Case Study Research: Theory • Methods • Practice

ARCH G. WOODSIDE
CASE STUDY RESEARCH:
Theory · Methods · Practice
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by

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To my two Marthas:
Martha Elizabeth Woodside and Martha Jane Woodside
## Contents

Preface ix

Acknowledgments xiii

1. Building Theory from Case Study Research 1
2. Bridging the Chasm between Survey and Case Study Research 17
3. Storytelling Theory and Research 41
4. Creating Visual Narrative Art for Decoding Stories 85
5. Subjective and Confirmatory Personal Introspection 107
6. Overcoming the Illusion of Conscious Will and Self-Fabrication 129
7. Using the Forced Metaphor-Elicitation Technique (FMET) in Subjective Personal Introspections about Self 143
8. Surfacing Executives Interpretations of Self and the Roles of Co-Workers in Enacting Front and Back Stage Strategies 157
9. Personal Exchanges, Social Behavior, Conversation Analysis, and Face-To-Face Talk 189
11. Case Study Research on Means-End Laddering Chains 225
13. Applying the Long Interview in Case Study Research 263
14. Tipping-Point Modeling in Case Study Research 291
15. Participant Observation Research in Organizational Behavior 321
# Contents

16. Systems Thinking and System Dynamics Modeling 343  
17. Fuzzy Set Social Science and Qualitative Comparative Analysis 359  
18. Conclusions: Principles for Doing Case Study Research 397  

References 409  

Subject Index 435
The need for a source offering broad and deep coverage of theory, methods, and practice in case study research is the central premise for this book — Case Study Research or CSR. CSR’s principal objectives include offering nitty-gritty details of processes (steps) in building theory and designing, implementing, and evaluating a broad range of case study research methods — coverage and depth that you will not find elsewhere in one source.

CSR includes comparing the criticisms and strengths of case study research with theory and methods that rely on matrix–algebra-based hypotheses testing. CSR includes introductions and details within lengthy examples of using qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) with available software (fsqca.com) as well as an in-depth treatment on building in degrees-of-freedom (DOF) in case study research. QCA is a Boolean-algebra-based approach for formal testing of the accuracy of complex statements of contingent relationships among recipes of antecedent conditions in predicting outcome conditions. Building in DOF analysis is often discussed in case study research but not to the depth that you find in this book — formal tests of hypotheses are possible in case studies using DOF analysis as well as other methods (e.g., latency response methods and system dynamics modeling).

Students and scholars — recognizing the limited ability of informants to accurately report their own (mostly unconscious) thinking and doing processes — and the problems relating to self-editing biases of informants while answering questions — and the biases in the questions that researchers frame — frequently seek alternatives to using fixed-point survey response instruments and collecting verbal-only responses. Case study researchers worry about (insist on) achieving high accuracy in understanding, explaining, and predicting thinking and doing processes.

Substantial evidence supports the view:

- Most thinking occurs unconsciously
- Humans have limited access to their own thinking-doing processes
- More than one person affects the process under examination.

Consequently, case study researchers frequently find the use of one-shot interviews with one person for each of 50–300 organizations (firm, family, or government
organization) to be too low-grade in accuracy to be acceptable. Too much nuance is missing, too much reality remains unknown, in studies that rely on one-shot interviews. Chris Rock’s (American comedian and commentator) insight automatically comes-to-mind here — “When you meet someone for the first time, you are not meeting that person, you are meeting his representative.”

Explicit consideration of four dimensions is relevant for theory building and testing of processes involving humans:

- **Time**: micro-seconds, minutes, hours, days, weeks, months, decades, centuries
- **Thinking**: unconscious only, unconscious and conscious, complex problem-solving
- **People**: one person, group; intergroup, nation, East–West and native cultures
- **Context**: home, work, travel; first-time versus repeat; weather, noise level, odors.

Figure 1 shows two of these four dimensions: time and thinking. Figure 1 includes superimposing several prevalent case-study research methods in these methods most relevant time-thinking locations. For example, according to Jung’s (1916/1959) archetypal theory human memory include genetic primal forces that affect automatic responses to different context without conscious thought — behavioral and thinking outcomes of responses learned over thousands of years.

Figure 1 includes 3 levels of thinking with unconscious thinking covering about 50 percent of the space, conscious thinking 40 percent, and meta-conscious thinking (i.e., thinking about thinking) about 10 percent of the space. The space allocations reflect the evidence that most thinking occurs unconsciously and humans infrequently engage in meta-thinking issues — an aside: Gigerenzer (2008) may be the most insightful scholar currently working on examining meta-thinking issues.

Note that Figure 1 attempts to show communication flows between the various levels of thinking. While recognizing that conscious and unconscious thinking and thoughts occur separately is useful theoretically, much thinking likely includes some bits of both conscious and unconscious thoughts (Evans, 2008).

“Go deep!” Go deep by both going into the field — real-life contexts and by learning a variety of case study theories and methods is the advice and direction that this book directs you to follow. This suggestion is a corollary to Weick’s (1979) famous suggestion, “Complicate yourself!”

The complicated individual can sense variations in a larger environment, select what need not be attended to, what will not change imminently, what won’t happen, and by this selection the individual is able to amplify his control variety. He safely (that is, insightfully) ignores that which will not change, concentrates on that which will, and much like the neurotic psychiatrist is able to anticipate significant environmental variation when and where it occurs. Complicated observers take in more. They see patterns that less complicated people miss, and they exploit these subtle patterns by concentrating on them and ignoring everything else. (Weick, 1979, p. 193, italics in the original)
Figure 1: Time and thinking property spaces.

Notes: a–b–c–d, Communication linkages among unconscious and conscious thinking; QCA, qualitative comparative analysis; FMET/ZMET, forced/Zaltman metaphor elicitation techniques; TAT, thematic apperception test.
CSR offers deep coverage of 14 case research methods; the closing chapter offers 12 specific principles to implement that serve to increase accuracy of what is happening and what will happen in real-life contexts-processes involving thinking and behavior by humans. Useful tools for going deep and for complicating yourself!
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Very special thanks to the informants whose stories this book tells. Thank you for sharing your life experiences, interpretations, and evaluations. Hopefully, each informant participating in the studies that this book presents can still see her or his own tree among the forest of case study reports among the descriptions and interpretations in the chapters.
Chapter 1

Building Theory from Case Study Research

Synopsis

This chapter provides a new definition for case study research (CSR). Achieving a deep understanding of processes and other concept variables, such as participants’ self perceptions (an “emic view” of what’s happening and “why I did what I did”) of their own thinking processes, intentions, and contextual influences, is identified as the principal objective of CSR. Using multiple methods to “triangulate” (i.e., confirm and deepen understanding by using multiple sources all focusing on the same process/event) within the same case is described.

This chapter describes core criticisms made by case study researchers of large sample surveys. A need exists for a paradigm shift in research on organizational behavior (including modeling the history of new product performance). The chapter outlines the significant weaknesses of CSR as seen by other researchers. The chapter examines Senge’s (1990) core propositions related to the “mental models” of decision participants. Details illustrate the use of specific research methods for case studies to achieve different research objectives and the combination of objectives. Finally, the chapter illustrates basic concept variables in case studies and briefly reviews twelve propositions relevant in many case research studies. This chapter reviews classic and recent contributions to the literature of CSR.

Introduction: Achieving a Broad Perspective When Defining Case Study Research

CSR is an inquiry that focuses on describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual (i.e., process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry, culture, or nationality). This definition is intentionally broader than the definition that Yin (1994, p. 13) proposes:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident.
For a given study, focusing the research issues, theory, and/or empirical inquiry on the individual \((n = 1)\) is the central feature of CSR. As Skinner notes (1966, p. 21), “... instead of studying a thousand rats for one hour each, or a hundred rats for ten hours each, the investigator is likely to study one rat for a thousand hours.” This view is not intended to imply that CSR is limited to a sample of \(n = 1\). The reporting of several case studies in one inquiry is possible when the inquiry is to estimate the size of an effect (i.e., the strength of a relationship between two variables) rather than to generalize to a population. For example, meta-analyses (e.g., Hunter, Schmidt, & Jackson, 1982) provide tools for estimating strengths of relationships (i.e., effect sizes). Also, reports of multiple case studies are available in organization science (e.g., Nutt, 1998) involving business-to-business contexts. In the marketing literature, Howard and Morgenroth (1968) illustrate transforming the research context in one supply chain from \(n = 1\) to \(n > 30\) by examining alternative thought/action routes taken separately, but seemingly similar, decisions that include five principal parties: a senior decision-maker, a regional manager, a local distributor, and two sets of competitors.

A key point to our definition is that CSR is not limited to contemporary phenomenon or real-life contexts, especially when boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident. Digging up the bones of the U.S. President Zachary Taylor in 1996 to determine if he was assassinated is an example of CSR; B.F. Skinner’s experiments in controlling the behavior of his infant daughter are an example of CSR. The defining feature of CSR lies in the supreme importance placed by the researcher on acquiring data resulting in describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual case.

Why Case Study Research is Useful

A substantial amount of psychological, management, and marketing research focuses on the decisions and the behaviors by individuals and groups within and between organizations (Woodside, 1992; Woodside & Wilson, 2000). The most frequently used research method in the field involves sending a mail survey of mostly closed-ended questions covering 10–20 research constructs. The request usually made is that the questionnaire be completed by one person per firm, without comparing any other person’s answers. The reported response rates for such studies typically range from 8 to 30 percent.

This dominant logic assumes that the responding individual is willing to report her own thinking process, the thinking processes of others involved in the decision process, and the sequence of events that occurred over several days, weeks, months, or years. The dominant research paradigm assumes that the research constructs (e.g., role ambiguity, trust, closeness of supervision) measured on fixed-point scales provide the nuance necessary for capturing the thinking/doing processes under study.

Yet the scientific literature on thinking concludes that approximately 95 percent of thought is subconscious (Wegner, 2002; Zaltman, 2003) and that people have only
limited access to their own thinking processes, not to mention the thinking processes of others. Consequently, research methods attempting to measure ongoing thinking (e.g., Van Someren, Barnard, & Sandberg, 1994) and thinking by the same person using multiple interviews over several weeks (e.g., Cox, 1967; Cyert, Simon, & Trow, 1956; Witte, 1972; Woodside & Wilson, 2000), methods to bring up subconscious thinking (e.g., Schank, 1999; Fauconnier, 1997), and interviewing the multiple participants involved in the thinking/doing under study (e.g., Biemans, 1989) not only are particularly useful steps, but also they become mandatory if we really want to achieve deep understanding in research on thinking/doing processes in industrial marketing.

“I Hate Lying Like That”

The operational constructs using closed-ended responses developed by researchers fail to uncover the deep nuances and dynamic interactions between thoughts and actions within and between individuals that occur within industrial marketing contexts. The following story illustrates such nuances that CSR can capture in ways unlikely to be captured by closed-ended mail survey responses. The story involves a sales call made by a representative of an industrial distributor of copiers and printing equipment (this sales call was overheard by the author who rode in the same vehicle with the sales rep). During the selling/buying discussion involving the new purchase requirements, the customer mentioned that the copier purchased recently from the sales rep was broken again. Both the sales rep and the customer mentioned that the copier had needed a service technician to repair it almost every week since it was installed six weeks before. The sales rep responded to the customer’s concern by saying, “I’m sorry you’ve experienced so many problems with your new copier. We will get to the bottom of the situation. It’s a fine piece of equipment and we will solve the problem so it doesn’t keep coming up.” After getting back in his car, the sales rep remarked to the researcher, “The copier is a piece of shit; I really hate lying like that [to a customer]. It’s really going to hurt my relationship with the guy.” The sales rep elaborated that a competing distributor carried a line of copiers that were far superior in performance and reliability compared to his product line.

Three-Person and Five-Way Mental Processing in Industrial Marketing

Most studies in consumer, business, and industrial marketing usually focus on only one of five mental processes, that is, verbalized thoughts. Figure 1 depicts such thoughts as Level 1 thinking. The other four levels shown in Figure 1 include the following mental processes.

Level 2 mental processing includes conscious editing of thoughts surfacing from unconscious processing, spreading, and combining of thoughts held in conscious processing. These thoughts include thoughts heard by both the person verbalizing
and hearing thoughts from another person. Level 2 processing requires much more cognitive effort because of the attempt to handle three-way incoming thoughts from the unconscious, the person’s own verbalizations, and the thoughts being received from the other person. “How do I know what I think until I hear what I’ve said?” (see Weick, 1995) is a question that reflects the idea that a person interprets her own thoughts after verbalizing them.

Level 3 mental processing is the surfacing of unconscious thoughts into conscious processes (i.e., “spreading activation” of concepts held in “working memory” as well as moving of some thoughts involved in conscious processing into unconscious storage). Level 3 processing is automatic. An individual is often unaware of how the thoughts came to the surface or what process occurred that moved her conscious mind to focus on a new topic.

Level 4 mental processing includes unconscious processes between two or more persons that do not surface into conscious processes. Each person’s nonverbal communications influence, and may attract or repel, the other person in ways unrecognized by both. “I don’t know why, but I don’t trust that guy” is a verbal commentary of Level 4 processing.

Level 5 processing reflects a spreading activation within the unconscious of an individual. This includes completing automatic thought and action routines without

Figure 1: The multiple mental processes in research on industrial marketing–buying thinking.
surface recognition of the process. Level 5 mental processing may lead to behaviors that the individual is unable to recognize or report performing (Bargh, 2002; see Bargh, Chen, & Burrows, 1996, for an empirical study that relates to this observation), and behaviors not done that the individual reports doing (see Woodside & Wilson, 2002a).

Figure 1 depicts that the five mental processes also occur for the researcher as the researcher attempts to observe and interpret the mental processes involved between the two principals. Figure 1 illustrates the researcher’s limited ability to understand all five processes occurring for the two principals, as well as within the researcher herself.

Thus, the researcher’s perspective of her five mental processes would benefit from explicit discussion and surfacing efforts in the form of introspections (see Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993, for recommendations on how to improve introspection studies in consumer research). The dominant theory in-use for research on industrial marketing/buying processes relies on the assumption most likely held implicitly, and not explicitly, by researchers that a deep understanding of such processes can be acquired using answers from direct questioning across many firms of one respondent per firm within a marketing or buying organization. Researchers rarely stop to ask introspectively, what are my unconscious processes that are influencing the design and execution of my study? How can I surface unconscious thoughts held by me? Is acquiring informants’ answers to closed-ended questions enough for a deep understanding of the thinking and doing processes that I am studying?

The process of answering questions always involves a degree of introspection and “auto-driving” (see Heisley & Levy, 1991) by an informant. The person answering questions must retrieve some bits of information stored in long-term memory, organize and edit the bits, and create a verbal or written response in a form that she believes that the researcher is able to understand. If the findings from research in the mental processing literature are accurate that most mental processing is unconscious and informants have very limited ability in surfacing unconscious thoughts, then acquiring a deep understanding of industrial marketing/buying processes from conscious responses to direct questions from one respondent using a single questionnaire must be supplemented by using alternative data collection methods.

Auto-driving indicates that the interview is “driven” by informants who are seeing and hearing their own behavior. Auto-driving addresses the obtrusiveness and reactivity inherent in consumer behavior research by explicitly encouraging consumers to comment on their consumption behavior as “... photographs and recordings represent it” (Heisley & Levy, 1991, p. 257). However, auto-driving relates implicitly to all informants’ attempts to retrieve, organize, edit, and report answers to questions. Asking the informant to collect, organize, and describe photographs of themselves or to use other pictures (e.g., via Zaltman’s metaphor elicitation technique, ZMET) to describe a context or themselves embodies explicit auto-driving tools that can be useful for bringing up unconscious processes (e.g., Christensen & Olson, 2002). The researcher observing a marketer/buyer meeting, and subsequently asking one of these two parties to describe the meeting that just occurred, is another example of auto-driving.
Deep Understanding: The Principal Objective of Case Study Research

Any combination of the following purposes may serve as the major objective of CSR: description, understanding, prediction, and control. However, we propose that deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviors occurring for a specific process through time should be seen as the principal objective by the case study researcher. Deep understanding in CSR includes: (1) knowledge of “sensemaking” processes created by individuals (see Weick, 1995) and (2) systems thinking, policy mapping, and systems dynamics modeling (e.g., Hall, 1991) — what might be labeled appropriately as meta-sensemaking.

Sensemaking is how the individual (i.e., person, group, and/or organization) make sense of stimuli. Sensemaking foci include: (1) focusing on what they perceive; (2) framing what they perceive; (3) interpreting what they have done, including how they solve problems and the results of their enactments (including the nuances and contingencies in automatic and controlled thinking processes). Because gaining “thick description” (see Geertz, 1973b, pp. 5–6; Sanday, 1979; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994) can be restricted to varying levels of depth and detail, thick description alone is not enough. The resulting data and information from a thick description may focus on surface details only, for example, describing the physical characteristics of the environments, actors, and their conversations. To learn (1) the subjective significance of persons and events occurring in a case study and (2) the linkages and underlying (or, influence) paths among concept variables identified in a case requires deep understanding.

Research Steps Required to Achieve Deep Understanding

Achieving deep understanding in CSR usually involves the use of multiple research methods across multiple time periods (i.e., triangulation; see Denzin, 1978). Triangulation often includes: (1) direct observation by the researcher within the environments of the case, (2) probing by asking case participants for explanations and interpretations of “operational data” (Van Maanen, 1979), and (3) analyses of written documents and natural sites occurring in case environments (Figure 2).

The category of operational data includes spontaneous conversations of participants in a case, activities engaged in and observed by the researcher, and documents written by the participants. “Presentational data” are the appearances and answers to inquiries that informants strive to establish and maintain “in the eyes of the fieldworker, outsiders and strangers in general, work colleagues, close and intimate associates, and to varying degrees, themselves” (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 542).

Data in this category [presentational] are often ideological, normative, and abstract, dealing far more with a manufactured image of idealized doing than with the routine, practical activities actually engaged in by members of the studied organization. In short, operational data deal
Figure 2: Triangulation in CSR. Note: Showing only three time periods is arbitrary; the key point: the case study researcher often prepares written narratives of his or her interviews, direct observations, and document analyses; then, these narratives are presented to selected participants in the following time period to verify that the narratives include the details reported, observed, and found in the previous time period. For examples, see Nutt (1993) and Howard and Morgenroth (1968).
with observed activity (the behavior per se) and presentational data deal with the appearances put forth by informants as these activities are talked about and otherwise symbolically projected with the research setting. (Van Maanen, 1979, p. 542)

Gaining deep understanding often includes research to learn the “mental models” (Senge, 1990; Huff, 1990) of the participants. A mental model is the set of propositions a participant in a case understands to be reality — that is, an accurate portrayal of the causes, events, and outcomes relevant in the case. Each person studied in a case has a set of related but unique mental models describing

1. The “typical” steps (i.e., persons, conversations, behaviors, and events) that occur in the process being studied by the researcher.
2. The steps that should occur in the typical process (i.e., the participant’s normative mental model).
3. What actually occurred in a given process, for example, the most recent process completed or a completed process “strategically” important for the organization.
4. The participant’s perceptions of how another specific person or others in the organization, in general, understand the details of the process being examined.

Senge (1990) makes a number of telling points about decision-makers’ mental models. Here are three of his points particularly worth noting for CSR. First, the mental model of any one person interviewed in a case study often fails to match closely with the direct observations made by the researcher or other persons interviewed (taken individually); the perceptions and beliefs both expressed by the interviewee and formed by the researcher from direct observation are likely to miss important details and depth of understanding. Second, mental models are rarely made explicit and tested by participants in the case; they are formed tacitly; participants often assumed their mental models to accurate views of: (1) what has occurred and (2) why it has occurred (or what should and should not occur) and why. Third, important feedback relationships among variables (i.e., “loops,” such as increases in variable A leads to decreases in variable B that leads to further increases in variable A) go unrecognized by the participants in the case being studied. Hall (1978, 1984) provides the detailed illustrations of all three of these points.

The mental model of a participant in a case study is an emic representation of reality. For example, an emic report is the verbatim “sensemaking” comments made by the individual under study in a case. The interpretation of the same process provided by the case study researcher is an etic representation of reality.

Etic representation in CSR often includes description and explanation of emic meaning as well as building composite accounts of the process based on data from triangulation. Thus, the collection of emic mental model accounts from interviews represents one set of data for the case study researcher.

Collecting operational, as opposed to presentational, data is a core strength of CSR. A core proposition within the mental models of most case study researchers is that operational data often vary widely from presentational data. Thus, case
researchers seek a deep understanding by directly observing in “real time” (Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994) and (when possible) asking case participants, “What exactly is happening right now? What were the triggering events leading up to what happened? What is the meaning of what just happened to the case participants? What is going to happen next because of what has just happened?”

A distinguishing belief embraced by case study researchers (often implicitly) is that participant verbal reports of conversations, behaviors, and events distort and fail to include details necessary for deep understanding of the processes under study. “Rich as I believe these [respondent] interviews are, they are frozen in time, individual statements only vaguely anchored in the social and historical context that created them” (Wolf, 1990, p. 351). As Arnould and Wallendorf (1994) conclude, “Because of the inherent inconsistencies and ellipses in oral reports, verbal data alone are not regarded as sufficient for developing ethnographic interpretation. The preferred corrective for these limitations is combining verbal report data with data from long-term participant observation in cultural context.” If long-term participation is impossible, the alternative includes adopting multi-method procedures, for example, interviewing all parties participating in conversations and events under study, and the collection of documents and additional unobtrusive measures (see Webb & Weick, 1979; Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 1966).

The Core Criticisms of Large Sample Survey Research and Case Study Research

The core criticisms made by case study researchers of large sample surveys (i.e., $n > 100$) of one person in a household, informal group, or organization include:

1. The failure to confirm reported conversations, behaviors, and events, independent from the one person surveyed.
2. The failure to collect the necessary detail for gaining deep understanding of the mechanics and reasons embedded in the processes examined. These criticisms are countered by critics (i.e., researchers using large samples persons in identified populations) to CSR by a core criticism of their own: CSR results are not generalized to a population, the particular case included in a given case study is so unique that it represents a one-off context.

Briefly, the following observations relate to this debate. First, we advocate adopting the view (i.e., mental model) that any one respondent is severely limited in reporting the details necessary to learn to deeply understand the process being studied — some use of triangulation of methods and multiple informants is necessary to confirm and deepen information. Second, the objective of CSR is not to generalize findings to a population but to probe theory (i.e., one or more explicit mental models related to the processes being examined; see Campbell, 1975; Yin, 1994).

Third, the criticism can be directed at any one study as being idiosyncratic in its selection of population, data collection procedures, data handling and analysis, and selection of subjects for study from the population; labeling a study as being idiosyncratic is one step to concluding that the data collection procedures used and
findings made cannot be replicated — a false conclusion given that no one study can be replicated perfectly. Fourth, several case studies can be completed and fixed samples of cases may be drawn; case studies are not limited to \( n = 1 \); multiple cases, or multiple behaviors and events within one case study, can be examined to deepen understanding of patterns and contingencies related to theory (see Nutt, 1993, for an example of a large sample case study and McCracken, 1988, for a defense of multiple case sampling for identifying patterns across cases).

The objectives here do not include attacking large-sample, one person per household or organization, one-time survey research studies. However, the substantial amounts of respondent reporting of events that did not occur, and the absence of reporting events that did occur in such studies (see Farley & Howard, 1975), as well as the absence in such studies of details necessary for deep understanding of processes being studied, are additional motivators for adopting CSR methods.

In an essay on “Organizational Performance as a Dependent Variable,” March and Sutton (1997, p. 702) bemoan the fact that the bulk of research on identifying the causes of organizational performance rely on cross-sectional data and retrospective studies: “These studies may actually tell us less about the determinants of performance than about the ways performance information affects memory, cognitive processing, and story telling.” Retrospective bias may be the telling weakness of most empirical studies on measuring the performance of new product introductions specifically and, in general, on most studies measuring other areas of organizational performance.

Performance information itself colors subjective memories, perceptions, and weightings of possible causes of performance. Informants exist in a world in which organizational performance is important. That world is filled with widely believed conventional stories about the causes of good and poor performance. As a result, retrospective reports of independent variables may be less influenced by memory than by a reconstruction that connects standard story lines with contemporaneous awareness of performance results. (March & Sutton, 1997, p. 701)

March and Sutton (1997) also fault theory building that includes not viewing organizational performance as an independent variable: “… the theoretical ideas and analytical models that are normally used [e.g., by the majority of organizational and inter-organizational researchers] ignore a variety of feedback loops that are likely to be important.” Organizational behavior as a series of feedback loops is a suggestion stressed by Senge (1990) as one central for shifting research paradigms from linear thinking to system thinking. The importance of building and testing complex models is critical to capture the impact feedback loops on performance demonstrated empirically by Hall (1976, 1984).

The crucial point here: deep understanding of the multiple perceived realities that occur through time in organizations and households requires the use of multiple data
collection methods across several time periods. Meta-sensemaking — the researcher’s pursuit of a vision of reality lying outside the social beliefs of one person interviewed per organization or household — requires that additional data be collected (e.g., interviews of other persons involved in the behavior being examined; direct observation; and the analysis of documents and other unobtrusive measures).

**Data Collection and Analysis Methods Useful for Case Study Research**

While the literature often CSR associates with using qualitative research methods, we advocate viewing CSR as *not* being restricted to one set of research methods. Quantitative methods, including statistical hypotheses testing, are appropriate for many CSR studies. Also, the value of most CSR reports may be enhanced considerably by using multiple tools, both qualitative and quantitative methods, in the same study.

The value of most CSR reports increases with the use of dissimilar, multiple research methods and the inclusion of multiple study objectives (e.g., see Pettigrew, 1995). One of our objectives for this book is to provide insights for achieving useful descriptions and explanations and to go beyond these objectives — to describe the additional, possible objectives of predicting and controlling case study behavior.

**Theory Building and Theory Testing Using Case Study Research**

The relevant literature often associates CSR with theory building versus theory testing (Dyer & Wilkins, 1991; Eisenhardt, 1989). However, examples of theory testing reports using CSR are available. The quality of a CSR report often may be increased dramatically by designing the study to include *both* theory building and theory testing (e.g., see Howard & Morgenroth, 1968; Gladwin, 1989). Consider adopting the broader view: CSR is often appropriate for both theory building and theory testing. This book describes several examples of successfully doing theory building and testing by CSR scholars.

**The Objectives of Case Study Research**

CSR is appropriate for several research objectives: description, explanation, prediction, and control of the individual process, animal, person, household, group, or organization. Thus, we advocate that CSR is often appropriate for several research objectives going beyond description and explanation. Description in CSR is the attempt to answer who, what, where, when, and how questions. Explanation in CSR is the attempt to answer the why question. Sometimes CSR explanations include reports provided by: (1) the direct participants in the case; (2) informed third-party observers to the case; and (3) the case study researcher. Prediction in CSR
includes forecasting near term and/or long-term psychological states, behaviors, or events that will follow within the individual case and/or similar cases. Control in CSR includes attempts to influence the cognitions, attitudes, and/or behaviors occurring in an individual case. Control is a relevant objective in experimental studies of single cases (see Hersen & Barlow, 1976), for example, in studying the efficacy of alternative methods for achieving behavioral changes desired by: the participants (e.g., subjects, clients, or patients) in a case; an organization (e.g., a product/service marketer, a government lobbyist); and a non-profit organization or society (e.g., a department of social work, a school or university).

Each of these four research objectives can be viewed beneficially as orthogonal to the other three objectives (Figure 3). Thus, we advocate embracing the mental stretch that case description is possible without explanation, and explanation without description is also possible. Also, every possible four-way combination shown in Figure 3 occurs in CSR.

Let us concentrate on a few of the cells in Figure 3 to demonstrate the possibilities. Cell 1 is the null CSR report: no information relevant to describing, explaining, predicting, or controlling is included in the study; an abstract artist rendering of a case study is illustrative of cell 1.

Cell 7 includes attempts to “build-in degrees-of-freedom” (Campbell, 1975) in a theory of behavior that may be relevant to a given category of cases. Creating a set of 10, 20, or 30 propositions that the case study researcher proposes as typical of decision-making and behavior for a given case theory is illustrative of building-in degrees-of-freedom. Such theory building may be content-free of a specific case, that is, the theory may be formed deductively.

Weick’s (1969; also see Weick, 1979; Bougon & Komocar, 1990) dynamic causal modeling of organization and change is an example of a content-free theory for

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<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Prediction</th>
<th></th>
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</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Control</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Description</td>
<td>Explanation</td>
<td>1. Abstract (Art)</td>
<td>2.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>No</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>6.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>9. Naïve observation</td>
<td>10.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Classifying CSR by research objectives.
explaining, predicting, and controlling case behavior without starting with a
description of a particular case. Several propositions are included in dynamic causal
modeling that these researchers believe useful for achieving effective, long-lasting
change (i.e., control) in a social system (i.e., a given case). Here is an example
proposition:

A social system’s identity nodes and loops are typically over
determined by the pattern of the whole and are almost impossible to
change directly (e.g., Warwick, 1975) or in a piecemeal fashion (e.g.,
Miller & Friesen, 1982). Thus, within a holistic approach, when the
nodes and loops of interest to strategic change coincide with the social
system’s identity nodes and loops, the solution to strategic [long-
lasting] change is indirect. The solution is to focus change efforts on
peripheral loops rather than on those directly responsible for system
identity. (Bougon & Komocar, 1990)

Cell 9 is a description without explanation, prediction, or control: a naı¨ve report
of events in a case by a reporter totally unfamiliar with what is occurring in the case.
Andy Griffin’s (a U.S. actor/comedian) humorous portrayal of a backwoodsman
reporting the first-time observance of an American football game illustrates cell 9.

Representative of cell 13 CSR, most participant observation studies include the
objectives of providing thick descriptions and deep explanation of the processes and
events occurring within a specific case; developing models to predict outcomes or
future events and designing change strategies to influence (i.e., control) case behavior
are not primary objectives in such studies. Qualitative inquiry is an example of a
scientific periodical with a primary focus on thick description and deep under-
standing in CSR.

Participatory action research reports are representative of cell 14 CSR because the
objectives of such studies include thick description, deep understanding, and
attempts to influence the design and outcomes of behaviors occurring in a case,
without attempting to build predictive models for estimating values of proposed
dependent variables (e.g., see Whyte, 1990, 1991).

Ethnographic decision tree modeling (EDTM) does not include attempts to
influence outcomes by the researcher but do include model building to predict
estimates of values of specific dependent variables. Thick description and deep
understanding provide the foundation for EDTM; thus, EDTM is illustrative of cell
15 in Figure 3. The Journal of Contemporary Ethnography is an example of a scientific
periodical with a primary focus on such research reports.

Applied theory development in social work and clinical psychology/psychiatry
illustrates cell 16 CSR — the aims of the researcher include thick description, deep
understanding, prediction of outcomes, and control of behavior exhibited in a
specific case. The Journal of Applied Behavioral Analysis, the Journal of Clinical
Psychology, and Behavior Therapy are scholarly publications related to this category
of CSR.
Suggestions Regarding Selection of Case Study Research Objectives

The aim here does not include the claim that moving away from cell 1 toward cell 16 is always best. We do suggest greater awareness of the possibilities of planning to accomplish multiple objectives in CSR. Also, different CSR tools (i.e., research methods) are relevant for achieving different objectives. For example, EDTM is useful in particular for building theory for predicting outcomes occurring naturally in cases and action research is useful in particular in designing strategies to change behaviors and outcomes in cases. Thus, skill building in learning research tools relevant for case studies across a wide range of objectives should complement your training in advanced CSR.

Core Propositions in Case Study Research

Several core propositions in CSR are summarized visually in Figure 4. Briefly, 12 of these propositions are described here. (1) Time is recognized explicitly in modeling behavioral processes in CSR. For example, in the studies of $n = 1$, the possibility of variability in responses (i.e., events or outcomes) is built into the study by observing behavior of the respondent across several time periods.

(2) In many case studies, multiple individuals participate in different conversations and behaviors within one time period in the case. Conversational analysis is the

![Diagram](image_url)

Figure 4: Concepts and propositions in CSR. Source: Original figure but relates to Calder (1977, Figure 2, p. 198).
primary focus of many case studies. (3) Individuals are members of identifiable households, groups, or organizations. (4) Much like actors appearing in different scenes in a play, different individuals in the same group may participate in conversations and behaviors in different time periods; for example, note in Figure 4 that individual 6 is found in conversations in T1 and T3. (5) When examined deeply, most cases involve three or more informal groups or organizations that affect the process and outcomes under study. The involvement of “third-parties” in interorganizational case studies is the focus of several studies in supply-chain management (e.g., see Biemans, 1989). (6) Identifiable individuals and groups engage in identifiable behaviors leading to identifiable events (i.e., outcomes). (7) Specific events influence the occurrence of other events. (8) Some events are repeated, for example, E1 to E2 to E1 in Figure 4. (9) The presence of certain events (e.g., E5) changes the influence of another event; for example, E6 occurs in T4 following E1, given that E5 has occurred. Thus, CSR and theory building often includes contingency propositions of complex relationships. (10) Not all members of a group communicates with every other member in the same group; for example, in Figure 4 I1 talks with I2 and I3 in Group 1 in T1, but I1 does not talk with I2. (11) Participation in the case of identifiable groups occurs only in a limited number of time periods; for example, G1 is found in T1 and T2, and G3 is found in T2 and T3. (12) Conversational contacts within a group may increase or decrease from one period to the next within a case; for example, witness the increase in contacts in G3 between T2 and T3 in Figure 4. Figure 4 also includes sentiments and beliefs (SB). Sentiments and beliefs are relevant to individuals and to groups. Both individuals and groups have unconscious and conscious opinions as to what is true or false and good or bad. SB research includes findings that some sentiments and beliefs change through time for individuals and groups while other sentiments and beliefs are static. How behavior affects SBs and how SBs affect behavior are topics of both theory and empirical examination in case study research (see Homans, 1974). Events in Figure 4 include decisions, performance outcomes, and revelatory incidents — Figure 4 does not include the attempt to distinguish among these three categories of events. Different streams of CSR focus on different concept variables that appear in Figure 4. For example, policy mapping is the attempt to diagram, explain, and predict recurring relationships among events in a case study (e.g., Hall, 1976, 1984, 1991; Howard & Morgenroth, 1968). Decision systems analysis is the attempt to diagram and explain (but not to predict) relationships among non-recurring events in a case study (e.g., Howard & Morgenroth, 1968). The CSR methods appropriate for a given study depend on the nature of the process being examined, as well as the interests of the researcher. For processes being repeated with adjustments, such as managing a newspaper business or pricing gasoline, policy mapping is an appropriate research tool. For one-off processes, such as an individual or organization adopting a new technology, decision systems analysis and EDTM are appropriate research tools. While many different CSR methods are available, all include the recognition of the core concepts in Figure 4.
Summary

CSR is an inquiry focusing on describing, understanding, predicting, and/or controlling the individual (i.e., process, animal, person, household, organization, group, industry, culture, or nationality). Any combination of the following purposes may serve as the major objective of CSR: description, understanding, prediction, or control. However, that deep understanding of the actors, interactions, sentiments, and behaviors occurring for a specific process through time is the principal objective by the case study researcher. The researcher should consider using explicit auto-driving tools to aid in bringing-up unconscious mental processes among informants.

A mental model of a process provided by a participant interviewed in a case study is an emic representation of reality. The interpretation of the same process provided by the case study researcher is an etic representation of reality. Etic representation in CSR often includes description and explanation of emic meaning as well as building composite accounts of the process based on data from triangulation. Triangulation includes: (1) direct observation by the researcher within the environments of the case, (2) probing by asking case participants for explanations and interpretations of operational data, and (3) analyses of written documents and natural sites occurring in case environments.

Core criticisms made by case study researchers of large sample surveys consisting of interviews of one person per household, informal group, or organization include: (1) the failure to confirm reported conversations, behaviors, and events and (2) the failure to collect the necessary detail for gaining deep understanding of the mechanics and reasons embedded in the processes examined.

Core variables in CSR include individual and group behaviors through time resulting in a sequence of paths of events (decisions, performance outcomes, and revelatory incidents). Beliefs and sentiments held by individuals and groups are additional core variables sometimes studied in CSR. No one CSR method is appropriate for all studies.
Chapter 2

Bridging the Chasm between Survey and Case Study Research

Synopsis

Chapter 2 describes how behavioral science research methods that management and marketing scholars apply in studying processes involving decisions and organizational outcomes relate to three principal research objectives: fulfilling generality of findings, achieving accuracy of process actions and outcomes, and capturing complexity of nuances and conditions. The chapter’s unique contribution is in advocating and describing the possibilities of researchers replacing Thorngate’s (1976) “postulate of commensurate complexity” — it is impossible for a theory of social behavior to be simultaneously general, accurate, and simple and as a result organizational theorists inevitably have to make tradeoffs in their theory development — with a new postulate of disproportionate achievement. This new postulate proposes the possibilities and advocates the building and testing of useful process models that achieve all three principal research objectives. Rather than assuming the stance that a researcher must make tradeoffs that permit achieving any two, but not all three, principal research objectives as, Weick (1979) clock analogy shows, this chapter advocates embracing a property space (a three-dimensional box rather than a clock) view of research objectives and research methods. Tradeoffs need not be made; having-your-cake-and-eating-it-too is possible. The chapter includes a brief review of principal criticisms that case study researchers often express of surveys of respondents using fixed-point surveys. Likewise, the chapter reviews principal criticisms of case study research studies that researchers who favor the use of fixed-point surveys express.

Introduction

This chapter provides a new view of planning process research to achieve three principal objectives (generality, accuracy, and complexity/coverage) rather than adopting the view that the researcher must make tradeoffs as to which two of the
three objectives to accomplish. The chapter proposes replacing Thorngate’s (1976) “postulate of commensurate complexity” with a postulate of disproportionate achievement as the guiding principle in planning research designs relating to case study research.

After this brief introduction, section two reviews the principal criticisms by case study researchers of fixed-point surveys. Section three reviews the principal criticisms of empirical positivists of case study research. Section four describes how to go about building bridges across the chasm in thinking and research methods to accomplish all three objectives — all relevant for both empirical positivism and interpretive research. Section five offers specific recommendations for planning research designs to achieve generality, accuracy, and complexity/coverage. Finally, section six offers conclusions and limitations.

Case Study Researchers’ Principal Criticisms of Fixed-Point Surveys

Case study researchers inherently find poor meals in fixed-point survey research reports for four principal reasons. The first follows from this observation: such surveys require informants to retrieve information explicitly (often stored in stories and interpretations of events in long-term memories; see Schank, 1990) and transform this information to responses using scales that usually range for low (1) to high (7) or from strongly disagree (−3) to strongly agree (+3). Given the substantial evidence that most thinking is done implicitly (unconsciously) and informants have very limited abilities to retrieve implicit thoughts explicitly (Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002; Zaltman, 2003) and explicit thoughts are highly biased in favor of the nurturing the informants’ self-egos (Argyris, 1982; Coopey, Keegan, & Emler, 1997; Laughlin, 1970), fixed-point self-report surveys on causes and processes lead to data that provide inaccurate and meager information relating to the process under study. The lack of meaningful policy implications from findings of five-point or seven-point scale metrics relates to this point; the variable-level implications from such studies lack specificity to real-life policy contexts.

Second, data from fixed-point surveys are often the core inputs to performing structural equation models that predict models of dependent constructs (themselves measured in fixed-point survey questions) that often include variables such as trust, perceived quality, intention-to-buy, and satisfaction — with external validity tests of the connection of such constructs to actual behavior absent from such studies. Real-life participants engaging in thinking processes do not think implicitly or explicitly using fixed-point responses even when they report doing so (Woodside & Wilson, 2000); process participants think both implicitly and explicitly using simple-to-complex recognition and evaluation heuristics (Gladwell, 2005; Gigerenzer, 2001, 2007; Hogarth, 1987, 2001) that usually include a few different combinations of causal conditions that lead to a given outcome event (e.g., purchase) or alternative outcome (e.g., not purchase). The use of fixed-point measures fails to capture the real-life outcomes of interest in behavioral science research.
Third, correlation analysis, multiple regression, and structural equation modeling (SEM) assume symmetrical relationships between an independent variable (either a direct or an interaction expression) with a dependent variable — high values on the independent measure relates to high values of the dependent measure and low values on the independent relates to low values on the dependent measure. In real life, relationships tend to be asymmetrical rather than symmetrical — the presence of a specific combination of causal conditions results in sufficiency (but not necessity) of a specific outcome with the causal conditional statement making no prediction about the absence of the specific causal combination. Thus, low scores for a causal combination of antecedent conditions usually relate to both low and high scores on the outcome condition under study. For example, in asymmetrical associations a study may predict and find that the presence of combination of three specific levels for different antecedents in a causal recipe results in a high score for the outcome condition but the same specific outcome both occurs and does not occur across cases with the absence of the antecedent causal recipe. To illustrate this point, this chapter includes a specific example of such findings in a business-to-business purchasing study.

The nature of asymmetrical associations indicates that more than one route operates that lead to a given outcome condition (e.g., purchase of a new product design). Consequently, theory and empirical testing need to include consideration of the alternative routes to a given outcome condition — one multiple regression model (i.e., algebraic statement is insufficient in describing or understanding the multiple causal recipes resulting in a given outcome).

Rather than reporting one to three multiple regression models or structural equation models that are typically available in fixed-point survey-based research reports, researchers need to consider and describe the alternative paths that are particularly relevant for subsets of informants using methods that do not assume symmetrical relationships.

Fourth, statistical tests of relationships build on linear additive models that aim to measure the unique contribution of each independent variable to explaining the variation in a dependent variable. Such models focus on providing an analysis of net effects and are ill-equipped for measuring alternative complex causal recipes resulting in the same outcome condition (e.g., purchase). Classical empirical positivistic studies have severe limits in reporting and interpreting interaction effects among three or more variables; such interpretations focus on estimating indirect effects on a dependent variable above the direct effects of each independent variable rather than on interpreting the relevancy of different forms of the interaction takes on that affect the dependent variable. Conditional fuzzy set statements of alternative causal recipes (that this chapter describes later) accurately express the various routes to a given outcome while combinations of main and interaction effects in one algebraic expression do not.

Case study researchers bemoan the lack of accuracy in representation and prediction of the principal findings of researchers using classical empirical positivistic tools. Ragin (1997) provides additional details of case research criticisms of classical statistical hypotheses testing of associations.
Criticisms of Case Study Research by Empirical Positivists

Researchers applying classical empirical positivistic methods (e.g., correlation, analysis of variance, regression analysis, and SEM using fixed-point survey data) inherently find poor meals in case study research reports for four principal reasons. First, many case study research reports include no explicit steps to create and test theory. Empirical positivists express the view that using “direct research” (i.e., proposing explicitly to enter the field to collect data with no prior theory and that theory follows data collection, Mintzberg, 1979) when entering the field (specific process contexts) to observe and explain what is occurring and to build theory inductively is unsound and impossible — the researcher carries personal cultural value configurations implicitly into the field that affect her interpretations and judgments and statements of conducting direct research without prior explicit theory are inherently naïve. The first reason stresses the failures to test associations formally and failure to state theory a priori and to generalize to theory and other contexts as telling weaknesses of case study research.

Second, the “thick descriptions” (Ryle, 1949; Geertz, 1973a) of processes in specific context that increase the accuracy of findings in case study research reports also reflect chaotic complexity to researchers using classical empirical positivistic methods. Such thick descriptions also detract from the necessity to generalize beyond the immediate case to support the validity of the propositions that the case study researcher concludes from her observations.

Third, researchers criticizing case study methods view the variability in multiple-person interpretations of verbal data in thick descriptions as a telling weakness. The use of “member checks” (i.e., asking other case study researchers to read the original case data and interpretations by the original researchers, see Hirschman, 1986) does not sway the view of failure to achieve objectivity in interpretations of textural data on opinions, beliefs, and interpretations and such soft data are integral to thick descriptions.

Fourth, the practical relevance of a case study report to other contexts, normative implications, or prescriptive implications is questionable both on grounds of the absence of deductive theory and the collection of data to one or a very few contexts — case study research provides inadequate replications to support either generalization or practical relevance to aiding decision-making in other contexts. This argument includes the view that the process in the case study report is not necessarily relevant to any other contexts.

In summary, Figure 1 reflects the primary strength and weakness of classical empirical positivistic and case study research methods in terms of Thorngate’s (1976) first two objectives for advancing behavioral science: achieve generalization and accuracy. The visual message of Figure 1 is that the strength of classical empirical positivistic research and variable-based theory development (via fixed-point surveys typically using 1–5 or 1–7 scaled items) is its ability to generalize via quantitative modeling; however, Figure 1 depicts variable-based theory using classical empirical positivism as failing to provide accurate, relevant views of real-life processes. Figure 1 shows the opposite image for case study research methods and case-based methods.
theory development — highly accurate portrayals of real-word processes and little to no generalization across other contexts.

Two additional sets of research methods appear in Figure 1. Anecdotes and subjective personal introspections (SPI) (e.g., Sloan, 1964) appear as offering low generalization and low accuracy. Fuzzy set social science (Ragin, 2000; Rihoux & Ragin, 2009) and historical research (Golder, 2000; Golder & Tellis, 1993) methods appear in Figure 1 as offering high generalization and high accuracy. The review that follows includes all four of these methods.

**Building Bridges across the Chasm**

Members of both research camps appear to be guilty of the “law of the instrument” — one uses the tool one has even if in context the tool’s use is highly inappropriate. Dropping one’s tools is a proxy for unlearning, for adaptation, for flexibility, in short, for many of the dramas that engage organizational scholars. It is the very unwillingness of people to drop their tools that turns some of these dramas into tragedies. These dramas, however, are not confined simply to the people in organizations that scholars study. The scholars themselves are equally at risk. Kaplan’s (1964, p. 28) “law of the instrument” portrays part of the risk: “Give a small boy a hammer, and he will find that everything he encounters needs pounding. It comes as no particular surprise to discover that a scientist formulates
problems in a way which requires for their solution just those techniques in which he
himself is especially skilled’’ (Weick, 1996). Learning to drop one’s tools and pick-up
tools more useful to the task-at-hand is difficult for several reasons that Weick (1996)
describes. Reasons include evidence supporting the assertions that experience
breeds comfort and same-group interactions support the status quo over change.
For example, “Campbell (1979) has shown how the learning theory developed in the
tight research group surrounding Kenneth Spence was less powerful than the
learning theory developed within the much looser group surrounding Edward
Tolman. These differences are explained in part by the relative ease people in
Tolman’s group had evaluating and changing ideas without regard for the effect of
these changes on their reputations and the relative difficulty people in Spence’s group
had when they tried to do the same thing” (Weick, 1996, p. 309).

Weick’s (1979, p. 261) battle cry is relevant for overcoming one camp thinking
in theory creation and research methods, “Complicate yourself! Consider different
causes, other solutions, new situations, more complex alternatives, and take pleasure
in the process of doing so.” Several research methodologists provide advances
in theory and method that respond usefully to Weick’s battle cry and provide
useful tools for achieving three primary objectives relevant to Thorngate’s (1976)
“postulate of commensurate complexity.” The postulate states that it is impossible
for a theory of social behavior to be simultaneously general, accurate, and simple and
as a result organizational theorists inevitably have to make tradeoffs in their theory
development. For example, the more general a simple theory is, the less accurate it
will be in predicting specific details. Karl Weick (1969) uses a clock face metaphor to
illustrate this postulate, with the word general inscribed at twelve o’clock, accurate at
four o’clock and simple at eight o’clock (Figure 2A). Weick uses this metaphor
to illustrate the inevitable dilemmas that are present in social scientific research:
one can only obtain the benefits of any two of the virtues of simplicity, generality and
accuracy, by sacrificing the third one” (Moss, 2002). Weick argues that theories
and research are classifiable as being either: “two o’clock research,” which is general
and accurate but difficult; “six o’clock research,” which is accurate and simple,
but weak on generality, or; “ten o’clock research,” which is general and simple, but
not accurate.

Figure 2B visualizes dropping the metaphorical tool of Weick’s clock and
Thorngate’s postulate of commensurate complexity and picking up a “property
space” (Lazarsfeld, 1937) view that all theoretical objectives are achievable for
behavioral scientists. These objectives include generality, accuracy, and complexity
(coverage). Property space analysis depicts a truth table view of all possibilities
involving possibility combinations of conditions or factors; with three objectives,
eight possible combinations are possible at least theoretically.

Figure 2B includes nine possibilities with the ninth indicating “triangulation” —
that is, the use of three sources/methods in classical case study research to confirm
observations (cf. Denzin, 1978). Note that in the three-dimensional box that the
objective of coverage (i.e., detail or complexity) replaces the objective of simple in
Weick’s clock. While the objectives of building a theory that is understandable and
useful support the call for simple models, advances in new research tools support the
A proposal that building useful and understandable behavior process theory that includes coverage/complexity (e.g., delays in influence, feedback loops, tacit, and deliberate knowledge) is achievable and has been occurring since the 1990s. The intention is that the three-dimensional box includes a postulate of disproportionate achievement: building and testing useful process models that are general, accurate, and complex is possible.

A brief discussion follows for each of the nine locations in the three-dimensional box with references to literature for each for further examination. The discussion on fuzzy set social science (corner 4 in the box) lingers a bit because this set of tools is new in organizational process research.

**An Anecdote and Subjective Personal Introspections**

An anecdote is a short story that tells an interesting tale often to support an argument. Senator John McCain talked about the hardship a tax increase would place on “Joe the Plumber” in a 2008 U.S. Presidential debate with his opponent, Senator Barack Obama. Because an anecdote is not necessarily typical of others or even the protagonist in the story (e.g., the Joe in the “Joe the Plumber” story was not working as a licensed plumber), anecdotal research is low in generality, accuracy, and coverage.
SPI (see Gould, 1991, 1995; Holbrook, 1986, 1995, 2005b) includes a family of research methods that rely extensively or even exclusively on the researchers’ life experiences as data (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). Woodside (2004a, 2006) describes how SPI reports are representations of folk explanation theory of behavior explanations (Malle, 1999, 2004) but that such explanations usually fail to include implicit (unconscious) thinking of the informant–researcher and usually fail to include sufficient coverage (i.e., complexity) to accurately explain real-life processes; Woodside (2004a, 2004b, 2006) recommends and describes examples of using mixed-methods strategies to complement and enrich SPI reports with confirmatory personal introspections (CPIs).

**Thick Descriptions, Role-Playing, and Forced Metaphor Elicitation Techniques (FMET)**

These methods provide highly accurate descriptions but usually are low in generality and low in the amount of actual coverage/complexity of process behavior. Case study reports using the long interview method (McCracken, 1988) focus primarily on individual retrospective descriptions by a few informants of process experiences.

McCracken (1988) recommends completing five long interviews with informants for each theoretical sample of interest. A theoretical sample includes selecting representative cases (e.g., informants) for specific, or for all, cells in a property space.

Role-playing (also known as, “forecasting using structured analogies,” see Green & Armstrong, 2007a, 2007b) provide high accuracy in process information but low generality and low coverage. Role playing includes informants each adopting specific roles found in real-life cases and interacting with each other with their individual views of how each would contribute in the (inter)organizational process.

Role-playing studies are useful in accurately predicting process outcomes. Advances are occurring in the 21st century in moving role-playing toward modest contributions in generality and coverage (e.g., Green & Tashman, 2008). Forced metaphor elicitation techniques (FMET) include the attempt to capture both tacit and deliberate knowledge from informants about colleagues and themselves in enacting (inter)organizational processes (Woodside, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c). To gain tacit knowledge, von Wallpach and Woodside (2009) report asking informants at three different organizational levels in a manufacturing firm to identify themselves and others as particular animals using photographs and to describe behaviors each person enacts as representative of their specific animals. Their study indicates that such tacit zoomorphistic data complements, deepens, and sometimes conflicts with explicitly thought descriptions of organizational processes.

**Fixed-Point Surveys**

The survey method with five- or seven-point scale items (e.g., strongly disagree to strongly agree) likely is the dominant logic in use in Ph.D. dissertations.
Applications of such scaled items via postal and/or Internet data collection usually have one respondent per firm; these applications typically have less than 25 percent usable responses of the mailings or Internet contacts; the data analyses that follow in these studies focus on performing structural equation modeling. Most structural equation models of (inter)organizational processes use such structured responses to test the models’ nomological and internal validities. Such SEM modeling reports offer evidence of being general by large sample sizes (e.g., $n > 300$), with the inherent inaccuracy problems of self-reports only data, low correspondence of fixed-point scales with actual processes and events, and shallow coverage inherent with data collected retrospectively from the stance of one period and usually one informant responding per organization.

**Fuzzy Set Social Science (FSSS), Historical Method, and Simulation Models of Thinking and Deciding**

Corner 4 in the three-dimensional display of the postulate of disproportionate achievement indicates high generality, high accuracy, and low complexity (or coverage). Three research methods are representative of the achievements and limitations of corner 4: FSSS, the historical method, and simulation models of thinking and deciding. This section briefly describes each of these methods. Each method includes in-depth case analysis of a few (e.g., 3 to 30) unique cases or a few to several (e.g., 3 to 100) thinking and deciding processes.

**FSSS**

FSSS bridges quantitative and qualitative approaches because the methods in this tool kit are simultaneously qualitative and quantitative (Ragin, 2008, p. 82). FSSS focuses on analyzing alternative combinations of antecedent conditions that represent causal complexity rather than the analysis of net effects; FSSS identifies causal recipes (specific combinations of causally relevant ingredients relating to an outcome) and thereby unravel causal complexity.

FSSS builds on set theory and fuzzy sets (Zadeh, 1965) analysis using Boolean algebra rather than linear algebra. Examining all logically possible combinations of causal conditions makes it possible to construct experiment design-like contrasts (where only one causal condition at a time is allowed to vary) and thus offers a thorough analysis of the effects of relevant causal conditions. In effect, the impact of each cause is examined in all logically possible contexts (the $2^k$ configurations of conditions, $k =$ number of causal conditions) (Ragin, 2008, p. 125).

The following discussion is a brief introductory example of FSSS. A fuzzy set scale allows for fine gradations of the degree of membership in a causal conditional recipe. A fuzzy set is viewable as a purposively calibrated scale transformation of a continuous variable. Such calibration is possible only through the use of theoretical
and substantive knowledge that is essential in the specification of the three qualitative breakpoints (full membership = 1.0; full non-membership = 0.0; and maximum ambiguity — the crossover point = 0.5) (Ragin, 2008, p. 30).

Figure 3 illustrates the creation of three fuzzy set purposively calibrated scales from case data in a business-to-business process study of marketing and purchasing industrial chemicals (Woodside & Wilson, 2000). Less than one percent of all customers for the large manufacturer of industrial chemicals were fully in the membership of customers with large purchase requirements. Customers with purchase requirements for the category of chemicals in this study are classifiable more out than in the large customer requirements membership. The manufacturer classifies customers willing to single source 90 percent plus of their purchase requirements for the category as fully in the membership of customer willing to single source.

Customers buying 50 percent of their requirements from this manufacturer are classifiable as more out than in membership of willing to single source. Customers aggressively demanding price reductions plus additional benefits (e.g., the manufacturer building storage facilities for the category on the customers’ site at no charge) are classifiable as fully in the membership of customer aggressive with respect to price setting. Customers demanding “cost avoidance” objectives (i.e., price increases less than published inflation rates for the category) are classifiable at the crossover point. Customers expressing willingness to pay “market prices” for the category are classifiable as more out than in membership for customer aggressiveness with respect to price.

Three common operations on fuzzy sets are set negation, set intersection, and set union (logical or). Logical and: compound sets are formed by the combination of two or more sets, an operation commonly known as set intersection. With fuzzy sets, taking the minimal membership score of each case in the sets that are combined accomplished a logical and set intersection. Table 1 includes the fuzzy set scores and the set intersection of their three-way combination (causal recipe) for eleven customers in the study of marketing and buying of industrial chemicals. The midlevel dots are used to indicate set intersection (combination of aspects) for the three causal conditions (A / B / C). Note the intersection scores are equal to the lowest score from the three prior columns in Table 1. The intersection value indicates the degree each case is more in or out of the intersection membership. Negation: a fuzzy set can be negated to indicate the degree that the case is not a member of the set. To calculate the membership of a case in the negation of fuzzy set A, simply subtract its membership in set A from 1.0 as follows:

\[(\text{Membership in set } \sim A) = 1.0 - (\text{Membership in set } A)\] or \[\sim A = 1.0 - A\], where “\(~\)” indicates negation. Thus, for customer case number 1, its membership in (Not a member of the large customer group) has a negative score of 0.1. Note that negation membership, “Not a Large Customer,” is asymmetric to membership in the target concept of small customer membership, that is, a customer can be more in the out than in the large customer membership (Not a member of large customers) and still not be full member of the small customer membership. This point holds for the other two causal conditions (B and C) in Table 1. Dual coding of key causal conditions has important theoretical benefits.
<table>
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<th>(B)</th>
<th>(C)</th>
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<td></td>
<td>+ 3.0</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>90%+</td>
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<td>0.7</td>
<td>80%</td>
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<td>Cross-over point</td>
<td>+ 1.0</td>
<td>0.5</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Full nonmembership</td>
<td>&lt; 0.0</td>
<td>0.0</td>
<td>&lt; 50%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 3: Fuzzy set scaling examples. (A) Customer has large annual purchase requirements. (B) Customer willingness to single source requirements. (C) Customer objective (aggressiveness) with respect to price. Key: SOBX, share of business awarded to firm X (our firm); Code, buyer statement indicating aggressive stance in price negotiation with firm X (our firm); “Cost reduction +” indicates buyer wants lower price for next year in real terms and extras (e.g., free construction); “Cost avoidance” indicates buyer wants price increase to be less than rate of inflation.
Logical or: two or more sets also can be joined through the logical or: the union of sets. The logical or directs the researcher’s attention to the maximum of each case’s memberships in the component sets. A case’s membership in the set formed from the union of two or more fuzzy sets is the maximum value of its memberships in the component sets. The addition sign is used to indicate logical or, for example the logical or membership for case number 1 for the combination of the three causal conditions in Table 1 equals \( A + B + C = 0.9 \).

With fuzzy sets, membership scores in one set (a causal condition or a combination of causal conditions) that are less than or equal to their corresponding membership scores in another set (e.g., the outcome) indicates a subset relationship. Observe in Table 1 that the causal recipe membership score for \( A \cdot B \cdot C \) are consistently less than or equal to their corresponding membership scores in customer share of business awarded to firm X (the chemical manufacturer marketing the category) in the study — with the exception of customer case number 11.

**Figure 4** shows the plot of the causal recipe of the intersection representing the conjunction of the causal conditions \( A \cdot B \cdot C \) and the outcome membership of customer share of business awarded to firm X. The pattern of results is consistent with an argument of sufficient causation — an upper-left triangular plot, with the degree of membership in the causal combination of the horizontal axis and the degree of membership in the outcome on the vertical axis, signals the fuzzy set relation. The plot in **Figure 4** shows sufficiency but not necessity for the conjunction of \( A \cdot B \cdot C \) on the outcome membership. Other paths to high membership scores on the outcome condition exist but this observation does not take away from the finding of sufficiency in high membership scores in the causal recipe resulting in high membership scores in the outcome condition — the argument of sufficiency but not necessity permits multiple paths to high scores for the outcome condition.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer case number</th>
<th>A. Large customer</th>
<th>B. Willingness single source</th>
<th>C. Price objective</th>
<th>A \cdot B \cdot C</th>
<th>Y. Customer SOB\textsubscript{X} annual agreement</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.7</td>
<td>.8</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.9</td>
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<td>.2</td>
<td>.8</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.9</td>
<td>1.0</td>
<td>.6</td>
<td>.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Table 1:** Fuzzy set scores for customer SOB awarded to X.
Measures of Associations

Consistency, like significance, signals whether or not an empirical connection merits the close attention of the investigator. If findings from the membership analysis are inconsistent with the hypothesized relation, then the hypothesis or conjecture is not supported (Ragin, 2008, p. 45). Coverage, like strength, indicates the empirical relevance or importance of a set-theoretic connection. Coverage estimates assess the proportion of cases following a path to high outcome scores; coverage is a straightforward indicator of the empirical importance of a causal combination (Ragin, 2008, p. 55).

The formulas and specific estimates for consistency and coverage for the causal combination (conjunction $A \cdot B \cdot C$) appear at the bottom of Figure 4. The evaluation

\[
\text{Consistency}(Y_i \leq X) = \frac{\sum [\min(X_i, Y_i)]}{\sum X_i} = 27/27 = 1.00 \text{ without customer case number 11}
\]
\[
= 29/33 = .88 \text{ with customer case number 11}
\]

\[
\text{Coverage}(X_i \leq Y) = \frac{\sum [\min(X_i, Y)]}{\sum Y_i} = 27/62 = .44 \text{ without customer case number 11}
\]
\[
= 29/64 = .45 \text{ with customer case number 11}
\]

Figure 4: Plot of $Y$ (new SOB$X$ award) by causal condition $A \cdot B \cdot C$ ($n =$ customer case number).

Note:

- Consistency ($Y_i \leq X_i$) = $\sum [\min(X_i, Y_i)]/\sum X_i$
  - $= 27/27 = 1.00$ without customer case number 11
  - $= 29/33 = .88$ with customer case number 11
- Coverage ($X_i \leq Y$) = $\sum [\min(X_i, Y)]/\sum Y_i$
  - $= 27/62 = .44$ without customer case number 11
  - $= 29/64 = .45$ with customer case number 11
of the set relationships between the causal recipe and the outcome condition indicates high consistency and moderate amount of coverage.

The uniqueness of case number 11 in the findings in Table 1 and Figure 4 merits further attention and its discussion permits extending Gibbert’s (2006) observations about “generalizing about uniqueness.” Further discussion about customer 11 with the manufacturer marketing the category resulted in confirmation of this customer’s unique relationship with this marketer. The manufacturer sales manager reported monthly complaints by this customer and continuing attempts to renegotiate prices during the annual contract. While this sales manager did not use the expression, customer 11 reflects the industrial customer equivalent to Van Maanen (1978) “The Asshole,” in his study of a distinct but familiar type of person to the police. Thus, unique findings indicate a paradox worthy of further investigation. “Generalizability demands the research findings are not idiosyncratic to the firm or the sample of firms studied” (Gibbert, 2006, p. 124). Thus, the researcher should look for the presence of further assholes or other seemingly unique cases before concluding that adding condition D is relevant for model building and testing.

Creating a fourth causal condition, \( \sim D = \text{“Not an Asshole”} \) would place all customers in Table 1 above the crossover point (0.5) except for customer 11. Customer 11’s low score on this causal condition (\( \sim D = 0.00 \) for customer 11) would shift his \( A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot \sim D \) conjunction score to the left and result in high consistency for this more complex causal recipe.

Note that Table 1 and Figure 4 examine only one causal condition’s relation to the outcome condition. Additional causal conditions warrant examination and these include \( A, B, C, A \cdot B, A \cdot C, B \cdot C, \sim A \cdot \sim B \cdot \sim C \), as well as \( \sim A \cdot B \cdot C \), and others. Ragin, Drass, and Davey (2007) provide a software program to ease the calculations involved in creating complex conditions and estimating their consistency and coverage (www.fsqca.com).

### Historical Method

The historical method fits well in the corner 4 in the box that includes displaying the possibility of achieving disproportionate achievement; corner 4 indicates high generality, high accuracy, and low coverage. The historical method includes theory and analysis relating to archival data and dynamic influences on outcomes. Smith and Lux (1993, p. 595) provide a useful exposition of historical analysis even though their view is too restrictive, “Historical research provides a qualitative interpretive method uniquely formulated to explain the causes of change through time.” Golder (2000, p. 157) offers a broader definition than Smith and Lux’s view: historical analysis is “the process of collecting, verifying, interpreting, and presenting evidence from the past.” Golder (2000) is must reading because the exposition provides a solid foundation of where the field went and is going — a thorough historical analysis of historical analysis would indicate that the field offers well-formed models and tests of these models from the perspective of variable-based research (versus FSSS’s reliance...
Tellis (1988) and colleagues (e.g., Tellis & Franses, 2006; Tellis & Golder, 1996; Tellis & Wernerfelt, 1987; Tellis, Niraj, & Yin, 2009) are leading contributors to the literature advancing theory and research using historical analysis.

A prime strength of historical analysis is its use of independent and dependent variables very useful and appealing for theorists, executives, and both marketing and financial analysts. Market share and market share leadership and switches are sometimes dependent variables in historical analysis. Independent variables often include transforming qualitative information into ordinal scales useful for model testing (e.g., see the product quality scale in Appendix A, Tellis et al., 2009).

Historical analysis is often limited in the range of questions it can address; thus, the placement in corner 4 rather than 8 in the three-dimensional box. However, historical analysis is useful in addressing profoundly important questions and providing useful answers to these questions. Clayton Christensen’s dissertation report (Christensen & Bower, 1996) on the impact of disruptive technologies of firms’ successes and failures and subsequent book, *The Innovator’s Dilemma* (Christensen, 1997), exemplifies the use of historical analysis and the immense impact on theory and practice that the method can provide.

**Simulations of Thinking and Deciding**

Also appropriate for placing in corner 4 of the three-dimensional box are simulations of thinking and deciding. Such simulations are in the form of alternative paths in binary flow diagrams (e.g., Morgenroth, 1964; Howard & Morgenroth, 1968) and ethnographic decision tree models (Gladwin, 1989). These models provide rigorous development of generalizable theory using accurate details of process data on very focused issues. Such models are generalizable to multiple cases (individuals) facing a given dilemma, for example, a given firm processing information deciding on a response to a major competitor’s price change (Howard & Morgenroth, 1968) for several periods — with each price change and response serving as a case study.

**Reports on Multiple Anecdotes in Different Contexts**

These studies are low in generalization and accuracy but provide extensive coverage. Possibly, placing Studs Terkel’s (1974) *Working*, and W.T. Tucker’s (1967) *Foundations for a Theory of Consumer Behavior* in corner 5 of the three-dimensional box is a bit unfair because both reports include thick descriptions of how individuals interact with others and go about completing activities. These reports build usually from one interview in one setting per informant. Both reports do include general statements (propositions) for explaining individual behavior. However, such reports do not provide rigorous analysis of variable or case-based data or well-formed falsifiable propositions. Consequently, formal analysis of the descriptions and
explaining the case data in these reports is absent. Such reports are useful in nurturing insight and nuanced thinking about the complexity of behavior and implicit and explicit motives antecedent to action.

**Multiple Case Studies in Similar Contexts**

These studies offer highly accurate reports with substantial complexity/coverage of organizational and individual processes. Nutt’s (1984) report on 78 case studies on types of decision-making exemplifies corner 6 in the three-dimensional box. Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret (1976) report on the “structure of unstructured decisions” fits into corner 6 as well. Both studies provide useful though modest amounts of description of processes and indicate that search and evaluation processes occur in several different periods in decision processes and even after decisions are made. The propositions these studies develop are insightful but stop short in proposing testable hypotheses either using variable or FSSS methods.

**Naïve Observation**

Naïve observation may offer a great amount of coverage as to what steps occur in a process as well as sophisticated generalizations that are sometimes highly inaccurate. An untrained and inexperienced American attempting to explain a Japanese tea ceremony is illustrative of corner 7 in Woodside’s box. Famously, Freeman (1983) attacked Margaret Mead’s (1928) work for presenting a naïve observational report on sexual adolescent behavior in Samoa. Unfortunately, Mead was unable to respond as she had died before Freeman’s attack. Characteristics of naïve observation include “participant observation” with the researcher living and acting in the social and work lives of informants for several weeks, months, or a year or more. *Street Corner Society* (Whyte, 1943/1993) exemplifies such research in the environment of an Italian–American “street gang” (more like an informal club of single men than a gang). Whyte was a participant observer for 3.5 years in this study. In an industrial marketing setting, Woodside and Samuel’s (1981) study of corporate buying agreements is the result of Woodside living and working inside a corporate purchasing office for six weeks with Samuel providing an informant’s interpretation—inside “member check”—of the researcher’s (Woodside’s) interpretations of what was happening and the meaning of actions of individuals and groups. The presence of, and reliance on, informant member checking is another characteristic of naïve observation (e.g., Whyte relied on “Doc” (the de facto leader of the group) to help him interpret events and the meanings of interactions among street gang members with each other and other persons in the local society).
Multiple-Case System-Dynamics Modeling

Research methods representative of corner 8 in the three-dimensional box are very ambitious. Multiple-case system-dynamics models are representative of such ambitious methods. Such models include tacit and deliberate knowledge of individuals and subgroups in organizations and simulations of prior actions to predict future actions. Such models include attempts to include feedback loops (restarts of problem definitions and search for solutions, “hidden demons” of seemingly minor conditions that have substantial influence on outcomes in causal recipes with other conditions, and what-if analyses).

Figure 5 is a template showing many of the participants in a firm and feedback loops in the decisions and actions among participants at different stages in attempting to adopt superior new technologies with some firm members attempting to thwart the adoption. While this template represents a summary of propositions by Woodside and Biemans (2005), many of the participants, decisions, outcomes, and feedback loops that Figure 5 shows are apparent in system-dynamic models of firms attempting to change direction (e.g., Huff, Huff, & Barr, 2001).

Huff et al. (2001), Maani and Majaraj (2004), and Repenning (2001) exemplify formal model building and testing of firms attempting to change direction (i.e., adopting superior new technologies). Their treatise includes the same propositions as (and more complexity/coverage than) Christensen (1997) and Christensen and Bower (1996) but formally models the impact of forces of inertia versus the forces of change in the firm. Such modeling successfully maps thinking, decisions, actions, and outcomes through several months and years to provide compelling insights into why some firms are successful in adopting superior new technologies while other firms fail to do so. Huff et al. (2001) is a remarkable treatise that illustrates how path dependencies lead to specific outcomes rather than independent assessments via checklists of “key success factors” or “key failure factors.” No one factor (i.e., antecedent condition) is necessary or sufficient to result in adaptation or continuing stability (and rejection of superior new technologies and strategic actions) by a firm, rather, different streams of thinking–decisions–actions (i.e., complex causal recipes) are sufficient for one outcome or the other (change versus stability). The empirical demonstration of this key insight using system-dynamics modeling for different firms in one industry (the pharmaceutical industry) is Huff et al.’s remarkable achievement.

Triangulation: Mixed-Methods and Decision Systems Analysis

The use of mixed or multiple methods in case study research usually contributes to increasing accuracy and complexity/coverage in a study more so than generality. A mixed-method approach is likely to provide confirmation and disconfirmation of some beliefs and feelings of participants collected during interviews by examining data collected using alternative methods within the same context (e.g., a given firm and among stakeholders of the firm) during the same days, weeks, and/or months of
Figure 5: A dynamic theory of innovation, manufacturing, diffusion, adoption/rejection (IMDAR) of superior products/services built on using new technologies. Adapted from Woodside and Biemans (2005, Figure 1, p. 382).
the study. Rich, deep, insights into what is happening and why it is happening follow from such mixed-methods research studies. Woodside and Samuel’s (1981) decision systems mapping (Capon & Hulbert, 1975; Howard, Hulbert, & Farley, 1975; Hulbert, 2003) of corporate purchasing processes is an application of a mixed-methods strategy.

Figure 6 illustrates the main components of this mixed-methods application. Note that Figure 6 includes the collection of seven categories of data. Categories 1–3 represent explicit and implicit information from each of three separate sources. Categories 4–6 represent explicit and implicit information from each two-way combination of sources.

Category 7 represents information from all three sources within the same context (i.e., a location in time with the same people present). The following vignette includes examples of case data collection using direct observation, interviews, and product demonstrations individually and in combination. During a marketing performance audit (Woodside, 1977), the researcher (R) traveled by car for seven hours with an informant (I1) to several customer sites.

During the sixth hour of the trip I1 informed R, “Bobby [sales manager] never rides with me. I never get any help from Bobby.” Three additional road trips separately with three additional salespersons provided similar stories. One of the four salespersons offered the following conclusion about his relationship with Bobby, “I hate Bobby — I really do.”

The department’s administrative assistant (I5) reported the following story during a second, two-hour, individual interview with R.

(I5) At lunch time if the secretary goes to lunch and I’m out to lunch, Bobby will immediately leave. Do you know why?
(R) No, I don’t. Please tell me.

(15) Because Bobby does not know where anything is. If a customer calls in [to ask about the status of an order or to buy something], Bobby does not know what to do.

One day during the study, R asked Bobby to demonstrate how to use the equipment that the salespersons were selling. Bobby responded, “OK. Jim, show Arch how to use this equipment.” Jim demonstrated operating the equipment as Bobby and R watched. Bobby was observed staying in his office each day over a three-week period. At the end of three weeks R asked Bobby about getting out and riding with each of the salespersons to go to customer sites and meet with customers. This question started the following exchange:

Bobby: “I’m not a sales manager, I’m a product manager.”

R: Don’t the four salespersons report to you? Bobby: Show me in a textbook where I’m supposed to ride with sales people. During this discussion, Bobby offered the following summary statement. “I don’t like the salesmen. Do you? I really don’t like marketing either. And I’m not going to ride with the salesmen.”

At the time of study, none of the four salespersons were meeting their monthly sales quotas. Two months following the audit, the department was closed and Bobby was placed in another department in the firm. (Bobby’s father was a member of the firm’s board of directors and a former governor of the state.) Field case studies employing a triangulation of methods is time consuming because such an approach usually includes re-interviewing the same and new informants during the course of data collection and attending key meetings and events that are scheduled for specific days well after the start of the study. Re-interviewing the same person on different days and often in different contexts/locations is valuable because of the opportunity to clarify information collected from the first interview and, equally important, because a second interview creates a sense of “us” between the informant and the interview. During one of his stand-up presentations, Chris Rock (American comedian and social commentator) expresses this proposition succinctly, “When you meet someone for the first time, you are not meeting that person, you are meeting his representative.”

Mixed-methods designs usually result in compelling evidence that (1) deliberate thinking strategies that informants describe in interviews differ substantially from tacit (implicit) thinking strategies and from actual (implemented) strategies observed and (2) emotions among participants usually run high for specific process steps that are occurring in the firm. For example, reports of disagreement and anger relating to specific personal relationships and events are relevant to the success and failure of adopting superior new technologies and other processes in organizational behavior; data collection via postal surveys rarely capture the nitty–gritty dramatic dynamics of the emotions of process participants. Being there — observing in field
Recommendations for Bridging the Chasm

Achieving accuracy is paramount. Generality and complexity are add-on objectives. To some meaningful extent, process researchers can plan their research designs to accomplish all three objectives to a meaningful degree. However, attempting to insure generality at the cost of accuracy and complexity will only insure the continuation of research reports of little importance and even less impact (see Armstrong, 2003 for a review of the lack of impact of articles and studies in general by marketing scholars). Achieving accuracy in describing, understanding, and predicting organizational and individual processes includes applying research designs located in the middle and top right of the three-dimensional box: locations 4, 8, and 9 and placing less reliance on research designs illustrated by locations 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7. Research designs focusing nearly exclusively on applying corner 3 methods (e.g., fixed-point surveys) can be useful for studying such issues as customer’s assessment of services delivered, satisfaction with the overall service–product experience, and intention to buy–use the service in the future. But such post hoc focused studies are not descriptions and explanations of on-going thinking, deciding, actions, and outcomes processes. For studies focusing on describing, explaining, and/or predicting management processes and process dynamics, fixed-point surveys coupled or uncoupled with structural equation modeling (SEM) or other regression-based statistical analysis, are insufficient and represent achieving generality without accuracy or complexity — even though box-and-arrow depictions of SEM output appear to be complex. Such survey-based SEM reports have fatal weaknesses — especially given the widespread use in data collection in SEM applications of one-shot surveys relying on explicit-only informant reports of 7-point scales that are several steps removed from real-life thinking and actions, and result in useable responses of less than 25% of the total surveys mailed.

This chapter closes with a brief discussion of Table 2. This figure summarizes some specific steps to take that are helpful to achieving each of three research objectives. Note that each box in the figure includes an exemplar source that further illustrates the step. Box 1 in Table 2 urges a researcher to plan to examine members in specific-to-all reference classes in a property space analysis (Lazarsfeld, 1937; Woodside, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) rather than planning to conduct a general sampling of possible informants. For example, a few customers may be extremely important to the current profitability of a firm and special attention is necessary in planning the study to find and collect data on these customers (e.g., Woodside & Wilson, 2000). Box 2 in Table 2 suggests achieving generality by collecting multiple applications of thinking and deciding processes for a reference class of decisions (one property space location). Morgenroth (1964) and Howard and Morgenroth (1968) are the useful sources illustrating the achievement of generality in model building for information
processing, thinking, and deciding price increases and decreases by one group of
decision-makers across multiple applications. These two articles include testing the
resulting thinking–deciding model created from one set of decision data for a hold-
out sample of decisions; a seminal contribution to process modeling that achieves
generality in one firm across many decisions in one reference class of actions.

Box 3 includes generalizing from data for a single case to theory using Campbell’s
(1975) recommendations for conducting degrees-of-freedom (DOF) analyses

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objective/ steps</th>
<th>Step 1</th>
<th>Step 2</th>
<th>Step 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generality</td>
<td>1. Apply property space analysis to uncover all process categories and use theoretical sampling of spaces; exemplar: Woodside (2008a, 2008b, 2008c)</td>
<td>2. Collect multiple instances of process data within each reference class (i.e., for each property space); exemplar: Howard and Morgenroth (1968) and Montgomery (1975)</td>
<td>3. Create degrees of freedom (DOF) tests to generalize single case data to theory; exemplar: Wilson and Woodside (1999); conduct FSSS and test conditional recipes; exemplar: Ragin (2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complexity</td>
<td>7. Adopt systems thinking, mapping strategic thought, and decision systems analysis; exemplars: Senge (1990), Huff (1990) and Howard et al. (1975)</td>
<td>8. Build and test simulation models of thinking and deciding; exemplars: Howard and Morgenroth (1968) and Gladwin (1989)</td>
<td>9. Build and test system dynamics models; exemplars: Hall (1976) and Huff et al. (2001)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
(see Wilson and Woodside (1999) for such an (DOF) analysis in case study research). Similar to a medical doctor looking to match a patient’s symptoms of an illness to one more possible diseases, DOF analysis is a pattern matching process whereby the examination attempts to match several (e.g., $n = 10$) characteristics occurring in a process in a case with the predictions regarding these same characteristics made by competing theories (bounded rational model versus political model versus garbage can model of thinking and deciding, see Wilson and Woodside for such a DOF analysis).

