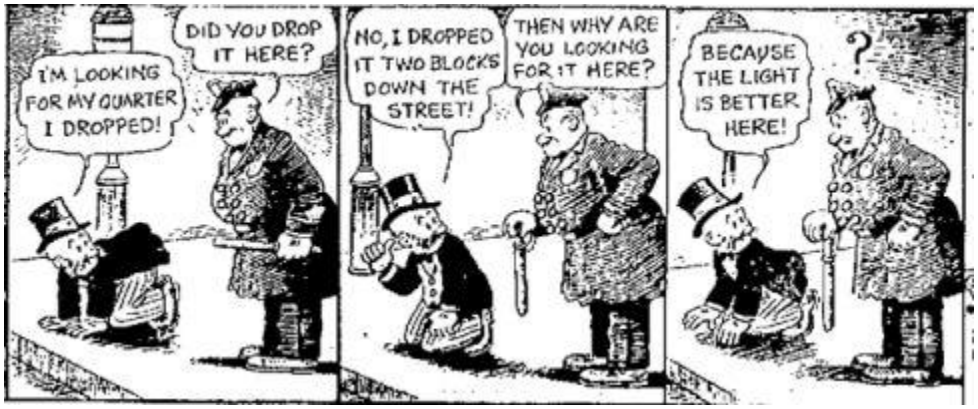
Godwin, Patterson, & Johnson (1999) used the critical incident technique from in-depth interviews with 32 informants. Their results, six categories of primary appraisal ("what is at stake") and five coping strategies, closely aligned with their theoretical conceptualization in the first part of the study. Similarly, Day (2002) uses focus groups and 22 in-depth interviews to study value. But the themes she described did not break new ground. They aligned with the tenets derived from her literature review.

Hogarth & Hilgert (2004) analyzed written comments from 779 surveys from the Federal Reserve System's consumer complaint program. They concluded that the analysis of the comments produced some insights but did not really tell them anything they could not have learned with quantitative methodologies. The two data sets, quantitative and qualitative, essentially reinforced each other. Bakir, Bakir, & Blodgett (2020) qualitatively studied students' motivations, goals, values and beliefs for studying abroad and, unsurprisingly, they found answers to the questions they asked, which questions were based on their front-end theorizing. This study did not produce the insights that emerged from two other qualitative studies of students studying abroad (Petersen et al., 2020 and Wright & Larsen, 2012), nor did it provide a theoretical explanation for students' satisfaction with the study abroad program, other than to state that it fit in with the EDP.

Summary, Interpretation, and Conclusions

In this paper, we have identified four major themes associated with the qualitative research that has been published in the JCS/D&CB: Satisfaction as a process; satisfaction as a social process; explanations for CS/D&CB phenomena arising outside of the EDP; and qualitative studies driven by quantitative assumptions. A second-level interpretation of these four themes might be stated as "theoretical complexity." The studies reviewed clearly indicate that CS/D&CB is a very complex and dynamic field of study, with a lot left to learn. Symanski & Henard (2001) performed a meta-analysis of evidence in the CS/D&CB field and concluded the emphasis on the EDP may not be warranted. They suggested that researchers place greater emphasis on modeling equity in quantitative research, a suggestion that is supported by this qualitative review.

Given the complexity of CS/D&CB, why, then, is so much attention given to the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm? The *streetlight effect* may offer an explanation. This is a type of observational bias that occurs when researchers study something that is easy to study. As David Freedman commented, "Researchers tend to look for answers where the looking is good, rather than where the answers are likely to be hiding" (Freedman, 2010). The cartoon below offers a clear description of the streetlight effect. The expectancy-disconfirmation explanation of CS/D&CB is short, intuitive, robust, and reproducible. Indeed, much has been learned and will continue to be learned from this approach. But as this review shows, CS/D&CB is very complex and the EDP does not completely describe the nuanced and multifaceted phenomenon that is CS/D&CB. The studies profiled above also approach CS/D&CB from multiple theoretical perspectives whereas the EDP approaches CS/D&CB from a cognitive and behavioral perspective.



We recommend the continued use of qualitative methodologies to study CS/D&CB phenomena. These techniques provide for the emergence of new ideas and theories explaining these phenomena. The richness of these studies can provide fruitful directions for both qualitative and quantitative studies, which in turn will enhance our understanding of CS/D&CB. Qualitative research continues to be an excellent avenue for researching the complex nature of CS/D&CB.

That said, we do wish to make some comments on some of the various qualitative methodologies, and we recommend that future qualitative researchers pay attention to the following guidelines and suggestions.

