AN UPDATED HISTORICAL REVIEW OF THE JOURNAL OF CONSUMER SATISFACTION, DISSATISFACTION AND COMPLAINING BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

The Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Complaining Behavior (JCS/D&CB) has been a valuable resource for researchers and practitioners for more than 30 years. This invited review provides an updated perspective to the 2015 article, "A Historical Review and Future Research Agenda for the Field of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, & Complaining Behavior" (Dahl & Peltier, 2015). The update compares research published in the contemporary era (2015–2022) of the JCS/D&CB to previous research eras. We identify a growing interest in complaining and complimenting behaviors, a return to interest in consumer satisfaction methods and measurements topics. Finally, we discuss research opportunities to advance the literature on consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and complaining behavior.

INTRODUCTION

Academics and marketing practitioners have long been interested in consumer satisfaction, dissatisfaction, and consumer complaining behavior (hereafter referred to as CS) (Kennedy & Thirkell, 1988). Over the past 35 years, The *Journal of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction and Consumer Complaining Behavior* (JCS/D&CB) has been a leader in understanding CS and has documented research trends and areas of interest (Wright & Larsen, 2023). Given this prominence, the JCS/D&CB published an invited paper by Dahl and Peltier (2015) titled "A Historical Review and Future Research Agenda for the Field of Consumer Satisfaction, Dissatisfaction, & Complaining Behavior." In that article, the authors reviewed JCS/D&CB articles published from the journal's inception in 1988 through 2014, addressing three research questions: (1) what research themes exist within the topic of CS, (2) what antecedents and outcomes of CS have scholars explored and what results have they found, and (3) what gaps in understanding exist that require further insight and hence further research. In 2021, Dahl and Peltier served as invited keynote speakers at Google's User Happiness Measurement Summit, sharing their framework and lessons learned from their 2015 article.

In this invited article, we respond to a request by the JCS/D&CB editor to extend the Dahl and Peltier (2015) review to include the contemporary era from 2015 through 2022. Our review and commentary comes in two different forms. First, we highlight specific articles to illustrate the differentiation between categories, research designs, and sample populations. These articles were selected to provide examples of highly relevant research in key content areas. The second form of commentary is a broad discussion and critique of specific articles. This commentary aims to start a dialog within the JCS/D&CB community about where the field has been and where it is headed.

Key additions included a discussion and critique on articles addressing consumer well-being, brand community as an essential construct for word-of-mouth (WOM) research, proactive dysfunctional consumer behavior marketing tactics, and brand love. Overall, the current paper addresses three research questions: (1) how does contemporary research compare and contrast to previous research eras, (2) what are some of the key contexts and methodologies, and (3) what are the gaps in knowledge that warrant further investigation from researchers?

METHODOLOGY

We employed the rubric used by Dahl and Peltier (2015) to categorize the different topic areas, research contexts, and sub-categories within the field of CS. The rubric was developed based on a review in the *Journal of Marketing Education* (Gray, Peltier, & Schibrowsky, 2012). It was informed by early literature reviews in the JCS/D&CB by Hunt (1993), Swan and Trawick (1993), and similar review pieces authored by Davidow (2012) and Perkins (2012). The contemporary era represents all the articles published in the JCS/D&CB since 2015. The contemporary era does not necessarily represent a distinct era in terms of academic trends compared to previous eras. This era was kept separate from the previous study for convenience and to separate the work that had been done previously. The main rubric categories of interest in this study are the type of article (conceptual or empirical); antecedents, moderators, and outcomes investigated; data collection methods (qualitative, quantitative); research design (exploratory, descriptive, or experimental); sample used (student, non-student); and context (geographic scope, business-to-consumer vs. business-to-business, product vs. service). In total, we reviewed and categorized an additional 53 articles published since 2015 (similar to the initial historical review, we excluded articles classified as editorials).

Procedurally, the three authors independently assessed whether the article categorization scheme used in Dahl and Peltier (2015) was still valid or whether new categories were needed. Based on the individual assessments across the three authors, it was determined that while the importance of the categorical areas may have changed from 1988–2014, the categories themselves remain relevant. One benefit of this consistency is that using the same categories allows for better comparisons between 2015–2022 and the earlier eras. Table 1 provides the categories and descriptions of these categories.

DISCUSSION OF RESULTS

We first provide an overview of the frequency of categorical coverage from 2015 to 2022, including a comparison to previous eras covered by the earlier review. We then present an examination of articles based on their research context, design, method, data collection, and sample.