Box 4 recommends increasing accuracy by re-interviewing the same individual in multiple settings. Such multiple rounds of emic (informant-view) data help to clarify and deepen etic (researcher view) interpretations of what happened, why it happened, and learning the consequences of what happened. Woodside, Pattinson, and Miller (2005) provide thick descriptions of process data using this approach. Box 5 extends the method to include conducting multiple rounds of interviews with multiple participants in the process under study.

Whyte (1943) applies this procedure in his Street Corner Society as do Pattinson and Woodside (2007) in their “Innovation and Diffusion of Software Technology.” Box 6 recommends achieving accuracy by including a triangulation of methods in planning the design of process studies. Woodside and Samuel (1981) illustrate this approach in business-to-business case study research. Box 7 focuses on enriching studies by acquiring data showing the details and complexity in process data using such tools as mapping strategic thought (Huff, 1990) and decision systems analysis (Howard et al., 1975). Box 8 recommends achieving complexity by building and formally testing simulation models of thinking and deciding; Howard and Morgenroth (1968) illustrate the accomplishment of such modeling in case study research. Box 9 includes the most advanced steps involving description, understanding, and prediction of complex processes for a reference class of decisions (e.g., innovate or maintain use of current technology); Huff et al. (2001) provides details for taking this step successfully.

Limitations: the intention here is that the prior discussion and these recommendations are guideposts for (1) adopting the postulate for disproportionate achievement regarding the principal objectives in planning research designs (i.e., planning research designs to achieve all three principal objectives: generality, accuracy, and complexity/coverage) and (2) an eclectic stance toward learning and applying new research methods. The intention is not to present a full exposition of methodological theory or applications of specific data analysis methods. The discussion is limited in scope and by depth of coverage; hopefully, this brief discussion of the available references to alternative research methods serves empirical positivists and case study researchers to apply Weick’s (1979) wisdom to “complicate yourself” by learning additional methods and taking steps necessary for achieving all three principal research objectives.

**Conclusions**

This chapter advocates dropping belief in Thorngate’s (1976) postulate of “postulate of commensurate complexity” — it is impossible for a theory of social behavior to be
simultaneously general, accurate, and simple and as a result organizational theorists inevitably have to make tradeoffs in their theory development; and, picking a new research paradigm: the postulate of disproportionate achievement: the building and testing of useful process models that achieve all three principal research objectives is possible now because of breakthroughs in software research tools (e.g., system-dynamics software, see Sterman, 2000) and methods (e.g., FSSS, see Ragin, 2008). Applying the postulate of disproportionate achievement requires adding methods to the different tool boxes-in-use by both empirical positivists and interpretive researchers.

Both empirical positivists and interpretive researchers need to recognize the widespread tendency to fall into using Kaplan’s (1964, p. 28) “law of the instrument” — one uses the tool one has even if in context the tool’s use is highly inappropriate. Planning on using research designs that include taking modest-to-substantial steps toward achieving accuracy, generality, and complexity is now possible and appropriate.
Chapter 3

Storytelling Theory and Research

Synopsis

Case study research frequently includes collecting and interpreting stories individuals tell about their lives and events that they believe they know about. Chapter 3 discusses storytelling theory and describes case study research in consumer behavior of stories that consumers tell about buying and using products and services. Storytelling is pervasive through life. Much information is stored, indexed, and retrieved in the form of stories. Although lectures tend to put people to sleep, stories move them to action. People relate to each other in terms of stories — and products and brands often play both central and peripheral roles in their stories. To aid storytelling research in consumer psychology, this chapter develops a narrative theory that describes how consumers use brands as props or anthropomorphic actors in stories they report about themselves and others. Such drama enactments enable these storytellers to experience powerful myths that reflect psychological archetypes. The chapter includes findings from case study research that probes propositions of the theory. Implications for consumer psychology and marketing practice follow the discussion of the findings.

More often than not, in America at least, those who win in myth markets are performing a myth of rebelling; the most successful icons rely on an intimate and credible relationship with a rebel world: Nike with the African-American ghetto, Harley with outlaw bikers, Volkswagen with bohemian artists, Apple with cyberpunks, Mountain Dew with slackers — protagonists who would rather pursue quixotic activities than “grow up” and get serious about careers. (Holt, 2003)

Consumer Storytelling Theory

A myth is a traditional story about heroes or supernatural beings, often explaining the origins of natural phenomena or aspects of human behavior. The myth of
rebellion builds from the outlaw archetype reflecting the motto, “[parental, follow-the-leader, and societal] rules are meant to be broken” (cf., Mark & Pearson, 2001). The central proposition in this chapter is that consumers often use products and services as props or anthropomorphic identities to enact story productions that reflect archetypal myths (cf., Holt & Thompson, 2004; Wertime, 2002). Storytelling of such enactments includes conversations between consumers and brands on both unconscious and conscious levels of thinking (cf., Wang, Baker, Wagner, & Wakefield, 2007; Zaltman, 2003). The work of several other scholars in consumer behavior (e.g., Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Hirschman, 1986; Holt & Thompson, 2004; Padgett & Allen, 1997) and in related fields of human inquiry (Bruner, 1990a; Mitroff & Kilmann, 1976; Orr, 1990; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Zuikier, 1986) support the view that “… people think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically” (cf., Weick, 1995, p. 127; Wells, 1989). Stories and storytelling are central to achieving a deep understanding of consumer psychology (cf., Escalas & Stern, 2003; Holt, 2004). The following five propositions inform this conclusion. First, people naturally think narratively rather than argumentatively or paradigmatically (Hiltunen, 2002; McKee, 2003; Weick, 1995).

The movie director Steven Spielberg dramatically illustrates the point: Once upon a time it was a small gathering of people around a fire listening to the storyteller with his tales of magic and fantasy. And now it’s the whole world. In Japan and in Finland, in the heartland of America, in Italy and Spain, in Singapore and France … still they gather to hear the stories. But now they gather in multiplexes in Britain, Germany, Spain, Australia … or giant movie places in Mexico. That’s what has thrilled me most about Jurassic Park phenomenon. It’s not “domination” by American cinema. It’s just the magic of storytelling, and it unites the world. And that is truly gratifying. (1994, quoted in Hiltunen, 2002, p. xii)

A casual search of blogging (i.e., entries to personal online journals) expands on Spielberg’s view. Weblogs are individuals’ own stories of their lived experiences, beliefs, and attitudes that often include pictures (photoblogs) and video (vlogs). Weblogs are expanding exponentially in the first decade of the 21st century — from less than 1,000 in 2000 to 30 million plus in 2007 (Kluth, 2006). Blogging appears to be a revolutionary away of communicating whereby individuals provide commentary on their lives and the lives of others via such services as LiveJournal.com and MySpace.com — to name only two of many such services. As a counterpart to individual blogging Web sites, Wang et al. (2007) show that marketers attempt to create social roles for brands in commercial Web sites increase consumers’ interest, attention, and feeling of control (and indirectly their Web site purchase intentions compared to informative [lecture format] Web sites).

Second, a substantial amount of information stored in and retrieved from memory is episodic — stories that include inciting incidents, experiences, outcomes/evaluations,
and summaries/nuances of person-to-person and person-and-brand relationships within specific contexts (see Fournier, 1998; Schank, 1990).

Third, retrieving, reliving, or repeat watching stories results in what Aristotle (see Hiltunen, 2002) refers to as “proper pleasure” — a catharsis — that relates usefully to the work of Holt (2003) and Jung (1916/1959): Watching, retrieving, and telling stories enables the individual to experience one or more archetypal myths. An archetype is an unconscious primary form, an original pattern or prototype in the human mind; archetypes are not learned or acquired — they are with us from birth and are as natural and embedded in us as our own DNA (Jung, 1916/1959; Wertime, 2002).

Fourth, specific brands and products often play pivotal roles enabling consumers to achieve the proper pleasure that results in a consumer mentally and/or physically enacting a specific archetype — and reliving the experience by periodically retelling a given story. The brand-consumer storytelling and pleasure outcome builds on Bagozzi and Nataraajan’s idea (2000, p. 10) “that people need help in finding what makes them happy, and this is where marketing comes in.” Happiness via brands enabling consumers to enact archetypal stories is a micro complementary proposal to Nataraajan and Bagozzi’s (1999) more macro explication of the role of marketing in aiding consumers’ conscious quest for happiness.

Fifth, individuals seek clarity to make sense of prior conversations, events, and outcomes from others and themselves by telling stories. “How do I know what I think until I hear what I say?” (Weick, 1995) partly summarizes this proposition. Story repetition is often a plea for clarity that may be achievable in part by recognizing that the drama in the story is one illustration of one or more specific archetypes (e.g., story of rebellion, mother-of-goodness, little trickster, ultimate strength, the hero; see Wertime, 2002, for the storylines for these and other archetypes). The above set of propositions builds from the proposals of Holt (2003), Hiltunen (2002), Jung (1916/1959), Mark and Pearson (2001), and Wertime (2002). The propositions help to explicitly describe how brands enable archetype outcomes. The proposals here go deeper than Holt’s (2003, 2004) proposal that icons are encapsulated myths; the proposals in the present chapter describe how consumers’ stories involving actions with brands and products provide a proper pleasure (Aristotle’s Poetics, Butcher, 1961) that relates unconsciously to one or more archetypes (Jung, 1916/1959) and helps consumers achieve deep satisfying levels of sense making.

The observation that many consumers are motivated to report, via blogs and other forms of personal journals, on their lived experiences involving buying and using brands is one impetus for research on consumer storytelling. Such personal online journals are unlike traditional diaries in two respects: Blog entries are displayed in reverse chronological order and though traditional journals were private or even secret affairs that were never linked to other journals, blogs are social in nature, whether they are open to the public as a whole or only to a small select group (Kluth, 2006).

Now, a new blog is created every second of every day, according to Technororati, a search engine for blogs, and the “biosphere” is doubling in size every five months
A casual search of blogs via Technorati, Google, or Ask by brand names and adjectives (e.g., “Honda” or “Hawaii” and “good” or “bad”) brings forth dozens of blog entries of seemingly mundane reports of buying and experiencing a Honda or a visit to Hawaii.

Why would anyone care to share or read such stories? Three rationales help to explain this behavior. First, telling stories is inherently pleasurable to the authors; such storytelling allows authors to be both protagonist and audience and to vent anger or report bliss about events and outcomes over and over again, and to enjoy the nostalgia of reliving earlier experiences (see Schindler & Holbrook, 2003). Second, to some extent consciously, but mostly unconsciously, storytelling permits the teller to experience an archetype fulfillment; the plot line in the story told provides evidence that the storyteller-as-protagonist represents a regular guy/gal, lover, jester, creator, ruler, rebel, sage, hero, outlaw, magician, or some other archetypal primal form. Third, telling stories revises and deepens sense making of the meaning of events in the story and what the complete story implies about oneself and others.

Schank (1990, p. 219) proposes that people think mostly in terms of stories. “They understand the world in terms of stories that they have already understood. New events or problems are understood by reference to old previously understood stores and explained to others by the use of stories.” Woodside and Uncles (2005) empirically confirm the importance of behavioral primacy affecting not only what consumers are able to understand but also what they prefer and do in subsequent time periods.

The following stream of research provides a strong justification for storytelling theory building in consumer psychology as well as for creating and testing the impact of storytelling in marketing contexts (e.g., Adaval & Wyer, 1998). Consumers often include products and brands in reporting their own (emic) lived experiences (e.g., see Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Hirschman, 1986; Kozinets, 2002; Moore, 1985; Woodside & Chebat, 2001); consumers assign roles, actions, and relationships to brands (Fournier, 1998) in the stories they tell to themselves and to others; brands enable consumers to enact archetypal myths (e.g., drinking Mountain Dew enables the slacker myth; see Holt, 2003).

Classical drama provides a definition of a “good” (McKee, 2003), or memorable, story: A good story displays tension that includes one or more inciting incidents preceded by conditions or settings that initiate the unconscious/conscious identification of one or more goals, with actions by a protagonist and possibly additional actors resulting in an outcome; the temporary occurrences of world blocks (e.g., an antagonist temporarily preventing the protagonist from achieving the main goal) and/or personal blocks (e.g., the protagonist lacks the skill to perform an act necessary to reach the goal) serve to increase viewer and/or protagonist emotion and involvement in a story. Taking steps to overcome blocks such as seeking and gaining help from others occur frequently in stories.

This chapter expands on brands-as-icons storytelling research by developing a narrative theory of consumer storytelling involving iconic brands. The theory’s core proposition reflects the views of a leading screenwriting coach (McKee, 2003):
Consumers seek out or find themselves in unfamiliar and/or anxiety inducing contexts; consumers consciously and/or unconsciously act in scenes that take them through and out of these contexts; stories lead consumers to consciously and unconsciously reflect and make sense of the story, their actions in the story, and the outcomes of the story (cf., Weick, 1995).

Following this introduction, the next section of this chapter advances a theory of consumer storytelling. The third section develops ten propositions that follow from consumer storytelling theory. The fourth section presents a case study research method that probes these propositions. The fifth section presents the findings of the study. The final section includes a discussion relating the findings to the theory, limitations, strategy implications, and future research suggestions.

**Consumer Storytelling Research**

Consumer storytelling theory builds on several related streams of theory and research, including Holt and Thompson’s (2004) view that dramatic consumption experiences must be scripted, either by experiential service providers or within the institutional structure of a consumer subculture. Thus, the structure of a word-of-mouth (WOM) communication is an important indicator of whether the message is a story. A story’s structure includes two important elements: chronology and causality (Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004). Regarding chronology, narrative thinking organizes events in terms of a temporal dimension: Action occurs over time. This discussion of story matches with classical drama versus vignettes or lectures; see Stern (1994) and Escalas and Stern (2003) for details comparing these three forms of communications. Wells (1989) provides thorough descriptions of drama and lecture communications relevant for crafting advertising strategies.

Time figures in narrations as episodes (e.g., situations via scenes within acts in a drama); each episode has a beginning, middle, and end, whereas time in reality is an undifferentiated continuous flow (Bruner, 1990a, 1990b; Escalas, 1998). “Second, narrative thought structures elements [scenes, action, talk, and acts] into an organized framework that establishes relationships between the story’s elements [e.g., actors including persons, products, and brands; see Fournier, 1998] and allows for causal inferencing” (Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004, p. 187).

Escalas (1998) provides a narrative structure coding scale that reflects her assessment of the literature (also see Bruner, 1990a, 1990b; Gergen & Gergen, 1988) on what makes for a good, or well-crafted, story. Bruner (1990a, 1990b) proposes two dimensions that relate to crafting a good story: the landscape of action and the landscape of consciousness. The landscape of action consists of events that are visible (by sight or imagination) to the casual observer: initiating event, resulting actions, and outcomes. The landscape of consciousness allows the reader/viewer to get inside the head of the story’s characters (e.g., protagonist and antagonist). As Delgadillo and Escalas (2004, p. 187) emphasize, “According to Bruner, a story with both
a landscape of action and consciousness is a better story than one that contains only a landscape of action."

Gergen and Gergen (1988) offer the concept of evaluative slope in theorizing about storytelling: Events in a story are evaluated over time (as it occurs in the narrative) for the degree these events improve or worsen the state of the protagonist. Stories that have a steep incline or decline in evaluative slope and those that alternate in sign (e.g., rising, falling, then rising again) evoke the most emotion (see Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004).

Six propositions inform Escalas’ (1998) scale items (items appear in quotes) for measuring the degree of good storytelling. A 5-point scale applies for each item ranging from 1, not at all, to 5, very much. The story presents a protagonist engaging in actions to achieve goals; (1) “To what extent do these thoughts consist of actors engaged in actions to achieve goals?” The story informs about conscious and/or unconscious thoughts of the protagonist and other actors; (2) “To what extent do these thoughts let you know what the actors are thinking and feeling?” The story informs about how personal evolution or change in the life of the protagonist occurs; (3) “To what extent do these thoughts provide you with insight about the personal evolution or change in the life of a character?”

The story informs how events involving the protagonist, take place; (4) “To what extent do these thoughts explain why things happen, that is, what caused things to happen?” The story has an inciting event (a crisis or turning point) involving the protagonist, along with a beginning and a resolution; (5) “To what extent do these thoughts have a well delineated beginning (initial event), middle (crisis or turning point), and ending (conclusion)?” The story presents the protagonist in clear-cut situations; (6) “To what extent do these thoughts focus on specific, particular events rather than generalizations or abstractions?” Consumer storytelling theory builds from memory systems research as well (e.g., Bettman, 1979; Tulving, 1985). From reviews of the theoretical and empirical literature, Tulving (1985) provides a ternary classification scheme that consists of procedural, semantic, and episodic memory mono-hierarchical subsystems.

The system at the lowest level of the hierarchy, procedural memory, contains semantic memory as its single specialized subsystem, and semantic memory, in turn, contains episodic memory as its single specialized subsystem. In this scheme, each higher system depends on, and is supported by, the lower system or systems, but it possesses unique capabilities not possessed by the lower systems … Episodic memory affords the additional capability of acquisition and retention of knowledge about personally experienced events and their temporal relations in subjective time and the ability to mentally “travel back” in time. (Tulving 1985, p. 387)

Tulving (1985, p. 388) emphasizes that episodic memory associates with self-knowing consciousness, “Autonoetic (self-knowing) consciousness is a necessary correlate of episodic memory. It allows an individual to become aware of his or her
own identity and existence in subjective time that extends from the past through the present to the future.” Tulving’s assessment fits well with Weick’s (1995) assessment that people make sense of events, outcomes, and self by telling themselves and others stories about what they have experienced. According to Weick (1995), all sense making is retrospective and based on storytelling to self and others by the storyteller.

Consumer psychology and psychoanalytic research on brands as anthropomorphic identities, archetypes, and on brands as icons (see Fournier, 1998; Hirschman, 2000a; Holt, 2003; Rapaille, 2004) informs consumer storytelling theory. For example, a consumer and brand may be bound in a kinship relationship by automatic (unconscious triggering) of inherited brand use from the consumer’s mother. Fournier (1998) describes 15 consumer–brand relationship forms including arranged marriages, kinships, flings, secret affairs, enslavements, courtships, and others).

Jung (1916/1959, p. 101) defines archetypes as “forms or images of a collective nature which occur practically all over the earth as constituents of myth and at the same time as autochthonous (biologically based unconscious thinking) individual products of unconscious origin.” Campbell (1968, 1974) argues that most archetypal forms originated in Sumer and Akkad around 2500 BC. From this beginning, he proposes, all other textual narratives represent a “provincial extension of the one historic heritage and universal history of mankind” (Campbell, 1974, p. 133). Archetypal images include such widely recognized symbols as the tree of life, the raven and jackal as death images, owls as symbols of wisdom, ships as carriers of the dead, birds as female figures, the earth as a womb, and so forth (Hirschman, 2000a, p. 60).

Hirschman (2000a, p. 60; also see Hirschman, 2000b) reports ample evidence of archetypal thought among consumers in the stories they tell: “For example, Campbell (1973, p. 71) writes of ‘the helpful crone and fairy godmother as a familiar feature (supporting actors) of European fairy lore.’ This female figure serves as a helper or guide to the novice in the story, providing special wisdom or knowledge to help the novice complete his/her task.” Lisa, age 20, describes an exemplar of this archetype in the character of Mrs. Garrett, the headmistress on the television series The Facts of Life:

They lived in a boarding school. And from what I can remember about the show, they were always doing something wrong and then being told a lesson. Something happens, but it always ended by teaching a lesson somehow. Mrs. Garrett, I remember her. She was like the keeper of the school, or at least the girl’s dorm. And I guess she was like their mom, their psychiatrist, because she always had the right answers and she always had the right ways, and they were always asking her for advice. And she was this old red-headed lady … So she was always directing them in the right direction. (Hirschman, 2000a, p. 60)

Without referring to earlier work by Jung, Campbell, Hirschman, and Holt (2003) interprets storytelling in television commercials as manifestations of primary forms, that is, archetypes. For example, Holt (2003, p. 48) provides the following
interpretation for the “Do the Dew” ad campaign for Mountain Dew soft drink brand. “With the ‘Do the Dew’ campaign, Mountain Dew reinvented the wild man (prior campaign focus for the brand) as a slacker. In these spoofs of extreme sports, all presented as do-it-yourself quests, the brand asserted that the real men of America’s free-agent frontier weren’t the most buff or competitive athletes, but the creative guys who pursued their stunts as whimsical art. Slackers didn’t just face down dangerous situations that came their way. They sought out insane life-threatening risks. The Dew guys upped the ante on masculine risk taking to absurd levels, which, in the end, made fun of the idea that manhood has anything to do with such feats. The people with real power, in Mountain Dew’s worldview, were people with extreme — and very particular — tastes. Slackers had no power as workers, but they could assert their will in the corporate world by asserting their opinions. Companies and their managers would have to take notice.”

Holt and Thompson (2004, p. 425) advance such archetypal analysis in their analysis of two consumers’ self stories. Holt and Thompson propose through their analysis that “American mass culture idealizes the man-of-action hero — an idealized model of manhood that resolves the inherent weaknesses in two other prominent models (the breadwinner and the rebel) — what we call the ideology of heroic masculinity — to construct themselves in dramatic fashion as man-of-action heroes.” In a view the present chapter adopts, Hunt (1993) criticizes Holt’s (1991) prior argument that such interpretative research should not be subject to audits, triangulation, and purposive sampling but should be judged alone on its insightfulness and “ability to convince the reader, no more.”

Rapaille (2004) emphasizes that learning a core cultural archetype occurs early in life through an imprinting epiphanic experience that establishes an unconscious behavior pattern — and such imprinting occurs only during a critical period of time (age 1–6), after which it is very difficult or impossible to imprint. Rapaille’s interpretive research describes alternative collective unconscious archetypes that drive different cultures; he describes how the American mind is very different from the French mind, for example.

The early storytelling research by McClelland (1961, 1988) informs Rapaille’s proposition that epiphanic story experiences imprint people with collective unconscious archetypes. McClelland demonstrates this by analyzing unsolicited stories written in everyday life (e.g., using multi-item closed end scales that build in degrees-of-freedom for interpreting case data; see Campbell, 1975; Wilson & Woodside, 1999), that cultures vary in their orientations toward needs for achievement, power, and affiliation.

Holt (2003) proposes that some brands become icons — brands that permit consumers to experience powerful myths consciously or unconsciously. Myths are simple stories with compelling characters and resonant plots; myths help consumers make sense of the world. “Myths provide ideals to live by, and they work to resolve life’s most vexing questions. Icons are encapsulated myths. They [icons] are powerful because they deliver myths to us in a tangible form, thereby making them more accessible” (Holt 2003, p. 44).
Consumer self-awareness processing in making myths accessible is worthy of attention by consumer researchers. For example, examining an unsolicited self-reported (emic) story, Woodside and Chebat (2001) apply Heider's balance and change theories in examining how a Jewish couple consciously copes with automatic-unconscious retrievals of Nazism and the Holocaust when considering the purchase of a German car (cf., Holt, 2002). Research on storytelling (e.g., see Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Fournier, 1998; McKee, 2003; Schank, 1990; Zaltman, 2003) is useful because it helps clarify and deepen knowledge of how people resolve paradoxes triggered in their minds by unbalanced states (ranging from a vague conscious feeling of unease to awareness of a problem or opportunity arising from an inciting incident). Learning stories enables the researcher to examine the complexity often associated with initial balanced states (e.g., the personal prequel history of the protagonist and supporting actors in a story that affects how consumers interpret the situation in which an inciting incident occurs) that lead to imbalance and the steps taken (consciously and unconsciously — see Wegner, 2002) to achieve old or new balance states.

Essentially, a story expresses how and why life changes. It begins with a situation in which life is relatively in balance: You come to work day after day, week after week, and everything’s fine. You expect it will go on that way. But then there’s an event — in screenwriting, we call it the “inciting incident” — that throws life out of balance. You get a new job, or the boss dies of a heart attack, or a big customer threatens to leave. The story goes on to describe how, in an effort to restore balance, the protagonist’s subjective expectations crash into an uncooperative objective reality. A good storyteller describes what it’s like to deal with these opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper, work with scarce resources, make difficult decisions, take action despite risks, and ultimately discover the truth. (McKee, 2003, p. 52).

The drama versus lecture literature in consumer research offers propositions in addition to McKee’s proposals on the crafting of stories by marketers to persuade consumers (e.g., Stern, 1994; Wells, 1989). Wells (1989) provides guidance on how dramas differ from lectures: Lectures are directed at an audience; dramas are overheard. Television commercial dramas teach lessons about how products add to the quality of life. Under certain circumstances, they also provide true samples of the emotional rewards enabled by the advertiser’s brand. Stern (1994) transforms the commercial drama–lecture dichotomy into three distinct communication forms: classical drama, vignette drama, and lectures. Vignette dramas are constructed as a series of stories in which unrelated characters replicate similar actions across a variety of spatial settings, without necessarily showing change; the chronology has neither beginning, middle, or end, nor any fixed order, with no loss in meaning because each vignette stands alone (Stern, 1994, p. 609).

This chapter does not include examining the occurrence of vignette dramas in consumer storytelling. The presence of all three forms of communications may occur in varying degrees in the communications consumers provide to themselves and others; Stern’s proposals are worth examining empirically in future research.

To probe the core and supporting propositions of the theory, the present chapter includes an examination of case study data. To control against social desirability bias
(Fisher, 1993) and self-generated validity and other effects of measurement on belief, attitude, and behavior (Feldman & Lynch, 1988), the case study research includes searching for unsolicited weblog consumer self-reports of stories reflecting brands causing inciting incidents (cf., Holt’s, 2002 report on why brands cause trouble) or brands enabling consumers to enact myths (i.e., iconic brands).

The findings include strong evidence to support the theory; the findings and the theory are useful for increasing an understanding of how consumers cope and solve dilemmas found in the contexts of everyday and unique situations that they encounter. Two marketing strategy implications that follow naturally from this research include (1) creating new dramas that build on real-life self-reports of lived experiences with brand icons and (2) practicing-to-improve brand icon stories to aid consumers in unconsciously and consciously enacting archetypes via experiences with brands.

**Consumer Storytelling Theory and Research Propositions**

Several propositions follow from the discussion of consumer storytelling theory that extends Escalas’ (2004) general hypothesis that the structure of word-of-mouth communication is usually organized as a story. These additional propositions include the following components of consumer storytelling theory.

**P1.** Narrative storytelling on purchasing/consumption requires a protagonist consumer to experience an “inciting incident” (McKee, 2003) that focuses her attention and results in action in response to this incident.

**P2.** Consumer storytelling theory extends beyond highly risky consumption acts to the more mundane and improvisational presentations-of-self (to oneself and others) in everyday life.

**P3.** Consumption stories protagonists tell about themselves consciously and/or unconsciously often match the plot lines scripted by brand controllers (e.g., Nike’s myth of individual achievement through perseverance) or by deep-seated, “hardwired” (see Hirschman, 2000b; Rapaille, 2004) cultural archetypal myths.

**P4.** Consumers’ presentations-of-self storytelling presents a protagonist engaging in actions to achieve goals.

**P5.** These stories inform the listener or reader about conscious and/or unconscious thoughts of the protagonist and other actors.

**P6.** These stories frequently describe epiphany personal realizations and changes that occur in the life of the protagonist.

**P7.** The story informs how events involving the protagonist take place.

**P8.** The stories frequently include a second inciting event (a crisis or turning point) involving the protagonist, along with a beginning inciting incident and a resolution.
P9. The stories present the protagonist in clear-cut situations.

P10. The storytellers frequently provide a lesson learned — a gloss/gist of wisdom — in a sense-making summary comment in the closing or opening emic interpretation to the story.

Figure 1 shows some of these 10 propositions visually.

Figure 1 depicts elements in a story on two graphical dimensions: past, present, and future on the x-axis; emotional intensity (see Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004) on the y-axis. Figure 1 includes an ascending and descending evaluative slope with several minor and one or more major emotional peaks. Figure 1 configures time in narrative format as episodes (i.e., scenes within acts in a drama); each act has a beginning, middle, and end, because the storyteller thinks of acts occurring in distinct units of time even though in reality time is an undifferentiated continuous flow (Bruner, 1990a, 1990b; Escalas, 1998). A scene is equivalent to a situation; a situation represents the conjunction of a physical place, specific time, physical objectives (props) and atmospherics, and specific people (cf., Bearden & Woodside, 1976; Belk, 1975); any change in any one of these four factors represents a scene change within an act. Interactions (e.g., talking, yelling) and actions and events (e.g., touching, moving, eating, walking) occur within scenes.

Figure 1 shows several increasing emotional peaks. The peaks represent conscious and/or unconscious minor/major inciting incidents (e.g., the protagonist recognizing the possibility of going on a trip to Paris; deciding on going and making specific plans for the trip; arriving in Paris; seeing the lights of Paris at night at the Eiffel Tower). The expectation is that consumer storytelling reports include at least four emotional peaks varying in height: (1) I Act 1, the protagonist has some suspicion or fully conscious sense of awareness by the protagonist of the possibility of engaging in a “dramatic turn of events” (2) in Act 2, the protagonist engages in actions resulting in recognizing that an inciting incident has occurred (e.g., seeing paintings in museums in Paris that the protagonist has seen in textbooks as a child); (3) in Act 3, the protagonist experiences a sense of resolution or fulfillment (e.g., she receives travelers’ checks from American Express office in Paris replacing the checks stolen along with her pocketbook); (4) in Act 4, telling the tale each time evokes a small emotional peak again and again, and the protagonist engages in reflection — self-interaction. Reflection is one dimension of sense making (Weick, 1995); Act 4 concludes the story often with a summary judgment with an implicit or explicit statement of a lesson learned (P10).

Figure 1 shows one person, the protagonist, in all acts but not all scenes in the story. Certainly, the protagonist is not always present in all acts that she may report in telling the story. The intention is for Figure 1 to represent a rough template only of the elements, flow, and content of stories that a protagonist may include in her storytelling.

Most consumer storytelling likely occurs in narrated story form; the protagonist writes or speaks in past tense in a looking-back reporting mode in describing and interpreting scenes, acts, and outcomes — rather than reporting pure dramas.
Figure 1: Consumer storytelling theory of structure and emotional slope. Notes: A<sub>i</sub>, Actor; V<sub>i</sub>, event/action; S<sub>i</sub>, scene; ←→, interaction/dialogue. Only A1, the protagonist, appears in all acts. In Act 4 the protagonist makes sense of the action when telling the story to herself and/or others about the events occurring beforehand (prequel), the action leading up (Act 1) to the inciting incident (Act 2) and how the story turns out (resolution, Act 3).
In pure dramas, the actions and the characters simply unfold in the storytelling, and the expectation is that the readers, viewers, or listeners provide their own interpretations (Boller, 1990; Booth, 1961; Iser, 1976; Martin, 1986). The distinction between overt narration and pure drama matters. Here is why:

Overt narration tends to distance an audience from the characters. Specifically, narration prompts an audience to view the depicted experiences as “someone else’s.” In contrast, dramatized stories tend to prompt an audience to view the depicted experiences as “their own.” Dramatic forms invite audience participation in the portrayed experiences. Through their imaginary apprehension of the characters’ mental states and motives, audience members share in the enactment of the story actions. (Boller, 1990, p. 622)

Figures 2 and 3 further extend and deepen understanding of relevant central concepts in drama theory applied to marketing and consumer psychology. Figure 2 expands Moisio and Arnould’s (2005) dramaturgical framework in marketing. Building from Goffman’s (1959) drama contributions concerning presentation of self
Story Enactment (t2), Reporting and Interpreted (t3)
Archetype story performed by consumer via brand use.
Emic sense-making by consumer and marketer;
etic sense-making by researcher. Which archetype is enacted?
How was enactment accomplished? What complementary archetypes also are enacted in the realized story?

Key: 8A, B, and C = indicators of a specific archetype enactment.

Figure 3: Brand enabling archetype enactment by consumer.
in everyday life and the work of Grove and Fisk (1992), Moisio and Arnould (2005) distinguish among drama structure, drama interaction, and drama content. Drama structure refers to the set of theatrical components: setting, actors/audience, and performance, or the formal components of drama (Grove & Fisk, 1992).

Drama interaction is the level of consumer involvement or activities, ranging from active to passive, which can shape, redirect, and structure the unfolding of the drama performance. Drama content refers to the cultural resources that “infuse … activity with signs which dramatically highlight and portray confirmatory facts that might otherwise remain unapparent or obscure” (Goffman, 1959, p. 30). Figure 2 extends the above descriptions of drama structure, drama interaction, and drama content in several ways. First, Figure 2 includes revisions of the descriptions of each concept; for example, drama interactions explicitly include conversations and actions in Figure 2. Such activity may include conversations in the drama between one or more human participants as well as between a consumer and one or more brands. A brand may express a viewpoint explicitly, for example, the “I AM A MAN” message expressed in Burger King’s Double Whopper 2006 TV commercials.

Second, Figure 2 suggests a causal pattern from drama content directly influencing drama interaction and indirectly influencing drama structure. However, certainly drama structure and interaction affect drama content in some situations — drama content is contingent on relevant drama structure, permitting such content to be activated.

Third, the below-the-dotted-line dramaturgical framework in Figure 2 serves to deepen sense making of each of the three concepts. The participants (actors) in the drama as well the audience (again, the actors are also the audience members to their own performances, as well as consumer psychologists and marketers) are both consciously and unconsciously interpreting drama content, structure, and interactions. A scene comes readily to mind here from Moonstruck, where Cher, playing a widow, is explaining to Nicholas Cage why he lost his hand. The dialogue goes something like this: Cher, conversing in character, tells the brother of her fianceé, “I know the real reason that you lost your hand [to an electric bread cutter] — because you are a wolf trapped in a loveless engagement and you cut off your own hand to escape from the marriage.” Cage, in character, responds to hearing this revelation/interpretation by violently swiping food, plates, glasses, and a bottle of liquor off his kitchen table, lifting Cher up into his arms, and announcing, “Son of a bitch!” The profanity is not directed at Cher’s character, but is an assessment of his own feeble prior attempts to make sense of how he came to lose his hand. Note here that several different actor/audience members are interpreting the action and the meaning of the action, including the two principal actors, the author of this chapter, and you — the reader. The deeper archetypal interpretation revision by Cage’s character shifts the blame of the loss of his hand from his brother as “the little trickster” to himself as “the anti hero” (for a discussion of these two archetypes, see Wertime, 2002). The little trickster frequently causes embarrassment and loss of attention — what Cage’s character claims his brother did to him when he lost his hand. The wolf in fairy tales and other myths represents the human potential for destruction and evil — the archetypal profile of the anti hero (for elaborations of
archetypes applicable to marketing and consumer psychology, see Mark & Pearson, 2001; Wertime, 2002).

Figure 3 emphasizes the centrality of archetypes for deepening sense making of classical dramas applied to marketing and consumer psychology. Arrow 1 in Figure 3 represents the proposal that mostly unconscious desire for archetype fulfillment drives consumers to act. Arrow 2 proposes that the classical drama productions by marketers reflect one or a few archetypes. An example of a marketer’s application of the ultimate strength archetype is the drama Timex watches manifests when the watch survives torture tests: “It takes a licking and still keeps ticking,” thereby confirming the gist of this archetype. When an obstacle is there, it must be overcome; strength must be proven in use. Wertime (2002) provides details of marketing applications for 12 archetypes. Arrow 3 in Figure 3 reflects the proposal that the archetype a marketer’s story produces in a brand drama should match with the intended customer’s archetypal, mostly or entirely unconscious yearnings.

Table 1 provides gists of stories for 12 archetypes that Wertime (2002) describes, along with examples of brands explicitly or implicitly informing consumers that experiencing these brands demonstrates fulfilling one or more of these archetypes.

In Figure 3, arrows 4, 5, and 6 illustrate that the consumers’ enactment of a story and their retrospective storytelling reflects one or more archetypes; the same proposal applies to brand storytelling by the marketer. Consumer emic reports of own-lived stories are unlikely to describe archetypal origins of stories because few consumers have training in sense making using archetype theory. Etic interpreting by researchers with such training is usually necessary to achieve such insights. In the case study that this chapter later describes, the fairy godmother (i.e., mother-of-goodness archetype) illustrates this point — the retrospective report by two American travelers on their trip to Paris includes an older cousin paying all trip expenses of the younger cousin and arranging events leading to transformational experiences for the younger cousin.

Considering arrow 5 in Figure 3, Mark and Pearson (2001) provide an etic interpretation of the innocent archetype (i.e., natural living, childlike simplicity, and experiencing paradise) of Volkswagen’s new Beetle car design. But looking at the design through the archetypal lens, we see that the “face” of the new Beetle is virtually identical to the face of an infant — with big eyes and a high, smooth forehead. Research shows that throughout the animal and human kingdom, those same baby-faced characteristics, the characteristics of the innocent, signal that there is no threat and that the creature is in need of care. They are the facial characteristics of the koala bear, the teddy bear, Mickey Mouse, and, most recently, the little television creatures from the United Kingdom called the Teletubbies.

They are faces that win hearts the world over (Mark & Pearson, 2001). A suggestion for future research is worth noting here. The reporting of such looking through the archetypal lens by Mark and Pearson (2001), Rapaille (2004), and Wertime (2002) — and Holt (2004) and Holt and Thompson (2004) even though this work does not refer directly to archetypes — would be enriched by further interviews with consumers and marketers during which the consumer researcher describes the archetypal interpretations of the consumers’ earlier collected stories back to the consumers. The question here is how do consumers (emic) interpret the researcher’s
Table 1: Archetypes, story gists, and brand examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Story gist</th>
<th>Brand examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate</td>
<td>When an obstacle is there, it must be overcome; strength must be proven in use</td>
<td>Timex — “It takes a licking and keeps ticking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strength</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Siren</td>
<td>Power of attraction, linked with the possibility of destruction</td>
<td>Allure by Chanel; Envy by Gucci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Hero</td>
<td>Fortitude, courage, and victory; a journey and transformation</td>
<td>Michael Jordan and Nike shoes; Joe DiMaggio and Mr. Coffee; Power Puff Girls; Forrest Gump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Anti-Hero</td>
<td>Universal message of destruction and attraction of evil; the bad dude</td>
<td>Heavy metal icons; Howard Stern; Jerry Springer; Oakland Raiders; Che Guevara; Harley-Davidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Creator</td>
<td>Creative inspiration and the potency of imagination; originality; authentic</td>
<td>Coca Cola — the real thing; Walt Disney; Kleenex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Change Master</td>
<td>Transformation, self-improvement and self-mastery</td>
<td>Curves — workout stores for women; Gillette’s Mach 2 Razor; Porsche 911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Powerbroker</td>
<td>Authority, influence and domination — the world’s leading -...; the best ...; number one</td>
<td>CNN; E.F. Hutton; Bill Gates; Microsoft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Wise Old Man</td>
<td>Experience, advice and heritage; staying the test of time</td>
<td>Levi’s; Obi-Wan Kenobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Loyalist</td>
<td>Trust, loyalty and reassurance</td>
<td>Coca Cola and “Mean” Joe Green with boy of 12 TV commercial; I Love Lucy; Friends TV sitcom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Mother of Goodness</td>
<td>Purity, nourishment, and motherly warmth</td>
<td>Just Juice; Ivory Soap; Tropicana Orange Juice; Aunt Jemima; Fairy Godmother; Witch of the East; Snow White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Little Trickster</td>
<td>Humor, non-conformity, and the element of surprise</td>
<td>Dennis the Menace; Bart Simpson; Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure; SpongeBob SquarePants</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Enigma</td>
<td>Mystery, suspense, and uncertainty</td>
<td>Zorro; Abercrombie and Fitch; Star Trek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Developed in part from several chapters in Weretime (2002).
(etic) archetypal interpretations? Of course, such etic-enhancing–emic-reinterpreting research would follow with another round of etic (i.e., researcher) interpretation of the consumers’ reinterpretations of the archetype reports. Such research extends Hirschman’s (1986) call for asking other researchers to provide “member checks” of facts and interpretations collected in case studies by a field-investigating researcher. Without referring to the literature on archetypes, Cox (1967) provides an early example of multiple rounds of emic–etic–emic–etic interpretive case study research that reflects this call for deepening sense making of archetype interpretations. Let consumer researchers not be so arrogant and vain as to believe that their interpretations of consumer storytelling reports are necessarily accurate, complete, or the only ones applicable to interpreting the relevance of specific archetypes (cf., Woodside, 2006).

Arrow 7 in Figure 3 emphasizes that “good” (see McKee, 2003), storytelling results in “proper pleasure” (Aristotle, see Hiltunen, 2002). Living out a good story and retelling such a story offers a captivating emotional experience, leading to fulfilling one or more archetype outcomes (arrows 8 A, B, and C in Figure 3). Such a theory increases understanding of why weblogs report seemingly mundane experiences that include using product and service brands. The case studies that follow illustrate this proposition.

Method

Based on the scarcity of research on consumer self-storytelling (relative to consumer attitude research), our intention is that the propositions are conjectures for developing a nascent stream of research work. Future work should adopt the use of a competing multiple hypotheses probing approach, for example, examining competing lecture versus drama theories of communications by consumers via building and testing alternative sets of propositions (see Campbell, 1975; Wilson & Wilson, 1988; Wilson & Woodside, 1999). This report probes two sets of consumer storytelling versus advertising lecturing propositions.

Figure 4a is a conversion of the set of consumer storytelling propositions into a degrees-of-freedom instrument for assessing how well a specific WOM/blog communication matches with the storytelling paradigm. Figure 4b is a conversion of advertising lecturing propositions (see Wells, 1989, for an elaboration of these propositions).

Figure 4c illustrates the possibilities of advertising representing different combinations of low/moderate/high levels of drama and lecture formats. Figure 4c reflects the proposition that, although all combination levels do occur in advertising, most advertising executions follow the lecture format; marketers seek to convince consumers using attribute–benefit–satisfaction arguments for buying their brands. Thus, Figure 4c depicts the most frequently occurring advertising structure, using the large oval in quadrant 3.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Proposition</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>?</th>
<th>Y</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Protagonist experiences an <strong>inciting incident</strong>?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If yes, describe the inciting incident:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Unconscious and/or conscious attempt in blog to <strong>match a myth</strong> identified for brand?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Protagonist found in blog engages in <strong>actions to achieve goals</strong>?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The blog presents a <strong>story that informs about conscious and/or unconscious thoughts</strong> of the protagonist and other actors?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. The blog presents a story about <strong>how personal evolution or change</strong> in the life of the protagonist occurs?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. The blog describes a <strong>world or personal block</strong> that does/may prevent goal attainment?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. The blog has a <strong>beginning, middle, and ending</strong>?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. The blog presents a protagonist in <strong>clear-cut situations</strong>?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. The blog has a protagonist who offers a <strong>lesson learned</strong>?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 4a: Storytelling degrees-of-freedom instrument.
Title of Blog Entry and Reference: ____________________________________________________________

For each proposition below, please circle one regarding whether or not the proposition matching lecture format: N = No, Y = Yes

1. Does the communication speak directly to third-party (e.g., reader) audience?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

2. Communication presents specific feature details of a product/service?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

3. Use of persuasion tools (e.g., selling words, “you should”, “limited time offer”)?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

4. Is a protagonist absent from the communication (e.g., no names given)?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

5. Does the communication present a source or spokesperson as an expert?
   (highly credible, e.g., Michael Jordan spokesperson for Nike brand)?
   Evidence: It quotes AC Nielsen and the Center for Disease Control and Prevention.
   N    ?    Y

6. Is a one or two-sided argument logic found in the communication?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

7. Does the communication include one or more conclusions?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

8. Does the communication include one or more recommendations for the viewer/reader to follow?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

9. Does the communication specifically mention benefits from features or from using the product/service?
   Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

10. Does the communication include normative statements that signal what conclusion is most appropriate and/or what actions are best?
    Evidence: ____________________________________________________________ N    ?    Y

Figure 4b: Lecture degrees-of-freedom instrument.
Figure 4c: Drama/Lecture advertising grid. Note: Size of oval by grid location reflects hypothesis concerning relative frequency of advertising drama–lecture combination, for example, most radio commercials reflect high lecture and low drama structure (quadrant 3).
Stern’s (1994) description of vignette advertising represents a combination of low-lecture and moderate-drama advertising (ads including several brief incomplete stories) — appearing high in quadrant 4. Low-drama in combination with low-lecture format advertising (bottom right of quadrant 4) likely rarely occurs; such ads represent attempts to achieve high consumer message involvement or brand-acceptance without-ad involvement via very unique, low-reactance advertising executions. One example of a quadrant 4 TV commercial that comes to mind is a Corona ad showing an empty bottle of its beer rolling sideways on a table with other free-standing empty Corona beer bottles in front of a beach — a 30-second TV commercial that includes sounds of seagulls. Some consumers have found this low-drama and low-lecture Corona campaign to be so appealing that dozens of amateur interpretive productions of the campaign are available for watching on Youtube.com. Brand Web sites often represent information locations high in drama and lecture formats — quadrant 2 in Figure 4c. The hero.honda.com Web site showing motorcycles fit for rebels in their twenties is one example of such a high-drama and high-lecture communication execution. The hero.honda.com sites includes lots of reason-for-buying copy along with lots of details for “great escape” motorcycle trips, for example, several days on a road trip from Manali to Leh, the capital city of Ladakh, located in the Himalayas. Planning and going on such a road trip to Leh — or just buying the motorcycle and dreaming of such a road trip — likely unconsciously enables both the change master and the creator archetypes in the minds of the planner/dreamer. The capability of designing brand Web sites high in both drama and lecture formats is a distinctive strength of Internet brand marketing.

For this chapter, the method used for collecting consumer-generated communications includes doing Google searches for brands for which some consumers experience high emotion during purchase or use — brands or experiences for which archetypal myths are readily identifiable: Paris and travel, Versace and buying and wearing a coat, and Tommy Hilfiger and wearing jeans. Paris, as personified in Greek mythology, is known for extreme beauty and romance. Versace is the luxury brand of clothing and other products and services (e.g., hotels) that often uses ads showing a “superhero corporate titan closing deals with her mental acumen and intoxicating men with her overt eroticism,” for instance, Madonna wearing brightly colored, hyper sexy daywear while playing corporate executive (Givhan, 2005). “Wearing Hilfiger represents youthful success and the state of ‘cool’ being” (Rsingh.net, 2005).

The Google searches for consumer communications included entering the brand name and blog for each of the three brands. For each brand, the first entry returned from the search that was found not to include advertisements or obvious brand sponsorship was selected for analysis.

Certainly this search method for brands and blogs conjunctions is not an attempt to achieve representative sampling; the approach is an example of theoretical sampling to learn whether at least some written communications among some consumers in a naturally occurring environment matches with one model of consumer storytelling theory. Future research is necessary to examine how representative storytelling relating to products and brands is in consumer blogs.
Appendices A–C include abstracts of the first blog communications passing the selection screen described above for the three brands. The complete communications and the blog writers' Web sites are available for scholarly research from the authors, but the findings exclude mention of Web site names because of the personal information in the stories. Because the study focuses on interpreting consumer storytelling, the sampling procedure includes seeking to find reports in quadrant 1, high drama and low lecture.

This study does not include the attempt to estimate the shares of drama and lecture formats; the aim is to examine whether consumer blogs do exist that fit into the storytelling paradigm and indicate consumer experiences with brands enabling archetype outcomes. Consequently, the blogs this chapter interprets score very low on the lecture degrees-of-freedom instrument and very high on the drama degrees-of freedom instrument. Additional research is necessary to provide information on the relative use by consumers of drama and lecture formats in the blogs when they mention experiences with products and brands.

Analyzing the Stories

The analyses of the stories include the following steps: (1) building events and emic narrative interpretation maps within applications of Woodside and Chebat's (2001) approach for updating Heider's balance theory (Figures 5–7); (2) applying the consumer storytelling degrees-of-freedom instruments (see Figure 4a) to each blog communication; (3) applying the Leximancer computer software program (see Smith, 2000) and comparing the results with the findings from the other two analyses. Leximancer, a data mining tool useful for extracting the main concepts contained within electronic documents, generates an automated analysis. The evidence for a concept will be found in the texts under consideration. These concepts are displayed on an interactive map that provides a single holistic view of the information as well as allowing one to automatically search for instances of the text that contain the given concepts. For the analyses in this chapter, replacements are first made of “I” in the communications, with “emic” and “etic” replacing the use of “me” in the story to pick up these concepts (cf., Martin, 2005). This step was done because Leximancer output does not report personal pronouns as concepts, and the conclusion was drawn that the output should include actors as important concepts.

Findings

The findings include a balance/imbalance mapping and flow diagram of relationships for each blog communication, a consumer storytelling degrees-of-freedom analyses, and a Leximancer output.
The occasion was my cousin Paige's 16th. "I am a Canadian and get by in French."

"All I can say is WOW! We rented a 2 bedroom, 1½ bath apartment (two showers), "Merlot" from ParisPerfect http://www.parisperfect.com/ and boy was it ever perfect!"

"The father stretched out his cupped hands which held all of the pieces they were able to recover, including the memory stick and he very solemnly said, "El muerto...."

"We had a full view of the Eiffel from our charming little terrace. ... We were within walking distance to two metro stops (Pont d'Alma or Ecole Militaire)."

"We were walkable to many good bistros, cafes and bakeries and only a few blocks from the wonderful market street Rue Cler."

"I bought a Paris Pratique pocket-sized book at a Metro station. This handy guide has detailed maps of each arrondissement, as well as the metro lines, the bus lines, the RER and the SCNF (trains). I'll never be without this again."

"We went on a Fat Tire's day trip to Monet's gardens and house in Giverny, about an hour outside Paris."

"We were walkable to many good bistros, cafes and bakeries and only a few blocks from the wonderful market street Rue Cler."

"We had a full view of the Eiffel from our charming little terrace. ... We were within walking distance to two metro stops (Pont d'Alma or Ecole Militaire)."

"We were walkable to many good bistros, cafes and bakeries and only a few blocks from the wonderful market street Rue Cler."

"We were walkable to many good bistros, cafes and bakeries and only a few blocks from the wonderful market street Rue Cler."

Figure 5: Elaboration of trip to Paris blog communication.
1. Scott

2. Aching back

3. Wheeled garment bag for Christmas trip home

4. Store

5. Attractive sales women

6. Pants unzipped

7. “Not only that, but I happened to be wearing a pair of loose-fitting jeans that day, purchased in a foolish attempt to look with it. (Damn you and your marketing, Tommy Hilfiger!) These pants were almost loose enough to fall off when they were fastened, and in their current state I feared that they would slip to the ground at the slightest encouragement.”

8. “There’s nothing more dreadful than being embarrassed in front of a person you find attractive, and this seemed like the inevitable outcome of my current situation.”

9. “Part of the problem was that Valentine, which I later learned was her name, was an excellent saleswoman. I have never met anyone so knowledgeable about luggage.”

10. “I adopted a two-pronged strategy. The first phase, the Hike... The second phase of my plan, the Cover...”

11. “Valentine: Zis bag has many expandable pockets. Me: Ah. (Left-hand Hike. Right-hand Cover.) Valentine: Zis makes it very useful for short trips or long trips. Me: I see. (Right-hand Hike.)”

12. “I did not have $700 to spend on Italian luggage, so my choice was pretty clear after five minutes... choose the Travelpro... because I had the Financial Acumen to recognize that it was a great buy.”

13. “You know, I think I’m going go ahead and get the Travelpro.” Her face lit up like a child’s on Christmas morning.

14. “It was with horror that I realized my next predicament: getting to the counter. My pants were looser than ever, and the motion of walking would surely just speed their escape.”

15. “I reached the car (out of breath!)... slid the jeans up to my waist, zipped them up, and fastened the button. Rapture! I was never so glad to be wearing pants in all my life. Happiness flooded over me. I wanted to sing a song. I wanted to hug someone. I wanted to apologize to Tommy Hilfiger and take back the nasty things I’d said about his questionable parentage. “I was emotional! No hard feelings?”

16. “Most of all, I wanted to go back inside and talk to Valentine. I wanted to tell her about the whole silly situation But life, as I well know, is not the movies, and I was not about to risk humiliation twice in one evening—my hips snugly ensconced in denim.”

Figure 6: Elaboration of unzipped — Tommy Hilfiger jean wearer communication.
I have discovered a lovely second hand ladies wear shop in Beachamp Place near Harrods in Knightsbridge which has designer wear at vastly reduced prices.

I bought a Valentino short leather skirt (and the leather is baby soft, ok I know I said I wouldn't wear fur-so I'm inconsistent! ) which would cost £600 new for £110 and it really as new—you would never have guessed it's second hand.

"I spoed [English for spied] a beautiful cream coloured cashmere coat .-Versace no less for 150 pounds—— No way would I be able to afford one of these at the real price of nearly £1,000."

Versace did not let me down. The coat, all encompassing, only using two of the buttons provided kept my chastity covered. This coat has quality and after several dry cleanings because of the colour still looks as good as new!

The problem I had was that the evening was very warm and they asked why I was wearing a coat when it was so hot.

Quick as a flash I told them I was going to a fancy dress 'vicars and tarts party' ...."I pulled up my coat to show the top of a leg and told them that was all they were getting!"

I spied [English for spied] a beautiful cream coloured cashmere coat ...Versace no less for 150 pounds—— No way would I be able to afford one of these at the real price of nearly £1,000."

Figure 7: Elaboration of Pollee buying and wearing a Versace coat.
Gayle Takes Cousin Paige to Paris

The first story (Figure 5 and Appendix A) reports on a trip to Paris by a Canadian, Gayle, and her cousin, Paige. Early concepts in the report include mention of three principals within a clearly storytelling communication: Gayle, Paris, and Paige. The relationships among these three principals are all positive and in balance. Gayle reports previous trips to Paris, and this particular trip represents a coming-of-age transformation for Paige, with the implication that Gayle and Paige’s mother are paying for the Paris experience of Paige changing from child to woman. Although this is not consciously stated, Gayle’s actions and her self-interpretations reflect a fairy godmother myth enactment.

Gayle’s storytelling includes the possibility of romance, with Gayle providing a likely Prince Charming for Paige.

But my cousin is a budding artist and I thought it might be enjoyable for her to experience some of Paris’ best art offerings through the eyes of another artist. So I engaged Michael for two days. His warmth, charm, wit and quirkiness were infectious and by the end of two days we cried when we said goodbye and feel like he’s part of our family. He brought insight and intelligence, historical perspective and tailored the itinerary to Paige’s interests. Paige will always remember him fondly ... after all ... he taught her the meaning of allegory. (Appendix A)

Gayle does insure that Paige experiences iconic sites and scenes — actions uniquely available in Paris: for example, museums, the Eiffel Tower, and the Metro. Gayle offers a chronological report with an increasing emotional slope that includes both Parisian sites and the breakage of an expensive camera as high points. The degrees-of-freedom (DOF) analysis for the trip to Paris case study includes supporting evidence confirming each of the 10 degrees-of-freedom issues, leading to the conclusion that Gayle’s communication is a narrative story.

Examining the Leximancer output for Gayle’s story, the rather primitive stage of the output from the software program is the first conclusion that might come. As the description mentions for Leximancer, this structured analysis complements rather than substitutes for other interpretation methods (e.g., balance and flow diagramming and applying a storytelling degrees-of-freedom instrument). (Leximancer diagrams for the cased studies are available from any of the authors) The close association of Paige and Gayle (emic “I”) is the main observable finding from the Leximancer output for this story.

Note in the closing lines of the story that Gale connects the concepts of Paige, treasure, and memory for their trip to Paris. The metaphor of their trip experiences, representing acquisition of a forevermore treasure, expresses achieving an important goal — one of the elements in good storytelling.
Scott Wears Tommy Hilfiger Jeans Unzipped While Shopping for a Wheeled Garment Bag

The start of Figure 6 includes two negative associations in a balanced three-way relationship that includes Scott (clearly the protagonist in this report), an aching back, and a wheeled garment bag. The positive relationship between Scott and the bag creates balance that overcomes the negative relationship between Scott and an aching back. Scott’s first mention of Tommy Hilfiger jeans reflects one example of “brands causing trouble” (Holt, 2002).

Not only that, but I happened to be wearing a pair of loose-fitting jeans that day, purchased in a foolish attempt to look with it. (Damn you and your marketing, Tommy Hilfiger!) These pants were almost loose enough to fall off when they were fastened, and in their current state I feared that they would slip to the ground at the slightest encouragement. (Appendix B)

This quote indicates Scott’s meta conscious (thinking about thinking) awareness of his attempt to live the myth that he perceives Tommy Hilfiger pitches — what Rsingh (2005) summarizes as the “state of cool being.” Scott’s parenthetical editorial reflects a nascent view of Holt’s treatise that some consumers become inflamed (in Heider’s change paradigm) to unfreeze and refreeze in adopting an anti-branding sentiment and lifestyle in rebellion to marketers, cultural authority. Note in Figure 6 that two story streams occur in a parallel format: Scott’s concern about his jeans being unzipped while talking with a sales woman and his buying a wheeled garment bag. Box 15 includes some indication of an emotional high from finally getting to zip up his jeans: “Rapture! … Happiness flooded over me.” Box 15 also indicates Scott’s return to a believer in the myth intended by the marketer for Tommy Hilfiger: “I wanted to apologize to Tommy Hilfiger and take back the nasty things I’d said about his questionable parentage.”

The degrees-of-freedom analysis includes substantial evidence that Scott’s report is narrative storytelling. The use of quotes by Scott in Box 11 hints at his shifting to a pure drama form of turn-taking conversation (see Schenkein, 1978) between Valentine (the sales woman) and himself.

The Leximancer output interprets a dominance of the wheeled bag over the pants in Scott’s story. However, Scott as a self-concept “I” overlaps more with the pants than the bag.

Appendix B includes a unique post-story epilogue offering by Scott. “EPILOGUE: It turned out that the garment bag was too small, so I couldn’t even take it on my trip. I wanted to return it, but I couldn’t bring myself to go back. The bag is still sitting in my closet. I haven’t worn those jeans since that night, and I haven’t been back to the store.” The ironies of neither using nor returning the bag or the jeans serves to illustrate Scott’s story as a satire of his life with brands and serves as a self expose’ of a “secret affair” with Tommy Hilfiger, that is, a privately held relationship considered risky if exposed to others (see Fournier, 1998).
Pollee Buys and then Wears a Versace Coat sans Knickers
(i.e., No Underpants)

Appendix C is an abstract of the third blog communication. Figure 7 offers balance/imbalance mapping results. The author of this communication, Pollee (an alias), entitles the report, “Long coat, no knickers.” Given that the substantial evidence found in the entry supports all 10 dimensions of storytelling, the report reflects a narrative story.

Note in Pollee’s story that she also buys lingerie at Rigby and Pellar (a retail store), and she decides to pull “into a garage to use the loo.” She decides to surprise her “man of the moment” by removing her dress and knickers in the loo, to wear only her coat and lingerie (likely a slip and stockings) home to “my man.” She is stopped by two police officers after the garage stop for using a cell phone while driving (illegal in Britain), and the officers also ask why she is wearing a coat on such a warm (August) evening. “Quick as a flash I told them I was going to a fancy dress vicars and tarts party.” Such a party requires guests to arrive dressed as a vicar or a prostitute and are an English tradition.

This story expresses characteristics of the Versace coat assisting in a courtship relationship and participating directly in a secret affair (see Fournier, 1998). Courtship refers to an interim relationship state, possibly on the road to a committed partnership contract; the man of the moment morphs into “my man” with no hindrances apparent to a possible committed relationship. Versace is a co-conspirator with Pollee in a secret affair when she wears the coat without knickers — a highly emotive, private bonding that leads to a risky exposure to police officers. Note in the story’s ending that Pollee includes a happy face symbol (:) ) in suggesting her secret affair drama with Versace leads to a final emotional high point; her man achieves an erection (“only the Nan bread went soft”), and the happy face follows this development.

The opening relationship in Figure 7 includes a brief imbalanced relationship reference for Pollee, fur coats, and design shops. Pollee twice refers to the point that she “wouldn’t wear fur.” But her addition, “I’m inconsistent,” indicates an imbalanced state that is not resolved in the next scenes and acts in the story.

The output from the Leximancer analysis indicates that the concept relating most closely to Pollee (emic) is price. Such a relationship might be overlooked from studying the interpretive mapping and the results from applying the consumer storytelling degrees-of-freedom instrument. The second hand shop enabling Pollee to buy a Versace coat at a price about 15 percent of the new coat retail price is a scene critical in developing the plotline of the story.

Pollee’s story includes several touch points matching the Versace myth of enabling a woman to intoxicate men with her overt eroticism. Note that Pollee’s attempting to kiss her man results in his shifting out of the way to continue to watch football on the TV. Only by “slowly unbuttoning my two buttons [of my Versace]” does she achieve the intoxicating affect — the ultimate goal intended in the story.
Discussion, Limitations, Strategy Implications, and Future Research Suggestions

The findings support the view that at least some of the time individuals write stories in naturally occurring blog communications that include enactments of brands as archetypical icons. This conclusion complements and extends the work of Holt (2003, 2004), Holt and Thompson (2004), and related literature (e.g., Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Arnould & Wallendorf, 1994; Boller, 1990; Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004; Fournier, 1998; Hirschman, 1986; Padgett & Allen, 1997; Woodside & Chabet, 2001).

Several previous studies may introduce researcher/experimenter biases (Fisher, 1993; Shimp, Hyatt, & Snyder, 1991) in informant reports; for example, Delgadillo and Escalas’ (2004) procedure in their Study 1 reads as follows: “Please tell us about a recent experience you’ve had with a product or brand ….” The use of the word “tell” would likely suggest storytelling to some informants. Similarly, Holt and Thompson’s probing follow-up questions in the face-to-face interviews with the two informants, the focus of most of their article, are likely to stimulate self-generated validity problems (see Feldman & Lynch, 1988). However, a content analysis (Kassarjian, 1977) method avoids such issues. At the same time, the analysis and findings provide confirmatory evidence supporting Holt’s views of how and why brands become icons.

The use of content analysis is not devoid of its own validity and reliability issues. The authors of this report worked together in studying the three blogs in search of evidence in support of the consumer storytelling theory. Future research should include the use of independent member checks (Hirschman, 1986; Woodside, 2006) and comparisons of multiple informants separately completing the consumer storytelling and lecture degrees-of-freedom instruments. The use of different data analysis tools for interpreting the blog communications confirms the instructions Smith (2000) provides for using Leximancer: The appropriate view is that the software program complements independent interpretive assessment of text and oral communications rather than use as a stand-alone tool. Examining natural reports by consumers-as-authors using Woodside and Chebat’s (2001) application of Heider’s balance theory usefully complements Leximancer applications.

Marketing and advertising strategy implications include the following points. First, crafting a story whereby the brand is a supporting actor enabling the protagonist to achieve conscious and/or unconscious goals likely helps build very favorable consumer–brand relationships (e.g., committed partnerships, best friendship, flings, or a secret affair). The storytelling analysis in this chapter includes identifying self-oriented thinking by the storyteller with near-conversational interactions with the primary brands appearing in the stories (e.g., Gayle’s “I love Paris”; Scott’s, “Damn you and your marketing, Tommy Hilfiger!” Pollee’s “Versace did not let me down”). Consequently, learning — not only thinking about — what buyers and users say to the brand and what the brand says first and back-and-forth in such conversations is likely to provide valuable clues for designing highly effective marketing and advertising strategies.

Narrative reports and drama enactments are more likely to encourage vicarious participation (see Boller, Babakus, & Olson, 1989) whereas lecture forms of
advertising tend to evoke argumentative forms of thinking. Given that learning via storytelling is more memorable and retrievable than lecture-based learning (Bruner, 1990a, 1990b; Schank, 1990), learning the stories consumers tell in natural settings represents a useful grounding for the art of crafting naturalistic stories or acceptable fantasies involving brand experiences — stories and fantasies that are acceptable and enjoyable for the intended audience. Consumer storytelling research provides evidence as to how and why brands become archetypal icons in the informants’ own words. Informant reported enactments of the iconic roles played by brands likely include symbols and expressions that match with imprinted unconsciously driving myths that affect the informants’ behavior. Such originating core myths may be uncovered via word searches using blog search engines (e.g., Technorati, Feester, or Blogdigger). Consequently, becoming aware of the consumer enactments of imprinted myths via brand icons provides direction for story genre and consumer–brand relationships (e.g., the fairy godmother myth is one plotline worthy of producing alternative enactments to encourage one segment of travelers to visit Paris; showing alternative scenes of a protagonist wearing a Versace coat sans knickers is a story gist useful for rejuvenating romance in a tired relationship).

A stream of studies supports the hypothesis that drama- versus lecture based advertising is more effective in situations reflecting everyday life (Adaval & Wyer, 1998; Delgadillo & Escalas, 2004; Chebat, Vercollier, & Gelinhas-Chebat, 2003). The present chapter verifies that not only Goffman (1959) and other behavioral scientists have a compelling need to interpret the presentation-of-self in everyday life, but also some consumers are driven to offer their own interpretations (i.e., narratives) of presentations (i.e., dramas) of their everyday lives — lives that enact myths via the use of iconic brands.

Appendix A

Appendix “I Love Paris ... Anytime at All ....,” posted by Gayle on November 4, 2004.

Here is my very lengthy and belated trip report from my June trip. The occasion was my cousin Paige’s 16th birthday. Her mom and I are like sisters and ever since Paige was born we planned to take her to Paris to celebrate this milestone. I have been to Paris many times, but my cousins have not. I am a Canadian and can get by in French. They are Californians and though adept at Spanish, were intimidated to be in a cultural environment they didn’t know. I am so proud of them both. They rose to the occasion and we had a blast!

Getting There

I flew direct from Toronto on Air France and they flew LAX-JFK-CDG on Air France, all without incident. I had arranged for a taxi service to meet us at the airport (I arrived earlier than they did). As is usual in France the meter had been
started while they were waiting so the originally quoted fare ended up being substantially higher. I had forgotten about this possibility, which of course resulted in the fare adding up to substantially more than we’d been quoted when I reserved via email.

The Apartment

All I can say is WOW! We rented a 2 bedroom, 1 1/2 bath apartment (two showers), “Merlot” from ParisPerfect http://www.parisperfect.com/ and boy was it ever perfect! Located on avenue de la Bourdonnais at the intersection of rue Rapp and rue St. Dominique in the 7th, we had a full view of the Eiffel from our charming little terrace. The apartment was lovely, with a modern kitchen and baths, very nice furnishings and accessories.

The second bedroom was very tiny and I would not recommend it for an adult couple, but for just me it was just fine. My cousins shared the master. The location of this gem was perfect. We were within walking distance to two metro stops (Pont d’Alma or Ecole Militaire) and several buses stopped outside our door. We were walkable to many good bistros, cafes and bakeries and only a few blocks from the wonderful market street Rue Cler.

The apartment manager was a lovely woman, formerly of Arizona, and a welcome basket filled with practical goodies was waiting when we arrived, including a baguette bag for us to keep, a lovely bottle of wine, laundry detergent tabs, some milk, snacks and a wonderful binder filled with practical information as well as lists and descriptions of restaurants and attractions. We will be renting from ParisPerfect again, for sure. There was only one issue. ParisPerfect quotes their rental rates in U.S. dollars. If you wish to put the rental on a credit card, then the card is actually charged in Euros. This worked heavily against us. In future, I would ask to be quoted a rental price in Euros to avoid the fluctuation which I was the victim of since I booked the apartment one year prior. Or I would send them a U.S. money order, especially now since the Canadian dollar is so much stronger against the U.S. dollar than against the Euro.

Getting Around

I told my cousins to bring with them small 1 1/8 headshots and on Saturday we procured our Cartes Oranges (zones 1–3) and our Museum Passes at our nearest Metro station, in addition to a carnet of 10 single tickets for getting around until the Carte Orange ticket became active on Monday morning.

For those of you who don’t speak French, I saw several folks who only spoke English slip a piece of paper through the ticket wicket indicating what they wanted, making their transactions very simple. If memory serves 3 Cartes Orange and 3 Museum Passes plus our carnet of 10 tickets cost 219 Euros or 73 Euros each I also
found out later that kids/students (I think under 18) don’t need a Museum pass as they get in free. However, they cannot always access certain Figureions [sic], so I did not regret that we got Paige a pass.

On previous trips I have comfortably and adeptly used the metro, but on this trip I decided it was time to learn to use the more convenient and much more scenic bus routes which crosses [sic] the City of Light. I am so glad I did. We got to see so much more of the neighborhoods, travel with locals and actually found it more convenient to get to the sites we were going to with a bit less walking and a lot less stairs. I bought a Paris Pratique pocket-sized book at a Metro station. This handy guide has detailed maps of each arrondissement, as well as the metro lines, the bus lines, the RER and the SCNF (trains). I'll never be without this again.

The Sites

Six months before our trip, I gave Paige a couple of good guide books on Paris and suggested she let me know what her interests were since after all, this was to be her trip. So with her list, I had prepared a basic itinerary as a guideline but I wanted to also be flexible and spontaneous. We got through about half of what we intended to but we experienced so much more we hadn’t planned. We walked 8–10 hours a day and thank goodness for my Puma’s (black, not tourist white) or I would have died!

As this was their first trip we had to cover some of the basics. Here, roughly was where we went.

Sites

- The Marais
- Notre Dame
- L’Arc de Triomphe — 248 steps up and 248 steps down…
- Champs Elysée
- Jacquemart Museum
- Louvre Lite
- Musée D’Orsay
- Les Invalides, Napoleon’s Tomb and the Napoleon Museum
- Sacre Coeur
- Monmartre
- Rodin Museum
- Pompidou Museum
- Train to Vernon, bike to Giverny with Fat Tire Bike Tours
- http://www.fattirebiketoursparis.com/
- Eiffel Tower.
Unforgettable Memories

This trip had so many memories, but here are a few choice highlights: A Picture is Worth … On our very first night, knowing that the Eiffel Tower light show started at 10:00 p.m., I steered my cousin out onto our tiny terrace to see the glittering spectacle. She was so thrilled and excited and was snapping pictures with her brand-new very expensive digital camera, but did not have the strap around her wrist. Yup, you guessed it, in her excitement, she dropped the camera and we both watched in shock as it bounced off our little marble-topped bistro table, through the ornate iron railing and down the six flights to the pavement below. We were stunned. It was not funny, yet we laughed so hard we were crying. I went racing down to the street to get it and as I ran out the door, heard her conversing with the people down below in Spanish! When I opened the door to the street there was an entire Spanish family: grandma, grandpa, mom, dad and a few kids standing waiting for me. The father stretched out his cupped hands which held all of the pieces they were able to recover, including the memory stick and he very solemnly said, “El muerto…” I thanked him and returned upstairs with the remains. Lesson learned … always use the strap!

D-Day Lessons

On our second evening we wanted an easy, simple, and inexpensive dinner so we grabbed a table right outside our apartment door at Le Dome, a neighborhood cafe. A few tables over there were four guys of varying ages, clearly American and from their haircuts and build, I guessed military. They asked if we could take their picture and we struck up conversation, only to learn that they were indeed military, guests of the French government, invited to participate in the D-Day commemoration in Normandy because they were from the same battalion that liberated Omaha Beach and they were invited to meet the veterans and represent their battalion today. They were so honored to be there and had been very moved by the ceremonies. A couple of them had never been to Europe and this was their great adventure. They had decided to come to Paris to find the Harley Davidson store so they could buy Harley Paris t-shirts. But alas, it was not meant to be as the store was closed and they had to leave the next morning at the crack of dawn. I told them we’d go get them the shirts and send them to them from California. Needless to say they were thrilled.

We ended up walking to the Bateaux Mouches with them and then along the Seine to the Eiffel, talking about their jobs and their lives as infantry-men. We heard how hard it is on families, that most of them don’t care about the politics of the day, or the current administration, that they have a job to do, whether they agree or not, and that many of the long-term benefits outweigh the short term sacrifices. My 16-year-old cousin was simply awestruck by the entire evening’s events. When we said goodnight and wished them well, Paige turned to us and told us that she had learned so much and that it had been a night she’d never forget. Of course, we sought out the Harley store and got them their T-shirts.
Artist in Residence

Michael Osman is an American artist living in Paris. He supplements his income by being a tour guide. I found out about him on Fodors. Much has been written there about him … good and bad as well as simply stupid stuff. But my cousin is a budding artist and I thought it might be enjoyable for her to experience some of Paris’ best art offerings through the eyes of another artist. So I engaged Michael for two days. His warmth, charm, wit, and quirkiness were infectious and by the end of two days we cried when we said goodbye and feel like he’s part of our family. He brought insight and intelligence, historical perspective and tailored the itinerary to Paige’s interests. Paige will always remember him fondly … after all … he taught her the meaning of allegory.

Worth a Try

From the beginning, Paige was a French enthusiast. She asked for a French lesson every day and would then actually use the new words and phrases wherever we went. On several occasions, people commented on how polite she was and it served her well when she was rewarded with additional pain au chocolat or extra dessert treats.

The Men, the Women, the Children

Everywhere we went people were charming, engaging, and welcoming. We especially noticed how beautiful the women were and their style and flair for dressing, even in the hottest weather. But the men were equally charming and flirtatious. I got my come-uppance when I hastily, and without thinking, commented in English to what I thought was a non-English speaking waiter that he had the most exquisite eyes I’d ever seen and without skipping a beat, he replied to me in French, “Only when I am in your presence!” Swoooon!

A Manger [French for “a diner”]

We were determined to eat casually and simply. Breakfasts were at our cafe outside our apartment where for 6 Euros we got orange juice, a buttered baguette, a croissant, and a cafe crème. Lunches were often on the run, crepes, salads, sandwiches, etc., usually in close proximity to wherever we were sightseeing. Dinners were always in our neighborhood and came from either the detailed and lengthy list of restaurants we were provided by Paris Perfect, or from information from my various guidebooks. Thanks to so many Fodor’s Posters who provided excellent restaurant recommendations, as well as to previous guests of ParisPerfect who left copious notes on their favorite haunts.
A few we enjoyed were Café de Mars, La Terrace de 7ème, Bistro du Papa. After reading a previous Fodorite’s trip report, we headed off to find La Cigale, for souffles … La Cigale 4 rue Recamier 75007 in the 7th, in a little alley, hard to find. On our trip to Giverny, we met a young woman from Brisbane, Australia, who was traveling on her own and we invited her to join us. Three of us enjoyed delicious and innovative souffles, while Paige had the rack of lamb. We shared two dessert souffles, one chocolate and the other cherry/almond. Yum!

One of our favorite meals was at Relais de L’Entrecote. One of my all time favorites, this is a steakhouse like no other you’ve ever been to. No menus. No reservations. Cash only. For a very low price you get gorgeous a salad, steak sliced in the best sauce I’ve ever had, unending hot, crispy frites, wine and dessert. A real neighborhood joint. The review in Zagat says it like this and I concur, “When ordering from the friendly but no-nonsense servers, rare, medium or well done are the only words you need to know because the reasonably priced beef’s the only game in town here. 2 locations. 6th arrondissement, 8th arrondissement … 20 bis, rue St-Benoit (St-Germain-des-Prés) Paris 01 45 91 600, or 15, rue Marbeuf (Franklin D. Roosevelt) Paris 01 45 20 717.”

Shop ’til We Drop

I wanted Paige to get a feel for shopping experiences that she would not have at home (aka … the ubiquitous Mall). We strolled the designer rich (and rich designer) Avenue de la Montaigne, the boutiques of St. Germain, the overwhelming Galeries Lafayette (where I discovered the champagne bar and parked myself to imbibe while my cousin shopped), the trendy stores of the Marais, the markets, the museum shops, an art fair, and the bookanistes. She became very adept at scoping out the hundreds of shops that carried teensy, weensy (size 0) clothes that would set her apart at home, focusing on the trendiest most fun clothing and accessories.

Her initial shyness soon evaporated and she would stride into a store issuing the requisite “Bonjour madame/mademoiselle” upon entry and “Merci, bonne journee” upon exiting. One of my favorite experiences was when she asked if we could go into Chanel on Avenue de la Montaigne … just to look around. She politely asked to see the earrings and picked up several of the small, plastic button earrings with the ubiquitous Chanel “C’s.” When told they were 230 Euros, without a beat, and with a polite smile she said, “Thank you, they are a bit more than I was hoping to spend.” When we left the shop, she commented on the fact they were just a pair of plastic earrings :)

Monet’s Gardens

We went on Fat Tire’s day trip to Monet’s gardens and house in Giverny, about an hour outside Paris. We took the train with the group and then picked up the bikes at
the train station in Vernon, biked to the market to pick up lunch items, had a picnic lunch then biked to the house for the afternoon. It was lovely and I highly recommend it. We were there at peak season and it was mobbed, so I’d suggest it may be more enjoyable in the off season, though the lily ponds may not be in bloom.

This company also has several other tours, including a night tour, a day tour, a tour of Versailles, and segue tours ... see their Web site http://www.fattirebiketoursparis.com/. I reserved on line ahead of time.

The End

I could go on and on ... but look, I already have. Obviously we had a wonderful time and I know Paige will treasure the memory of this girl’s trip for many years to come.

Appendix B

“Unzipped,” by Scott, posted on his blog site, December 1999.

It was the evening of December 20th, three days before I was to depart for Indiana on my annual pilgrimage home. I needed a wheeled garment bag so that I could give my aching back a rest during the long journey.