A FEW THOUGHTS ON METHOD

Qualitative research in the JCS/D&CB has used a wide variety of qualitative methodologies (see table 1). The theories arising from qualitative research are or should be grounded in real life phenomena, which is why one approach to qualitative research is called "grounded theory" (Glazer & Strauss, 1967; Locke, 2001). The grounded theory approach recognizes the iterative process between researcher and data (see Nordstrom & Egan, 2021, for an excellent example of grounded theory research). As data are collected, researchers analyze the data and then collect more data as necessary to answer new questions arising from previous analysis of data, until saturation or redundancy is reached. Data are derived from the text, initially coded, and the codes are grouped together into higher-level nodes. These nodes are then interpreted into yet a higher-level node and theory emerges. Johnson (2015) provides a good exposition of grounded theory in a sales management context.

Consumer culture theory (CCT) uses a similar methodology, but with different goals. Societal values are rendered as "texts" to be hermeneutically analyzed (Ricoeur, 1981; Scholes, 1982). That is, the texts are iteratively analyzed to identify emerging themes. These readings, like grounded theory, produce evolving categories that expand, contract, and solidify as the research progresses. Several readings are necessary to adequately identify and extensively exemplify the various emergent themes. After many iterations, the emergent themes are interpreted holistically as an "experiential *Gestalt*" that gives new meaning to both the themes and the data (McCracken

Table 1

Qualitative Methodologies

Methodology	Qualitative Research Studies
Focus groups	Day, 2002; Halstead, Jones, & Cox, 2007; Karani, 2021; Malafi ,1996; Swan, 1992
In-depth interviews	Bantham ,2010; Cárdenas, 2012; Day, 2002; Halstead, Jones, & Cox, 2007; Johnson & Ross, 2015; Petersen, Wright, & Aron, 2020; Swan, Powers, & Hansen, 1995; Swan, 1992; Wright & Larsen, 2012; Wright, 1996
Structured Qualitative Interviews	Bakir, Bakir, & Blodgett, 2020
Participant or engaged observation	Swan, Martin, & Trawick, 2003; Swan & Trawick, 1999; Swan & Trawick, 1997; Swan, Powers, & Hansen 1995; Wright, Horn, & Larsen 1996; Wright, Larsen, & Higgs 1995
Critical Incident Technique	Godwin, Patterson, & Johnson, 1999; Yan & Lotz, 2009
Literary analysis or other textual analysis	Blodgett, Hill, & Bakir, 2006; Durgee ,1999; Nordstrom & Egan, 2021; Parker, Pomerantz, & Fehr 1995; Wright & Larsen, 2012; Wright, Larsen, & Higg,s 1996
Netnographies	Cohn, 2016; Wright & Larsen, 1997; Wright, Larsen, & Bolfing, 1999
Memory work	Fitzpatrick, Friend, & Costley,2004; Friend & Rummell, 1995
Phenomenological interviews	Cohn, 2016; Fitzpatrick, Friend, & Costley, 2004; Friend & Rummell, 1995
Autodriving Photoelicitation Technique	Petersen, Wright, & Aron, 2020; Wright & Larsen, 2012; Wright, 1996
Researcher Introspection	Williams & Anderson, 1999
Survey free response comments	Hogarth & Hilgert, 2004

1988; Spiggle 1994; Thompson 1997). But instead of creating new theory as grounded theory does, the data may be interpreted considering other, already existing theories. For example, Petersen et al. (2020) interpret the five emergent themes in light of the transcendental customer experience theory first described by Schouten et al., (2007). The difference between CCT and grounded theory is that CCT is more interested in holistically interpreting the results, while grounded theory is more interested in creating new theories from the data. But each follow a similar process. See Figure 2. Both CCT and grounded theory start with raw text. Codes are assigned to the text, then grouped together in emergent themes (CCT) or higher-level nodes (grounded theory). Finally, we arrive at second-level interpretations (CCT) or new theory (grounded theory).

Note that with qualitative research, a burden falls on the researchers to provide enlightening, inspired, and creative interpretations. Even if a data management program is used (e.g., NVIVO or Delve), it is still up to the researcher(s) to interpret the data. Good, insightful qualitative research arises from researcher intuition and inspiration while working with the data. For example, while Nordstrom & Egan (2021) were assessing the initial texts, they noticed that data and statistics were being used in arguments, as well as "highly emotive visual images" (p. 83), suggesting both a cognitive and an emotional approach to persuasion. This fed into their higher-level nodes and ultimately into their overarching dimensions. This was not an insight that a computer program could provide. It required an interpretation from creative human beings immersed in the data.

The quality of the qualitative research that has appeared in the JCS/D&CB in the past has been uneven, perhaps, at least in the early years of the journal, due to the then unknown nature of qualitative research. Some articles (e.g., Bantham, 2010; Johnson & Ross, 2015; Nordstrom & Egan, 2021; Petersen et al., 2020; Swan, 1992; Wright, 1996) provide insightful second-level interpretations, but many others do not (e.g., Cárdenas, 2012; Day, 2002; Karani, 2021; Malafi ,1996; Swan & Trawick, 1999). In an era where qualitative research is reaching the mature stage, all qualitative studies should conform to normative standards of the methodology. Going forward, authors should expect that second-level interpretations or theory building will be necessary for publication.