Overall Summary of Publications by Article Category

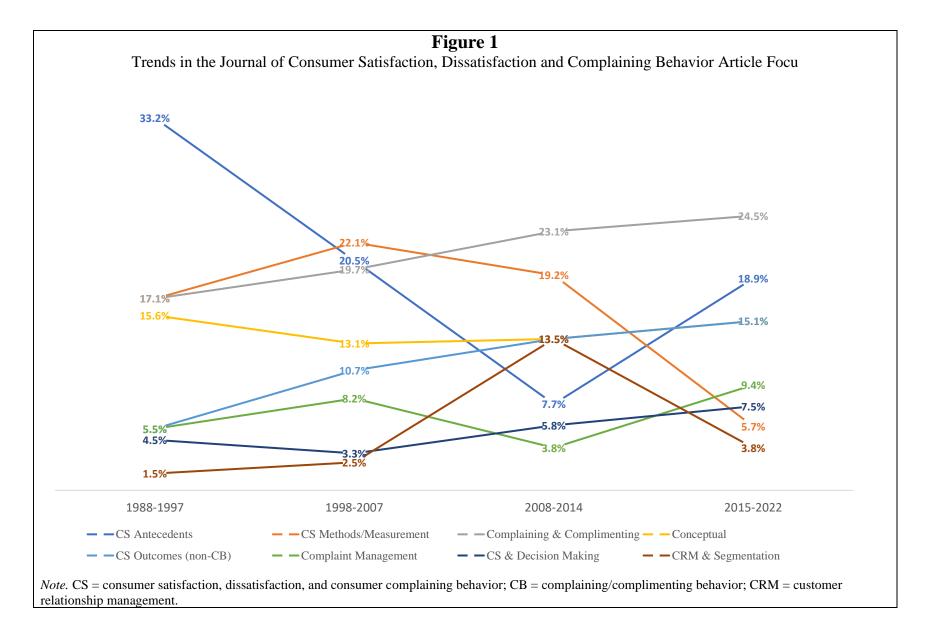
Table 2 and Figure 1 provide a breakdown of the number of articles by category throughout the different eras of the JCS/D&CB. The following summary discusses the prominence of categorical coverage from 2015–2022. We also discuss trends in categorical coverage compared to results noted in Dahl and Peltier (2015). Finally, within this section we highlight select articles published since 2015 within the most prevalent categories that point to future research considerations in today's increasingly digital-driven world.

The JCS/D&CB coverage of *complaining and complimenting behavior* continues to increase, once again representing the most popular article category in the contemporary era (n =

Table 1									
Article Categories and Descriptions									
Category	Description								
CS Antecedents	Articles focusing on exploring (dis)satisfaction formation related to products, services, and/or integrated product–service satisfaction with focus on attitudinal, cognitive, social, and demographic based antecedents.								
CS Methods/ Measurement	Articles discussing issues related to the methodologies or measurement of CS, including scale development, construct development, and/or potential measurement issues stemming from measurement scales, contexts, etc.								
Complaining & Complimenti ng Behavior	Articles focusing on complaining/complimenting behaviors, including word-of-mouth (negative and positive). Articles address issues related to the different types of complaining/complimenting behaviors, antecedents, and/or outcomes the behaviors.								
Conceptual	Articles focusing on providing reviews of the CS literature and building new conceptual frameworks without empirically testing.								
CS Outcomes (non-CB)	Articles focusing on examining the relationships between (dis)satisfaction and outcomes other than complaining/complimenting behaviors. Articles within this category include those examining the relationships between satisfaction and loyalty, repurchase intentions, and/or firm performance (i.e., service–profit chain).								
Complaint Management/ Response	Articles addressing organizations' handling and response to consumer complaints, including management of the process, responses to complaints, consumer satisfaction with complaint redress, and third-party organizations.								
CS & Decision Making	Articles examining CS-issue in relation to the consumer decision making process.								
CRM & Segmentation	Articles addressing the role of CS issues in CRM and/or how firms can use CS for customer segmentation purposes.								
dissatisfaction, a	s and descriptions from Dahl & Peltier, 2015. CS = consumer satisfaction, and consumer complaining behavior; CB = complaining/complimenting = customer relationship management.								