As usual, the week before Christmas turned out to be a frenzy, so I had put off my luggage purchase until the last minute. If I wanted a new garment bag, I had to get it that night. Not wanting to run the gauntlet of holiday-crazed suburb dwellers that were crowding the large shopping mall, I opted to visit a luggage store in a small strip mall near my office. I parked my car and strode for the store entrance, flush with the happy willingness to buy that seems to possess Americans in the busy days before Christmas. I pulled the door open, its bell jingling merrily.

At the sound the saleswoman moved from behind the counter to greet me at the front of the store. As my foot crossed the threshold I immediately realized two things:

1. The saleswoman was extremely attractive.
2. My pants were completely unzipped.

To say that this woman was extremely attractive would actually be an understatement. She was gorgeous. She stood 5_7_ and had shoulder length black hair, high cheekbones, and a perfect button nose. Her well-proportioned mouth spoke English with a vaguely European accent, which added to the mystery. Her body was nothing but curves. She was a statue wrapped in a blue-ribbed turtleneck sweater and stylish black pants, both garments tight enough to observe the sculptor’s fine craftsmanship from across the room. Her slender legs looked even longer when punctuated by square-toed high-heeled boots, their shiny black leather winking from beneath the hem of her slacks.
To say that my pants were unzipped would likewise be an understatement. In point of fact, they were about to fall off. The button of my jeans had apparently come undone in the car, and the zipper had fallen completely open under the inevitable tug of gravity. The only thing keeping the pants attached to their owner at all was a brown belt, and the 1-inch strip of worn leather did not look like it was up to the task. Not only that, but I happened to be wearing a pair of loose-fitting jeans that day, purchased in a foolish attempt to look with it. (Damn you and your marketing, Tommy Hilfiger!)

These pants were almost loose enough to fall off when they were fastened, and in their current state I feared that they would slip to the ground at the slightest encouragement. I told this story to a friend who cheekily applauded my bravado, suggesting that approaching such a woman with an open zipper constitutes the sincerest form of honesty. To him let me just say that it's easy to laugh when your pants are well secured. I, on the other hand, was mortified. There's nothing more dreadful than being embarrassed in front of a person you find attractive, and this seemed like the inevitable outcome of my current situation. I was instantly transported back to eighth grade, when my friend Kyle had yanked down my pants in front of a girl that I really liked at the time. I was devastated. I was so embarrassed that I couldn’t even look at her after that day. My ears burned for months afterward. Fourteen years later, I shuddered at the memory.

“May I help you?” She asked again. I had apparently missed her original query, lost in thought as I was. I quickly realized that there were only two choices: make my purchase and leave as quickly as possible, or walk out the door and never, ever come back. If I gambled and won, I’d have my luggage and no one would be the wiser. If I lost … well, it would be eighth grade all over again. As I looked at this radiant beauty, her smile lighting up the store, I felt that familiar sickly dread of junior high welling up inside me. The only thing that kept me from bolting was my poor, aching back. “Yes,” I replied, “I’m looking for a wheeled garment bag.”

The saleswoman smiled at me. “We have several excellent models, sir,” she replied warmly as she strode with feline grace to a rack of luggage, leaving a trail of perfume and clipped vowels in her wake. This was going to be harder than I thought. Part of the problem was that Valentine, which I later learned was her name, was an excellent saleswoman. I have never met anyone so knowledgeable about luggage.

She knew every manufacturer, she knew every bag and, most devastating to my cause, she knew where everything was in the store. I’d hoped that if I asked enough questions she might be forced to go in the back room for a minute and leave me alone to put my pants back on. Alas, this was not to be. She moved with the cool assurance of a master, ready to handle any question I threw at her. To make matters worse, I couldn’t take my eyes off of her. She was beautiful. She made luggage sales look like the sexiest thing in the world. I watched, mesmerized, as her shapely fingers caressed glistening black nylon. Her silky voice enchanted me with a siren song of aluminum frame construction and lifetime warranties.

My reverie was snapped only by the sensation of my jeans sliding down my legs. I realized that I had to regroup and concentrate if I was going to make it out with my dignity intact. I took a deep breath, cleared my mind, and got to work.
I adopted a two-pronged strategy. The first phase, the Hike, was an attempt to hike the pants up to temporarily prevent them from slipping off of my hips and onto the floor. To execute the Hike, I casually hooked a thumb through one of my belt loops and tugged the waist as high as I could get it. I imagined myself doing this contemplatively, as an aristocrat might pull on his sleeve to signal a bid at an auction.

The second phase of my plan, the cover, was intended to prevent anyone from discovering the hiking activities that were then taking place. I thrust my non-hiking hand into the pocket of my long black coat and casually pulled that side of the coat around me. At the same time I pulled my shoulders into my coat to cover more of my front, as if a chill wind had just blown through the store.

I put my plan into action immediately. The resulting exchange would not have looked out of place in a Charlie Chaplin movie. Although I attempted to make it look natural by switching my hiking and covering hands, I had to adjust so often that my clothing was constantly in motion. I was a blur of blue denim and black wool.

Valentine: Zis bag has many expandable pockets.
Me: Ah. (Left-hand Hike. Right-hand Cover.)
Valentine: Zis makes eet very useful for short trips or long trips.
Me: I see. (Right-hand Hike.)
Valentine: Zis bag also uses rip-stop ballistic nylon and durable polyurezane veels [sic].
Me: (Left-hand Hike.) Polyurethane wheels, huh? (Right-hand Cover. Left-hand Hike.) That’s good. (Right-hand Hike.)

We continued in this manner for several minutes as I tried to focus on the important luggage facts being shot at me, machine gun style, from Valentine’s perfect mouth. She gushed over a $300 suit bag made by Travelpro, enumerating its many features while frequently stressing its high-quality American manufacture. She claimed it was the very best bag in the store, second only to a more expensive Italian bag. I nodded appreciatively, not bothering to work out the math. (I’m telling you, she was good.)

I did not have $700 to spend on Italian luggage, so my choice was pretty clear after about five minutes. I couldn’t appear too anxious, though. If my retreat were too hasty, Valentine might get suspicious and give me the once-over. One well timed glance at my nether regions and I was done for. I was also worried about looking like a cheapskate, even in this time of crisis. I had to examine a few other options and then, after careful consideration, choose the Travelpro not because I couldn’t afford the other bags, which of course I couldn’t, but because I had the Financial Acumen to recognize that it was a great buy.

I poked and prodded at the other bags, rubbing my chin thoughtfully whenever I had a free hand that wasn’t busy Hiking or Covering. Valentine helpfully demonstrated every zipper on every bag, and each zzzzzzzzip! ratcheted up my anxiety level. My pants kept slipping. The store, previously empty, was now nearly full, as if a tour bus of luggage hungry sightseers had just pulled up. The time had come to make my move. I waited for her to finish talking about the quality of
American ball bearings and then, with a thoughtful pause, I said, “You know, I think I’m going [to] go ahead and get the Travelpro.” Her face lit up like a child’s on Christmas morning. “Oh, zat is an excellent choice, sir!” she glowed, putting her delicate hand on my arm. The feeling of warmth at her touch was tempered only slightly by the thought of what might happen if she jostled me too forcefully.

“Right zis vay sir, and ve’ll get you all taken care of.” She pulled my new bag up onto its wheels, thrust the handle at me, and slinked over to the cash register, her pants swishing as she walked. It was with horror that I realized my next predicament: getting to the counter. My pants were looser than ever, and the motion of walking would surely just speed their escape. My only chance was to walk quickly and use inertia to keep them up. I made it in two fast strides, but I nearly tripped on the way. Safely across the store, I could now lean on the counter to halt the downward progress of my trousers. The trip had frightened me, though; I was clearly losing my concentration. I had to get out of there fast.

Valentine gathered the paperwork needed to ring up my purchase. For some reason, it seemed that everything she needed to complete our transaction was in an extremely low drawer behind the register, which required her to keep bending over suggestively. I tried not to look, but my leaning posture put me in a perfect ogling position. Not wanting to move my legs and risk disaster, I turned my head awkwardly to the right and gazed at a display of backpacks to reassure the others in the store that I wasn’t staring. The smirk on the face of the other store employee told me that I wasn’t going a very good job. (Why couldn’t he have been my salesman?)

Finally, Valentine stood up and began to process my credit card. It was taking forever. I prayed that my credit card wouldn’t be rejected. I began to sweat. Finally the machine spit out a receipt, which Valentine offered to me, smiling. I signed it quickly and turned to go, but she wasn’t through. She handed me a passel of items and explained each one at length: my credit card, my receipts, the owner’s manual, the warranty card. I patiently waited until she was through and then, with as attractive a smile as I could muster, yanked everything out of her hand. Not even bothering to put my credit card back into my wallet, I turned on my heel and hurried out. “Zank you sir, and have wonderful holiday!” Her accent played in my ears as I wheeled my trophy out of the store.

I stood on the sidewalk outside. It was 150 feet to the car. My hands would be full during the journey, so I wouldn’t be able to make any pants adjustments on the way. If they started to slip at all, they were going straight to the ground. I had a horrible vision of myself standing in the middle of the brightly lit parking lot with my pants around my ankles, surrounded by Valentine and the people from the tour bus, all of them cackling and pointing. I shuddered. This was it. I performed one final Hike, grabbed the suitcase handle, and made a break for it.

I took long strides, keeping my legs perpendicular to the ground for as long as possible. I looked like a football player high-stepping through a series of tires. I was sure Valentine was watching me; I could feel her cool blue eyes burrowing into my back. The parking lot seemed to get longer with every step I took, like that hallway in “The Shining.”
I reached the car (out of breath!) and frantically pressed the unlock button on my car remote (hurry up hurry up!) until the lights flashed and I heard the metallic snick! of the lock. I tore open the trunk (my God, they’re slipping!), threw the suitcase inside (faster, faster!) and tossed in the handful of papers Valentine had given me (no time, just go!). My credit card clattered against the garment bag’s wheels. I slammed the trunk closed (almost there!), whirled around, whipped open the driver’s door, and dove for the safety of the cockpit. The darkness was like a tall, cool glass of water. After a long drink I pressed my back against the seat, slid the jeans up to my waist, zipped them up, and fastened the button. Rapture! I was never so glad to be wearing pants in all my life. Happiness flooded over me. I wanted to sing a song. I wanted to hug someone. I wanted to apologize to Tommy Hilfiger and take back the nasty things I’d said about his questionable parentage. “I was emotional! No hard feelings?”

Most of all, I wanted to go back inside and talk to Valentine. I wanted to tell her about the whole silly situation and explain why I had been acting so strangely. In the end, she’d probably think it was cute. She’d laugh and put her hand on my arm again. She’d find the story charming, like in the movies, and insist on buying me a cup of coffee. But life, as I well know, is not the movies, and I was not about to risk humiliation twice in one evening. I sped out of the parking lot and into the night, my hips snugly ensconced in denim.

Epilogue: It turned out that the garment bag was too small, so I couldn’t even take it on my trip. I wanted to return it, but I couldn’t bring myself to go back. The bag is still sitting in my closet. I haven’t worn those jeans since that night, and I haven’t been back to the store.

Appendix C


Well I wouldn’t wear a fur coat — not a real one anyway — so the title had to reflect that!!

I have discovered a lovely second hand ladies wear shop in Beachamp [sic] Place near Harrods in Knightsbrisge [sic] which has designer wear at vastly reduced prices. I bought a Valentino short leather skirt (and the leather is baby soft, ok I know I said I wouldn’t wear fur — so I’m inconsistent!) which would cost £600 new for £110 and it looks really as new — you would never have guessed it’s second hand.

Anyway — onto the op — at this lovely shop I spoed [English for spied] a beautiful cream coloured cashmere coat — Versace no less for 150 pounds. Sold to the lady slobbering in the corner! The feel of the cashmere was sooo soft and it was lined with a beautiful silver embossed lining that felt beautiful against the skin and epitomized luxury all the way. No way would I be able to afford one of these at the real price of nearly £1,000.

The fit of the coat was wonderful and I felt like I was one of those film stars sweeping into the room wearing the most wonderful outfit. Versace is available at so
many stores now, almost always tied up by anti theft devices so this was the first time I had ever been able to try Versace on.

There is a great Versace store at Bicester which does have cheaper prices — worth a look! This coat was less than 6 months old and had been sent in by a lady who gets her clothes for nothing and wears them once or twice and then sends them in for resale.

Having worn Versace I would definitely look to buy something else from their “stable” as the finish on this coat is the best. It has been hand stitched and reeks of quality. Proud of my purchase and having just been into Rigby and Pellar for my six month refit of lingerie I started my journey home wanting to show off my purchases.

On speaking to the man of the moment I found he was at home not doing a great deal and, as he was on his own, I thought I could pay him a visit. We agreed I would get a takeaway on the way back.

My mind wandered as I negotiated the motorway and I was so eager to show off my new “buys” that I cooked up a surprise. I have always wanted to do this and this was the perfect opportunity. I picked up the takeaway and then pulled into the local garage to use the loo.

It didn’t take long to change into the lingerie and on a whim I didn’t redress but just put on my coat. Luckily I had been wearing a skirt in any case so had the required stockings to complete the look :-)

I stuffed my bags with my remaining clothes and left the garage trying not to look too conspicuous! No one, of course, paid any attention to me at all but I really thought they knew what I was up to.

Now the food was getting colder the hotter I became and I really wasn’t concentrating too well on my driving. As a precaution (clever girl — I’m learning) I thought I would ring my man to check he was still alone, after all I didn’t want to make a fool of myself. Yes he was alone and where was his dinner! Well I thought ... I hope to be giving you some food for thought in a few minutes :-)

As I rung off down I caught sight of a blue light behind me ... the local constabulary wanted to discuss me using a mobile phone while driving ... well they don’t have a great deal to do in this rural area! I duly pulled over and sat in the car having wound the window a little — after all you never know if they’re real. They were real and asked me to get out of the car.

Now I don’t know if you have ever stolen a frozen chicken by stuffing it up your skirt and trying to walk away casually, but if you have you will be able to visualize how I got out of the car ... trying the hardest not to reveal what was (or wasn’t) underneath my coat.

Versace did not let me down. The coat, all encompassing, only using two of the buttons provided kept my chastity covered. This coat has quality and after several dry cleanings because of the colour still looks as good as new!

The problem I had was that the evening was very warm and they asked why I was wearing a coat when it was so hot. The fear on my face convinced them that I was smuggling drugs or something and their manner was less convivial. Quick as a flash I told them I was going to a fancy dress vicars and tarts party. [Refers to a party
where the theme requires guests to arrive dressed up as either a vicar or a prostitute. It is a very English tradition.

“Let’s have a look” said the youngest one, who was the one if I had a choice I would have accepted a drink from! I pulled up my coat to show the top of a leg and told them that was all they were getting! They laughed and we all went our separate ways ... thank goodness.

Five or six minutes later I arrived at my man’s house, “nice coat” he said as I wafted in like a film star, “did you remember the poppadoms?” [Indian crisp bread served at curry houses in England often as an accompaniment to the main course.]

As I tried to kiss him he shifted me out of the way as the football was on. I resorted to standing in front of the TV and slowly unbuttoning my two buttons ... Luckily he has a microwave, and only the Nan bread went soft :-)

Would I buy Versace again? Best coat I ever bought!
Chapter 4

Creating Visual Narrative Art for Decoding Stories

Synopsis

Chapter 4 shows and tells how to create visual art to achieve deep understanding about stories that individuals tell. Creating visual narrative art (VNA) of stories achieves several objectives. First, creating VNA revises and deepens sense-making of the meaning of events in the story and what the complete story implies about oneself and others. Second, creating VNA surfaces unconscious thinking of the protagonist and other actors in the story as well as the storyteller (recognizing that in many presentations of stories an actor in the story is also the storyteller); unconscious thinking in stories relating to consumer and brand experiences reflect one or more archetype (Jung 1916/1959) fulfillments by the protagonist and the storyteller; given that almost all authors agree on a distinction between processes that are unconscious, rapid, automatic, and high capacity, (System 1 processing) and those that are conscious, slow, and deliberative (System 2 processing, see Evans, 2008), VNA enables and enriches processing particularly relating to system 1 processing—enabling more emotional versus rational processing. Third, creating VNA of stories is inherently and uniquely fulfilling/pleasurable/healing for the artist; using visual media allows artists to express emotions of the protagonist and/or audience member, to vent anger, or report bliss about events and outcomes that words alone cannot communicate; VNA provides a tangible, emotional, and holistic (gestalt) experience that is uniquely satisfying and does so in a form that many audience members enjoy over and over again. Chapter 4 elaborates on the rationales for its central proposition, briefly reviews relevant literature on VNA, and illustrates one mode of VNA for the complementary stories told by a consumer and brand.

This chapter is co-authored with Arch G. Woodside, Boston College, and Carol Megehee, Coastal Carolina University.
Introduction to the Literature and Theory of Visual Narrative Art

Visual narrative art (VNA) includes scenes and/or all the acts/episodes in a story using one or more illustrations via paintings, sculpture, photographs, physical movements, film, or other media beyond verbal reporting that creates a picture in the mind relating to events involving symbols, people, animals, and other objects within contexts relevant to action in the story. Including physical displays of affection and aggression, VNA is the oldest storytelling medium with cave paintings of animals and depictions of humans hunting animals in Europe dating back more than 30,000 years. In more recent times (e.g., since the birth of Siddhartha Gautama (Buddha) in 485 BCE to the present), VNA remains the major medium for storytelling especially in societies with high levels of illiteracy.

This chapter responds to Felman and Laub (1992, p. xv) research call for “textualization of the context.” “The basic and legitimate demand for contextualization of the text [e.g., the place, time, and prequel events in a story] itself needs to be complemented, simultaneously, by the less familiar and yet necessary work of textualization of the text.” Research on VNA builds from dual processing accounts of reasoning, emotions, judgment, and social recognition. Dual processing research recognizes two different modes of mental processing. The following labels summarize these different modes: System 1 and System 2 processes (Kahneman & Frederick, 2002; Stanovich & West, 1998). Dual processing theory includes theory and empirical evidence supporting the following attributes of System 1 processes: unconscious thinking, holistic, evolutionary old, associative and parallel, shared with animals, domain-specific, independent of general intelligence, and independent of working memory (Evans, 2008). Theory and empirical evidence support the following attributes of System 2 processes: conscious thinking, analytic, evolutionary new, rule-based, uniquely human, domain-general, linked to general intelligence, and limited by working memory capacity (Evans, 2008). The present chapter suggests and demonstrates the usefulness for researchers to work (create and collect dual processing data) and report in dual media to reflect dual processing: creating VNA as well as verbal reports of concepts, processes, outcomes, and interpretations.

Dual processing theory and research, the literature on visual narrative art, and storytelling theory and practice literature support the propositions and case study that this chapter reports. However, while this chapter connects these three literature streams, the presentation here does not include extensive reviews of the three literature streams.

VNA was quite in vogue during the Buddha's lifetime especially in the form of pata-chitra — a cloth-banner serializing a story and revealing a moral — now a traditional tool of knowing and stimulating a mind to know (Jain & Daljeet, 2006). Nigel Saul and colleagues’ (1997) The Oxford Illustrated History of Medieval England provides dozens of photographs of sculptures, paintings, and architecture that confirm their point, “History has often taken shape in the telling of tales” (Nelson, 1977, p. 25). Spiegelman’s Maus I (1986) and Maus II (1991) present a compelling, highly emotional, VNA portrayal of the Holocaust that portrays Jews as mice and Germans as cats. “It tells an absorbing story, a moving portrait of a flawed family. It is also complex aesthetically and politically in ways specific to comics” (Chute,
Chapter 4’s focus is to distinguish from earlier reports relating to VNA in consumer culture research that report on decoding themes appearing in fiction and nonfiction comics (e.g., Barcus, 1961; Berger, 1971; Belk, 1987; Chute, 2008; Ewert, 2000; Kassarjian, 1983, 1984; Spiggle, 1985, 1986). The focus here is on advancing a VNA template for the case study researcher to create visualizations of stories relating to text and non-text materials as a tool to assist in decoding stories into both unconscious and conscious meanings. The use of “researcher” here is inclusive of professional social scientists as well as the human protagonist and other actors engaging in self-reflection (e.g., Spiegelman, 1991; and subjective and confirmatory personal introspections, see Gould, 1991; Woodside, 2004a, 2006) using media that include going beyond verbal reporting.

Following this introduction to VNA and VNA research, the second section describes the central objective and presents rationales for creating VNA in consumer research. The third section three presents a general template for creating VNA. The fourth section four applies the creative process and shows a VNA for a consumer self-report on shopping, buying, and using a luxury brand of clothing (a Versace woman’s coat); building on Fournier (1998) and Chapter 3, the resulting VNA also depicts what a seemingly innate object, a brand, says and does in interacting with the consumer. The fifth section five decodes the VNA of the story involving the human and brand protagonists to enable the VNA viewer to achieve understanding of both conscious and unconscious meanings of the whole story from its parts. The sixth section six includes conclusions, implications for learning in consumer research using VNA, limitations, and suggestions for further research.

Central Objective and Rationales for Creating VNA in Consumer Research

The central objective here is to illustrate the creation of VNA in contextualizing text so as to explicate the dual processing that occurs in the meanings in stories. The chapter probes the proposition that incorporating/creating visual media parallel with analyzing written text assists particularly in surfacing System 1 (unconscious) processing and consequently serves to deepen and clarify meaning in a story’s scenes and its gestalt.

Rationales for creating VNA include the general finding that unconscious thinking is the dominant mode for most mental processing and such processing is unavailable or only available within narrow limits of meaning and detail for conscious thinking and communicating verbally (for reviews, see Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Creating VNA to parallel verbal (oral and written) narrative nurtures dual processing to a greater extent and in ways that verbal narratives alone do not. Research using true experiments supports the proposition that nonverbal (e.g., image, music) processing involves different psychological mechanisms than verbal processing and that
nonverbal versus verbal cues elicit more imagery (visual associations with action and motion), thereby suggesting that such cues may be particularly useful for investigations of feeling/emotional advertising (e.g., & Punj, 1998).

Second, relationships involving communication exchanges between consumers and brands (Fournier, 1998) provide the means for awakening and fulfilling collective unconscious archetypal forms that VNA assists in surfacing. VNA in conjunction with verbal narrative art permits, recognizes, and insists on unconscious–conscious dual processing interpreting during the VNA creation process and by most audience members when art uses both media (e.g., film and comics).

Third, “Thoughts typically occur as nonverbal images even though they are often expressed verbally. Thus the way in which thoughts occur may be very different from the way in which they are communicated” (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995, p. 37). Using historical analysis of research in the natural sciences, learning research, and technology, Ferguson (1977, p. 827) provides substantial evidence confirming that, “‘Thinking with pictures’ is an essential strand in the intellectual history of technological development.”

Fourth, “Human memory is story-based” (Shank 1999, p. 12). Story-based, episodic memories provide multiple indices for retrieval and interpretation and therefore facilitate learning (Shank, 1990, 1999). Telling stories and repeating these stories often brings clarity (Weick, 1995). Retrieving and repeating stories provides a catharsis — an emotional cleansing that relieves tension by bringing unconscious or repressed memories to consciousness (Woodside, Sood, & Miller, 2008). Specifically, storytelling allows the individual to experience one or more archetypal myths. An archetype is an unconscious primary form in the collective human subconscious that represents an idea. An archetype is a prototype that is not learned but is with us from birth (Jung, 1916/1959; Wertime, 2002).

The title and movie, Rebel without a Cause (1955), reflect a central proposition of archetypal theory: an archetypal form stimulates and directs a collective unconscious form of processing that a story encapsulates. Reflecting such unconscious processing, in the movie the protagonist, Jim Stark (a teenager played by James Dean) is asked, “What’s wrong?” He responds, “I don’t know. Leave me alone.” The movie tells the tale of a teenager feeling betrayed by his bickering parents and parental control of his actions.

Without referring to Jung’s archetypal theory, Holt (2003) proposes that marketers can be highly successful when their brands enact rebellion.

Table 1 summarizes the rebel (anti-hero) and eleven additional archetypal forms, their stories, and examples of brands showing and telling productions of these stories.
Table 1: Archetypes, story gists, and brand examples.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Story gist</th>
<th>Brand examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ultimate strength</td>
<td>When an obstacle is there, it must be overcome, strength must be proven in use</td>
<td>Timex — “It takes a licking and keeps ticking”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The Siren</td>
<td>Power of attraction, linked with the possibility of destruction</td>
<td>Allure by Chanel; Envy by Gucci</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The hero</td>
<td>Fortitude, courage, and victory; a journey and transformation</td>
<td>Michael Jordan and Nike shoes; Joe DiMaggio and Mr. Coffee; Power Puff Girls; Forrest Gump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The anti-hero</td>
<td>Universal message of destruction and attraction of evil; the bad dude</td>
<td>Heavy metal icons; Howard Stern; Jerry Springer; Oakland Raiders; Che Guevara; Harley-Davidson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The creator</td>
<td>Creative inspiration and the potency of imagination; originality; authentic</td>
<td>Coca Cola — the real thing; Walt Disney; Kleenex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The change master</td>
<td>Transformation, self-improvement, and self-mastery</td>
<td>Curves — workout stores for women; Gillette’s Mach 2 Razor; Porsche 911</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1: (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Archetype</th>
<th>Story gist</th>
<th>Brand examples</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The powerbroker</td>
<td>Authority, influence and domination — the world’s leading …; the best …; number one</td>
<td>CNN; E.F. Hutton; Bill Gates; Microsoft</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The wise old man</td>
<td>Experience, advice, and heritage; staying the test of time</td>
<td>Levi’s; Obi-Wan Kenobi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The loyalist</td>
<td>Trust, loyalty, and reassurance</td>
<td>CocaCola and “Mean” Joe Green with boy of 12 TV commercial; <em>I Love Lucy</em>; Friends TV sitcom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The mother of goodness</td>
<td>Purity, nourishment, and motherly warmth</td>
<td>Just Juice; Ivory Soap; Tropicana Orange Juice; Aunt Jemima; Fairy Godmother; Witch of the East; Snow White</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The little trickster</td>
<td>Humor, non-conformity, and the element of surprise</td>
<td>Dennis the Menace; Bart Simpson; <em>Pee-Wee’s Big Adventure</em>; <em>SpongeBob SquarePants</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The enigma</td>
<td>Mystery, suspense, and uncertainty</td>
<td>Zorro; Abercrombie and Fitch; Star Trek</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Source:* Developed in part from several chapters in Wertime (2002).
Chapter 3 develops the central proposition that Table 1 implies: a mostly unconscious process creates the kernel of a consumer–brand relationship and the consumer’s desire for archetype fulfillment drives her or him to act — to undertake a storytelling journey.

Today, people often share their stories by way of blogs on the Internet. Blogs are a rapidly growing form of information that are open to the public or to small select groups (Kluth, 2006). Sharing stories via blog entries is pleasurable because both authors and readers can relive experiences, vent anger, share happy times, and vicariously experience the role of protagonist in the story (Shindler & Holbrook, 2003). In addition, storytelling permits archetype fulfillment and “revises and deepens sense making of the meaning of events in the story and what the complete story implies about oneself and others” (Woodside et al., 2008, p. 100).

All great storytellers deal with the fundamental conflict between subjective expectations and cruel reality (McKee, 2003). Both storyteller and listener should approach the story with skepticism. The skeptic knows that the real truth lies below the surface story in the unconscious and unexpressed (Wilson, 2002). A story typically begins when the protagonist’s life is in balance but some triggering event comes along and throws him out of balance. The heart and soul of the story, the journey, is the protagonist’s struggle to restore balance or achieve a new balance, describing what it is like to deal with opposing forces, digging deeply, taking risks, facing ugly truths, but finally achieving a catharsis — emotional fulfillment and cognitive understanding about himself and other important people in his life.

**Consumer–Brand Storytelling Master Template**

Storytelling theory and practice literature just reviewed forms the basis of the phase dynamics theory (PDT) of epiphany travel which can be used as a master template for analyzing consumer self-narratives (Woodside & Megehee, 2009). PDT consists of five stages or phases in the protagonist’s cognitive and emotional preparedness to more fully answer the question, “Who and I?” Triggers, or motivating states and experiences, provide segues between phases in preparing for starting a story (Prequel and Awakening), engaging in the story’s action (Journey and Catharsis), and later re-experiencing (Post-Journey Storytelling and (Re) Interpretations) a journey that leads to personal enlightenment. Throughout the process and in the retelling of the experience, the protagonist fulfills one or more archetypes. Figure 1 illustrates the basic PDT model.

Figure 1 shows a sequential polyscenic mode of visual narration whereby the narrator opts to separate each of several scenes in a story using some dividing motif — an architectural structure such as walls or trees or the use of distinct panels such as a sequence of four to eight panel episodes by creators of many comics. The sequential polyscenic mode is one of several possible modes of VNA. Jain and Daljeet (2006) present examples of Buddhist art (sculpture and pata-chitra) to illustrate sequential polyscenic and three additional modes of VNA. A continuous mode is the presentation of a whole chain of events without a frame separating one
Prequel

On-going life experiences that may include un-pre-, or semi-conscious feelings that something is unknown or missing about oneself; unconsciously asking, “Who am I?”

Awakening

Recognizing a journey is likely to be necessary; completing planning steps to start the journey; consciously asking, “Who am I?”

Journey

Catharsis

Emotional and cognitive understanding/fulfillment and understanding about oneself and possibly other persons important in one’s life; deeper knowledge of who I am.

Post-Journey

Storytelling and (Re)Interpretations

Telling of parables and experiencing “proper pleasure” by reliving events and outcomes in the journey; storytelling dynamics

Key: $T_1$ = trigger—for example, $T_1$ is a communication, event, that provides/surfaces conscious thinking about (1) problems/opportunities and (2) people and places necessary to reach to enable the achievement of desirable end states

= a world (e.g., landslide) or personal (e.g., lack of knowledge or skills) block often that is unexpected that occurs during the journey

= help from a person—often a person on the scene that provides advice and assistance; serves to help craft solutions and means around world blocks

= delays, breakdowns

= physical locations

= weather or environmental conditions causing a delay or setback in the journey

= good times/moments occurring during the journey

= rope signifies help in the form of an animal, product or natural object

Figure 1: Phase dynamics theory of epiphany travel.
event from another. A synoptic mode presents multiple interpretations of the same or similar stories with the various episodes representing synopses of a theme without regard to temporal sequence. A conflated mode of a polyscenic narration portrays a long series of events stretching over an expanded and well defined geography though lacking in chronological order (Jain & Daljeet, 2006).

A monoscenic mode presents either the “seed” out of which grows an entire story (Jain & Daljeet, 2006) or a vivid scene that captures the climax or gist of the story. Figure 2 presents a story in the monoscenic mode that might remind you of the Grimm’s fairy tale of Hansel and Gretel meeting an evil old witch. The illustration depicts two protagonists and a tall bent-over person in a ragged dress and carrying a crooked walking stick; the scene might automatically bring to mind the story of an evil witch who plans on eating the two children. VNA via literary illustrations, paintings, and other media (e.g., seeing–reading comics, attending theatre productions, watching professional wrestling, and other sporting events) provides a tangible, emotional, and holistic (gestalt) experience that is uniquely satisfying and does so in a form that many audience members enjoy over and over again (see Schindler & Holbrook, 2003).

Applying the Master Template in Creating Visual Narrative Art

This section presents a VNA without (Figure 3) and with contextual text notes (Figure 4) for Pollee’s self-reflective account of her shopping for clothing where she
Figure 3: Pollee shopping, buying, and using Versace cashmere coat and lingerie.
1. Pollee shopping in store at Beauchamp Place and spots a Versace coat on sale for very low price that she is able to try-on because no anti-theft device is attached to the coat.
2. After buying coat, Pollee goes to Rigby & Peller and buys luxury-sexy lingerie.
3. Pollee calls boyfriend and buys takeaway food to take to his place.
4. Pollee stops at loo and transforms into a Siren by...
5. Taking-off dress and wearing only coat with lingerie to surprise boyfriend.
6. Pollee talks to boyfriend on cell phone.
7. Police stop Pollee for talking on cell while driving.
8. Pollee explains wearing coat in summer by telling officer that she is traveling to a vicars and tarts party.
9. Pollee arrives home to see her boyfriend watching football on TV; takes off coat, shows him her transformation; they embrace and have sex.

Figure 4: Textualizing the visual contexts of Pollee’s shopping, buying, and using Versace cashmere coat/lingerie.
spies, buys, and wears a recycled Versace coat. The section first reports a PDT textual decoding of Pollee’s story. The section also shows a VNA creation of the story along with a decoding of this VNA.

Analyzing a Consumer Self-Narrative from a Blog

“Long coat, no knickers …,” a blog by Pollee, posted August 24, 2001, illustrates the master template for analyzing consumer self-narratives. Pollee’s full self-report appears in Appendix C in Chapter 3. As the following text and visual decoding of the story reveal, Pollee’s self-report exemplifies a story in which the two protagonists — Pollee and Versace interact with each other and supporting actors in the story to fulfill the Siren archetype.

Prequel

In the prequel phase, the protagonist, in her on-going life, may experience unconscious, preconscious, or semiconscious feelings that something is unknown to him or missing in her life. From time to time the protagonist may ask herself, “Who am I? What is my purpose? Why am I here?” But until the meta-conscience is aware that these questions be answerable, they remain below the level of active conscience. This void may lie dormant in the person for years unless and until a tipping point (Gladwell, 2002) — a small change with a big, immediate effect — is reached. In this model, the tipping point is represented as a trigger, or the catalyst for change.

Pollee, the consumer protagonist in “Long coat, no knickers …,” reveals at the beginning of the story that she likes shopping at a second-hand ladies store in Knightsbridge. Even though she would never wear real fur, she confesses to buying a short leather Valentino skirt. Pollee even admits that she is inconsistent in the fur/leather principle. Although she tells us that she cannot afford designer clothes at new retail prices, what she really reveals about herself without actually saying so is that designer labels are important to her.

Prequel-Awakening Trigger (T1)

The Prequel-Awakening Trigger (T1) is a communication or event that surfaces to provide conscious thinking about (1) problems and/or opportunities and (2) people and places necessary to reach to enable the achievement of desirable end states. This trigger moves the consumer protagonist from a low-level, free-floating idea of a yet undefined need to be fulfilled to recognition that the need is one of self-discovery or self-definition. Information search — at least internal search — is triggered at this point.

“At this lovely shop I spied a beautiful cream coloured cashmere coat — Versace no less for 150 pounds. Sold to the lady slobbering in the corner!’ And so begins
Pollee’s great adventure! In the early scenes in Pollee’s self-report, she says nothing explicitly that responds to communications by Versace, the brand protagonist. Versace says very little verbally but its visual communications to Pollee and others appears clear. Figure 3 includes visuals of the irresistible beauty and charms of Sirens as the archetypal myth capturing the (initially) unconscious thinking of Pollee and the visual communications of Versace. See the Versace photograph (monoscopic story gist) appearing on top of the head of the woman portraying Pollee in Figure 3 (top left) and the following interpretations relating to Versace and Versace’s logo.

We’ve been conditioned to be at least titillated if not outright shocked by Versace. Garish, a little trashy, but always excellently constructed, Versace has been the label to go to for purely sexy luxury. It’s naughty: Medusa is the brand’s logo, after all. (WSJ, 2008, p. 1)

Medusa represents a dark force in the brand protagonist’s story. McKee (2003) emphasizes that creating a dark force makes for good stories. Inciting incidents and dark forces “throw life out of balance.” The story goes on to describe how, in an effort to restore balance or to achieve a new balance, the protagonist’s subjective expectations crash into an uncooperative objective reality. “A good storyteller describes what it’s like to deal with these opposing forces, calling on the protagonist to dig deeper, work with scarce resources, make difficult decisions, take action despite risks, and ultimately discover the truth.” (McKee, 2003, p. 52)

Medusa [in Greek mythology] was one of the Gorgons [three sisters], and the only one who was mortal. Her gaze could turn whoever she looked upon to stone. There is a particular myth in which Medusa was originally a beautiful maiden. She desecrated Athena’s temple by lying there with Poseidon. Outraged, Athena turned Medusa’s hair into living snakes. (Lindemans, 2009)

Awakening

Upon further evaluation, the consumer protagonist recognizes that a journey might be necessary to complete the missing or unknown aspects of his life or person. In the awakening phase, the protagonist plans steps to begin the journey and consciously asks, “Who am I?” Travel options (e.g., where to go and what to see) are examined and begin to gel in this phase.

Pollee reveals all kinds of wonderful things about this coat as if she is trying to justify the purchase and reduce any dissonance she has about spending her 150 pounds. The verbal motives for purchasing the coat include relative price (i.e., getting a 1000 pound coat for 150), condition (i.e., less than 6 months old, worn only once or twice), and quality (i.e., silver embossed lining, hand stitching). Her possibly initially unconscious motives are to own a Versace (luxury designer) item and to transform herself into a Siren.
Clothes with the Versace label are usually locked up with anti-theft devices because they are so valuable. Such security devices have prevented Pollee from trying on Versace, until now. Pollee speaks of the feel of the coat against her skin ("sooo soft"), the reek of quality, and of feeling like a film star. In this cashmere Versace coat, Pollee becomes the Siren.

**Awakening-Journey Trigger (T2)**

The Awakening-Journey Trigger (T2) is a communication or event that compels the protagonist to finalize specific travel plans. She will start a quest and her travels will be to a specific location at a specific time in the not-too-distant future. T2 leads the protagonist to believe that the discrepancy between the actual state and the desired state is large enough and important enough to seek additional information. External information search, evaluation of alternatives, and selection and purchase of products take place between awakening to the need for a journey and actually taking the journey.

Pollee puts together the purchase of this sensual cashmere coat with her "six month refit of lingerie." The lingerie purchase occurs at Rigby & Peller — a luxury store brand specializing in sexy lingerie. Now the real journey begins! Unconscious thoughts surface in Pollee’s mind and she asks herself, “What is the best way to show off my purchases? How can these products bring out my inner-Siren?”

**Journey**

During the journey to enact the archetypal storyline, the consumer protagonist experiences the ups and downs/perceived positives and negatives in various physical locations punctuated by — often unexpected — world (e.g., landslide) or personal (e.g., feelings-of-failure) blocks that occur during the journey, delays (including weather or environmental conditions causing setbacks in the journey), help (often a person on the scene that provides advice and assistance that serves to facilitate the crafting of solutions and means around world blocks), and, of course memorable good times/moments that occur during the journey. Although the story of an epiphany journey can include aspects of pre- and post-journey experiences and interpretations, the journey provides the preponderance of the details of the story.

Pollee calls her “man-of-the-moment” to make sure he was home alone and not busy. She will pay him a visit and bring some take-out food. Once she is in her car and on the highway she comes up with an idea to surprise and show off her purchases to her man. Pollee picks up the food and then pulls into “the local garage to use the loo.”

In no time, Pollee changes into her new lingerie, and “on a whim,” puts the coat over the lingerie without getting redressed. Her stockings complete the look. “I stuffed my bags with my remaining clothes and left the garage trying not to look too conspicuous! No one, of course, paid any attention to me at all but I really thought they knew what I was up to.”
As she drove, “the food was getting colder the hotter I became.” She wasn’t concentrating on her driving, and as a precaution, she checked on her man again to make sure he was still home alone. “Yes he was alone and where was his dinner! Well I thought … I hope to be giving you some food for thought in a few minutes ;-)” No, Pollee was concentrating on her destination and not on her driving!

Just as she hung up, Pollee “caught sight of a blue light behind me … the local constabulary wanted to discuss me using a mobile phone while driving [illegal to do in the United Kingdom] … well they don’t have a great deal to do in this rural area!” She pulled over and rolled down her window to be certain they were real policemen. “They were real and asked me to get out of the car.”

“No I don’t know if you have ever stolen a frozen chicken by stuffing it up your skirt and trying to walk away casually, but if you have you will be able to visualise how I got out of the car … trying the hardest not to reveal what was (or wasn’t) underneath my coat.” But the Versace coat did not let her down. The coat’s quality was as good as new even after several dry cleanings. “Only using two of the buttons provided kept my chastity covered.” Pollee’s going to have some fun with the policemen!

How can she explain wearing the coat on such a warm evening? She hopes the cops don’t read the fear on her face as her being up to something worse than just dialing and driving. But staying in character, and “quick as a flash I told them I was going to a fancy dress vicars and tarts party.” “Let’s have a look” said the youngest one, who was the one if I had a choice I would have accepted a drink from! [Note that Pollee reveals that she would consider a new man-of-the-moment depending on the context.] I pulled up my coat to show the top of a leg and told them that was all they were getting! They laughed and we all went our separate ways … thank goodness.” Not only did she not get a ticket, but she and the two policemen got a good laugh out of the situation.

**Journey-Catharsis Trigger (T₃)**

The Journey-Catharsis Trigger (T₃) is the eureka! Ah-ha! Or, moment-of-truth. A few minutes later, Pollee wafts into her man’s house like a film star and he says, “Nice coat … where’s the food?” She tries to kiss him, but he pushes her out of the way, “As the football was on.” Pollee starts to engage in a striptease. “I resorted to standing in front of the TV and slowly unbuttoning my two buttons … Luckily he has a microwave, and only the Nan bread went soft ;-)”

**Catharsis**

Sometime during, but also at the end of and following the journey, the protagonist experiences an epiphany — a sudden intuitive realization of “the meaning of it all.” This follows not only a cognitive understanding of the experience, but a feeling of “cleansing” or renewal of self (catharsis). In this phase, emotional and cognitive
understanding of self — and possibly other people important in life — leads to fulfillment and a deeper knowledge of, “Who I am.”

The “new” Versace coat, or what’s underneath it, prevails over football on TV! Proof to Pollee that she is a Siren! “Would I buy Versace again? Best coat I ever bought!”

**Catharsis-Storytelling Trigger (T₄)**

The Catharsis-Storytelling Trigger (T₄) provides the bridge between emotional fulfillment and cognitive understanding and the retelling and reinterpretation of the journey. What made Pollee, the protagonist, think of posting this to her blog and sharing it with the rest of the world? Whatever her motivation, the blog provides positive word-of-mouth for the Versace brand. (This is four years after Versace was killed, so was it a scarcer item? Was this Donatella’s or Gianni’s design? Does it matter?)

**Post-Journey Storytelling and (Re)Interpretations**

Post-journey storytelling allows the epiphany traveler to relive and reinterpret events and outcomes in the journey. The story evolves to become the experience itself. Through interpretation, the story may evolve to the form of parable — metaphoric, symbolic stories with a lesson, moral, or message.

Why would the consumer protagonist want to share his story over and over again? First, storytelling allows the consumer protagonist to experience “proper pleasure” (Aristotle in Hiltunen, 2002) by reliving events and outcomes in the journey (Butcher, 1961). Storytelling is inherently pleasurable; it allows the teller to be both protagonist and audience, to vent anger or restore bliss, to relive the experience over and over again. Second, storytelling allows the protagonist to fulfill a primal archetypal form. Finally, storytelling revises and deepens sense making; repetitive storytelling clarifies and sharpens the meaning of events and contributes to the definition of self and others (Woodside et al., 2008).

How many of Pollee’s creative and humorous thoughts actually occur in their correct place in the story, and how many did she create after the fact in the process of storytelling? For example, did she actually think of what it would be like to steal a frozen chicken when she was getting out of the car to face the policemen, or did she think of it as an embellishment to her story while writing her blog? Perhaps, she thought of it after the fact but before she wrote the blog and these funny ideas were what stimulated her to post the story.

How much of the story was retroactive rationalization? The Siren archetype is a thread that runs throughout the story as if it were scripted. Pollee stays in character with the sensual designer clothes, the naughty lingerie, the flirtation with the cops (including the vicars and tarts cover story), the food, and the strip show in front of
the TV. The “man of the moment” fills a stereotype of the boyfriend who is only interested in food and football until the Siren successfully convinces him to be interested in her (sex).

This blog has a life beyond the first posting or retelling. Blogs are highly social in nature in that they invite commentary from others. Once information has been posted to cyberspace it takes on a life of its own and it is virtually impossible to retract once posted. Others will clarify, alter, and transfer information posted. Unbeknown to the original author of this blog, her story lives on in academic research!

Archetypal Identification as Outcome

By purchasing the cashmere Versace coat, undergoing her adventure in her new coat, and later retelling her story on in a blog, Pollee fulfilled her Siren archetype. In Greek mythology, the Siren was one of a group of sea nymphs that would lure sailors to their deaths on the rocks surrounding their island by sweetly singing their siren song. In general, a siren is a beautiful, seductive woman — a temptress — who by power of attraction, can lure men with her allure to their possible destruction. Not only was Pollee able to avoid a traffic ticket by flirting with the policemen, but she was able to lure her “man of the moment” away from the football game on TV!

Figure 3 is a VNA creation of the main and secondary story lines in “Long coat, no knickers” — a blog posting by “Pollee.” The main point depicted in Figure 3 is that Pollee, the consumer protagonist, fulfills a Siren archetype. Finding the deeply discounted but beautiful and luxurious Versace coat and pairing it with (just) her new lingerie allows Pollee to enact her inner temptress. Even the close encounter with the cops illustrates the principle that all great storytellers deal with the fundamental conflict between subjective expectation and (sometimes cruel) reality.

Much like Clark Kent using a telephone booth to transform from his cheap business suit and thick horn-rimmed eyeglasses into the blue bodysuit with red cape of Superman, Pollee uses a loo to transform from middle-aged woman shopper into the Versace cashmere coat and Rigby & Peller lingerie of a Siren. She overcomes world blocks (police stopping her journey and asking for an explanation for wearing a winter coat in the summer and her boyfriend’s focus on the football game on TV) with humor and creativity.

Textual Decoding via a Sequential Mode of VNA

Figure 4 includes textual decoding of the VNA for the Pollee–Versace story. Note that Figure 4 replaces the continuous mode of narration appearing in Figure 3 with a sequential mode of narration by using dotted triangles as a dividing motif. The dotted triangles show the six physical locations that appear in the story.

The use of a dividing motif in Figure 4 helps to clarify the possible balances and imbalances in relationships among stories that the brand, consumer, archetype, and
Case Study Research: Theory · Methods · Practice

reported action tell. Figure 5 reconfigures and simplifies Figure 4 in consideration of Heider’s balance theory (Heider, 1958; Woodside & Chebat, 2001). Woodside and Chebat’s (2001) application of Heider’s balance theory to a Jewish couple buying a German car illustrates a transformation from a psychologically balanced state to an imbalanced state to a new balanced state. The unconscious automatic association of Volkswagen with Nazi Germany prevented the couple from initially considering the purchase of a Volkswagen Super Beatle. The couple went through several iterations of conscious thinking to give themselves conscious permission to buy the car.

Figure 5 shows a conjunction of four triangles: ABC, BCD, ABD, and ACD. Note that Figure 5 shows balanced positive relationships for all four triangles. Considering Heider’s balance theory and a close reading of Pollee’s self-report indicates that the imbalance occurring is Pollee’s prior inability to enact her unconscious desire to transform into a Siren. Building from Jung’s theory of archetypal unconscious processing, double-headed arrow 1 in Figure 5 is the initiating driving force awaiting activation to permit Pollee to experience triangle BCD.

Versace uses a somewhat shocking, monoscenic, visual story at node A in Figure 5 to associate with the Siren archetype. Versace’s visual communication to Pollee is visceral, emotional, and instinctual — a factual communication would be counter-productive. Versace’s visual association in triangle ABC suggests that Versace and Pollee attach kindred spirit forces representing a combined undeniable force. Putting on the Versace coat has a dramatic impact similar to Clark Kent’s donning his Superman costume. Pollee and Versace combine to enact the story that Pollee reports: ABD in Pollee’s mind becomes Pollee’s ACD lived experience. Such an analysis is extendable to other archetypes and customer–brand stories (cf., Holt, 2003).

A visual imbalance does appear in Figure 5. Note that in the illustration at node A the central model is wearing clothes while the other four models appear without clothes on a beach — an imbalance (paradox, riddle, conflict). Only the central model is looking at the viewer and she appears ready to say, “Well, are you coming or not?” One interpretation is that the central model represents the consumer transported into Medusa to a place where beautiful immortals gather. What serves as the central model’s transporter? A Versace black, leather, bare-back pants-suit serves to transport the central model into Medusa to this place where she can associate with beautiful, naked, young immortals. The central model’s facial expression, facial makeup, and hair all express her archetypal transformation.

Conclusions, Implications, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

Brand, visual message, and monoscenic story portrayal

Archetype: Siren

Consumer/Pollee, with unconscious/conscious desire to enact archetype

Story enactment, gift, that follows Siren plot and consumer-brand unconscious/conscious interactions

Creating Visual Narrative Art for Decoding Stories

Figure 5: Brand and consumer interacting in storytelling production of Siren archetype. Source: Original visual structure that follows from Figure 3 template in Woodside et al. (2008).
the Voice of the Customer: Metaphor-Based Advertising Research.’’ Here is the refrain in Krauss’ song:

The smile on your face lets me know that you need me

There’s a truth in your eyes sayin’ you’ll never leave me

The touch of your hand says you’ll catch me if ever I fall

You say it best when you say nothing at all. (Krauss & Union Station, 2008)

The present chapter reviews relevant literature that supports the proposition that most communication is nonverbal, consumers think in stories via pictures mostly — not in words, and dual processing theory and research indicate that the oldest thinking process (System 1) has attributes that associate with the archetypal collective unconscious: automatic, implicit, holistic, evolutionary old, emotional, low-effort, visual-contextualized, and primal (shared with animals). Nonverbal messages appear to enhance effectiveness in ways that are not achievable with words.

Consumers and brands often talk to each other because such a form of expression represents logical, rationale, sane behavior — System 2 processing. System 2 processing is explicit, controlled, evolutionarily recent, textual, abstract (low context), uniquely human, rule-based, analytical, and often down-right boring, ignorable, and unconvincing.

The theory and research in this chapter supports a complementary proposition to Weick’s (1995, p. 12) famous System 2-related, sense-making suggestion that we do not know what we think until we hear what we say. The System 1-related complement is that we do not know what we feel (desire, love, hate) until we visualize what we (unconsciously) see. Because most thinking is unconscious, to learn what we are really thinking Wilson (2002) informs that we (researcher and informant) need to focus on our observable behavior — what we actually do and not what we say we believe in. Creating and interpreting VNA surfaces substantially important unconscious thinking/feeling-behavior associations.

Creating VNA requires the researcher and/or the informant to work in an evolutionarily old and primal mode of communication. Such a medium is useful because “all consumers have relevant hidden thoughts: ideas they are not aware of possessing but are willing to share once discovered” (Zaltman & Coulter, 1995, p. 39). Zaltman and Coulter (1995) emphasize the possibility of accessing these hidden or deep structures using a variety of techniques such as those used in art therapy, and especially phototherapy, can be very effective in surfacing such thoughts (Weiser, 1988; Ziller, 1990). What a person notices in a picture will always mirror the inner map that she or he is unconsciously using to organize and understand what the senses perceive (Weiser, 1988).

Implications that follow from VNA-related theory and research include the view that creating picture collages of stories consumers and brands tell are worthwhile
because they build from theory and empirical evidence that dual processing accounts for human behavior. VNA relates directly to the dominating influence of unconscious (System 1) processing while the dominant research method of asking questions does not and assumes that only conscious (System 2) processing is relevant. Another implication is that creating VNA may be useful in combination with consumer verbal storytelling. The consumer acting as a storytelling informant can be assisted in interviews in using the Internet to collect drawings and photographs, organize the collection into a story, and describe the story verbally that unfolds visually in the resulting VNA. Such a story-visualizing and storytelling conjunctive approach represents one type of forced metaphor elicitation technique (for another FMET approach, see Woodside, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c).

One of several limitations to creating VNA as a research method is that such creations usually require more than one session to create a complete VNA representation. Creating an insightful VNA likely requires a few days to a week or longer to permit surfacing of unconscious thoughts as the collage takes-on forms and shape. Using naturally occurring individual self-reports via storytelling with or without photographs (e.g., in blogs), researchers can expect to review such case data several times over several days in creating a VNA to represent the story. Issues of validity, reliability, and generalizability are relevant for research using VNA.

Following some amount of training in creating VNA, validity and reliability can be probed by asking an informant to create VNA of their own verbal story separate from a researcher’s own VNA creation of the same story. The resulting emic and etic visualizations can be compared for similarity, differences, completeness, and accuracy. Some meaningful degree of generalizability is achievable by selecting samples of informants based on theoretical profiles (e.g., middle-aged, heterosexual females currently involved with a man-of-the-moment) for VNA research. While not referring directly to VNA, McCracken (1988) suggests that five interviews per profile provides practical generalizability if the results from such anthropological data are highly similar. The VNA in this report may be relevant only for Pollee and Versace; the study does not include independent confirmation of the accuracy and usefulness of the VNA or its generalizability — certainly another limitation that future research should address.
Chapter 5

Subjective and Confirmatory Personal Introspection

Synopsis

Research findings support the view that a multiple methods approach is necessary to surface the substantial amount of relevant thinking processes that occur both consciously and unconsciously within different phases of consumer decision making. Chapter 5 advocates viewing all studies that ask informants questions as representative of researcher–informant introspections. Because answers to questions differ substantially depending on how the questions are framed, applying multiple, explicit, question frames to acquire conscious and unconscious thoughts in researcher–informant introspections is helpful. This chapter reviews multiple methods, including metaphor elicitation of unconscious thinking, useful for achieving and confirming thick descriptions of conscious and unconscious thinking associated with informants’ deep-seated beliefs and observable actions.

Introduction

A substantial body of social and case study research now supports a “creative destructive” (Loewenstein, 2001) view of consumer decision making (see Bargh, 2002; Zaltman, 2003). Such a view proposes that in actuality individuals have far less access to their own mental activities than survey researchers give them credit for. A stream of studies supports the conclusion that informants are able to only partially retrieve and report the reasons for their actions (Ericsson & Simon, 1993; Woodside, 2004b; Woodside & Wilson, 2003). “Ninety-five percent of thinking takes place in our unconscious minds — that wonderful, if messy, stew of memories, emotions, thoughts, and other cognitive processes we’re not aware of or that we can’t articulate” (Zaltman, 2003, p. 9).

Consequently, this chapter offers a workbench model of informant’s thinking related to interpreting and answering questions that the informant asks him- or herself or is asked by another researcher (e.g., another person addressing a question to an informant). The chapter suggests the use of a combination of introspective
conscious and unconscious thought retrieval elicitation techniques to achieve three objectives: (a) confirming both the belief and evaluations held consciously and unconsciously by the informant, (b) confirming the existence of experiences and related outcomes as described by the informant, and (c) achieving a deep understanding of how consumers become aware of their own desires (see Belk, Güliz, & Askegaard, 2003) that affect their search behavior, purchases, and use of products and services.

Figure 1 portrays multiple issues related to thinking about an issue raised by a researcher — regardless of whether or not the researcher is the same or a person different from an informant. Table 1 summarizes some of the research concerns and findings that relate to the first nine issues in Figure 1. Given that the dominant logic in consumer research continues to rely on asking questions and that attempts at answering questions require introspection (i.e., interpreting the questions, retrieving information from memory, editing, and reporting), Levy’s (1996, p. 172) views represent a sound defense for advancing introspection research methods:

In a casual sense, introspection is an inevitable part of consumer research, used by all research workers, as it means looking within one’s self to know one’s ideas and feelings. That is, introspection is another word for being self-conscious, aware, thoughtful, having ideas, and knowing what they are.

Relevant to the researcher asking a question (the starting oval in Figure 2), some amount of national and micro-culture-based unconsciousness (see Hofstede, 2001) occurs in framing and verbalizing questions. For example, how an Australian, a Brit, and an American frames and asks a respondent about beverages that the respondent consumed for breakfast will vary unconsciously by word content, dialect, and speaking pattern — even though the three researchers are using the same language.

Hofstede’s (2001, p. 4) view about provoking behavior applies to the researcher asking questions: “Strategies using provoking behavior inevitably contain a Heisenberg effect, in that the researcher interferes with the behavior observed. This means that such behavior [as reported by the informant] cannot always be extrapolated to circumstances in which the researcher is not present.” Also, the events and thinking process reported retrospectively by the informant may be viewed accurately as only approximations and highlights of the events and processes that actually occurred. Researcher interference with the behavior observed also applies to the researchers’ recordings and interpretations of nonreactive measures (for a discussion of this point, see Chapter 1 in Webb, Campbell, Schwartz, & Sechrest, 2000).

**Subjective Personal Introspection**

Subjective personal introspection (SPI; see Holbrook, 1986) includes a family of research methods that rely extensively or even exclusively on the researchers’ life experiences as data (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993). Holbrook (1986, 1995, 1999, 2003, 2007)
1. Researcher (R) frames and asks a question; the question may be in a survey, asked orally by a person other than the informant (I), or generated reflectively by I.

2. I aware question is being asked?

3. Meta-cognition: I asks herself why question is being asked (see Schwartz 1999).

4. I crafts meaning for the question: reframes question and topics (see Hilton 1995; Ericsson and Simon 1993).

5. I searches memory automatically for relevant experiences and knowledge that relate to the topic(s) in the question as interpreted and framed by I.

6. Unconscious thinking activated by attending to attending to the question and memory search.

7. (a) I retrieves experiences and concepts from memory; (b) Interprets and assigns meaning; (c) collects additional meanings automatically

8. (a) I edits and crafts answers that she believes relevant to question; (b) I edits answer to appear sane, wise (c) I edit answer based on context, status, (d) I automatically selects words to express herself

9. I verbalizes an answer.

10. R aware, understands, and interprets answer being given?

Figure 1: Introspective thinking process related to answering a question.
Table 1: Research concerns and findings for 10 issues related to introspection.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Research concerns and findings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Researcher (R) frames and asks question</td>
<td>Alternative question frames have larger influence on how informant (I) interprets and answers the question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informant (I) aware of question asked?</td>
<td>I may not attend or interpret R’s statement as a question</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meta-cognition: I asks herself why question asked</td>
<td>Meta-cognition likely to be an implicit step that I does not verbalize unless unsure, not confident, about rationale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I crafts meaning; reframes question and topic</td>
<td>Meaning/interpretation I assigns may poorly match with R’s framing of the issue and general focus of the inquiry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I’s search of long term for experiences and knowledge</td>
<td>I’s initial search is done automatically, a spreading activation relevant to question as I has framed it. Occurs quickly among easily retrieves concepts; evaluations are assigned automatically among concepts retrieved based on unconscious thinking</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unconscious thinking activated</td>
<td>Most thinking occurs unconsciously; I partially able to uncover unconscious thinking by reflection and use of thinking probes (e.g., metaphor elicitation techniques)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I retrieves experiences and knowledge from memory</td>
<td>I automatically and unconsciously decides when to stop retrieving interprets own thoughts; assigns meaning, experiences, interpretations, and assigning meanings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I crafts answers; does editing of thoughts</td>
<td>Crafting and editing done automatically partially and by controlled thinking (I may ask, “Will I get in trouble if I say what I really think?”)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I verbalizes answer</td>
<td>I unlikely to provide a rationale for beliefs without probing by R in order to limit cognitive effort and limit interviewing time</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2005a) provides a stream of introspective empirical reports focusing on one method of introspection: “impressionistic narrative accounts of the writer’s own private consumption experiences” (Holbrook, 2005a, 2005b, p. 3). Holbrook’s contributions stimulated the work of other consumer researchers (e.g., Gould, 1991, 1995; Hirschman, 1992; Williams, 1992) and work with a colleague (Holbrook & Kuwahara, 1998).
Instructions: Please read the instructions for all six rows in Figures 2a and 2b before answering.

1. In the square below, draw and name the beverage that represents who you are on a Friday night at a party. In the oval below, write down 3 words that describe that tells about the object in the square to the left. In the hexagon below, write down 3 words about yourself that follow from the words in the oval to the left. In some way relating to where to go for a university or college degrees please tell a story or true event that illustrates the words in the hexagon to the left.

2. In the square below, draw and name the motor vehicle that best represents who you really are:

3. In the square below, draw and name the motor vehicle that best represents your carefree side, the vehicle that you would most like to be:

Figure 2a: Metaphor and storytelling exercise.
Figure 2b: Metaphor and storytelling exercise.
Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) discern five categories of introspection on the basis of the level of closeness or intimacy between the researcher and introspector:

- **Researcher introspection.** The ultimate level of closeness in which the researcher is the sole introspector in the study; while several studies are available using this method, “our review of the social science literatures indicates that consumer research may be alone in this regard” (Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993, p. 141).
- **Guided introspection.** People other than the researcher are asked to introspect or think aloud about themselves and their actions; answering a written questionnaire is one form of guided introspection.
- **Interactive introspection.** The researcher assists others in their introspections but the object of the study is the “emergent experiences of both parties” (Ellis, 1991, p. 30). Wallendorf and Brucks comment that “beyond Ellis’s initial discussion, there does not appear to be a social science literature that has used and refined this method.” The present study does advance Ellis’s perspective and includes an interactive introspection among the triangulation of methods employed.
- **Syncretic combinations.** The most common form expands the sample beyond the researcher but also incorporates details of the researcher’s life experience that she or he is willing to document; unlike interactive introspection, this combination does not have the researcher share his/her introspections with informants (e.g., Freud, 1908/1965).
- **Reflexivity within research.** Ethnographic studies using participant observation and relying on two sources of data: (a) observational and interview material from people in a cultural group being studied and (b) reflexive material that emerges from being a participant studying that cultural group.

**Advancing Toward Confirmatory Personal Introspection**

Employing a syncretic combination of methods likely leads to deeper sense-making than SPI, as developed and advocated by Holbrook (1986, 2005a, 2005b). Such syncretic combination includes two or more of the following methods: (a) researcher self-introspection and written description of an observable stream of behaviors and thoughts occurring while the behaviors occurred; (b) the researcher interviewing any mentors who participated in the behavioral process under study; (c) the researcher interviewing a cohort to learn the cohort’s interpretations about the researcher’s own understanding of the occurrence of specific acts in the stream of behavior, and the antecedents that lead to each act; (d) the reflective use of decision and conscious processing tools by the researcher to help surface prior conscious thought (see Park, Hughes, Thurkal, & Friedman, 1981); (e) metaphor-generating tools (e.g., Christensen & Olson, 2002; Zaltman, 2003) and the use of experimental research designs (e.g., see Bargh, 2002) to uncover unconscious thinking relevant to the
behavioral process being investigated; and (f) the use of an independently developed
survey schedules to assist the researcher–informant in his or her introspection.

The objectives of this combination of methods include:

- Confirming the occurrence of milestone behavioral events and decision heuristics
  used in making choices in specific phases of the behavioral process;
- Uncovering unrecognized paradoxes and resolutions in differences in opinions
  held by multiple persons participating in several phases of the behavioral process
  under study;
- Helping to make explicit the “implicit mental model” (Senge, 1990) relevant to
decision making within the original time frame of the introspection study; and
- Surfacing thoughts held unconsciously that are applicable to choices made in the
  process under study.

In his report of the following incident, Holbrook (2005a, 2005b, p. 48) offers a
backhand (i.e., he is not an advocate of the need for independent assessments of
researcher introspections) application of syncretic combinations in his inter-
pretive analysis of photographs from his family’s archive: “I often find myself
musing over what rampant lack of self-confidence would encourage a mechanical
reliance on such self-imprisoning safeguards and such vision-restricting formulas.
The closest I have come to a member check [an independent assessment of an SPI
for accuracy and completeness] has been inviting my ninety-one-year-old mother to
attend a conference where I presented some of this material and dutifully
making revisions in my comments as she called out occasional corrections from
the audience.” Note that he reports that his mother’s comments helped to revise
his incorrect remembrances and her silences imply confirmation of other parts of
his narration. Thus, the attempt here is to illustrate how unique forms of
introspective syncretic combinations can be planned that help to (at least partially)
overcome the Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) conclusion that researcher self-
introspection offers severely limited potential in contributing useful research in
consumer behavior.

The application of multiple research methods transforms Holbrook’s SPI to
achieve a confirmatory personal introspection (CPI) that includes many of the
criteria of scientific approaches to research without the loss of the criteria
representing the artistic approach (see Brown, 1998, for a review of both
approaches). CPI is likely to be found useful for designing products and marketing
communications that consumers find desirable and that motivate their purchase
behavior. These two views respond to Andreasen’s (1985) and Wells’ (1993)
“research backward” guideline to answer the “so what?” question before
implementing an empirical investigation.

Given the substantial scientific evidence that most thinking is unconscious (for
reviews, see Bargh, 2002; Zaltman, 2003), the research tools to surface unconscious
thoughts described subsequently are worthy of attention. Field studies applying CPI
may demonstrate the usefulness for working from several complementary literature
streams to extend Zaltman’s (2003) treatise on how consumers think — including
strategies for theorizing from process data (e.g., Eisenhardt, 1989; Langley, 1999);
decision-plan net theory of individual-choice models (see Park et al., 1981);
“autoethnography” and other personal introspection methods (Holbrook, 2005a,
2005b; Wallendorf & Brucks, 1993), as well as related views on sense-making (Weick,
1995); and unconscious and automatic influences on consumer judgment, behavior,
and motivation (see Bargh, 2002).

In bare-knuckle terms, the view here attacks the current dominant logic in
counter research on learning the reasons for consumer choice of brands or store
sites by relying principally on a written, self-completed survey using mostly closed-
end (fixed-point) questions. Although most consumers are able to complete such
surveys, such a highly cognitive method excludes data collection of most thoughts —
embracing the finding that most thinking occurs unconsciously, consumers have only
limited accessibility to the unconscious, and “people generally do not think in
words” (Zaltman, 2003, p. 13). Behavioral research methods that enable consumers
to access their unconscious thoughts need widespread adoption in studies on product
and brand knowledge held by consumers. CPI research includes methods designed to
reduce the inherent attempts to self-edit and block unwelcomed, or socially
unacceptable (see Fisher, 1993), thoughts and to stimulate informants to report
reasons for their actions seemingly “too minor to mention” in open-ended written
responses.

Subsequent to this introduction, the literature review suggests placing introspec-
tion in consumer research within grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) and
building theories from case study research (see Eisenhardt, 1989; Langley, 1999;
Woodside & Wilson, 2003). The third section urges the adoption of Hirschman’s
(1986) humanistic inquiry philosophy and method recommendations as much as
possible for researcher introspection. The fourth section describes the application of
multiple methods focusing on the same empirical ground covered by a researcher’s
introspection — multiple methods that are useful for surfacing unconscious thoughts
and aiding retrieval of conscious thoughts generated during the process being
examined. The fifth section offers implications for theory construction that follow
from CPI. The final section covers limitations, conclusions, and suggestions for
further research.

**Introspection, Case Study Research, and Constructing
Grounded Theories**

Building theories from case study research (Eisenhardt, 1989; Woodside & Wilson,
2003), the organizational decision-making literature (see Langley, Mintzberg,
Pitcher, Posada, & Saint-Macary, 1995), and the historical method in consumer
research (Smith & Lux, 1993) provides useful theoretical grounding for researcher
self-introspection. Eisenhardt (1989) informs that, “The case study is a research
study which focuses on understanding the dynamics present within single settings
Moreover, cases studies can employ an embedded design, that is, multiple levels of analysis within a single study (Yin, 1994).”

Langley et al. (1995) review organizational literature that recognizes phases in some decision making that often involve an iterative feedback process, but nonetheless often lead to some form of choice agreement among multiple participants in the process, followed by action. These authors emphasize that even when a decision can be isolated, rarely can the processes leading up to it.

Thus, most of the literature notwithstanding, we believe that no decision can be understood de novo or in vitro, apart from the perceptions of the actors and the mindsets and cultures of the contexts in which they are embedded. On the contrary, we shall argue that decision making must be studied in toto and inspiration, emotion, and memory, and at the collective level to include history, culture, and context in the vast network of decision making that makes up every organization (Langley et al., 1995, p. 261).

Several authors in separate but complementary research streams emphasize that subconscious processes play major roles in decision making. Thus, Langley et al. (1995, p. 268) wish to add to Simon’s administrative man, an “insightful man, who listens to the voices emanating from his own unconscious, or perhaps, better expressed, who sights the images that well up in his own imagination.” Smith and Lux (1993) call for the study of unconscious motives (Mu) in their historical method exposition in consumer research, “Unlike transparent motives that ‘just are,’ unconscious motives arise from social circumstances that do not necessarily have to stand as they are, but of which the individual may not be consciously aware at the time the act occurs. Such unconscious motives might be likened to unreflected experience (Thompson, Locander, & Pollio, 1989) in that they constitute a ground against which behavior is the figure.”

Unconscious processing is an additional observation found in the literature on decision making and thinking research. “It is often difficult to say who decided something and when — or even who originated a decision” (quoted in Quinn, 1980, p. 134, and Langley et al., 1995, p. 265).

Core Propositions for Examining the Exchange Process for Major Services

Consequently, the core proposition (CP1) offered here is that consumer choice processes include recognizable phases involving several persons participating in one or more phases with conscious and unconscious thoughts/motives affecting the buyers’ beliefs and actions, and that one or all of the participants may be unable to consciously explain the causes of specific milestone subdecisions occurring in the process. However, CP2, relating to the purchase process for a major consumer durable (e.g., motor vehicle) or service (e.g., the selection of a university to attend for a 3- or 4-year degree), states that one or more phases of the process are likely to include substantial conscious effort, and some of the thinking involved (not all) can be retrieved within a researcher introspective study.
Adopting the Humanistic-Inquiry Paradigm for Researcher Introspection

Hirschman (1986) provides four criteria appropriate for humanistic inquiry that, if applied, are useful for increasing the usefulness of researcher introspections — including subjective personal introspections:

- **Credibility.** Representing the multiple realities of the process examined adequately, possibly by the researcher submitting the interpretation to the scrutiny of the participant in the process who provided some of the original data and seeking responses as to the report’s authenticity.
- **Transferability.** Transferring the resulting interpretation of the process to other contexts, such as the purchase of a major service different from the one being examined (e.g., processes involved in buying a medical procedure versus processes for a university degree).
- **Dependability.** Use of multiple human investigators enhances internal stability of measures taken.
- **Confirmability.** Seeking neutrality and objectivity, possibly by asking outside auditors to confirm or disconfirm the interpretations by the researcher.

Crafting Formal Survey Protocols for Self-Interviews

One step toward increasing credibility in researcher self-introspection is for the researcher to formally interview him- or herself on two or more separate occasions. Although such a suggestion may seem absurd, calls for further reflection by decision makers for more useful sense-making of events and causes of these events are made elsewhere (e.g., Weick, 1993).

The use of a formal survey protocol for completing by the researcher, with him or her adding and answering additional questions, is another suggestion that may improve credibility — thus, the use of a written interview schedule of questions crafted earlier by an informant and others serves to guide, broaden, and deepen emic interpretations during subjective personal introspections.

Learning While Talking

One step toward accomplishing confirmability occurs by having two researchers interview one another while interviewing themselves. This method helps operationalize Weick’s (1993) famous proposition, paraphrased here as “How do I know what I think until I hear what I have to say? How do I know what I’ve done until I tell aloud what I did?”

Another step toward confirmability, as well as dependability, is having an “inside auditor” answer questions that confirm or disconfirm as well as deepen the
interpretations reported by the researcher self-introspection (e.g., the corrections offered by Holbrook’s mother on his interpretations of her father’s behavior).

**The Inside Auditor**

The use of such an inside auditor, as one’s mother or another person involved directly in the focus of the introspection, is almost certain to be helpful for clarifying and deepening researcher introspective reports. Consequently, an advance toward CPI is made by using inside auditors as well as agreeing with Hirschman’s (1986, p. 246) advocacy of an outside auditor:

To assess whether or not the interpretation is drawn in a logical and unprejudiced manner from the data gathered and the rationale employed, humanistic inquiry relies on the judgment of an outside auditor or auditors. These individuals should be researchers themselves, familiar with the phenomena under study.

**The Cohort Auditor**

To stimulate the mental surfacing of observations about the self and the process being examined by the introspection, an additional category of auditor is possible: the cohort auditor (CA). CA is a person living in the same current environment as the researcher completing a self-introspection that the researcher–introspector (RI) asks to comment on the process and outcome under study. Thus, the RI both tells his/her story to the CA and asks for questions and comments from the CA as the story is being told. Besides being a sounding board, the CA is likely to provide information that triggers retrievals relevant to the focus of the study by the RI that might otherwise not occur.

**The Forced Metaphor-Elicitation Technique (FMET)**

The forced metaphor-elicitation technique (FMET) has the goals similar to the Zaltman metaphor-elicitation technique (ZMET) and the Doyle and Sims (2002) “cognitive sculpting” technique. Using metaphor analysis as a research tool to understand more deeply the unconscious linkages associating with a behavior; Sims and Doyle (1995) illustrate cognitive sculpting research with informants’ use of tabletop objects as metaphors of what they are saying and have done — resulting in what Sims and Doyle refer to as “explicating knowledge.”

Christensen and Olson (2002) provide an application of the ZMET for a study of 15 very highly involved mountain bikers: “Approximately 1 week prior to the interview, each recruited participant was contacted and given a set of instructions.
First, they were asked to think about mountain biking. Then they were told to select 8–10 pictures that represent their thoughts and feelings about mountain biking and bring the pictures to the interview. Each picture is a metaphor that expresses one or more important meanings about mountain biking... Respondents participated in in-depth interviews conducted by three interviewers trained in the ZMET methodology and experienced in conducting ZMET interviews.” See Zaltman (2003) for further details.

The FMET is a tool for surfacing metaphors for use in researcher introspection. FMET includes four distinct steps. First, the respondent is asked to draw or select pictures for three sets of two objects each (Figure 2 shows the FMET design):

- The animal that first comes to mind that the RI believe that “represents some aspects of who you are, what you are like.”
- The animal that first comes to mind “that you admire, might select to be if you were an animal other than a human.”
- The beverage first comes to mind that “that best represents you most of the time during the daytime.”
- The beverage that first comes to mind that “best represents you at home or a party on a Friday night.”
- The motor vehicle that first comes to mind that “best represents the vehicle you really would most likely be if you were, in fact, a motor vehicle.”
- The vehicle that first comes to mind that “best represents the fun, carefree side of you.”

Nearly all individuals can identify themselves as more than animal, beverage, and vehicle, depending upon the situation being framed by the question (cf. Dichter, 1985; Woodside, Floyd-Finch, & Wilson, 1986). Thus, the FMET attempts to capture the several unconscious beliefs about the RI. Unlike the ZMET, the FMET does not focus on selecting items in pictures related directly to the behavior being examined — the ZMET is more likely to cause greater cognitive effort and strain caused by attempts to find pictures that associate with the behavior being examined than the FMET. The ZMET appears to require great cognitive effort and substantial interviewer training and skill in order to interpret the pictures selected by the informant; as discussed subsequently, the FMET is designed for the RI to self-interpret how the specific objects selected associate with the choice behavior under investigation.

Second, the FMET asks the RI to say or write the two to four features that first come to mind about each of the six objects in the pictures. Third, the FMET asks the RI to mention the first thoughts that come to mind — “what each of these features tells you about yourself.” Finally the FMET asks the RI “to tell a story or true event that illustrates the concepts and description” of the features just mentioned about you related to the choice behavior under investigation. Figure 3 illustrates the fourth step for the choice of buying a major consumer service — the choice of a university for an undergraduate degree. The RI then has the opportunity to include the results from using the FMET into her interpretation of her service choice.
Figure 3 is an example application of one informant’s use of the FMET related to the topic of selecting a university or college for an undergraduate degree. Note how the informant’s responses in the fourth step help to uncover the matching of personal features within the informant’s desires to the features provided by specific brand (in this case, Parma University, Italy).

Achieving personal independence relates to the pictures that include animals that hunt alone, a motorcycle — a vehicle often with one rider, and a two-seat sports car. The RI refers to being “independent” to describe the cat and the motorcycle. “Independent” is used by the RI to describe herself as well. Such information is helpful to achieve a deep understanding of the motivation to attend a university as far away from her high school friends and her parents as possible — within the felt limits of the reported inadequate transportation system. High need for achievement, independence, freedom, and health via sports are core themes that connect the animal, beverage, and motor-vehicle metaphors with the RI’s university decision. The FMET findings increase understanding of the reasons for the RI’s choice of product–service features for evaluating and ranking alternative universities.
A Confirmatory-Introspection Research Example

Figure 4 shows the phase theory used to consider possible subdecisions that may be involved in the purchase of a major consumer service; that is, the selection of a university in order to attend for a 3- or 4-year Bachelor of Arts degree. The rejection-inducing dimensions (RID), tradeoff dimensions (TD), and relative-preference dimensions (RPD) (cf. Park et al., 1981) shown for each decision phase in Figure 4 is to indicate the possibility of such feature dimensions and not that they always occur for each phase.

A RID is an aspect that an alternative must offer for the alternative to receive further consideration. For example, a student wants to play college football and will only consider colleges and universities that have a football team. Not having a football team is an RID for this student.

A TD is an aspect that a student is willing to give up only if an alternative offers a different aspect of equal value. For example, a student wants to live in a private room on campus but is willing to consider a university that offers private rooms nearby but off campus.

An RPD dimension is an aspect that the student finds attractive for an alternative to offer but not having the dimension does not cause the student to reject the alternative. For example, a student may prefer to go to a college or university that has sororities and fraternities but is willing to consider colleges and universities that do not have this feature.

This university-choice topic is a useful focus for several reasons. First, the selection of a university for such a degree represents the purchase of a major service, due to the time and often the financial expenditure for the student and her or his parents — an important decision made relatively early in life for many persons in many developed nations. Second, based on pretest interviews, most college students are likely to be able to identify distinct phases in their choice process, which include becoming aware of alternative universities; collecting information from family members, friends, and teachers on what attributes to consider in making the decision; selecting universities and colleges to visit; and making the final choice. Thus, the decision is complex and time consuming, and one or more phases are likely to include the combination of substantial amounts of conscious and unconscious thinking.

Third, for some phases of such an important service purchase, RIDs, TDs, and RPDs are likely to be used. Fourth, this choice decision is relevant to the RI from whom the data were collected: The RI was still attending her chosen university and felt capable of reporting the details occurring in most of the phases of the process.