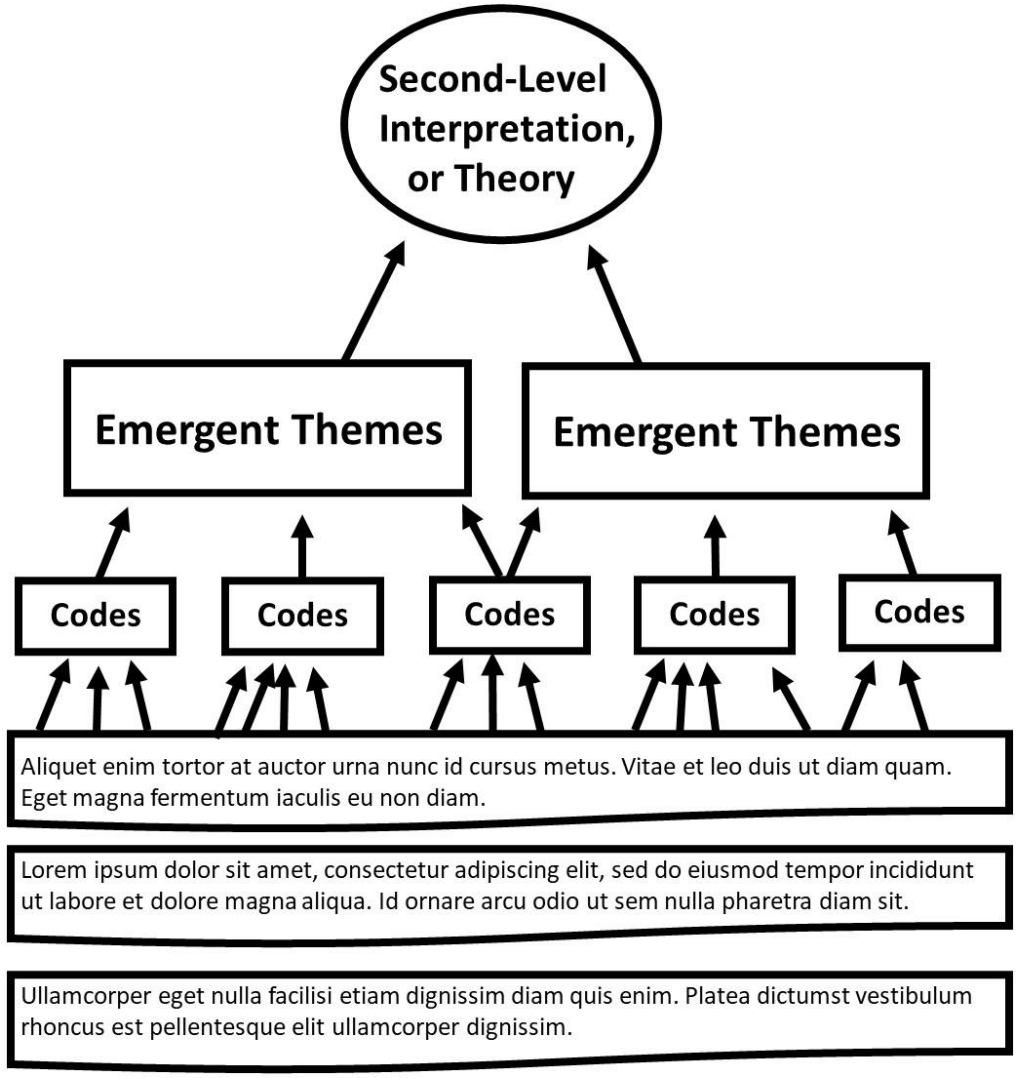
Another qualitative method, ethnographic studies, has been somewhat problematic in the JCS/D&CB. For example, Wright and colleagues provide extensive excerpts of their participant observation notes in their ethnographies (Wright et al., 1995; Wright et al., 1999), but none of the Swan and colleagues studies claiming to be ethnographies do (Swan et al., 1995; Swan & Trawick, 1997; Swan & Trawick, 1999; Swan et al., 2003). In the Wright and colleagues studies, it is easier to see how the interpretations emerge from the data. It is more difficult in the studies by Swan and colleagues. Future ethnographic studies will need to include an extensive sampling of notes, perhaps as an appendix.

A NOTE ON CITING QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Most of the qualitative research published in the JCS/D&CB has ignored previously published qualitative research in the JCS/D&CB. For example, Yan & Lotz (2009) used a critical incident technique but did not cite Godwin et al. (1999), who used the same methodology ten years previously. Cohn's (2016) "netnography" did not cite or reference two previously published netnographies, Wright & Larsen (1997) and Wright et al., (1999). The many "ethnographies" of Swan and colleagues (e.g., Swan & Trawick, 1997; Swan, Martin, & Trawick, 2003) did not cite Wright, Larsen, & Higgs (1995). Focus group research by Day, 2002; Halstead, Jones, & Cox 2007; Karani, 2021; and Malafi, 1996 did not cite Swan 1992, or any other focus group research

Figure 2

Grounded Theory and Hermeneutical Analysis



Textual or visual data are read and coded. These codes are then grouped into emergent themes (hermeneutical analysis) or higher-level nodes (grounded theory). The themes/nodes lead to a second-level interpretation (hermeneutical analysis) or new theory (grounded theory).

published in the JCS/D&CB for that matter. Durgee's (1999) literary analysis of passages from works of fiction did not cite Wright, Larsen, & Higgs' (1996) literary analysis of Tom Wolfe's novel, *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. None of the studies that used in-depth interviews cited any previous JCS/D&CB studies using such interviews, unless the papers were by the same authors.