Table 2 Number and Percentage of Articles by Category and Era										
	1988	-1997 1998		-2007	2008–2014		2015-2022		1988–2022	
		Era		Era		Era		Era		Overall
Category	n	%	п	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
CS Antecedents	66	33.2	25	20.5	4	7.7	10	18.9	105	24.6
Complaining/Complimenting Behavior	34	17.1	24	19.7	12	23.1	3	5.7	74	17.4
CS Methods/Measurement	34	17.1	27	22.1	10	19.2	13	24.5	83	19.5
Conceptual	31	15.6	16	13.1	7	13.5	8	15.1	62	14.6
CS Outcomes (non-CB)	11	5.5	13	10.7	7	13.5	8	15.1	39	9.2
Complaint Management	11	5.5	10	8.2	2	3.8	5	9.4	28	6.6
CS & Decision Making	9	4.5	4	3.3	3	5.8	4	7.5	20	4.7
CRM & Segmentation	3	1.5	3	2.5	7	13.5	2	3.8	15	3.5
Totals	199		122		52		53		426	

CRM = customer relationship management.



3, 24.5%) and accounting for nearly one-fourth (23.8%) of all JCS/D&CB articles since 2008. Similar to previous eras, articles in this category primarily focus on complaining behavior, with a few notable exceptions since 2015. The continued digital transformation of many industries points to the need for additional research exploring online reviews and WOM (Bapat & Kannadhasan, 2022). Over the course of JCS/D&CB's history, many articles in this category have focused primarily on complaining behavior and negative WOM (Arora, Das Gupta, & Naylor, 2021; Srivastava & Kalro, 2018). However, there appears to be increased interest since 2015 in exploring consumer segments and related behaviors along with other aspects of the complaining and complimenting continuum. Celuch, Walz, and Hartman (2018) built on the increased focus of service-dominant logic while exploring the role of trust-related concepts and customer citizenship behaviors such as advocacy and feedback. Manner and Lane (2017) offered insights on traits of consumers who post online reviews, while Srivastava and Kalro (2018) overviewed the literature on motivations and outcomes of seeking online reviews. Recently, Subramanian, Thakur, and Manjula (2022) showed how marketers may nudge consumers to provide positive feedback via framing of online customer review prompts.

JCS/D&CB articles since 2015 in this category have also raised some distinct conceptualizations along the complaint–compliment continuum. Pruden and Vavra (2015) demarcated between incentivized and managed WOM, an important consideration given the rise of influencer marketing. However, consumers may be more skeptical in cases of paid influencers and complimenting behaviors, thus creating new dynamics for future research to consider. More recently, Burnham (2020) explored suggestion sharing behavior, and Meiners, Reucher, Khan, and Spille (2021) examined non-complainers. Although negative WOM undoubtedly remains a critical issue for marketers (Arora et al., 2021), combined, these recent studies offer valuable insights for marketers seeking to understand how to motivate positive WOM. Future research should continue to build understanding of consumer motivations and managerial approaches across the complaint–compliment behavioral continuum, including how economically-incentivized WOM via paid influencers may impact other CS outcomes.

The second most common article category is *CS antecedents* (n = 10, 18.9%). The article count in this category represents a rebound from the previous era, representing only 7.7% of all articles from 2008–2014. Despite a CS antecedent research downturn in the previous era, researchers continue to find new constructs and contexts to investigate. Organizations are constantly looking to add strategic distinctiveness to their competitive advantage (Celuch & Robinson, 2016), and the integration of emerging technologies into the marketing discipline will continue to have wide-ranging implications for the CS literature that requires further investigation (Poushneh & Vasquez, 2017).

Research interest in *CS outcomes* (other than complaining and complimenting behavior) has slightly increased over the last three eras to 17.3% of all articles in the 2015–2022 era of JCS/D&CB. Examples of other CS outcomes of interest include customer loyalty (Powers, Jack, & Choi, 2018) and commitment (Celuch, Walz, & Jones, 2018), along with various behavioral intentions including sharing economy intentions (Kim & Yoon, 2022) and repatronage and switching intentions (Rahman & Soesilo, 2022).

The conceptual article category has consistently ranked as the fourth most popular category, including in the contemporary era from 2015–2022 (n = 8, 15.4%). Conceptual article topics were wide-ranging and encompassed diverse constructs, including social capital (Johnson & Ross, 2015), dysfunctional customer behavior (Aron, 2016; Aron & Kultgen, 2019), user-generated content (Naylor, 2016), transcendent customer experiences (Petersen, Wright, & Aron,

2020), marketing telos (Larsen & Wright, 2020), and brand love (Madadi, Torres, & Zuniga, 2021; Gumparthi, Srivastava, & Chatterjee, 2021).

