MODERATING THE EFFECTS OF POINT-OF-SALE INFORMATION AND CONSUMER SATISFACTION

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ABSTRACT

This paper examines the moderating effects of information, prior beliefs, experience and styling preferences for automobiles on consumer satisfaction and intention to repurchase. Structural equation modeling was used to analyze data from an experiment in which information at the point- of-sale was manipulated. Information was found to moderate satisfaction, but not intention to repurchase. The latter was found to be a function of prior beliefs, product and dealer performance and satisfaction.

OVERVIEW

Since 1981 the Consumer Satisfaction Index (CSI) published by J. C. Powers & Associates has been used as a barometer of current performance and future sales in the automobile industry. The CSI queries recent car buyers on their satisfaction with the technical specifications of the car as well as with dealer performance. Typically U.S. producers do not rank high on the scale. The index measures satisfaction as the difference between expectation and performance (Seraphin 1987). Hence, two solutions to increase satisfaction and improve scores on the index are to improve performance or to lower expectations. The latter is appropriate in a situation such as a sports model with a T roof that is acknowledged by the manufacturer to leak as the owner's manual states that "seepage is likely to occur." The provision of information at the point of sale could lower expectations and thus reduce dissatisfaction with this model.

In an experimental investigation, those who received the negative information (that the T roof was a nice sporty feature, but prone to leakage) were less dissatisfied when the potential problem developed than were those who received no notice of the problem or existence of the problem had been denied. This paper extends the prior research by examining the effects of prior experience and attitudes on the use of consumer information and subsequent perceptions of performance, satisfaction and intention to repurchase. The purpose of the earlier study was to demonstrate the long run benefit to dealers of providing consumer information which may be negative. The present investigation is concerned with identification of antecedents to the disconfirmation paradigm including prior attitudes and beliefs, experience, and preferences for automobiles. It is also concerned with the use of intention to purchase as a measure of satisfaction.

PRIOR RESEARCH

Aaker (1982) and others have suggested that the provision of information by the business firm will result in more satisfied customers which will culminate in higher sales in the long run due to repeat sales and word-of-mouth communication. To the extent that the information provided is congruent with product performance, it should be expected to mediate satisfaction. This satisfaction should be expressed either as an emotional response or in a behavioral form measurable by intention to repurchase. The consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction paradigm has been investigated frequently over the past fifteen years. The constructs most often found to be significant to the development of satisfaction include expectations, performance, and disconfirmation. Much of this research has utilized experimental design to measure satisfaction by manipulating expectations and varying the level of performance to produce disconfirmation (Anderson, 1983 Churchill & Surprenant, 1982; Tse & Wilton, 1988; Olshavsky & Miller, 1972; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988). The theoretical base for the CS/D paradigm is derived from social psychology. Sirgy (1983) identified six cognitive theories which have been used to explain the phenomena: contrast theory, assimilation-contrast theory, generalized negativity theory, and attribution theory.

Intention to repurchase has not been given as much attention by researchers as it might deserve. Hunt (1988) said that intention to repurchase is a simple and close substitute for consumer satisfaction. Furthermore, intention to repurchase is the satisfaction measure most salient to managers; and for this reason it merits consideration in CS/D studies which have implications for managers as an objective.

Intention might be difficult to measure in an experimental design, particularly in studies using products which may either not be of interest to participants or be unfamiliar to them. Churchill & Surprenant deleted this measure from their model due to its "being more highly correlated with attribute measures of satisfaction than with the global measures" and that the reliability of this measure was lower than that of the remaining indicators of the satisfaction construct (1982, p. 498). Tse and Wilton (1988) said they measured purchase intent, but apparently only used it for manipulation checks of the expectations and product treatment. These authors may have encountered the same problem as Churchill & Surprenant. A reason that intent might be difficult to measure is that in experiments where both expectations and performance are manipulated for an unfamiliar product, performance and satisfaction measures might tap the same construct. Tse and Wilton reported an r^2 of .730 or $r = .854$ between perceived performance and satisfaction. This is inordinately high and evidences multicollinearity. As the eta correlations were not provided, whether or not the variance explained was greater than one (Heywood case) cannot be ascertained. With a correlation of .8 between two of the constructs or indicators, a correlation of .4 would seem too low and the measure might have been deleted as it was by Churchill & Surprenant.