In general, with some exceptions, JCS/D&CB qualitative research has not been widely cited (see Table 2). Not citing previous research in the JCS/D&CB is part of the problem, a problem that should be corrected. The blame for this can lie at the feet of the editors and reviewers of these articles, who themselves did not suggest citing previous research, or were perhaps unaware of such research. Going forward, qualitative articles submitted for publication should expect to cite relevant qualitative research previously published in the JCS/D&CB.

Table 2
JCS/D&CB Qualitative Research Citations

Research	Citations		Research	Citations
Day, 2002	166		Swan & Trawick, 1999	10
Blodgett et al., 2006	73		Swan et al., 2003	6
Halstead et al., 2007	41		Hogarth & Hilgert, 2004	5
Godwin et al., 1999	39		Swan et al., 1994	4
Swan, 1992	37		Swan et al., 1995	4
Yan & Lotz, 2009	33		Johnson & Ross, 2014	3
Wright & Larsen, 2012	29		Swan & Trawick, 1997	3
Wright et al., 1995	27		Wright, 1996	3
Williams & Anderson, 1999	22		Cohn, 2016	2
Fitzpatrick et al., 2004	16		Wright et al., 1996	2
Bantham 2010	15		Wright, et al., 1999	1
Cárdenas, 2012	13		Karani, 2021	1
Durgee, 1999	13		Malafi, 1996	0
Wright & Larsen, 1997	13		Bakir et. al., 2020	0*
Friend & Rummell, 1995	12		Petersen et al., 2020	0*
Parker et al., 1995	11			

Source: Google Scholar. Accessed 21 March, 2022.
*As of 21 March, 2022, these two paper have only been available for 13 months.

LIMITATIONS

The summaries of the qualitative research presented in this paper are themselves an interpretation of the articles. They are not "the" interpretation, but rather "an" interpretation. Theoretically, at least, there are an infinite number of possible interpretations (Hudson & Ozanne, 1998). Reasonable researchers could read the same articles and come up with completely different, but no less compelling, interpretations. This is not a bug of qualitative research, but rather a feature. Multiple and different interpretations are always possible.

The authors also do not give a complete review of the many qualitative methodologies, nor do they delve into all the intricacies of grounded theory or CCT. This article is meant only as a primer on qualitative research. Researchers desiring to perform qualitative research should immerse themselves into the extensive qualitative research literature, or enroll in a qualitative research course, available at most major universities.

CONCLUSION

Qualitative research in the JCS/D&CB has a thirty-year history of producing thick, descriptive results that demonstrate the complexity of the CS/D&CB phenomena. This paper has reviewed the relevant articles, interpreted the cumulative findings, and made some methodological and citation suggestions for future research. We strongly encourage researchers to continue producing quality qualitative research that complies with professional norms and standards and to continue providing insights into the antecedents and consequences of satisfying and dissatisfying consumer experiences. The discipline is all the richer for its inclusion in this journal. As H. Keith Hunt said, "it is only in the story context that the richness of CS/D&CB comes into focus. We can pass out all the questionnaires we want, but we will not really understand 'what happened' or 'what they think' until we hear consumers' stories in their own words" (Hunt, 1993, p. 41).

CORRESPONDING AUTHOR:
Newell D. Wright, Ph.D.
Professor of Marketing and International Business
College of Business
North Dakota State University
NDSU Dept. 2420, P.O. Box 6050
Fargo, ND 58108-6050
USA
E-mail: newell.wright@ndsu.edu
Phone: +1-701-231-6532

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Appendix A: List of Qualitative Articles Examined in this Article