Brand love and dysfunctional customer behaviors appeared as recent emerging topics in the JCS/D&CB that may warrant further exploration in the digital context. Brand love entails a passionate emotional attachment to a brand exhibited by satisfied consumers (Gumparthi et al., 2021). Madadi et al. (2021) proposed several antecedents, outcomes, and a nomological model for brand love or hate, while Karani (2021) examined brand love's relationship with forgiveness, and Gumparthi et al. (2021) explored the customer journey leading to brand love. Research exploring brand love's impact on the complaint–compliment continuum, service recovery, repurchase intentions, and other CS variables seems warranted.

While brand love reflects a positive aspect, dysfunctional customer behavior stems from reactionary behaviors of dissatisfied customers and can have serious ramifications for brands when it occurs in a digital environment and more easily impacts other consumers (Aron, 2016). Service or product failures produce critical incidents or cumulative flashpoints that influence consumer decision-making and may cause customers to act out against a brand (Aron & Kultgen, 2019). Aron and Kultgen (2019) argued marketers can only react to the dissatisfied consumers' actions, although opportunities may exist for marketers to create proactive strategies to prevent dysfunctional behavior, particularly in an era of predictive analytics. Potential research in this area may explore nuances of what provokes dysfunctional consumer behavior as well as how marketers can proactively prevent, mitigate, and correct such behavior.

Papers focused on *CS methods and measurement* saw a notable change compared to previous eras; these articles only represent 3.8% (n = 3) of all articles from the contemporary era. Methods and measurement papers of prior eras ranged between 17.1% and 22%. Researchers in other journals have increasingly examined consumer sentiment in online reviews by applying artificial intelligence-based analysis (i.e., natural language processing). Given the recent review on qualitative research in JCS/D&CB (Wright & Larsen, 2023), these new methodological approaches may represent another welcome addition to understanding online review behavior, sentiment, and related aspects. JCS/D&CB scholars may also seek to replicate scales similar to the recent work of Yaccarini, Simkin, Bachem, and Azzollini (2022).

The remaining three categories, *CS and decision making* (n = 4, 7.7%), *complaint management* (n = 5, 9.6%), and *customer relationship management and segmentation* (n = 2, 3.8%), have consistently ranked in the bottom three in terms of article count across all eras of the JCS/D&CB. It is unclear as to why these three categories are less popular than other categories, but this trend has been stable over time. Recent sub-topics within *CS and decision making* include: customer decision strategy, counterfactual thinking, and customer satisfaction (Machin, 2016); customer journeys and perceived value (Taylor, Ishida, Lim, & Delpechitre, 2018); and perceived online review quality, status quo effects, and customer loyalty (Hong, Kim, & Lennon, 2019). In *complaint management*, articles cover: product failure recovery (Catenazzo & Paulssen 2015), service recovery and customer personality (Agarwal, Mehrota, & Barger, 2016), service failure and apologies (McClure, Killian, & Pearson, 2019), and customer grudges and misinformation (Nordstrom & Egan, 2021). Finally, subtopics in *customer relationship management and segmentation* include: customer relationship management technology and customer relationships (Saxby, Celuch, & Walz, 2015) and employee–customer service exchanges and rapport building (Smith, 2021).

One potential area for future research across these less popular categories once again relates to the intersection of technology and service interactions. The presence of a human-to-human

interaction element is likely to be critical in service failure forgiveness (Catenazzo & Paulssen, 2015). Notably, human-technology interactions, such as artificial intelligence-enabled service encounters, smart devices, and similar contexts, will lack this critical factor. We suggest JCS/D&CB scholars design research to explore the complaint management and service recovery process in these digital service encounters.

Summary of Research Designs

Table 3 provides an updated breakdown of the research designs employed across eras. In the following paragraphs, we offer a brief highlight of findings and commentary related to JCS/D&CB articles from the contemporary 2015–2022 era relative to the historical review.

Increase in qualitative research. The most remarkable change in research designs in the contemporary era is the rise of qualitative research, with over one-fourth of the articles employing a qualitative component. We point interested researchers to Wright and Larsen's (2023) recent review of 30 years of qualitative research from within the JCS/D&CB for additional insights on enhancing research designs employing this methodological approach.

Continued interest in geographic scope and cross-cultural research. The JCS/D&CB continues to receive attention from global scholars. As such, the journal receives article submissions on a wide range of CS cultural contexts from all over the world. During the contemporary era, the JCS/D&CB published 10 articles that used international samples or involved cross-cultural research, including studies with samples from India, Saudi Arabia, Germany, Korea, Indonesia, and Argentina.