Recent investigations have tended to focus on performance, and disconfirmation (Tse & Wilton, 1988; Oliver & DeSarbo, 1988) and performance has generally been found to be the strongest predictor of satisfaction. Oliver and Swan have both used intentions as a measure of satisfaction. In their earlier works both modeled the

satisfaction process through intentions to include prior beliefs and attitudes. Oliver (1980) utilized Helson's adaptation theory in conceptualizing CS/D. This theory states stimuli are perceived in relation to an adapted standard which is a function of the stimulus itself, the context, and the psychological characteristics of the individual (Oliver, 1980, p.360). Once established, the adaptation level serves to sustain subsequent evaluations in that positive and negative deviations will remain in the general vicinity of one's original position. Oliver postulated that product satisfaction was based on the product itself including one's prior experience, brand connotations, and symbolic elements, the context including the content of the communication from social referents and marketer dominated sources; and the individual's personality traits including persuasibility and perceptual distortion. Deviations from adaptation level were thought to be caused by the degree to which product performance deviated from expectations. Expectations were defined as the belief probabilities of attribute occurrence. From this it necessarily followed that beliefs provide the foundation for attitude formation and serve as an adaption level for subsequent satisfaction decisions. A series of equations to explain these relationships was given as:

attitude (t_1) = f (expectations)
satisfaction = f (expectations, disconfirmation)
attitude (t_2) = f (attitude t_1, satisfaction)

By incorporating concepts from Fishbein's beliefs intention model, two more equations were added to demonstrate the relationship between satisfaction and intentions:

intention (t_1) = f (attitude t_1)
intention (t_2) = f (intention t_1, satisfaction, attitude)

Following a series of empirical tests, Oliver concluded that the consequences of satisfaction decisions were revised attitude and intention. These were reflected in the following sequence:

satisfaction ------->post attitude -------->post intention

In the above discussion Oliver appears to indicate that though satisfaction is a sequence, it incorporates multiple constructs in various stages and that it is more complex than a simple series of sequential steps. Swan (1982) proposed the following sequence to describe the disconfirmation paradigm.

preattitudes ---> expectations ---> product usage and perception of performance ---> disconfirmation ---> satisfaction ---> post attitudes ---> intentions ---> word-of-mouth ---> repurchase

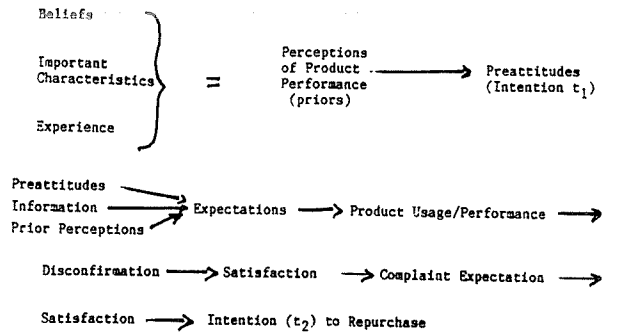
In their most recently published work Oliver & Swan (1989) hypothesized that intention was a function of satisfaction and found this to be true. They also indicated that direct effect tests of other antecedent variables confirmed the strong mediating link of satisfaction to intentions.

Although both Swan and Oliver postulated the effect of prior influences to CS/D, little empirical work has examined these. Papers on the antecedents of consumer satisfaction commonly begin with manipulating expectations and performance to measure disconfirmation and these are considered to be the antecedents of satisfaction.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

The framework for this study rests largely on the foregoing discussion particularly the works of Oliver and Swan. A conceptual model, based on Swan's (1982) ordering of the disconfirmation paradigm has been developed (see Figure 1) to test the relationships of prior product perceptions and information at the point of sale to consumer satisfaction with the product and with the dealer along with their subsequent influence on intentions to repurchase.

Figure 1
Conceptual Model



As shown by the model, prior perceptions of product performance are posited to be a function of beliefs, importance of characteristics, and experience. These perceptions will lead to preattitude which is defined as an intention to purchase in $_{t1}$. Expectations for product performance are depicted to be moderated by information at the point-of-sale, prior perceptions and preattitude. Product performance either confirms or disconfirms expectations and leads to (dis)satisfaction with the product and to expectations for dealer complaint handling. Satisfaction with dealer complaint handling will lead to intention to repurchase in t_2.