Figure 5 serves to demonstrate the value in using multiple methods in collecting data to confirm and deepen the process under investigation. Note that Figure 5 depicts each method as confirming one or more pieces of data learned by one or more other research methods as well as certain amounts of information found unique to a particular method. Also, note that not all the information relevant to the process is shown to be captured even when multiple methods are used.

Figure 5 includes cylinders to indicate that a certain amount of information not relevant directly to the process is recorded. Seemingly non-relevant information may
$P_1 =$ the buying process for a major product-service include several identifiable phases (e.g., A, B, C, D, E) 

$P_2 =$ feedback loops occur (e.g., revisions in thinking due to new information) 

$P_3 =$ a few attributes are critical (i.e., rejection inducing dimensions) for each phase and other attributes are “nice to have features” (i.e., relative preference dimensions) 

$P_4 =$ different influence sources affect the use of different attributes for different phases of the process, that is, the I’s shown in this figures may refer to different influence sources (e.g., friends, parents, teachers, college tour guides) 

Figure 4: Propositions ($P_i$) for the unconscious and conscious thinking–doing process for buying major product–service. RID, rejection inducing dimension; TD, tradeoff dimension; RFP, relative preference dimension. The RID, TD, and RFP and each of the phases may or may not be identified consciously by the informant. A–E are conscious and/or unconscious phases in the decision-making process (e.g., A, I will attend a university; B, I become aware of alternative universities to attend (awareness set); C, I select universities to visit; D, I select a university to attend; E, I attend the university I select; F (not shown), I stay or transfer out of the university that I am attending; and G, I complete the university degree program. Lower case letters indicate the attributes relevant to each decision heuristic.
Figure 5: Research toolkit for surfacing relevant unconscious and conscious thinking–doing processes.
enable the uncovering of information directly relevant to the process under study, for example, an informant may need to talk and say little that is directly relevant to the specific study to get to the point of being comfortable about what she is saying, as well as to learn enough about what she thinks to elaborate deeply on her motivations. Thus, although some data are identified as not directly relevant to the phases in the process, it is preferable not to label any part of the data collected as useless information.

Implications for Theory Construction

In some substantial sense, an informant always engages in researcher introspection whether he or she is asking questions implicitly or explicitly to him- or herself, as well as whether the questions are written or presented verbally. The informant creates an interpretation of the question posed from whatever the source — thus, the informant engages in researcher introspection. Also, metaphorically speaking, the informant has to search the file drawers of his or her mind to find the drawer somehow labeled by one or more concepts interpreted to be in the question. Then the informant has to find the folder in the file drawer; open the folder; read and interpret the folder’s contents; and select and use words, sentences, and other tools that he or she feels can be interpreted by him or her and possibly by others in a manner that he or she desires. Thus, respondents must make sense of the questions asked of them, and autobiographical memory in retrospective thinking is involved in all survey research.

The work of Payne (1951), Grice (1975), Hilton (1995), Ericsson and Simon (1993), and Schwarz (1999) supports the view that “question comprehension involves extensive inferences about the speaker’s intentions to determine the pragmatic meaning of the question” (Schwarz, 1999, p. 96). Such inferences apply to whoever asks the question, no matter if the question is asked implicitly or explicitly. Consequently, the informant is always an active participant in framing a question, as well as in answering it.

From this perspective, the severe problems that Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) note for researcher introspection does not lead to the conclusion that the method should be abandoned in consumer research. Rather, the more useful conclusion is that researcher introspection needs to innovate to include carefully executed (rigorous) research procedures and the combined use of multiple data-collection instruments. Such data-collection instruments should include tools designed explicitly to surface unconscious thinking processes, especially because substantial scientific knowledge now exists that unconscious thinking processes represent most mental activities by individuals (for a literature review, see Zaltman, 2003).

Researcher introspective case studies aid in “opening up decision making” (Langley et al., 1995) by demonstrating that different models of decision making are likely to be relevant for different phases occurring in the process. For example, decision making as convergence without consciously considering alternatives may best describe the process whereby the student RI became committed to attending
a university for the purpose of acquiring a degree. After such a convergence has been completed, the phase involving visiting alternative universities reflects decision making following Simon’s (1960) three-step sequence: first intelligence (i.e., diagnosing the problem), then design (i.e., finding alternatives to evaluate), and finally choice. Langley et al. (1995) refer to this view as Model 1, organizational decision making as sequential.

Regarding the selection and use of criteria to select universities to visit and reach the choice of university to attend appears to represent “insightful man,” that is, the RI may listen “to the voices emanating from his [her] own subconscious, or perhaps better expressed, who sights and images that well up in his [her] own imagination” (Langley et al., 1995, p. 268). However, the relevancy of these features is questionable because the data from the FMET were collected after, rather than during, the choice process. The FMET data do appear to provide useful clues into the deep meanings of RIDs in the RI’s decision plan net. Thus, decision making as insightful, identified by Langley et al. (1995, p. 259) as Model 5, appears relevant especially for the selection of dimensions to use for evaluating university alternatives.

Generalizing the results of the RI report to theory suggests that different models of decision making are at times more or less relevant to the decision process, depending on the phase in the process being examined. Thus, asking whether or not the purchase of a major durable or service is made consciously or unconsciously is less useful than asking where and how both thinking processes contribute to the decision process.

Conclusions, Limitations, and Suggestions for Further Research

The use of multiple methods in research introspections does appear helpful in confirming the occurrence of specific phases in the decision process and in achieving a deep understanding of primary motivations within the individual that help to explain the presence of attribute dimensions used in his or her choice of a university. The combined use of decision-plan net analysis, the FMET, schedules of survey questions completed by mentors, an inside auditor, and the RI him- or herself represents a blending of emic (conscious and unconscious views of the individual native informant) and etic (interpretation of the researcher after acquiring some distance from the research site) perspectives. Though at first blush the view may appear to be an oxymoron that an etic perspective can be acquired in researcher introspection, asking others to confirm the occurrence of specific actions that relate to the behavior of the RI that the RI is examining, as well as seeking views from an inside auditor, serves the RI in viewing herself in the third person.

To increase sense-making about what one has done and to deepen understanding of why it was done, Weick (1995) advises that one reflect (e.g., sleep on it) on the meaning of what one does and says, as well as seek the views of mentors about the meaning of what has happened — steps to achieve distance, an etic view of what happened and why it happened. The use of explicit tools, including survey forms
designed and used explicitly by the RI to interview herself and others, as well as the additional tools described in this chapter, is more likely to result in achieving a useful etic view than is adopting Holbrook (2005b, p. 48) emic-is-enough assumption (e.g., “I assume that my own introspections resonate so strongly with the photos taken by my grandfather because ATH [Holbrook’s grandfather] has, in effect, captured the essence of my own subjective personal introspection-based recollections”).

Along with the RI asking herself multiple and the same sets of questions on different days (e.g., for an example of same topic, consecutive weekly interviews and informant reflections over 18 weeks, see Cox, 1967) regarding the process being examined in the study, the interviewing of other persons involved directly in the process as well as insider auditors is likely to always improve researcher introspections. The following views by Weick (1995) and Allport (1985) as well as Hirschman’s principles for humanistic inquiry are rationales for this suggestion. “Those who forget that sense-making is a social process miss a constant substrate that shapes interpretations and interpreting. Conduct is contingent on the conduct of others, whether those others are imagined or physically present” (Weick, 1995, p. 39). Social psychology is “an attempt to understand and explain how the thought, feeling, and behavior of individuals are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others” (Allport, 1985, p. 3).

Of course, the intention is not to generalize from one RI case study to many consumers. The specific findings are applicable only to the RI. However, the two core propositions are confirmed by the findings that CP1, the decision process examined, includes recognizable phases involving several persons participating in one or more phases with conscious and unconscious thoughts/motives affecting their beliefs and actions, and that one or all of the participants are unable to consciously explain the causes of specific milestone subdecisions occurring in the process.

CP2 relates to a purchase process such as the selection of a university to attend for a 3- or 4-year degree. One or more phases of the process likely includes substantial conscious effort, and much of the thinking involved (not all) can be retrieved within a researcher introspective study. Such seemingly intuitive propositions need confirmation and extension by additional research before concluding that they are obviously valid. Heretofore, the view that whether or not to buy a major retail service, such as whether or not to attend university, can be a convergence process instead of being a decision (organizational decision-making Model 4 of Langley et al., 1995) receives scant attention in the service marketing literature.

Unfortunately, the Webb et al. (1966, 2000) observations are still accurate early in the 21st century.

Today, the dominant mass of social science research is based on interviews and questionnaires. We lament this overdependence upon a single, fallible method. Interviews and questionnaires intrude as a foreign element into the social setting they would describe, they create as well as measure attitudes, they elicit atypical roles and responses, they are limited to those who are accessible and will cooperate, and the responses obtained are produced in part by dimensions of individual
differences irrelevant to the topic at hand. *But the principal objection is that they are used alone.* No research method is without bias. Interviews and questionnaires must be supplemented by methods testing the same social science variables but having *different* methodological weaknesses. (Webb et al., 2000, pp. 1–2)

Ironically, although Holbrook (2005a, 2005b) criticizes using a “member check,” his use of family photographs and incorporating of his mother’s corrections to his subjective personal introspection are two examples of applying supplementary methods for transforming SPI into CPI. The irony extends beyond illustrating the Webb et al. (2000) point that no research method is without bias to the observation that subjective personal introspections alone are unlikely to detect substantial biases in method and in the accuracy of reported findings.
Chapter 6

Overcoming the Illusion of Conscious Will and Self-Fabrication

Synopsis

Naïve subjective personal introspection includes the failure to recognize the confirmability of one’s own attitudes and personal meanings learned explicitly from self-examining such topics and explaining one’s own behavior. Unconscious/conscious theory of behavior explanation follows from unifying the research on unintended thought–behavior with folk explanations of behavior. Chapter 6 describes advances in research confirming own attitudes and personal meaning and suggests the need for applying multiple methods to overcome the fundamental attribution error, inherent cultural prejudices, and the general bias toward self-fabrication. The discussion is valuable for achieving a deep understanding of how customers think, advancing from subjective to confirmatory personal introspection, and understanding the need to apply research tools useful for enlightening knowledge and overcoming the inherent bias within subjective personal introspection.

Introduction

In reviewing relevant literature, Chapter 5 provides a series of telling propositions regarding subjective and confirmatory personal introspection. The following points reflect and extend these propositions.

1. The dominant logic in consumer research includes asking questions that require some amount of subjective personal introspection by a respondent — whether or not a separate individual is asking the question or the informant both asks him or herself and answers the question and whether or not the informant asks the question face-to-face with a researcher, reads the question in a survey, or ponders the issue alone.
2. Because most thinking occurs unconsciously (Bargh, 2002; Wegner, 2002; Zaltman, 2003) and the informant has limited access to his or her own unconscious thinking, the informant is able to retrieve, interpret, and report (to herself and
others) only a limited amount of relevant knowledge and insight when answering questions and pondering a specific topic.

3. The use of additional research tools (beyond self-interviewing and meditation) aids in surfacing and confirming/refuting both events and personal meanings that the informant otherwise concludes to be accurate answers reflecting his or her own prior and/or currently held beliefs and attitudes.

The next section elaborates on advanced attribution errors, that is, (a) personal denial of committing the fundamental attribution error, the illusion of will, including unawareness that implicit (automatic, unconscious) meaning is relevant for subjective personal introspection (SPI) and (b) disregarding and denying the usefulness of member checks (independent assessments of an SPI for accuracy and completeness) and other tools (e.g., implicit association tests; see Brunel, Tietje, & Greenwald, 2004; Masion, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2004), the forced-metaphor elicitation technique for uncovering unconscious meaning (see Chapter 6) — tools permitting access to unconscious personal meaning that otherwise remain inaccessible to the researcher–informant.

This chapter describes folk conceptual theory of behavior explanation (see Hilton, 1990; McClure, 2002; Malle, 1999, 2004; Malle & Knobe, 1997) and discusses the theory’s relevancy to SPI research and theory. Highlighted topics also include the critical importance of SPI and the use of mixed research designs in SPI research for (a) theory building in consumer research; (b) deepening individual and group sense-making; and (c) aiding in preventing unfair, bad, and downright dangerous decision-making (e.g., Gaither, 2002; Kozak, 1996) — reasons that substantially extend Gould’s (1995) defense of SPI in responding to the Wallendorf and Brucks (1993) criticism of the method. Chapter 6 closes with conclusions and implications for theory and research.

**Deepening Subjective Personal Introspection**

Gould (2005) proposes that research using methods to confirm personal introspections are irrelevant in SPI research — reporting insights through meditation is sufficient and alone reflects ones thoughts and feelings. This view is incorrect in several aspects, but the more important flaw is that it ignores the following main point. Because subjective personal introspection pervades social research, and both the researcher and informant (whether or not both are the same individual or different persons) are unable to examine relevant unconscious and conscious data using only one method (e.g., Buddhist meditation), applying mixed-methods designs (Tashakkori & Teddlie, 1998) is essential for correcting event memory failures and overcoming fundamental and advanced attribution errors.

Here is the essence of Gould’s (2005) position. Thus, when people tell stories about their lives, confirmation could mean that the researcher would seek a member check on the accuracy of accounting for certain
events. For example, did the individual engage in a certain behavior or not? But there is no member checking the meaning a person assigns in the story. This is her own introspective story. People can compare stories with one another but one does not generally “confirm” one’s own story in terms of personal meaning. When Holbrook (2005a, 2005b) is asking his mother about certain remembrances, he is engaging in retrospection in some sort of confirmation through his mother. But again, he is not confirming the personal meanings of his experiences or of his story. Thus, Woodside makes what is a major flaw [that] underlies much of his argument in establishing the need for confirmation; he conflates event-memory checking where confirmation may be useful with meaning and experiential member checking where it is not.

A seemingly minor point: Because Holbrook (2005b, p. 48) does not see the need, his report does not include asking his mother anything; without him asking she volunteers. “I often find myself musing over what rampant lack of self-confidence would encourage a mechanical reliance on such self-imprisoning safeguards and such vision-restricting formulas [e.g., member checks]. (The closest I have come to a member check has been inviting my 91-year-old mother to attend a conference where I presented some of this material and dutifully making revisions in my comments as she called out occasional corrections from the audience.)”

Holbrook’s view is an example of an advanced overconfidence bias applied to interpreting both factual accuracy and meaningfulness in his SPI. His SPI research would benefit from replacing his musing about “rampant lack of self-confidence” with a more mindful, complex model of explicit–implicit thinking (cf., Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001). His use of a triangulation of data-collection methods (i.e., his SPI, examining 2,300 photographs taken by his grandfather, and his mother’s member check) counters his disparaging remarks about using additional data-collection methods beyond SPI.

Overconfidence and self-fabrication rather than a rampant lack of self-confidence are the dominant human tendencies in explaining our own behavior to ourselves and others (cf., Langer, 1975; Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Overconfidence bias in cognitive science (e.g., Gigerenzer, 2000; Gilovich, 1991; Gilovich, Griffin, & Kahneman, 2002; Lichenstein, Fischoff, & Phillips, 1982) refers to the human tendency to overestimate the accuracy of one’s own answers. For instance, the study by Lichenstein et al. (1982) gave participants questions such as “Absinthe is (a) a precious stone or (b) a liqueur”; they chose what they believed was the correct answer and then were asked for a confidence rating in their answers, for example, 90 percent certain. When people said they were 100 percent certain about individual answers, they had in the long run only about 80 percent correct answers; when they were 90 percent certain, then had in the long run only 75 percent correct answers, and so on. Lichenstein et al. (1982) identify such discrepancies as the overconfidence bias and explain their occurrence by general heuristics in memory search, such as confirmation biases, or general motivational tendencies, such as the illusion of validity (see Gigerenzer, 2000).
Advanced overconfidence bias (AOB) goes beyond such cognitive science reports of overconfidence bias. AOB includes the implicit — and often inaccurate — assumption that the person holds unconsciously the meaning she reports in a SPI. The main point here relates to the McClelland, Koestner, and Weinberger (1992) evidence and conclusion favoring dual (explicit and implicit) motives and goals — not that SPI reports are invalid but that SPI and alternative introspection data-collection methods tap different levels of meaning and explanations. Not recognizing this possibility and not using mixed-method designs to acquire both explicit and implicit personal introspection data is committing AOB.

Implicit motives are needs that people acquire in childhood that have become automatic and nonconscious. Self-attributed motives are people’s conscious theories about their needs that may often differ from their nonconscious needs. The picture McClelland and his colleagues paint is of two independent explanatory systems that operate in parallel and influence different types of behaviors. “In our terms, the adaptive unconscious and the conscious explanatory system each has its own set of needs and motives that influence different types of behaviors” (Wilson, 2002).

The SPI reports in the consumer research literature (e.g., Gould, 1991; Holbrook, 2005b) are akin to explicitly interviewing yourself without recognizing the usefulness of applying implicit interviewing methods to capture unconscious meanings and motives.

**Fundamental and Advanced Attribution Errors**

The fundamental attribution error (Ross & Nisbett, 1991; Wilson, 2002) refers to people overlooking situational influences on their actions and inferring that they acted on the basis of their own internal states — inferring internal states via explicit interpretation without the use of tools for learning implicit thinking. Choi, Nisbett, and Norenzayan (1999) demonstrate that people in Western cultures are especially prone to the fundamental attribution error, and that people in East Asian cultures are less prone. The advanced attribution error (AAE) includes denial that the fundamental attribution error is relevant personally and that applying additional tools (a mixed-methods research strategy) will help overcome illusion of will and cultural bias that occur automatically during SPI.

Bargh et al. (1996) demonstrate how situation-message treatments (i.e., marketing manipulations) can influence behavior directly without affecting participants’ introspection. These researchers had college participants fill out a scrambled sentence that included words such as “wrinkled,” “gray,” “retired,” “wise,” and “old.” These participants were thus primed with the stereotype of an old person, whereas other participants in the study did not receive this version of the test. As each participant left the experiment room, the person’s gait was measured surreptitiously. The individuals who had been led to think about senior citizens walked more slowly than did those not primed with this thought. The idea of the action arose from the stereotype and so influenced the behavior directly, apparently without conscious will.
Extensive post-experimental interviews suggested that the participants were not particularly conscious of the aged stereotype after the experiment. And even if they were, they were certainly unaware that this might suggest they should walk at a different speed, or for that matter that their walking speed was being assessed. Yet merely thinking of the kind of person who walks slowly seemed to be sufficient to induce shuffling (Wegner, 2002, p. 128).

Gladwell (2005) offers several examples of how conscious and unconscious thinking and deciding in the same person often diverge and conflict.

The winning trombone-playing performance of Abbie Conant, a professional concert musician, in a behind-a-screen competitive audition is a case in point. Ms. Conant played sixteenth in the 33-candidate audition. Her playing was so outstanding that the Philharmonic music director, Sergiu Celibidache, cried out, “That’s who we want!” The competition was stopped and the remaining 17 players were sent home. There were two more rounds of auditions. Conant passed both with flying colors. But once Celibidache and the rest of the committee saw her in the flesh, all those long-held prejudices began to compete with the winning first impression they had of her performance. She joined the orchestra, and Celibidache stewed. A year passed. In May 1981, Conant was called to a meeting. She was demoted to second trombone, she was told. No reason was given. Conant went on probation for a year, to prove herself again. It made no difference. “You know the problem,” Celibidache told her. “We need a man for the solo trombone” (Gladwell, 2005, p. 247).

Conant took the case to court and over the next 13 years she won several rounds of battles (in courtrooms and additional auditions), including reinstatement as first trombone and pay equal to male colleagues (Gladwell, 2005).

Might reports of culture-trained automatic thinking differ in ways unrecognized in existing SPI reports (e.g., Gould, 1991; Holbrook, 1986, 1995, 2003, 2005a, 2005b)? Would the use of additional tools in a mixed-methods design (e.g., screened and unscreened auditions) sometimes confirm and sometimes disconfirm meanings expressed in explicit thinking reports? In two studies, Brunel et al. (2004) provide evidence of such confirmation and disconfirmation within consumer research contexts. Their studies compare participants’ explicit attitude reports with implicit association test (IAT) findings. Based on computer-mediated response latency measurement protocols, the IAT measure is computed by comparing the relative response times associated with several categorization tasks (see Brunel et al. for details).

Study 1 reports high efficacy of the IAT as a measure of brand attitudes and brand relationship strength toward Macintosh and Microsoft Windows-based PC machines: Under conditions in which participants were not expected to hide their beliefs, explicit brand attitudes were strongly correlated to implicit attitudes and implicit brand relationship, thereby validating the IAT for brand evaluation. Study 2 demonstrates no significant differences between explicit attitudes toward ads with White spokespersons compared to ads with Black spokespersons, suggesting that at the explicit level, participants do not exhibit racial preferences; however, implicit measures of attitude toward ads reveal strong preference for ads containing White versus Black spokespersons. Brunel et al. (2004) conclude, “Consumers’ associative brand networks may include concepts and associations that a consumer
either cannot or will not report [to others or themselves], but which may surface through the IAT.”

A number of additional studies examine the effect of introspection, or thinking about reasons, on attitudes, judgments, and choices (e.g., Levine, Halberstadt, & Goldstone, 1996; Simonson & Nowlis, 2000; Wilson, Hodges, & LaFleur, 1995). When people are asked to explain their attitudes (or choices), they tend to focus on a subset of the reasons that would otherwise (without the need to explain) influence their attitudes, particularly reasons that are verbalizable, accessible, plausible, and/or self-enhancing. Having to provide reasons or introspect can affect choices, because provided reasons are typically only a subset of the factors that would otherwise influence preferences.

Folk-Conceptual Theory of Mind and Behavior Explanation

Heretofore, the consumer–research literature does not include the unique and valuable advances in the literature of how people explain their own behavior (i.e., SPI). Malle (1999, 2004) summarizes this body of work and develops the folk-conceptual theory of mind and behavior explanation (folk model, for short). “It is not, however, ordinary people’s own theory of explanation (they probably don’t have one), but rather a genuine scientific theory” (Malle, 2004, p. 236). Malle points out that prior attribution theory focuses introspection on people allegedly classifying causes of effect outcomes into two major categories: person and situation causes — greatly simplifying the possible conceptual framework in which explanations are embedded. Similarly, Gould’s (1991) typology of energy states focuses on a small subset of human explanation — “bodily felt experience of everyday consumption” (p. 205) rather than representing a sophisticated folk model of mind and behavior.

The folk model categorizes behavior explanations into two major modes of explanation — reason and cause — as well as two minor modes — causal history reasons (CHR) and enabling factors (EF). Reason explanations are people’s explanations of an intentional behavior that cite the agent’s reasons for acting that way; cause explanations are people’s explanations of an unintentional behavior that cite the causes that brought about the behavior.

Causal history of reason explanations provides an explanatory link between reasons and their own causal history, citing factors that preceded and thus brought about the reasons for an action. These explanations literally describe the causal history of reasons, which could lie in childhood, in cultural training, in personality traits, or in a situational cue that triggered a particular desire (Malle, 1999).

Without direct reference to the folk model literature, Allen (2002) demonstrates the dominance of causal history of reason and enabling-factor explanations in his “fits-like-a-glove” (FLAG) framework choice of postsecondary education. Similarly, Holbrook’s (2005a, 2005b) SPI application of an eight-cell value typology, extrinsic–intrinsic, self–other oriented, and active–reactive provides a causal history of reason explanation — rich in value interpretation but very narrow in coverage of behavior explanation.
Enabling-factor explanations refer to the agent’s skill, efforts, opportunities, or to removed obstacles (see McClure & Hilton, 1997; Turnbull, 1986); these explanations take it for granted that the agent had an intention (and reasons) to perform the behavior; what they try to clarify is how it was possible that this behavior was in fact performed” (Malle, 1999, p. 31). Enabling-factor explanations only explain the action’s occurrence — they cannot be used to explain why the agent formed the intention in the first place (which is what reason explanations do). For example, “How come John aced the exam? — He’s a stats whiz.” Such enabling-factor explanations refer to the agent’s skills, efforts, opportunities, or to removed obstacles (Malle, 1999, p. 31; also McClure & Hilton, 1997; Turnbull, 1986). Gould’s (1991) eight-cell typology of energy states: tense–calm, energized–tired, absorbed–not absorbed is an enabling-factor explanations framework.

Malle (2004) contends that two broad motivations for explaining behavior exist: finding meaning (i.e., sense making; cf., Weick, 1995) and managing social interaction. These two broad motivations correspond to the two forms in which explanations exist in the world: as cognitive representatives and as communicative acts. Strong self-serving biases tend to occur in behavior explanations that favor self-fabrication over self-revelation (Wilson, 2002). On one level of analysis (type of behavior explained), explanations of actions are most likely to enhance or diminish one’s self-image because they are observable, and hence accessible for evaluation by others, and intentional (thus fully subject to either praise or blame). Conversely, experiences are unobservable (thus difficult to evaluate by others) and unintentional (hence easier to excuse from responsibility), so explanations of experiences should be at least susceptible to self-serving biases. On another level of analysis (mode of explanation), self-serving actors should explain their positive behaviors with reasons (implying intentionality) and their negative behaviors with causes (implying lack of intentionality) because intentionality intensifies praise and blame. On a third level of analysis, citing situation causes for negative behaviors reduces blame and citing person causes increases blame, both when using cause explanations and when using enabling-factor explanations (see Malle, 1999; Malle & Bennett, 1998; Weiner, 1995).

Examining the preconditions (e.g., meta-thinking by the actor of her perceived intentionality of a behavior — “did I really intend to do that?”) affects which behavior explanation category most likely applies to explain behavior. If the self-informant perceives that the behavior was unintentional, situation/person cause explanations most often occur. If the perception is that the behavior was intentional, belief/desire reason explanations most frequently occur and CHR and EF explanations also occur but with less frequency.

Alternative framing of the behavior explanation issue affects the category applied in SPIs. “How was this possible?” is a frame that increases EF explanations that otherwise are rare when the framing is a motivationally biased question — “Why?” or “What for?” Malle et al. (1998) supports this hypothesis, finding that enabling-factor explanations occur 4–12 times more frequently in response to a “How possible?” question than in response to any other explanatory question. Moreover, enabling-factor explanations should be frequent when the behavior is difficult to perform but rare when the behavior is easy to accomplish (McClure & Hilton, 1997; Malle, 1999).
Figure 1 illustrates how different ways of framing issues influence behavior explanations. For example, several researchers (Becker, 1998; Thompson et al., 1989; Woodside, 2004a) caution against using “Why?” framing questions for several reasons; for example, the question implies intention when the behavior occurred unintentionally; informants, even self-informants, become defensive because “Why?” requires an answer that makes sense, one that does not reveal logical flaws and inconsistencies; “How?” questions give people more leeway, are less constraining, and encourage telling a story that includes a chain of events, thinking, and evaluating. However, Becker (1987, p. 60) emphasizes an important exception to his condemnation of “why” questions: sometimes the self-informant or other researcher wants to know, exactly, what kinds of reasons the informant gives for what he or she has done or thinks he or she might do as part of a description that guides thinking. But, in his study investigating choice of postsecondary education, Allen (2002) provides examples of informants finding great difficulty in answering “Why” questions but their difficulty vanishes quickly when providing in situ descriptions regarding “who, what, where, when” issues.

Malle (2004, p. 122) emphasizes that the influence of explanatory choices can be found at every level of analysis, “People increase their use of causal history explanations when accounting for negative actions (Nelson & Malle, 2003); they increase their use of belief reasons when trying to appear rational (Malle et al., 2000), and they explicitly add a mental marker to their belief reasons when they want to distance themselves from the agent [or situation] (e.g., “Why is he looking at apartments?” — “He thinks I am moving in with him”; Malle et al., 2000).” The use of mental state markers on reasons occurs in introspection reports, for example, when a person distances current belief or want from reports of belief and want in the prior situation that the researcher–informant is describing (e.g., “I searched online because I thought I could get a better deal”) versus not marking the reason (e.g., “I searched on-line to get a better deal”).

Note that Figure 1 includes a feedback relationship between belief and desire reasons to describe the finding that valuing occurs automatically from a belief and that humans are culturally trained to perceive and categorize information, and form beliefs, based on evaluations — judgments of familiar and acceptable behaviors, desires, and dislikes. Valuing is finding benefit from achieving the goal implied by a belief.

What should be done to overcome framing biases? A useful initial answer: Because explicating descriptive details may help reduce the influence of the fundamental attribution error and aid in uncovering the if–then contingencies in behavior explanations (see Woodside & Wilson, 2003), self-informant behavior explaining benefits from first asking “what, how, where, and when” questions before asking “who and why” questions.

A useful follow-up answer: Let us recognize the need to apply multiple framing questions for the same behavior–explanation issue because all questions include biases (e.g., see Clark & Schober, 1992). A third answer: Because behavior explanation includes both unconscious and conscious intentional and unintentional thinking that the self-informant is unable to uncover adequately from any one inquiry method, SPI benefits from employing mixed-method designs for confirming...
Figure 1: Framing questions’ influence on directing subjective personal introspection in explaining behavior. Source: Based, in part, on Figure 5.1 in Malle (2004, p. 119).
events and personal meanings and identifying the applicability of explicit versus implicit meanings and attitudes for specific behaviors.

Mixed Methodology in Subjective Personal Introspection

Gladwell (2005, pp. 81–84) dramatically illustrates the use of a mixed-method design for (dis)confirming meanings expressed in his explicit SPI. He reports,

I’ve taken the Race IAT [available at www.implicit.harvard.edu] on many occasions, and the result always leaves me feeling a bit creepy. At the beginning of the test, you are asked what your attitudes towards blacks and whites are. I answered, as I am sure most of you would, that I think of the races as equal. Then comes the [implicit association] test. You’re encouraged to complete it quickly ... I took the test a second time, and then a third time, and then a fourth time, hoping that the awful feeling of bias would go away. It made no difference. It turns out that more than 80 percent of all those who have ever taken the test end up having pro white associations, meaning that it takes them measurably longer to complete answers when they are required to put good words into the Black category than when they are required to link bad things with black people. I didn’t do quite so badly. On the Race IAT, I was rated as having a “moderate automatic preference for whites.” But then again, I’m half black. (My mother is Jamaican.)

As Bargh et al. (1996), McClelland et al. (1992), and Wilson (2002) stress and empirically support, the most important point being made here is that explicit attitude, motive, and meaning self-report measures do not correspond to implicit measures (e.g., IAT, TAT, and FMET — forced-metaphor elicitation technique, Woodside, 2004b).

Gould (2005) mistakes Woodside (2004b) as seeing “one of the problems with introspection as being its subjectivity and the need to rein that in with various confirmatory approaches.” Woodside (2004b) focuses on broadening SPI — not trying to rein it in — by making the case for combining explicit and implicit methods in SPI reports.

Applying the useful proposition that research to learn explicit or implicit meanings held by an informant applies to SPI, Figure 2 is a typology of research methods that provides insights for designing mixed-method designs and for building SPI theory that covers both explicit and implicit meaning. The typology includes the eight possible combinations of verbal versus nonverbal, explicit versus implicit, and positivistic versus interpretative methods; examples of each of the eight, and combinations of using two of each, are available in the social, psychological, and consumer research literatures.

Cell 1, the fixed-point survey method, is the dominant research method for most studies attempting to measure informant-held meaning. Major advantages of this method include ease of data collection of explicit meanings held individually for a large number of informants and the applicability of statistical hypothesis testing. Limitations of this method include the failure to recognize that most thinking is done unconsciously and that implicit thinking may differ substantially from explicit
thinking, along with social-desirability biases in answering questions explicitly (see Fisher, 1993).

Cell 2, existential–phenomenological reports (see Thompson et al., 1989), includes the researcher starting with a very broad question and allowing the informant to reframe and pose additional questions as well as answers. Such interviews provide thick descriptions of situations, thinking processes, and some amount of both explicit and implicit meanings held by the informant. Self-editing of responses before the informant shares them with the researcher likely limits the value of the method along with the inability of the informant to retrieve a substantial share of implicit meaning held in memory. However, especially when the practice includes multiple interviews over several weeks with the same informant, the method offers the advantage of self-revelation of implicit meanings the informant rarely becomes aware of when completing fixed-point surveys (e.g., see Cox, 1967).

Cell 3, automatic thought-retrieval research, includes asking what benefits and beliefs evoke which brands (e.g., see Thelen & Woodside, 1997). The method is useful for measuring implicit meanings associated as well as not associated with a given brand versus competing brands. The method has the advantages of limiting the occurrence of self-desirability bias, the collection of implicit data for a large number

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Method</th>
<th>Positivistic</th>
<th>Interpretive</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Explicit</td>
<td>1. Fixed-point surveys</td>
<td>2. Existential-phenomenological reports</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Verbal</td>
<td>3. Automatic thought retrievals</td>
<td>4. TAT; FMET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implicit</td>
<td>5. Direct observation frequency recordings</td>
<td>6. Direct observation Meaning reports; ZMET</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonverbal</td>
<td></td>
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<td>Implicit</td>
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Key: TAT = thematic apperception test; FMET = forced metaphor elicitation technique; ZMET = Zaltman method elicitation technique.

Figure 2: Measuring informant-held explicit and implicit associations. Note: TAT, Thematic apperception test; FMET, forced metaphor elicitation technique; ZMET, Zaltman method elicitation technique.
of informants, and applicability of statistical hypothesis testing. Limitations include being unable to uncover the causal history reasons that support the automatic brand retrievals.

Cell 4 includes TAT (see McClelland et al., 1992), and the FMET (see Chapter 7 in the present book). McClelland provides compelling evidence supporting the external validity of TAT data and offers mixed-method reports comparing explicit and implicit informant-held meanings. Cell 4 methods often require extensive training of researchers and often substantial effort in analyzing data.

Cell 5, direct observation-based frequency recordings, includes researcher assumptions about the implicit meanings held by consumers. For example, Wells and Loscuito (1966) inferred by direct observation that some consumers examined packages to learn price information and others did not. The method has all the advantages associating with being present and not relying on an informant’s memory. Playing back video or tape recordings of consumers in naturally occurring situations to learn their explicit interpretations of their own behavior represent a mixed-method design (e.g., see Taylor & Woodside, 1981). Like all interpretive methods Cell 5 requires very substantial effort for both data collection and analysis.

Cell 6, direct observation meaning reports, includes the informant creating a tangible expression of meanings and interpretations that he or she wishes or is able to share with the researcher. The collages from magazine and newspaper images that Zaltman’s informants create as part of the ZMET are examples of nonverbal data. The Doyle and Sims (2002) advances in the cognitive sculpting technique provide another example. Data collection usually extends to include both etic (researcher) and emic (informant) explicit interpretations of the nonverbal expressions; thus, a mixed-method design results from actual applications of Cell 6 methods.

Cell 7 includes IAT reports (e.g., Brunel et al., 2004; Masion, Greenwald, & Bruin, 2004). Brunel and his colleagues (2004) demonstrate the value of collecting both explicit and implicit meanings held by informants — applying the mixed-method strategy of combining Cells 1 and 7. Gladwell’s (2005) commentary of his own prior explicit-survey and IAT-implicit associations represents a three-method design: Cells 1, 2, and 7.

Cell 8, behavioral drama enactments, includes videotaping and interpreting informants’ enactments of themselves as inanimate objects, for example, “using facial and body gestures and motions with any available props that you might care to use, describe yourself as a typewriter (or dog, cat, sports utility vehicle, ice cream)” ; for examples, see Dichter (1964). To expand on etic interpretations of informant enactments, asking informants to observe videotapes and interpret their own performances offers the opportunity of expanding from a single to a mixed-method design, for example, combining Cell 8 with Cell 2.

Conclusions and Implications for Theory and Research

SPI is pervasive in consumer research — answering questions asked by ourselves or others requires SPI. SPI researchers (e.g., Gould and Holbrook) need encouragement
to look beyond single-method applications to mixed-method designs, as Woodside (2004b) illustrates in SPI reporting. This point is extremely important for building and testing scientific theory, building in safeguards to protect ourselves from our own biases and self-fabrications when making decisions affecting ourselves and others, as well as increasing mindfulness (Gaither, 2002; Kozak, 1996; Weed, 1991; Weick & Sutcliffe, 2001) while reducing arrogance.

Along with ignoring the multiple benefits of using confirmable introspection methods, the main point Gould (2005) suggests is inaccurate: “But there is no member checking the meaning a person assigns in the story. This is her own introspective story.” Own explicit self-reports often do not express the same implicit meaning held by the same informant — our own implicit introspection stories often differ dramatically from own explicit storytelling.

Chapter 7

Using the Forced Metaphor-Elicitation Technique (FMET) in Subjective Personal Introspections about Self

Synopsis

Chapter 7 describes research tools that permit zoomorphistic explications of self-viewing of human self-behavior in terms of the behavior of animals. Transference theory, archetypal, culture, and early experiences propositions also serve to inform the etic interpretations of an informant’s zoomorphistic self-report. The chapter describes applications of the forced metaphor-elicitation technique (FMET) that provides case study data including storytelling and paradox resolution by informants. The chapter closes by advocating acceptance of Gigerenzer’s proposal that method can drive theory advancement. The discussion reviews relevant literature on examining dual thinking processes by humans — implicit and explicit beliefs, attitudes, decision processes, and behavior. The research evidence helps to decode consumers’ implicit thinking and behavior toward products and brands; such evidence serves to inform ourselves and brand executives of consumers’ dreams about brands and how such dreams become reality — or what prevents consumers from buying the brands playing roles in consumers’ stories crafted through implicit thinking.

Metaphor is everywhere in the language we use and there is no escape from it . . . But more important than their ubiquity, the metaphors we use structure our thinking, hiding some features of the phenomena we apply them to, and highlighting others. (Goatly, 1997)

Introduction: Meta-Thinking or Thinking about Thinking

Using metaphors assists in explaining, interpreting, categorizing, and summarizing a behavior, person, product, brand, or other phenomenon. Goatly (1997) reviews the strong evidence that metaphor and the mental processes metaphors entail are basic to language and cognition. Zaltman (2003), Coulter, Zaltman, and Coulter (2001), and Zaltman and Coulter (1995) shows how metaphors structure consumer thinking and serve to reveal unconscious thinking. Chapter 7 describes the use of a
forced metaphor-elicitation technique (FMET) to help surface implicit (i.e., unconscious) beliefs and feelings about self and to learn how such implicit beliefs and feelings associate with product designs and brand choices (see Woodside, 2004b, 2006; Woodside, Floyd-Finch, & Wilson, 1986). Part of Woodside’s (2004) application of FMET includes zoomorphistic explications of self. Definitions of zoomorphism include the viewing of human behavior in terms of the behavior of animals (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Zoomorphism).

The present study supports and extends the conclusion of prior work (Woodside, 2004a, 2004b) that most informants can easily identify the animal that first-comes-to-mind “that represents some aspects of who you are, what you are like,” as well as the “animal that first-comes-to-mind that you admire, might select to be if you were an animal other than a human.” Self-reports of the characteristics and behaviors of these animals enable the surfacing of product-design configurations and specific brands that appear to match the requirements/needs that such characteristics and behaviors reflect. The present chapter includes a “confirmatory subjective personal introspection (CSPI)” (see Chapter 5) that presents two sides of the author: Arch Rhinoceros and Arch Eagle. Prior work on subjective personal introspection (SPI) (Gould, 1995; Holbrook, 1986, 1995, 2005a, 2005b) and the dual systems perspective toward explicit and implicit thinking (Wilson, 2002) inspire the research program that this chapter reports.

Defining Metaphor

One-word definitions for metaphor include symbol, figure-of-speech, simile, image, and allegory. An allegory is a parable, fable, symbol, story, or tale. More formally, a metaphor occurs when a unit of discourse is used to refer unconventionally to an object, process, concept, or colligates (co-occurrence of words) in an unconventional way (Goatly, 1997). Goatly (1997) uses certain terms to correspond to certain phrases in this definition:

- The conventional referent of the unit is the vehicle.
- The actual unconventional referent is the topic.
- The similarities and/or analogies involved are the grounds.

Consider “Barq’s [root beer] — has bite.” The vehicle is Barq’s; the unconventional referent (topic) is bite by a dog (see a dog with a can of Barq’s for snout with teeth made of jagged cuts in the side of the can at http://www.barqs.com/index.jsp); the grounds are the physical and emotional response by a human when bit by Barq’s or a dog — Barq’s is one of the few root beers that contains caffeine.

The Adaptive Unconscious

The term “adaptive unconscious” conveys the proposition that nonconscious thinking is an evolutionary adaptation: the ability to size up our environments,
disambiguate them, interpret them, and initiate behavior quickly and nonconsciously confers a survival advantage and thus was selected for. Without these nonconscious processes, we would have a very difficult time navigating through the world (much less standing up without constant attention). This is not to say that nonconscious thinking always leads to accurate judgments, but on balance it is vital to our survival (Wilson, 2002).

Zaltman (2003) emphasizes that most thinking is done unconsciously and that unique research tools are necessary to reveal an informant’s unconscious thinking to self and to the researcher. The literature on unconscious thinking is extensive and supports the conclusion that mental processes that are inaccessible to consciousness but that influence judgment, feelings, and behavior substantially do occur. Also, most thinking involves processes that are nonconscious, fast, unintentional, uncontrollable, and effortless; automaticity represents unconscious thinking that satisfies all or most of these criteria (Bargh & Chartrand, 1999; Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002).

Figure 1 summarizes literature relevant to providing a theoretical foundation for the study of unconscious thinking and its influence on behavior. The three cornerstones of Jung (1969), Hofstede (2003), and Wegner (2002) provide unique proposals for the origins of unconscious thinking. Wilson (2002) champions the proposition that implicit and explicit beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and mental processing are parallel systems that sometimes result in different outcomes (e.g., future behavior or interpretations of recent behavior). He reviews a large body of empirical evidence that supports this view.

The objectives here do not include providing an exposition of the literature streams that Figure 1 summarizes beyond pointing out that some archetypes (Jung, 1969) are experienced earlier in life (Wegner, 2002) in some cultures (Hofstede, 2003) than in others — for example, the American cowboy with a horse and gun appearing on several TV shows weekly in the 1950s in the United States more so than in Sweden (e.g., Gunsmoke; Paladin, Have Gun, Will Travel; Bonanza). Such a hero myth might unconsciously enable the implicit acceptance of specific behaviors in one culture more than another. (See Rapaille, 2006, for his SPI of experiencing the equivalent of an American cowboy jumping down from a tank during World War II and handing him a chocolate bar when he was three years old and living in a small French village.) Thus, the issue is not which foundation theory of unconscious thinking is most compelling. All contribute valuable insights that increase understanding of how and why implicit thinking affects beliefs, attitudes, behavior, and mental processes.

### Research Methods for Examining Nonconscious Thinking

Such theory and conclusions about unconscious thinking implies that identifying nonconscious-based needs, beliefs, processes, and actions requires creating research methods that go beyond SPI. Any context wherein an informant responds verbally to a direct question involves some amount of SPI. The need to be politically correct, appear sane, or feel good about ourselves, and exhibiting overconfidence that we are capable of answering accurately are examples of restrictions of SPI and explicit
Figure 1: Origins of the adaptive unconscious.

See Jung (1969)
Key proposition: archetypes (innate, universal, unconscious, prototypes) guide behavior (e.g., Ubermensch (Superman), Hero, Great Mother, Rebel Trickster, Wise Old Man).

See Holt & Thompson (2004); Woodside and Sood (2007)

See Wegner (2002)
Key proposition: The mind creates this continuous illusion [that it causes its own actions]; it really doesn't know what causes its own actions.

See Rapaille (2006); Zaltman (2003)

See Wertime (2002); Mark & Pearson, (2001)

Key proposition: culture is the collective [unconscious] programming of the mind that distinguishes one human group from another.
responses. The literature is extensive and strongly supports the view that implicit (mostly conscious) processes run in parallel with explicit (conscious) processes. (For a review, see Woodside, 2005.) The best-seller Blink reports some of this evidence (Gladwell, 2005). While the case is made by Wilson (2002), Wegner (2002), and Rapaille (2006) that implicit versus explicit thinking dominates most beliefs and actions, the more relevant points here are (1) that thinking and actions include bits and pieces of both implicit and explicit thinking and (2) that direct questioning alone serves a poor meal. Collecting explicit responses alone rarely provides enough sustenance to accurately learn how and why people think and act in different contexts. Such a conclusion is often shocking to both informants and researchers. For example — being “half Black” himself — Gladwell (2005) reports being shocked to discover his own moderately strong (implicit) bias against African Americans versus his strong (explicit) bias favoring racial equality.

Related to implicit and explicit thinking and knowing, visual and verbal measures of attitude and beliefs reflect different kinds of knowledge that develop at different rates. Visual measures tend to tap a nonconscious, implicit type of knowledge, whereas verbal measures tap a conscious understanding of the theory of mind that takes longer to develop (Wilson, 2002). (See Malle, 1999, 2004, for a full treatment of an explicit theory of mind and Wegner, 2002 for an exposition on an implicit theory of mind.)

A substantial amount of research evidence confirms that implicit and explicit motives, attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors represent two independent and mostly unrelated systems that operate in parallel and influence different types of outcomes: “the adaptive unconscious and the conscious explanatory system each has its own set of needs and motives that influence different types of behaviors” (Wilson, 2002, p. 83).

Relating to consumer behavior, Puccinelli, Braun, and Mast (2002, p. 1) observe, “While it is possible that explicit and implicit knowledge correspond, the exciting opportunity for marketers is that often there is a discrepancy; that is, what a consumer believes explicitly may have no bearing on their [sic] actual behavior”: “For example, a consumer may have an association about a product of which they [sic] are unaware, such as a positive inclination toward purchasing Tide because their mother had used the brand (even though she might not be able to consciously remember her mother’s usage)” (Puccinelli et al., 2002, p. 1).

The work by Anderson, a social/personality psychologist, and her colleagues (Anderson & Glassman, 1996; Chen & Anderson, 1999) demonstrates empirically that a form of transference process occurs outside of awareness and that this process appears to be an important source of individual differences in how people react to new acquaintances. Anderson provides a new method to study transference systematically in controlled experiments and shows that activating chronically accessible constructs of all sorts influences people’s judgments and behaviors — without introducing Freud’s interpretation of transference (i.e., the way we superimpose infantile feelings toward our parents onto new relationships). Thus, Tide’s repeated presence in early life contexts with a daughter and her mother transfers implicitly to present-day contexts of buying and using Tide.
Consumer research focusing on implicit awareness, attitudes, beliefs, behavior, and processing has applied several methods. These methods include Holt’s (1991, 2002, 2003, 2004) anecdotal and case study research on how brands become icons via storytelling (especially associating a brand with a story of rebellion) rather than lecturing. The consumer-research literature includes applying the implicit association test (IAT) in laboratory experiments (Brunel et al., 2004); the IAT is an implicit, nonverbal, empirical, positivistic procedure that is available at www.implicit.harvard.edu. The Zaltman metaphor-elicitation technique (ZMET; Zaltman, 2003; Zaltman & Coulter, 1995) includes asking an informant to create a tangible expression of meanings and interpretations that he or she wishes or is able to share with the researcher.

Here is an example of one study’s procedure using the ZMET to examine informants’ implicit attitudes toward advertising:

Instructions included in the letter asked informants to bring to the interview pictures that illustrated their perceptions of the value of advertising. The instructions indicated that the informant could bring pictures from magazines, newspapers, pieces of artwork, and/or photos taken specifically for this assignment or retrieved from photo albums. We specifically mentioned in the letter that we were interested in their thoughts and feelings about advertising in general and not about particular advertisements and that their visual images should be representative of these general thoughts and feelings.

Furthermore, the images should not be actual print advertisements, according to the instructions. The ZMET interview employs several steps to bring key metaphors to the surface and determine their interrelationships, including (1) storytelling, (2) missed images, (3) Kelly Repertory Grid and laddering, (4) sensory images, (5) the vignette, and (6) the summary image. Finally, Step 6, the summary image, was designed to have the informants create a composite of their thoughts and feelings associated with advertising.

Informants chose entire pictures or specific images from their pictures that they wanted to include in their summary image. Then a graphic artist scanned the images and demonstrated the capabilities of the imaging software to the informant. The informant then instructed the graphic artist regarding the size, color, and positioning of the pictures in the summary image. When the summary image was complete, the graphic artist asked the informant to describe the image and its meaning with regard to his or her overall opinion about advertising. (Coulter et al., 2001, p. 11)

Woodside (2004a, 2004b) and colleagues (Woodside et al., 1986) propose an alternative approach for surfacing and examining metaphors that consumers use implicitly — FMET. The FMET includes four distinct steps that build first on a zoomorphistic interpretation of self.

The first step asks the informant “to draw or select pictures of the animal that first-comes-to-mind that you believe represents some aspects of who you are, what
you are like.” Second, the informant is asked to say or write the two-to-four features
that first-come-to-mind that best represent this animal. Third, the FMET asks the
informant to mention “the thoughts that first come-to-mind about what each of these
features tells about yourself.” Finally, the FMET asks the informant to “tell a story
or true event that illustrates the concepts and description of the features that you just
mentioned about you related to a specific choice behavior under investigation (e.g.,
selecting a type and brand of vehicle to drive).” Informants are asked to repeat the
four FMET steps a second time focusing on the animal that first-comes-to-mind
“that you admire, might select to be if you were an animal other than a human.”

A fifth procedural step includes asking the informant to think aloud the thoughts
that come-to-mind when viewing her/his own answers to the two sets of questions
and to relate a personal history story that reflects the likely outcome following a
comparison of the alternative choice behaviors.

If an animal that is most representative of self does not come to mind readily, Feinson
(1998) provides a nine-item quiz that informs the taker of the “animal in
you” and the resulting behavior that you are likely to observe of yourself. The quiz is
also available at www.animalinyou.com. For example, for the rhinoceros human,
Feinson describes, “With such a cantankerous personality, your unpopularity is
hardly surprising, and your bullying reputation is carefully cultivated to ensure the
solitude you crave.” For the eagle human, “Sleek and well groomed, your looks are
striking. However, you occasionally have a flawed aspect to your appearance —
perhaps a bald spot or too large a nose — but you still exude strong sexual energy
that turns heads.”

Applying FMET and Learning Storytelling Resolutions

Figures 2–5 summarize FMET applications for four informants. The first three
informants were college students at Boston College while participating in the study.
Each of the four informants was asked to find a photograph, drawing, or other
illustration of the animal that was most representative of her or himself in real life
and the animal that she or he would want to be other than a human. The informants
completed each of the steps in the FMET procedure as the previous section describes.

Ana as a Small Dog and as a Dolphin

Figure 2 shows informant Ana’s animal-who-I-am visual to be a small dog that is
cute, fun, and friendly. Such characteristics provide clues for a storyline about brands
that seek to associate with Ana’s inner small dog life. One such brand that Ana
identifies is the VW Beetle.

Ana’s animal — who-I-would-be visual is a dolphin — an animal that she
describes as friendly, beautiful, playful, intelligent, and swims fast. Brands likely
would benefit from illustrating these characteristics in attempting to associate with
Ana’s zoomorphic wish. She identifies the Lexus RX Hybrid as one such brand.
Figure 2: Ana: dolphin and dog.

Resolving the dilemma:

I imagine myself more in a small car than a big Lexus. Although the Lexus is hybrid and it looks great, I am not a very good driver and it would be very hard for me to drive a big car. With a small car I can park everywhere without any problem. Also, my friends always tell me that it seems that I would “disappear” in a big car because I am small, so I’d rather stay with the small car.
Figure 3: Bob: Cheetah and giraffe.
Figure 4: Joseph as a tiger and panda bear [sic].
Figure 5: Arch as a rhinoceros and as an eagle.
Ana’s friends’ view that she would disappear when driving a large car confirms her preference for a small vehicle. Ana admits to not being a very good driver, information that might be more difficult to acquire by direct questioning.

**Bob as a Giraffe and as a Cheetah**

*Figure 3* shows informant Bob’s animal-who-I-am visual to be a giraffe. “Tall, lanky, laid back” describe both the giraffe and Bob, according to Bob. A cheetah is the animal Bob would become; he shows a cheetah moving at full speed along with the description of fast, strong, and agile. Bob associates the giraffe with long, big, and not really fast cars — like a Ford Crown Victoria. He associates a fast car with a Ferrari. The life history story Bob tells suggests problems in attracting Bob to considering owning the Ford.

The fifth step in using the FMET quickly surfaced Bob’s high school experiences in driving an earlier model of the Ford Crown Victoria. Ford faces a difficult task in gaining Bob as a buyer.

**Joseph as a Panda Bear and as a Tiger**

*Figure 4* shows a black bear that informant Joseph identifies as a Panda Bear — the animal that he most represents. “Cute, cuddly, strong, and likes eating” fit both the bear and Joseph, according to his self-report. This transference translates into a Cadillac Escalade. Joseph’s wish to be a tiger associates with wild, beautiful, fierce, and strong which surfaces a Range Rover. His story indicates that the bear-reality side wins out over his tiger-wish side.

The concept “flashy” is something that Range Rover might best avoid in trying to attract customers like Joseph. A question for Cadillac to consider before getting too comfortable — how many men under 25 make “a hefty fortune” on Wall Street in one summer? Joseph represents a very atypical customer even if a highly desirable one.

**Arch as a Rhinoceros and as an Eagle**

*Figure 5* shows the rhinoceros that Arch describes as himself. Arch’s zoomorphic description includes “big, grumpy, adorable, and near-sighted.” This description translates into a GMC Suburban — a vehicle Arch reports owning. Feinson (1998) reports some rather disappointing behaviors that help deepen understanding of this zoomorphic treatment:

Getting to know a rhino can be an exhausting business, for it tends to rely on wordless forms of communication that must then be carefully interpreted. But, rhinos will let you know in no uncertain terms when
you have crossed its (sic) line. For they do not suffer fools gladly and often hurt the ones they love. (http://www.animalinyou.com/rhino.htm)

Arch recognizes his desire to be an eagle: soaring high, seeing far, catching fish easily, and getting lots done by moving fast. This description translates into his latest dream car — a BMW 645 CiC. A moving great work-of-art! However, Arch’s story indicates that his mother will never give permission for such a purchase — even though she died in 2002. So Arch reports his resolve to transfer his need to soar like an eagle through his work while continuing to dream about the BMW.

Contributions to Theory

Transference theory regarding how past relationships can influence people’s perceptions of any new person or object they meet serves to expand from the zoomorphistic self-interpretations and resulting storytelling to a nonconscious, social information-processing system — namely, what Wilson (2002) refers to as the adaptive unconscious. Anderson and Glassman (1996), Sullivan (1953), and Klein (1952) inform the etic interpretations of the zoomorphistic and brand-related self-reports. Mental representations of relationships with significant others and animals are self-relevant and are often used to interpret and evaluate unique contexts:

Because representations of relationships with significant others are self-relevant and frequently brought-to-mind, they become chronically accessible and are often used to interpret and evaluate new people [animals, brands] we meet. In short, just as the construct of “honesty” or “kindness” can be activated and applied to a new person, so can the construct of a specific person [animal] such as “my mother” or “Uncle Henry” [or the animal I would be]. (Wilson, 2002, p. 78)

The surfacing of Bob’s and Arch’s mothers is illustrative of Klein’s (1952) and Heimann’s (1956) treatment of transference and the possibility of unconscious mental conflicts if not mental illness caused by such unconscious conflicts — the clashes between instinctual impulses and what is opposed to them. To some extent, Bob and Arch have taken their mother inside themselves (as most of us do) and the surfacing of usually held unconscious knowledge affects self-interpretations of animal brand associations. This application of transference theory suggests that a fourth foundation corner may be necessary in Figure 1: psychoanalysis of dreams, with Freud (1923) as the foundation source and Dichter (1960, 1964) as the most well-known proponent in consumer research.

Archetypal, cultural, and early experiences propositions also serve to inform the etic interpretations of informant zoomorphistic self-reports.
Such additional theoretical work is one suggestion for future research. The relevance of Dichter’s (1964) contributions is important even if seemingly fallen from view in the 21st Century. In *Strategy of Desire* (1960), he reports that 70% of 200 informants participating in in-depth interviews admit to dreaming about owning a convertible; he presents the transference argument that the convertible represents a mistress while a sedan stands for a wife. His recommendation to the car manufacturer sponsoring the study was to place a convertible in the showroom window to bring in customers who would buy sedans — convertibles representing only 2% of sales.

Dichter never bothered to fully-develop a psychoanalytic model of consumer motivation. Advances in theory and creative empirical methods on the adaptive unconscious support his work in transferring psychoanalytic theory to consumer contexts. Such interdisciplinary research should pick up speed in the 21st Century in both theoretical and empirical contributions — a time to soar as an eagle (cf. Holbrook, 1988, 1995).

**Reducing Inbreeding**

Gigerenzer’s (2002, p. 295) wisdom is worth repeating in closing this discussion. “Intellectual inbreeding can block the flow of positive metaphors from one discipline to another. Neither disciplines nor sub-disciplines are natural categories. Interdisciplinary exchange has fueled the development of some of the most influential new metaphors and theories in the sciences.” Thus, the explicit surfacing of metaphors has application as an interpretive research method and for creating theory.

Gigerenzer (2002) also emphasizes the role of method in creating substantive theory: Method can drive theory prior to data. Subsequently, data following brilliant new data-collection methods can serve to support theory. Recent advances in implicit thinking methods support this spirited view.
Chapter 8

Surfacing Executives Interpretations of Self and the Roles of Co-Workers in Enacting Front and Back Stage Strategies

Synopsis

This chapter examines the topic of internal branding from an organizational/behavioral science perspective, theoretically and empirically investigating how organizational members actually enact corporate brands. A mixed method research procedure serves to surface conscious (i.e., deliberate) and unconscious (i.e., tacit) internal brand meaning enactments in an internationally operating Austrian corporate business-to-business brand. The results are evidence of the potential complexity of real-life internal branding processes that limit the possibility of achieving a cohesive intended internal implementation of corporate brands. The chapter concludes with the managerial implication that purposeful managerial interventions necessitate an understanding of the social system that is the target of an internal branding initiative.

Introduction

Corporate branding implies understanding brands from a corporate identity perspective, linking brands with corporate values and beliefs. Internal branding is the discipline dealing with establishing this link. A large body of literature approaches internal branding from a normative, managerial perspective, proposing that internal branding efforts should start out with a definition of intended brand meaning (i.e., intended values, beliefs, behaviors) or an intended corporate brand identity, that is, “what does the organization want others to think about the organization” (Brown, Dacin, Pratt, & Whetten, 2006, p. 100). Managerial internal branding efforts aim to achieve a common understanding, commitment, and behavior among organizational members, which is in line with this centrally established corporate brand identity.

This chapter is co-authored with Sylvia von Wallpach and Arch G. Woodside, University of Innsbruck.
Internal branding theory ascribes employees the role of “brand ambassadors” (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005, p. 5) which should spread intended brand meaning through every action and interaction and thereby contribute to the development of a consistent, intended brand image among all relevant stakeholders. The facilitation of this task is likely to be high if externally communicated brand values are simultaneously internal guiding principles — accepted tacitly by organizational members and directing their actions (LePla & Parker, 1999; Tosti & Stotz, 2001; Urde, 2003).

Few prior studies approach the topic of internal branding from an organizational/behavioral science view (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005) dealing with how organizational members actually perceive the organization and the corporate brand, that is, “who we are as an organization” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 100). The present chapter deals with this “perceived organizational identity” (Dutton, Dukerich, & Harquail, 1994) perspective, investigating how organizational members actually interpret and enact corporate brand values, beliefs, and behaviors.

The organizational study focus for internal branding is not on what should happen, but on what actually happens in enacting internal brand deliberate and tacit thinking and behavior. The assumption underlying this approach to internal branding is that purposeful managerial interventions necessitate an understanding of the social system that is the target of the internal branding initiative. This chapter provides insights into the potential complexity of actually implemented, real-life internal branding processes, which limit the possibility of achieving a cohesive internal corporate brand perception and consistent brand enactments. Hereunto, the second section gives a theoretical overview on the social dynamics characterizing enacted internal branding. The third section introduces a methodology that allows to access organization members’ emic interpretations of internal brand enactments and applies this methodology to the case of an Austrian corporate B2B brand, demonstrating how the brand is implemented internally. The chapter closes with a discussion on enacted internal branding and implications for managing corporate brands internally.

Theory of Enacted Internal Branding

Life behind the Scenes

Theory on internal branding so far mainly takes a normative, interventionist perspective, focusing on what should be done to achieve consistency between actual and intended internal enactments of brand values, beliefs, and behaviors (e.g., Kotler & Pfoertsch, 2007; Miles & Mangold, 2005; Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2006); and assuming that this goal can be reached.

Enacted internal branding theory illuminates the life behind the scenes. Following Goffman’s (1959) idea of backstage processes, enacted internal branding theory forwards the proposition that there are hidden, real-life internal brand enactments
that might contradict what management intends for its brand, that is, intended corporate brand identity aspects management defines front stage. This proposition is in-line with organizational sensemaking literature, arguing that “shared meaning is difficult to attain” (Weick, 1995, p. 188) and, “There is often lack of actual agreement, which is ignored or assumed away” (Brown, 1994, p. 97). One can think of many instances where front and back stage values, beliefs, and behaviors do not match. Consider the following example of the British B2 B brand, Gate Gourmet, where management itself does not live up to the officially stated values, creating a back stage reality which considerably harmed the brand’s credibility:

Gate Gourmet is the world’s second largest in-flight catering company, serving clients such as British Airways, American Airways, or Continental Airlines. In its official, front stage value statement as published on the corporate website in 2005 (http://www.gategourmet.com), the corporate brand particularly highlighted and reinforced the element “World Class People” and stated that “we treat our colleagues, customers, and suppliers with respect and dignity”. In the same year, company management drastically acted against this value. Gate Gourmet unilaterally decided to cut wages and conditions in order to avoid financial losses and refused to negotiate with the union. The major dispute resulted from dismissing 670 employees at Heathrow Airport in August 2005 after staff staged a two-day “illegal” walkout — meant to express their indignation with management practice — and the parallel hiring of lower paid temporary workers. Managements’ inconsistent back stage enactments led to major image deteriorations amongst a wide variety of internal and external stakeholders, including British Airways management and employees, British Airways passengers, unions and the general public. (Vallaster, de Chernatony, & von Wallpach, 2006, p. 33)

While this example pictures an extreme case of inconsistent front and back stage brand enactments provoked by management, other more hidden internal front and back stage conflicts are likely to exist due to various organizational members’ emic interpretations of front stage values. These interpretations influence both how organizational members actually enact the brand, that is, how they behave and interact with other internal stakeholders, and those organizational members’ consequent brand perception and behaviors. The result is a multiplication of unintended value perceptions and enactments, leading to a variety of back stage internal, “‘doppelgänger brand images’ — that is, families of disparaging images and stories about a brand” (Thompson, Rindfleisch, & Arsel, 2006, p. 50) and potential conflicts and confusion between internal stakeholders.

The consequences of disparaging internal back stage brand images are, however, not only limited to the internal context. A variety of organizational members is likely to interact with external stakeholders, such as customers, suppliers, investors, or media. During those interactions, organizational members represent the brand and
contribute to the development of various external stakeholders’ brand perceptions. Emic back stage interpretations of brand values and beliefs guide the organizational member’s behavior in those stakeholder contact situations, resulting in respective external Doppelgänger brand images. Problems arise if the values and beliefs the organizational member enacts are in obvious conflict with values other brand communication channels that are under corporate brand management’s control officially promote. Imagine a company stating the value “environmental friendliness” front stage in its corporate brand value statement and other communicative media directly targeting customers, while its sales representatives make customer visits with a vehicle obviously consuming large amounts of petrol. Inconsistent and eventually contradictory messages of this kind confuse external stakeholders and deteriorate the brand’s image and credibility.

In many cases, especially in strongly service-oriented businesses, the contact with organizational members (e.g., sales representatives or key account managers) is the most pronounced and important experience external stakeholders have with the brand, establishing what the brand really means to the stakeholder. This actual brand image, that is, “What stakeholders actually think about the organization” (Brown et al., 2006, p. 100) might be different from intended brand image but not necessarily harmful for the brand because stakeholders might not even know or consider what management intends its brand to be.

According to Bartunek (1993), Goffman (1959), and Stevenson, Bartunek, and Borgatti (2003), organizational members are mostly aware of contradictions between front and back stage processes. The theory of enacted internal branding extends this view and accounts for the fact that organizational member’s interpretations of back stage enactments are likely to be both conscious and unconscious (Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002). While organizational members’ stories allow investigating conscious back stage brand enactments and conflicts with front stage values and beliefs, more sophisticated research methods are needed to uncover unconscious brand enactments and related conflicts.

 Origins of Discrepancies between Actual and Intended Internal Brand Enactments

Organizational sensemaking literature forwards several reasons for heterogeneity in organizational members’ sensemaking that can be applied to realized internal branding. One major reason for different brand enactments are organizational members’ own identity needs (Coopey et al., 1997). The organization an individual is a member of can affect the individual’s own identity. When organizational members strongly identify themselves with the organization, the attributes they use to define the organization also define them (Dutton et al., 1994). Individuals therefore tend to interpret organizational values, beliefs, and behaviors in ways that best suit their individual identity generation or maintenance. On the one hand, individuals perform this identity generation effort for themselves in order to “make things rationally accountable to themselves” (Weick, 1993, p. 635). Through their emic, idiosyncratic interpretations of brand values people can model their autobiography, attributing values and favorable outcomes to
themselves, thereby raising their own self-esteem and their individually perceived importance for the corporate brand — a self-serving tendency referred to as attributional egotism (Bettman & Weitz, 1983; Brown & Jones, 1998).

On the other hand, organizational members enact brand values and beliefs in ways that influence the opinion others have of them, that is, their company internal personal image — a self-presentation behavior known as impression management (Schlenker, 1980). In order to maintain a desired image and to please their in-groups, organizational members adopt group interpretations of brand values as their own, emic interpretations. Maintaining one’s own identity might also require generating the identities of other social actors by interpreting their internal brand enactments: actors interpret the enactments of those individual they are interacting with most in ways that support their own brand enactments. Both individually and socially focused identity generation can lead to back stage interpretations of brand values and beliefs that are different from and eventually conflicting with front stage intended brand values.

Personal experiences outside and inside the organization can be further sources for discrepancies between front and back stage internal brand enactments. All individuals enter an organization with some prior interpretation of what are desirable values, beliefs, and behaviors. This is the result of former contacts with other social groups (e.g., family, school, or other organizations) or their national cultural background: “The individual’s system of values is itself a product of his experiences, and especially of his experiences in the social environment … As an adult he comes to adopt the values and norms of the group with which he identifies himself. This development of values and the adoption of norms constitute the process of socialization” (Kelvin, 1971, p. 232).

Individuals go through this process several times throughout their lives, whenever they get in contact with a new social group. When entering a new organization, individuals undergo tertiary or organizational socialization, “the process of ‘learning the ropes’, … of being indoctrinated and trained, … of being taught what is important in an organization or some subunit thereof” (Schein, 1971, p. 210, quote marks in the original). Ideally, this process leads to the accommodation of individual’s believes with front stage defined corporate brand values. However, this ideal reaction is only one possible outcome: the newcomer might as well adopt a back stage view of corporate brand values after experiencing the actually enacted values, beliefs, and behaviors within the corporation (cf., Cooper-Thomas, van Vianen, & Anderson, 2004). Depending on the position, the new organizational member adopts or the point of time he enters the organization, he will, for instance, get in contact with different formal and informal social groups within the organization or different leaders, influencing the individual’s ultimate emic interpretation of internal brand enactments.

Finally, an organization member’s actual interpretation of brand enactments depends on his or her former contacts with branding events within the organization. Branding communication might, for instance, not reach every organizational member with the same intensity or might be interpreted differently as a result of incomplete or inaccurate individual information processing (Dearborn & Simon, 1958; Hedberg, 1981). Again, conflicts between front and back stage values systems can be the result.
Conflict Neutralizing System Inherent Dynamics

The majority of meaning conflicts is likely to happen unconsciously and to remain unresolved because of missing awareness (Wilson, 2002). Conscious conflicts, however, represent unbalanced psychological states producing anxiety and inducing a wish of conflict resolution in organizational members. In line with Bartunek (1993) and Goffman (1959), organizational members contribute themselves actively in resolving contradictions they are aware of. The degree of involvement in these conflict-solving activities varies. Some organizational members are very active in avoiding or diminishing front and back stage as well as various back stage brand enactment conflicts regarding themselves but also other internal stakeholders. These stakeholders are important brand influencers, who can have both a positive and negative impact on intended brand enactments: they can either strive for a conflict resolution that strengthens intended brand values and beliefs, taking on the role of internal brand ambassadors; or they can aim to spread an alternative, back stage brand meaning.

Most organizational members are, however, not that active in solving conflicts. On the one hand, organizational members might not be willing to engage in conflict resolution because of individual identity generation needs. These needs can necessitate the maintenance of a value and belief system that contradicts front stage values while supporting how the organizational member wants to perceive himself or wants to be perceived by others. On the other hand, executives might simply not have the power and miss the necessary resources to induce change — especially if the contradictions do not concern themselves but other executives (Giddens, 1979, 1984).

Still, organizational members may take the necessary steps to avoid major conflicts they are aware of and that would harm their own position in the company, typically aiming to find some compromise or working agreement on how to enact the brand internally. Even though resulting actual internal brand enactments might not be intended by corporate brand management, they do not necessarily have to harm the brand but might be what the brand actually represents for most internal and external stakeholders (Figure 1).

Practice of Enacted Internal Branding

The third section gives insights into the practice of enacted internal brand, proposing a mixed method research procedure that allows surfacing actual conscious as well as unconscious internal brand enactments. The present study applies this research procedure to identify actually enacted internal brand values, beliefs, and behaviors in a business to business company. This single case approach is common practice in organization studies and accounts for the fact that enacted internal branding is a context specific phenomenon that cannot be understood in isolation, that is, “Apart from the perceptions of the actors and the mindsets and cultures of the contexts in which they are embedded” (Langley et al., 1995, p. 261).
The Case

The case-organization is an internationally operating Austrian business to business company, producing high-tech materials used as components in public transport, industrial, and construction applications and selling all of its products and services worldwide under the corporate brand name. The company’s original scope of activities was the production of artificial leather products, which then shifted to the manufacturing of high-tech materials in 1975. In the mid-1980s, the company founded its first subsidiary in Germany and began to develop its European distribution network. In the 1990s, the company opened offices in Amman, Jordan and in Berlin, Germany, and intensified its distribution activities in Asia, South America, and in Europe.

At the end of the 1990s, the company underwent a major change in leadership, bringing a new value system and the introduction of a process organization with four main processes (resources including the CEO, human resources, organizational development and controlling, innovation, sales and production) with it, which required a major restructuration. In 2005, a strategic realignment at the global level took place, dividing the enterprise into business units in order to bundle its know-how and expand its services to provide individualized solutions to its customers. Today, the company is world market leader in its field, employing a workforce of 232 people, with a staff of some 172 at the Austrian headquarters. The company booked sales of EUR 46.3 million in 2007, with exports accounting for some 83 percent of sales. In May 2008, the company opened its own production facilities in China.

In 2007, the new CEO approached one of the two authors, asking for support in surfacing actually enacted corporate brand values, beliefs, and behaviors within his

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Figure 1: Implemented internal branding theory.
company. Planning for the study included agreement with the CEO that the main focus of the project should be on organizational member’s emic interpretations of corporate brand value enactments. For that purpose, a sample of 35 (out of 150) Austrian employees was chosen to cover all resource processes, departments and hierarchical levels at the headquarters (see Figure 2 for an overview on the departments and hierarchical levels included in this study). The 35 organizational members participated in an in-depth interview regarding the principles guiding work in the company. All interviews took place in meeting rooms at the headquarters or — if executives had a private office — in the executives’ respective offices. Interviews lasted between 45 minutes and 2.5 hours. All interviews were recorded and verbally transcribed, resulting in 530 pages (single spaced, Times New Roman, pt. 12) of transcripts. The next section gives insights into the research procedure used to surface internal brand enactments.

A Mixed Method Research Procedure to Surface Internal Brand Enactments

A main challenge in surfacing internal brand enactments is the fact that organizational members are not always consciously aware of their own enactments (cf., Wilson, 2002). Zaltman (2003) stresses that most thinking is done unconsciously and researchers need unique tools to make unconscious knowledge accessible to both the individual and the researcher. In order to detect both conscious and unconscious brand enactments in organizational members’ emic interpretations, the present study applies a mixed method approach (Woodside, 2004b, 2006), combining storytelling about the organizational members’ immediate work environment with cognitive mapping (Huff & Jenkins, 2002) and metaphor elicitation (Woodside, 2004a, 2004b, 2006; Zaltman & Zaltman, 2008). This combination of research methods has several further advantages. First, the application of multiple research methods leads to participants’ “confirmatory personal introspection” (Woodside, 2004a, 2004b), that is, to the confirmation of their own interpretations via multiple research methods. Additionally, interpretations are cross-checked by other organizational members reporting their own views of actual internal brand enactments. Second, various forms of knowledge representation and preferences with regard to knowledge retrieval (verbal versus visual) can be accounted for. Finally, the methods were chosen to allow individuals slowly approaching topics that might be socially less acceptable, such as sensitive information regarding personal relationships and interactions within their work environment.

In a first step, organizational members told stories about their time in the company. The main assumption underlying the application of storytelling as a research tool is that stories are the most natural way for human beings to acquire, store, and retrieve knowledge (Bruner, 1991; Hiltunen, 2002; McKee, 2003; Mink, 1978; Weick, 1995; Woodside et al., 2008). In an organizational context, storytelling plays a pivotal role. By exchanging stories, organizational members are socialized and learn to distinguish between valued as well as unacceptable beliefs and behaviors.
Figure 2: Sample overview: Departments and hierarchical levels included in the empirical study.
(Allan, Fairclough, & Heinzen, 2002; Kelvin, 1971; Schein, 1971). Stories are also the foundation for individual sensemaking and the way organizational members assign meaning to the organizational environment surrounding them (Brown, Stacey, & Nandhakumar, 2008). Organizational members might therefore store much information regarding internal brand meaning enactments as stories in episodic memory, containing verbal and non-verbal as well as conscious and unconscious knowledge elements (Tulving, 1972, 2002). The most natural way to access episodic knowledge and to gain emic interpretations of internal brand enactments is asking organizational members to reproduce these stories. While storytelling should allow gaining deep insights into organizational members’ social realities and internal brand meaning enactments, the interpretations verbal, oral storytelling retrieves are predominantly conscious/verbal, neglecting alternative ways of knowledge representation and retrieval.

In order to access eventually unconscious, non-verbal interpretations of internal brand enactments participants had to draw a cognitive map depicting their immediate social work environment and to comment their map with a story. Cognitive maps are “visual representations that establish a landscape, or domain, name the most important entities that exist within that domain, and simultaneously place them within two or more relationships” (Huff & Jenkins, 2002, p. 2). The maps are not direct personal representations of cognitive processes but “intermediate tools that facilitate the discussion of cognitive processes that can never be directly observed” (Eden, Jones, Sims, & Smithin, 1979, in Huff & Jenkins, 2002, p. 1); mental processes that include tacit knowledge that is hard to verbalize. Cognitive mapping is a much applied research method in organizational contexts, encouraging organizational members to share their idiosyncratic sensemaking of organizational reality, giving insights into actual values, beliefs, and behaviors guiding behaviors in their immediate social context (e.g., Howard & Morgenroth, 1968; Huff & Jenkins, 2002; Woodside & Samuel, 1981).

Cognitive mapping is effective in eliciting implicit (i.e., tacit or unconscious) knowledge “when coupled with techniques such as metaphors and storytelling, which have been argued to help express the inexpressible” (Ambrosini & Bowman, 2002, p. 19). To support organizational members in accessing the most hidden interpretations regarding internal brand enactments and crossing both the line of unconsciousness and social desirability, storytelling and cognitive mapping was completed by a metaphor elicitation task. Metaphors are common to human cognition and language and allow “understanding and experiencing one kind of thing in terms of another” (Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). The main advantages of metaphors are that they “give tacit knowledge a voice” (Munby, 1986, p. 198) and allow organization members to avoid directly talking about sensitive information regarding other social actors and their relationships.

Several metaphor elicitation techniques are known in marketing and organization science, such as cognitive sculpting (Sims & Doyle, 1995; Doyle & Sims, 2002) or the Zaltman metaphor elicitation technique (ZMET) (Zaltman, 2003). The present study applies an extension of the forced-metaphor elicitation technique (FMET) by Woodside (2004a, 2004b, 2008c) to surface organization members’ unconscious
internal branding values, beliefs, and behaviors. Building on Woodside’s (2004a, 2004b, 2008a, 2008b, 2008c) conclusion that individuals have no difficulty giving zoomorphistic explications of self, that is, identifying themselves with animals and that many personality traits and behaviors of humans can be easily transferred to animals and vice versa (Feinson, 1998), participants were asked to identify themselves and other social actors depicted in their cognitive maps with animals and to support their metaphors with stories explaining why single animals represent respective human beings.

Data Analysis Procedure

The research team, including the first author and a research assistant, applied hermeneutic text analysis to analyze the organizational members’ stories. Hermeneutic text analysis considers both language (that is the semiotic-structural characteristics of the text, considering syntactic and semantic text elements) and content of a text as potential loci of meaning (Arnold & Fischer, 1994; Thompson, 1997). Researchers move back and forth between these two levels of analysis — a process referred to as “hermeneutic circle” (Thompson, Pollio, & Locander, 1994) — aiming to “achieve an understanding free of contradictions” (Arnold & Fischer, 1994, p. 63). Still, two researchers separately interpreting a text might come to different conclusions because of the researchers’ different pre-understandings. This variability of researcher interpretations is perceived as fruitful because it allows discerning multiple meanings texts might eventually contain (Arnold & Fischer, 1994). The analysis of cognitive maps and zoomorphistic metaphors was performed by organizational members themselves, who had the task to explicate their maps and metaphors with stories. The analysis of these stories followed the principles outlined above.