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Swan 1992	Fourteen focus group interviews.	Hospital patients, physicians, nurses, and other staff representing OB/GYN, hematology, oncology, cardiology, orthopedics, rehabilitation and gastroenterology.	Four emergent themes: 1) the social construction of reality; 2) patient satisfaction as contingent on the fulfillment of expectations; 3) negotiated treatment outcomes expectations between providers and patients; 4) judging provider competence; 5) multiple realities between patients and providers; 6) persuasion and power. Second level interpretation: satisfaction is fundamentally a social process achieved through negotiation of expectations.	In a hospital setting, both patient expectations and standards for performance are negotiated as health care providers attempt to change unrealistic patient expectations/performance standards. As a result, satisfaction is a joint product of work done by both providers and patients. Satisfaction is a social process.
Swan, Powers, & Hansen 1995	Four years of intermittent engaged observation; "Ethnography."	Four construction engineering and six manufacturing informants	1) discovering a vendor mistake or problem that exists with an order; 2) investigating the problem to determine its cause and how it might be corrected; and 3) fixing the problem resulting from the mistake.	Development of the industrial complaint process model. Very straightforward description of what happened.
Parker, Pomerantz & Fehr 1995	A "close micro-analysis of carefully transcribed" 911 calls. Ethnomethodology.	Twenty 911 calls from November 11, 1994, about an clash of urban youth in a residential neighborhood of Philadelphia. All 20 transcripts are included as an appendix.	Caller deference and trust when initiating the call; breakdowns of trust; operator negotiating details (the who, what, where, when and why) of the situation; expectation that calls to 911 would be taken seriously and answered promptly; disconfirmation when there were not police after repeated calls. No second level interpretation.	Satisfaction with process versus outcomes. Very straightforward description of what happened.
Wright, Larsen & Higgs 1995	Ten months of participant observation that produced detailed notes and photographs of the observation. A hermeneutical analysis of notes, photos, and videos.	Building homes and raising funds with volunteers from Appalachian Mountain Housing.	Focus on volunteers feeling good and having fun with their efforts rather than on helping the needy. Saturday workdays were carefully choreographed by preparations during the week so volunteers could hammer away without wasting too much time on Saturdays, have fun, and feel good (satisfied) with their efforts. The constant focus on fundraising diminished the satisfaction earned during the Saturday workdays.	The recruited volunteers should be seen as the most important customer. To succeed, the organization must meet the expectations of this most important customer. Fundraising may require specific skills not possessed by all volunteers, and volunteer organizations should recruit skilled fundraisers so that other volunteers will not be dissatisfied with the constant focus on fundraising.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Friend & Rummell 1995	Phenomenological memory work. Participants each write memories based on trigger topics; each memory is then analyzed as a group. A discussion ends when a coherent picture emerges from a set of memories.	Two groups of five women each, with the researcher as participant. Five meetings of each group, lasting from two to four hours each.	A single memory is interpreted at length. The interpretation is informed by the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm, though more detailed and emotionally complex than traditional research. Feelings of justice and moral injustice frame the interpretation. A complex and complicated model of one memory is produced, illustrating the complexity of feelings of dissatisfaction.	The interpretation provides 1) a complex conceptualization of the CS/D&CB process; 2) the understanding that the consumer's actions, goals, values, attributions, feelings, behaviors, and emotions contribute to the conceptualization of satisfaction and dissatisfaction; and 3) demonstrates the importance of the consumer's social realm in the interaction process. Following Hunt (1993), CS/D&CB is best understood through richly detailed storytelling, to generate key insights from the stories.
Malafi 1996	Analysis of data generated by focus groups. Data classified by a naïve research assistant unfamiliar with CS/D&CB research.	Data from five focus groups consisting of seven to fifteen soldiers in each focus group; only two female soldiers participated.	Emergent categories resemble the exit, voice, and loyalty categories proposed by Hirschman (1970).	Military structure and culture did not encourage formal voice complaints. Instead, informal complaining was rampant. When traditional exit responses are not possible, soldiers adapt exit to the situations at hand; neglect and retaliation behaviors were also evident in the data. A very straightforward description of what happened.
Wright, Larsen & Higgs 1996	Literary and hermeneutic analysis of a single novel.	Tom Wolfe's *The Bonfire of the Vanities*	Making purchases within embedded markets increases satisfaction; making purchases outside of embedded markets decreases satisfaction. Ample evidence of the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm in the novel. The Diderot effect explains the shift in the protagonist's expectations and the degree of satisfaction with the two product purchases (a New York apartment and legal services) as they change throughout the book.	Overall satisfaction/dissatisfaction depends on a network of expectations rooted in social or communal values, making satisfaction determined by group, not individual, expectations. The theory of embedded markets provides a credible account of the ways in which group norms may shape an individual consumer's expectations about and satisfaction in an exchange. The Diderot effect explains how and why a consumer's degree of satisfaction with an entire constellation of products may suddenly change.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Wright 1996	Depth interviews and the autodriving photoelicitation technique. Data include transcripts of interviews, researcher notes, descriptions of photos and the actual photos.	Four couples who had recently purchased their first home or recently moved from a smaller to a larger home.	A house is not a static purchase, but a dynamic one. Satisfaction waxes and wanes over time as the home and the homeowners change through divestment and possession rituals, fantasizing, and the acquisition of possessions. A second-level interpretation describes satisfaction with homes as a process, not an end state.	A product like a house may meet all of a consumer's performance expectations, yet still cause dissatisfaction because it is not consistent with the consumer's larger constellation of possessions. Also, consumers may not be satisfied with the house because it does not currently live up to expectations, but the evolving nature of the home allows consumers to derive satisfaction from the process of transforming the home to meet future expectations.
Swan & Trawick 1997	Participant observation; extensive transcribed notes.	Birding outings to Florida, Venezuela, China, and Trinidad and Tobago. One key informant: Frank Knight.	Three emergent themes. 1) Variety experience: life birding (seeing a new bird) and diversity birding (seeing a wide variety of birds). 2) Variety seeking (travel to new and distant areas; travel to nearby areas with diverse habitats). 3) Field trip motivation: to see life birds and a variety of familiar birds. Second level interpretation: Experiencing variety through symbolic interactions. The meaning of variety arises out of several shared meanings held by members of the community.	Experiencing variety may be a source of satisfaction. Variety encompasses the "pleasant surprise" dimension of positive disconfirmation (Oliver 1997). Experiencing variety is a social process.
Wright & Larsen 1997	A hermeneutic analysis of online complaining behavior. Study data consisted of several thousand email messages posted by listserv members.	Members of a sports listserv devoted to BYU sports and the messages they posted in response to a perceived snub of their favorite team.	The expectation that the team would be snubbed were met. Feelings of equity, fairness, and justice violations lead to complaining behavior, which arise out of an intense self-focus, as suggested by Kowalski (1996). When complaints fell on deaf ears, or when the perceived utility of complaining was low, retaliation and grudgeholding behaviors appeared.	They authors produce an extension to Kowalski's (1996) complaining model to incorporate grudgeholding and retaliation. The important point: this arises outside of the expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm.
Wright, Horn, & Larsen 1999	Ethnography: notes, reports, e-mail correspondence and photos.	Traveling around France and interacting with people.	Major emergent themes: being orientation, ingroup orientation and high context. Second level interpretation: satisfaction will be higher for purchases made *within* rather than *between* embedded markets.	The commercial culture of France has been more attuned than that of the United States in identifying and giving exceptional service to customers who have especially high lifetime value for a business.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Williams & Anderson 1999	Researcher introspections, where the researcher studies her- or himself.	Introspection in the context of a drumming workshop for women.	Emergent themes: expected versus unexpected workshop attributes; participants' social motives and complexity of consumption performance. No second level interpretation.	Zajonc's social facilitation theory as an alternative to the expectancy-disconfirmation paradigm in understanding consumer delight.