The following hypotheses, based on this model, will be tested:

H1: Perceptions of product performance are predetermined by prior beliefs, important characteristics, and experience with the product category.
H2: Prior perceptions of product performance will lead to preattitudes or intention to purchase in $_{t}1$.
H3: Preattitudes, prior perceptions of product performance, and information at the point of sale will lead to expectations of product performance.

H4: The disconfirmation of expectations will lead to dissatisfaction and intent not to repurchase.

In addition to testing these hypotheses, structural equation modeling will be used to determine the total effects of prior determinants or antecedents to the consumer satisfaction/dissatisfaction and intent to purchase.

RESEARCH DESIGN

An experimental investigation was conducted to test the hypotheses and assess the affects of information and other antecedents on satisfaction and intention to repurchase. Self administered questionnaires were completed by 640 undergraduate students enrolled in principles of marketing and consumer education courses at two northeastern universities over a period encompassing four semesters. Marketing students completed the questionnaires during the first week of the semester; half of the consumer education students completed questionnaires during the first week and half during the last week of the semester.

Experimental Manipulation

Information at the point-of-sale regarding the problem of leakage in the T roof sporty model domestically produced automobile was manipulated for the experimental effect. Students were given a scenario in which they were told to:

> Place yourself in the following situation. You are planning to purchase a sporty car with money you received for graduation. You have decided on a _____ with a T roof.

This introductory statement was followed by one of the following three information conditions:

> Version 1: The dealer salesman tells you that although this is a nice sporty feature, many of them leak. He explains that because the roof isn't stable, caution must be taken when removing the sections of the roof. You would anticipate that....
> Version 2: .... but two of your friends have warned you that T roofs often leak. When you asked the dealer salesman about this problem, he assured you that he had never in his 12 years of selling _____ heard of this. You would anticipate that....
> Version 3: You had heard that these T roofs often leak, but the salesman never mentioned this problem. You would anticipate that....

In order to measure the effects of information, product performance and dealer performance were constant across the three information conditions.

Measures

The information manipulation was used to measure expectations. This was followed by questions to measure satisfaction with product performance, expectations of dealer response to the problem, subsequent (dis)satisfaction and intentions to repurchase framed in a recommendation to "your sister" who wanted to purchase a different model of the same make of automobile. To measure intention t_1, respondents were asked what action they would have taken: whether they would have purchased the car with or without the T roof from this dealer or whether they would have purchased another make of sporty car.

Following this sequence to measure the constructs posited by the model, students were queried on the importance of product characteristics in evaluating alternative brands of automobiles based on Assael, 1984, (p. 42). The questionnaire included items to measure beliefs about U.S. produced vehicles, the extent to which they believed an automobile was an indicator of status, and whether they liked cars or thought them to be an "evil necessity." Experience was assessed by individual and family ownership of cars. Demographic characteristics of age, gender and major field of study were included on the instrument; however, these were not expected to moderate effects as they were not significant in the prior investigation. Measures used in the analysis are described below and summarized in Table 1. Some measures were deleted due to lack of correlation between these and paradigmatic measures of satisfaction/ disconfirmation.

Analyses

Initial analyses suggested that the experimental manipulation did affect intention to repurchase in this simulated condition ($F = 4.46$ [df 2]; $p = < .012$). Examination of the full correlation matrix indicated that many of the antecedent variables were not correlated with any of the disconfirmation measures; these were subsequently deleted from the analyses. Of the indicators to measure importance of styling, economy, dependability, and performance characteristics, only "sporty look" and "classy styling" were correlated with any of the satisfaction measures. These two along with the most ideal car (IDEAL) were used as indicators of Preference (PREFER).

The extent to which an individual agreed that an automobile indicated status and that if it were not absolutely necessary one would not own a car were deleted from the analyses due to the finding of no relationship. Indicators of Belief included whether or not American cars were of better quality than imports (AMQUAL); whether American cars give a better value (AMVALU); and whether the individual's family believed it is better to "buy American" (FAMAM).
Whether or not the individual student owned a car, for how long, and the type of car were expected to measure Experience (EXPER) along with the number and types of cars owned by the student's family. Only the types of cars owned by the family were found to correlate with measures of satisfaction. The remaining indicators were not included in the analyses.