Internal Branding Reality

Conflicts and agreements Numerous conflicts between front and back stage internal brand enactments characterize the company internal reality. The most pronounced example for a conflict between front and back stage brand enactments regards the company’s management handbook, containing front stage, intended corporate values, beliefs, and behaviors. The following emic interpretations by two organizational members regarding the handbook’s actual back stage enactment illustrate this conflict:

- Management has created a solid base for all working processes in our company — the management handbook. But if we would always follow this handbook working would become impossible because it blocks all of our natural work flows.
- There are process descriptions for everything in this company but most employees don’t even know they exist and do things their way.
Throughout the 35 participants’ autobiographic stories, a number of critical incidents and issues arise, causing conflicts:

(a) A major leadership change toward the end of the 1990s led to the introduction of new front stage values, splitting the workforce into “old employees” still following the former value and belief system and “new employees” promoting the newly introduced, intended corporate brand identity. This results in conflicts between the actual back stage internal brand enactments of old employees and the new front stage system, as well as between old and new employees, who enact the brand differently back stage.

The following statements by old and new organizational members illustrate the conflicting views present in the company very well:

- **Old employees 1.** I am strongly committed to this company but not to our new CEO and his management team. These managers were not selected because of their skills but because they please the new CEO and do not contradict him. Our old CEO would never have accepted that — he was very knowledgeable and very modest. Old employees still follow his tradition: they care about other people, try to maintain personal contact and do not follow everything that is formally stated, while new employees follow to the new structures and processes without questioning them and foster impersonal, formal communication.

- **Old employee 2.** Today everything is different. The management team has changed. Under the old CEO, R&D had a different standing: if we needed a machine, we got it. Today, we are fighting with company internal bureaucracy. Work is also much more impersonal today: for instance, we have computer systems such as SAP replacing interpersonal contact and in a project team we are not supposed to talk to the responsible persons directly but only via the project manager. Due to the immense growth that took place during the last 10 years we are not like a family anymore — everything is fragmented.

- **New employee 1.** It’s like two different worlds: with the new CEO a new era started. The old guys are like a sect, they are old fighters which do not integrate new employees into their groups and give them the impression to be youngsters. They create a negative atmosphere; find negative aspects in everything; and are against change and innovation. They will never become supporters of the new CEO — they fight against everything he does. And they are jealous because all important positions are filled by employees adhering to the new CEO’s values and beliefs.

(b) A second major conflict raising issue were two waves of restructuration that took place at the end of the 1990s and in 2005, first introducing a process organization and then dividing the sales department into business units and organizing them as a matrix. Both restructurations required the introduction of new processes and related, intended brand behaviors. Front stage, the new structures still appear to be the ideal solution. Managers who have been involved in elaborating these structures are still in favor of them because they allow the company to grow and to provide its customers with individualized solutions. However, especially in the
case of the new matrix organization introduced in the sales department, everyone is aware of the fact that the back stage enactment is non-satisfying. A manager comments the situation as follows:

- I have been heavily involved in elaborating this new structure and I really support what we came up with. But I cannot support how it has been implemented and what is made of it today. Other organizational members confirm this conflict.

- From an organizational point of view, the new matrix organization was the right decision. But honestly, do you know a case where a matrix organization really works — except for large companies like Gore or IKEA? Our people, especially our subsidiary leaders, don’t accept that they have been degraded and that the business unit leaders supervise their employees. We are dealing with people and these people will find their ways and change the structures to suit their needs.

- A matrix organization is always difficult and probably only works if people get along with each other and treat each other with respect. If everybody “cooks his own soup” it cannot work.

- In the sales department, the restructuring led to major losses for many people: old sales representatives lost customers to new sales representatives; many people in leading positions were degraded; others were not promoted as expected. These people tend to boycott the new structure and are not willing to change their ways.

(c) Also, different national cultural backgrounds present in the company lead to discrepant emic interpretations of brand enactments. A German and an Austrian employee, respectively, describe the situation:

- There are major differences in mentality between German and Austrian employees, influencing their way of interpretation and behavior. The topic “just in time,” for instance, is interpreted very differently. For me, just in time means delivering on exactly the right time. For Austrians, delivering early means doing a better job. But for me early delivery is as bad as late delivery.

- I am the only leader in our team, who represents the local Austrian culture. My German colleagues are different. I am trying to make sure that our local culture is preserved.

Organizational members try to solve various front and back stage conflicts throughout their stories, but indicate themselves that the realistic outcome are working agreements between employees, ensuring a smooth workflow. In the case of the above-mentioned management handbook, organizational members engage in conflict resolution, simultaneously indicating that the conflict is not resolved and that working agreements are in place:

- But all in all, the management handbook has been based on actual working processes; therefore there are not too many situations where you have to act against it to ensure a smoother work flow ... Anyways, it’s not only me who does not follow the management handbook; many of my colleagues also prefer the
informal way: this makes our collaboration very agreeable and we all very much appreciate that.

Besides conflicts, organizational members’ stories also indicate that there are agreements with regard to internal brand enactments. One major point of agreement is the enactment of positive and negative incentives.

- In our company you are usually neither punished nor praised. I would accept punishment if I got praise from time to time. But in 11 years nothing like that happened.
- It is part of our culture to allow people to make mistakes and to learn from these mistakes. Rewards do not really exist — nothing really happens if you do a good job because that is what you are supposed to do anyways.

In their stories, organizational members confirm a strongly ego-centric stance, reporting events that are of highest concern to themselves and picturing themselves as the heroes of their stories. Stories allow organizational members to make sense of their own role in the company and to generate their own identities. Old employees, for example, tend to interpret their beliefs and values as the right way to go and picture themselves as representatives and promoters of the “right” value system. Organizational members do, however, avoid too detailed descriptions of their actual work environment and the values and beliefs guiding their most frequent and intense company internal behaviors and relationships. Only the combination of storytelling with cognitive mapping and metaphor elicitation takes organizational members this step further, encouraging them to switch from a macro to a micro-level perspective and to cross the line of consciousness and social desirability.

Figure 3 shows two original cognitive maps two organizational members working at different hierarchical levels in the innovation department/process forwarded. Both maps are unique with regard to their design, the people included, and the connections between them.

The main advantage of the cognitive mapping exercise is that the method allows organizational members to slowly approach and to make sense of their immediate work environment and enables them to position themselves vis-à-vis other social actors. However, most organizational members still avoid giving details in their interpretations of actual back stage brand enactments in their groups and do usually not describe how the relationships and interactions in their immediate work environment look like. The main focus is on who is involved and why these people formally interact, but not on the principles underlying these interactions. Cognitive mapping is still a valuable and necessary prerequisite preparing the ground for the subsequent application of metaphor elicitation.

Most organizational members need the combination of cognitive mapping and metaphor elicitation to verbalize unconscious or eventually socially undesirable interpretations regarding their immediate work environment. Projecting their interpretations of other organizational members’ brand enactments to animals instead of talking about them directly relieves participants from the pressure to
Figure 3: Original front and back stage cognitive network maps of our executives.
respond in socially desirable ways. A few individuals refused to perform metaphor elicitation and preferred giving a verbal explanation. The fact that the resulting descriptions were similarly thick is an indicator for the existence of different preferences in knowledge retrieval that need to be accounted for in order to gain deep insight into interpretations of actual brand enactments.

Figures 4 and 5 again show the cognitive maps of the two representatives working in the innovation department/process. The presentations in these two figures preserve individuals’ anonymities by covering the original content with equivalent symbols as the ones participants used in their maps and assigning each person mentioned in the maps a person number (Px) and a department number (Dx) consistent across all maps. The maps now include the animal pictures the two participants (called Eric and Marc) chose to describe the people mentioned in their maps. The stories Eric and Marc forwarded during their cognitive mapping and metaphor elicitation tasks are discussed next.

Eric (P26) is one of three competence leaders in the innovation department. Eric appears to enjoy both verbal and visual knowledge retrieval, having no difficulty approaching topics that might be socially undesirable (such as relationships at work) already while drawing his cognitive map. The results of the metaphor elicitation task (discussed later in this section) show, however, that Eric still avoided details regarding the most pronounced conflicts or other hot topics in his department.

Eric puts himself in the middle of his cognitive map, then depicting the various teams he is interacting with. Eric starts with his own team (D53) where the contact is most intense, then proceeding to the second team in the innovation department (D52), mentioning the competence leader of this team (P23) he is sharing his office with. The third team in the innovation department (D51) is more distant from Eric’s team, wherefore he depicts them a bit farther away, still stressing that he needs them for his daily work. Next, he mentions P27, who is the eldest in his team, his official representative and the direct contact to other team members (P51, P52, and P53).

Eric is also collaborating with P24 who is in P23’s team now but was formerly one of Eric’s employees — as many other organizational members — but “they” (meaning top management) took lots of employees away from him while restructuring the company. Eric’s story accompanying his cognitive map indicates a front and back stage conflict: Eric is not totally convinced of the new front stage structure which reduced his power and importance in the company by diminishing the number of employees under his supervision. Eric has the impression that he has been degraded. In his emic interpretation of the situation Eric forwards a conflict resolution attempt, which could also be perceived as a personal coping strategy:

- Ok, while I was here I always had 10–12 employees. D52 and D53 were one team. But one day I would have had 20 employees which is definitely too much. So they had to split our team.

Next, Eric mentions his boss by saying no more then “well, then I should probably not forget my boss who also belongs to my immediate environment.” Eric stresses
Figure 4: Front and backstage cognitive social network map of Eric (P25) including animal metaphors.
Figure 5: Front and backstage cognitive social network map of Marc (P5) including animal metaphors.
that there are many other people in the company he interacts with, for instance, in
the two business units D82 and D83. The contact with D82, especially with the
business unit leader P10 is more pronounced because of this business units’ techno-
logical needs. D83 has more contact with his fellow colleagues in the innovation
department (D52). Eric marks the relationships between the business units and the
various teams in the innovation department with an additional connection line.

In the production department (D40) there are two competence team leaders
Eric is strongly interacting with — both were once employees in his team. In his
interpretation regarding these two employees, Eric finds a way to satisfy his own
identity generation needs, while indirectly distancing himself from the new
management team, especially his own boss. Eric is one of the old employees
supporting the point of view that the strong technology focus the old CEO promoted
was desirable while nowadays irrelevant topics such as project management are
paramount. Eric’s direct graphical connection to one of the oldest members of
the executive board (P6) underlines this strong connection to the past. The following
statement supports Eric’s identity generation attempt:

- People that have worked in my department get to know the material we are
  working with so well, that they want to work with it and move on to the produc-
tion department. That is the one department in our company where they really
  need know–how, and they got it here. In top management positions this knowledge
  is not required anymore today.

When asked to assign animals to single persons in his cognitive map, depicting
these persons’ characteristics and roles, Eric’s first comment is “wow, the idea to use
animal symbols is really not bad.” Eric begins with his team: P27 is a rooster. He is
proud, an alpha animal and Eric’s official representative who would like to have
more of a leading role in the team. P52 is a sheep, at times too generous with herself
and others. P51 is a fox, not an insidious fox but a cunning, smart fox. Also the busy
bee fits P51 because he is smart and hardworking. P53 is a rather new team member
and quite young, a caterpillar that still needs to become a butterfly. Eric perceives
P53 as a good developer because he is reliable and solid: he does not give up right
away when developing some new material but reliably finishes his task. Finally,
the conflict between Eric and his boss becomes obvious. Eric states “oh yes, P5, he is
guy how wanted to become my boss, but I won’t say more about that now, well,
restructuration at times provides you with a boss.” However, he refuses to assign an
animal to P5 before finishing the rest.

Next, Eric chooses people randomly, moving from one department to the next.
P54 (one of his former employees who now works in the production department) is
described as kind of vain, somebody who talks a lot without saying much and who
likes to present himself in the best light. Eric cannot think of an animal that would fit
this description. P6, the only member of the executive board Eric has intense contact
with is a rabbit or what Germans calls “rabbit foot,” meaning that he is spineless.
P10 is a lion who is stubborn and very self-conscious, that is, he perceives himself as
the best and knows everything better than anybody else, also when it comes to technological issues.

Again, a conflict between various backstage value and belief systems is perceivable: P10 is a new employee with much less experience than Eric and representing the “new” value system. P24 is incredibly diligent and tends to lose himself in irrelevancies. He is like a hamster in his wheel: if you give him some work he will not stop until he is done with his task. Eric describes himself as a cat who has its own will and does whatever it wants, stressing that also other people perceive him like this. He is the contrary to his fellow competence team leader colleague P23 who is a dog doing whatever he is told. In the case of P22 Eric cannot think of an animal but describes this person as a former farmer, very solid, reliable, tidy, what differentiates him from P54 who is not reliable at all. P55 is an elephant who doesn’t forget anything and is also comparable to P22 because he is very reliable.

Finally, Eric has to assign an animal to his boss (P5), choosing a bear and a donkey. According to Eric, both animals are not ideal. P5 is very persistent and a supporter of the new values. He likes to work in a very structured way which does not fit Eric’s work approach. In the story accompanying his metaphor elicitation, Eric overtly talks about their conflict regarding their interpretations of internal brand enactments and states that they have found a way to get along — a work agreement — without really accepting each other. In a last step, Eric chooses a metaphor for characterizing his team: they are a bunch of penguins. This is meant to describe the typically enacted brand values and behaviors as well as the climate within the team: “on the one hand, they are very warm and friendly but on the other hand they can be cold as ice and treat each other in a “frosty” way.” Eric states that there are strong contradictions in his team that become most obvious when looking at the variety of animals he chose (a sheep, a rooster, a bee that stings). People do not always get along — an indication for the existence of back stage conflicts in the department.

Figure 5 depicts Marc’s (P5) cognitive map. Marc is Eric’s boss. First, Marc draws his own team, the innovation department. Marc is one of the few participants who dares mentioning interpersonal relationships, and especially conflicts (e.g., with the CEO, members of his team or members of other teams) already in his autobiographic story. He appears to be very self-reflective and tries to make internal brand enactments conscious to himself by analyzing his own beliefs and behaviors as well as the behaviors of other organizational members in his surroundings.

Marc is also able to describe the corporate brand values that are actually guiding company internal behaviors, mentioning respect and acceptance between employees, willingness to move on and to change things, transparency (e.g., every employee is personally informed about the company’s financial situation four times a year), and everybody is empowered and receives the freedom to take decisions himself but is also responsible for himself. Marc is an internal brand ambassador. On the one hand, he is strongly involved (or involves himself) in defining front stage values and behaviors and on the other hand he shows an interest in promoting the resolution of conflicts. Marc is a very structured person and a strong supporter of project management. This focus on structures dominates his back stage understanding of
internal brand values and behaviors. The following anecdote regarding himself and the CEO of the company shows how Marc is actively engaging in making his individual back stage value and belief system part of the front stage values and beliefs and also illustrates Marc’s interest in conflict resolution:

- Some days ago I had a fight with our CEO. I am a very structured person and a strong supporter of project management and I am actively trying to spread this way of working in our company and to convince other people of its benefits. Therefore, I asked the CEO’s secretary to put this topic on the agenda for our next executive board meeting because I wanted to report some new ideas and experiences I just had while doing a seminar on innovation management, ideas on how to do things differently in our company. For some reason our CEO was completely against it and we had a fight on the phone. I was personally offended and went to his office ten minutes later to get an appointment for the next day so that we could discuss the topic after cooling down. The day after we solved the problem and found out that it was actually a misunderstanding and that we had a similar attitude with regard to this topic.

Marc starts his cognitive map by positioning himself in the middle and the three competence teams of his department (including the competence team leaders P22, P23, and P26, that is Eric) as well as P56 (who work independently from the three teams) to his right. These are the people Marc is daily interacting with. P56 is Marc’s assistant, who is coaching and supporting him when it comes to strategic issues.

Marc only includes the persons he is interacting with most but stresses that he is also in contact with the competence team leaders’ representatives and their employees. Next, Mark includes several departments and heads of departments (who are on the executive board with him) in his map: the production department with P4, the sales department with P8, the controlling department with P3, organizational development with P6, human resources with P2 and P43, and the CEO, P1. In the sales department, Marc adds the three business units with their heads (P10 with whom he has most contact as well as P9 and P11) and the subsidiaries in Germany with the respective heads (P7 who is also on the executive board, P12 and P13). Marc interacts with all of these people and there is also project-dependent contact with their employees.

So far, Marc’s description of his social environment is rather superficial, focusing on formal relationships but not so much on actual interactions and underlying values. Only the metaphor elicitation task encourages Marc to share some deeper insights with regard to actual brand enactments and conflicts in his environment. Marc starts out with Eric (P26), whom he already mentioned in his story, indicating that there have been some discrepancies between them. Marc chooses a running horse, a fox and a rooster to illustrate Eric’s characteristics and his role in the team. Eric is chaotic but visionary, like a horse that is running very quickly, with lots of know–how that should be used. Compared to Eric, Marc is small horse, that is, he is similar but not that quick yet. Also the fox fits Eric well: he is smart, foxy.
Finally, Eric is a rooster who likes ladies and cars. Marc’s relationship with Eric was complicated at the beginning.

Due to the restructuring some years ago, Marc suddenly became Eric’s boss. Eric did not accept that because he was himself head of a department for years. The two of them also have very different approaches to work and tend to enact the brand differently: Eric is chaotic while Marc is very structured. Additionally, Marc is a new employee while Eric has been working for the company already under the old CEO and strongly supports the old value system. According to Marc, the two of them have been able to sort this back stage conflict out: “We get along really well today and are able to collaborate. Eric is a very valuable member of my team.” Eric’s accounts show that his perception of the relationship is different: he is still not accepting Marc, the conflict is still there but they found an “agreement” that allows them to work together.

P23, the second competence team leader Marc describes, is a squirrel — an animal very diligent, hardworking, committed, quick, and dexterous. He has been working for the company for a few years and is already in a leading position. Additionally, P23 is a good communicator. P22 is very active and committed. He is a dog that can be seduced but also a dog that barks and bits and runs if he does not agree with something. Marc stresses that the combination of these three people is ideal: there is P23 who is diligent and careful, P26 (Eric) who is very creative and P22 who overtly says what he thinks. As individual, all of them enact the brand slightly differently from what is expected front stage, but together they make it work. Marc can’t think of an animal representing P56. She is the one who makes sure that things happen in the department, who coaches all team members.

The heads of the other departments are the second major group Marc reports interacting frequently with. The CEO (P1) is both a horse and a donkey. The horse is visionary, galloping toward the future but also somewhat unstructured and chaotic. The donkey is stubborn and determinative, not listening to others. To some extent, these behaviors are contradictory. Marc stresses that the two of them get along really well and communicate on a high level. Still, an obvious discrepancy appears in their brand values, beliefs, and behaviors when it comes to a structure (the CEO is much less structured than Marc) which also explains the fight Marc described before. P3, the head of the controlling department, is a scorpion.

Marc is at times annoying, critically reflecting everything, causing troubles on the executive board but more in the sense that he makes people aware of what goes wrong. He could also be described as a brand ambassador who makes sure that other managers are aware of eventual conflicts between front and back stage values, beliefs, and behaviors. P6 leads the organizational development department. He is the handsome guy, a peacock, elegant, noble, calm, not looking for excitement or for challenges. He usually follows the main stream but is a very valuable team member due to his know–how. P8, the head of the sales department, is new in the organization and has a hard time because he does not know the ways of doing business here. He is not yet accustomed with the company internal front stage value and beliefs system and entered the company with prior experience in other companies and a different national cultural background. He is a Bambi: insecure, needs lots of
support in order not to get lost or not to be killed in the high grass. P4 is head of the production department. P4 is a hamster, very active, critical. Finally, Marc chooses the zebra for himself. He tries to give his department and the whole company structure (indicated by the zebra’s black and white pattern) and to maintain the balance within his team.

Marc stresses that he is not a “typical boss” but more of a team member responsible for coordination. On the executive board he is the troublemaker who addresses hot topics. He is not looking for challenges or conflicts. However, he does not avoid them if they arise but tries to solve them — supporting the fact that he is a brand ambassador.

Metaphor elicitation helped participants to overcome restraints present during storytelling and cognitive mapping and encouraged them to give insights in actual back stage internal brand enactments within their immediate work environment. Both organizational members include conflicts between the various value and belief systems and conflict resolution strategies in their emic interpretations accompanying metaphor elicitation. These interpretations were obviously not consciously retrievable or socially undesirable to mention in their stories. Additionally, by sharing their perceptions regarding the behaviors people surrounding them enact and the various relationships between these people, the two participants generate the identities of these people relative to the firm’s brand identity (i.e., which value and belief system are these people enacting and is this system consistent with front stage values and beliefs?) as well as their own identities relative to other actors (i.e., do the value and belief enacted by other social actors correspond to the participants’ own emic interpretations and do interactions with these people support his identity?). Finally, only the combination of all three methods is likely to give real deep insights into and thick descriptions of conscious and unconscious, socially desirable and undesirable internal brand enactments.

**Back stage enacted corporate brand values** In-depth hermeneutic analysis of the stories, the 35 participants forwarded in every step of the research procedure led to an identification of actually enacted values and beliefs in each of the four resource processes and on the corporate level. For illustration purposes, the value system enacted in the innovation process (Eric and Marc belong to) will be introduced before discussing the company-wide value system. A total of four managers and four employees working in the innovation process participated in this study. Figure 6 shows the values derived from these eight organizational members’ stories, differentiating between values that only management or employees mentioned and values that both groups enacted. A discussion of shared values follows, supported with excerpts from their original stories.

The value fairness and support implies assisting employees and allowing them to make mistakes. For managers, this value signifies establishing a work environment where employees can fulfill their tasks without problems and assisting employees when they have questions or are in troubles. Also the active support between
employees is part of this value. Employees expect and value assistance from management. The following statements support this value:

- My boss has to take care that others don’t take advantage of me.
- If we really want to be innovative we have to collaborate and support each other.

Aiming for community is another value both management and employees in the innovation process share. This value contains teamwork and personal contact. Managers, for instance, perceive themselves as team members and not as strict supervisors and believe in the power of their teams. The innovation process also values inter-departmental collaboration. The following statements illustrate how participants interpret this value:

- I am not a traditional supervisor. I set deadlines and make sure that work is done. And at times I participate in meeting where I am in the role of a normal team member. If we want to make a difference we have to do that together, as a team.
- I very much appreciate that innovation and sales work closely together.

Regardful collaboration encompasses an adequate conversation style as well as acceptance of various personalities and opinions within the team and the company:

- We treat each other with respect and accept other organizational members as they are.
- To be nice with each other, we do … how should I put this, sometimes people are not as nice with each other but that is not the desired way to collaborate.
Another value that is of major importance to both groups is openness and transparency, implying an open discussion about problems, conflicts, and further actions as a basis for collaboration. Statements like the following underline this value:

- I try to tell people what bothers me and what I disapprove of, or what could be changed.
- It is important to discuss different ideas and to deal with themes even if it’s emotional and sometimes not comfortable for the persons that are involved.
- Transparency is important in our company: there are quarterly held meetings where our CEO informs all employees about the company’s financial situation.

Finally, structured and systematic work characterizes the innovation process. The head of the innovation process strongly promotes this value and tries to install it front stage: “I am very structured, I need this for my work and I try to convince others of the benefits of this approach to work.”

Not all members of the team positively evaluate this strong focus on structure. This indicates that there are conflicts between back stage beliefs and employees only enact this brand value as intended because they feel pressured to do so:

- If I do something today I have to ask myself if I fulfill the formal criteria and processes. It doesn’t really matter whether I do a good job or not — it’s all about formalities and following the formally installed processes.
- We have been growing and needed more formal structures but at times it’s a bit difficult to work in such an environment, especially for someone who is not that formal and more creative.

The above examples illustrate that employees and management agree on a core of enacted brand values that guide the behavior within their team as well as with other teams. Still, there are numerous values that only one of the two groups mentions. The reasons might either be that the other group does not enact this value at all or is simply not aware of this value. Differences in value perceptions and enactments can but do not necessarily have to lead to conflicts between the groups. On the other hand, there are values that both groups seem to share (e.g., structured work) but are actually only enacted as desired due to pressure from the top while employees still believe in another approach to work.

In order to gain insights into the company-wide enacted brand value system, the single value systems identified for each process were aggregated. Figure 7 depicts the values mentioned in most organizational members’ stories. Most values overlap with those identified for the innovation process. Additional values that have been more pronounced in other processes are individual responsibility and facing challenges.

Individual responsibility is a central enacted brand value guiding the behavior of the majority of organizational members. Managers give their teams the freedom to find their own way to solve problems and to make mistakes in order to learn and
to develop themselves and the company. Employees very much appreciate this value. The following statements illustrate the importance of individual responsibility:

- Leading in this company signifies installing equilibrium between freedom and soft pressure to achieve the goals.
- I tell nobody how to do his job. In the end the results has to be ok.
- Everybody is allowed to make mistakes and to learn from his mistakes.
- For my supervisor it is important that the result is ok and that I reach it without breaking any basic rules. But we have lots of freedom.

Finally, a strong will to face challenges characterizes the company. These comments support this value:

- This team has to face challenges to enhance the company.
- I don’t look for challenges but if there is a challenge I will always face it.

Concluding, throughout all participants’ emic interpretations of internal brand enactments the impression arose that the local mentality strongly dominates this company. All values tend to support the central idea of working together to achieve more and the personal integration of all organizational members. The following statement by one participant summarizes the company’s effort to balance local
tradition with innovation, two values that seem to be inextricably linked and in this synthesis crucial for the corporate brand’s success, “We honor the old while welcoming the new.”

**Discussion and Managerial Implications**

Contrary to existing literature on internal branding, the present chapter applies an organizational/behavioral science view, discussing how brands are actually enacted by organizational members. Enacted internal branding theory and practice illustrate that organizational members can be considered active brand co-creators, enacting brand values, beliefs, and behaviors during every action and interaction with company internal and external stakeholders. Former research acknowledges this active role of employees, picturing them as “brand ambassadors” (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005, p. 5) or “brand builders” (de Chernatony, 1999, p. 157), who support management in establishing a desired corporate brand image with other stakeholders. Enacted internal branding theory demonstrates that achieving this ideal outcome is unlikely.

This chapter shows that organizational members’ emic interpretations of actually enacted brand values, beliefs, and behaviors are in many cases different from what management intends for its brand. This is consistent with Goffman’s (1959) proposition that there are hidden back stage processes that contradict how management defines its brand front stage. Numerous conflicts between front and back stage values, beliefs, and behaviors, as well as between various back stage brand enactments characterize enacted internal branding, leading to “Doppelgänger brand images” (Thompson et al., 2006, p. 50) inside and outside the company.

Given the enormous social complexity management encounters an obvious question. What can management do to nurture front-stage, intended, brand values, beliefs, and behaviors? To some extent, management can rely on system inherent conflict resolution dynamics. The case study findings here show that unbalanced psychological states, for instance, provoke brand enactment conflicts that organizational members are consciously aware — resulting in distress among organizational members and lead to conflict-solving attempts that ideally promote intended brand values. Still, management cannot rely on such a process to occur naturally because in many cases organizational members are (a) not willing to solve conflicts, (b) unable to solve conflicts, and (c) not even aware consciously of the conflict.

In order to face this challenge, management needs to gain an understanding of the functioning of both deliberate and tacit social reality. Organizational reality is to be understood as a dynamic social system, structured by inherent values, beliefs, and behaviors/processes that are not necessarily consistent with management’s formally installed front stage values, beliefs, and behaviors/processes (Giddens, 1979, 1984; Goffman, 1959).

Organically grown values and beliefs influence organizational members’ individual sensemaking and the social norms guiding their interactions and power relations with other individuals (Giddens, 1979, 1984). Theoretically, every member of the organization can induce change in this social system: “organizations can be moved in
some coherent and explicit direction — here lies the possibility of deliberate and effective strategy” (Whittington, 1992, p. 695). Changing the underlying values guiding the organization is, however, most difficult because they represent stable principles that will only change under certain circumstances, for instance, due to major events such as a leadership change (Bartunek, 1984). The actual outcomes of attempts to influence social reality are not foreseeable (Giddens, 1984).

Before attempting to influence internal brand values, beliefs, and behaviors, management is therefore well advised to learn more about the actual social reality in its company. Applying the mixed research procedures in this report represent a design to help management to surface various conscious and unconscious brand enactments and eventual conflicts between them. This knowledge can serve as a starting point for re-thinking and eventually redefining front stage values, beliefs, and behaviors. Organically grown guiding principles might be much more powerful and important for the success of a corporate brand than artificially defined values.

This becomes most obvious in the case company investigated in this study, where the organically grown synthesis between local tradition and innovation is essential for the corporate brand’s success. Still, management may have to consider further corporate brand values, beliefs, and behaviors that are not yet present in the company but are necessary for reaching the corporate brand’s vision. Integrating actually enacted values with intended values provides a corporate brand with a solid, credible base that is automatically lived and enforced by organizational members, as well as with a common goal organizational members can work toward.

The study that this chapter presents confirms that social dynamic enactments to a substantial extent may inhibit managerial efforts to spread intended corporate brand values, beliefs, and behaviors. On the one hand, management has the advantage of having more resources and power at its disposition than other organizational members that allow exerting a certain influence on the system. Management can, for instance, choose from a variety of communication devices designed to transmit desired corporate brand values (Burmann & Zeplin, 2005); can develop incentive systems that exemplify which behaviors are valued and which should be avoided (Esch, Rutenberg, Strödter, & Vallaster, 2005); or can promote desired values via leadership (Vallaster & de Chernatony, 2005) and human resource activities (de Chernatony, Cottam, & Segal-Horn, 2006). Still, many other organizational members actively participate in this structuration process. These social actors may willingly or unwillingly counteract managerial internal branding efforts and limit the possibility of implementing the brand’s meaning and behavior as intended.

**Experiential Exercise in Emic/Etic Deliberate and Tacit Interpreting**

**Task Description**

Figure 7 shows Susan’s (P56) cognitive social network map including her animal metaphors. Susan is Marc’s (P5) assistant in the innovation process/department.
She is responsible for organizational development within the innovation process. In order to gain further insights into the actual front and back stage brand enactments in the innovation process, the reader is asked to interpret Susan’s emic interpretations of her immediate work environment. Please analyze the following data material taken from Susan’s original emic interpretations both from an emic (informant) and etic (researcher) point of view and answer the following questions:

- What does the emic text say and what do the emic metaphors indicate?
- Are there any conflicts between front and back stage structures (etic point of view)? Justify your answer.

**Data Material**

Storytelling excerpts:

- At the beginning I did not realize what is really going on in this company because I was mainly working with my boss (Marc) who is very structured. But now I am aware of the chaos. It looks like we have structures and we actually have them but we do not have the same structures in every part of the company. This leads to chaos and big problems because we are growing very quickly while not having the necessary structures.

- There are some employees who have experience with project management. They are much more receptive to our efforts to introduce project management as a company wide tool than other employees who have been following a different work approach for years. Officially, project management has been introduced for quite a while but it is not lived, yet.

- There is a high degree of transparency in this company and people get lots of information but that does not mean that people understand everything as intended.

- There are some problem areas in this company: people do-at times-not get along with each other — especially within the sales process and within the innovation process. But I have the impression that it is slowly getting better.

Story accompanying Susan’s cognitive mapping task:

There is Marc (P5) who is my boss. Then there is P52 who is project leader in one of the projects I am involved in. P52 is introducing a tool that allows specifying strategic goals on the level of every single employee. Then I am interacting quite a lot with the competence team leaders in the innovation department (P22, P23, P26 — Eric). There is also project related contact with P3, the head of the controlling department and P26 (Eric, who is also competence team leader) when it comes to patents. I am also working with two of our business unit leaders, P9 and P10, but there is more contact with P10. Susan leads a project team that is responsible for process development. This team consists of representatives from different departments and several executive board members: P25 represents the innovation
department, P28 works in one of the German subsidiaries, P16 and P57 are sales representatives in two different business units, P58 is responsible for marketing, P6 is the company internal project initiator (P6 is also one of Susan’s direct contacts when it comes to strategic issues because he is the company internal expert for organizational development) while P5 and P8 are the steering committee. Finally, Susan is also interacting with the human resource department, especially with P43 and P59.

Excerpts from Susan’s story accompanying animal metaphors:

- P26 (Eric) is a peacock. This animal does not represent all of Eric’s characteristics but it exemplifies that Eric has an immense know–how and likes to talk about things he knows well and to share this know–how. Eric is very special: he has his own way of thinking and working. What makes sense for him often does not make sense for other people in this company. This leads to confusion.
- P23 is a squirrel. He is very diligent, ambitious, structured, and makes sure that the collaboration with other organizational members’ works.
- P22 is a dog. He does not like to contradict our boss (Marc) — he accepts his ideas and decisions without objection. What the boss says must be right.
- Susan can’t think of an animal for Marc who is very structured, not bossy but very collegial, down to earth and knows how to deal with other people. One of Marc’s problems (which is simultaneously one of his strengths) is that he trusts people too much and is disappointed if somebody does not live up to his expectations (Figure 8).

**Teacher’s Note**

Already an analysis of Susan’s storytelling excerpts allows identifying several brand enactment conflicts. Similar to Marc (P5), Susan is very structured and has a clear idea of ideal front stage brand enactments. Susan is convinced that management makes efforts to introduce intended brand values and behaviors/processes/structures. However, these efforts are not consistent enough. Consistency is already missing front stage: there are many different front stage brand enactments (i.e., intended structures) in various parts of the company. Additionally, organizational members do not live the brand as intended, that is, organizational members enact structures differently than intended front stage. This inhibits the achievement of a major company goal: constant growth.

Susan also indicates that there are a variety back stage brand enactments originating from different experiences organizational members have made outside and inside the company. Employees who have, for instance, used project management as a tool in other companies enact this front stage desired brand enactment as intended while older employees that have been working in the company for a long time do not accept this new way of working, that is, they do not enact this brand behavior as intended front stage. Even though management is trying to communicate
Figure 8: Front and backstage cognitive social network map of Susan (P56) including animal metaphors.
front stage values, beliefs and behaviors/processes/structures people do not interpret and live the brand as intended but implement their own emic back stage interpretations.

Finally, Susan mentions some “problem areas” indicating that there are several conflicts between organizational members in various departments, also in the innovation department. From this excerpt it is impossible to tell why these conflicts arise — one possible reason is different back stage brand enactments by various organizational members. There is, though, a tendency toward conflict resolution: “it is slowly getting better.”

Susan’s cognitive mapping exercise does not give deeper insights into the actual brand enactments in her immediate work environment. Susan illustrates who she is interacting with and why (i.e., the formal relationships between various actors) as well as what some of these people are doing. How these interactions look like remains uncovered. Only the combination of Susan’s cognitive map with her animal metaphors allows an understanding of actual interactions and brand enactments.

Eric (P26), for instance, is a source of conflict and confusion within the department and the whole company. Eric has his own way of interpreting and enacting the brand. His emic interpretations are not consistent with front stage or with other organizational member’s back stage brand interpretations and enactments. Still, Eric is a valuable and capable team member with lots of knows how that he likes to share with other people — thereby supporting the achievement of departmental and company goals. P23’s way of working is very different from Eric’s and in line with front stage structures. Similar to his boss (Marc), P23 is very structured and likes to collaborate with other organizational members. P23 is interested in avoiding potential conflicts hindering collaboration that may arise due to different back stage brand interpretations. P22 is also trying to avoid conflicts and to follow his boss’s way of thinking. It is unclear whether P22 is really convinced of the front stage brand interpretation his boss promotes or whether he is just “a slave to his boss.” Finally, Marc is pictured as the one who lives his front stage brand interpretation and actively engages in advancing the implementation of intended brand enactments backstage, for instance, via active collaboration with his team members and by empowering/trusting his team in implementing the brand.
Chapter 9

Personal Exchanges, Social Behavior, Conversation Analysis, and Face-To-Face Talk

Synopsis

A book on case study research would be remiss without a chapter that introduces the reader to relevant literature on personal exchanges and face-to-face talk. Chapter 9 offers a conceptual property-space analysis for theory and research on personal exchanges including talk. The chapter describes a study on face-to-face conversation analysis (i.e., talk) in a buyer–seller context. The study includes examining forty transactions between actual insurance salespersons \((n = 3)\) and prospective clients \((n = 57)\) interacting in field settings. The chapter reports the relationships between purchase behavior and the frequency of key orientation and bargaining statements made by the salespersons and customers. The findings support the importance of studying social factors, influence, and situation variables in constructing a general conceptualization of exchange relationships.

Introduction

Personal (one-on-one) exchanges include all forms of contact by two or more entities. This broad definition includes my late grandmother’s conversations with persons that she thought were living in the radiators in her house. Thus, personal exchanges occur between two or more entities — real or imagined.

Personal exchanges also include human–animal (e.g., pet) exchanges and face-to-face exchanges among two or more persons. Human-to-human exchanges are classifiable into two broad categories: official and unofficial. “Official exchanges” are interactions on topics relating to professional or job-related task such as an instructor and student discussing a research topic. “Unofficial exchanges” are interactions on topics that are social in nature such as an instructor and student discussing a recent movie seen earlier and separately. Patient–doctor conversations by a patient meeting with a medical doctor for an annual check-up is likely to include mostly official exchanges and some unofficial exchanges. Most face-to-face meetings include topics of discussion relating to both official and unofficial exchanges.
Figure 1: Personal exchanges, social behavior, conversation analysis, and face-to-face talk. Notes: “·” = “and”; “~” = “not”: 1. SB · ~ PE: Social behavior (SB) without personal exchange (PE) (e.g., sending greeting card; anonymous donation); 2. SB · PE ~ CA Social behavior and personal exchange without conversation analysis (CA) (e.g., sending a greeting card in response to receiving one); 3. SB · PE · CA without face-to-face talk (FFT) (e.g., written communication exchanges about social topics); 4. SB · PE · CA · FFT (e.g., face-to-face communications about social topics); 5. ~ SB · PE · CA · FFT (e.g., face-to-face communications about “official” topics such as a discussion by motorist with police officer about speeding); 6. ~ SB · PE · CA · FFT (e.g., written exchange a appealing speeding ticket and receiving a denial of the appeal); 7. ~ SB · PE · CA · FFT (e.g., receiving an invoice and sending payment).

Figure 1 is a Venn diagram showing talk as one method of exchange that spans social behavior and personal exchange. Figure 1 shows face-to-face talk as one form of conversation analysis. “Conversation analysis as a mode of inquiry is addressed to all forms of talk and other conduct in interaction, and accordingly, touches on the concerns of applied linguists at many points” (Schegloff, Koshik, Jacoby, & Olsher, 2002). Most researchers in the field include examining both verbal and nonverbal exchanges as well as face and non-face interactions in the domain of conversation analysis (CA). However, most of the CA literature includes analysis of turn-taking involving talk (e.g., Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson, 1974, 1996; Schegloff et al., 2002).

Schegloff et al. (2002) underscore a single underlying premise of CA:

People use language and concomitant forms of conduct to do things, not only to transmit information; their talk and other conduct does things, and is taken as doing things — things such as requesting, offering, complaining, inviting, asking, telling, correcting, and the myriad other actions which talk in interaction can accomplish.
By “actions” here we are not referring to physical actions but to ones accomplished through the talk; and we are referring not only to actions with familiar vernacular names like those just mentioned, but recognizable and describable actions without names (such as “confirming allusions,” cf., Schegloff, 1996). (Schegloff et al., 2002, p. 5, italics in the original)

The central issue for case study research on personal exchanges from a CA viewpoint is to understand language use in contexts of its deployment ... “we need in the first instance to understand how and for what it is deployed by its participants, and how its deployments are understood by them and reflected in their own responsive conduct” (Schegloff et al., 2002, p. 6).

Following this introduction, the second section describes a study designed to understand how and why participants to a conversation use language to do things. The study focuses on face-to-face first-time interactions between a buyer and seller of life insurance products (i.e., “products” include services). The study includes a researcher sitting-in and tape-recording real-life meetings in 40 separate case studies; the data collections were done with the cooperation and approval of the senior management of the life insurance firm, the three salespersons, and the 57 customers participating in the meetings.

Figure 2 locates the study in cell 7 among 27 property–spaces that occur when considering three dimensions of CA with 3 levels for each dimension:

- unobtrusive (U) to U & O to obtrusive (O) observations of exchanges by a researcher
- frequency of parties meeting: one time, twice, three plus times
- face-to-face, face-to-face plus; separate locations and by documents.

The note at the bottom of Figure 2 identifies additional studies that exemplify other cells in the $3 \times 3 \times 3$ (27) property–spaces. Cell 1 includes studies that record interactions unobtrusively — the participants are unaware that are being observed in a study, the participants for most of the interactions in studies in cell 1 are meeting for one-time only, and they are meeting face-to-face. For example, Humphreys served as a “watch queen” to collect observational data on meetings by homosexual men in a men’s room in a park; the participants were unaware that Humphreys was conducting a study. In the study the watch queen scanned the park area through small windows located near the ceiling to be able to warn participants about the arrivals of police — the presence of a watch queen being a natural and regular occurrence in this context.

A study by Woodside and Davenport (1974) is representative of cell 4 in Figure 2; in Woodside and Davenport study of selling and buying in a retail store context, the seller knew that he was participating in a study but the buyers did not. The study involved manipulating the talk content by the seller and recording the buyers’ behavior (non-purchase versus purchase of a music tape-player cleaner). The study was conducted in a naturally occurring, non-laboratory, context of a music store.
Figure 2: Property–space analysis (27 cells) of research on person-to-person exchanges. Notes: Examples of exemplar studies. Cell 1: Humphreys (1970); Cell 4: Woodside and Davenport (1974); Cell 5: List (2006); Cell 7: Buyer–seller study in this chapter; Cell 8: Browne (1973); Cell 9: Whyte (1943/1993); Cell 12: Sirsi et al. (1996); Cell 15: Eichenwald (2000); Cell 21: Pettigrew (1975).
Representing cell 5, a study by List (2006) includes customers buying collectable sports cards from sales agents both in laboratory and naturally occurring contexts with two purchases occurring in the natural context per sales agent — with the sales agents knowing that they were participating in a study. The study indicates that sales agents behave differently in tightly controlled laboratory experiments than in their naturally occurring environment.

Representing cell 8 is a study by Browne (1973) of obtrusive direct observations of meetings between salespersons and customers and salespersons and sales managers at a used-car sales lot for 18 months. All participants knew that the researcher was observing these real-life interactions and most of the meetings involved two meetings with the same customer before completing a purchase.

Representing cell 9 is Whyte’s *Street Corner Society*. Whyte made direct observations of the interactions among a 13-member small-informal group during 1937–1940 in New York City (identified in his book as Eastern City). Almost all the data that Whyte collected was from direct observations of face-to-face meetings among the group members and between members of the group and persons outside of the group. The group members knew that Whyte was conducting a study; his study was obtrusive yet he became nearly a member of the group.

He learned to speak Italian [some of the talk observed was in Italian]; he spent the better part of three years living in the district; he hung out with the Nortons [the group] on their corner, won the confidence of the leader and the rest of the gang, and became one of the gang in its games, its political campaigns, and its other activities. (Homans, 1950, p. 157)

The study by Sirsi, Ward, and Reingen (1996) is representative of cell 12 — many of the participants started out knowing but came to accept the researcher as a member who was observing and documenting their interactions; the researchers completed observations of many meetings.

The ethnographer spent over 900 hours in the field. He approached participant observation in each micro-culture with a commitment to full immersion. He did not merely observe the participants but became one of them, radically changing major aspects of his lifestyle. Participants were always informed of his dual interest in their cultures. Rapport was established quickly among the macrobiotics and more slowly among the activists. To win the activists’ trust, the ethnographer gave up eating all meat, foreswore the use of possessions implicated in animal abuse (from leather shoes to Bic pens), and threw himself into helping organize protests against animal abuse. Gradually, he was accepted into the inner circle of activists. (Sirsi et al., 1996, p. 349)

Representing cell 15 is the field investigation by the FBI (United States Federal Bureau of Investigation) and reported by Eichenwald (2000) in which nearly all of
the participants were unaware that their multiple meetings to fix agricultural chemical prices globally were being taped-recorded and video-tapped. One senior executive, an informant for the FBI, in one of the firms (ADM Corporation) participating in the meetings was aware of his participation in the study; thus, the study includes both obtrusive and unobtrusive data collection.

Representing cell 21 is a study by Pettigrew on the participation of members in three levels in an organization: senior, middle, and junior executives. Pettigrew analyzed the content of written documents among the participants. The main conclusions of the study include the following points: middle executives acting as information gatekeepers and they manipulated conclusions and decisions to favor their own objectives by the information that shared with senior and junior executives.

The aim here is not to explicate fully representative studies for all 27 cells in Figure 2. The aim is to introduce the reader to possible classification schemes for locating personal exchange and social behavior studies including studies that focus on talk.

Research on buyer–seller face-to-face interactions

Several marketing scholars propose that exchange behavior between two or more persons is the fundamental phenomenon of marketing to be explained. Exchange behavior includes dynamic social-process communication flows. The face-to-face meeting of salespersons and customers represent an important type of exchange behavior in marketing. For example, personal selling in most economies represents larger marketing expenditures than advertising. In the United States, industry estimates on annual expenditures range from $100 billion to $150 billion annually, with personal sales calls to industrial sales customers estimated to cost an average of $400 per call. Unfortunately, the recognition of the importance of exchange behavior in selling and buying is coupled with a scarcity of empirical data on actual two-person or multiple-person interactions among salespersons and customers. The data for 210 department store selling/buying interactions taped surreptitiously via wireless microphone are the most well-known marketing reports of exchange behavior. Analyses of these data indicated that customer buying versus not buying of appliances is significantly associated with the number of suggestions offered by both salesman and customer (Willett & Pennington, 1966) and the frequency in which both salespersons and customers engage in specific bargaining activities (Pennington, 1968). Additional research on part of this data (involving 40 complete transactions resulting in the actual purchase of either a refrigerator or a color television) indicates that in most cases the salesperson and not the customer who determines the extent of search and evaluation of alternatives.

“In spite of his very sketchy and initial information on the customer’s desire, the salesman typically selects the order and the number of alternatives evaluated. The salesman also seems to dominate the evaluation of each alternative in that his semi prepared presentations guide the customer’s attention to various product attributes” (Olshavsky, 1973).
Varela (1971) reports on additional empirical research on marketing exchanges. Varela applies social-psychological theories to influence purchase behavior in natural settings among retail-store buyers. In one study over 90 percent of the buyers visited by specially trained salespersons were persuaded to agree to later travel to a manufacturer’s showroom ostensibly to determine if the manufacturer had followed the advice offered by the store buyer to the salesman.

Analyses of tape-recorded exchanges between life insurance salespersons and customers in natural settings have indicated that discreetly packaged blocks of interactions occur during the face-to-face meetings (Schenkein, 1978). The following Puzzle–Solution–Confirmation–Comment is one example of such a discrete block (Schenkein, 1978):

Salesman: Uhh, do you have any insurance?  (Puzzle)
Customer: No life insurance (Puzzle)
Salesman: No life insurance, yeah you have car and that don’chu. (Solution)
Customer: Yeah (Confirmation)
Salesman: We all have car, an- and s- stuff like that. (Comment)

This example is one that attempts successfully to locate the customer in an “official” (insurance related) identity position. The definition for “official” identity here refers to a characteristic of an exchange participant that relates to the main purpose of the exchange. Schenkein (1978) describes reciprocating attempts by customers to locate insurance salespersons into official identity positions (e.g., salesman’s job title, years of experience) as well as examples of reciprocal “unofficial” identity positioning (e.g., hobbies, choice of church affiliation).

An “unofficial identity” refers to a characteristic of an exchange participant that relates only indirectly or not at all to the main purpose of the exchange. Unofficial identity characteristics often help establish points of similarity between two members in an exchange (e.g., “Oh, we went to the same high school”).

For life insurance, several non-interactional studies report that the purchases occurring during the exchanges of salespersons and customers depend upon the economic, social, physical, and personality characteristics of each person (Evans, 1967; Gadel, 1964). For other products, the content of sales message and oral skills of salespersons have been shown to be important influences of purchase outcomes in several one-way studies of the effects of salespersons variables on customer behavior (Busch & Wilson, 1976; Pace, 1962; Woodside & Davenport, 1974).

A useful choice of analysis of bargaining communications in marketing should be two or more communication turns between two or more parties in the exchange. Such communications are likely to include discretely packaged blocks of interactions and breaks and connections between such blocks. The concepts of official and unofficial identity negotiations may be useful in labeling a few of the blocks of interactions. These concepts are defined and examples provided from tape recordings of buyers and sellers meeting in natural settings. “Being there” is advocated as a necessary part of research programs to study bargaining behavior in marketing communications.
Extant content analytic systems for analyzing bargaining communications call for dismembering verbal or written exchanges of buyers and sellers and placing the separate utterances into categories (e.g., Bonoma & Rosenberg, 1975; Pennington, 1968; Willett & Pennington, 1966; Angelmar & Stern, 1978; Bales, 1968; Pettigrew, 1975). For example, building directly on the work of Bonoma and Rosenberg (1975), Angelmar and Stern (1978) develop eight categories of semantic units of each party’s turn in a bargaining conversation.

While the half-turn analytical paradigms used by Olshavsky (1973), Angelmar and Stern (1978), and others (e.g., Willett & Pennington, 1966; Taylor & Woodside, 1979) are useful, the violence done in uncoupling an exchange of turns between communicators needs to be recognized. These referenced content analysis schemes use something less than exchanges as units of analysis. Classifying a communicator’s verbal or written turn as “a promise” or into another bargaining category without relating the turn to the other party’s response is similar to listening to one-hand clapping. Such analytic schemes fail to capture the essence of marketing exchanges.

The choice of analysis of bargaining communication in marketing should be two or more communication turns between two or more parties in the exchange. Bargaining communications in marketing are likely to include discretely packaged blocks of interactions and breaks and connections between such blocks.

Within the talking or verbal part of a negotiation, a content analytic scheme of such exchanges should build upon the recognition of the following facts, which seem grossly apparent to relatively unmotivated examination of conversational materials. In any conversation:

1) speaker change recurs, or, at least occurs;
2) overwhelmingly, one party talks at a time;
3) occurrences of more than one speaker at a time are common, but brief;
4) transitions from one turn to a next with no gap between them are common, together with transitions characterized by slight gap or slight overlap, they make up the majority of transitions;
5) turn order is not fixed, but varies;
6) turn size is not fixed, but varies;
7) length of conversation is not fixed, specified in advance;
8) what parties say is not fixed, specified in advance;
9) relative distribution of turns is not fixed, specified in advance;
10) number of parties can change;
11) talk can be continuous or discontinuous;
12) turn-allocation techniques are obviously used, current speaker addresses a question to another party; parties may self-select, in starting to talk;
13) various turn-constructional units are employed, turns can be projected one word long or, for example, they can be sequential in length;
14) repair mechanisms for dealing with turn-taking errors and violations obviously are available for use. For example, if two parties find themselves talking at the same time, one of them will stop prematurely, thus repairing the trouble
one or both participants in a two-person meeting likely are seeking to accomplish a specific task via the exchange.

Exchanges between insurance salesmen and prospective clients are used here to describe what the parties do in such interactions to juggle their official with informal and personal (unofficial) identities in the course of their conversations. Schenkein (1971, 1978) calls attention to the “identity negotiations” which are likely to occur in seller–buyer encounters. “Whatever else they might or might not share; such encounters are made up of talk between strangers who might know one another only as local versions of some abstract identity like ‘salesman’ or ‘client.’ For these encounters, strangers not only conduct their business under the auspices of their official identify relations, but they also negotiate into the unfolding of their encounter eminently personal identities from their separate biographies” (Schenkein, 1978, pp. 57–58).

Both official and unofficial identity negotiations are likely to occur in buyer–seller interactions of the type described here, that is, between a life insurance salesman and prospective client meeting for the first time. Similar negotiations are likely to occur in industrial marketing, distribution channels, and in retail transactions involving expensive products and services.

Official identity negotiations refer to two or more conversational turns between parties which provide some information about one of the parties and comment by the other party related directly to the main purpose of the meeting (e.g., selling and buying insurance). Official identity negotiations help to specify the rather abstract identities of “salesmen” and “client” characteristics of the Parties in the meeting.

Unofficial identity negotiations refer to two or more conversational turns between parties which provide some information about one of the parties and comment by the other party not directly related to the main purpose of the meeting. Attempts by salesmen to use “referent power” (French & Raven, 1959) by first learning and commenting to the client on the similarity of a planned, unofficial, identity negotiation.

Official and unofficial identity negotiations may be centered on characterizing and commenting on either by the buyer or seller. Thus at least four types of identity negotiations may occur in a customer–seller meeting: salesperson official and unofficial and customer.

The development and testing of several propositions is possible that concern the frequencies and sequences of occurrence of each type of identity negotiation relative to the purchase and satisfaction outcomes of buyer–seller meetings. The purpose here is to describe several examples of such negotiations, how they might be classified into discrete blocks of exchanges, and report on the separate interpretations a salesman and buyer offer later to identities earlier negotiated between them. In several instances, conjectures and other comments are offered with the examples.

Excerpts of conversations from several buyer–seller meetings were transcribed from a study (Taylor & Woodside, 1980) of exchanges of insurance salesmen and
customers which occurred in natural settings. The study includes a total of 40 salesman–client parties. All face-to-face meetings of the salesman and client for each of the 40 parties were tape-recorded. James Taylor accompanied each of three salesman on sales calls to collect the data.

Each client was requested to permit the tape recording “for a study of conversations among persons meeting for the first time.” A total of 15 customers purchased life or health insurance and 25 did not during the meeting and taping of the exchanges. Given the wealth of data produced, only a few of the recordings were transcribed into written text. Taylor (1977) reports further details of this study.

**Action sequences in identity negotiations**

Schenkein (1978) observes the presence of a common four-turn Puzzle–Pass–Solution–Comment action sequence or discrete conversation block in identity negotiations. The following exchanges may be an example of such a block for an unofficial identity negotiation (U) of a customer (C) with a salesman (S):

C: I have one son who will take over the business someday.
S: How old is he?
C: Six.
S: So it won’t be for awhile before he’s ready to take over. Ha, ha.

Such four-turn action sequences are very common in the conversations among the 40 customer–salesman parties and for both official and unofficial identity negotiations. Though not always present, a question by the second party is a common identifying feature of the “Pass.” A “Pass” is a response by participant two to an opening remark by participant one that requests and/or allows participant one to elaborate on the opening remark. The following exchange illustrates the presence of a question in the Pass in an \( U_s \) (unofficial identity negotiation of the salesman) in the same meeting as the \( U \) just reported.

S: When I was in the military I was out at Fort Knox.
C: At Fort Knox?
S: Yeah.
C: I’ll be.

\( U_s \) and \( U_c \) occurred commonly during the first 1–5 minutes of the first meeting between the salesmen and clients (Taylor & Woodside, 1980). \( U_s \) and \( U_c \) are likely to be planned specifically to occur by the salesman as a method for developing referent power over the customer.

Thus, Wilson (1977) hypothesizes that the initial exchanges during a dyadic customer–salesman exchange is devoted to source legitimization attempts by the salesman. This may include attempts by the salesman to induce \( O_s, O_c, U_s, \) and \( U_c. \)
“Unless this basic acceptability [of source legitimization] is developed, further communication tends to be ineffective if not impossible” (Wilson, 1977, p. 36).

Identity negotiations require the willingness of both parties to participate in the exchange. While such negotiations can be stopped during the action sequence, specific changes in the topics of conversation nearly always occurred after participating in the full Puzzle–Pass–Solution–Comment sequence, in the meetings of the 40 customer–salesman parties. Thus, some action sequences occur that resist interruptions, and with even an unwilling participant, they run to completion, as Schenkein (1978, p. 74) notes.

Examples of discrete blocks of exchanges believed to represent $O_s$, $O_c$, $U_s$, and $U_c$ are provided from different salesman–customer–parties in Tables 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b. The exchanges in the two tables are taken from the same meeting. Different customer parties and two salesmen (A or B) are included between the tables.

Notice in comparing $O_c$’s in Tables 1a, 1b, 2a, and 2b that the third turns are different. In Table 1, the Solution, or third turn, is a confirmation to the candidate solution offered by the salesman to the customer’s first turn: “I work for State Farm Insurance.” The $O_c$ in Table 1 may be best described as an example of the following action sequence:

C: Identity-Rich Puzzle
S: Candidate Solution
C: Confirmation
S: Comment.

More than a confirmation is provided in the third term in the $O_c$ in Table 2a: “I make all the decisions for this shop, but he does as far as the corporation goes.” Thus both confirmations and/or “Identity-Rich Solutions” (using Schenkein’s term)

Table 1a: Official identity negotiation for salesperson A and a husband (HC) and wife (WC) (couple 1) with salesperson’s turn first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salesperson related</th>
<th>Customer related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: I’ve been with Protection Life for 5 years, and [pause] Are you familiar with Protection Life?</td>
<td>WC: I work for State Farm Insurance.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC: More or less.</td>
<td>S: You work for the insurance department?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: They’ve been in business since 1923 and they are the ___ ranked company in South Carolina. They own such things as Southland Mall and WTS TV.</td>
<td>WC: Yeah.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC: I didn’t know that.</td>
<td>S: Ah, oh! I’m in big trouble already.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC: Complaint department.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 1b: Unofficial identity negotiations a customer and a salesperson early during a first meeting with customer’s turn first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer related</th>
<th>Salesperson related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HC: I would like to think that I will be a professional bowler in five years.</td>
<td>S: My wife is a big bowling fan. I used to bowl when I was small and do a lot of pin setting… but that was before you guys time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Oh, really? Do you have a program to that end? Are you getting advice?</td>
<td>HC: Yeah, we do. They still have them some places in Ohio.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>HC: Really, I know several pros and They are helping me but I haven’t mapped out a plan.</td>
<td>S: Yeah, my legs use to hand down in The pits and bowlers got me … ha, ha. They would take side bets.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: That’s interesting. I’m going to follow your progress real well.</td>
<td>HC: Yeah, I bet so.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: S, Salesperson; WC, wife customer; HC, husband customer; S, salesperson.

Table 2a: Official identity negotiation for salesperson A and a husband (HC) and wife (WC) (couple 2) with salesperson’s turn first.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salesperson related</th>
<th>Customer related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: Are you familiar with our company — Protection Life?</td>
<td>WC: My husband makes the decisions on fringe benefits.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC: Protection Life Insurance?</td>
<td>S: He makes all those decisions, huh?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Yeah!</td>
<td>WC: I make all the decisions for this shop, But he does as far as the corporation goes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WC: Yeah, I am.</td>
<td>S: Ah, huh.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2b: Unofficial identity negotiation for salesperson A and a husband (HC) and wife (WC) (couple 2).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Salesperson related</th>
<th>Customer related</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td>WC: This shop serves as a showcase for our plantscaping. For example, we did the airport.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S: No kidding?!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>WC: The people saw that we can make bids at some of the banks and they come see what we have.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>S: Yeah! They can take a look.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
may be offered as solutions to a prior Pass or Candidate Solution. The willingness to
provide Identity-Rich Solutions versus Confirmations only may be an indication to
the other party, especially the salesman, of the likely outcome of the meeting.

The first part of the $O_s$ in Table 1a, “I’ve been with Protection Life for 5 years now
and ...” is a tentative presentation of a Puzzle by the salesman which receives no
verbal response from husband and wife as customers. The salesman continues the
turn then but changed the subject from himself to the customers and presented
a direct Puzzle in the form of a question: “Are you familiar with Protection Life”
disguised name. The Comment by the wife (WC) in the second turn, “More or less”
appears to be ignored by the salesman. The Pass is followed by an Identity-Rich
Solution in the third turn by the salesman. Any Pass by the customer is likely to
follow with this solution, is one conjecture which may be reasonably suggested. Only
the provision of a Candidate Solution in the second turn in place of a Pass is likely to
change the contents of the third turn.

The original start of the Puzzle in $O_s$ in Table 1a, “I’ve been with Protection Life
for 5 years now, and ...” includes a pause indicated by the three dots. The pause
allows time for the customer to start a conversation turn and participate in an $O_s$. The customer did not participate in an $O_s$, that is, the negotiation attempt by the
salesman failed. The salesman immediately executed a restart that was a more direct
$O_s$, “Are you familiar with Protection Life?” than indicated by the original start.

“Are you familiar with Protection Life?” may be better classified as a start to a
discrete block of exchange to help establish source credibility, that is, the company is
trustworthy and capable, rather than an $O_c$ Distinguishing characteristics of company
versus salesperson specific official identify negotiation can be made. Both, one and
not the other, or neither sometimes occurred in the meetings tape-recorded.

The Comment in the fourth turn of the $O_s$ in Table 1 is followed by a comment
and a transition to a new conversation topic by the salesman leading to an $O_c$. The salesman announced to the customer that he wanted to learn a great deal of
information in the next few minutes of the meeting before the $O_c$ occurred.

“You didn’t know that. They try to keep some of those things not too much
before the public notice, but they are a good, strong, substantial company. And the
people that have been policyholders of theirs for years, they like to take good care of
them. So they assigned the Buyers [name disguised] family to me, so that’s why
I called C.C. [husband] and asked him if I could come out and sit with you and go
over what you presently have and maybe talk about some things you might want to
accomplish in the future. OK? And to do that, I’ve got a little questionnaire that
takes a few minutes to answer. Now we might discuss some things that are somewhat
confidential. If you’d care not to divulge something say so, OK? But it’s basic stuff.
For instance, Linda, where do you work?”

This presentation serves several purposes beginning with a comment to close an $O_s
to an attempt to legitimize the company, to provide a rationale for the meeting with
a vague implication to purchasing additional insurance, to gaining cooperation to
complete a “little questionnaire,” to starting an $O_c$. The “little questionnaire” did not
include a written form but the term was used to set the immediate future exchanges
to facilitate participation in several successive $O_c$’s.
The use of such a strategy may appear to be intuitively beneficial for a salesman to use. However, in several other instances of the 40 exchanges no $O_c$’s were found. $O_c$’s did not occur in all customer–salesman meetings. An $O_c$ followed by another type of identity negotiation ($O_s$, $U_s$, and $U_c$) often occurred but the inclusion of all four identity negotiations occurred for less than 50 percent of the meetings.

Successful bargaining of information by the salesperson (i.e., the customer receives, understands, and accepts information offered by the salesman) may depend significantly on the ratio of $O_c$ and $O_s$. Specifically, when $O_c/O_s > 1$, then the probability of successful information–negotiation by the salesman is likely to increase.

Both the number of $O_c$ and $O_s$ as well as their ratio are likely to relate to the sales outcome. The likelihood of purchase increases as (1) $O_c > 0$, (2) $O_s > 0$, and (3) $O_c/O_s > 1$. However, the primary effect of identity negotiations is likely to be on other discrete blocks of exchanges during customer–seller meetings and not the purchase outcome. Identity negotiations may be related most strongly with information bargaining. In turn, information bargaining may relate most strongly to other discrete blocks of exchanges occurring during the meeting.

A retrospective analysis

Following the face-to-face meetings for three customers and salesmen exchanges, separate additional meetings were held with each customer and one of the researchers. The tape recording of the initial meeting was played to each customer with the request to stop the recording every few minutes and comment on what was happening. In several instances, the researcher stopped the tape and asked the customer why he/she made a particular comment and what did the customer think “when the salesman said that?” The retrospective comments by the customer to the original meeting were tape recorded.

The same procedure was followed with the salesmen. A separate meeting was held with the relevant salesperson and the researcher that focused on discussing how the salesperson interpreted what was happening at various points in the original meeting. The tape recording of the original meeting was stopped at the same locations in both of the separate meetings with each salesman and each customer and each was asked to describe what was happening a that point, what each was thinking at the point in the conversation.

Tables 3 and 4 provide two brief excerpts involving identity negotiations from the original meeting of a customer and salesman with their retrospective comments. The $U_s$ in Table 3 is followed shortly by the $O_c$ in Table 4.

Both the salesman and the customer report in their retrospective comments that they were manipulating the conversation, “I was trying to build rapport ...” and “I was just trying to find out ...” Both report a discovery about the other party in exchange.

Note that the original excerpt begins with a comment by the salesman. This refers to a previous $U_s$. Following “That’s interesting,” the salesman elaborates an Identity-Rich Puzzle. “That’s where I got my MBA degree (University of South
Table 3: Unofficial identity negotiation of salesperson A and retrospective comments of salesperson A and customer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: That’s interesting. That’s where I got my MBA degree [University of South Carolina].</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: Did you happen to know, by chance, Professor Olin Poe?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: I worked for Olin Poe for a year and a half. I was his graduate assistant. He taught me everything I know today. So, anything, I do wrong, blame it on him … ha, ha.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: OK. Lay it on my head. I’ve been taking notes … ha, ha. Tell me what I need to maybe what I don’t need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seller’s retrospection</th>
<th>Customer’s retrospection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>At this point, I was trying to build rapport. I discovered this common ground between us — the professor that we both knew. So, I made several references to this fact.</td>
<td>I was just trying to find out more about the salesperson. We had both gone to the same school, and I was surprised to discover he had worked for this professor. It was good to know we had a common friend.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>This conversation and retrospections represent one attempt by the seller to evoke referent power as a means of influencing the customer. Similarly, the customer sought to learn if some commonality existed with the seller prior to the conversation turned to product-related topics. Attempt to construct seller–customer similarities and life-history overlaps focused frequently on (1) having a common friend, (2) attending the same or similar colleges/universities that competed in sports programs (e.g., football), and (3) the same attitudes or hobbies (e.g., bowling).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
Carolina).” This is followed by a puzzle expansion plus candidate solution by the customer and a confirmation by the salesman. Then the customer comments “OK” and shifts the conversation to indicate willingness to accept insurance information, “Lay it on my head …” A brief analysis by the researcher appears at the bottom of Table 3 on the exchange.

The $U_s$ in Table 3 appears to serve to help permit the occurrence of the $O_c$ in Table 4. Notice that the $U_s$ in Table 4 represents the following scheme:

S: Puzzle-Candidate Solution,
C: Confirmation,
S: Comment-Conclusion,
C: Confirmation,
S: Transition.
```
Table 4: Official identity negotiation of salesperson A and retrospective comments of salesperson A and customer.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conversation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>S: Is it true that you don’t have anyone that’s dependent on you?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: That’s right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: Right? OK! So, if something were to happen to you then, who ever your estate was left with would really have no hardship?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C: That’s right.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>S: In light of that, let’s look at your present plan.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seller’s retrospection</th>
<th>Customer’s retrospection</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What I was trying to establish here is the fact that no one would suffer an economic loss at her death. She needs only sufficient insurance to cover burial expenses. Her present coverage was too much.</td>
<td>I was wondering why he brought this point up. I remembered that my mortgage company recommended, but did not require, that I purchase a mortgage protection policy when I bought the house.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The salesperson enters the interaction with a well-defined goal to convert the prospect’s present term policy to a whole life policy. A 3-step strategy was undertaken: (1) establish a rapport with the buyer; (2) show the present policy was not needed, and (3) convince the buyer that a whole policy better fit her needs. Kathy had no prior knowledge of the salesperson; thus, the had no well-defined goals or strategies. Only vague goals of “seeking information” were cited by Kathy as a reason for meeting with the salesperson.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The coupling of a puzzle and candidate solution by either the salesman or customer may occur most often after both $U_s$ and $U_c$ have occurred. The coupling of verbal actions may serve to imply to the other party that the conversation is directed to a specific goal.

Notice in the salesman’s retrospective comment in Table 4 that he has a hidden agenda that he expects the customer to discover. The customer fails evidently to discover this agenda. The salesman evidently does not realize this, or he believes the discovery to be unimportant to future agendas since he shifts the conversation: “In light of that, let’s look at your present plan.” The salesman may be about to elaborate on the original $O_c$ in the conversation about the present plan to accomplish his goal mentioned in his retrospective analysis. Later in the meeting he specifically tells the customer the conclusion he believes she should reach based upon this and other $O_c$’s.
Conclusions

Some discrete parts or blocks of buyer–seller interactions may represent identity negotiations of both the seller and buyer. Such identity negotiations are classifiable as official or unofficial. Possibly more categories than two should be used to classify such negotiations, e.g., semi-official, semi-unofficial.

Identity negotiations represent only a part of the total exchanges in meetings of buyers and sellers. As theorized by Wilson (1977) and Taylor and Woodside (1980), attribute delineations and attribute value negotiations are likely to occur in such meetings. The important point is that interactions appear to occur in discrete blocks of exchanges linked by transitions. The separating of the seller’s and buyer’s interactions into different classification categories may be useful but also violates the nature of the exchange. Both the analysis of chunks of exchanges and complete exchanges, as well as classifying buyer’s and seller’s turns into separate categories are advocated for use within the same research program.

Detailed analysis of salesman–customer conversational turn-taking in natural settings is a necessary step to understanding bargaining behavior in marketing exchanges. Case-by-case research programs of salesman–customer meetings are needed for marketing exchanges in several settings. Several empirical studies incorporating such ethno-methodologies are available (e.g., Lombard, 1955; Browne, 1973; Varela, 1971) which reduce the arguments that (1) the approach is too time consuming and too much work, (2) the customers and salesman will not agree to be observed or tape-recorded, and (3) it is too obtrusive to be valid.

Lombard (1955) and his associates report substantial numbers of meetings of 20 salespersons and customers can be observed meaningfully in six months. Browne’s (1973) participant observation study of salesmen and customers meeting in a used-car lot indicated that nearly all the customers and salesmen were willing to be observed. The rates of sales of the salesperson during the studies by Browne (1973), Lombard (1955), and Taylor (1977) were not significantly more or less than the sales recorded before the study nor the sales expected by the salespersons. Given these findings, the recognition of the need to learn “theory in use” (Zaltman, LeMasters, & Heffring, 1982), and the serious problems with self-reports (cf., Wilson & Nisbett, 1978), research that includes “being there” is necessary in most research designs on marketing exchange behavior.
Chapter 10

Constructing Thick Descriptions of Marketers’ and Buyers’ Decision Processes in Business-to-Business Exchange Relationships

Synopsis

A central finding in the relationship marketing/buying literature is that the thought and decision processes by both marketers and buyers include a series of branching, if-then, questions and answers. For example, will customer X accept a 7 percent price increase? The correct answer: acceptance depends on the changes in the other attributes on the table (i.e., in the bid proposal or product–service design). Consequently, from designing and evaluating bid-purchase proposals to evaluating the current state of the overall seller–buyer relationship, the perceived value of the level of any given attribute depends in part of the value perceived in the levels of several other attributes. Possibly, business-to-business decisions and outcomes may be understood best by constructing thick descriptions of the multiple contingency paths that marketers and buyers think about and sometimes enact when deciding. Chapter 10 reports the use of two “think aloud” methods to learn the contingency thoughts and decisions of marketers and buyers of industrial solvents. The main conclusions of the study: designing generalized “gatekeeping,” contingency, models of if-then decision paths can be achieved; these models are useful for constructing accurate behavioral theories of marketer–buyer relationships.

Introduction: The Contingency Thinking Proposition

Buyer behavior, marketing behavior, and organizational research includes tracing and generalizing contingency models to include the thoughts and decisions of the multiple interacting actors (e.g., see Howard et al., 1975; Bettman, 1979; Nutt, 1993, 1998). Applying multiple-person, contingency models to marketer–buyer relationships may increase understanding of the triggering thoughts, decision frames, and events resulting in alternative paths and outcomes occurring in such relationships.

Such modeling may be useful for predicting outcomes to multiple links in chains of if-then thoughts and decisions: if we do X and they respond with Y, so our
response is T and their further response to W, then what happens next? Such modeling is complex and complicated further by the involvement of at least three sets of additional sets of person-relationships:

(1) The buyer’s relationships with the marketer’s competitors;
(2) Persons in multiple departments in the buying organization intimately involved with some of the details in the process; and
(3) third-party participants (e.g., consultants) in the seemingly two-way relationship (e.g., see Choffray & Lilien, 1978; Biemans, 1989).

Weitz, Sujan, and Sujan (1986) emphasize the contingent relationship between adaptive selling and effectiveness. They define adaptive selling as the altering of the sales behaviors during a customer interaction or across customer interactions based on the perceived information about the nature of the selling situation. The concept of adaptive selling can be generalized to describe adaptive buying: altering buying behaviors during an interaction with a marketer or across marketer interactions based on the perceived information about the nature of the buying situation. Similarly, Montgomery (1975) provides an insightful generalized “gatekeeping” model of such adaptive buying behavior for supermarket buyer decisions.

Chapter 10 describes the use of collecting thick descriptions (Geertz, 1973a; Sanday, 1979) of marketer–buyer relationships for building contingency models of chains of if-then decision paths. The main objective is to achieve deep understanding of the thought paths and decisions: actually enacted by the marketer and buyer in these relationships in response to the communications and actions proposed and/or taken by other party; and the possible alternative paths they are prepared to take, and sometimes do take depending on other responses foreseen by the other parties in the relationship.

Here is the central research proposition that is relevant to achieve these objectives: learning the thoughts, decisions, and actions of the participants in buyer–seller relationships is necessary for achieving deep understanding of marketer–buyer relationships.

The study this chapter reports applies “the think aloud method” (van Someren et al., 1994) and “direct research” (Mintzberg, 1979) to demonstrate a field study application to support this central research proposition. The think aloud method consists of asking people to think aloud while solving a problem and analyzing the resulting verbal protocols (van Someren et al., 1994, p. xi). Direct research is tracing the patterns in streams of decisions over time by “measuring in real organizational terms” — getting out into the field into real organizations: “Research based on description and induction instead of implicit or explicit prescription and deduction” (Mintzberg, 1979, p. 588).

The next section includes a limited review of extant literature on contingency modeling relevant to buyer–seller relationships. Then, the chapter offers five core propositions based on the findings from this literature. The third section then describes a data collection approach that includes the two research methods. The following section presents results from a field study to understand and describe contingency
thinking. The final section includes implications for theory building on exchange relationships.

**Literature on Contingency Modeling of Exchange Relationships**

Substantial literature has emerged on modeling the thought and behavior processes (i.e., through time) of buyers, sellers, and buyer–seller relationships. For example, Cox (1967) presents verbal models of the thoughts and actions of two consumers on their household buying decisions ± data were collected using weekly interviews over 15 and 16 sessions. Cox reports that the concept of perceived risk emerged from the data collected in this study (see Bauer, 1967). Based on think aloud, supermarket-shopping interviews of two consumers, Bettman (1970, 1971b) develops a graph theory approach to comparing consumer information processing models. The consumers’ development and use of simple decision rules to aid in making choices quickly to reach satisfactory outcomes is a key finding from Bettman’s work (also see Bettman, 1979; Payne, Bettman, & Johnston, 1993). Gladwin (1989) uses “ethnographic decision tree modeling” to describe the contingency paths in buyer–seller relationships for Malawi farmers’ credit buying thoughts and decisions. Gladwin emphasis the need for multiple revisions in the field (while the data are being collected) for model-building to improve accurate description and prediction of the resulting contingency model — a similar observation is made by Morgenroth (1964) who urges making several rounds of revisions of contingency thought-decision models via the think aloud method and direct observation.

From perspectives of marketing thoughts, decisions, and actions of relationships with customers, Browne (1973, 1976) provides verbal and diagram models of used car “salesmen’s” thoughts, decisions, and actions with customers, and sales managers. Browne provides the following insights about this direct research study:

> Model building is an ongoing process. Because a participant-observer does not go into the field with hypotheses, the end point of such a study is not always obvious … One of the advantages of this method of model building is that you can use the group’s opinion for verification; that is, various participants can be queried for their opinions on the accuracy of the model. (Browne, 1976, pp. 81–82)

Within the gasoline distribution industry Morgenroth (1964) and Howard and Morgenroth (1968) provide detailed maps of the contingencies in thoughts and decisions of two marketers (working in the same firm) based on the known and possible behaviors of customers and competitors. The resulting “decision systems models” (DSA) both described and predicted accurately price-shift decisions made by the marketers for different contingency situations. The Morgenroth (1964) and Howard and Morgenroth (1968) reports are based on a research method combining thinking aloud with document analyses of past decisions.
Capon and Hulbert (1975) review several early studies in the literature using DSA to learn the contingencies in marketers’ thoughts and decisions. The earlier work of Montgomery (1975) in marketing is similar in method to the studies reported by Gladwin (1989); Montgomery develops a composite “gatekeeper analysis” of the contingency decisions of supermarket buying committees to proposals made by manufacturers. The proposals were offers of new grocery products. The result of Montgomery’s gatekeeping analysis is a contingency model of the questions, answers, and decision paths representing the buying committee’s deliberations. Montgomery (1975, p. 263) describes the advantages of this research method:

The gatekeeper analysis makes no assumptions as to the scale of the data or its underlying distribution. It also allows for nonlinear conditional interaction among the variables. Further, the gatekeeper approach would seem to be a closer approximation to a buyer’s decision process [compared with multiple discriminant analysis]. It is difficult to imagine that a buyer cerebrally forms a weighted linear combination of variables and compares this score to a cut-off level as is done in linear discriminant analysis. It seems more plausible that they exhibit a decision process something like the gatekeeper tree where serious failure [contingency path leading to a reject decision] at some point spells difficulty for a product offering.

The literature reviewed serves two intended purposes. First, this literature illustrates related literature streams in marketing, buyer behavior, sociology, psychology, and anthropology focused on providing “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973a) of the thoughts, decisions, and actions of persons involved in buying and selling behaviors. Second, the review provides grounding for developing several core propositions for the study of thinking and decisions occurring in seller–buyer relationships.

Finally, Nutt (1998) provides a valuable normative implication from his research on how 352 strategic decisions were framed: success improved when claims (made by decision participants on how problems should be framed) were performance based. Nutt’s work is important for at least two reasons: relationship research efforts often overlook how problems are framed; even though the decision frame used substantially influences both the direction and outcome quality of decisions.

Five core propositions Based on reviewed theoretical and empirical literature, we developed the following five core propositions to guide a field study on industrial seller–buyer behavior:

- **P1.** Individually, both sellers and buyers identify and work with contingency sub-routines in thinking and deciding relationship issues with each other.
- **P2.** Individually, both sellers and buyers build-in specific objectives to attain within their contingency decision processes; these objectives relate to attaining or surpassing specific levels for specific attributes. For example, achieving “5 per cent + cost reductions” not “cost savings” may be a specific level of a specific
attribute guiding the contingency thinking for some customers. (The expression, “cost savings,” is used in industrial purchasing to refer to avoiding some share of price increases due to inflation; “cost reduction” is a purchasing term referring to achieving price decreases for purchases in the current contract year versus the previous year.)

- **P3.** Individually, both sellers and buyers use a limited number of thought paths to classify the other party into a limited number of types. Buyers often classify sellers first according to the current state of the relationship: “preferred supplier,” “secondary supplier,” and “vendor used to check market prices.” Sellers often type buyers by the thinking and actions the seller expects to encounter in meetings with buyers: a cost reduction buyer; a cost savings buyer; an insure delivery buyer.

- **P4.** The majority of sellers and buyers can be segmented into a limited number of thinking-deciding groups based on data collected from think aloud and direct research methods. Both sellers and buyers use a few ways-of-thinking variables to assign the other party in the relationship; for example, a seller may reflect that buyer X always works hard and she is successful in achieving cost reductions with my firm; I have five other customer firms like buyer X.

- **P5.** Applications of both the think aloud method and direct research both complement as well as uncover unique information about the thinking and deciding processes of sellers and buyers.

Applying both research methods permits confirmation of processes uncovered by each approach; such applications may result in learning important nuances left uncovered by the use of only one research method.

**Method**

The steps in the research methods used are summarized in Figure 1. The cooperation of the marketing and sales departments of an international chemical manufacturer was gained. (For competitive purposes, the names of the firms in this report are fictitious.) The data collection started with several direct research steps: individual interviews with the vice president of marketing, two sales managers, a pricing manager, and four sales representatives. The direct research steps included document analyses and direct observation of seller–buyer meetings at customer manufacturing plants and distribution centers.

These initial steps were taken to achieve several objectives: to learn how sales reps, sales managers, and the VP of marketing classify customers; to develop several problem scenarios in the form of conjoint exercises for the buyers to solve while thinking aloud; to learn the industry language used in selling and buying industrial solvents (the product category selected for the study); to learn the contingency paths developed and then selected in real-life conversations between sellers and buyers. (Models of individual preference functions based on preference rankings are not included in this report.)
1. Researcher meets individually with VP Marketing and sales managers to gain descriptions of conversations, decisions, and events with sales reps, and with customers.

2. Write-up narratives of initial meetings and give copies to VP Marketing and sales managers; request each to make corrections and elaborations of the narratives.

3. Arrange meetings with sales reps selected for high expertise in adapting selling; interview selected sales reps (7 hours each) and observe their face-to-face conversations with customers.

4. Receive corrections/elaborations from VP Marketing, sales managers, and sales reps of written scenarios and negotiation process routines; revise both the scenarios and routines.

5. Individually give copies of scenarios and negotiation process routines to VP Marketing, sales managers, and sales reps; ask for corrections, and elaborations.

6. Receive corrections/elaborations form VP Marketing and sales managers; write-up draft scenarios of: seller-buyer-encounters based on interviews with sales reps and direct observations of seller-buyer conversations, negotiation process routines for alternative selling-buying situations.

7. Schedule individual meetings with customers selected as representative of different seller-buyer scenarios and negotiation routines; use think aloud methods to learn how customers solve different seller-buyer scenarios and buying processes.

Figure 1: Applying the think aloud method for learning categorized knowledge of selling-buying situations.
Buyers in three of four buying firms were willing to describe their thinking processes only partially for the conjoint exercises; complete rankings for both buying exercises were provided by the buyer in only one firm — the buyer in the smallest customer firm studied.) Using direct observation, full-day interviews and customer visits were made with each of the four sales reps. Three six-hour interviews were held with the VP of marketing; these interviews included detailed reviews of the relationships with 20 customer firms, including document analysis of the histories with these customer firms.

Following the development and revisions of alternative, written selling-buying scenarios, a second group of four buying firms (not including firms observed in selling-buying meetings in the direct observation data collection stage) were selected and interviewed. Data from applying both the think aloud and direct research methods were collected in this step (shown as step 7 in Figure 1).

Two-hour interviews were scheduled with each of four buyers at their business sites (two in Ohio, one in Pennsylvania, and one in South Carolina). The interviews included asking open-ended questions and reviewing documents to learn the detailed steps used in buying solvents (the direct research method). Second, each buyer was asked to think aloud when solving two seller–buyer scenario problems. As an inducement for participating in the study, each buyer was given a published monograph focused on mapping industrial buying processes. All four buyers first contacted agreed to participate in the study; the buyers agreed that the need existed for detailed knowledge of the thinking and deciding process buyers actually use in working with suppliers.

The attempt was made to select buyers for the separate, individual, on-site interviews to represent different customer firms segmented by contingency thought processes.

**Limitations**

The study reported here does not include an attempt to generalize findings to a population, nor to generalize findings to theory. The data presented are limited to describing problem framing and relationships for a limited number of buyer–marketer interactions focused on selling–buying one industrial commodity.

Some of the buying heuristics described in the findings reflects a cost-driven industrial environment. While perhaps useful for understanding the nuances in relationship marketing-and-purchasing, our emphasis is on the research process in providing thick descriptions rather than on generalizing the results. The reported study and findings are exploratory.

**Findings**

The results of the study are summarized in Figures 2–6. Figures 2–5 are maps of the thoughts and decision processes of the four buyers. Figure 6 is a composite summary of the thinking and contingency paths found to be used by the sales reps and sales
managers in adapting their pricing decisions to the thoughts and decisions of customers.

**Decision Frame of Buyer Focused on Achieving “Cost Reduction”**

How a professional buyer focused on achieving annual “cost reductions” frames for buying and relationship decisions is summarized in Figure 2. A cost reduction is paying less for the same quantity and quality purchasing requirements in the current year compared to the previous year; achieving a cost reduction differs from a “cost avoidance” objective. Cost avoidance is paying a price increase lower than a noted and an agreed-upon view of the industry price increase for a product. Framing a decision to focus on achieving a cost reduction objective likely is viewed by nearly all professional buyers as a more aggressive stance compared to focusing on achieving a cost avoidance objective.

The greater value of framing decisions using a cost reduction strategy versus cost avoidance or other strategies (e.g., vendor performance rating strategies) was supported by several claims made by the buyer, Robert Elwood. See Nutt (1998) for research on claims made by decision participants to influence how decisions are framed.

Mr. Elwood claimed: “[I’ve] achieved $2 to $4 million annually in net savings since becoming department head of purchasing — my predecessor and most of the buyers reporting to him were downsized [transferred or fired] before I came to the department; I do not use vendor management rating forms because they are not focused on purchasing performance;” and “my department has grown in size — four buyers now report to me, only one buyer reported to me when I became department head three years ago.”

In a separate interview, both a senior marketer (the solvents product manager) who meets face-to-face with Mr. Elwood and a local sales representative focused their annual and monthly discussions on the following topics: reaching specific price-points; creating unique value-added projects; and gaining/offering “preferred supplier participation” by receiving/offering 75–100 percent of the annual purchase requirements.

Note in Figure 2 that Mr. Elwood uses a “second look” and additional looks strategy (box 6) as a decision tool to achieve his cost reduction goals. Such look strategies include the buyer providing limited competitive bid information to competing vendors followed by the vendors responding usually with additional price reductions. Mr. Elwood pointed out that he ensures that senior management is aware of cost reductions being achieved with his unique “Cost Reduction Reports” he sends to senior management on a quarterly, and sometimes monthly, basis.

Framing decisions using vendor performance rating systems Figure 3 is a summary description of a contrasting decision frame enacted by buyers in the same industry as Mr. Elwood. Related to Figure 3, the two buyers interviewed based their evaluations of competing suppliers and vendor proposals using a “New Generation Division Vendor Performance Rating System.” This system includes a written survey
1. "Master Requisition Reports" received from plants.

2. Prepare and send request for proposals (RFPs) to vendors.

3. Decide on cost reduction goals; seek 2 to 3 bids for each product line; include estimated requirements by plant locations; inform vendors of potential requirements for "preferred supplier" participation.

4. Receive bids: are cost reduction and value-added goals achieved?

5. Will vendor support (fund) unique value-added projects or provide other unique and valuable terms and conditions?

6. Offer vendors "second look" and seek price decreases due to efficiencies of long-term contract if "preferred supplier" status award made to vendor; continue with "third look" when necessary.

7. Vendors revise and submit new proposals.

8. Award contracts; Notify suppliers of annual quantities awarded by plant locations.


10. Prepare "Cost Reduction Reports" (CPRs); monitor suppliers for contract conformance; send CPRs to senior management.

Figure 2: Robert A. Elwood: Decision systems analysis for buying solvents at Smith Metal Works Finishing Plant.
1. Receive production budget and requirements forecasts from logistics

2. Develop RFQs and send to vendors; receive proposals from vendors

3. Review performance of supplier X using "New Gen Division Vendor Performance Rating System":
   - Delivery on-time? Specs in line?
   - Quantity objectives met? Strong tech support?
   - Provided exclusives in NPD?

   - Is supplier willing and able to improve performance to achieve certification?
     - Yes
     - No

   - Did supplier X have substandard reports in recent previous years?
     - Yes
     - No

   - Notify X that price quote is above market price; receive lower price quote from X

   - Is a price increase included in vendor X's proposal?
     - Yes
     - No

   - Is price increase less than 14% and justified by increases in market prices?
     - Yes
     - No

   - Award vendor X same share of requirements as previous year or increase share award

   - Can we drop vendor X as a supplier and not have to single-source?
     - Yes
     - No

   - Request X to create self-improvement plan to achieve re-certification

   - Drop vendor X as a supplier

   - Reduce share of business award to X

Figure 3: Solvents buying process by Willard F. Boys and Dale Apple at Smith New Generation Division.
form that requires plant buyers at multiple locations to rate each supplier on 20 attributes on a monthly basis.

The five attributes reported by Mr. Boys and Mr. Apple, the buyers identified in Figure 3, as core objectives are described in box 3. Note that cost reduction is not an objective in this decision frame. A trigger price-increase of 14 percent is part of a cost avoidance strategy used by Mr. Boys and Mr. Apple (see box 10 in Figure 3). These buyers are not focused on achieving cost reductions in the form of price reductions; rather, they are focused on evaluating suppliers and other vendors using an elaborate rating system and ensuring that their suppliers achieve “certification” — high-performance scores across all attributes in the rating system. Note that this relationship includes the requirement made by the buyer for suppliers not achieving certification to provide a written plan on the self-improvement strategy the supplier will create and implement to achieve certification (box 7).

Framing relationships focused on achieving materials-delivery requirements. Related to Figure 4, fear of not having the necessary raw materials for keeping the plant operating for 3 shifts per day, 365 days per year, is the overriding issue for the two buyers interviewed. Consequently, multiple sourcing and never single-sourcing with one solvents manufacturer was described first in how these two buyers framed decisions and relationships with suppliers.

Price increases for solvents were acceptable for the buyers at this firm if such price increases met three criteria:

- (1) the supplier’s delivery and quality record was void of major problems (box 7 in Figure 4);
- (2) the supplier could “justify” the price increase (box 8); and
- (3) the price increase did not result in an increase in the ratio of the material’s cost to the buyer’s product price (not shown in Figure 4).

These buyers reported not using a second look strategy but do sometimes call-in suppliers to negotiate revised price points (box 10). A small manufacturer’s buying relationship with a much bigger supplier Figure 5 is a summary of the ongoing buyer–marketer relationship and self-questions asked by the buyer in a small (one-plant location) firm. Solvents are a critical raw material for this firm; the buyer prefers to single-source with one of the two known manufacturers of the solvent being purchased.

From time-to-time (twice each year), the buyer inquires or receives a quote from a regional distributor of solvents (box 3); such a quote may be an unrequested bid, but the buyer does sometimes ask the distributor to bid. “I always give BIGCHEM a second look because I know BIGCHEM will beat the distributor’s price (box 4). It is a way for me to be sure that I am getting market price.”

When this small manufacturing customer came out of bankruptcy protection (Chapter 11 filing) 3 years prior to the interview, BIGCHEM was the first supplier permitting the small customer to pay on net 30 days credit terms for tank care deliveries; this action was cited by the buyer as the reason causing her to switch from awarding 50 percent of the required solvents purchases to awarding 100 percent to
Receive production forecasts from mfg at plant

2
Develop purchasing requirements and identify 3 possible mfg suppliers and up to 2 distributors on AVL

3
Use informal RFQ to request price & annual volume commitments from selected vendors

4
Panned purchasing strategy:
- (1) Do not single source with one solvents mfg
- (2) Select a “primary” supplier who has capability to supply total annual volume
- (3) Select a large secondary, mfg, supplier (award 30%+ to this supplier)
- (4) Select a distributor for additional back-up insurance for product delivery
- (5) Call in supplier for negotiation if price increase is “out-of-line”

5
Receive responses from approved vendors and apply planned purchasing strategy

6
Evaluate first: the solvent mfg having the production capacity to meet 100% of our requirements (but this mfg will not receive 100% award)

7
Any major problems with product quality, delivery, or unjustified price increases with this supplier’s current year performance?

8
Is this supplier’s proposed price for new contract period justifiable?

9
Supplier taking acceptable corrective actions?

10
Call-in supplier and negotiate; is price reduced and now acceptable?

11
Offer letter of intent to award share of business to supplier

12
Evaluate second solvents mfg’s capability of providing nearly 100% of our firm’s annual requirements; search for, find, select a back-up distributor to receive a 10% share

Reject supplier

Figure 4: Solvent buying process at three production shift manufacturer. Notes: Lee and Baur’s (Purchasing at Customer firm) first priority is to fulfill requirements for plant to operate 3 shifts per day, 365 days per year; their nightmare: non-delivery of required solvents; and “cost reductions” are not an objective. AVL, approved vendor list.
Start of annual solvent TXR contract cycle

1. Does BIGCHEM appear competitive in prices to TXR?
   - No
   - Yes

2. Agree to year contract with BIGCHEM
   - Yes
   - No

3. Is a local distributor offering me a better price than BIGCHEM?
   - No
   - Yes

4. Give BIGCHEM a "second look"
   - Yes
   - No

5. Are BIGCHEM's delivery and terms and conditions acceptable?
   - No
   - Yes

6. Seek a bid from COMCHEM
   - Yes

7. Will BIGCHEM beat local distributor's price offer?
   - No
   - Yes

8. Agree to a one year contract with local distributor
   - Yes

Figure 5: Buying process for TXR by buyer at Petro Division of Widget Corporation.
BIGCHEM. The second supplier, COMCHEM, was dropped; no explanation was
given to COMCHEM. Until the time of the study, BIGCHEM was unaware of why
the share of business they received from this customer had increased and BIGCHEM
was uncertain what share of business the firm was receiving from this customer.
(BIGCHEM is the marketing firm participating in the study.)

Even though the specific solvent being purchased was crucial for manufacturing at
the customer plant, the buyer was unaware of the availability of a third manufacturer
of the solvent. She had done no search of alternative solvent suppliers. Her framing
of the buying problem was focused explicitly on the question, “Am I paying market
prices?” Implicitly, the buying problem was focused on availability of supply; she
reported never having had a problem with delivery from BIGCHEM in a span of
more than 10 years. Thus, she did not raise the issue of availability when framing her
thoughts and decisions when buying solvents.

The Framing Process for the Marketer

The marketer’s framing process in describing relationships with customers and in
pricing is summarized in Figure 6. While seemingly complex, the thoughts and
actions of the product managers and sales representatives in this firm are centered on
asking a short series of questions: how much business does the customer represent
(box 2)? How does the customer frame key aspects of his/her firm’s relationship with
us and our competitors (boxes 3–7)? Which objectives should dominate our response
to the customer’s response to our proposal (boxes 15 and 16)?

If the customer firm is a key account (i.e., large business for the marketer) and the
customer insists on achieving a price reduction, the marketer is likely to respond with
a “creative proposal” that includes: first, a low price; second, funding for storage
equipment or related facilities at the customer’s sites; and third, “price protection”
against price increases during some of the contract period. Whether or not such an
outcome occurs depends on the marketer’s belief that “preferred supplier participation” was received from the customer — a euphemism for being awarded the largest share or 100 percent of the customer requirements for solvents.

Results Relating to the Five Core Propositions

P1 supported: contingency sub-routines. The results support the first proposition:
individually, both sellers and buyers identify and work with contingency sub-routines
in thinking and deciding relationship issues with each other. Only a few self-questions
are asked and answered when buyers and marketers decide on actions related to such
relationships.

Partial support for P2: specific objectives planned in contingency decision
processes. Individually, only some buyers may build-in specific objectives to attain
within their contingency decision processes; these objectives relate to attaining or
Figure 6: Summary pricing, and sales negotiations, decision model for BIGCHEM based on customer decision profiles.
surpassing specific levels for specific attributes. Such framing behavior is illustrated in Figure 2 for price reductions; Figure 3 for meeting certification objectives; Figure 4 for maintaining a current cost/price ratio; but no such numerical objective was found related to the data in Figure 5.

P3 partially supported: limited number of thought-paths found. Possibly because both buyers and sellers must focus some attention to several ongoing relationships each day, P3 received some support: individually, both sellers and buyers use a limited number of thought paths to classify the other party into a limited number of types. However, the thought-paths uncovered were not focused on classifying the other party in the relationship but rather on framing and solving specific problems related to the relationship.

P4 untested: segmenting sellers and buyers by thoughts and decisions. In the exploratory study reported, the number of relationships and thought-paths examined is too limited to test P4. However, the findings described do lead to the conclusion that such research would support this proposition — even though collecting such data is intensive. Nutt (1993) suggests that we should not be deterred because of the great amount of work required by such direct research. Certainly, he has not been put off.

P5 untested: combining think aloud and direct research uncovers unique information. The results presented do not compare and contrast data from the two research methods used. Thus, the following proposition is not tested: applications of both the think aloud method and direct research both complement as well as uncover unique information about the thinking and deciding processes of seller and buyers. For the one buyer (in the small manufacturing firm, see Figure 5) who did complete all steps related to the think aloud tasks, unique information was uncovered from each research method.

Only when using think aloud in solving the conjoint scenario tasks did this buyer report not being aware of the third manufacturer-supplier of solvents; the conjoint attributes used included a factor involving three alternative names of manufacturers. Her thoughts related to this supplier, “I would never use this supplier because no one calls on me from this firm and I have never heard of them,” provided valuable information on how she goes about framing the buying problem and relationships with solvent suppliers.

**Implications for Theory Building on Exchange Relationships**

Deep understanding of buyer–seller relationships may be gained only from thick descriptions of the thoughts, decisions, and actions that occur naturally in such relationships. Both sellers and buyers exhibit adaptive thinking and behavior in the relationships. While all relationships include seemingly idiosyncratic nuances, using only a few relationship description variables, sellers and buyers may be segmented usefully into a few groups according to the contingency thoughts they use.

Thick descriptions of marketing–buying relationships should include the thinking/contingency processes used by both parties in such relationships. In examining the thoughts and behaviors of industrial marketers and buyers in real-life relationships,
the adaptive selling strategies found include varying responses to the customer firm based on buyer responses to proposals made by the marketer, and considering the value of the ongoing relationship with this individual customer. Based on the limited results of exploratory study described, adaptive buying strategies includes asking a limited number of problem framing questions; these framing questions vary among buyers in different firms but most customer firms may be segmented into a limited number of categories (five to ten) by problem frames.

Within marketer–buyer relationships, finding customers focused on achieving price reductions and marketers focused on achieving profit maximum price points may be rare occurrences. Such relationships often include problem-framing steps only obvious after collecting data from direct research.

Managerial Implications

Both marketers and buyers are likely to follow the human tendency to frame problems and people using a limited number of issues and categories. Most often such framing processes are done implicitly rather than explicitly (Huff, 1990; Senge, 1990). Several researchers point out that the quality of “sensemaking” (Weick, 1995) is improved by making explicit our usually implicit (i.e., automatic) thought processes (see Huff, 1990; Weick, 1995).

Improvements include increasing the abilities of sales representatives to perceive and respond appropriately to nuances and complexities in customers’ buying processes that would otherwise be overlooked (see Weitz et al., 1986). Thus, the results of constructing decision maps such as those illustrated in this chapter may serve as sales training and buying training tools. The resulting thick descriptions in such maps identify mental markers for categorizing customers (suppliers) and appropriate response routes to take when such mental markers appear. For example, issues in boxes 3, 4, and 6 in Figure 6 are identified as important mental markers in customers’ thinking — the answers to these issues dramatically affect the courses of actions taken by the marketing firm, in this case, BIGCHEM. Complicate yourself!

Learning about such multiple decision routes, and when to take them, complicates thinking and performing when engaging in selling and buying behaviors. Achieving such complication is the final suggestion in the ten pieces of advice offered by Weick (1979, p. 261): “Complicate yourself!” Otherwise, two natural tendencies occur: reliance on oversimplified, novice, mental models of customer (supplier) behaviors; and failure to build in the requisite variety to achieve “adaptiveness” (Campbell, 1965) — a trait necessary for healthy marketing/purchasing relationships.

Micro Segmentation and Target Marketing

Thick descriptions and mental mapping are tools useful for micro segmentation (see Wind & Cardozo, 1974). Macro segmenting variables, such as SIC grouping,
company size, and geographical location, are fine tuned by sales representatives’ use of micro segmenting variables. Micro segmentation includes grouping customers by their relationships with the competing suppliers and other decision-related variables. Knowledge of how customers frame and solve buying problems serves as the foundation in most attempts to micro segment customers. While each customer firm performs buying processes uniquely, most customer firms may be categorized into a limited number of segments by how they frame and solve buying problems (e.g., Choffray & Lilien, 1978; Nutt, 1998).

The decision-process mapping procedures described here can be used to cluster customers into segments according to similarities and differences apparent in the resulting decision maps. Nutt (1998) provides a detailed empirical example of such a micro segmentation process of buying decisions. Product managers and sales representatives can use such maps to adapt product offerings and sales calls to match the processes and features (i.e., specific combinations of attributes and attribute levels) that are shown in the decision maps of different customer micro segments.
Case Study Research on Means-End Laddering Chains

Synopsis

Means-end chain (MEC) theory proposes that knowledge held in individuals’ memory is organized in a hierarchy with concrete thoughts linked to more abstract thoughts in a sequence progressing from means (i.e., brands and product features) to psychological and social consequences and finally to ends (i.e., fulfillment of personal values). This chapter proposes several advances in the theory. First, specific buying and consumption situations serve as frames of reference when consumers are thinking about products and alternative features of products and brands. Second, states of psychological imbalance may occur in consumers’ minds among linkages retrieved automatically for features/consequences and consequences/values; thus, Heider’s balance theory incorporates MEC theory and research. The theoretical and practical usefulness of means-end research increases by asking consumers to name an acceptable alternative to the product and brand used in a recent consumption situation, as well as an unacceptable option and to describe the features/consequences/values of these options. Consequently, alternative relationships of consumer/brands (e.g., casual friendships, marriages, enmities) become relevant for MEC theory. To examine the propositions empirically, this chapter describes psychological schemata for four MECs that combine two consumers’ recent consumption situations with personal values.

Introduction: Associating Brand/Features/Consequences/Benefits/Values

In consumer research on MECs, the meanings that a consumer associates with a product, service, or specific brand are represented hierarchically. The lowest level depicts an object’s attributes — those that are physical or concrete, and those that are abstract (e.g., a brand’s image). The remaining levels are consumers’ outcomes including functional and psychosocial consequences, followed by consumers’
instrumental and terminal values (see Gutman, 1997). Laddering is a research method frequently used for electing to do MEC studies.

Traditionally, laddering is a metaphor representing a respondent’s answers to a series of “Why?” probes, typically starting with the attributes that distinguish more desired from less desired alternatives. Asking for successive elicitation creates a chain of features and concepts leading from product or brand attributes to one or a few terminal values: each successive concept learned becomes a sub-goal for the final goal. Gutman and Reynolds (1978) illustrate a resulting ladder elicited from a respondent in a study of breakfast cereal: crunchy → has body → stays with me → avoid snack → aids weight loss → improves appearance → romance.

In the empirical research that this chapter describes, the questions, “What makes you say that?” and “What does that lead to?” are used in place of “Why” probes. Becker (1998) emphasizes that “Why?” requires a “good” answer, one that makes sense and can be defended. Such answers are unlikely to reveal logical flaws and inconsistencies. Becker recommends using, “How?” questions.

When I asked them, [such questions] people gave more leeway, were less constraining, invited them to answer in any way that suited them, to tell a story that included whatever they thought the story ought to include in order to make sense. They didn’t demand a “right” answer, didn’t seem to be trying to place responsibility for bad actions or outcomes anywhere. (Becker, 1998, p. 59)

The scientific literature for avoiding “why” questions in most contexts is compelling because most thinking is unconscious and consumers typically are unable to bring up and report unconscious processes (unconscious processes often drive behavior that consumers are unaware that they performed; for example, see Bargh, 2002; Zaltman, 2003). Advancing theory and research that inform knowledge of consumer unconscious processes is worthwhile (see Malle, 1999 for a complete theory of folk explanation of behavior, that is, a thorough theoretical development of how humans explain everyday behavior and how the question asked affects the cause people assign in answering).

The value for consumer theory and research of MECs and the laddering method relates only implicitly to unconscious mental processes — and how laddering may help to surface unconscious thoughts. For example, direct questioning of how a cereal being crunchy aids a consumer’s love life may cause a scoffing response from the consumer. Asking the consumer a sequence of probing questions is a form of “auto-driving” (Heisley & Levy, 1991); research may enable the consumer to surface unconscious thoughts that rarely enter conscious processing.

Surfacing unconscious processes may result in tension and stress because unbalanced associations occur among concepts now in a consumer’s working memory (Heider, 1958). The thought, “A Jewish couple buys a German car” (Figure 1; see Woodside & Chebat, 2001) implies an example of such stress resulting from the surfacing of negatively valued concepts and images — some held unconsciously — with the positive experiences associated with buying a car highly prized for its design.
features. Advancing Heider’s balance theory to person, brand, and attribute (and attribute to benefit to instrumental and terminal values) enables more robust MEC laddering research because the resulting ladders may uncover and display stress and stress resolution, as well as harmonious associations.

Pieters, Baumgartner, and Allen (1995) advocate following an alternative empirical method for MECs rather than the better-known laddering approach that Gutman and Reynolds (1978) demonstrate. Pieters et al. (1995) elicit people’s reasons for wanting to do something or to pursue a goal rather than to name concrete features that they associate with a product. Bagozzi and Dabholkar (2000) apply Pieters et al.’s approach for mapping people’s cognitive schemata regarding a specific target, President Clinton. While Pieters et al. (1995) and Bagozzi and Dabholkar (2000) refinements are useful for describing how specific schemata accurately predict attitudes and intentions regarding future events, the following advances focus on framing means-end theory and research by consumers’ recent experiences.

**Heider’s Balance Theory**

Heider (1958, Chapter 7) distinguishes two types of relations between separate entities: unit and sentiment relations. “Separate entities comprise a unit when they are perceived as belonging together. For example, members of a family are seen as a unit; a person and his deed belong together” (p. 176). ‘U’ denotes the cognitive unit between two entities, and not U the fact that the two entities are segregated” (p. 201).
A sentiment relation refers to the positive (L or +) or negative (DL or –) feelings or valuation that one gives to an entity, such as a person, activity, or object. These relations may be for dyads, triads, or more complex cases but all relations are from the perceiver’s subjective point of view. Thus, while a brand may possess a given attribute or provide a specific benefit, if a consumer perceives the opposite, a not U relation results between a brand and such an attribute or benefit. Heider (1958) describes the two relation concepts to result in four possibilities between two entities: “U, not U, L, and DL.” He emphasizes:

By a balanced state is meant a situation in which the relations among the entities fit together harmoniously; there is no stress toward change. A basic assumption is that sentiment relations and unit relations tend toward a balanced state. This means that sentiments are not entirely independent of the perceptions of unit connections between entities and that the latter, in turn, are not entirely independent of sentiments. Sentiments and unit relations are mutually interdependent. It also means that if a balanced state does not exist, then forces toward this state will arise. If a change is not possible, the state of imbalance will produce tension. (Heider, 1958, p. 201)

Unit and sentiment relations represent independent theoretical and empirical propositions grounded in cognitions (i.e., units) and affections (i.e., sentiments). When tension caused by imbalance arises in the mind of the individual, then the individual is likely to exercise some mental and physical effort to eliminate the tension.

Unbalanced situations stimulate us to further thinking; they have the character of interesting puzzles, problems which make us suspect a depth of interesting background … . Stories in which the stress is laid on unbalanced situations are felt to have a deep psychological meaning. Dostoevski, for instance, describes again and again feelings full of conflict resulting from just such situations. (Heider, 1958, pp. 180–181)

**Advancing Means-End Chain Laddering Research with Heider’s Balance Theory**

Figure 2 summarizes the application of Heider’s balance theory and related extensions to MEC laddering research. Note that the grounding in Figure 2 includes “prequel to action” to emphasize that if consumer research focuses on existing consumer/brand relationships (Fournier, 1998); such relationships depend on specific purchase or use situations. A situation is defined as a conjunction of time, place, objects, and person(s). Consequently, the experiences, attributes, and benefits that a consumer identifies (to herself and the interviewer) are contingent on the structure of the situation leading to brand purchase or use.
1. Prequel to action: What events influences the buying/using act/context?

2. What immediate feelings/thoughts/actions were drivers to act?

3. Description of product P and brand B actually consumed in the act.

Figure 2: Means-end laddering research: Updating the theory and data collection method.
Consequently, the situation informs the attributes/benefits/value associations. The implication for research design is that MEC data for a given respondent should be collected for multiple situations (some of which may be relevant to the focal brand). A focal brand is defined as the one that the consumer names as used most often or identifies as the one used most recently; alternatively, a focal brand may be defined as the specific target chosen by the researcher — the primary focus of the study for which the researcher asks a respondent to describe — its product features and consequences in experiencing such product features and how these experiences relate to personal values. Asking informants individually to identify a focal brand for a given product category is a less reactive procedure; the researcher naming a target brand indicates possible self-validation problems — informants report perceptions about the brand mentioned by the researcher that may not relate much to the informants’ past or future lives (Feldman & Lynch, 1988). Thus, asking the informant to report on her most recent consumption behavior and collecting means-end data with respect to situation X as well as for situation Y may be more relevant for the informant and reduces the occurrence of self-validity problems.

Figure 2 includes the assignment of sentiments (positive and negative signs) to associations in the resulting laddering steps. In Figure 2, note that product P and brand B associate negatively with attribute I and lack of I relates negatively with the benefit B (e.g., assume benefit B is an informant’s comment, “good tasting mouthwash,” for a mouthwash attribute I). Figure 2 advances MECs by suggesting collecting data on the first alternative that comes to mind for the consumer for the recent experience in the focal situation. For example, “If you had not consumed brand B in situation X, what might you have consumed instead?” Figure 2 also asks for reject alternative information and implies the proposition that the respondent is able to easily remember a product/brand that would have been unacceptable for consumption in her recent experience.

Such brand rejection data are then followed by means-end probes to bring up brand/attributes/values associations for unacceptable alternatives for use in the given situation. The brand strategist might ask here: how often, and for what situations, does my product and brand surface as the reject alternative? And when rejection occurs, what attributes and personal values surface in the respondent’s mind?

**Fournier’s Consumer/Brand Relationship Typology**

Fournier (1998) extends the two-party social relationship metaphor to encompass the consumer and brands. She develops the consumer/brand relationship proposition, including anthropomorphizing the brand as an active relationship partner — at the level of consumers’ experiences with their brands. Her proposal of 15 consumer/brand relationships includes arranged marriages, casual friends, marriages of convenience, committed partnerships, best friendships, compartmentalized friendships, kinships, rebounds, childhood friendships, courtships, dependencies, flings, enslavements, enmities, and secret affairs.
Advancing Means-End Chain Laddering Research by Applying Fournier’s Consumer/Brand Relationships

Use of the advanced MEC laddering research that Figure 2 summarizes serves to complement and inform Fournier’s consumer/brand relationship typology: Multiple consumer–brand relationship types are uncovered by collecting data within given situations of consumer/brand experiences, acceptable alternatives to these lived experiences, as well as rejected alternatives. Equally valuable are the data uncovering association streams of the three laddering paths (done, alternative, and rejected) to terminal values.

Applying the Advances in Means-End Chain Laddering Research

The following four case studies illustrate applications of advances in MEC laddering research. The four cases report two experiences for each of two informants (subjects, Ss).

Method

In order to collect the data to examine the propositions, two subjects, Eric and Peter, were chosen to participate in two separate interviews each. Each subject is a senior in college, in his early twenties, living in an apartment on campus at a large university in the eastern United States. The interviews were conducted at the residences of the respondents at two different times during the day. The two situations under consideration for this study were the consumption of a beverage in the morning after waking up and the beverage consumption between eight o’clock and midnight on a Friday night. For the MEC laddering process described previously, each respondent was asked a series of 34 questions for each situation. The questions were designed to elicit responses that would provide the perceived attributes, benefits, and consequences of the products consumed.

The respondents were also asked to provide alternative products that they might have chosen in each situation as well as rejected products that would not be considered. The subjects were also asked questions pertaining to prior actions to the consumption of the beverage and about the situation itself, such as where it occurred and if anyone else was around. With the responses gathered from each subject, an extended MEC was created for each subject in each situation using the theoretical model shown in Figure 2.

The extended MEC begins at the bottom with the prequel to the action discussed. This prequel is the event(s) that is believed to influence the action to occur. From this prior event, there must be some sort of recognition, or immediate feelings or thoughts that act as drivers to act. Stemming from the driver is the action itself, or the product usage. The consumer’s description of the product (what it was, how much was consumed, and what brand) as well as a brief description of the situation (when and
where the action occurred, others present at the time). Completion of these steps results in completion of MECs, including the identification of terminal values.

Identifying a specific consumption experience and situation provides theoretical ground for developing MECs based on the proposition that the consumption of a specific product and brand is acceptable in only certain situations. In fact, the same brand and product form may associate positively to one situation and negatively to alternative situations for the same consumer. Also, different attributes and benefits may come to mind for a consumer for the same brand depending on the usage situation that the consumer is thinking about (Bearden & Woodside, 1978; Belk, 1974). Consequently, resulting MECs may be expected to vary contingent on the focal situations being described in consumers’ experiences. From the description of the product and the situation comes the three distinct series of the extended MEC. On the left is the reject alternative and on the right is the alternative that would be considered. The center of the model focuses on the product that was actually used or consumed.

The separate attributes of the product or brand are laid out in order to get an idea of the benefits or consequences of each. This same questioning process is used to collect information for the alternative and reject products. The benefit of the attributes is where the MEC begins to probe for the instrumental beliefs and values of the respondent. These beliefs are often unconsciously stored thoughts that the consumer may not connect but that actually play a role in the decision-making process. Some benefits may lead to the same values and benefits from the alternative and the reject products can also tie into these same values. The model shows that the alternative and reject products may tie in with the entire MEC, which is why they should be considered when looking at unconscious thinking of consumers. Finally, the chain concludes with terminal values or their core values and beliefs in the S’s life.

Findings

Beverage Consumed on Monday Morning

For this situation, each respondent answered questions about the first beverage they consumed on the day that the interviews took place. Eric went to bed around one in the morning and did not have anything to drink before going to sleep. After waking up at ten o’clock on Monday morning with a dry mouth and morning breath, he went down to the kitchen in his apartment and poured a 16-oz. glass of Tropicana orange juice. Eric proceeded to have another glass of orange juice while he ate a bagel alone at the table. The attributes that he associates with Tropicana orange juice are that it tastes sweet, kills morning breath, and contains vitamin C (Figure 3). No benefit was linked with the sweet taste, but sweet taste is an attribute that Eric remarked that he prefers. The benefit of killing morning breath was having better breath throughout the day, which was also a benefit that he did not believe any alternative drinks offered. Eric explained that his mother had always told him that he
1. **Prequel to action:** Went to bed at 1 AM after eating some pretzels while doing homework.

2. **Action:** Eric awakens at 10 AM with feeling of dry mouth and morning breath.

3. **Action:** Eric goes downstairs to the kitchen for a drink of orange juice; uses plastic Solo cup that holds 16 oz.; Eric drinks two servings; each serving 14-15 ounces; Eric alone in kitchen, other roommates are sleeping; Eric eats bagel with cream cheese while drinking juice.

**Reject that comes to mind:**

- **Coffee**
  - Makes me jittery
  - Have to go to bathroom

**Caffeine**

- Need energy
- Need to wake up

**Calories**

- Need calories
- Need energy

**Rejected that comes to mind:**

- Coffee

**Attributes:**

- Sweet
- Kills morning breath
- Vitamin C
- Quenches thirst
- Keeps me in shape
- More attractive to females
- Better breath
- Prevents colds
- Makes me feel healthy
- Socialize without embarrassment
- Feel comfortable in my surroundings
- Saves money
- No doctor visits
- More attractive to females
- Keeps me in shape
- Stay healthy
- Stay hydrated
- Quenches thirst
- Socialize without embarrassment
- Feel comfortable in my surroundings
- Saves money
- No doctor visits

**Unique terminal value for alternative Gatorade**

- Keeps me in shape
- Stay healthy
- Stay hydrated
- Quenches thirst
- Socialize without embarrassment
- Feel comfortable in my surroundings
- Saves money
- No doctor visits

**Benefits:**

- Better breath
- Prevents colds

**Instrumental Values:**

- Socialize without embarrassment
- Feel comfortable in my surroundings
- Saves money
- No doctor visits

**Terminal Values**

- Embarrassment
- Money
- No doctor visits
- Saves
- Terminal values

**Figure 3:** Means-end laddering chain for Eric’s first beverage on Monday morning.
should drink a lot of orange juice to prevent getting a cold, which is a benefit of a product containing vitamin C. By preventing illness he believes that he will not have to visit the doctor (which was a positive relationship, because he does not like paying the extra money or dealing with doctors in general). As an alternative Eric suggested that he also likes to drink Gatorade because it quenches his thirst and keeps him hydrated. Again, by staying hydrated he believes that he will be able to stay in better shape and remain healthier, which ties in with the benefits of the vitamin C in orange juice.

Having good breath is important for Eric because one of his main goals is to feel comfortable in his surroundings. By not having bad breath he felt that he could socialize with others and not worry about others smelling his breath. Coffee is the product that Eric reports that he rejects because of caffeine, calories, and causing him to have to go to the bathroom. The consequences of all of these attributes negatively connected with the value of feeling comfortable because each one posed a problem with comfort. Interestingly, there were two other benefits that surfaced in this interview stemming from staying healthy and staying in shape. As a result of staying in shape Eric felt that this would make him more attractive to females, this seemed to be a common theme with the four different situations. Saving money came up as a core value because in the interview he explained that he bought Tropicana orange juice even though it tended to be more expensive. He was willing to pay the price premium for the brand but overall he is looking to save money.

Peter spent Sunday night watching movies and eating popcorn with his girlfriend until about 2 a.m., when they went to bed. When he woke up around 11 on Monday morning, his mouth was very dry from the popcorn and he had bad breath. He got out of bed and went to the refrigerator in the bedroom and pulled out the gallon jug of orange juice. He drank three 10-oz. servings directly from the jug while his girlfriend and roommate were asleep in the room. Peter does not recall the brand because he bought whatever was cheapest at the store, but he does know that it was not a major brand like Tropicana. His alternative product was apple juice, and the rejected product was cranberry juice (Figure 4).

The attributes that Peter described for the orange juice were that it was refreshing, it killed germs, and it contained vitamin C. In the interview he remarked that he was not sure if the orange juice actually killed germs but this was what he guessed gave him better breath after drinking it. As a result of having better breath he said that he would actually be able to kiss his girlfriend because she did not like to taste his bad breath. Besides the fact that Peter does not like the taste of cranberry juice in general, he also felt that it stained teeth with its red coloring, and caused saliva build up, which made him spit. These consequences can be negatively linked with Peter’s being able to kiss his girlfriend. All of this leads up to the core value of romance and the feeling of closeness that Peter believes is important.

Peter mentioned that he believed that vitamin C prevents colds and would help him to stay healthy. He also felt that the alternative, apple juice, could help him to stay healthy because it is “good for you.” Staying healthy is important to Peter because another core value is that he likes to keep up with his responsibilities in life. He does not like to fall behind in schoolwork or to miss days at his job.
2. **Action**: Peter awakens at 11 AM with feeling of dry mouth and bad breath.

1. **Prequel to action**: Went to bed at 2 AM after eating popcorn and watching a movie with girlfriend.

3. **Action**: Peter goes to refrigerator in the bedroom for a drink of orange juice out of a gallon container; Peter drinks 3 servings; each serving 8-10 ounces; girlfriend and roommate asleep in the room.

**Figure 4**: Means-end chain laddering findings for Peter’s first beverage on Monday morning.
Both informants chose the same beverage for quite similar reasons, but it did not turn out that their core values were also the same. There was the similarity of staying healthy, but that is one of the only similarities. Also, each informant had a different relationship with his brand of choice. Using the relationships developed by Fournier (1998), Eric is in a “committed partnership” with the Tropicana brand, while Peter is a “casual friend/buddy” with his brand of orange juice. Eric is in a long-term, voluntary union with Tropicana even though it is higher priced because it is a brand that he knows and trusts. Peter buys more based on price. As long as a certain brand is the cheapest, he will continue to purchase it, but if a competitor suddenly becomes cheaper, he will buy that brand. There is no long-term commitment in the brand relationship.

Beverage Consumed Last Friday Night between 8 P.M. and Midnight

Both Eric and Peter are self-described heavy drinkers, drinking ten beers on average four or five nights a week. This consumption has increased somewhat over the last couple of years, but all throughout they have been “beer drinkers.” Eric’s situation on Friday night began when he invited friends over for pizza and to watch the game on TV (Figure 5). He had gone out earlier and bought two 30-packs of Busch Light for the evening and his friends were expecting to drink when they arrived. As the night progressed the group began to play drinking games and consume even greater amounts of beer. By midnight Eric recalls having about 12 cans of beer before going to sleep.

The attributes suggested for Busch Light beer are a smooth taste, it contains alcohol, and that it contains calories. The fact that the beverage contained alcohol seemed to be the most prominent reason for consuming the beer. The benefit of the alcohol is that it gets the person drunk, which makes it easier to socialize, but much like the calories in the beer, the alcohol is also not healthy. The calories lead to getting fat and being less attractive to females.

The alternative product to drink on a Friday night for Eric was vodka. Vodka was an alternative because it was stronger than beer, which would get him drunker, but this leads to having a hangover. The negative consequence of being so very drunk leads to being unattractive to females and goes against his core values of feeling good both physically and emotionally.

The rejected product for Eric was wine, no specific brand, just wine in general. He reports not liking the taste of wine and he also perceives wine as a “girly” drink. The bitter taste of the wine causes him to feel sick to his stomach, which has a negative relation to the core value of feeling good physically. The alcohol in beer, which makes it easier to socialize, has a positive relationship with the value of having fun. Eric stressed that at his age he was more concerned with having a good time than with worrying about too many responsibilities but he did see this mentality changing in the near future because of graduation.
1. **Prequel to action**: Invited friends to cover over for pizza; play drinking games; and watch TV.

2. **Action**: Friends arrive around 8 PM and immediately ask, “Where is the beer?”

3. **Action**: Eric opens the refrigerator for a drink of **beer**; grabs a silver-and-blue 12-oz aluminum can of **Busch-Light**; Eric drinks about 12 servings between 8 PM AND 12 PM; friends and roommates are also drinking while playing card games and Beirut.

**Figure 5**: Means-end laddering findings for Eric’s beverage consumption on Friday night.
The situation for Peter was different because of the setting, but for the most part the MEC looked similar to that of Eric. Peter had taken a test earlier in the afternoon that he did not believe had gone very well. After the test, he went down to the local bar, Mary Ann’s, for “happy hour.” He met up with friends at the bar and they began to drink beer. By 8 p.m., Peter was still at the bar and he was still drinking bottles of Busch Light beer. He had about eight beers between 8 p.m. and the time he left the bar at 10 p.m.

The attributes that Peter describes in Busch Light beer are that it is carbonated, and that it contains alcohol and calories. He could not explain what he thought the benefits of carbonation are, but this could be investigated in a follow-up interview if one were to be performed (Figure 6).

Alcohol was the major attribute that Peter described in beer. The alcohol led to getting drunk and acting immature, which was negatively related to his core value of thinking rationally and responsibly. Peter mentioned rum as the rejected beverage because of a bad experience that he had in the past. Due to this, bad experience he cannot drink any rum because it makes him vomit.

Calories were not a major concern for Peter but he did acknowledge that they are not healthy. Because of this he would need to work out to be more attractive to females. Wine was given as an alternative to beer as a beverage to consume on a Friday night. Peter felt that wine is more of a sophisticated drink and makes him look more mature. He felt that this would make him more attractive to females — in this case, one of his core values.

The brand relationships between both Peter and Eric and Busch Light beer are about the same. Both respondents remarked that Busch Light beer was popular with them because it was cheaper than most beers, but that it was not the cheapest. This is a “casual friendship/buddy” type of relationship because there is not a long-term commitment to the brand. The consumers are loyal but they do buy other brands and will likely not stay with this brand after graduation because of their increased financial situation. Another brand relationship can be seen between Peter and rum. This is an “enmities” relationship because he has a desire to avoid the product due to its negative effects.

**Applying Advanced Means-End Chain Laddering to Learn Unconscious Processes**

Research on consumer thinking processes (see Zaltman, 2003) indicates multiple levels of mental processing. Figure 1 in Chapter 1 summarizes five levels of thinking processes that demonstrate MEC laddering research. Level 1 represents conscious thinking that is verbalized between two or more parties. Level 2 thinking includes conscious handling of thoughts before and after verbalizing thoughts and surfacing thoughts. Level 3 thinking includes surfacing thoughts that are mostly not under conscious control. Level 4 thinking represents unconscious thinking between two or more persons. Level 5 thinking represents unconscious processing including...
1. **Prequel to action:** Had a test earlier that afternoon that didn’t go so well.

2. **Action:** Peter goes to Mary Ann’s for happy hour around 5 PM.

3. **Action:** By 8 PM Peter is still drinking **beer** at Mary Ann’s; orders a 12-oz bottle of **Busch Light** from the bartender; Peter drinks about 8 servings between 8 PM and 10 PM when he leaves the bar; the bar was full of friends and classmates and music was playing loudly.

**Figure 6:** Means-end laddering findings for Peter’s beverage consumption on a Friday night.
spreading activation of relationships among concepts that the individual is unaware are occurring.

Other empirical findings (see Bargh, 2002; Wegner, 2002) support a core proposition about how the mind thinks: the most processing occurs unconsciously. Such unconscious thinking influences consumers’ actions in ways mostly unknown to the consumers’ themselves.

Such observations are likely to cause stress among consumer researchers who mainly apply the current (early 21st century) dominating logic of asking closed–ended (e.g., 7-point scale items) questions because such questioning mostly reaches only level 1 processing, that is, verbalized thoughts (Zaltman, 2003). Some deeper form of questioning is necessary to reach into level 2 to 5 mental processing. The advances in MEC laddering research that Chapter 11 discusses may help achieve this objective.

**Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research**

The four MEC laddering cases serve to inform theory development and are not intended as representative of college students in general or for specific segments of beverage consumers. This report is limited by not taking the step of describing the results in follow-up interviews with the two case study informants and having the informants confirm and elaborate on the researcher’s interpretations (Hirschman, 1986, argues for such a validation step). Such an additional “auto-driving” step will likely prove useful for achieving further advances in MEC laddering theory and research.
Chapter 12

Building in Degrees of Freedom Analysis in Case Study Research: Empirical Positivistic Testing of Data to Alternative Theories

Synopsis

A valuable, although little-used, case data analysis technique, degrees-of-freedom analysis (DFA), is the subject of Chapter 12. Given the richness of case data and its prevalence in business marketing research, DFA has the potential to become an important addition to one’s “research workbench.” Donald Campbell (1975) first proposed this theory testing.

This chapter presents three business-to-business marketing applications; the first two involve use of the technique to compare the extent to which four theories of group decision making are manifested in organizations. The third application illustrates how the technique is useful for theory development in the context of manufacturer–distributor relationships. The contribution is in demonstrating how researchers can link “traditional” (i.e., logical positivistic) hypothesis testing procedures to examine theoretical propositions in case study research. This approach is one way of achieving a critical test (Carlsmith, Ellsworth, & Aronson, 1976), that is, testing the relative empirical strengths of competing theories. The chapter highlights the value of generalizing case data to theory versus the inappropriate attempt to generalize such data to a population (Yin, 1994). The explication and demonstration of this technique is not available elsewhere to the degree that Chapter 12 provides.

Introduction

Degrees-of-freedom analysis (DFA) was introduced by the noted psychologist, experimental methodologist, and philosopher of science, Donald Campbell, in the late 1960s. While other case methodologists (Miles & Huberman, 1994) mention DFA in passing, there are few published examples of applications of this technique. One reason why this technique is so interesting and unique is that DFA employs a quantitative framework to gain insight and understanding about qualitative case
A simple example to readily illustrate DFA is a doctor–patient interaction. Upon examining a sick child, the doctor, after a series of questions, determines symptoms of fever, irritability, loss of appetite, nausea, and a dull pain in the lower, right quadrant of the abdomen. The pattern of observed symptoms (quantitative data) leads the doctor to diagnose her patient as suffering from appendicitis (the theoretical condition). In the same fashion, case data collected in social science contexts can be examined to note the degree of match to a pattern that is set forth by theory.

Related to the medical diagnosis example, a key problem found in the literature is the tendency of medical doctors to use only one or two points of observations and their most easily retrieved knowledge (Gilovich, 1991) this two-point process may not represent sufficient coverage of issues to indicate a pattern of responses. Consequently, too often the result is jumping to inaccurate conclusions and misdiagnoses. In short, the more patterns that can be “matched,” the more confident one is that the diagnosis is accurate and not subject to systematic bias. Campbell (1975) maintains that this pattern-matching activity is analogous to having degrees-of-freedom in a statistical test:

In a case study done by an alert social scientist who has thorough local acquaintance, the theory he uses to explain the focal difference also generates predictions or expectations on dozens of other aspects of the culture, and he does not retain the theory unless most of these are also confirmed. In some sense, he has tested the theory with degrees of freedom [emphasis added] coming from the multiple implications of one theory. (Campbell, 1975, pp. 181–182)

Such analysis considers case data quantitatively because the researcher notes the degree of match to the theory in terms of “hits and misses.” How many hits are necessary to “confirm” the theory? Simple statistical tests are useful for noting whether or not the number of hits or misses is greater than that expected by chance. Or, the researcher may conduct DFA purely to note the absolute number of confirmed predictions for the sake of basic knowledge development (without worrying about whether or not results are “statistically significant”). This aspect of DFA is consistent with Denzin and Lincoln’s (1994) observation, as follows.

Nor does qualitative research have a distinct set of methods that are entirely its own. Qualitative researchers use semiotics, narrative, content, discourse, archival, and phonemic analysis, even statistics [emphasis added]. (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994)

The contribution of Chapter 12 is in demonstrating how researchers can link “traditional” (i.e., logical positivistic) hypothesis testing procedures to examine theoretical propositions in case study research. This approach is one way of
achieving a critical test (Carlsmith et al., 1976), that is, testing the relative empirical strengths of competing theories.

The contribution is valuable for two reasons. First, Chapter 12 provides the nitty-gritty details in applications, where case data are generalized to theory versus the inappropriate attempt to generalize such data to a population (Yin, 1994). The explication and demonstration of this technique is unavailable elsewhere to the degree here. Second, DFA utilizes strong features from both the logical positivism and critical relativism traditions in terms of its scientific method. That is, rich qualitative case data are used to examine whether or not theoretical propositions are supported; thus, a substantial degree of objectivity and validity are achievable via the DFA procedure.

These examples show DFA to be a very flexible technique that can accommodate case research studies of varying goals (e.g., theory development versus theory comparison) and contexts (e.g., individual versus group decisions, discrete transactions versus ongoing relationships). In addition, DFA offers researchers some advances over existing techniques. For example, content analysis (Kassarjian, 1977) is a technique often associated with case data. Results of content analysis are often expressable as counts, means, or frequencies of the phenomenon of interest. DFA takes the researcher a step further by subjecting the counts, or patterns, in a qualitative dataset to an a priori set of predictions (i.e., hypotheses, propositions, and conjectures) so that theories can be compared, tested, or constructed, according to the researcher’s purpose.

The next section, a brief overview of the steps involved in conducting DFA.

**Doing Degrees-of-Freedom Analysis (DFA)**

The heart of DFA is the development and testing of a “prediction matrix.” The prediction matrix sets up the “pattern,” based on theory, to be either confirmed or disconfirmed by the case data. The statements in the prediction matrix are analogous to hypotheses in the sense of traditional statistical hypothesis testing. Campbell (1975) states, “One should keep a record of all the theories considered in the creative puzzle-solving process. To represent the degrees of freedom from multiple implications, one should also keep a record of the implications against which each was tested, and the box score of hits and misses.”

Any research study, even the most exploratory, has some grounding in the extant literature. An established theory or a “theory-in-use” may motivate a new research study. A theory-in-use is the set of propositions guiding the behavior of a decision maker, and theories-in-use are usually stated implicitly rather than explicitly (Senge, 1990). Other examples of developing theories-in-use include script-theory research (e.g., Leigh & McGraw, 1989) and research on perceptual processing and acquiring cognitive skills (Anderson, 1982; Chase & Simon, 1973). Following the development of such theories, the predictions made explicit in the theories may be tested empirically after collecting additional case data.
So, the first step in DFA is for the researcher to be familiar with the existing knowledge base about the phenomenon of interest. If one or several theories on the topic exist, the prediction matrix can be constructed with relative ease. If no theory has been proposed in an area, individual studies may generate rival explanations (via theories-in-use) that may be incorporated into a prediction matrix for testing. This use of DFA would then lead toward the goal of theory development.

Upon careful development of one or more prediction matrices, the researcher is ready for fieldwork. Data may be in the form of personal interviews, document analysis, participant or nonparticipant observation, or other case data collection methods (Yin, 1994). Care must be taken by the researcher to conduct the data collection in such a way to avoid introducing bias into the data. Chapter 12 discusses this point in some detail later and offers several strategies for maintaining data integrity.

After the data are collected, trained judges then review the information (interview transcripts, for example) to note hits or misses to items in the prediction matrix. The box-score of hits and misses can then be subjected to statistical tests to note the significance of the ratio of confirmed versus unconfirmed predictions found in the data. Such tests might be a sign test (Siegel, 1956), a chi-square test, or a $z$-test for differences in proportions.

Testing rival theories, that is, doing a comparative theory test (Sternthal, Tybout, & Calder, 1987) or critical test (Carlsmith et al., 1976), via DFA deepens the value of case data. That is, when several theories exist, the number of confirmed predictions can be noted to see which theory tends to be supported relative to others. Or, if theory development is the goal, the researcher can look at the confirmed predictions to examine the variance in findings across the original empirical studies. Constructing a table of “benchmark,” findings of confirmed predictions may be the first step at formulating an initial theory.

Based on the discussion above, Figure 1 is a summary diagram that provides an overview of DFA research process. Upon completion of a DFA study, the researcher may continue with additional programmatic investigations into the phenomenon of interest. The feedback loop in Figure 1 represents this refining process. Depending on the outcome of one study, the researcher may go back and repeat to some or all of the activities in the process. The remainder of the chapter examines three DFA applications (Dean, 1986; Wilson & Vlosky, 1997; Wilson & Wilson, 1988).

### Using DFA for Theory Comparison: Group Decision Making in Organizational Behavior

Dean (1986) applies DFA to examine the degree of support for four theories of organizational decision making in the context of adoption decisions of advanced manufacturing technology. Because Dean’s research focuses on adopting and acquiring new manufacturing technologies, his empirical application of DFA may be of particular interest for industrial purchasing and marketing researchers. From the
literature, the four theories include: (1) the rational model of decision making (Allison, 1971); (2) the bounded rational model (Cyert & March, 1963); (3) the political model (Pettigrew, 1973); and (4) the garbage can model (Cohen, March, & Olsen, 1972) Dean’s central finding was that while no single theory was supported in all cases, one theory, the bounded rationality model, tended to have more of its predictions confirmed while the garbage can model tended to have the fewest confirmed predictions.

In a partial replication of Dean’s work, Wilson and Wilson (1988) examine these four theories in the context of organizational buying decisions for copier equipment. Since they replicate Dean’s study in a marketing context, the details of the Wilson and Wilson study are presented here as an example of DFA as a comparative theory test (Carlsmith, Merrill, & Aronson, 1976; Sternthal et al., 1987).

### Four Models of Organizational Decision Making

Briefly, each of the four models of decision making offers different explanations for behavior in terms of outcomes and processes. The rational model, derived from microeconomics, posits that members of organizations make decisions that provide maximum benefit (i.e., utility) to the firm. The bounded rationality model proposes

![Figure 1: The research process for degrees-of-freedom analysis (DFA).](image-url)
that while decision makers try to be rational, they are constrained by cognitive limitations, habits, and biases (i.e., human nature). According to the political model, decision makers are competing to satisfy their own goals, and choice is a function of an individual’s power. Finally, in the garbage can model, decisions are the result of an unsystematic process — that is, problem definitions can change, preferences are unclear, and people may come and go from the decision group (Dean, 1986).

**Development of a Prediction Matrix**

The four theories are a mixture of similar, complementary, competing, and orthogonal predictions about organizational decision-making behavior. The prediction matrix is developed based on seven basic decision activities (Dean, 1986). They are:

1. **Problem definition** — the conceptualization of the decision problem or process by buying center members
2. **Solution search** — the existence, degree, and type of search for alternative solutions to the problem(s)
3. **Data collection, analysis, and use** — the extensiveness, type, and function of attempts to collect and use information
4. **Information exchange** — the ways in which buying center members share information during the decision process
5. **Individual preference formation** — the existence, nature, and resistance to change of buying center members’ preferences
6. **Evaluation criteria** — how decision criteria are developed and used
7. **Final choice** — how when and why choices among alternative products are made.

Thus, each theory or model of organizational decision making has predictions for buying center member behavior in each of the seven facets. The following discussion of these behaviors is adapted from Dean (1986) for the present business marketing context. According to the rational model (Allison, 1971; Kepner & Tregoe, 1965), buying center members would be expected to develop comprehensive problem definitions, to conduct an exhaustive information search, develop a priori evaluation criteria, and to exchange information in an unbiased manner. Individual preferences and final buying center choice should reflect the alternative that offers the maximum benefit to the organization.

Under the bounded rationality model (Cyert & March, 1963; Kepner & Tregoe, 1965), buying center members simplify the problem definition, search is sequential and limited to familiar areas, and information exchange is biased by individual preferences. Preferences originate from either personal or departmental sub-goals for each buying center member. Evaluation of alternatives follows a conjunctive decision rule, where criteria are expressed in terms of cutoff levels. Choice depends on which alternative first exceeds the minimum cutoff levels of the evaluative criteria.

The political model (Pettigrew, 1973; Pfeffer, 1981) proposes that buying center members will compete for decision outcomes to satisfy personal and/or departmental...
interests. Preferences are based on these interests and formed early in the decision process. Problem definition, search, data collection, and evaluation criteria are weapons used to tilt the decision outcome in one’s favor. Choice is a function of the relative power of buying center members.

Finally, the garbage can model (Cohen et al., 1972) suggests that decisions are analogous to garbage cans into which problems, solutions, choice opportunities, and buying center members are dumped. Problem definitions are variable, changing as new problems or people are attached to choice opportunities. Data are often collected and not used. Preferences are unclear and may have little impact on choice. Evaluation criteria are discovered during and after the process, and choices are mostly made when problems are either not noticed or are attached to other choices.

Given the propositions of each model across the seven decision phases, a prediction matrix can be constructed. Rather than have a general statement for each model and decision phase, operational items may be developed to make the data judging task clear. Such is the case for buying copiers; two operational items for each decision phase were developed. The resulting 56-cell table (2 statements × 7 phases × 4 models) contains the predictions that a theory is either confirmed (Y), partially confirmed (P), or not confirmed (N). Table 1 shows this prediction matrix.

Collection of Case Data

The researcher must carefully design data collection forms in order to avoid including items that favor one of competing theories described in alternative predictive matrices. Alternatively, to insure that the data have a high degree of nomological validity (i.e., empirical pattern of findings fits theoretical pattern), the research might incorporate alternative questions that favor each theory (e.g., several different scenarios illustrating alternative theories could be evaluated by the respondent to see which best matches his/her “reality”). The first approach — to achieve bias reduction in questioning — benefits by having independent experts check several revisions of the open and closed-end questionnaire. The same checking procedure may be used for the second approach to insure that theory biases are built into the scenarios accurately.

Possibly, because DFA and the idea of formulating competing prediction matrices are relatively new methods in case study research, the literature provides scan direction to issue of bias favoring one theory over competing theories (Wilson & Woodside, 1999). To allow for objectivity and verifiability in data collection and analysis, the actual survey forms used to collect data for DFA should be available for independent examination. In Wilson and Wilson’s study, the set of questions is available in the original article and is not included here for the sake of brevity (Wilson & Wilson, 1988, p. 590).

Wilson and Wilson collected data from members of four buying centers regarding office copier decisions in different departments across their university. Buying centers typically consisted of two, and sometimes three, persons. In-depth interviews were
Table 1: Predictions of four models on decision process activities in organizational behavior.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision phase and operating mechanism</th>
<th>Rational model</th>
<th>Bounded rationality model</th>
<th>Political model</th>
<th>Garbage can model</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Problem definition</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do the participants view the problem in the same way?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does the problem definition represent the goals of the organization?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Search for alternative solutions</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is search limited to a few familiar alternatives?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are potential solutions considered simultaneously and compared with one another?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Data collection, analysis, and use</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is information collected so that an optimal decision can be made?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is control over data collection and analysis used as a source of power?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Information exchange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is information biased so as to conform to the preference (position) of the person transforming it?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is information exchange negatively affected by people entering and leaving the decision process and changing their focus of attention?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Individual preferences</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do preferences change as problems become attached to or detached from the decision?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are individual preferences a function of personal goals and limited information about the alternative?</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Evaluation criteria tradeoffs</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Are criteria for a solution agreed on a priori?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Do tradeoffs across solution criteria occur?</td>
<td>Y</td>
<td>N</td>
<td>P</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
conducted by the first author after the supplier choice decision had been made. In addition, documents pertaining to each decision (i.e., purchase requests for quotes, supplier quotes, and purchase orders) were analyzed.

The interviews were semi-structured; similar questions were asked of each respondent, but questions were open-ended. The questions were across broad areas of decision activities and as such, the interviewer could ask for details on relevant points. In other words, the question order and probes did not follow exactly the same route for all interviews because of elaborations by respondents when answering. The interview format and questions were not designed to operationalize any one theory. The transcripts and archival material were then reviewed by three trained judges (the two authors plus an ABD graduate student in business marketing) to note the extent to which tenets of the four models were supported by the data.

The use of one interviewer only in the collection of case data may increase the possibility of interviewer bias. Several strategies are possible to reduce such bias. First, in some cases two interviewers working alone, and sometimes as a team, can conduct multiple interviews in the same case study and then, the two or more interviewers can compare their mental and written notes. Second, additional data from written documents and direct observations can be collected to verify or disconfirm the reported reality presented by respondents to any one interviewer. Third, a trusted informant within the organization may act as a “consultant.” Interview notes may be reviewed by the consulting informant to verify facts and eliminate apparent paradoxes.

A criticism often leveled at studies using case data is that generalization is difficult, if not impossible. Yin (1994) countered this argument by stating that each case should be considered a study within itself — just like an experiment. Thus, the buying decision data are viewed as an initial case study with three replications. Yin makes the point that multiple cases should not be considered as a “sample” and external validity issues are not so problematic as some logical positivists might argue.

Critics typically state that single cases offer a poor basis for generalizing. However, such critics are implicitly contrasting the situation to survey research, in
which a “sample” (if selected correctly) readily generalizes to a larger universe. This analogy to samples and universes is incorrect when dealing with case studies. This is because survey research relies on statistical generalization from a sample to a population, whereas case studies (as with experiments) rely on analytic generalization. In analytic generalization, the investigator is striving to generalize a particular set of results to some broader theory (Yin, 1994).

**Inter-Judge Reliability**

An examination of the level of agreement among the three judges offers information about the reliability of the findings. Based on their review of the interview transcripts and archival material, a judge could say that a theory is confirmed (Y), partially confirmed (P), or not confirmed (N). Four levels of agreement exist for the three judges — perfect (YYY, PPP, NNN), near perfect (YYP, YPP, NNP, NPP), some (YYN, YNN), or none (YPN). This scheme is adapted exactly from Dean (1986).

The three judges did display a pattern of agreement greater than one would expect by chance. Each judge made 56 evaluations (7 phases × 2 statements each × 4 cases); see the prediction matrix in Table 1. Judges were in perfect agreement for 55 percent of the evaluations and nearly perfect agreement for 23 percent. Thus, near perfect to perfect agreement occurred for 78 percent of the evaluations. Judges were in some agreement for 20 percent of the evaluations and in total disagreement in only 2 percent of the evaluations. By chance, the distribution would be 11 percent total agreement, 44 percent nearly perfect, 22 percent some agreement, and 22 percent no agreement. By a chi-square test, these distributions of agreement levels are significantly different ($\chi^2 = 103.77$, 3 DF, $p<0.001$).

**Theory Comparison by “Box-Scores”**

For brevity, results from one buying center case are presented along with a summary of the results across the four cases. These abbreviated findings serve the present purpose of illustrating applications of DFA; the complete set of tables is available (Wilson & Wilson, 1988). Table 2 provides details about one copier buying decision case. For Judge A, 8 evaluations of a possible 14 confirmed the predictions of the rational model of organizational decision making. In other words, for the rational model there were eight hits and six misses; a 57 percent hit rate. Raw scores for the rows in Table 2 may not sum to the same total because multiple hits were possible given overlapping aspects of the theories, as indicated in the prediction matrix.

Looking down the column for the rational model, 17 evaluations of 42 possible (3 × 14) confirmed the predictions of the rational model. That is, the rational model had 17 hits and 25 misses, a 40 percent hit rate. Similarly, the bounded rationality model had a 62 percent hit rate while the political and garbage can models had
31 percent hits, respectively. On an absolute basis, the bounded rationality model had more predictions supported by the case data than the other decision-making models.

Even though care was taken by Wilson and Wilson to insure that the survey questions did not favor one theory over others, a possibility exists that respondents wanted to appear rational to the interviewer. This view supports, in part, an explanation of findings in support of the bounded rationality model. Consequently, consider using alternative survey methods, such as scenario problem-solving by respondents and the forced-metaphor elicitation technique (FMET; see Chapter 8), to examine for the contextual possibilities for applications of competing theories.

To evaluate this result statistically, a chi-square test is used to test whether there is a significant difference between the observed distribution of “hits” (i.e., confirmed predictions) and the distribution one would expect by chance. Use of the chi-square test in this manner is appropriate since we are examining the extent to which two distributions (observed and expected) are different from each other (Siegel, 1956).

Since the a priori assumption is that any model may be as good as another, all four models have an equal chance (25 percent) of having their predictions confirmed. The absolute number of confirmed predictions across the models in this case is 69. The expected distribution would be $69/4 = 17.25$ hits per cell. The chi-square statistic is significant at $p < 0.10$ which indicates that the two distributions are significantly different and a systematic pattern occurs in the data. The pattern is that the bounded rationality model has more of its predictions confirmed compared to the other models (see Table 2).

When the matches to the predictions are considered as proportions, a $z$-test can be used to evaluate the results. The highest proportion of matches is for the bounded rationality model (0.61) which is significantly larger than that for the rational model (0.40); $z = 2.01$, $p < 0.05$. It follows that the number of matches for the bounded rationality model are also significantly greater than the political model and garbage can model.

Table 2 presents a meta-analytic summary of the results across all cases. Again, a chi-square test indicates that the distribution of matches to the prediction matrix is significantly different from that expected by chance ($\chi^2 = 15.9$, 3 DF, $p < 0.01$). Specifically, the bounded rationality model tends to have more predictions confirmed

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational decision-making model</th>
<th>Rational</th>
<th>Bounded rationality</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Garbage can</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Judge A</td>
<td>8 (0.57)</td>
<td>8 (0.57)</td>
<td>2 (0.14)</td>
<td>4 (0.29)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge B</td>
<td>2 (0.14)</td>
<td>9 (0.64)</td>
<td>8 (0.57)</td>
<td>3 (0.21)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Judge C</td>
<td>7 (0.50)</td>
<td>9 (0.64)</td>
<td>3 (0.21)</td>
<td>6 (0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total observed matches</td>
<td>17 (0.40)</td>
<td>26 (0.62)</td>
<td>13 (0.31)</td>
<td>13 (0.31)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expected matches</td>
<td>17.25</td>
<td>17.25</td>
<td>17.25</td>
<td>17.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: $\chi^2 = 6.53$, 3 DF, $p = 0.10$. Numbers in parentheses are percentages of matches (hits).
from the case data compared to the other models of decision making. The proportion of matches for the bounded rationality model is also significantly greater than the proportion of matches for the political or garbage can models ($z = 2.93$, $p < 0.05$).

**Theory Comparison Conclusions**

As Figure 1 shows, the final step in DFA is to assess the findings in light of the existing knowledge base. Questions to ask at this point might be “how do our results compare to those of other studies?” and “how do our results confirm or disconfirm rival theories?”

In the example, the bounded rationality model has the greatest number of predictions confirmed by the case data compared with rival models. This conclusion supports Dean’s contention that tenets of one theory may dominate while rival theories may receive less support (Dean, 1986). In the context of a modified rebuy decision (Robinson, Farris, & Wind, 1967), a post-hoc look at the findings indicates that the bounded rationality model seems to provide the best framework for understanding organizational decision making. This makes intuitive sense given that modified rebuy decisions are characterized by limited problem-solving behavior with buying center members drawing on past buying experiences. In other contexts, the results might be different. The results of this comparative theory test helps to clarify the context where one theory might apply to a greater degree than others, but more research on other contexts is necessary before more definitive conclusions can be made.

For example, if the decision had been for new technology with little information available (a typical new task situation), the political model may have had more predictions confirmed since buying center members might be motivated to “protect their turf” (Pettigrew, 1975).

Similarly, the rational model may have had more predictions confirmed in a new task situation in order to reduce financial risk of making a high-dollar purchase. Thus, decision context is proposed as strong moderator on the applicability of a particular decision theory within a specific case study.

Table 3: Meta-analysis across all cases: observed matches to predictions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Organizational decision-making model</th>
<th>Rational</th>
<th>Bounded rationality</th>
<th>Political</th>