Durgee 1999	Literary analysis of passages from novels focusing on soulful experiences.	Passages from 18 novels were given to 12 adults who were asked to indicate which passages "most touched the soul."	Soulful consumption: 1) items that meet difficult challenges, serve faithfully over a long time as in a person-to-person relationship; 2) items with an odd character, which can be represented in terms of an unusual metaphor; and 3) Gestalt-like.	Soulful consumption: slow, contemplative consumption; hands-on, handmade; connected to nature or natural forces; designed by someone who knows *temenos*; can involve unhappiness; often has imperfections; versatile, multi-sensory; do out of one's own volition; feel alive; represents higher order values; mutual caring between the person and object; odd character; and Gestalt. This contrasts with delight, which is ephemeral.
Swan & Trawick 1999	Ethnographic: analysis of field notes and recall of the trip; post trip notes from other participants.	A seven-day boat cruise on the Nile River with excursions on land.	Three emergent themes leading up to positive affect, arousal and surprise (Oliver et al. 1997): participant background and the tour; participant and setting the stage; participant and producing surprises. No second level interpretation.	The ethnographic experience confirmed the Oliver et al. (1997) conception of delight.
Godwin, Patterson, & Johnson 1999	Qualitative, critical incident in-depth interviews; results coded by researchers	Thirty-two participants recruited through snowball sampling	Six categories of "primary appraisal" (what is at stake) and five options for coping were identified.	Understanding what is at stake for consumers as well as how they cope with the situations are crucial for service recovery activities.
Wright, Larsen, & Bolfing 1999	Hermeneutic analysis of online reactions to spam (unsolicited commercial email)	Several hundred email listserv messages submitted to a listserv devoted to sports between September 22-26, 1998.	The reactions to spam showed a pattern of reactance, retaliation and grudgeholding.	Adapted Wright and Larsen's (1997) adaptation of Kowalski's (1996) theory of complaining to include consumer reactance.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Day 2002	Masters' student teams conducted 22 one-on-one interviews; three focus groups involving 20 participants; two mini groups with seven participants; and five decision protocols. Triangulation through multiple methods and researchers.	The sample consisted of 28 males and 26 females across a broad range of age, occupation, cultures, and educational backgrounds.	Themes aligned with tenets derived from a literature review: No one definition of value is widely accepted; multiple costs and benefits contribute to value; consumers make tradeoffs when assessing value; value is situationally and temporally determined. Also: Value is not always considered in purchase decisions, especially in healthcare; sometimes difficult to disentangle value from satisfaction; associated value with price paid and benefits received; value of products includes functions, features and appearance for goods and ambiance, characteristics of service personnel for services. Perceptions of value are idiosyncratic. No second level interpretation.	Because value is perceptual, trying to get agreement upon a single definition may be futile. Generalizations about how consumers arrive at value estimates or determine received value may be difficult to achieve. Consumers place value only on those attributes and benefits directly related to their perceived wants or needs. In services, perceived quality often trumps value. The relationship between value and satisfaction was very ambiguous. Value is not always considered in consumer choice. Conclusion: more work is needed in this area. Theory building.
Swan, Martin, & Trawick 2003	Ethnography. Note: all of Swan's "ethnographic" studies have been weak and do not really contain evidence from notes. They seem designed to pre-confirm ideas. His studies lack the "thickness" of other qualitative studies.	Two years of birding in near and far places.	Compensatory satisfaction: finding alternative sources of satisfaction when expectations are disconfirmed. In birding, unpredictability and variability are normal, but there are pre-trip expectations. When these expectations are not met, compensatory satisfaction can still occur. 1) Shifting focus from birds to other elements in the natural environment leads to satisfaction. 2) Finding satisfaction in companionship.	The expectancy/disconfirmation paradigm is confirmed. Also, satisfaction is an active, dynamic process that has a strong social element to it. Avoiding dissatisfaction by the process of compensatory satisfaction is a new contribution. Socialization as a form of compensatory satisfaction suggests dynamic, continuous, shifting activities in satisfaction-seeking.
Hogarth & Hilgert 2004	Written comments from surveys compared to the quantitative portion of the surveys.	A total of 779 surveys with both quantitative and qualitative questions.	Qualitative emergent themes: 1) The fox guarding the henhouse; 2) You can't fight city hall; 3) You're not listening to me; I get no respect; 4) Brand recognition, or you Can't ignore a 1000-pound gorilla; 5) Leave it to the pros; 6) Level of effort, or close, but no cigar; 7) gratitude. Themes 1-3 are negative and 4-7 are positive. No second level analysis.	The qualitative data produced insights but did not really tell the researchers anything they could not have learned with quantitative methodologies. The two data sources reinforce each other.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Fitzpatrick, Friend, & Costley 2004	Memory-Work, where those who lived the experience extract the memories, not researchers. Phenomenology.	Four written stories of "nasty" shopping experiences by female "co-researchers."	Strong experiential links among distrust, intense negative emotion, dissatisfaction, and customer exit. Distrust is a key dissatisfier. Humiliation, disbelief, surprise, guilt, embarrassment, frustration, outrage, fear, panic, helplessness and distress are emotions triggered by employee distrust.	Distrust is both a response mode of dissatisfaction as well as a trigger. A very thick description of distrust. In real life, people experience distrust, dissatisfaction and exit as dynamic, multifaceted, and highly specific phenomena. Distrust is very destructive to market relationships.
Blodgett, Hill, & Bakir 2006	Textual analysis of e-mail messages from informants who have lived in the U.S. and who have now returned home.	Twenty-five respondents representing 23 different countries for the qualitative study. (There was a second, quantitative study).	Liberal return policies are similar in the U.S., Ireland, England and New Zealand. More narrow and restrictive policies are present in France, Belgium, Germany, Ghana, Japan, Brazil, Argentina, Latvia, China, Russia, and Switzerland. No returns or exchanges in Taiwan, Peru, Kenya, Albania, Bosnia, Pakistan, Venezuela, and India.	Complaint behavior is largely dependent upon the prevailing return policies in a given country. Cultural values have les influence on dissatisfied consumers' decision to seek or not seek a refund or exchange.
Halstead, Jones, & Cox 2007	Five focus groups (N=44) and seven in-depth interviews with disadvantaged consumers. Each focus group informant was paid $50 and given refreshments; each interview informant was paid $25.	Focus group participants were considered to be disadvantaged on the basis of disability, low income, little/no education, poor health status, age, or unemployment. 75% female.	The goal of the research was to identify limitations and deficiencies with current satisfaction theory as it relates to disadvantaged customers. Emergent themes include: Lack of expectation formation; emphasis on interactional fairness; satisfaction as "here and now" (available when needed); satisfaction as affect; passive acceptance, lack of complaining. Dependency and helplessness were evident when no other options were available (e.g., healthcare). No second level interpretation.	A satisfaction model that applies to disadvantaged consumers should include two primary antecedents: perceived performance and equity. The equity construct should include an overall/global measure of fairness as well as specific measures of procedural and interactive justice. The performance measure should tap into current product/service performance only, not past performance.
Yan & Lotz 2009	The critical incident technique (CIT) to study the role of other customers at the time of service failure in consumer complaining behavior.	Ninety-seven respondents consisting of 15 males and 82 females submitted written CITs for analysis.	Four types of other customers in consumer complaint behavior: 1) acquainted customers physically present; 2) unacquainted customers physically present; 3) acquainted customers mentally present; and 4) unacquainted customers mentally present.	The study results confirm some theories and findings in interpersonal influence and social facilitation literatures. Results also support social comparison theory.