The correlations, mean and standard deviations for the indicators used in the analyses are given in Table 2. Structural equation modeling (LISREL VI) was used to test the model.[1] Multiple indicators were used for the

Table 1
Description of Measures

VARIABLE NAME	DESCRIPTION
AMQUAL	The quality of American cars is equal to Japanese or European cars (5 pt. agree/disagree)
AMVALU	American cars give a better value for the dollar than European or Japanese (5 pt. agree/disagree)
FAMAM	My family believes that when it comes to cars, it is better to buy American (5 pt. agree/disagree)
BELIEF	Latent construct measured by AMQUAL, AMVALU, FAMAM
SPORTY	Importance of sporty styling in a car
CLASSY	Importance of classy styling in a car
IDEAL	Ideal car: Japanese sport; American sport; European sport; Japanese, American or European sedan
PREFER	Latent construct measured by SPORTY, CLASSY, IDEAL
PROPAM	Proportion of family cars that are American made
PROPJP	Proportion of family cars that are Japanese made
EXPER	Latent construct measured by PROPAM, PROPJP
ACTION	Intention t_1: Would you buy the car with the T roof; buy without the T roof; buy another make of sporty car
INFORM	Information presented at the point-of-sale: negative information, problem denied, none given
EXPECT	Expectation regarding leakage: no leakage if you are careful when removing sections; no leakage because of factory reputation; a little leakage; heavy leakage in a rainstorm
LEAK	You were caught in a rain and the roof leaked a bit: You would feel: terrible/angry; unhappy/somewhat dissatisfied; mixed feelings; generally satisfied
DEALER	Upon returning to the dealer, you would expect: he would fix the car; replace it; tell you how to carefully replace the roof; tell you to live with it.
MANUAL	You are told the owner's manual says to expect the leakage, how would you feel: angry, dissatisfied but confident the manufacturer would fix the leak; somewhat dissatisfied; satisfied and consider the problem to be minor
RCOMND	Six months later your sister wanted to buy another model by the same manufacturer, what would you recommend: buy from the same dealer; from a different dealer; buy the same model as yours; buy from a different manufacturer

constructs of Beliefs, Preference, and Experience as discussed previously. Single variable measures were used for the constructs of preattitudes (ACTION), expectation (EXPECT), perceived performance and disconfirmation (LEAK), complaint expectation (DEALER), (dis)satisfaction (MANUAL), and recommendation (RCOMND). Modification indices were used to respecify the model to better fit the data.

RESULTS

Preliminary analysis indicated no differences in response to expectation, satisfaction, or intention between groups of students participating in the study. Responses were not found to differ ($p = > .05$) between students attending the two universities nor were they found to differ over time.

The Proposed Model

The chi-squared for the measurement model to test the hypotheses was 159.25 (df 54) $p = < .000$ with GFI = .978. Although the significant chi-squared indicates that the model does not fit the data, the goodness of fit index suggests that the fit is not bad and with a smaller sample size, the fit might be all right (Hoetler, 1983).

Standardized factor loadings for the three multiple indicator constructs are given in Table 3. All indicators were statistically significant; however, the loading of 1.537 for Propjp (proportion of Japanese cars in the household) indicates that this and the remaining variable (Propam) for the construct are measuring the same concept. This could have been anticipated as the proportion of American cars owned by the household is nearly the reciprocal of the proportion of Japanese cars. The correlation between these two indicators was .808. When the correlation between two variables is this high, they are probably measuring the same thing and one should be deleted from the analysis. A third indicator of experience, student ownership of an automobile, was not included in the analysis as this did not correlate with any of the salient measures. The factor loading of .129 for IDEAL (car) is low and contributes little to the solution; however, as it is significant it was retained.

Table 2
Correlations, Means and Standard Deviations of Measures

	AM-QUAL	AM-VALU	PRO-FAMAM	PRO-PAM	PJP
AMQUAL	1.000				
AMVALU	0.488	1.000			
FAMAM	0.359	0.367	1.000		
PROPAR	0.092	0.083	0.137	1.000	
PROPJP	0.141	0.058	0.284	0.808	1.000
SPORTY	0.010	0.017	0.024	0.005	0.051
CLASSY	0.039	0.138	0.001	0.047	0.014
IDEALA	0.029	0.022	0.079	0.017	0.143
ACTION	0.104	0.125	0.090	0.033	0.020
INFORM	0.022	0.004	0.007	0.076	0.097
EXPECT	0.095	0.067	0.085	0.089	0.141
LEAK	0.089	0.067	0.032	0.045	0.015
DEALER	0.012	0.028	0.059	0.041	0.017
MANUAL	0.088	0.090	0.022	0.027	0.055
SISTER	0.177	0.155	0.140	0.012	0.123
MEAN	2.761	2.555	3.218	0.789	0.490
S.D.	1.059	0.878	1.208	0.437	0.466

TABLE 2 (cont.)