<th>Garbage can</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Case #1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #2</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #3</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case #4</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total observed matches</td>
<td>71 (0.42)</td>
<td>99 (0.59)</td>
<td>51 (0.30)</td>
<td>72 (0.43)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total expected matches</td>
<td>73.25</td>
<td>73.25</td>
<td>73.25</td>
<td>73.25</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: $\chi^2 = 15.9$, 3 DF, $p = 0.01$. Numbers in parentheses are the percentage matches (hits).*
The following view may be best: decision-making realities may reflect bits and pieces of competing theories. No one theory may dominate. The issue becomes one of learning the contingencies that generate the occurrence of support for portions of each theory. Next, we illustrate of the use of DFA for the purposes of theory development in the area of relationship marketing.

**Using DFA for Theory Development: Manufacturer–Distributor Relationships**

While there is a wealth of empirical studies on the topic of relationship marketing, there are no established “middle-range” theories (Merton, 1957); thus, this field is ripe for the application of DFA. Wilson and Vlosky (1997) and Fontenot and Wilson (1997) conducted a large-scale case research project to gain deep understanding about partnering relationships between firms as opposed to typical (transactional and often adversarial) relationships. The context of their work is in the area of manufacturer and distributor relationships in the wood products industry. The motivation for this work was to identify the activities that tend to be associated with the more beneficial (“win–win”) partnering relationships as opposed to short-term adversarial (“win–lose”) relationships. This section presents a brief review of their work to illustrate a theory-building application of DFA.

**Grounding in the Extant Literature**

Webster (1992) proposes that business marketing relationships span a continuum from discrete transactions to legal partnerships (vertical integration). In between, these two endpoints are relationships with varying degrees of cooperation, trust, and dependence. Discrete transaction relationships, historically the most common form in the U.S. marketplace, are usually characterized as adversarial with both the buyer and seller attempting to achieve the best economic position at the expense of the other. As one moves toward the opposite end of Webster’s continuum, relationships are characterized as being more “partner-oriented” with firms exhibiting higher degrees of cooperation, trust, commitment, and communication (Webster, 1992).

Four models in the literature (Anderson & Narus, 1990; Dwyer, Schurr, & Sejo, 1987; Mohr & Spekman, 1994; Morgan & Hunt, 1994) offer a good base for developing a prediction matrix. These studies include some overlapping constructs (e.g., trust, functional conflict, communication) but also have their own unique constructs and hypotheses. From these four studies, we get an idea of the most often studied features of business-to-business relationships, and based on the findings, we can make predictions accordingly.
The Prediction Matrix

Table 4 is the prediction matrix for the relationship marketing study. Table 4 includes predictions (most in the form of “yes” or “no” answers to questions in the matrix) for 11 relationship activities. Predictions are for both partnering and typical relationships so that a contrast between these two forms can be observed. The 11 relationship activities (i.e., joint programs, pricing, logistics) were distilled from the literature, and the indicators shown in Table 4 are the operating mechanisms used during the personal interview. These statements are similar to those used in our previous example (see Table 1). Operating mechanisms in a prediction matrix are helpful because they help the interviewer and respondent to focus on issues rather than talk in generalities.

Data Collection

Members of research teams interviewed key informant respondents at distributor organizations about activities with partnering manufacturers and typical manufacturing principals. A standard list of questions was provided to each team for conducting semi-structured interviews and again, Dean’s (1986) methodology was followed (Wilson & Vlosky, 1997). Specifically, questions were asked about the activities firms engage in (or don’t engage in) with what the respondent considers a “partnering” supplier and a “typical” supplier. Wilson and Vlosky’s (1997) complete questionnaire is included in their article, and while questions may seem to require simple “yes” or “no” responses from participants, the research teams were instructed to use the specific questions to get respondents talking about their business relationships. Interviewers were expected to, and did, use their own probes with respondents in order to get fine detail and nuance in order to write up their final cases.

The research teams were used since informants were spread across the United States and Canada. Team members were identified as being active academic researchers in either marketing or wood science and in the general geographic area of the potential distributor respondents.

After conducting the interviews, team members worked to transcribe their field notes and write cases on the companies they studied. Based on the complete set of field notes, the team members made judgments to complete the prediction matrix for their particular case. While most teams interviewed only one distributor, some (e.g., Paun, 1997), compile data from multiple cases. The cases written by the research teams have additional in-depth nuance on manufacturer–distributor relationships that is beyond the scope of reporting for this chapter. Interested readers may consult the May 1997 issue of *Journal of Business Research* to view the cases in their entirety.

Degrees-of-Freedom Analysis Results

Table 5 contains the DFA results for the partnering suppliers to the wood products distributor informants. For most cells of the prediction matrix, 10 cases could be
Table 4: A prediction matrix of relationship activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship activity</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Partnering supplier</th>
<th>Typical/average supplier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Development of new product or service programs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint programs to market manufacturers’ products?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement in product deletion decisions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>Offer trade discounts?</td>
<td>More generous than normal</td>
<td>Industry norm only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special pricing problems?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim policy?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>Industry norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment terms?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>Industry norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>Typical shipment size?</td>
<td>LTL accommodated</td>
<td>Full truck load required</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>JIT Inventory management?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Method of transportation</td>
<td>Truck or other options</td>
<td>Truck only</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOB mill or FOB delivered?</td>
<td>FOB mill</td>
<td>FOB delivered</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealer promotion</td>
<td>Supplier featured in promotional literature?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing of customer lists with supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales volume incentives offered by supplier?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>Industry norm</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Co-op advertising?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales force activities</td>
<td>Joint sales training?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Little to none</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint sales calls to distributors customers?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint performance reviews of suppliers’ sales force?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint performance reviews of distributors sales force?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint customer lead development for distributor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing planning</td>
<td>Conduct joint marketing planning with supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier request a written marketing plan?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4: (Continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship activity</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Partnering supplier</th>
<th>Typical/average supplier</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Performance reviews</td>
<td>Conduct annual performance reviews with the supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Does supplier configure shipments to your specs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier use/offer UPC bar coding?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier manufacture products to your specs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier offer special packaging services?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Does distributor visit supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier visit distributor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek out supplier at trade shows or association meetings?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>Does supplier have access to distributor’s computer files</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does distributor have access to supplier’s computer files</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face communication frequency</td>
<td>Multiple times per week</td>
<td>Less than once per week</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone communication frequency</td>
<td>Multiple times per day</td>
<td>Once per day or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electronic communication frequency</td>
<td>Multiple times per day</td>
<td>Once per day or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which department mostly communicates with supplier?</td>
<td>Multiple departments</td>
<td>Purchasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other departments that communicate with supplier?</td>
<td>Multiple departments</td>
<td>Senior management</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of EDI between supplier and distributor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 5: Box-score results for partnering supplier relationships.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Relationship activity</th>
<th>Indicator</th>
<th>Prediction hits (%)</th>
<th>Number of cases</th>
<th>Significance*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Programs</td>
<td>Development of new product or service programs?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint programs to market principal’s products?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Involvement in product deletion decisions?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pricing</td>
<td>Offer trade discounts?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special pricing problems?</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Claim policy?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment terms?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Logistics</td>
<td>JIT inventory management?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>FOB mill or FOB delivered?</td>
<td>FOB Mill</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dealer promotion</td>
<td>Supplier featured in promotional literature?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sharing of customer lists with supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sales volume incentives offered by supplier?</td>
<td>Better than industry norm</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>Co-op advertising?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales force activities</td>
<td>Joint sales training?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint sales calls to distributors customers?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint performance reviews of suppliers sales force?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint performance reviews of distributors sales force?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joint customer lead development for distributor?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing planning</td>
<td>Conduct joint marketing planning with supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier request a written marketing plan?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance reviews</td>
<td>Conduct annual performance reviews with the supplier?</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship activity</td>
<td>Indicator</td>
<td>Prediction hits (%)</td>
<td>Number of cases</td>
<td>Significance*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------</td>
<td>---------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---------------------</td>
<td>----------------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>Does supplier configure shipments to your specs? Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier use/offer UPC bar coding? Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier manufacture products to your specs? Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier offer special packaging services? Yes</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communication</td>
<td>Does distributor visit supplier? Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does supplier visit distributor? Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Seek out supplier at tradeshows or association meetings? Yes</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information exchange</td>
<td>Does supplier have access to distributor’s computer files Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Does distributor have access to supplier’s computer files Yes</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Face-to-face communication frequency Multiple times per week</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Telephone communication frequency Multiple times per day</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>+ +</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Electronic communication frequency Multiple times per day</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Which department mostly communicates with supplier? Multiple departments</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other departments that communicate with supplier? Multiple departments</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Use of EDI between supplier and distributor? Yes</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>–</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The test of statistical significance is a sign test (Siegel, 1956) by using the following indicators: 11, the partnering relationship prediction is supported both directionally and statistically ($P$, 0.05); 1, the partnering relationship prediction is supported directionally; 2, the partnering relationship prediction is not supported directionally; 22, the partnering relationship opposite to that predicted is supported statistically ($P$, 0.05). **No statistical testing inferences are made in these cells due to the small number of cases. The weighted average hit rate of predictions to observations is 53 percent; that is, our predictions for partnering relationship activities are confirmed approximately half the time. By a z-test, this proportion of hits to misses is not significant.
evaluated. In some cases, though, particular questions did not apply to the distributor respondent; thus, the number of observations ranges between 5 and 10 cases. From Table 5, the specific activities present for partnering firms (e.g., joint marketing programs, trade discounts, joint sales force performance reviews, specially configured shipments, etc.) can be observed.

Wilson and Vlosky use a combination of statistical tests used to evaluate the compiled results of prediction matrices completed by the research teams. First, a sign test (Siegel, 1956) is done for each row/prediction. “The sign test gets its name from the fact that it uses plus and minus signs [or ‘yes’ ‘no’ responses] ... as its data” (Siegel, 1956). We can evaluate each row of the prediction matrix by assessing the number of cases where the partnering prediction is confirmed (yes) or not confirmed (no). The resulting ratio can be evaluated in terms of an associated $p$-level for a binomial test (Siegel, 1956, pp. 68–75 and Table D, p. 250).

In Table 5, 7 of 10 cases, partnering suppliers participate in development of product/service programs. While this result is in the expected direction as Wilson and Vlosky propose, $p = 0.17$ (from Table D in Siegel); thus, the finding is only marginally significant, at best. Table 5 provides a note to this point. For the next row of the prediction matrix, 8 of 10 firms reported they did participate in joint programs to market the partnering manufacturer’s products. This result is statistically significant ($p < 0.05$) and is so noted in the explanation at the bottom of Table 5. Results for the remaining rows are interpreted similarly.

To evaluate the results over the entire table, a weighted average of the proportion of matches to the prediction matrix is calculated (53 percent). A $z$-test is used to estimate whether this proportion is not significantly different from chance (50 percent). The computational formula for this test is available in Bruning and Kintz (1968). The difference between 53 and 50 percent is not statistically significant for the table as a whole.

Even so, gaining interesting insights about partnering behavior follow from examining the rows of Table 5. In so doing, a post-hoc profile of partnering relationship activities emerges. For example, in the context of one specific industry (wood products), partnering activities with manufacturing principals are manifested in terms of joint marketing programs, superior pricing arrangements, cooperation between the sales forces, and joint planning activities, to name a few. Relatively, little partnering activity occur between manufacturers and distributors in more “sensitive” areas such as information exchange (e.g., use of EDI and having computerized access to information in the partner’s organization).

Such detailed insights allow for industry specific refinements in thinking about business-to-business relationships. Wilson and Vlosky’s findings corroborate work of earlier studies. For example, in the wood products industry, manufacturers and distributors still have some progress to make in terms of investments in technology before partnering activity in communication will occur. Vlosky (1995) notes that the industry is fraught with distrust between firms; this would contribute to an unwillingness to share information and communicate freely.

In this narrow industry example, several studies have been conducted as initial explorations (Vlosky, 1995; Vlosky & Wilson, 1994); subsequent corroboration of
such findings in Wilson and Vlosky (1997) provides an initial step in the inductive theory building process for a research area (Eisenhardt, 1989).

The next step in the research program of Wilson and Vlosky would be to test their posterior (i.e., post-hoc) profile of partnering relationship activities for additional verification. The partnering activity statements/predictions in the posterior profile (Dean, 1986) would become new hypotheses for an additional study that may use DFA or other analysis techniques, as necessary.

DFA as a Research Tool

As evident from the two examples of DFA in this chapter, the technique has a lot to offer to researchers in business marketing. Many phenomena in this field are very complex and a case methodology is needed to uncover and confirm nuances of organizational and/or individual behavior. Case studies are also more feasible logistically in terms of data collection, compared with experiments or even surveys, given the time demands on respondents in the business-to-business context. With multiple case observations, the researcher can use DFA to meta-analyze his/her data for purposes of theory building, theory comparison, or theory testing.

A major advantage of DFA is its flexibility. Data from one case or many cases may be used. While case research methodologists maintain that studies with \( n = 1 \) can be perfectly valid in terms of analytical generalization, researchers need multiple data points for any sort of “statistical” generalization. However, multiple cases in a DFA should not be considered as data points/observations in a sample, but separate replications in the same way that multiple experiments about a common phenomenon are considered.

DFA is flexible in how results are evaluated. One or several judges may evaluate the data to tally the theory box-score results. When multiple judges are used, inter-judge reliability computations offer additional evidence of the reliability of the evaluations and the validity of this approach.

The purpose of the researcher’s study (theory building or theory comparison) is a third dimension on which DFA demonstrates flexibility. In theory building, disparate findings from studies in the literature can be explored, propositions can be formulated and assessed, and the developing theory can be refined through post-hoc examination of DFA findings. On the theory comparison side, Campbell (1975) and Sternthal et al. (1987) both noted the need for considering rival explanations against each other to note which theory offers a better explanation for phenomena. DFA is a way to conduct such comparative theory tests.

Research Limitation Considerations

In these examples of studies employing DFA, note several limitations to avoid where possible. For example, in Wilson and Wilson (1988), respondents were not contacted for a follow-up review of the decision that the interviewer had recorded.
Thus, replication of this research is needed to determine if the results obtained are stable. This correction was made in case data collection as reported in Wilson and Vlosky (1997); in writing the case reports, researchers often had multiple visits with respondents to verify and clarify information obtained at earlier visits. In addition, the case data analyzed by Wilson and Vlosky were collected in a semi-structured depth interview, as described earlier. Case writers were asked post-hoc to complete the prediction matrix based on the information gathered from wood products distributors. In other words, the case writers did not have the prediction matrix until all data had been gathered in order to minimize data contamination and theory confirmation bias.

As this tutorial on DFA notes, strategies to reduce the potential for bias in data collection should be given consideration by researchers planning to use this technique. Wilson and Wilson (1988) employ both personal interviews and document analysis in an effort to achieve triangulation. However, assurances about data reliability and validity would be increased if post-hoc interviews had been done or by employing some of the other strategies mentioned earlier (use interview teams, present respondents with alternative decision scenarios, use a “consultant” respondent for verification).

Similarly, more data integrity checks would benefit Wilson and Vlosky’s (1997) work since multiple interviews were the only source of data. However, in their defense, most of the cases were written by teams of academic professionals who have a relatively high degree of knowledge about and experience with validity issues. We would have less confidence in their conclusions if a “student worker” or other novice individual had been employed to collect the data. The bottom line, though, is that more formal controls on data collection (as suggested earlier) would only improve DFA studies and should be given serious consideration.

**Conclusion**

The contribution of this chapter is to illustrate and advocate the use of DFA in business marketing research. Detailed examples (Wilson & Vlosky, 1997; Wilson & Wilson, 1988) are presented as a tutorial to illustrate the technique in theory comparison and theory building applications. This explication of the technique is important because although the approach was originally described by Campbell (1975), he never, in any of his writings, provided a field study application of the method. Similarly, other case methodologists (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Yin, 1994) mention DFA briefly but provide no examples.

Much potential exists for DFA in business market research. For example, a DFA examination of the major paradigms used to frame relationship marketing studies would be interesting. Research in relationship marketing has been grounded in overarching, global paradigms such as exchange theory, transaction cost analysis, game theory, and organizational governance theory. When are these models applicable and in which contexts in relationship marketing? By developing a prediction matrix from these paradigms, theory comparison studies (similar to those this chapter describes) are possible.
Chapter 13

Applying the Long Interview
in Case Study Research

Synopsis

The long interview is an intensive questioning of informants selected for their special knowledge, experiences and insights (or ignorance) of the topic under study. The objectives of the long interview include learning the thinking, feeling, and doing processes of the informants, including an understanding of the informants' worldviews of the topic under study in their own language. The chapter compares the strengths and weaknesses of the long interview to other primary data collection methods. The chapter describes a research application of the long interview in integrated marketing. The study was designed to (a) learn about the rich complexities in the lives of household gardeners buying and using seeds plants after responding to direct marketing appeals and (b) resolve two conflicting “theories-in-use” of how and why different customer types purchase products. These competing theories were proposed by different executives in the firm sponsoring the study. The development and critical testing of competing theories-in-use are described. This chapter reports a study to learn the behavior of five customer types. The results include thick descriptions of the processes of buying and using seeds and plants purchased through direct marketing offers and store visits.

Introduction

The long interview is a qualitative research method — not to survey the lives of respondents — but to mine them (Cox, 1967; McCracken, 1988). The long interview has been reviewed and used extensively in research on buyer behavior. The purpose here is to describe its features and usefulness for collecting data about key informants; the chapter includes an application in the field of integrated marketing.

This chapter is co-authored with Elizabeth Wilson, Suffolk University, Boston.
“Key informants” are persons with special knowledge or are members of a specific sub-population of immense interest to the researcher or strategist (for example, extremely frequent casino visitors (Perfetto & Woodside, 2009) or drivers who commit road rage nearly every week of the year (Woodside, 2008c). Thus, the long interview is a method that selects informants who are representative of unique sub-populations using pre-qualification selection routines and not by random selection from a general population.

Chapter 13 compares the feature characteristics of the long interview versus other primary data collection methods. Second, the chapter presents a brief literature review of long interview applications in research in marketing. Third, the chapter describes details of McCracken’s (1988) long interview paradigm within the context of a study of an integrated marketing program. From applying the paradigm, theoretical propositions are developed that have important strategic implications for an integrated marketing firm. Next, Chapter 13 describes details of the research method, and fifth, the findings are discussed. Finally, the chapter offers suggestions for applying the long interview in studying the lives of key informants for testing theories-in use and improving management and marketing strategies.

**Features of the Long Interview Method**

The features typical of long interviews include: (a) a two- to six-hour, face-to-face meeting with the interviewer and respondent; (b) interviewing the respondent in his or her life space, that is, the environment related to the topic under study; (c) asking open-ended, semi-structured questions with deeper exploration of unexpected topics related to the study as opportunities occur; (d) tape recording of responses (when not disruptive) during the interview; (e) verification of responses by triangulation of research methods (e.g., comparing answers with data from direct observation and documents); and (f) developing thick descriptions of individual cases (individual customers’ buying and using behaviors). A detailed description and brief research examples of the long interview method are provided by McCracken (1987, 1988).

The long interview is held in the respondent’s product/service buying or using environment. Table 1 summarizes comparisons of strengths and weaknesses of the long interview with four other primary research methods. The feature profiles of the five research methods in Table 1 were developed from several sources on research designs; see Churchill (1991), Dillman (1978), and Miller (1991).

In Table 1, the profile of strengths and weaknesses for the long interview is most similar to the profile for participant observation. Participant observation in consumer behavior studies includes direct viewing of a customer’s buying and/or using of products and services by an observer. Usually these studies include an extended period of observation, ranging from several days to several months (Arnould & Price, 1993; Celsi, Rose, & Leigh, 1993). In this section, we provide a brief commentary on the strengths and weaknesses listed in Table 1 that are especially relevant to the long interview as applied to direct marketing.
Verifying Responses

The ability to verify respondents’ answers (the first feature in Table 1) is a strength of the long interview. Answers may be verified by one or more of several potential sources: documents offered by the respondent in describing his or her responses, direct observation of products purchased and usage environments, confirmation by other persons in the household on key events, and quantities and varieties of purchases and prices paid. Some ability to verify responses to mail and telephone surveys is supplied by partial knowledge of the respondents’ buying histories (based on records in a direct marketer’s customer database), and/or by repeating key questions on two occasions during the interview schedule.

Table 1: Feature comparisons of primary data collection methods.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Feature</th>
<th>Mail survey</th>
<th>Telephone interview</th>
<th>Mail intercept</th>
<th>Long interview</th>
<th>Participant observation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to verify responses</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Response Rate</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Slow</td>
<td>Lowest</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Ability to probe, learn response why responses</td>
<td>Low-moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Cost per completed interview</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Ability to describe purchase and use (what, when, who, how, where)</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Possibility of interviewer bias</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Fast</td>
<td>Moderate</td>
<td>Low</td>
<td>Low</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Speed in completing study</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Capability of auto-driving</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very Slow</td>
<td>High</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Ability to generalize results to a population</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Very High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Ability to generalize results to a theory-in-use</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Very Slow</td>
<td>Very High</td>
<td>Very Low</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Response Rates

Very high cooperation–completion rates may be expected for long interview studies compared to mail or telephone surveys. The long interview usually includes a three-step contact method: (a) initial letter describing the purpose of the study (and often an offer of payment for participating); (b) a telephone call to arrange an appointment; and (c) the interview. Four to five telephone attempts are usually made to reach each subject sampled before replacing a non-response with an alternative subject. The perceived importance of the study by the subject (because the interviewer requests an on site interview) and the offer of a substantial payment (e.g., $30) for completing the survey, are two explanations for the high response rates.

Ability to Learn Reason Why Responses

The use of probing questions to learn deeper and deeper reasons why specific products and brands are purchased, and why certain usage behaviors are performed, is a key strength of the long interview compared to the broad but relatively shallow mail and telephone approaches. The reasons for direct buying versus other forms of buying, as well as the reasons for buying from one direct marketer instead of another, are more likely to be uncovered using the long interview.

Cost per Completed Interview

The long interview approach is relatively more expensive than mail or telephone surveys. The costs per completed interview may range from 10 to 20 times higher than for a returned mail survey. Consequently, the number of long interviews completed may be expected to be 10 to 20 times smaller for the long interview than for a mail survey.

McCracken (1988, p. 37) emphasizes that informants selected for long interviews “are not a sample,” and that their selection should not be governed by sampling rules. The numbers selected for long interviews are usually four-to-eight informants for each sub-population type of research interest; for example, first-time customers buying two or more product varieties from firm X may represent one customer type.

Ability to Describe Purchase and Use

In Table 1, all five research data collection methods are described as moderate-high in ability to collect purchase and use descriptions. Woodside and Soni (1991) provide a detailed example of collecting such information in a direct marketing research study using a mail survey and empirical positivistic hypotheses testing.
Possibility of Interviewer Bias

An important strength of mail surveys is the absence of interviewer bias; such bias includes tone of voice, speed of asking questions, interruptions made, and many others (e.g., for long interviews and mall intercepts, facial expressions, body mannerisms, dress, and demographic characteristics).

Speed in Completing the Study

The long interview is a rather time-consuming method compared to the telephone and mall intercept methods. Contact time, travel time, interviewing time, and answering open-ended responses usually result in four to six interviews per day, the upper limit of a long interviewer’s typical day in the field. For each completed interview, data interpretation, classification, process analyses, and computer analyses (see Fielding & Lee, 1991) of long interview data can require 5 to 10 times the amount of time needed to analyze of mail, telephone, and mall intercept survey data.

Capability of Auto-Driving

“Auto-driving” means asking the respondent to comment on photographs, a video, or some other stimulus directly relevant to the respondent; he or she is then asked to provide an account of what is seen in these visuals, and whether or not the depiction relates to him or her (and, if so, in what ways). The long interview is suited particularly to showing respondents competing catalogs (some of which they are known to have used) and asking them to comment on, and compare, the catalogs. Similarly, respondents may be shown competing products available through direct marketers and be asked to comment on their awareness and use of each product, and to compare the strengths and weaknesses of each.

Ability to Generalize Results to a Population

Because of low numbers of completed interviews and the purposive selection of households for study, the long interview research method is poorly suited for generalizing results to a population. Mail and telephone surveys often include drawing large sample sizes selected randomly that enable the researcher to generalize results to a known population.

Ability to Generalize Results to a Theory

Long interview reports of individual household buying and using behavior represent detailed case studies. Yin (1989, p. 47) pointed out that a rationale for single case
studies is substantiated when the case “represents a critical case in testing a well formulated theory.” A “critical test” (Carlsmith et al., 1976) can be made in case study research when the propositions of two or more competing theories are examined empirically, using the data from one or more cases. Such a critical testing involves “pattern matching” [also referred to as building-in degrees-of-freedom (Campbell, 1975)] of the propositional predictions made from each theory with the findings observed in one or more case studies. Rarely is one theory supported entirely and a second or third rejected entirely; however, the case data are likely to support one theory to a substantially greater extent than other theories.

Given that most direct marketers are able to specify how and why different customers buy their products and services, such specifics, described in detail, can serve as theories in-use in long interview data analysis. Thus, the predicted answers and theoretical buying profiles of different customer types (suggested by direct marketers) can be compared to the actual answers provided by customers fitting different customer typologies.

In many instances, different senior and middle managers in the same direct marketing firm propose very different theories-in-use for the behavior and explanations of a given customer type. Data from the long interview are used to resolve such differences. In the empirical example described later, different expectations regarding each proposition were offered by different managers. Two competing theories-in-use could be identified from the patterns of propositions advocated by different senior managers in the firm. We labeled these two theories in-use “Stay-the Course” and “New Wave” theories. Table 2 summarizes the propositions advocated by proponents of the respective theories. A later section describes alternative propositions taken on the ten issues.

In Table 2, the two patterns of responses to the ten issues illustrate building in degrees-of-freedom in case study research for generalizing case data to theory, that is, the tenth feature in Table 1. Examining the data from the long interviews to learn if the answers advocated by one theory are supported more often than the competing theory is an example of a critical test.

After reviewing related literature and describing the long interview method, we describe details of the long interview research method and the results of its application for 26 customers of direct merchants of gardening products (seeds, plants, equipment).

One of the five largest mail order gardening suppliers, Boone, Inc., agreed to work closely with us in sponsoring the study. The applied objective of the study was to learn rich descriptions of the thinking and feeling processes of each of five distinct customer groups: loyal customers, new customers, non-buying catalog requesters, buying once-only customers, and “divorced” customers. The principal objective of the study was to learn how the products and services of direct merchants in one industry (gardening products) fit into the lives of each customer segment.

1. Name disguised.
Table 2: Theory-in-use application.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Issue</th>
<th>Theory 1: Stay-the-Course</th>
<th>Theory 2: New Wave</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Customers with young children involve children in buying gardening products</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Our heavy-repeat customers prefer our products versus competitors’ products</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Former customers stop buying mainly because of competitors’ actions</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Substantial regional differences in purchasing exist</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Most customers follow planned buying strategies when using catalogs</td>
<td>Mostly Yes</td>
<td>Mostly No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Our customers prefer four-color photographs for all products shown in catalog</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Customers like the idea of buying a planned garden</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Some important requests of customers are concerned about buying gardening product from environmentally friendly firms</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Customers perceive differences among direct merchants by product/service guarantees</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Customers requesting our catalog and who do not buy from us are buying from competitor catalogs</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marketing and Consumer Literature Relating to the Long Interview Method

Tucker (1967) provides an early application of a long interview method in consumer behavior, including detailed case studies on the buying behavior of specific individuals and families. Tucker’s work represents an early reporting of thick descriptions of the complex relationships among cultural, sociological, psychological, and marketing variables involved in need creation, buying, and consuming of products and services. Tucker (1967, p. 134) offers two simple, yet profound, propositions for modeling consumer behavior:

**Proposition 1.** Someone goes through some process and acquires something with some effect.

**Proposition 2.** Someone uses something in some way with some effect.

In Tucker’s opinion, not enough reliable information is available for the construction of an operational theory about the four elements in these propositions: someone, process, something, and effect. The long interview is a research method suitable particularly to provide reliable information for examining Tucker’s propositions.
Woodside and Fleck (1979) demonstrate substantial differences in need recognition, buying, and consuming complexities in their study of two beer drinkers. Each beer drinker was interviewed for six-hours over three meetings. More micro-studies focusing on the thinking and decision processes of consumers who are actively touching and buying products have been reported by Alexis, Haines, and Simon (1968) and Bettman (1970, 1971b). This second body of work and a related study (Bettman & Zins, 1978) leads to a fully developed theory of consumer information processing and choice (Bettman, 1979a).

Visual research and auto-driving data collection methods are usually integral parts of long interviews (Heisley & Levy, 1991, p. 36). In one of the most insightful auto-driving studies, Taylor (1977) audio-taped the conversations of several real-life insurance salesperson–customer encounters. Later, in separate meetings, Taylor played the audiotapes to the two participants and asked them to explain their thinking processes while speaking and listening to the original encounters. Thus, detailed interpretations of the participants’ verbal exchanges at many points of the original encounters were collected from the participants themselves. Chapter 9 in the present book provides an in-depth discuss on the theory and research on conversations.

McCracken (1987) uses photographs showing different styles of interior design to stimulate provocative and useful data from respondents. Heisley and Levy (1991) also photographed and audio-taped three families as they prepared and ate their evening meal. Later, Heisley and Levy asked the respondents to look at the photographs and “tell me whatever you think about when you look at [these photographs].” Heisley and Lev emphasized that such auto-driving makes it possible for people to communicate about themselves more fully and more subtly and, perhaps, to represent themselves more fairly.

The Long Interview Research Method

McCracken (1988) offers a useful four-step method of inquiry for long interviews. Figure 1 summarizes the four steps. The present chapter describes an application of this method in a study of home gardeners who came in contact with direct merchants of gardening products and services.

Stage 1: Review of Analytic Categories

Stage 1 calls for a review of both the scholarly and applied literature related to the long interview and gardening behavior. Research questions central to this stage of research include: (a) What analytic categories of customer types might be expected in the field? (b) Have counterintuitive data and findings been reported related to the planned study?
From the scholarly marketing literature (McCarthy & Perreault, 1993), several analytic customer categories may be proposed as relevant for examining customers of direct merchants. For example, a direct merchant may group customers broadly: heavy-loyals (customers who buy almost every year with annual purchases in the top quartile of all buying customers); light-loyals; buying once only customers; customers requesting a catalog but not buying; divorced customers, those buying in several previous years but who have stopped buying in recent years; non-customers buying similar products from retail stores; non-customers with demographics and general life styles similar to loyal customers but not buying products from any sources.

Such analytic categories have been applied in large-sample, national survey studies in direct marketing research and, specifically, to direct response gardening customers (Woodside & Moore, 1983; Woodside & Soni, 1991). Such studies support the general proposition that the demographic and general life-style characteristics between groups of customers, who have been categorized by differences in purchasing behavior, are unique from one another. Such “backward” segmentation provides useful information about the different lives of heavy loyal versus divorced customers, for example.

Figure 1: Long qualitative interview: four-part method of inquiry applied to direct marketing research. Source: Developed from discussion in McCracken (1988, pp. 29–45).
Stage 2: Review of Cultural Categories and Interview Design

Cultural categorization of customers follows and blends with analytic categories. For designing the long interview survey form, cultural categorizing is asking how each analytic customer category might think and feel about each step in buying and consuming a product/service. In addition, descriptive questions of current and past buying and consuming behavior are included in developing the survey form. McCracken (1987, 1988) began his study on personal possessions by asking himself, “What do I own? How did I come to own it?”

A core issue in cultural categories is identifying responses of members of different customer analytic categories to specific marketing tactics. For example, how do customers of each category interpret the organization (format) of competing direct merchant catalogs? Which customer group, if any, prefers “planned gardens,” that is, a designed garden where the customer orders the design and an architectural plan and seeds are purchased? Which customer group, if any, is concerned with environmentally friendly products, catalogs, and packaging materials? Do such concerns affect their buying decisions, and if so, how are decisions affected?

One to three intuitive and counterintuitive propositions were developed related to each of these, as well as other, macro- and micro-issues. Examples of specific propositions will be discussed in the next section.

Generation of Research Propositions

Following Stages 1 and 2, several intuitive and counterintuitive propositions may be generated and considered. Different senior executives within the same direct marketing firm often advocate opposing “intuitive” propositions about the demographic and lifestyle characteristics of customers in different analytic segments, and about the buying behavior of different customer groups. Similarly, executives may have conflicting propositions (views) about the thinking and feeling processes of customers within specific customer segments. Resolving such conflicts is important because key elements of marketing strategy build on core propositions held to be valid.

Next, we offer a sample of 10 sets of such opposing intuitive propositions that were examined empirically in this study. Each specific proposition was advocated by one or more senior executives of Boone, Inc. Distinctive patterns in positions held by different senior managers occurred. For example, a manager who believed that families with young children involved the children in buying gardening products also proposed that former customers stopped buying because of competitors’ actions (Propositions 1 and 4 of the New Wave theory, see Table 2). These propositions are offered to illustrate the usefulness of the long interview format. Many other strategy issues of interest to Boone, too numerous to include here, were also examined.

1. Children and gardening. P1a: Customers include one or more of their young children in buying gardening products and in related gardening activities.
P1b: Customers do not include any of their young children in buying gardening products and in related gardening activities.

An understanding of opposing propositions will help resolve the following marketing strategy issue: Should Boone offer products designed for children to promote (position) gardening as a family activity?

2. Preferences of heavy-loyal customers. P2a: Our heavy loyal customers prefer our firm versus our leading competitor. P2b: Heavy-loyal customers do not have a preference for our firm versus our leading competitor.

Among gardeners buying from direct merchants, few differences in customer attitudes toward direct marketing firms have been found among heavy-loyal customers in national survey research studies (Woodside & Moore, 1983). However, senior management at Boone wanted more evidence on this issue. Should Boone be positioned as the direct merchant most preferred by its repeat customers for long periods of time (from parent to child to grandchild)?

3. Why do former customers quit buying? P3a: Former customers stopped buying mainly because competitors have made attractive product and promotional offers that they prefer over our offers. P3b: Former customers have stopped buying mainly because they have stopped gardening.

An examination of these propositions may affect a direct merchant’s response to competitive moves; if many customers are being lost to competitors, then a very aggressive response to new competitor actions is warranted. However, if loss of customers has little to do with new competitor actions, it probably is not worthwhile to spend much time and money on trying to win back these lost customers.

4. Region of-country influence on purchase. P4a: Substantial differences in purchase and consumption behavior occur across all regions of the country: North, South, East, and West. P4b: Regional effects on purchase and consumption behavior are more substantial in some regions than in others.

Empirical evidence on these opposing propositions helps to resolve strategy issues including the following question: Should Boone include unique, regionally oriented inserts in its national “Big Book” mailing (the largest sized catalog mailed to all customers)?

5. Catalog shopping process by customers. P5a: Many, if not most, customers follow planned buying strategies from the catalogs they buy from. P5b: Many, if not most, customers buy products they did not plan to buy from the catalogs they buy from.

These propositions relate to the issues of share of customers doing unplanned buying, and their relative amount of planned versus impulse buying. The use of “reason why” copy and four-color photographs on all pages of the catalog are affected by the shares of unplanned purchases reported by customers.

6. Customer preference for four-color photographs of products. P6a: Most customers prefer seeing four-color photographs for all flower and vegetable products on all pages of the catalog. P6b: Customers do not expect, or prefer, to see four-color photographs of all products on all pages of the catalog.
Substantial cost reductions would occur if black and white photographs could be used for one-fourth to one-half of the pages in the Big Book.

7. Customer acceptance/preference of garden plans in catalogs. P_7a: Some customers like the idea of buying a planned garden, which includes a detailed architectural plan of the gardens and the seed/plant products. P_7b: Few, if any, customers like the idea of buying planned gardens.

In the 1990s, several competitors were starting to offer planned gardens in their catalogs. Should Boone devote a little, a lot, or no space in the catalog to planned gardens?

8. The issue of being environmentally friendly. P_8a: Some important segments of customers are concerned about buying from direct merchants who are environmentally friendly in using recycled paper in their catalogs and biodegradable packaging materials. P_8b: When buying seeds and plants from direct merchants, few, if any, customers are concerned about whether or not the direct merchants are environmentally friendly.

Empirical evidence on customer thought processes and preference for direct merchants positioned as being environmentally friendly is likely to affect the speed in which direct merchants adopt environmentally oriented marketing strategies. Do some customers recognize certain seed packaging to be more environmentally friendly than other packaging materials? Would some customers like to see special sections in catalogs of seeds and plants that are grown in completely organic (no chemicals) conditions?

9. Customer differentiation of product and service guarantees by direct merchants. P_9a: A substantial number of customers perceive differences among direct merchants in the product/service guarantees offered and how well direct merchants live up to their guarantees. P_9b: Few, if any, customers perceive differences among direct merchants in the guarantees offered, or how they live up to their guarantees.

Several senior executives at Boone were quite proud of their firm’s guarantees of product quality and company service offered to customers; these executives wanted to display prominently the guarantee in the main catalog and in advertising. Empirical support for one of the opposing propositions would help answer the question of whether or not promoting the guarantee would affect customer perceptions and behavior.

10. Customers requesting, but not buying from the catalog. P_10a: Customers requesting a direct merchant’s catalog, but who do not purchase from the catalog, are buying from competitors’ catalogs. P_10b: Customers requesting a direct merchant’s catalog, but who do not purchase from the catalog, are not buying from any competitors’ catalogs.

Some senior executives at Boone believed that non-response catalog requesters were not converting into customers because of powerful actions of competitors. Other executives believed that most non-response requesters simply enjoy receiving and looking at catalogs: These customers were not being lost to competitors because receiving and looking at the free catalog was the end consumption activity for these
customers. This issue has substantial impact on marketing expenditures: Should Boone allocate substantial funds to convert non-response requesters to buyers?

Whereas some intuitive findings may be supported empirically, many (if not most) predicted relationships made by direct marketing executives often are “best case scenarios,” atypical of reality; the opposite propositions match reality. Thus, competing, counter intuitive propositions should be generated and become an integral part in Stages 1 and 2.

For the empirical study we report here, a total of 82 sets of macro- and micro-intuitive versus counterintuitive propositions were developed for empirical examination. These propositions were developed from both analytic and cultural categories of customers. The 10 example proposition sets were included among the 82 sets; many of the others relate to the micro-issues described in Stage 2.

Following Stages 1 and 2, the resulting initial draft of the survey form for the long interview of gardeners was 54 pages. After a pretest with two customers from two different analytic categories, and several discussions with a team of eight managers from different departments within Boone, the survey form was reduced to 38 pages.

Stage 3: Discovery of Cultural Categories

The questionnaire is finalized in Stage 3 — An important decision in this stage is deciding if the study will include auto-driving and, if yes, the specific forms of the auto-driving to use.

A second important issue settled in Stage 3 is the selection of respondents. For the long interview procedure, McCracken emphasized that respondents are not a “sample,” and that their selection should not be governed by sampling rules. There are, however, a few rules of thumb.

For our direct marketing research study of gardeners, we modified these heuristics to contrast known customer groups. A central objective was being able to contrast the thinking and feeling processes of customers likely to have special knowledge about buying from direct marketing firms.

Stage 4: Discovery of Analytic Categories

Analyzing the results and writing up the report are principal activities in Stage 4. Some analytic categories of organizing the data need to be created. The major analytic categories for the data that we used for interpreting and writing up the gardening study are: (a) synopsis; (b) plans and actions in 1993; (c) equipment and space used in 1993; (d) buying sources used for 1993 and prior years; (e) favorite catalogs and reasons; (f) looking at, handling, and thinking about eight competing catalogs; (g) favorite carriers for receiving product; (h) keeping catalogs; (i) new variety buying; (j) examining the contents of catalogs; (k) environmental issues; (l) examining seed packages; and (m) a constant-sum evaluation exercise.
Care should be taken in Stage 4 to include all the steps found in thinking processes important to customers or to direct marketing executives. For example, whereas customers in several categories reported being concerned with environmental issues and recognized that some seed packets were environmentally friendlier than others; these concerns did not affect their selection of seed packets or use of catalogs.

**Method**

Mail-order buying of gardening products is an interesting area for an application of the long interview technique. Direct marketing of plants and seeds is one of the oldest mail-order industries in the United States. Before World War I, most plants and seeds for home gardening were purchased using mail order; mail-order buying of plants and seeds now represents less than 10 percent of total purchases in the United States. Total Industry sales are less than $1 billion. The mail-order gardening industry is not dominated by one or two firms, however, the top 10 firms in sales represent about 40 percent of total mail-order industry sales. In the past 20 years, the industry has stabilized its share of total gardening sales. However, the market shares and profits of individual firms fluctuate, sometimes substantially, from year-to-year. Competitors in the industry need to be concerned with two marketing objectives: (a) maintaining close relationships with their core customers and (b) attracting/retaining new customers.

**Meeting with Executives of a Mail-Order Gardening Firm**

The senior executives of Boone worked closely with us in designing the study. During three meetings early in 1993, a market research project team was formed and 23 customer groups were identified for possible study. In consultation with the project team and Boone’s CEO, five customer categories were selected for the study.

1. **Core customers.** Persons buying a higher than average dollar amount in three or more years during the most recent five years from Boone’s main annual catalog.
2. **New customers.** First-time buyers in 1993, spending a higher than average dollar amount, using the major annual catalog, which they got from Boone’s direct response advertising offer.
3. **Non-response requesters.** Persons requesting the annual catalog from direct response advertisements but not buying (i.e., non-convertors).
4. **Once-only customers.** Persons buying more than the average dollar amount in one of the two years prior to 1993 but not in 1993.
5. **Divorced customers.** Persons buying more than the average dollar amount in two or more years, but not since 1990.
As well as the product strategy issues highlighted earlier, several intuitive and counterintuitive propositions for comparisons among the groups were created. Given that large-scale, national surveys had been conducted on these customer groups (see Woodside & Soni, 1991), these planned comparisons were exploratory attempts to offer rich insights into the details of known differences among the groups.

**Participants**

Informants for the study were selected from three urban areas of the United States that are important geographic markets for Boone: Rochester, New York, Raleigh, North Carolina, and Dallas, Texas. For each of the five customer groups, 10 names and addresses of customers were selected from the firm’s database.

**Initial Contact**

Three weeks before visiting each of the selected geographic markets, two to three subjects for each customer group were initially sent a letter on university stationery; Boone was not identified as a sponsor of the study. The subjects were informed that they had been selected for the study from the names of households that had either requested and/or purchased products using mail order. The letter included an offer of $30 for participating in an in home, personal interview.

**Telephone Contact**

Four to five days after the letter was sent, each subject was telephoned and asked to participate in the study. With the exception of the divorced customers, over 70 percent of the subjects agreed to be interviewed. Those refusing to participate were replaced; letters and phone calls were made to new subjects in an attempt to interview one or more persons in each of the five groups in each of the three cities. Close to 60 percent of the divorced customers reported by telephone that they did not wish to participate; most of those subjects reported not gardening in 1993.

**Confirmation Letter and Interview Schedule**

Following the telephone contact, a confirmation letter of the personal in home appointment was mailed to each subject who had agreed to be interviewed. The interviews were scheduled during Friday, Saturday, and Sunday in March (for Dallas), May (Raleigh), and June (Rochester). Two to five interviews were completed each day over the three-day period per city. The planned and implemented interviews scheduled per city are summarized in Table 3.
Table 3: Research design for 1993 plant and seed customer study: planned/implemented long interviews.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Customer group</th>
<th>Dallas</th>
<th>Raleigh</th>
<th>Rochester</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Current core: Combo vegetable/flower</td>
<td>2/1a</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. New customer: 20 + multi-products</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>2/4</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5/7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Non-response requester:</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>5/4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Once-only customer</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>1/1</td>
<td>5/6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Divorced Customer</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>2/2</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>5/3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>8/7</td>
<td>9/11</td>
<td>8/8</td>
<td>25/26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*The first number represents the interviews planned within each customer group; the second number represents the interviews completed. For example, two interviews were planned in Dallas with current core customers: one interview was completed. “Divorced” refers to customers not buying from the firm for the most recent two years.

**Personal, In-Home Interviews**

Both authors participated in each of the 26 completed personal interviews. Audiotape recordings were collected for 24 of the 26 interviews (electrical outlets were not available for 2 interviews). Two to four photographs were made for all 26 respondents; 25 were photographed in their gardens.

Auto-driving data were collected during two parts of the personal interviews. In a latter part of the interview, subjects were shown eight competing gardening catalogs and asked several questions, such as:

“Do you recall receiving any of these catalogs in 1993?”

“Did you order any seeds or plants for growing in 1993 from any of these catalogs? If yes, which ones?”

“Which of these catalogs in front of you looks most interesting to you?”

“What makes you say that?”

“Which of these catalogs looks least interesting to you?”

Numerous other questions pertaining to issues about the catalogs were asked. All of the questionnaire items are not included here for the sake of brevity.
Second, later in the interview, subjects were shown seed packages from eight different mail-order firms. A series of open ended questions were asked, such as:

“Please look at these seed packets before you, what do you notice about them?”

“Please pick up three seed packets that are most appealing to you.”

During an early part of the interview, several “grand tour” questions were asked (see Stage 3 in Figure 1). For example, subjects were asked to describe their gardening activities for 1993. This was to learn general behavior related to gardening. Many specific probing questions followed (e.g., where were seeds/plants purchased, who in the household did the buying and gardening, time spent per week gardening, etc.).

Top-of-mind awareness data were collected. Questions were asked about what mail-order firm first came to mind for each of several core benefits and mail-order buying problems, if any. Each subject was also asked to complete a constant sum exercise of selecting up to five core benefits she or he sought from a set of 30 benefits printed on cards. After choosing the core benefits, subjects divided 10 points among the benefits to represent the importance of each.

**Completion Time**

The average time to complete each interview was 90 minutes. Three interviews were completed in less than 45 minutes; all of these brief interviews were completed with once only and divorced customers.

**Findings**

Because our principal objective is to illustrate the application of the long interview in direct marketing research, only a few highlights of the findings are presented here. Following a discussion of findings for the 10 sets of opposing propositions, we offer a detailed summary of one core customer and brief synopses of one customer in each of the other four customer segments.

**Findings for the Sets of Opposing Propositions**

**Children and Gardening**

Nine of the twenty-six house holds interviewed included young children or teenagers. Joint gardening activities by parents and children were reported by none of these nine
households; \( P_{1b} \) not \( P_{1a} \) is supported. Interestingly enough, some of the parents reported being influenced by their parents in their buying from direct merchants versus retail stores and in their choice of specific direct merchant firms. Thus, family influence was found to occur, but not as expected by the intuitive proposition of parent–child influence. The advantage of being a very well established mail-order gardening firm in affecting word-of-mouth recommendations between parent and adult child was an unexpected finding of the study. The decision was made, based in part on the findings of this study, not to place substantial funds in promoting gardening as a parent–young–child activity.

Preferences of Heavy-Loyal Customers

All of the heavy-loyal customers interviewed reported preferring one or two direct gardening merchants over others; thus, \( P_{2a} \), not \( P_{2b} \), is supported. However, these loyal customers did not report negative feelings toward any particular direct merchants (with one exception). Rating scales would not likely capture their preferences toward a particular direct merchant because preferences were based on experience. For example, “I always buy from Boone, that's the reason I prefer them,” is most representative of heavy-loyal preference. The strategy implication for direct marketers is that an extensive trial period of different suppliers is unlikely to occur among heavy-loyals. In other words, a direct merchant’s catalog must be readily available during the strategic window of opportunity when the heavy-loyals start to garden.

Why Do Former Customers Quit Buying?

Former customers reported a decrease in gardening activities during the most recent years, or preferences to buy from local retail stores, \( P_{3b} \), not \( P_{3a} \) is supported: Trying to win back such lost customers is doomed to failure.

Region-of-Country Influence on Purchase

Regional influences were found in one region versus the other two: Customers in the Dallas area reported the need to buy from direct merchants located in the Southwest because of special growing problems. Thus, \( P_{4b} \) not \( P_{4a} \) is supported. Four of seven respondents in Dallas reported buying from the same regional direct merchant because they believed this supplier offered products uniquely suited to the growing requirements of the Southwest. A similar finding did not occur among respondents in the Raleigh and Rochester areas. Given the substantial size of the Texas market and the possibility of substantial regional bias of customers, the development and advertising of products uniquely suited for dry, hot climates may be a viable strategy.
Catalog Shopping Process by Customers

All respondents who did buy gardening products from direct merchants in 1993 reported buying some unplanned products. To a greater extent, P5b not P5a, is supported. All respondents buying from the catalogs reported examining each page of the catalogs they requested and received. Heavy loyal customers reported buying some favorites every year, plus buying some unplanned items each year. Hence, providing reason why copy and four color photographs throughout the catalog are necessary.

Customer Preference for Four-Color Photographs of Products

A Strong consistent bias in favor of four-color photographs for all plants was found across all five customer types. P6b not P6a, is supported. This finding was supported especially in the auto-driving portion of the interview for the sponsoring firm’s catalog. The respondents were asked to examine two catalogs in-depth during the interview, one of the two catalogs always being the sponsoring firms catalog. According to customers, a competitive advantage of Boone’s catalog was the completeness in providing four-color photographs of all products. For Boone, the savings from switching to using black-and-white photographs on some pages may weaken brand equity in the minds of customers.

Customer Acceptance/Preference of Garden Plans in Catalogs

None of the respondents bought planned gardens and none reported willingness to buy planned gardens. The findings support P7b not P7a. Devoting substantial catalog space to planned gardens is unlikely to be profitable. They are unlikely to gain widespread customer acceptance. “The whole idea for me is to come up with my own garden arrangements,” was one response to planned gardens. Several respondents reported that they could see why someone would like the idea of planned gardens, but such plans were not for them.

The Issue of Being Environmentally Friendly

With the exception of one respondent in the Rochester area, all reported that helping the environment was not something they think about when looking at seed and plant catalogs. No one company came to mind as being environmentally friendly. P8b not P8a is supported. In the auto-driving portion of the interview, respondents did recognize that some seed packet materials were more environmentally friendly than others; however, none reported that they would be influenced to buy for this reason. Uniquely capturing the environmentally friendly position in the minds of customers is unlikely to increase sales.
How Do Customers Differentiate Product and Service Guarantees by Direct Merchants?

Of the respondents who purchased gardening products by mail in 1993, all reported that the merchants they were familiar with offered money-back guarantees. “All the companies do a good job in guaranteeing their products,” was the usual response to this issue. Thus, P9b not P9a is supported. Attempting to focus customer attention on a guarantee is unlikely to be effective in increasing customer loyalty.

The majority of respondents indicated some past communication with direct merchants to complain about mistakes related to order fulfillment. In all instances, prompt responses were made to the complete satisfaction of these customers, with the exception of one direct merchant (this particular company was criticized by four respondents in two regions of the country as offering inferior products consistently). Except for that one firm, all respondents reported that they would purchase again from the same direct merchants because of prompt handling of their complaints.

Customers Requesting but Not Buying from the Catalog

Non-response catalog requesters prefer to buy locally. P10b, not P10a is supported: Such customers are not being lost to other direct merchants. All four of the non-response requesters interviewed reported being most familiar with Boone’s catalog. None reported actually buying from any gardening catalogs. “I like to just look at the catalogs, especially the ones in color,” is one statement that best summarizes the customer relationship with any direct merchant of gardening products. Identification and purging of non-response requesters from receiving future catalog issues may be best; trying to convert non-response requesters into buyers may be too expensive to justify.

Critical Testing of the Competing Theories-in-Use

Referring to Table 2, the Stay-the-Course theory in use is supported by the case study results for 7 of the 10 propositions (Propositions 1, 3, 6, 7, 8, 9, and 10). The New Wave theory-in-use is supported by the results for Propositions 2, 4, and somewhat 5. Critical testing of 10 additional propositions not discussed in this article included support for 8 additional propositions advocated by Stay-the-Course, with 2 additional propositions advocated by New Wave. The 15 of 20 “hit ratio” for the Stay-the-Course theory is statistically significant (p < .04 by a two-tailed sign test, Siegel, 1956). A more useful view for strategy development would reflect that, although the Stay-the-Course theory receives greater support, a few important propositions advocated by the New Wave theory are also supported.
Descriptions of Two Customer Types

Two exhibits provide summaries of detailed descriptions of gardeners from two of the five customer types. Additional detailed summaries of gardeners from the other three customer types are available from the authors.

A Core Customer

We begin with a summary description of a core customer couple, Bruce and Dorothea. Appendix A summarizes the discussion. Their major gardening activities occur on a small family farm located several miles from their home. Appendix A is a detailed transcription of the audio-taped responses of this couple.

The demographic and life-style profile of Bruce and Dorothea closely matches the profile of about one-third of Boone’s core customers: retired homeowners and high school and college graduates, who garden every day of the week. Note that this couple does have favorite direct merchants they buy from each year; however, they are not 100 percent loyal to one or two suppliers. They buy from three to four direct merchants each year.

Of the three geographic areas included in the study, only in Texas was a regional direct merchant mentioned as being especially able to meet local growing conditions. Given the importance of the Southwest market, this study served as an early warning system of a possible regional threat to Boone. The regional direct merchant in Texas was mentioned by customers in other segments as a supplier during the study. Before data collection, this particular merchant was unknown to Boone.

The data on this couple and other core customers revised the concept of customer loyalty for several senior executives. Although a few customers are close to 100 percent committed to one direct merchant supplier, core buyers usually rely on three to four direct merchant sources, and one to two local stores.

A New Customer

Exhibit 2 summarizes the demographic, life-style, buying, and consuming profile of Bert, a new customer. Bert does all of his gardening at his home. Bert buys most of his plants and seeds from Boone, but he also buys from a local nursery. Note in Appendix B that Bert was influenced by his mother to prefer and use one particular plant and seed catalog. This Tran generational communication represents a major form of brand equity for the senior mail-order plant and seed direct merchants; this finding is confirmed by examining long interview research studies commissioned by Boone in the 1980s.
A Non-Response Requester

Elaine prefers to buy from local retail sources. Her buying history indicates that her reasons for not becoming a customer after sending an inquiry are unrelated to preferring another direct merchant’s products. The typical profile of non-response requesters includes most of the characteristics reported by Elaine: They buy locally and their garden space is small compared to core and new customers.

A Once-Only Customer

Janice, a once-only customer of Boone, reported that she is an active catalog user but tends to use some plant and seed catalogs as reference guides, not to buy from. Similar to non-response requesters, once-only customers prefer to buy locally. Different from non-response requesters, once-only customers sometimes make trial purchases from direct merchants.

Marketing to once-only customers is not profitable for most plant and seed direct merchants, including Boone. After careful study of the long interview reports in this study and prior studies, Boone’s senior executives concluded that substantial investments should not be made in attempting to convert once-only customers into long-term customers. Greater paybacks with less investment were believed possible from increasing marketing efforts to attract new customers and increase sales to core customers.

A Divorced Customer

Sara Beth, a divorced customer, became a lost customer not due to any particular failure of Boone, or to the marketing actions of competing direct merchants. She perceives particular mail order catalogs to offer less variety in recent years than in the past.

After examining the detailed findings for Sara Lee and other divorced customers (see Woodside & Soni, 1991), executives for Boone decided not to try to win them back. The sensitivity of these customers to special marketing offers was concluded to be too low and not cost effective.

Implications for Direct Marketing Theory-in-Use and Strategy

Certainly, the long interview as a research tool is not a panacea for direct marketing strategy. The method is most useful in complementing and extending large-scale survey research studies. By applying the long interview in direct marketing research, the direct marketing strategist likely will gain deep understanding of the thinking and feeling processes of members of important customer segments.
Managers often make the mistake of assuming they know their customers and that their particular view (i.e., theory in use) is valid, without being able to refer to any supporting evidence. Long interview research is useful for a direct marketing manager to test competing theories-in-use about customers’ behaviors and find out what they are really thinking, feeling,preferring, and doing. In addition, one manager may be sure he knows what customers want, whereas another manager is equally sure customers want something else. Studies employing long interviews can address such opposing propositions (as illustrated here) and provide directions for marketing strategy.

The objective for this chapter includes demonstrating the use of the long interview (a case study research methodology) for developing descriptive and predictive theories of several direct marketing customer types. The discussion of the results for the theoretical propositions for different customer types in the mail-order gardening industry leads to the conclusion that different sets of propositions are likely to be necessary to describe accurately the behavior of different customer types, and for designing effective marketing strategies to influence the buying behaviors of these customers.

Appendix A. Current Core Customer

Bruce and Dorothea, Dallas, TX

Synopsis

Bruce and Dorothea are both retired and in their sixties. They own and maintain a modest home that they have occupied for 35 years on an income in the $60,000–$80,000 category. They grow vegetables on a five acre farm 59 miles from their home. They experiment with plants at home and have some flowers and vegetables that are grown around the house. Most — 90 percent — of their gardening purchases are for vegetables. They use the Porter and Sons catalog extensively, especially for tomato seeds. Reason: Porter is local and knows the Texas growing conditions, which tend to be hot and dry in the Dallas area. Dorothea reported buying squash seeds from both Boone and Walnut. Boone commands a small amount of their annual purchases.

Plans and Activities in 1993

Actions Mostly vegetables will be grown this year in the yard and at the farm; a few flowers will be used in beds around the house. Both Bruce and Dorothea work in the yard and at the farm in gardening. Of the crop that is harvested, they tend to freeze black eyed peas, corn, and squash. They tend to spend at least an hour per day in their home yard garden and go to the farm twice per week during the summer.
Equipment and Space  The backyard area used for planting and experimentation is about 20 $\times$ 20 feet. A small utility shed is also in the backyard for storing garden tools and supplies.

Sources for 1993 and Prior

Top-of-Mind Sources  Porter and Sons was mentioned as the main source of supply for seeds and plants. This company has products that have been developed for the Texas climate and conditions.

Catalog Sources  Other catalog purchases include Russian Giant sunflower seeds, squash, cucumber, and green peas from Walnut, squash from Boone, and German Giant radish seeds from Gurney. They reported buying from these catalogs for the past 15 years because they have had relatively good luck with the seeds from these sources.

What Catches Your Eye (Unaided)?  Walnut and Boone were identified as the prettiest catalogs. Porter and Sons is distinctive since it is all black and white and very plain compared to other mail-order catalogs.

Favorite Catalogs and Reasons

Favorite  Porter and Sons and Walnut were identified as favorite catalogs. Porter and Sons was chosen because of its long history of supplying products specially suited for growing in Texas and because of prior success with Porter products. The Walnut catalog was described as pretty and well illustrated. The pictures of tomatoes were described by Bruce as “beautiful but they won’t grow here.” Dorothea mentioned that she likes Walnut because “the squash and beans do stand the heat pretty well.”

Reject  No catalog was identified here. They mentioned that they do not buy much from Gurney; of all the catalogs they buy from, they get the least amount of merchandise from Gurney. The reason for not buying much from Gurney is that Bruce feels the seeds are better suited for the climate in the northeast rather than Texas.

Looking at and Handling Eight Catalogs

Looking and Handling  The Boone Catalog was picked up first, followed by Walnut and Gurney. The Walnut catalog was mentioned as one whose arrival is most anticipated.
From Ordering to Receipt  Merchandise ordered from Boone and Gurney arrived at the right time for planting whereas products from Walnut were reported to be slow in arriving. The seeds from Boone and Gurney arrived in about 7–10 days but the Walnut order took three weeks to arrive.

Catalog Appearance

Most Interesting and Why  Walnut was identified as most interesting and Boone was chosen second. These were chosen because of the level of familiarity with these catalogs. When prompted. Stokes was mentioned because of the display of vegetables on the cover of the catalog.

Least Interesting and Why  Shepherds and Harris were identified as least interesting. Shepherd was described as not colorful and no specific reason was given for why Harris was judged least interesting.

Most Appealing Cover  Dorothea chose the Walnut catalog as most appealing due to its colorful display and the new varieties shown. Bruce chose Walnut’s cover as most appealing because it features a big tomato.

Favorite Seeds

Porter and Sons’ tomato seeds and black eyed pea seeds were identified as favorites purchased from year to year. These were purchased due to good performance in Texas conditions.

Buying Exclusives

Porter and Sons’ Celebrity tomatoes were mentioned as exclusives bought in 1993. Other exclusives bought include German Giant radishes from Gurney and “Heat Wave” tomatoes from Walnut. These companies were mentioned as having exclusive varieties for these types of vegetables. Boone and Walnut were mentioned as having exclusive varieties of squash and green beans.

Catalog Contents for Most Familiar Catalog

The catalog identified as most familiar was Walnut. The following comments are offered regarding the Walnut catalog.
People in Catalog  Bruce and Dorothea do not particularly enjoy seeing people in the catalogs or reading captions about people shown. They said that they don’t pay attention to that aspect of the catalog content.

Information  The amount of information contained was thought to be enough.

Writing Style  The Writing style was judged easy and enjoyable to read and the catalog was thought to be easy to use. Information is precise and to the point. The amount of technical detail is generally fine except Bruce would like more information to account for the hot dry conditions in central Texas, if possible.

Photographs  The size of photographs was thought to be just right. Bruce mentioned that he did not believe the photographs to be particularly realistic in showing plants as they might grow in Texas. He mentioned that some plants don’t do well in the dry heat compared to how they might look in more temperate climates. Showing pictures of each item offered in the catalog was important.

Planned Garden  Planned gardens were thought to be included in the catalog for flowers, in particular. These are not of interest to either Bruce or Dorothea.

Regional Gardening Concerns  Bruce said he would like to have more detailed regional information if possible. Again, growing conditions in Texas are unique in some ways. Bruce mentioned that he reads this information when available, but that it is usually not furnished in catalogs.

Children’s Garden  This is of no interest to the couple.

Organization  They both recognized new varieties of vegetables and flowers were offered on the first few pages of the catalog. The organization scheme of new offerings, flowers alphabetical, and vegetables alphabetical was thought to be fine.

Guarantee  The guarantee for seeds was not thought to be of major importance, A lot of variation in performance may be due to weather and or soil conditions rather than the seed product itself. A guarantee would be important for live plants, but no live plants are bought from catalogs. No mail-order catalogs came to mind as having the best guarantee.

Seed Packets

Notice  Walnut was noticed as having a lot of information on the seed packet.

Least Appealing  The seed packet from Boone was selected and described as best looking but difficult to open. Thus, this difficulty makes it relatively unappealing.
Harris seeds were also judged unappealing. The pack was described as not colorful and a picture is desirable (as on the Gurney’s dill pack).

**Best Quality Seeds**  
Walnut and Boone were judged to have the best quality seeds. The couple mentioned that these were familiar and known products.

**Appendix B. New, Multiproduct Customer**

**Synopsis**

Bert, a trial lawyer, is an active gardener who gets a little help from his wife. Bert is in the 35–44 age group and earns above $100,000. He works full time and his wife works part time. They have three children living at home. They have been in their current home for 10 years. Bert has ordered from Boone in the past after learning of the catalog from his mother. He has bought both plants and seeds from Boone this year.

**Plans and Activities in 1993**

**Actions**

Bert has both vegetables and flowers in his yard. He will be growing strawberries, Lima beans, peppers, carrots, onions, peas, okra, squash, asparagus, artichokes, radishes, garlic, lettuce, and beets. Flowers include pansies, snapdragons, petunias, cosmos, impatiens, and periwinkle. He also plans to have rosebushes and gladiolus bulbs. Mostly flowers and vegetables will be grown and have been bought; Bert mentioned that he did buy some azaleas from a local nursery to plant in the yard. Bert estimated that he does some gardening six days per week for an average of 15–20 hours per week. He freezes some of his crop. Bert has an area for herbs. He will grow parsley, cilantro, garlic, chives, and dill. He grows these herbs from seed.

**Equipment and Space**

Bert’s back yard is the site of most of his gardening area. It measures approximately $40 \times 60$ feet; Bert also has a greenhouse in his backyard.
Chapter 14

Tipping-Point Modeling in Case Study Research

Synopsis

Micro-tipping point (MTP) theory includes the proposal that a specific stream of unconscious and conscious thoughts result in a go/no-go discretionary action in a given context (e.g., whether or not to visit a given destination in a given season or year involving particular persons being included or excluded from the trip; whether to buy a Ford, BMW, or Toyota). The specific stream represents a stream or conjunctive combination of thoughts-in-context that results in a tourist party actually taking the steps that include booking the trip and experiencing a destination first-hand. Building such contingency models that are applicable to real-life combinations of unconscious and conscious thinking requires collecting data from informants on both implicit and explicit beliefs, attitudes, and thinking rules relevant for a specific yes/no context. Chapter 14 illustrates applying the long interview for collecting such data and using quantitative comparative analysis for constructing MTP models.

Introduction: Micro-Tipping Theory in Travel Research

Chapter 14 proposes building theory and doing case study research for examining conjunctive combinations of facilitating and constraining conditions that affect discretionary decisions (cf., Bargeman & van der Poel, 2006; Becken & Gnoth, 2004; Woodside, Caldwell, & Spurr, 2006). The chapter builds on prior fit-like-a-glove theory (see Allen, 2002, for an application of FLAG research in post-secondary education institution choice behavior) and research focusing on implicit thinking (e.g., Bargh, 2002; Wilson, 2002). The chapter describes how long interview (McCracken, 1988) applications are useful for examining micro-tipping point theory.

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in travel research focusing on potential travelers’ unconscious and conscious thoughts that relate to visiting specific destinations.

Even though the dominant logic in research into individual behavior is to ask informant questions, Rapaille (2006) argues consumers do not know the reasons for their own behavior and they only will offer answers that they think the researcher wants to hear. Rapaille (2006) collects information using his “discovery session” method. The final third of the three-hour discovery sessions includes five to ten informants relating their first experiences with a focal product or service while they lie in horizontal positions. Rapaille’s method attempts to breakthrough consciousness and conscious-editing of automatic retrievals from memory to learn unconscious associations and processes. Creating methods to achieve such breakthroughs is worthwhile given the substantial evidence that most thinking occurs unconsciously (for reviews, see Bargh, 2002; Gladwell, 2005; Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002; Woodside, 2006; Zaltman, 2003).

The literature on the dominance of unconscious thinking is persuasive. Informants’ limited abilities and self-editing tendencies when answering direct questions (e.g., to appear sane, good, and helpful), along with the substantial value of alternative research methods, imply that replacing or complementing the dominant logic with additional research methods is necessary. Early work in consumer research recognizes that understanding consumer unconscious thinking requires methods other than asking direct questions (Cox, 1967; Dichter, 1964; McCracken, 1988). For example, Dichter (1964) video-taped informants’ behavioral responses to requests to present themselves as a product or perform a service-ritual involving a service (e.g., prepare and serve a meal). Cox (1967) guided two consumers separately in weekly conversations with themselves over more than 14 weeks in order to understand and explain their own grocery shopping behavior. McCracken (1988) suggests using the long interview to enable informants to become aware and to report on how cultural and socio-historical forces affect their thoughts and actions. Applications of the long interview include face-to-face meetings with informants in physical contexts that occur naturally for the informants; attempting to permit the informant to drive the topics and explanations of how events unfold for her or his experiences; avoiding the use of “why” questions to lessen interviewer biases and likelihood that the informant will present answers she or he perceives the interviewer would like to hear; and attempting to increase accuracy and thick description of conversations, events, and timelines (cf., Thompson, 1997).

Bargeman and van der Poel (2006) apply the long interview method in a qualitative study on a qualitative study among 32 Dutch households, which is part of a larger research project on the routinization of vacation choice behavior of Dutch vacationers; Bargeman and van der Poel conclude from their study that “the vacation decision-making processes of the interviewed households are much less extensive and far more routinized than described in the rational choice models.” In routinized thinking processes external search, developing a consideration set of possible destinations and travel activities, and evaluation and selection of specific destinations and activities all tend to be minimal in comparison with extensive problem solving. The conclusions by Crotts (1999), Decrop (1999a, 1999b), and Fodness and Murray (1997, 1998, 1999) in separate research studies all emphasize a bias by tourists toward minimizing effort,
using internal search and automatic thought retrievals versus external search and extensive evaluations in taking steps leading to making trips.

Using a large scale survey of visitors to New Zealand, Becken and Gnoth (2004, p. 376) support a “tourist consumption system” hypothesis that “although each holiday component could become the starting point for a tourist’s holiday plan, choices soon become contingent on choices made previously.” Becken and Gnoth’s research provides evidence that most tourists to a given destination may be segmented by the decision processes that they employ in extensively or routinely plan different options in their resulting trips.

Ecological systems theory (e.g., Bronfenbrenner, 1986, 1992; King & Woodside, 2000; Raymore, 2002; Woodside et al., 2006) states that understanding an individual’s environment is essential to understanding individual’s behavior. An ecological perspective of human development recognizes the importance of understanding the contexts in which an individual finds herself. This approach “incorporates the interactions between the individual, other individuals, and the social structures of society to explain human development” (Raymore, 2002, pp. 41–42). Central points in ecological systems theory include the following two observations: (1) the presence/absence of specific factor levels may be neither sufficient nor necessary for an occurrence of a specific outcome and (2) however, the combination of specific chains of events may nearly always lead to a given outcome (see King & Woodside, 2000; Ragin, 2000). From an ecological perspective, individuals interact with the contexts in which they live their lives.

The interaction or occurrence of specific contexts triggering automatic thoughts often represent a tipping point resulting in a seemingly discretionary decision that reflects little to no conscious deliberation before the individual commits to a specific action. Government advocacy of “cooling-off periods,” where customers can cancel a purchase agreement within three business days after the purchase (Office of Fair Trade, 2003) is one example of attempting to introduce substantial conscious thinking into prior mostly unconscious-driven tipping-point responses. Therefore, tourism behavior research needs to consider the specific contexts in which an individual lives in order to fully understand the individual’s behavior. The present chapter proposes that a conjunction of context and unconscious/conscious thinking results in a micro-tipping point (MTP) that influences the occurrence of specific outcome (e.g., visit to a given destination). A core proposition to MTP theory is that neither context nor person factor alone is sufficient to result in a given outcome. The use of ethnographic decision tree analysis (Gladwell, 1989) informs the conjunctive nature of MTP processes. The sections following this introduction develop these proposals and case study research illustrates their application.

An alternative ecological systems theory applies constructive choice theory and the FLAG model (Allen, 2002) to describe the travel and leisure behavior of informants. Using these theories, Allen (2002) describes the “causal historical wave” in informants’ lived experiences in selecting a college or university by recent secondary school graduates. Allen reported the finding that informants did not compare the relative strengths and limitations of alternative colleges and universities — each option was evaluated automatically as a go or no-go outcome.
Micro-Tipping Point Theory

Micro-tipping point (MTP) theory proposes that individuals automatically engage mentally in combining unconscious and conscious thoughts. This proposal builds on the work of Bargh (2002) and his colleagues (e.g., Bargh et al., 1996) that purport both forms of thinking are relevant when an individual focuses on a particular task. McClelland et al. (1992) advance the related proposition that implicit and explicit motives differ and operate simultaneously in regards to a given topic; empirical evidence supporting this proposition; Brunel et al. (2004) provide substantial additional evidence supporting the independence of implicit and explicit motives.

MTP theory proposes conjunctional causation of specific levels of multiple features (i.e., factors) for a given binary outcome (e.g., leisure-only overnight trip of three or more nights away from home versus no such trip). While MTP theory recognizes that some specific feature-levels are necessary, the instances are rare when a level of one feature is sufficient to cause a given outcome. This proposition is a core tenet of MTP theory. Relating to conjunctional causation is the point that data outliers often are difficult to interpret. For example, a travel-related data set includes a few cases of very low income households engaging in one or more annual leisure trips away from home of three or more and a few high income households engaging in no leisure trips away from home of three or more nights (e.g., Woodside et al., 2006). While these data points appear to be counter-intuitive, conjunctional causation can explain these go/no-go outcomes in thinking paths that may not fully planned or consciously reflected on by travelers. Usually, combinations of four or more binary, demographic variables are necessary and sufficient to explain such results.

MTP theory adopts a case-based research orientation that includes the attempt to go beyond qualitative and quantitative arguments. MTP theory advocates the use the methods of qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) (see Ragin, 1989) for building, comparing, and generalizing conjunctional causation models.

While it is standard practice for case-oriented researchers to search for constants (e.g., high levels of foreign capital penetration) across positive [e.g., positive = recent trip to a destination; negative = no recent trip] cases in their attempts to identify the causal forces behind an outcome (e.g., anti-neocolonial revolutions), the typical case-oriented inquiry does not assume or even anticipate causal uniformity across positive cases. On the contrary, the usual expectation is that different combinations of causes may produce the same outcome. That is, case-oriented researchers often pay special attention to the diverse ways a common outcome may be reached … When examining similarities and differences across cases, case-oriented researchers usually expect evidence to be causally “lumpy.” That is, they anticipate finding several major causal pathways in a given body of cross-case evidence. (Ragin, 1989, p. 38)
MTP theory proposes and focuses on identifying the few (<10) conjunctural causal paths (also referred to as “streams of behavior,” see Gardner, 1990) that result in a positive outcome for the majority of cases as well as often reporting conjunctural causal paths resulting in negative outcomes. MTP adopts the QCA view that multiple conjunctural causation challenges the very idea of “relative strengths” of independent variables in affecting a dependent variable. “It is not possible to assess a variable’s ‘unique’ or separate contribution to the explanation of variation in some outcome unless the model in question is a simple additive model” (Ragin, 1989, p. 41). MTP theory proposes multiplicative relationships among several (e.g., four or more) antecedent variables as both necessary and sufficient to lead to acceptance or rejection of a specific outcome.

MTP theory is applicable for explaining both the multiple conjunctural causations leading to a positive outcome, negative outcome cases, and both positive and negative outcomes. MTP theory adopts the QCA view that alternative paths of constants leading to a constant outcome is worthy of study as well as constructing models that explain and predict binary outcomes. Montgomery (1975) provides an early example of an MTP model (using the label, “gatekeeper analysis”) for a supermarket new-product buying committee in the context of business-to-business marketing to explain and predict go and no-go committee decisions.

MTP theory does not expect to explain all the cases in a study (e.g., households traveling to Hawaii) with a single model (even when the model incorporates multiple conjunctural causation). MTP and comparative case analysis are applicable for analyzing both positive and negative outcomes (e.g., a destination visit versus non-visit), these research methods are suitable for explicating the alternative multiple combinations of conditions necessary to occur (i.e., path A versus path B ... versus path Z) in reaching either positive or negative outcomes alone. The case studies in the present chapter focuses only on examining positive outcomes; other applications of MTP are available in the literature that focus on explicating paths leading to both positive and negative outcomes (e.g., see Woodside et al., 2006).

The following generalized example illustrates causal explanations in case-oriented research that MTP theory proposes for a positive-outcome case study. When conditions A, B, and C are present, X causes Y, however, if any one of these conditions (A, B, or C) is absent, and X is also absent, then Z causes Y. This argument is multiple and conjunctural in form because the proposition cites alternate combinations of causal conditions. The hypothetical causal argument states four combinations of conditions occur that result in outcome Y. Using Boolean algebra, the causal argument can be formulated (see Ragin, 2000) as follows:

\[ Y = (A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot X) + (A \cdot B \cdot c \cdot x \cdot Z) + (A \cdot b \cdot C \cdot x \cdot Z) + (a \cdot B \cdot C \cdot x \cdot Z) \] (1)

In Eq. (1), the upper-case letters indicate the presence of a condition and lower-case letters indicate its absence. Also, multiplication (mid-level dots) indicates causal conjunctures and addition indicates alternative causal pathways (for further discussion, see Ragin, 2000).
Fits-Like-a-Glove (Flag) Model

Practice theory forms the basis of the FLAG, or fits-like-a-glove model (Allen, 2002). Practice theory advocates that, “People and psychological processes are embedded in and inseparable from their physical and social contexts … . Time, continuity, and change are intrinsic aspects of psychological phenomena” (Altman, 1992, pp. 268–269).

This perspective understands that human beings acquire knowledge through their transactions with their social and physical environments. Furthermore, human beings cannot be understood as apart from their social and physical settings, but rather as embedded within them. Development is an inherent quality of environments, which afford individuals the opportunity to advance their understandings about people and places. (Lippman, 2007)

FLAG theory states that social and historical forces, or habitus (cf., Bourdieu & Johnson, 1993), shape the human experience. FLAG choice emphasizes the role of the body in perception and comprehension which underlies the feelings, understandings, and actions of the consumer. The FLAG model describes embodied sensing, where a person’s body functions as an integral unconscious and conscious sensing organ. A person’s experience is a mixture of the meanings resulting from the combination of the person’s touching with all things encountered in the world. For example, embodied experience is illustrated by a traveling violation in the game of basketball. A player’s recognition of this violation often stems from an instantaneous sensing of the body, rather than an understanding of the rules defining a traveling violation. Additionally, practical experience comprises all of the understandings, feelings, and actions that are induced while a person is in motion and engaging in a specific context. For example, athletic performance is the result of the athlete’s feel for the game that comprises both bodily and cognitive states in relation to context and environment, rather than the mind giving the body commands.

The social shaping of practice takes two forms. The first form of social shaping includes low-involvement socialization of the understandings, feelings, and actions which make up the habitus of members of a certain group. Because these members have been exposed to similar social conditions and relations, they share a similar habitus. For example, differences between street basketball and formalized basketball illustrate socialization effects. Because different social conditions cultivate these games, the style of play differs greatly even though both games appear to be essentially the same. The second form of social shaping entails the way in which external factors shape practice. These external factors include family, peer groups, institutions, and mass media. Low-involvement socialization and external factors combine to shape practice.

The FLAG model elaborates on practice theory and integrates elements of social context into a model of choice (Allen, 2002). People make decisions based on what feels right or seems natural given the conditions and circumstances surrounding them. Therefore, consumers make decisions in which the object of choice seems to be a predestined, perfect fit. FLAG choices are present in daily experience. Choices