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Bantham 2010	Thirty-six unstructured interviews with both buyers and suppliers.	Buyer seller dyads that have existed for several years.	Emergent themes: Organizational self-awareness, commitment to the partnership; communication; inter-organizational understanding; cooperation; joint problem solving; tangible outcomes; intangible outcomes; and satisfaction. Second level interpretation: partnership enablers, partnership driver, and performance and relational outcomes.	Building a theory that is quite different from existing literature on buyer-seller relationships. See figure 3 in the paper for the complete theory. It focuses on both sides of the buyer-seller dyad, whereas previous studies have only focused on one side or the other.
Cárdenas 2012	Involved, in-depth interviews; hermeneutic analysis	Forty-nine longitudinal in-depth interviews in a collectivist culture, 25 one year and 24 of the 25 a year later.	Four themes: 1) the gift as a common product; 2) the gift as a special product; 3) the gift as an inadequate product; and 4) the gift as an awkward product. Second level interpretation: external stimuli; recipient and his consideration of the gift; and use and disposition of the gift and feedback to the giver.	Produced a model of gift-giving in a collectivist culture laden with cultural overtones.
Wright & Larsen 2012	Analysis of graffiti; use of in-depth interviews; the autodriving photoelicitation technique	Hermeneutical analysis of 201 graffiti left by students over a two-year period; 13 in-depth interviews several years later; autodriving.	Three principal emergent themes: Travel trophies on the wall; magic moments; and *communitas*. Second level interpretation: study abroad as an extraordinary experience.	Providing a theoretical explanation for the intense levels of satisfaction experienced by student participants: the extraordinary experience construct.
Johnson & Ross 2015	In-depth interviews; hermeneutical analysis.	Theoretical convenience sampling that produced 26 informants who used social relationships in purchases.	The impact of negative purchase experiences when using social capital in the marketplace produced three emergent themes: 1) recourse restraint; 2) trust decay; and 3) relationship atrophy. Theory development.	The discovery of negative outcomes at the individual level is an important contribution to social capital theory.
Cohn 2016	Phenomenological in-depth interviews; detailed research notes; and a netnography of an online community.	Thirty respondents (15 couples) who are new parents; analysis of messages on babycenter.com.	Five emergent themes related to deliberate, inaccurate gift-giving: 1) threats to self-concept from fashion, role, gender, faith, or collection creation; 2) To you—for me; 3) aggression; 4) ritual and obligation; and 5) bragging. The outcomes of all five themes is dissatisfaction.	Inaccurate gift preference prediction is not always a mistake; sometimes it is intentional. Second, the development of the five types of deliberate inaccurate gift preference predictions (the five emergent themes).