	SPOR-TY	CLAS-SY	IDEALA	AC-TION	IN-FORM
AMQUAL					
AMVALU					
FAMAM					
PROPAR					
PROPJP					
SPORTY	1.000				
CLASSY	0.440	1.000			
IDEALA	0.123	0.041	1.000		
ACTION	0.042	0.066	0.090	1.000	
INFORM	0.066	0.015	0.009	0.091	1.000
EXPECT	0.019	0.005	0.055	0.038	0.179
LEAK	0.025	0.056	0.103	0.195	0.139
DEALER	0.104	0.088	0.012	0.052	0.210
MANUAL	0.011	0.091	0.035	0.204	0.290
SISTER	0.029	0.036	0.053	0.384	0.049
MEAN	7.609	7.150	2.738	2.307	2.113
S.D.	1.785	2.000	1.743	0.641	0.830

Estimated correlations between the exogenous constructs are given in Table 4. As shown in the table, the only correlations that are significant are between BELIEF and both EXPER and ACTION. This is not surprising as one would expect that beliefs about the quality and value of American cars would be expressed in family ownership of each type as well as in what ACTION one would take in so far as purchasing the sporty model with a T roof.

Table 2 (cont.)

	EXPECT	LEAK	DEALER	MAN-UAL	SISTER
AMQUAL					
AMVALU					
FAMAM					
PROPAR					
PROPJP					
SPORTY					
CLASSY					
IDEALA					
ACTION					
INFORM					
EXPECT	1.000				
LEAK	0.210	1.000			
DEALER	0.210	0.222	1.000		
MANUAL	0.217	0.459	0.317	1.000	
SISTER	0.064	0.305	0.131	0.314	1.000
MEAN	2.639	2.229	1.748	2.225	2.383
S.D.	0.942	0.813	1.090	1.081	1.020

Table 3
Standardized Factor Loadings for Measurement Model I

CONSTRUCT INDICATOR	Maximum likelihood est.	z
Preference		
Sporty (P_1)	0.962	5.256
Classy (P_2)	0.457	4.879
Ideal (P_3)	0.129	2.740
Experience		
Propam (E_1)	0.526	5.490
Propjp (E_2)	1.537	5.957
Belief		
Amqual (B_1)	0.702	14.959
Amvalu (B_2)	0.670	14.424
Famam (B_3)	0.550	12.200

The proposed structural model, shown in Figure 2, includes the standardized path coefficients. The chi-squared for the model (X^2 (85) 584.89; $p < .000$) suggests that the model does not fit the data. A calculated Hoetler's index indicates that for the chi-squared to be nonsignificant a sample size of n = 66 would be required (Hoelter, 1983). This is well below the optimal sample size of n = 200 for LISREL and therefore substantiates the poor fit of the data to the model.

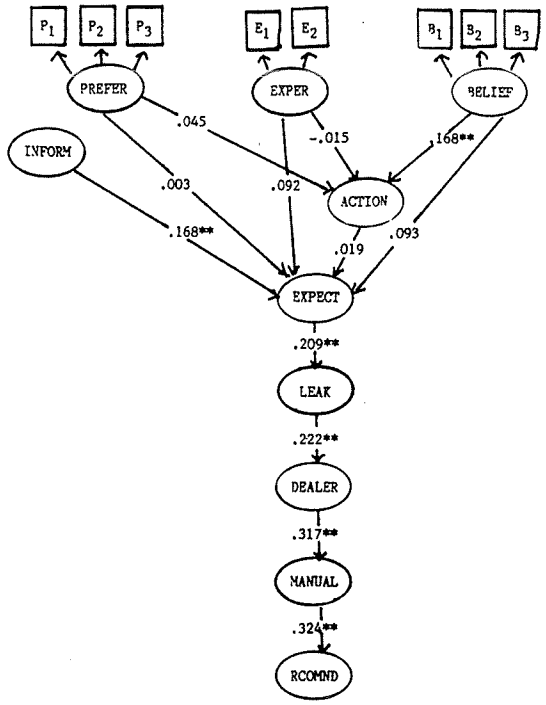
The path coefficients for the disconfirmation paradigm, from EXPECT (expectations) to RCOMND (recommendation) are all significant at p = < .001. INFORM (the type of information given) significantly