Consumer-to-consumer context surfaces. The business-to-consumer context continues to dominate in the JCS/D&CB. Even though the name of this journal has the word "consumer" in its title, the JCS/D&CB remains interested in research beyond the consumer context. Notably, a new context of interest since the 2015 review has surfaced. We label this new context consumer-to-consumer (C2C) and consumer-to-business (C2B) interactions to allow for greater specificity. We define C2C as an interaction between two or more consumers relevant to an interested outside organization. Researchers may approach the C2C label from different perspectives. For example, some researchers use C2C in reference to C2C communications, while others use C2C to reference a C2C transaction. Different scholars in journals outside of JCS/D&CB have similarly used the C2C term in communication contexts (Adjei, Noble, & Noble, 2010; Taheri, Pourfakhimi, Prayag, Gannon, & Finsterwalder 2021) or transaction contexts (Leonard, 2012; Moriuchi & Takahashi, 2022). Our categorization entails both aspects.

We classified three articles in the contemporary era as C2C. First, Naylor (2016) categorized C2C as two different typologies encompassing electronic WOM, by which consumers make statements regarding brands, and user-generated content, by which consumers create photos, videos, audio, or commentary regarding a brand. Either form of C2C under this construction could facilitate positive or negative communication about a brand. Cohn (2016) did not specifically use the term C2C; however, the article discussed the consequences of consumers buying for other consumers (gift giving).

The third article classified as C2C is from Kim and Yoon (2022). This article explores how consumer values and switching behaviors impact sharing economy consumption. Given many sharing services (i.e., Airbnb, Uber) involve consumers as both the service providers (i.e., property owner, vehicle driver) and end-users (i.e., renter, passenger), we also classified this as C2C. We also acknowledge there is often a third-party, and thus a triadic element, to these sharing services: the brand platform, consumer as a service provider, and consumer as an end user. Future research

				Tab							
]	Number and Percentage of Articles by Context, Design, Method, Data Collection, and Sample										
		<u>1988</u>	<u>8–1997</u>	<u>199</u>	<u>1998–2007</u>		<u>2008–2014</u>		5-2022	<u>1988–2022</u>	
			Era		Era		Era		Era		Overall
<u>a</u>		n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%
Context	DOC	1 4 1	01.0	07	00 (20	96.4	4.4	017	210	00.0
	B2C	141	91.0	87	92.6	38	86.4	44	91.7	310	90.9
	B2B	9	5.8	6	6.4	5	11.4	1	2.0	21	6.2
	G2C or G2B	5	3.2	1	1.1	1	2.3	0	0.0	7	2
	C2C	0	0.0	0	0.0	0	0.0	3	6.3	3	0.9
Design											
0	Descriptive	120	59.4	73	59.8	30	56.6	32	57.1	255	58.9
	Conceptual	35	17.3	20	16.4	8	15.1	11	19.6	74	17.1
	Experimental	25	12.4	13	10.7	12	22.6	4	7.1	54	12.5
	Exploratory	22	10.9	16	13.1	3	5.7	9	16.1	50	11.5
Method											
Meinou	Quantitative	132	84.1	73	75.3	39	84.8	43	69.4	287	79.2
	Qualitative	132	12.1	12	12.4	5	10.9	16	25.8	52	14.4
	Both	19 6	3.8	12	12.4	$\frac{3}{2}$	4.3	3	23.8 4.8	23	6.4
	Dotti	0	5.0	12	12.4	2	4.5	5	4.0	23	0.4
Data Col	lection										
	Survey	102	52.6	51	44.0	25	47.2	30	50.8	208	49.3
	Literature Review	36	18.6	19	16.4	8	15.1	6	10.2	69	16.4
	Experiment	25	12.9	13	11.2	12	22.6	7	11.9	57	13.5
	Mixed	9	4.6	13	11.2	4	7.5	5	8.5	31	7.3
	Content Analysis	8	4.1	6	5.2	0	0.0	2	3.4	16	3.8
	Ethnography/Case							1	1 7	10	2.4
	Study	2	1.0	7	6.0	0	0.0	1	1.7	10	2.4
	Interviews	7	3.6	0	0.0	2	3.8	4	6.8	13	3.1
	Secondary Data	1	0.5	4	3.4	1	1.9	1	1.7	7	1.7
	Focus Groups	4	2.1	1	0.9	0	0.0	1	1.7	6	1.4
	Other	0	0.0	2	1.7	1	1.9	2	3.4	5	1.4
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Sample	Non-Student	110	72.8	61	67.8	24	53.3	29	63.0	224	67.5
				61 20							
	Student	41	27.2	29	32.2	21	46.7	17	37.0	108	32.5

Note. B2C = business-to-consumer; B2B = business-to-business; G2C = government-to-consumer; G2B = government-to-business; C2C = consumer-to-consumer.

in the JCS/D&CB may consider exploring similar triadic exchanges or relationships to examine how elements of CS differ in this context.