Article	Methodology	Sample Description	Interpretation	Major Takeaway
Petersen, Wright, & Aron 2020	In-depth interviews and the autodriving photoelicitation technique.	Eleven respondents who had participated in a study abroad experience one or more years previously.	Five emergent themes: 1) sight versus blindness; 2) words verses actual experiences; 3) emotional intensity; 4) extreme enjoyment; and 5) personal growth and awakening. A second-level interpretation describes these five themes as a transcendental customer experience, or TCE.	Confirmed themes generated by Wright and Larsen (2012, 2016); discussed the similarities and differences between extraordinary experiences and TCEs. Both constructs explain the intense levels of student satisfaction with study abroad programs.
Bakir, Bakir, & Blodgett 2020	Structured, face-to-face interviews. Constant comparative method of analysis.	Sixteen participants: ten female and six male business students who were juniors or seniors.	Emergent themes: 1) pre- and post-departure personal goals and development; 2) pre-and post-departure professional goals and development; 3) pre- and post-departure global mindedness; 4) pre- and post-program personal beliefs; and 5) post-program impressions and satisfaction.	The study shows there are many benefits of short-term study abroad programs.
Nordstrom & Egan 2021	Hermeneutic analysis of promotional material. Grounded theory.	Promotional material from Ag More Than Ever from 2012 to 2020. Includes 118 blog posts, 1,200 images, transcripts. Use of NVivo.	Emergent themes: 1) Promoting the economic and social benefits of agriculture; 2) data refuting misinformation; 3) death of expertise; 4) highlighting similarities; 5) building superiority; 6) multimodal images; 7) encouraging conversations; and 8) images of children. Second-level interpretation: 1) providing trustworthy information; 2) transforming farmers into credible sources; and 3) building positive affect.	A case study of Thota and Wright's (2006) theory on decaying grudges. The authors extend Thota and Wright's (2006) theory with their findings.
Karani 2021	Focus groups	Four rounds of focus groups with four to seven people in each group; each focus group lasted 90 minutes.	Emergent themes: 1) Regional loyalty; 2) nostalgia; 3) Value; and 4) Doing the right thing. No second level interpretation.	Loyalty arising from childhood consumption of a brand is durable and extends into adulthood. Regional loyalty is a contribution to the literature on brand forgiveness.