Table 4
Estimated Correlations Between Exogenous Constructs (Model I)

	BELIEF	EXPER	PREFER	ACTION	INFORM
BELIEF	1.000				
EXPER	.103*	1.000			
PREFER	.030	.041	1.000		
ACTION	.165**	-.001	.047	1.000	
INFORM	.018	.040	.068	.009	1.000

* p < .01
** p < .001

Figure 2
Structural Model I



* path significant at p < .05 $X^2(85) = 584.89$
** path significant at p < .001 GFI = .894
RMSR = .094

affected expectations as proposed as did EXPER and BELIEF but to a lesser degree (p = < .05). BELIEF also significantly affected the ACTION an individual would take, but this was the only one of the three constructs to measure prior perceptions for performance to do so.

Modification indices suggested that BELIEF and INFORM affected satisfaction with the performance of the car and with the dealer's response to the problem and that prior BELIEF influenced the recommendation to repurchase. Based on the modification index, the measurement and structural models were respecified.

The Respecified Model

Standardized factor loadings for the respecified model are given in Table 5. The construct of EXPER (experience) has been deleted. Eliminating one of the two indicators for this construct raised the chi squared and resulted in nonsignificant paths. Chi-squared for the respecified measurement model was 46.83 (df 36); p = < .107 indicating that the model fits the data. Correlations between the exogenous constructs are given in Table 6.

Table 5
Standardized Factor Loadings for Measurement Model II (Respecified)

CONSTRUCT INDICATOR	Maximum likelihood est.	z
Belief		
Amqual (B_1)	0.697	14.653
Amvalu (B_2)	0.698	14.669
Famam (B_3)	0.523	11.602
Preference		
Sporty (P_1)	0.851	5.869
Classy (P_2)	0.551	5.524
Ideal (P_3)	0.138	2.849

Table 6
Estimated Correlations Between Exogenous Constructs (Respecified Model)

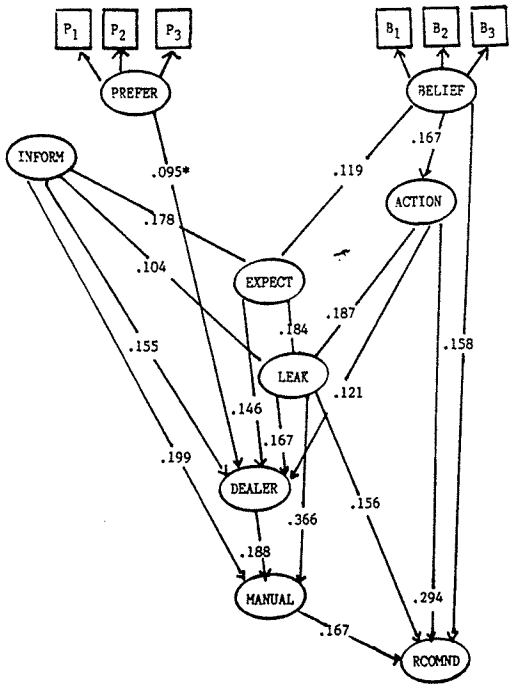
	BELIEF	PREFER	ACTION	TEST
BELIEF	1.000			
PREFER	.052	1.000		
ACTION	.166**	.063	1.000	
TEST	.018	.072	.009	1.000

** p < .001

The respecified structural model with path coefficients is shown in Figure 3. All paths are significant at p = < .01 with the exception of the path between PREFER and DEALER which is significant at p = < .05. The chi-squared for the model (X^2 (54) = 60.93; p = < .241) indicates that the data fit the model.

There are eighteen causal paths in the respecified model; these are depicted more clearly in Table 7. As shown in the table, information at the point of sale did not influence the intention to purchase in t_1; this was affected only by prior beliefs. In addition, information did

Figure 3
Respecified Structural Model



all paths significant at $p < .01$
* significant at $p < .05$

X^2 (54) = 60.93;
$p < .241$
GFI = .986
RMSR = .034

not directly influence or affect the recommendation or intention to repurchase (t_2). This manipulated variable did, however, directly affect expectations for product performance, and dissatisfaction with performance as well as expectations for and dissatisfaction with dealer performance. In order to test for the significance of information at the point-of-sale, the paths between INFORM and the endogenous variables of EXPECT, LEAK, DEALER and MANUAL were deleted. The chi square for this nested model (X^2 = 138.89 (58); $P < .000$) was significantly different (X^2 = 77.96 (4); $p < .000$) from the model in which the Information was included. Eliminating information only worsened with model.