Triads are systems of three actors in which each actor interacts directly or indirectly between the group (Siltaloppi & Vargo, 2017), with relational elements involving brokerage, mediation, and coalition. Brokerage entails one actor who facilitates interactions between other actors, mediation refers to the dyad's effect on the triad's third actor, while coalition describes the dynamic of all of the actors within the ecosystem. With the ubiquity of sharing platforms connecting different parties together, researchers should consider triadic relationships and the nuances related to CS that may include differences in CS with the frontline service provider versus the brand platform.

Surveys remain popular, online data offers an opportunity. Surveys remain the primary data collection tool of the contemporary era, consistent with the historical review of the JCS/D&CB. In comparison, relatively few studies seem to take advantage of the structured and unstructured data found on e-commerce platforms (reviews), social media, and online brand communities. We noted four studies that utilized online customer reviews, but only one study in the contemporary era used social media as a tool for data gathering. Given the pervasive nature of digital media in today's society, researchers should explore these content-rich data sources for examining CS-related issues. Researchers interested in these data sources may want to review recent studies from outside the JCS/D&CB. For example, researchers have used online data to explore social media interventions (Borah, Banerjee, Lin, Jain, & Eisingerich, 2020), brand reputation tracking (Rust, Rand, Huang, Stephen, Brooks, & Chabuk, 2021), and social media and consumer identity (Grewal, Stephen, & Coleman, 2019).

CONCLUSION

The goal of this invited paper was to provide an updated perspective on Dahl and Peltier's (2015) historical review of articles published in the JCS/D&CB. We categorized articles published from 2015–2022 as a contemporary era and highlighted key shifts since the previous historical review. Based on our review of 53 articles published over the past eight years, the most recent period marks a change in relative coverage of article categories. Specifically, we noted a growing interest in *complaining and complimenting behavior*, a return to interest in *CS antecedents*, and a noticeable decrease in interest in *CS methods and measurement*. The contemporary era also marks the dawn of new research streams and constructs (i.e., brand love, dysfunctional customer behaviors), a continued rise of qualitative methods (see Wright & Larsen, 2023), and a new context we label C2C.

There remains a dearth of articles investigating technology factors or service issues in the C2C context, and we recommend future JCS/D&CB scholars consider these as increasingly relevant and fruitful research avenues requiring more exploration. Service delivery increasingly occurs in the digital environment in many industries and how consumers evaluate the value-in-use of these service encounters remains relatively unexplored (Manser Payne, Dahl, & Peltier, 2021). Even in-person service encounters increasingly leverage technology-enabled services that enhance human–technology interactions. Digital transformation of business models has also led to a rise of C2C sharing platforms and services. Recent studies in JCS/D&CB have not heavily focused on technology factors, particularly when understanding the *CS antecedents* of these technology-enabled or C2C service encounters.

Given the rapid technological innovation and rise of artificial intelligence and similar technologies, there is a need for future research addressing how consumers respond and interact

with artificial intelligence chatbots, digital servitization platforms, and other technologies (Manser Payne et al., 2021). Many aspects of user experience intersect with CS, and CS remains a core focus of digital transformation efforts at organizations such as Google (Dahl & Peltier, 2021). Research that expands scholars' and marketers' understanding of how different consumer factors, managerial factors, firm-level factors, and technology features jointly contribute to CS, value co-creation, and related outcomes is of interest.

Marketing has a strong tradition focusing on CS (Larsen & Wright, 2020). It remains clear that despite the JCS/D&CB publishing over 450 articles over 30 years, there is still much to research and explore within the field of CS. We are encouraged to see the continued diversity in research topics, design, and other contextual factors published in the JCS/D&CB. Like Wright and Larsen (2023), we encourage scholars looking to publish in JCS/D&CB to draw upon the rich CS literature base within the journal when citing relevant work to strengthen the journal's impact.

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