DISCUSSION

The results of the analyses partially supported the hypotheses tested by Model I. . Of the three constructs hypothesized to comprise prior perceptions of product performance, only beliefs were found to be significant. Importance of styling (classy, or sporty) and the ideal car and experience did not influence preattitudes defined as the intention to purchase the sporty car with the T roof in t_1 (ACTION); thus, the first and second hypotheses are only partially supported. The finding that styling preferences did not influence intentions should be viewed with caution due to the experimental environment.

Table 7
Significant Path Coefficients
for the Respecified Model

CAUSES: EFFECTS	INFORM	BELIEF	ACTION	PREFER
ACTION	—	167		
EXPECT	.187	.119		
LEAK	.104	—	.187	—
DEALER	.155	—	—	.095
MANUAL	.144	—	.121	—
RCOMND	—	.158	.294	—

Table 7 (cont.)

CAUSES: EFFECTS	EXPECT	LEAK	DEALER	MANUAL
ACTION				
EXPECT				
LEAK	.184			
DEALER	.146	.167		
MANUAL	—	.366	.188	
RCOMND	—	.158	—	.167

Students might have been responding cognitively to the series of questions which formed the basis for the experiment, and ordering effects might have influenced responses to the item asking whether they would purchase the sporty car with the T roof. The results might have been due to a cognitive and objective effort to respond to the experimental setting rather than allowing personal preferences to influence responses. By contrast, this finding might also serve as a manipulation check on the validity of the results regarding the tests of the disconfirmation paradigm.

The third hypothesis stated that preattitudes, information at the point of sale, and prior perceptions would lead to expectations for product performance. As demonstrated by the significance of the paths in Model I, information at the point of sale had the greatest impact on expectations. Beliefs and experience also affected expectations but to a lesser degree. Although these two constructs are not highly correlated (Table 3), modification indices for Model I indicated that the factor Beliefs loaded heavily on these indicators and that their addition to the Beliefs construct would reduce X^2 by 86.437.

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that disconfirmation of expectations will lead to (dis)satisfaction and intentions (not) to purchase, was supported as all paths were significant. However, the poor fit of the data to the model suggests that there are other causal influences operating which moderate satisfaction/dissatisfaction and intention to purchase.

The respecified model serves to demonstrate the pervasiveness of prior perceptions and antecedents to the

expectation component of the disconfirmation/satisfaction paradigms. In this experimental condition it is interesting to note that only prior beliefs about domestically produced automobiles influenced the intention to purchase in t_1. The information presented at the point-of-sale significantly affected (dis)satisfaction with performance, expectation for dealer complaint handling, and (dis)satisfaction with the dealer. The information did not directly affect the recommendation or intention to repurchase; its effects were only indirect on this important measure. Information at the point-of-sale was shown to contribute significantly to the model. The relative magnitude of the effects of various antecedents on intention to repurchase show an interesting pattern. Intention in t_1 had the strongest effect which might be attributable to efforts to maintain cognitive consistency or dissonance reduction. The finding that dissatisfaction with the dealer exerted a stronger influence (ever so slight) than (dis)satisfaction with product performance is perhaps more a factor of response bias than of the actual ordering of the effect. The response choices included to buying the car from the same dealer or from a different dealer or buying a different make of car. This item seems to include a measure of dissatisfaction with the product performance as well as with the dealer which confounds the effect of product performance by increasing the effect of dealer satisfaction. The importance of actual product performance to satisfaction and intention to purchase might be understated. Satisfaction with product performance was the only variable to affect responses to all the remaining endogenous variables of the model. This finding is consonant with that of prior research which reported that product performance was the strongest influencer of satisfaction.

Some researchers caution against deleting variables and respecification of models in that the finding of a satisfactory model capitalizes on chance, while others view features of LISREL including the confirmatory factor analysis and attendant modification indices as an asset to theory building in an applied area. The respecified model provided in this paper evidences the author's agreement with the second position with limitations; however, this respecified model serves to raise questions rather than to answer them.

[1]The author wishes to acknowledge the assistance of Dr. David Kenney in analyzing and intepreting the data.

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