made for friends, occupation, particular styles of clothing, and even travel can be explained by the FLAG framework. Reflecting FLAG model contexts are problem/opportunity discussions where informant responses express an inability to provide reasons or explanations beyond simply reporting, “It just felt right” for one option and “It didn’t feel right” for many rejected options.

The FLAG model lends support to Rapaille’s (2006) view that consumers are often unable to answer direct questions that accurately explain the reasons or causes of their own behavior. Possibly without being aware of the literature, Allen’s FLAG model and Rapaille’s discovery sessions build on tenants of ecological systems theory. Such tenants also enable researchers go beyond proposing that “it just feels right” as Allen describes and a national “culture code” explanation of behavior that Rapaille offers.

The analysis in Chapter 14 includes detailed descriptions of the lives of the informants and how surroundings and upbringing shape their current implicit and explicit thoughts relating to a go versus no-go outcome toward visiting one destination. Ecological systems theory and the FLAG model inform these analyses. Following this introduction, the second section describes unconscious thinking theories and the development of these theories that is useful for case study research of discretionary travel behavior. The third section offers details of the method used for examining how the models may apply to tourists interpreting their own thoughts and behavior.

**Method**

The following two case studies serve as examples of inductive theory-building that applies MTP theory. Data collection includes applying McCracken’s (1988) long interview method in 90-minute face-to-face discussions separately with travel parties visiting Hawaii’s Big Island (BI) in July 2006. The survey instrument was structured to provide latitude for interviewers to ask probing or follow-up questions in the event that unexpected issues or experiences surfaced during the interview process.

The informants include members of two households visiting BI in July 2006. Both first-time and repeat visitors participated. In the case of first-time visitors, care was taken to assure informants were interviewed at the end of their visits. Informant selection was by convenience sampling.

Prospective informants were approached and pre-screened with general questions about their visit and whether they would be willing to participate in an interview. Most interviews were conducted at Kailua-Kona (a resort city located on the west side of BI) in hotels, or at a tourist shopping mall located at the Waikoloa resort area — 20 miles north of Kailua-Kona. Each informant received 50 USD and a Hawaii-themed t-shirt for their cooperation.

The questionnaire includes questions asking for: (a) demographic information about members of the traveling party, (b) pre-trip planning and sources of information, (c) activities and destinations — both planned and unplanned, (d) issues surrounding flights (e.g., accommodations), (e) eating and dining experiences, and (f) overall impressions of the travel experience. The survey includes open-ended questions with calls for probing and pausing to enable the informants to
elaborate upon their answers and to tell stories completely that relate to their interpretations of events. Informants were told that their compensation was not dependent on answering all the questions, and they could end the interview at any time.

Nearly all questions were answered by all the informants. Written, thick descriptions were completed for each informant. Each case study report was read and revised by the research team. A copy of the complete long interview form is available by contacting either author.

A German Couple Visits Hawaii (Big Island) for the First Time

This case study of a husband and wife from Bonn, Germany, visiting the State of Hawaii for three weeks (July 2006) supports the central proposition of the study — a tipping point (Gladwell, 2002) combination of specific conjunctive relationships results in triggering or rejecting leisure trips to specific destinations. While the theory may appear to be obvious, the literature rarely explicitly discusses the central proposition and rarely describes real-life streams of connecting on–off switches leading to or preventing leisure trips.

The husband is in his early 60s and works full-time as a professional scientist (Ph.D. in physics); the wife is in her late 50s and manages their home full-time which includes three children (17, 18, and 21 years old). While away on the July 2006 to Hawaii, the couple kept in daily contact by telephone with their children back home in Bonn. This trip signifies the first time that the couple was confident that all three children were old-enough for the couple to travel away from home without the children.

Figure 1a–b summarize details of a 90-minute face-to-face interview with the couple on their last full-day during their Big Island stay. The following discussion offers highlights and insights relating to this long interview.

The husband’s big island dream trip The husband reported that he always wanted to visit the Big Island (BI) because of the volcanoes. He reported learning about Hawaii and its volcanoes in the general media over many years. His training and work history in physics likely affected his vigilance toward media reports on the BI over earlier decades in his life. He reported that his wife was agreeable to visit the destination, but BI was his dream rather than hers.

Delta frequent flyer points The husband’s accumulation of frequent flyer points in Delta Airlines loyalty program became an enabling step toward transforming the dream into reality. The points were accumulated due to business trips over 20+ years. The couple waited to accumulate enough points for two first-class round-trip tickets.

Leaving the children alone at home The husband and wife were unwilling to travel away from home as a couple until the children were old enough to manage for themselves alone and unsupervised at home. The children’s advancing ages became
3. Pre-Framing and Pre-Planning Trip Issues
- Children old enough to care for themselves
- Trip needs to be 3-weeks in length to get over jet lag; 4-weeks is too long away from work
- Regarding the volcanoes in Hawaii, “If not now, when? Older, need to do this trip now.”
- Husband mentions, “I did not have the money to make this trip when I was younger.”
- Delta frequent flyer mileage program enables trip

2. Framing Leisure Choices
- Husband thinks consciously about dream visit to “South Seas Paradise”
- No specific media influence; generally aware of Hawaii
- Report no search for information prior to visit
- Used Internet for accommodations and rental car
- Delta mileage award from over 20 years for first class tickets

4. External Influences
- General press news stories about volcanoes in Hawaii
- Bought travel guide book
- Studied websites

5. Choice of Destinations
- Trip included 3-night stopover in San Diego with two hours in Tijuana (“My wife has never seen before.”)
- Three nights on Kauai
- Four nights on Maui
- Four nights on BI
- Five nights on Oahu; “End in Honolulu so we can get home fast if necessary.”
- “Volcano alone is the reason to come to the BI.”
- Alternatives: Asia…Thailand, but cannot travel alone there

6. Key Activity Drivers for BI Visit
- See volcanoes

7. Key Activities on BI
- Talked to children at home daily
- Saw lava tubes; no helicopter ride
- Snorkeling
- Visit church
- Hilo day trip

8. Situation On-Site Influences
- Rough coasts
- Not many breakers
- Did not spend much time on beaches

9. Consequences
- “America has a solution for everything while traveling (e.g., taxis and buses)
- “Wife happy now (having visited BI)”

Figure 1a: German husband and wife (Early 60s) visiting Hawaii in July 2006.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Area</th>
<th>Destinations</th>
<th>Route/mode to and in the BI</th>
<th>Accommodations while in BI</th>
<th>Activities in BI</th>
<th>BI Regions Visited</th>
<th>Attractions visited including restaurants</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consideration Set and Choices</td>
<td>Only State of Hawaii but did mention Thailand; all major islands in Hawaii</td>
<td>Delta mileage points saved over 20 years; stopover in San Diego; car rentals—Avis compact (“a good deal”)</td>
<td>Kona Seaside Hotel in central area of Kailua-Kona. Did price comparison and location shopping on internet.</td>
<td>Spent a day at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; a day road trip to Hilo; visited Mauna Loa Visitor Center; snorkeling</td>
<td>1-day at Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; 1-day in Kailua-Kona; 1-day driving and visiting Hilo; 1-day beaches/snorkeling</td>
<td>Volcanoes was principal attraction sought and visited; beaches; Hilo; strolling around Kailua-Kona; Big Island Grill</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>Hawaii volcano; trip idea in mind unconsciously &amp; consciously for 20+ years</td>
<td>Delta mileage points enabled trip; car rentals in keeping with being freely independent travelers</td>
<td>Save money by staying at middle to low priced hotel that is centrally located. Location and price were key motives.</td>
<td>Fulfill main motive for visiting the BI: volcanoes as well as visit beaches.</td>
<td>Experience a variety of activities even though volcanoes was prime motive</td>
<td>Gain a feel for the entire BI. Eating at Big Island Grill was “very good.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Search and Use</td>
<td>Low-involvement dominates search over 20 years</td>
<td>No substantial search for information.</td>
<td>Internet used to search and book accommodations.</td>
<td>No extensive search about locations visited prior to visits.</td>
<td>Very limited search for information indicated.</td>
<td>Low amount of search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Joint decision by husband and wife to use Delta FF points for trip to Hawaii</td>
<td>Couple successfully mapped out route/modes to go to 5 overnight stops in this one trip. Car blinkers broken.</td>
<td>“What we expected for 80 Euros.” “Make second elevator work” [broken]. [Need] coffee maker in room.”</td>
<td>Satisfied that visit was worthwhile (even though no spectacular lava flow views).</td>
<td>Satisfied with experiences and overall visit to the BI.</td>
<td>Satisfied by did not show/display joy with visiting attractions; a low-key interpretation of their visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>Substantial indirect impact of news stories, novels, about Hawaii on attracting visitors.</td>
<td>A combination of several stops with low number of activities per stop.</td>
<td>Couple avoided paying $200+ per night hotel room that several nearby hotels charge in Kailua-Kona.</td>
<td>Couple did not attempt to fill their days with lots of activities. Slow pace in doing a few activities each day.</td>
<td>No shopping for clothing and other products by this couple—fits European profile.</td>
<td>Close to being ironic that couple spent so much time and effort to get to BI but spent little effort in studying BI before visit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1b: Summary of first-time visit to the Big Island (Hawaii) by German couple (age: early 60s).
an enabling trigger for their leisure trip. The couple reported planning their trip with the final four days away being in Honolulu so that they could cut the trip short a few days if they sensed the children needed their early return home. Each day, the couple telephoned the children daily during the three-week trip.

**Husband agreeing to wife’s request for San Diego stopover clinches trip decision**  The wife was reluctant to fly directly to BI. She wanted to visit a place on the U.S. mainland during the trip. The husband suggested a visit to San Diego — which included a half-day visit to Tijuana, Mexico. They both reported enjoyed visiting the old town area of San Diego. The San Diego stopover also served the couple by partially overcoming jet lag before visiting Hawaii.

**Visiting multiple islands in hawaii**  Even though coming to the Big Island and seeing volcano related sights was a key driver for the trip, the couple included overnight stays to each of the four major islands in the State of Hawaii. This finding supports the proposition that while the BI may be a stand-alone destination, multiple-island locations/sights are likely to influence first-time visitors in planning their visits to the State of Hawaii. Consequently, marketing BI as a stand-alone destination may be less effective than promoting the complementarily fulfilling benefits that visits to several Hawaii Islands provide.

Figure 1c represents an ethnographic decision tree (EDT) model (Gladwell, 1989) of the questions and alternative paths the couple thought about taking that resulted in their decision and trip to the BI. EDT includes mapping the go/no-go conditions that informants relate the occur in a conjunctive stream that lead to the occurrence of a specific outcomes — the assumption of EDT is that no one condition with a conjunctive path is sufficient to cause a specific outcome. EDT modeling across multiple cases is a method analogous to Montgomery’s (1975) gatekeeper analysis. An EDT model is built using the emic (informant) description of self-questioning and answering in reflecting on how their lived experiences came about to include a specific outcome (e.g., current trip to the BI).

Four levels of four factors combine to allow for a positive outcome for the 2006 trip to the BI. A conjunctural causal equation of the combination of conditions affecting the positive outcome (Fig. 1d):

\[ S = \text{Success} = \text{Trip to the BI} \]
\[ A = \text{Dream} \]
\[ B = \text{Children home alone is acceptable} \]
\[ C = \text{Airline frequent flyer mileage account permits two free tickets to the BI} \]
\[ D = \text{Couple’s negotiation over trip details successful.} \]

\[ S = (A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot D) \quad (2) \]

Eq. (2) implies that the trip would not occur in the absence of any one of the four antecedents. For example,

\[ F = \text{Failure} = (a \cdot B \cdot C \cdot D) \quad (3) \]
Figure 1c: (Un)conscious decision process of German husband and wife (early 60s) visiting Hawaii in July 2006.
Using Boolean algebra is a step toward generalizing across cases as well as achieving parsimony in reducing the presence of specific antecedents when predicting whether or not a given positive outcome can occur without a given antecedent. For example, if visits by older couples to the BI can occur with or without successful husband–wife trip-detail negotiations, then factor D can be eliminated from the equation — if the aim only is to predict whether or not a visit can occur for such a trip party. The same proposition applies for the other antecedents (i.e., A, B, and C) as well. Thus, the argument is not that only four antecedents are necessary for all travel parties for leisure travel to the BI; instead, the occurrence of all four antecedents in combination results do result in a trip to the BI (go versus no-go outcome).

Using this grounded theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967) approach of inductive model building likely will result in a few stories (e.g., <10) that are highly similar for the majority of visitors to a specific destination. “Story” is the narrative presentation of a conjunctural causation equation of three or more antecedents. Storytelling by an informant often results in thick descriptions that include relevant surfacing of unconscious thinking and conscious elaborations (see Rapaille, 2006; Shank, 1990; Schank & Abelson, 1977; Sood, Woodside, & Miller, 2007).

The conjunctural method serves to focus attention on explicating the fits-like-a-glove proposition that several pieces (i.e., factor levels) fit together to permit a “yes”

\[ F = (A \cdot B \cdot C \cdot d) \]
or “no” choice favoring BI visit. This explication includes the husband consciously recognizing a long-time unconsciously held dream to visit a volcanic island in the South Pacific — never mind that Hawaii is not in the South Pacific. The realization that his children had become older teenagers and his wife’s willingness to negotiation conditions for such a trip triggered plans to transform the dream into reality. MTP research and theory describes and focuses attention on the combination of factor levels resulting in the positive outcome that builds from conjunctive path analysis, ecological systems, and FLAG modeling.

**An Older American Couple Visits the Big Island for the First Time**

Figure 2a–c present the analysis of a second case study — a long interview with an older American couple on their first visit to the BI. This couple lives in Long Island, New York. Their long interview data include information on one prior group-tour visit to the State of Hawaii that included three islands — but not the BI. Their son’s decade-long conversations about his two visits to the BI created a high level of tension in this couple’s minds — they needed to get back to Hawaii to experience the son’s reported BI experiences that they missed on their prior trip.

Conversations with their son and a previous visit to neighboring islands motivated the couple to conclude, initially unconsciously and then consciously, to return to Hawaii — if the conditions were right for such a visit. Children at home preventing (factor level B) or not preventing a trip (factor level b) was not relevant in this case. The ability to trade their time-share unit for a time-share unit on the BI was relevant as a conjunctural causal factor — a necessary but not sufficient condition in enabling the visit (see Figure 2c).

Like the German couple, this American couple reported a frequent-flyer airline mileage award as a requirement — an enabling contingency — for the trip to the BI. Similar to the German couple, the American couple negotiated between themselves to fulfill additional enabling requirement — with the wife offering to buy the husband’s round-trip flight tickets (Fig. 2d).

At a micro level these two couples are unique in their plans and behaviors regarding their visits to Hawaii; however, the couples’ unconscious and conscious thinking display substantial similarities at a mid-range level of theory. One or both members of each couple became cognizant of their desire to visit the BI after several years of hearing about the BI as a destination. Both couples set special trip financing conditions as enabling conditions for their BI trips (e.g., free airline ticket(s) and a time-share trade). Both couples referred to their children in their thoughts regarding a trip to the BI. In both case, reported negotiations between the husband and wife enabled the trip.

Note further in reading the summary reports in Figures 1a–b and 2a–b that both couples downplay the use of external information sources both to influence their decision to visit the BI and to affect their activity plans during their BI visits. Both couples did report searching online for accommodations; however, the Internet was
3. Pre-Framing and Pre-Planning Trip Issues
- Husband and wife use time-share clearinghouse to trade their one-week unit with someone else
- Wife achieved required frequent flier mileage with American Airlines; she has money to buy air
  tick for husband
- Use AA credit card to “build miles”
- “We did very little research before the trip—we watched the travel channel on TV.”
- No use of travel guide books prior to trip; received a folder of activity information in hotel lobby
- Booked accommodations (Hotel.com) and car rental online; adamant about not using a travel agent;
  separately mentioned that the daughter-in-law is a travel agent

1. Demographics
- Husband and wife
- Both in late 50s
- Own one-week time-share unit
- Live on Long Island, NY
- Married son in his 20s

2. Framing Leisure Choices
- Alternative destination considered: Great Lakes area in Wisconsin
- Vague idea about visiting the Caribbean someday
- Highest preference was a visit to BI

3. Pre-Framing and Pre-Planning Trip Issues
- Husband and wife use time-share clearinghouse to trade their one-week unit with someone else
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  separately mentioned that the daughter-in-law is a travel agent

4. External Influences
- Son and his wife traveled to BI for honeymoon and 10th wedding anniversary
- Son talked to parents about BI’s black and green sand beaches every year for the last
  ten years
- Three years ago visited Hawaii, but not BI

5. Choice of Destinations
- Time-share trade for BI visit became available

6. Key Activity Drivers for BI Visit
- Volcano
- Black and green sand beaches

7. Key Activities on BI
- Stayed in Hilo; close to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park (HVNP)
- Walked in HVNP
- No organized activities
- Snorkeling tour
- Hapuna Beach
- Driving around BI
- Full-size Pontiac rented from Alamo
- Hotel “nice-and-close to airport”

8. Situation On-site Influences
- Visit all extreme points on BI for sightseeing

9. Consequences
- “We now know that Hilo is the place to stay”
- “We now know it’s best not to rent a car; rent a jeep to be able to travel on lava roads.”

Figure 2a: Husband and wife in late 50s from Long Island visiting BI for one week
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Decision Area</th>
<th>Destinations</th>
<th>Route/mode to and in the BI</th>
<th>Accommodations while in BI</th>
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</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Consideration Set and Choices</td>
<td>Big Island; Great Lakes; Caribbean</td>
<td>American Airlines only due to frequent flier mileage award</td>
<td>Hotel near airport; low-price important</td>
<td>Volcano; Green sand beach; Black sand beach</td>
<td>• Hawaii Volcanoes National Park; Beaches; Tour of all BI regions by car</td>
<td>Parker Ranch; Kalahikiola Church; Hapuna Beach; Hawaii Volcanoes National Park</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Motives</td>
<td>“Pleasure” Make time-share trade successfully</td>
<td>Use A A mileage points—avoid spending money for 1 of 2 air tickets; Cheapest full-size car rental</td>
<td>Little driving from airport to hotel influenced choice</td>
<td>Follow son’s recommendations; Put to rest belief that they missed much by not visiting the BI</td>
<td>Achieve son’s recommendations Fulfill beliefs/feelings of missing something</td>
<td>Sightseeing all regions important activity for couple</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Search and Use</td>
<td>Low-involvement; Listen to son talk about BI</td>
<td>Searched for AA trips to BI online; On-line search for car rental</td>
<td>Searched on-line for accommodations using Hotel.com</td>
<td>Pride themselves in doing minimal search and use of information</td>
<td>Word-of-mouth reports by son over ten years prior to couple’s visit</td>
<td>Minimizing search effort and use of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outcomes</td>
<td>Successful time-share trade to BI; One-week BI visit</td>
<td>Had to pay for food on plane; $5 for a sandwich; “we brought our own food and drank free sodas”; Unhappy with car</td>
<td>“Not bad” “An older hotel!” “Had old brass key for room” Had swimming pool; Hotel has time-share units</td>
<td>Perceive themselves to be staying in wrong area of BI (not Hilo); Wrong vehicle rented</td>
<td>Satisfied with visit; No report of wanting to return; Many activities not done—due to costs</td>
<td>A visit of marginal value—couple was pleased but not passionate in reporting on their visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commentary</td>
<td>Conversations with son and H&amp;W prior visit to State sans BI visit were major influences</td>
<td>Couple reported having good seating on the trip but flight to LA was 1 hour late leaving NY and same for LA</td>
<td>“We made a mistake; Hilo is the place to stay closer to Hawaii Volcanoes National Park” Couple stayed on Kona side of the BI</td>
<td>Couple counts on on-site experiences, not seeking information, to do things better if there ever is a next time.</td>
<td>Minimizing expenses during the visit and not using professional help were important factors</td>
<td>Couple displays low involvement in search and use of information; Trip outcomes were good—couple reports</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 2b: Summary of first-time one-week BI visit by husband and wife in late 50s from Long Island.
1. Son talks about his honeymoon and 10th wedding anniversary visits to BI with his parents.

2. Couple takes 11-day tour to Hawaii three years ago that does not include visit BI.

3. Couple consciously senses that they are missing something by not visiting BI.

4. Can we make a one-week time-share trade to enable a BI visit?
   - Yes
   - No

5. Does wife have sufficient mileage points for a trip to BI?
   - Yes
   - No

6. Is wife willing to buy an air ticket for the husband to enable BI visit?
   - Yes
   - No

7. Consider trip to Great Lakes (Wisconsin).
   - Yes
   - No

8. Book flight for one-week BI visit.

9. Identify factors that are sufficient and necessary conjunctively for a trip to the Great Lakes.

Figure 2c: (Un)conscious decision process of couple in late 50s from Long Island visiting the BI.
not used to learn about local BI destinations, activities, or special events. The low level of search and external information use is signified by a lower case “i” in the summary equation that covers both couples visit to the BI:

$$S = (A \cdot E \cdot C \cdot D \cdot i) + (A \cdot E \cdot C \cdot D \cdot i)$$ (5)

Future research would be valuable for learning whether or not high versus low levels of information search/use affect the presence/absence of factors A–E as antecedents for visits to the BI. The likelihood is that information does not affect the equations (the go versus no-go conjunctural causal paths) but does affect the expenditures, length-of-stay, and number of activities visitors experienced; see Woodside, MacDonald, and Trappey (1997) for evidence supporting this proposition. If examinations of several cases both high and low in search/use of external information further confirm the proposition, then the go and no-go models can exclude information as a contingency factor — at least among older couples from visiting the BI from developed nations.

**Destination-Marketing Strategy Implications**

Several implications for effectively marketing visits to the Big Island follow from analyzing this case-study long interview report. For example, rather than using only
specific campaign advertising and promotions programs, general media reports have a long-term influence on trips such as the one taken by the couple from Germany. Having a continual presence in news media and popular press, movies, short stories, and novels has a long-time future impact on trips to a leisure destination. Consequently, such case studies support the proposition that public relations programs encouraging such story-reporting are effective.

Second, the findings from this case study support the effectiveness of destination-marketing special offers made in cooperation with airline frequent-flyer programs. The key is that some specific tipping point must be reached involving one or more factors — such as an accumulation of sufficient frequent flyer points in combination with a dream to visit the destination — to transform the travel dreams into realities.

Third, while visitors to Hawaii from some countries are known to shop for clothing and other products for themselves and to give to others (e.g., Rosenbaum & Spears, 2006), not all visitors (and likely many Europeans) are motivated to visit Hawaii for nature-related experiences and not to shop. Promoting shopping may be a turn-off for such visitors.

Fourth, the Big Island is unlikely to be a stand-alone destination magnet for first-time visitors to the State of Hawaii. Cooperative marketing programs across several islands and state-wide information brochures likely will be more effective in influencing first-time visits.

Fifth, the tipping point proposition receives strong support in case study research, such as the long interviews of the German couple and the American couple. Not only does a specific level of one factor need to be achieved (e.g., accumulation of many frequent flyer points), but specific outcomes of several factors must occur at the same instance (e.g., children old enough to be home alone and unsupervised, the accumulation of the necessary frequent flyer miles, and a successful husband–wife negotiation of a stopover visit to a secondary destination). The storytelling episodes with their son appear to be a necessary but not sufficient condition for the American couple in finally triggering a visit to the BI. Such case study data provides clues for destination advertising strategy on the importance of presenting storytelling dramas in commercial communications versus only on destination sights and experiences.

Are the stars in alignment, all the ducks in a row, and the old saws expressing such tipping point conjunctions? Advertising using storytelling scenarios may effectively express such tipping point scenarios that case study research uncovers — “The kids can manage without us, we have the mileage points, we can stop-off in San Diego and Mexico, and we’re still young enough to enjoy it! If not now, when?”

Conclusions

MTP theory is valuable in response to recognizing that consumers have limited ability and willingness to explain their own behavior. MTP theoretical tenants include a combination of the following points. (1) Most thinking occurs unconsciously. (2) Direct questioning of informants to learn the reasons and perceived causes
(see Malle, 1999, 2004) of their own behavior is unlikely to explicate unconscious thinking (see Zaltman, 2003). (3) Face-to-face methods that go beyond direct questioning are necessary for uncovering unconscious thinking — such methods include applying McCracken’s (1988) long interview method and Rapaille’s (2006) discovery sessions. (4) Combinations of antecedent conditions are necessary and sufficient for explaining and predicting behavior — the issue is not the relative importance of independent variables but rather on identifying alternative conjunctural causal paths leading to go and no-go outcomes (see Ragin, 1987). (5) The seemingly opposing goals of capturing/reporting complexity and achieving generality are achievable by collecting thick descriptions of several cases in each of several theoretically interesting combinations of antecedent factors. (6) All cells in full factorial design of four-or-five binary factors likely represent a limited number to many cases assuming that a study includes collecting a large number of cases ($n > 100$); thus, a researcher should seek to empirically examine seemingly outlier factor-level combinations — such combinations provide data for theoretically rich information. (7) QCA tools are useful for building and generalizing MTP models relevant for specific topics including describing and explaining discretionary destination behavior.

During the long interviews, the informants were initially unable to respond to the question as to what triggered this particular visit to the Big Island. The informants initiated the telling of stories leading to their present visits rather than reporting a conscious choice process or plus and minus judgments of attributes or experiences. The stories in their reports describe life-changing events (children moving away; reaching a travel award level; a move signaling the occurrence of job retirement) leading to an epiphany from unconscious to conscious knowing — a sudden realization that this was the year and Hawaii was the place.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This chapter does not describe the several alternative conjunctural causal paths relevant for trips to the BI. The study does not include descriptions of household members who are aware of the Big Island as a destination but never unconsciously or consciously thought about discretionary travel to the BI. Certainly, different additional paths exist among older American and German couples visiting the BI for the first time. Future research should consider suggesting alternative scenarios representing consumption systems not occurring for a travel party and asking travelers how representative or realistic such scenarios might be for the informants’ travel party. The objective is to stimulate thinking, use, and justification of building theory and applying alternative data collection methods via case study research. Future research would be useful focusing on conscious and unconscious constraints that combine to restrain individuals aware of destination that they consider as a possible place to visit but rarely or never actually visiting. Research on nontravelers having the discretionary funds and time to travel is sometimes a topic of major
importance for government destination organizations and firms seeking to stimulate
domestic and international travel.

Future applications of MTP theory and QCA tools in travel and consumer
research likely will achieve substantial success in reporting the complexity found in
case study research and the generality necessary for applied research. Such research
studies should uncover the alternative hidden (seemingly unimportant) factor levels
in combinations of causal paths leading to outcomes that the destination-brand
executive seeks or seeks to avoid.

Appendix. 2006 Hawaii Visitor Self-Report Study

Part 1. Type of Trip that You are Now Taking

1. How would you classify the trip that brings you to Hawaii? Is this a pure pleasure
trip, partly, or entirely a trip related to work, does the trip include attending
a conference? [Record verbatim response.] If a conference, what is the name of the
conference that you attending?
2. Did you start this current trip *that brings you to Hawaii* from you home in another
State or in some other country other than the U.S.? Please name the city, state,
and country where this current trip *that you are on* began.
3. Please describe the members of your immediate travel party for this trip. For
example, are you traveling with family members? If yes, what are the relationships
within the travel party?
4. Is your immediate travel party *part of a larger group*? For example, are you
visiting Hawaii on a group tour? If yes, please name/describe the group?
5. What are some of things that happened a few years, months, or weeks ago that
brought about this visit that includes you coming to Hawaii? [Use prompts: Please
provide details.]

Seek more details: Prompt: *How did it come about* that you are on this current trip
in Hawaii?

1. Is this your first visit to the State of Hawaii or have you been to Hawaii before
this current trip?
2. Has any other member of your immediate travel party been to Hawaii before this
current visit? If yes, please name the persons and describe the prior visits that
have been completed.
3. Are you visiting one or more of the islands here in the State of Hawaii on this
current visit or just the Big Island of Hawaii? If more than the Big Island, what
other islands in Hawaii are you visiting on this current trip and how many nights
are you staying on each island?
4. What made the difference in making this current trip to the State of Hawaii come
about versus not making the trip or doing some other activity or just staying at
home? Please discuss in some detail.
5. Are you visiting other destinations outside of Hawaii on this current trip? If yes, please name these other destinations and tell how many nights you have spent or will spend at each destination outside of Hawaii.

6. Please describe the things that happened and thoughts you may have had during the years, months, or weeks before the trip about how many nights that was scheduled for this current visit in Hawaii and the total number of nights away from home.

7. What made the difference in the number of nights, weeks, or months for this visit to Hawaii for you?

8. Is this visit to the Big Island a minor or major part of your visit to the State of Hawaii? Please describe how the Big Island came to be included in this current trip to the Big Island.

9. Is there anything in particular here on the Big Island that brings you here on this current trip? If yes, please describe. [Prompt. Anything else?]

10. Please describe the things that you are doing here today on the Big Island. What have you done this morning and what will you be doing today for the rest of day? [Prompt. Anything else?]

11. Please describe the things you and members of your immediate travel party have done before today here in the State of Hawaii on this current visit. [Prompt. Anything else?]

12. Please describe the things that you will be doing tomorrow and for the rest of your visit to the State of Hawaii on this current visit. [Prompt. Anything else?]

Part 2. Flights, Accommodations, and Ground Transportation

1. What steps/events/thoughts occurred that relate to you getting flight tickets for this visit to the State of Hawaii? For example, did you use frequent flyer miles, did you reserve tickets on-line, or visit a travel agent? Please describe the steps.

2. Was paying for the flights paid for as a business expense or was did you pay as a personal expense?

3. Was the airline company that you flew on something you thought about before getting tickets to visit the State of Hawaii or the Big Island? If yes or if no, please describe your thoughts about different airlines relating to the current visit to Hawaii.

4. Please describe your actual flights to the State of Hawaii and to the Big Island. How would you describe the flights? Prompt: Did anything surprising/somewhat unusual happen during the flights or between flights?

5. If you could change something about the flights to Hawaii or the Big Island, what would you change?

6. What steps/events/thoughts occurred that relate to you getting accommodations for this visit to the State of Hawaii? For example, did you reserve accommodations on-line, telephone for a place to stay, or visit a travel agent? Please describe the steps.

7. Please name and describe the accommodations that you are using here on the Big Island.
8. Was paying for accommodations on the Big Island paid for here as a business expense or was did you pay as a personal expense?

9. Were the accommodations that you are using here on the Big Island something you thought about before the visit the State of Hawaii or the Big Island? If yes or if no, please describe your thoughts you had before this trip about different accommodations relating to the current visit to Hawaii. Prompt: Did anything surprising/somewhat unusual happen during your use of accommodations here on the Big Island?

10. If you could change something about the accommodations that you are using in Hawaii or the Big Island, what would you change?

11. What steps/events/thoughts occurred that relate to you getting ground transportation (such as taking bus tours, renting a car, taking taxicabs, for this visit to the State of Hawaii? For example, did you reserve ground transportation on-line, telephone, or visit a travel agent? Please describe the steps.

12. Please name and describe the ground transportations that you are using here on the Big Island.

13. Was paying for ground transportation paid here on the Big Island as a business expense or did you pay as a personal expense?

14. Were the ground transportations that you are using here on the Big Island something you thought about before the visit the State of Hawaii or the Big Island? If yes or if no, please describe your thoughts you had before this trip about different ground transportations relating to the current visit to Hawaii. Prompt: Did anything surprising/somewhat unusual happen during your use of ground transportation here on the Big Island? Prompt: If you could change something about the accommodations that you are using in Hawaii or the Big Island, what would you change?

Part 3. Sources of Information about Hawaii and the Big Island

1. Before this visit to Hawaii, did you talk with friends, travel agents, family members, and/or local Hawaii persons about this current trip to Hawaii?
2. If yes, who did you talk with and what were the topics of the conversations?
3. What information did you learn and/or was useful before visiting Hawaii? Please describe.
4. Before coming to Hawaii, what comments were made to you by friends or family members about this visit, if any?
5. Did you and/or any one else in your immediate travel party get a travel book/guide in the months or weeks before this visit to Hawaii and the Big Island?

Prompt: If yes, what travel/guide books did you get?
Prompt: Was any particular travel/guide book useful for this current trip to Hawaii? If yes, how was the information helpful?
1. Did you talk to a travel agent or visit travel agents’ in person on-line websites before starting this visit to Hawaii?
2. If yes, what information did you look at? Please name the travel agents that you visited on-line or in person. Were the visits useful?

Part 4. Eating out and Dinning Experiences

1. Please describe some of your eating out and dining experiences during your visit to the Big Island.
2. Please name some of the restaurants and fast food places you have eaten at here on the Big Island.
3. Please describe any unusual or surprising events relating to eating out or dining here on the Big Island.

Part 5. Places Visited and Doing Activities on the Big Island

Please circle the following places here on the Big Island that during this current visit you have visited or definitely will visit:

1 Cloud Forrest-Kaloko Drive
2 Kailua-Kona
3 Makalei Golf Course
4 Parker Ranch
5 Waikoloa Village
6 Holoholoku
7 Kohala Mountain Road
8 North Shore of Kohala
9 Kapa’aau
10 Kalahikiola Church
11 Kauhola Point Lighthouse
12 Pololu Valley
13 Pololu Beach
14 Mo’okini Heiau
15 Kapa’a Beach Park
16 Mahukona
17 Lapakahí State Historical Park
18 Kawaihae
19 Kohala resort area
20 Hapuna Beach
21 Mauna Lani Bay Hotel
22 Kohala Lava Desert Area
23 Ke-awa-iki
24 Kiholo Bay
25 Makalawena Beach
26 National Energy Laboratory
27 Wawaloli Beach
28 Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park
29 Honokohau Harbor
30 The Gallery of Bamboo
31 Tropical Dreams
32 Shady’s
33 Kohala Book Shop
34 Nanbu Courtyard
35 Ackerman Galleries
36 Hilton Waikoloa
37 Mauna Lani
38 Shops at Mauna Lani
39 Kings’ Shops
40 Louis Vutton
41 Ukulele House
42 Ahu’ena Heiau
43 Kamakahonu Beach
44 Hulihe’e Palace
45 Palace Gift Shop
46 Pohaku Likanaka
47 Mokuaiakaua Church
48 Kona Inn
49 Huggo’s Bubba Gump
50 Hard Rock Café
51 Cloud Forrest up Kaloko Drive
52 Kailua-Kona
53 Makalei Gof Course
54 Parker Ranch
55 Waikoloa Village
56 Holoholoku
57 Kohala Mountain Road
58 North Shore of Kohala
59 Kapa’au
60 Kalahikiola Church
61 Kauhola Point Lighthouse
62 Pololu Valley
63 Pololu Beach
64 Mo’okini Heiau
65 Kapa’a Beach Park
66 Mahukona
67 Lapakahi Historical Park
68 Kawaihae
69 Kohala resort area
70 Hapuna Beach
71 Mauna Lani Bay Hotel
72 Kohala Lava Desert Area
73 Ke-awa-iki
74 Kiholo Bay
75 Makalawena Beach
76 National Energy Laboratory
77 Wawaloli Beach
78 Kaloko-Honokohau National Historical Park
79 Honokohau Harbor
80 The Gallery of Bamboo
81 Tropical Dreams
82 Shady’s
83 Kohala Book Shop
84 Nanbu Courtyard
85 Ackerman Galleries
86 Hilton Waikoloa
87 Mauna Lani
88 Shops at Mauna Lani
89 Kings’ Shops
90 Louis Vutton
91 Ukulele House
92 Ahu’ena Heiau
93 Kamakahonu Beach
94 Hulihe’e Palace
95 Palace Gift Shop
96 Pohaku Likanaka
97 Mokuaiakaua Church
98 Kona Inn
99 Huggo’s Bubba Gump
100 Hard Rock Café
101 Hang Loos
102 Pahoe hoe Beach Park
103 White Sands Beach
104 St. Peter’s Catholic Church
105 Little Blue Church
106 Ku’emanu Heiau
107 Kahalu’u Beach Park
108 Ke’e ku Heiau
109 Keauhou Shopping Center
110 Holualoa
111 Greenwell
112 Bayview
113 Kona Historical Museum
114 Kealakekua Bay
115 Place of Refuge
116 Napo’opo’o Beach
117 Captain Cook Monument
118 Kings’ Trail Rides
119 Ke’ei Beach
120 Moku-a-Kae Bay
121 South Point
122 Green Sand Beach
123 Whittington Park
124 Punalu’u Black Sand Beach
125 Volcanoes National Park
126 Kilauea Volcano
127 Chain of Craters Road
128 Hiking: ______
129 Volcano Village
130 Hilo
131 Glenwood
132 Pahoa
133 Kapoho
134 Kalapana
135 Lava Tree State Park
136 Kea’au
137 Cape Kumukahi
138 Pe’epe’e Falls
139 Kaumana Cave
140 Prince Kuhio Plaza
141 Nani Mau Gardens
142 Pana’ewa Rain Forest
143 Hawai’i Tropical Botanical Gardens
144 Mauna Loa Visitor Center
145 Stainback Highway
146 Puna
147 Ahalanui
148 Isaac Hale Beach Park
149 Honoli’i Beach Park
150 Akaka Falls
151 Umauma Falls
152 Nanue Stream
153 Laupahoehoe Train Museum
154 Laupahoehoe Point
155 Honoka’a
156 Waipi’o Valley
157 Old Mamalahoa Highway
158 Waiamea
159 Hamakua & Waiamea Shopping
160 Saddle Road
161 Mauma Kea State Park
162 Kaumana Cave
163 University of Hawai’i Telescope
164 Lake Wai-au
165 Keanakako’i
166 Mauna Loa
167 Kekaha Kai State Park
168 Ka’upulehu Beach
169 Kuki’o Beach
170 Manini’owali/Kua Bay
171 Makalawena
172 Makole’a Beach
173 Wawaloli Beach
174 Old Kona Airport Beach Park
175 White Sands Beach Park
176 Kailua Bay
177 Kahalu’u Beach Park
178 Pahoehoe Beach Park
179 Napo’opo’o Beach
180 Ke’ei Beach
181 Pu’uhonua o Honaunau
182 Pebble Beach
183 Ho’okena Beach Park
184 Miloli’i Beach Park
185 Honomalina Bay
186 Biking
187 Camping: ______
188 Fishing: ______
189 Golfing: ______
190 Helicopters: ______
191 Mauna Loa Summit
192 Punahaha
193 Kayaking
194 Scuba
195 Parasailing
196 Snorkeling
197 Snuba
198 Whale watching
199 Stargazing
200 Tennis
201 Submarine
202 Surfing
203 Kit surfing
Part 6. What Do You Think Will be Your Memories of Your Visit to the Big Island after This Trip Is Over? Please Describe in Some Detail:

Part 7. If you had the chance to not make this trip to the Big Island and spend your time and money on something else, assuming that you would do so, what would you spend your time and money on? Please describe in some detail.

Part 8. Which one would you do if you had a choice between this visit and the other activity? Please comment with some details.

Part 9. Gifts

A. Please describe gifts that you bought for yourself during this visit to the Big Island.

- What are the specific purchases that you made for yourself?
- How much did you pay for each gift?
- Did you plan to buy each of these gifts before your arrival or after your arrival?

B. Please describe gifts that you bought for other persons traveling with you on this trip.

- Did you buy any such gifts?
- If yes, what did you buy and for whom is each gift for?
- How much did you pay for each gift?

C. Please describe gifts that you bought to take home for family members or friends.

- Did you buy any such gifts?
- If yes, what did you buy and for whom is each gift for?
- How much did you pay for each gift?

Thank you for your cooperation. [Make out check payable to informant for $50.00; give check to informant.]
Chapter 15

Participant Observation Research
in Organizational Behavior

Synopsis

At its best, participation observation (PO) includes the researcher living inside a formal or informal organization long enough to actually observe first-hand how the organization makes sense of its environment, frames problems and opportunities, plans and performs actions, evaluates outcomes, rewards and punishes its members, and celebrates and commiserates sacred, climatic, and/or exceptional events. The core feature of PO is being there — the researcher’s presence in the same context as participants as events happen and not relying mostly on participants retrospections about what happened and the causes and consequences of what happened. In some studies PO data collection occurs unobtrusively — the researcher does not inform the organizations’ participants that she is conducting a study of their thinking and behavior — for example, in The Tearoom Trade (Humphreys, 1970) the researcher becomes a “watch queen” (lookout watching for police) in a men’s room in park while others engage in homosexual acts; in The Informant (Eichenwald, 2000) an executive in an international manufacturing firm becomes an undercover researcher (with hidden cameras and listening devices) to collect data showing his colleagues planning and doing illegal price-fixing deals with executives in other firms. In most studies PO data collection is obtrusive with the organizations’ members knowing that a researcher is present for the purposes of observing, describing, and explaining what is occurring in the organization — for example, in Coming of Age in Samoa (Mead, 1943) the American researcher lived among the natives in the south Pacific island to describe rituals relating to the transformation of child to adult; in The Used Car Game (Browne, 1976) the researcher directly observed interactions of salesmen, customers, and sales managers for seven-to-ten hours a day for 15 months with all participants knowing that the researcher was “being there” to collect data to describe and understand their thinking and behavior. The intent for this chapter is not to present a full review of the PO literature; the focus here is to illustrate an obtrusive PO study in a formal organizational context in-depth. The main goals include (1) illustrating doing PO and (2) describing the value of PO research. This chapter serves to introduce the reader to relevant organizational PO literature and provides details of applying participant observation to the study of organizational behavior. The study applies an ethnographic approach to develop flow
diagrams of the information processes and decision-making stages of corporate and plant executives in developing corporate purchasing agreements with suppliers. Participant observations of the processes to develop corporate purchasing agreements were conducted along with extensive personal interviews of plant buyers at seven plant locations of Epsilon Corporation — a multinational electronics firm with headquarters offices in New York City. The results indicate that valid and useful descriptions are possible of the information processes and decisions actually used to produce corporate purchasing agreements. Several diagnostic comments are provided to each of the four phases in the processes used to develop corporate purchasing agreements. A template for applying participant observation methods in case study research concludes the chapter.

Introduction

Procedures for descriptive analysis of information processes and decision making have been developed and applied at the organizational level. The resulting descriptive models are useful for gaining insights into the functions of business firms and as descriptive tools to find and solve problems. Few studies of management, marketing, finance, and purchasing decision processes have been published despite the advocacy for such research (Howard & Morgenroth, 1968). However, descriptive analysis of organizational decisions has not been ignored. Wind (1966) was a pioneer in describing the purchasing processes of component parts in firms; Mintzberg, Raisinghani, and Theoret’s (1976) classic description of decision processes focuses on firms’ purchasing processes. These study findings support the following four general propositions.

1. Executives use local rationality (rather than general rubrics) to resolve organizational conflicts involving goals (i.e., delegation and specialization in decisions and goals serve to simplify decisions and goals that really involve complex sets of inter-related problems and conflicting goals).
2. Persons involved in the buying process (i.e., an informal or semi-formal “buying center”) attempt to avoid uncertainty in decisions. This avoidance of uncertainty is achieved by using decision rules that emphasize short-run reaction to short-run feedback and by arranging a negotiated environment.
3. Any search carried out by the members of a buying center is stimulated by a problem and is directed toward finding a solution to the problem. Search is motivated, biased, and follows the simplest route (search to find “black swans” or negative cases that refute views occurs rarely).
4. The buying center changes its goals; shifts its attention, and revises its procedures for search as a function of its experience.
Recent research supports and refines these propositions. For example, Na, Marshall, and Woodside (2009) extend the four propositions with five additional propositions through their participant observation studies of decisions–outcomes–evaluations among advertising agencies and their clients.

5. The organizational structure (team or functional system) influences the structure of decision-making groups enacting decision processes. This proposition is very straightforward. For example, in the team system an account supervisor would usually be in charge of the group. However, in a departmental structure system, it is more usually a copy director or an art director who would be in charge of the group. Although we would expect the decision roles to be constant no matter what the structure (i.e., influencers, buyers, gatekeepers, and deciders), the functional roles involved will almost certainly differ.

6. The types of advertising decision (creative, media, promotion, and campaign) affect the structure of decision-making groups. This, again, makes intuitive good sense. It is to be expected that different types of advertising service require different types of expert for that particular problem-solving situation. Thus, the structure of decision-making groups will vary across each of these decision-type situations.

7. The decision situation (complexity, novelty, or importance) influences the decision process and the size of a decision-making group. The buying situation determines the size, role structure, and decision process within group decisions. Clearly, factors such as intangibility, unfamiliarity, complexity and simply the costs of getting the decisions wrong will all have a structural affect upon the decision-group composition.

8. Conflicts are rare and are resolved in ways perceived to be rational. Advertising is simply one kind of professional service, and a professional association provides support and a code of conduct in almost every market, as for other professional services. Professional services require a great degree of confidentiality and trust on the part of the purchaser, who lack the detailed information and skills of the professional being hired.

9. The function, types of decisions, and the decision situation (complexity, novelty, and importance) affect the structuring criteria and decision rules adopted (for evidence, see Bettman & Park, 1980; Vyas & Woodside, 1984). The proposition has face validity as well, in that very simple decisions only involve a small number of people, for instance, whereas a larger group of managers are more likely to share more risky decision situations. As each role-player brings her/his own decision criteria to the table, then the nature of the risks involved in the particular decision process are reflected in the decisional criteria.

Na et al.’s (2009) full report shows that real-life decision processes often depart dramatically from textbook explanations. For example, similar to all other descriptive studies, the findings consistently reject the proposition that decision makers weight antecedents by their importance and make choices by summing values representing strengths and weaknesses for each option before them. “It appears as if the participants used non-compensatory decision rules in every situation; at least,
we could not identify a situation where they applied compensatory rules. Decisional evaluative criteria varied dramatically among individuals, who tend to carry their criteria with them as they participate in the decisions” (Na et al., 2009, p. 165).

Witte (1972), Mintzberg et al. (1976), and others (Na et al., 2009) do not find a sequence of five phases in decision processing, as most of the normative literature suggests does and should occur (i.e., problem recognition to gathering information to development of alternatives for evaluation to deciding on an alternative). Witte (1972) was able to identify distinct phases in decision processing but found that all occurred in each time interval in the processes. The frequency of occurrence of the decision phases was different across time intervals. The total level of activity peaked at the beginning and end of the process and the number of choices peaked at the end. Mintzberg et al. (1976) delineate distinct phases of decision processes, but similar to Witte does not postulate a simple sequential relationship among the phases.

Mintzberg et al. (1976) identifies three phases and seven routines in strategic decisions:

1. The identification phase: decision recognition and diagnosis routines.
2. The development phase: search and design routines.

They further found that decision processes fell into seven groupings according to the path configurations through the seven routines. The purchasing decision processes involved extensive cycling back from evaluation-choice to design and search routines.

Using PO research, Chapter 15 reports on how the planning, doing, and outcomes occur in corporations for corporate purchasing agreements for commodities. The study describes the subdivisions (phases), routines, and problems in coordinating activities between routines. This study complements the descriptive research on marketing decisions by suppliers in participating in annual contracts with corporate customers that Capon and Hulbert report (1975).

Corporate purchase agreements (CPAs) or annual contracts are defined as statements of intention to purchase and supply a quantity of product at a set price usually for a 12-month period. Such agreements are not formal legal commitments but, their provisions are usually adhered to by suppliers and customers. Corporate purchase agreements are often used by large multinational corporations to combine the purchasing requirements of several plants for negotiating to receive large quantity discounts from suppliers. For suppliers, CPAs are an aid in learning the total product requirements of a customer. Suppliers use customer’s request for CPAs as a basis for planning strategy to achieve a greater share of major customers’ requirements. CPAs also aid in production scheduling for suppliers and help reduce the risk to customers of shortages and “not getting product.”

Capon and Hulbert (1975) report that a sales forecasting system was the core of marketing planning and budgeting of a large multinational British firm specializing in the highly capital intensive conversion of basic raw materials into products which are sold to secondary processors. Capon and Hulbert studied how the marketing department of this firm interacted with customers and processed information to
make decisions. They found that salespeople visited important customers accompanied by a sales manager where appropriate. Face-to-face supplier customer negotiation on price and quantity was central to Capon and Hulbert’s descriptive model of how the supplier reached annual contracts with customers.

**Method**

Similar to most research on descriptive models of executive decisions, the study was focused on a single firm: Epsilon Corporation (name disguised). Epsilon Corporation has plants through the world — 80 in the United States and 40 in Canada, Europe, Latin America, the Caribbean Area, and the Far East — with sales of $8 billion. Epsilon has five product groups. Each has a president reporting to the Executive Vice President for the Products Group. Six staff vice presidents report to the President of Epsilon Corporation. Each of these staff vice presidents has some supporting line responsibilities.

The corporate purchasing staff responsible for developing CPAs report to the Vice President of Materials and Facilities who reports to the Vice President of Manufacturing Services.

The study was directed only to directly describing the decision processes of CPAs for production materials — raw materials and semi-finished products used in manufacturing products by the five-product groups. A total of $2.9 billion commodity purchases in CPAS were planned for 2010. Total purchases of the Epsilon Corporation for commodities are over $2.7 billion annually. The Director of Purchasing has responsibility for developing commodity CPA’s. The Director of Purchasing reports to the Vice President of Materials and Facilities. The Vice President of Materials and Facilities reports to the Vice President of Manufacturing Services.

A multiple method approach was used to permit a “triangulation” (1979) of data collection to provide valid observations of coordinated purchasing activities and decisions. Data from direct observation, a review of company records, personal interviews, and a literature review were compared and contrasted in an attempt to produce clarity in understanding information processing and decision making in corporate purchasing agreements.

With the cooperation of Epsilon Corporation, an ethnographic approach was incorporated in the study. The ethnographic approach includes the use of anthropological tools and is commonly labeled as participant observation in sociology.

As practiced, this approach allows a fieldworker to use the culture of the setting (the socially acquired and shared knowledge available to the participants or members of the setting) to account for the observed patterns of human activity. (van Maanen, 1979)

Conklin (1968) describes the ethnographic method as involving a long period of intimate study and residence in a well-defined community employing a wide range
of observational techniques including prolonged face-to-face contact with members of local groups, direct participation in some of the group’s activities, and a greater emphasis on intensive work with informants than on the use of documentary survey data. The fieldworker must constantly check the reality of the descriptions of events and decisions provided by informants in the defined community. This checking includes comparing the various features of interviews with different participants concerning the same events, re-interviews of the participants to verify and elaborate previous statements, comparing correspondence of observations with the verbal reports of participants, and observing first-hand the activities of individuals and groups in the defined community.

This type of fieldwork, despite the best of intentions of the researcher, almost always boils down to a series of endless conversations intersected by a few major events and a host of less formidable ones. The information as recorded by the fieldworker is then primarily talk-based not only because this is what occupies the vast majority of the ethnographer’s time but also because understanding the concrete activities taking place in the field is grounded largely upon what members have to say about what such activities mean to them. (Conklin, 1968, p. 203)

For the present study, for seven weeks, the researcher became a participant observer of Epsilon Corporation’s purchasing staff at the company’s international headquarters in New York City. He attended staff meetings, committee meetings, meetings with vendors, and interviewed eight members of the staff briefly three to seven times each. A total of 18 members of Epsilon Corporation’s coordinated purchasing program were interviewed at seven plant locations during the data collection period. Each of the 18 participants was interviewed face-to-face in two-hour, individual, meetings. Personal interviews were held with salespersons of six suppliers of Epsilon Corporation. Five of views were held at the sales offices of the international headquarters of the suppliers. One interview was held near the headquarters building of Epsilon. These interviews were held to collect data to elaborate and verify the descriptions of the purchasing processes described by the buyers and purchasing staff at Epsilon’s headquarters.

During the data collection period of the study, flow diagrams of the information processing and decision making were developed and shown to several members of Epsilon’s corporate staff and plant purchasing managers. The diagrams were revised, shown again to the same corporate staff and plant purchasing managers, and then revised and presented for a third time to the same corporate staff and plant purchasing managers. The cooperating purchasing personnel were asked to describe the actual processes and decisions used in developing corporate agreements. They were asked to verify each step in these processes and decisions whenever possible with correspondence, memoranda, published reports, and their personal records.

The resulting diagrams shown in the results section are composite summaries of the descriptions provided and verified by the purchasing personnel cooperating in the
study. The attempt has been made to depict the processes and decisions used for most of the production materials coordinated across plants.

Findings

Epsilon Corporation uses a committee approach in their coordinated purchasing program. The Director of Purchases (Peter Reuter) and two purchasing specialists (Dale Thomas and Bill Matthews) each co-chair production materials committees, with a senior buyer at a plant location appointed as a co-chair on each committee.

Both Thomas and Matthews are in their mid-20s. Thomas was a buyer at an Epsilon Corporation plant for four years before transferring to the headquarters. Matthews is an engineer by training; he has worked with purchasing as an engineer for four years in another corporation before moving to New York City. Both Thomas and Matthews were purchasing specialists for approximately two years at the time of the study. Reuter has been in purchasing at Epsilon Corporation for approximately 25 years. He is in his early 50s.

Reuter co-chairs two committees directly: glass and Far East procurement. Matthews is co-chair for four committees: semiconductors, capacitors, resistors, and printed circuit boards. Thomas co-chairs eight committees, including ferrites, plastics, magnet wire, and hybrid inks.

Several committees have two co-chair persons at the plant locations — one in the United States and one in Europe. For example, the capacitor committee has Allan Bates in Chicago and H. Shaw at Minneapolis as co-chairpersons from plant locations. Committees with two plant locations co-chairpersons (United States and Europe) rarely meet as an entire committee. The U.S. segment of such a committee negotiates with U.S. suppliers and this segment of the committee will meet separately from the committee members in plants in other parts of the world. However, a co-chair (Reuter or Matthews, for example) from headquarters will attend non-United States meetings of the committees. For example, Matthews went to Germany for two weeks in July to attend negotiation meetings one of the semi-conductor committee with European suppliers. A total of 14 committees for production materials existed at the time of the study. Several new coordinated purchasing agreements were planned for the next calendar year that might require the formation of new committees, for example, connectors and cable agreements.

The Director of Purchases (Reuter) has no line responsibility to direct purchasing activity or decisions at the plants. Persuasion, appeals for cooperation, and written directives from the Executive Vice President of the Products Group are used to produce cooperation from the purchasing management at plant locations to work on CPAs. A total of 76 plant purchasing managers, including 42 in the United States, report to the plant manufacturing organizations within their Business Groups. Each of the plant managers have 2 to 12 senior buyers and buyers reporting to them. A total of 2 to 15 assistant buyers and order processors also work in purchasing management organizations at the plant level.
Coordinated Purchasing Savings at Epsilon Corporation

The purchased material of $2.4 billion of Epsilon Corporation is divisible into four material groups:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Share (%)</th>
<th>Value ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Production material</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>1.0 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inside material</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0.4 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finished goods</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>0.3 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nonproduction material</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>0.2 B</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td></td>
<td>1.9 B</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

For production material, 52 percent was spent in the United States, 24 percent was spent in Europe, 11 percent was spent in the Far East/Latin America, and 12 percent was spent in Canada. Of that $1.0 billion in production materials, 81 percent was spent on all types of purchases which were common in all locations. The $0.8 billion of potential coordination has been estimated for the purchases of the five Business Groups as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>Share (%)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications products business</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consumer groups</td>
<td>25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 3</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Group 5</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Of the $0.8 billion worldwide: potential, purchasing has identified for world-wide coordination 25 percent ($200 M) in 2010. Of the $210 M potential in nonproduction material, 15 percent is planned for coordinated in United States/Canada and Europe. At the start of 2010, the Director of Purchasing (Reuter) provided the following evaluation of Epsilon Corporation’s program to coordinate commodity purchases.

The value of coordinated commodities increased for a gain of 28%. The net reduction from previous price paid was $11.1 million compared to $8.7 million in the previous year — also a gain. Four new commodities were coordinated on a world-wide basis for the first time in 2009.
The coordinated commodity agreements with suppliers re-viewed as firm business arrangements by purchasing at Epsilon manufacturing locations, by Epsilon, New York, and by suppliers. Thus, the opportunity to report the actual dollar amounts being coordinated and net reductions is substantial for the coordinated commodity agreements.

**Decision Systems Analyses**

Figures 1–4 show the flow of events and decisions for the coordinated purchasing program for commodities at Epsilon. The events and purchase decisions are divided into four parts:

1. Developing and analyzing requirements
2. Preparing RFQs and analyzing quotations
3. Committee–supplier negotiations
4. Post-negotiation evaluation and reporting.

Figure 1 is a description of activities and decisions that take place prior to the corporate purchasing staff issuing a requirements survey to the plant locations. The development of a commodity plan is the central event of this process. The development of such plans was first proposed in 2009. The details of the benefits and format of commodity plans were explained in a statement prepared by Matthews (one of the purchasing specialists). Exhibit 1 shows part of this statement.

The preparation of commodity plans was a new activity in the summer of 2009. Such plans were not available yet for any commodity. However, the purchasing specialists and trainees ("Associates") were assigned to develop such plans for specific commodities.

The need for some type of planning similar to commodity plans was identified by three plant purchasing managers during the field interviews. The preparation of commodity plans had not yet been discussed with plant purchasing by corporate purchasing in the summer of 2009.

The survey of requirements near the bottom of Figure 1 was of direct concern to plant purchasing managers. Several buyers interviewed in the study reported that the "high number of man days to respond to corporate requests” and the “rush request by New York” were problems. To overcome these problems, a computer data system was created in 2008 for requesting requirements from plant purchasing. However, the continual need to plan and keep to a specific time schedule to send requests for requirements, prepare the requirements at the plants, and receive and analyze the requirements at New York should be recognized as the major immediate concern of the initial stage in producing coordinated agreements.

Preparing RFQs, issuing RFQ, and analyzing the resulting quotes are the major activities shown in Figure 2. A serious problem was reported by several of the buyers interviewed in the issuing of RFQs to vendors. Some buyers disagreed with the practice of sending an RFQ to a vendor who has not been qualified at several plants.
Figure 1: Stage 1 of corporate purchase agreements: Developing and analyzing requirements.
Figure 2: Stage 2 of corporate purchase agreements: Preparing RFQs and analyzing quotations.
Figure 3: Stage 3 of corporate purchase agreements: Committee-supplier negotiations.
Figure 4: Stage 4 of corporate purchasing agreements: Post-negotiation evaluation and reporting.

Exhibit 1. Commodity purchase planning (CPP).

I. What is commodity purchasing planning? CPP is a specific short/long-term written action plan for purchasing profit sensitive material, emphasizing value improvement so as to obtain the lowest overall delivered cost consistent with service and quality requirements for the commodity under plan. Plans are typically either written or updated on a yearly basis.

II. What benefits are gained from such a plan? (1) CPP provides a means to organize the thinking relating to buying strategies and methods which result in enhanced supply continuity, supplier service, and lower total costs for the purchased material … (9) Conveys management orientation and concentration of profits improvement.

III. Sample CPP Format. (1) Commodity — description and computer code number of material … (7) Supplier analysis: A. Evaluate performance of current and past suppliers … B. Existing contracts: tabulate essential data including: names of suppliers; using locations; … reasons for order splits … 10. Action plan — proposed administration of contract, committee, member involvement, and schedule of events for the forthcoming year.
In some instances, the buyers reported that a potential supplier was sent an RFQ and quoted who was not qualified at any Epsilon plants. Two buyers preferred to see RFQs sent only to suppliers who were qualified at two or plants. However, two buyers preferred the practice of sending RFQs to nonqualified vendors — “a good way to test the waters” was a reason offered for this procedure.

Whatever the approach taken, the committees need to discuss this issue before RFQs are sent to suppliers. The question of which suppliers should be sent RFQs should be answered in pre-negotiation meetings of the commodity committees. This step would be a recommendation for changing the decision system currently in use.

A problem occurs in the last step shown in Figure 2: develop supplier negotiation schedule and issue to committee members. Final agreement on which suppliers to invite to face-to-face negotiations is often not decided by the committee but by headquarters acting alone. One committee member reported that as supplier had arrived at the negotiation who was unknown by all the committee members.

An initial pre-negotiation meeting of the committee may be necessary before the week of the negotiations with suppliers to jointly analyze suppliers’ quotes. The use of the committee approach appears to call for several meetings of the committee: (1) an initial planning meeting to evaluate supplier performance across plants and to develop a time schedule, (2) a second meeting to evaluate quotes received and plan negotiations strategies with the different suppliers, and (3) a pre-negotiation meeting at the start of the week of negotiations with suppliers to review strategies and make last minute changes.

For some commodities, the first and the third meeting or only, the third meeting was held by a commodity committee. Having three meetings of a committee for a commodity was reported to be a rarity. A second meeting may be necessary to reach a consensus on which suppliers to invite to the negotiations and to plan negotiation strategies. Substantial conflicts sometimes occur and are left unresolved within the committee on what strategy to use in negotiating with vendors.

The degree of aggressiveness with suppliers was an area of conflict among committee members. The majority of members reported that their negotiation skills had improved because of their participation in committee negotiations with suppliers. They credited this improvement to Peter Reuter’s aggressive style in negotiating price concessions from suppliers. “Before Reuter we were too close to suppliers. Now we are more professional” is a statement from one committee member that was expressed in similar ways by other committee members who were interviewed. However, not everyone agreed that a very aggressive approach in negotiating with suppliers should be taken. The following comments were made by plant purchasing personnel on this issue.

1. “Making counteroffers to suppliers’ quotes below the price the committee would ultimately expect to agree won’t work.”
2. “Offers should be made on what the committee expects to receive.”
3. “Suppliers XY and LIPB were pissed off at a purchasing specialist saying, ‘Apparently you don’t appreciate our business.’ It was a bad [situation].”
4. "Making counteroffer 5 to suppliers’ quotes below the price expected to &:
   received is done now. It works!"
5. "Don’t try to drive a guy down so that he is not going to make any money. Look
   for the low quote and accept it. It’s got to be good for both parties."
6. "Maybe we start too low. We got an initial balk from suppliers."
7. "Yes, we are justified in making low counteroffers. At least we asked-should
   try."
8. "No-see who quoted low. Assume the low quote is the market price. It’s not
   ethical to dream up a price 10 percent below the low quote. When you do this
   you destroy long-term relationships. Credibility is destroyed. They believe me
   when I tell them that this is the market price."
9. "Well yes — start low and compromise if needed — if in actual negotiation
   sessions."
10. "Yes. I will never make a counter-offer that does not go below the price I am
    currently paying." This buyer would go lower in the counter-offer in a buyer’s
    market but not in a seller’s market.
11. "Yes, but I don’t want to violate the Robinson–Pactman Act. This is a good
    reason to bring in a small vendor who will low ball you — bring him in first.
    Never play brinkmanship unless you have the aces. You don’t have to be
    obnoxious; a common tactic now is yelling, table pounding, and then making up
    with suppliers."
12. "Yes, because you really don’t know where the vendors’ prices are."
13. "Yes, but should be made from knowledge. Don’t say you have it when you
    don’t. You hurt yourself. Corporate purchasing staff is concerned only with the
    bucks." This buyer went to explain that he has to be concerned with availability
    and quality in addition to price.
14. "Yes — must have some tell you no. But — New York — Reuter — undercuts
    chairman sometimes, Ralph Jones [name disguised] specifically." This buyer
    went on to say that his negotiation skills have improved from his committee
    participation, “I’m tougher now — less a feeling that it’s important to be nice —
    we don’t want to be called ‘nice’ by suppliers.”

The important point here is that serious differences in opinions on which type
of negotiation strategies should be used with vendors sometimes occur within
committees. These differences need resolving by each committee before the face-to-
face meetings with suppliers. Details of the events and decisions in the committee
and supplier negotiations are shown in Figure 3. The need for consensus of the basic
negotiating strategy before the start of the meeting is the most serious concern with
the negotiation process.

If the supplier’s proposal is not accepted by the committee, the committee will
present a counteroffer to the supplier at the meeting. This is the most likely action.
Supplier representatives will usually “caucus” on this counteroffer, that is, the
two-to-five representatives will meet in a private room by themselves to discuss the
counteroffer. The suppliers usually present a counter-offer to the committee’s
counter-offer. The supplier’s counter-offer may or may not be accepted. If it is not
accepted, the committee caucuses for a strategy revision and then presents a counteroffer to the supplier. Rejection by the supplier of this offer results in an unsuccessful negotiation.

Figure 4 describes the post-negotiation evaluation and reporting activities and decisions for coordinated agreements for commodities. A problem at this stage in the process is that plant purchasing participating as members in the committees do not learn how well the program has performed or learn months after the negotiations are completed. A reporting system to plants management, purchasing, and other functional areas from corporate is not included in the post-negotiation evaluation, and reporting stage.

One committee member in Atlanta remarked, “We don’t see any report on savings. [New York says] ‘Tell us your requirements, vendors, and other information.’ But we don’t get anything back from New York.” This member reported that the negotiations with suppliers were completed in less than two weeks on semiconductors but the contracts were not received for months. “A lot of it was New York being slow. Same problem with vendors.” The member wanted to know, “Why New York did not send me corporate agreements for semiconductors. I got them from another plant.”

We provide New York with tons of information but get nothing back. Not even a timetable nor a corporate-wide RFQ, or quotes back from suppliers. After a negotiation let us see the results: “As a corporation we committed so much.”

Another committee member made the following comments related to the post-negotiation stage. “We don’t get feedback. New York has problems.” He then went on to discuss scheduling problems and strategy problems with the coordinated program.

“Not enough time is allowed by New York to work up requirements for RFQs. This is a minor problem. Then it takes too long for New York to get RFQs out — 3 to 4 months to get RFQs out. New York is not concerned with service, quality, or lead time. They are concerned with price alone. We are concerned with product and service. The Purchasing Specialists try to go from coordinator to head negotiators. Suppliers get mad. Reuter needs a guy with field experience. The RFQs on capacitors sent to all suppliers. Most suppliers did not supply all plants. We lose some of our integrity of negotiation on capacitors by requesting them [suppliers] to quote on one price for a certain share of business and then tell them they can get only a much smaller share of the business. Suppliers do want to know where they stand. What percent of the business they will receive. Tell them a quantity, not a percent.

This member offered several recommendations. “Give us feedback on inquiries and savings. We do not receive corporate-wide RFQs in all cases. We should receive copies of suppliers’ quotes a month ahead of the negotiations. Don’t ask suppliers to
quote on what they are not approved. On capacitors, RFQs went to 20 suppliers. Don’t jerk suppliers around!” Another member reported that his plant publishes a “Purchasing Savings Program” report quarterly. A similar corporate-wide publication would serve a useful purpose.

Related to post-negotiation activities several committee members interviewed at the plants indicated that the coordinated program “has not been sold to their plant managers or other functional areas.” One member said, “The plant manager grumbles about the time waste of my participation on the committees.” Another member reported that he does not get the time to work on committee activities. A third said that his plant manager wants to know what the payoff is for having the buyer spend so much time on committee activities. A fourth member was leery about becoming a committee chairperson because “of all the work I have to do here.”

Several members of the committees voiced the impression that Epsilon had a limited but adequate number of well-trained and insightful buyers to chair the committees but not enough depth of such personnel. One buyer remarked that the company has no program to train and develop buyers. He said that training and development programs were limited to entry level personnel and purchasing managers at the company.

Table 1 is a summary of ten activities, purchasing problems associated with the activities, and solutions to these problems. Most of the activities shown in Table 1 have been discussed. Supplier commitment to delivery is a problem with contract execution that not been discussed.

A Committee Meeting

At a meeting of the semiconductor meeting attended by the PO researcher in June, a problem with supplier commitment to an existing agreement was the topic of discussion for one of the six hours of the meeting. One committee member said, “Each supplier is picking one Epsilon Product Group which it is supporting with product in the agreement but the suppliers are not fulfilling the agreement across Epsilon plants. The supplier is cherry picking during the contract on high profit items.” Another member told the committee that suppliers to the member’s plant location are saying, “When you reach the commitment level in the agreement, we will raise prices.” Both problems with the suppliers were narrowed to two suppliers. The Director of Purchasing (Peter Reuter) told the two complaining committee members that the problems would be solved that day or the next day. Reuter mentioned to the PO researcher on the day following this meeting that the problems were solved by telephone calls to the national account managers of the two suppliers.

One week later, a member of the semiconductor meeting reporting that he was upset about all the time taken in the semiconductor meeting to solve the supplier problems of two relatively small plants. “It was ridiculous,” he said. “It wasn’t the place to get into problems which they should have handled before the meeting.” Yet he believed that the meeting was useful and progress was made in the
current year. While the semiconductor meeting was held on June 27, the minutes were distributed on July 23. A total of ten members of the committee were present — all from the United States. The minutes were distributed to all 28 members of the committee including the members at the plant locations in Europe. The following actions were decided upon at the June 27 semiconductor meeting and reported in the minutes of the meeting.

“Because the semiconductor pricing continues to trend downward particularly in the linear circuit devices which constitute a large portion of Epsilon’s requirements, and because of the need of assurance of the suppliers in 2010, it was decided to follow this resultant course of actions:

1. Forecasts must be submitted to Bill Matthews by July 6, 2009.
2. Generate a RFQ by the beginning of August.
3. Have a committee meeting to review proposals by the beginning of September.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Major purchasing</th>
<th>Problem solution</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Survey usage patterns of locations</td>
<td>High number of man-days and rush requests by corporate</td>
<td>Computer systems and scheduling control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Developing requirements</td>
<td>Bring-in consultant after requirements are specified</td>
<td>Participant in project at inception</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Prepare RFQs</td>
<td>Quality and quantity of supplier list are weak</td>
<td>Extensive search</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Quote analysis report</td>
<td>Lack of participation of all persons involved</td>
<td>Telephone and face-to-face meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Pre-negotiation meeting</td>
<td>Time constraints</td>
<td>Schedule two pre-negotiation meetings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Negotiation with suppliers</td>
<td>Conflict over strategy</td>
<td>Agree on strategy in pre-negotiation meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Agreements</td>
<td>Use of agreements by locations; suppliers honoring commitments</td>
<td>Coordination and communication by corporate and locations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Evaluation of cost avoidance and reductions</td>
<td>Lack of agreement by committee members</td>
<td>Post-negotiation meeting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Contact execution</td>
<td>Supplier commitment to delivery</td>
<td>Location and corporate monitoring programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10. Reporting systems</td>
<td>Delays in release</td>
<td>Responsibility assigned to chairpersons</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1: Purchases, activities, problems, and solutions.
Action items to be considered:

1. Enforce 2009 contracts with suppliers."
2. Monitor any allocation programs and present orders with suppliers.

The minutes of the meeting were prepared by Bill Matthews.

This meeting illustrates several points. Progress in the decision process for coordinated agreements on semiconductors was accomplished. Specific problems with suppliers were discussed and plans developed to solve them. Committee meetings can frustrate, in part, due to differences in opinions of members concerning the topics covered and length of time taken for each topic.

While a telex was sent shortly after the meeting to the members of the committee on the actions agreed to by the members attending the meeting, the minutes were not distributed until nearly a month after the meeting. The minutes contained details of the meeting and ratings of each semiconductor supplier for each Epsilon plant location represented at the meeting for five attributes (price, delivery, quality, service, and distribution support). A 10-point scale was used for each attribute and a total score was computed for each supplier by summing the five ratings. Thus, the five attributes were equally weighted. A discussion of whether or not to weight the attributes unequally did not occur during the meeting. Bill Matthews went to Germany for the first half of July for duties as a co-chairman of a committee negotiating with European suppliers. Given that he had the primary responsibility for coordinating the actions agreed to at the June 27 meeting, most of the coordination did not occur. An RFQ was not generated by the beginning of August. This process–outcome example illustrates one of the central problems of the present coordinated purchasing program reported by several committee members interviewed at plant locations. The existing committee organization was inadequate to perform the coordination necessary for each commodity.

Summary of Committee Members’ Evaluations

Table 2 is an attempt to summarize whether or not each committee member perceived that substantial savings were realized in purchases for his/her plant. The majority (10 of 18) of the members interviewed in-depth reported that substantial savings were realized from the coordinated program which would not have been realized with the coordination.

Given the reports and plans of savings by the Director of Purchases, interviews with the purchasing specialists, the committee members of the plants, and the interviews with six Epsilon suppliers, an important conclusion of the study is that the coordinated committee program is producing significant savings and contributing to net profits of Epsilon Corporation. Table 3 provides an overall evaluation of headquarters performance by the members of the committees interviewed at the plants. The majority of the committee members do not evaluate New York’s performance positively.
The number of members classified as giving a negative overall evaluation to New York's performance implies that some changes to the present coordination program should occur. Such changes have been discussed in explaining the decision system used in the coordinated program.

**Summary of Recommendations from the Committee Members**

Several recommendations made by committee members to increase the performance of the coordinated program need emphasizing.

1. More timely coordination of committee actions is recommended. Someone is needed to continually move the committee through the decision process.

Table 2: Evaluation of savings realized from committee approach to corporate purchase agreements.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>We help out the little guys</th>
<th>Substantial savings</th>
<th>No savings</th>
<th>It's hard to tell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>2</strong></td>
<td><strong>10</strong></td>
<td><strong>5</strong></td>
<td><strong>1</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 3: Overall evaluation of corporate purchasing by 18 purchasing personnel.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location</th>
<th>Evaluation of corporate purchasing performance</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Chicago</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Atlanta</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pittsburgh</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbus</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>8</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2. The program needs to be sold to plant management and related functional areas. Face-to-face meetings between corporate staff members and committee chairmen with plant managers are necessary. Effective internal marketing programs on the benefits of CPPs are lacking at Epsilon.

3. Time must be taken for committee chairmen and the New York purchasing staff to visit and listen to plant purchasing.

4. A reduced role for the purchasing specialists is recommended. The purchasing specialists should not be co-chairs on the committees.

5. New York needs some senior purchasing staff people with several years of plant experience to coordinate committee activities and decisions.

6. The committee members should have more say as to which suppliers are sent RFQs and invited to negotiate.

7. Negotiation strategies with suppliers should be agreed upon by the committee before meeting with the suppliers.

8. Post-negotiation reports prepared by the chairman on New York are recommended. These reports should be distributed to all members of the committee.

9. A company-wide report on savings produced by the coordinated program by commodities should be distributed to plant purchasing, including buyers. The plant managers and other functional areas besides purchasing should receive these reports.

10. Two separate pre-negotiation meetings are recommended — one at the start of the decision process and one after quotes are received from the suppliers. A half-day committee meeting should occur immediately before the start of the negotiations with suppliers.

**Evaluation of Key Informant Interviews**

The cooperation and insight provided by 13 of the 18 interviews with members of the coordinated committee members were excellent. The answers and comments provided by these members provided most of the data collected in the study. A total of four additional interviews were helpful but not completely satisfactory — either the PO researcher interpretation of the answers, vagueness of the questions, or some other factors limited the usefulness of responses. One interview was unsuccessful. Thus, 17 of the 18 interviews with committee members were judged as worthwhile.

The majority of the committee members interviewed were active members of their respective committees. Several chaired the committees. Most attended one or more committee meetings annually. The committee members interviewed were involved with the majority of savings realized from the coordinated committee program. All members contacted and requested to be interviewed did cooperate and were interviewed. Thus, no non-response bias occurred in this study. Thus, even though the sample size was small, the research method used is believed to provide valid observations on how members of Epsilon’s coordinated committees evaluate the program.
Also, the observations of corporate staff, activities and records, and interviews with vendors provided a triangulation of information to support the major conclusions of the study.

Conclusions

Four central conclusions were emphasized in report of the findings of this study to the corporate purchasing staff at Epsilon. (1) The committee approach for corporate purchasing has produced substantial dollar savings that would not have been realized in 1976–1979 without the program. (2) The committee approach has produced a number of intangible benefits — the most important being the increase in professionalism of the buyers serving as members of the committees. (3) The coordinated program is now inadequately staffed. (4) The program has not been sold to the management and related functional areas at the plant level — this lack of effective internal marketing limits the benefits realized from the program.

An ethnographic approach for the study of coordinated purchasing programs is a useful method for learning the flow of decisions and activities involved in the administration of such programs. The study reported here should be considered a pilot research effort. Analogous to Whyte’s (1943) Street Corner Society, six-month to two-year participant observations are necessary for acquiring a deep understanding of corporate and plant purchasing decision processes. Hopefully, the study reported here will reduce the time required by other researchers to develop a clear, initial, focus on what is actually happening in purchasing.
Chapter 16

Systems Thinking and System Dynamics Modeling

Synopsis

Chapter 16 is an introduction to systems thinking and analyzing the system dynamics of relationships within an organization or between organizations. Systems thinking builds on the propositions that (1) all variables or conditions have both dependent and independent relationships, (2) lag effects occur in relationships, (3) feedback relationships occur (e.g., A → B → C → A), and (4) seemingly minor relationships (i.e., “hidden demons”) have huge influence in causing a set of relationships (i.e., a system) to implode or explode. The propositions of building and testing a set of relationships apply in many contexts; this chapter examines systems thinking and system dynamics in one context as an introduction to this stream of case study research. Hall (1976) provides details of an advanced application of systems dynamics research – do not be fooled by the date of the study; Hall (1976) is an exceptional up-to-date case research study using system dynamics modeling. This chapter describes the issues and criticisms concerning golf, tourism, and the environment and considers how golf–tourism–environment relationships might achieve economic well-being for a region while avoiding vicious cycles of destruction to local environments and the quality of life of local residents. The examination proposes the use of systems thinking, cause mapping, and system dynamics modeling and simulations of golf, tourism, and environmental relationships to help achieve workable solutions agreeable to all stakeholders. Sustainable relationships that include golf, tourism, and environmental objectives require crafting government policies via stakeholder participation of all parties that such relationships affect – recognizing and enabling this requirement needs to be done explicitly – to reduce conflicts among stakeholders and avoid system failures.

Introduction

A cause map is an illustration of sense-making propositions that include mutual dependencies of variables in a system of relationships. A cognitive map that displays
various concepts connected by causal relationships is called a cause map; it is a summary of the cause–effect inferences of our sense-making processes (Gilmore & Murphy, 1991; Weber & Manning, 2001; Weick & Bougon, 1986). Positive (+) and negative (−) signs on directional arrows inking nodes (i.e., variables) in a cause map indicate the nature of the relationship between the variables (see Weick, 1979).

**Cause Maps of Unsustainable and Sustainable Golf Tourism**

The use of principles of cause mapping permits visualizing systemic propositions of relationships that indicate unsustainability and sustainability of golf tourism for a given geographical region – the same principles are applicable for other tourism categories besides golf such as casino tourism, hunting tourism, and medical tourism.

Such visualization helps to capture complexity of feedback relationships and “hidden demons” (i.e., seemingly minor and subordinate paths) in relationships (cf. Tufte, 2001). Cause mapping is a useful step toward building system dynamic models that permits what-if simulations of the eventual outcomes when one variable changes slowly or dramatically within a system of relationship.

**Simple Unsustainable Models of Golf Tourism**

Figure 1 includes two models illustrating a positive relationship between the number of golf courses in a region and tourism and tourism’s positive influence on the

![Diagram](a)

Figure 1: (a) An unsustainable simple model of golf tourism. (b) An unsustainable moderately complex model of golf tourism.
number of golf courses – these two variables are mutually dependent. Advocates of increasing the number of golf courses in a region point to the first influence – golf courses bring tourists. Increasing tourists’ numbers increases the need for golf courses – the second arrow in Figure 1a.

Any variable that has arrows both coming and going out from it is interdependent; the variable is affected by and affects other variables. Any variable that only has arrows coming to it but has no arrows going away from it is a dependent variable. And any variable that has arrows going away from it but has no arrows coming into it is an independent variable (Weick, 1979, p. 72).

A causal or feedback loop is a relationship or chain of relationships among variables whereby starting with one variable an arrow from that variable eventually leads back to the same variable. The direct mutual dependency of golf courses and tourism in Figure 1a indicates a causal loop.

Figure 1b indicates that tourism has an indirect influence on property development. The increase in tourism increases the number of golf courses, which in turn increases property development, which in turn increases the number of golf courses.

Note in both Figure 1a and 1b that a starting variable (i.e., an element or node with a path [arrow] leading out) increases even further on completing a path circuit, and the same variable continues increasing with each completion of a cycle. In a causal loop with an even number of negative signs (e.g., zero negative signs in both parts of Figure 1), the variable will continue to move in that same direction until the system is destroyed or until some dramatic change occurs (Goldsmith, 1971).

The loops in the two parts of Figure 1 are amplifying loops that represent vicious or virtual circles (Weick, 1979). Building in necessary complexity to reflect reality occurs by identifying additional variables that build in an odd number of negative signs in a cause map. “These loops are particularly interesting because they impose stabilities on organizing processes” (Weick, 1979, p. 74).

**Complex Sustainable Models of Golf Tourism**

Figure 2 shows an attempt to increase understanding by building in necessary complexity of how golf tourism potentially provides both benefit and harm to a geographic region. Such modeling is illustrative of integrative thinking and the value of nurturing an “opposable mind” (Martin, 2007). “Integrative thinking shows us a way past the binary limits of either-or. It shows us that there’s a way to integrate the advantages of one solution without canceling out the advantages of an alternative solution. Integrative thinking affords us, in other words of the poet Wallace Stevens, ‘the choice not between, but of’” (Martin, 2007, p. 9).

Such integrative thinking and building cause maps that include necessary complexity reflect Chamberlin’s (1890, p. 93) wisdom: “In following a single hypothesis, the mind is presumably led to a single explanatory conception. But an adequate explanation often involves the coordination of several agencies, which enter
Figure 2: A causal map of a sustainable complex golf tourism system.
into the combined result in varying proportions. The true explanation is therefore necessarily complex. Such complex explanations of phenomena are specially encouraged by the method of multiple hypotheses, and constitute one of its chief merits.” Cause mapping is a parsimonious approach that captures “the method of multiple working hypotheses.”

Note that Figure 2 includes and expands on the relationships in Figure 1 and both deviation-amplifying and deviation-dampening loops. Any causal loop that has an odd number of negative signs serves to dampen (decrease) levels of one or more variables in the model. The loop 1 → 6 → 5 → 10 → 1 includes three negative signs – a dampening loop. The loop 1 → 3 → 5 → 10 → 1 includes three negative signs – another dampening loop. The negative relationship from property development to residents’ health and quality of life (3 → 5) might be a point of conflict.

Initially, property development may serve to increase the quality of life of residents by increasing the value and selling prices of land; further increases in property development may serve to exclude local residents from living in the region. The cause mapping and system dynamics literature demonstrates the occurrence of such reversals in relationships (from positive to negative) in different time periods (e.g., Hall, 1976).

Weick (1979) predicts that any system will survive as a system only if it contains an odd number of negative loops. If the system contains an even number of negative loops, then their effects will cancel one another and the remaining positive cycles will amplify whatever deviations may occur – this view assumes that all loops are of equal importance, an assumption that is revisable. The next section discusses this issue.

Working through all the loops in Figure 2 indicates that the cause map includes three positive and eight negative loops (Table 1). This finding indicates that such a geographic region will become overloaded and not fluctuate around some middle value because the system of relationships includes an even versus an odd number of negative causal loops.

The cause map serves to illustrate the “squeaky wheel gets oiled” principle to be necessary to achieve such a dampening outcome – decline in residents’ health and quality of life propels an increase in government regulations to prevent further

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Net positive</th>
<th>Loops</th>
<th>Net negative</th>
<th>Loops</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1-2-1</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>1-7-9-5-10-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-3-1</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>1-7-9-4-5-10-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1-2-4-5-10-1</td>
<td>(+)</td>
<td>1-3-5-10-1</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-8-9-5-10-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
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<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
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<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-6-5-10-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-7-5-10-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td>1-7-1</td>
<td>(—)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
declines in health and quality of life. Not shown directly in the map are the necessary steps in organizing and prodding and promoting government regulations by residents to achieve the dampening effect. Such cause mapping recognizes and justifies the participation of multiple stakeholders and explicit planning with government involvement and regulations in regional recreational development – including building and maintaining golf courses.

**Strategies for Analyzing Systems**

The cause mapping and system dynamics literatures suggest three general strategies in analyzing outcomes of the complexity that always occurs in building realistic systems that include elements of the environment (e.g., land, water, and health-harming pollutants). First, strategist could assume that the loops are of unequal importance. Making this assumption, the strategist could scale the different loops on their degree of importance and predict the fate of the system by the nature of its most important loop.

Figure 3 is a visual of a cause map showing three loops of greater importance (in bold) than the remaining seven loops. The three high-importance loops are all deviation amplifying. All three indicate positive outcomes from increasing the number of golf courses: increasing tourism and employment, increasing health and quality of life, and increasing property development. Figure 3 suggests that tolerant, laissez-faire government approaches to golf course development are best.

However, given that all three of these seemingly most important loops are deviation amplifying, the system is unsustainable and will eventually become uncontrollable and breakdown or reverse its direction because of some dramatic changes. No system continues to grow unabated forever (Ford, 1999, p. 7). Figure 3 is one map showing the good news of building golf courses in a region. This good news view often includes minimizing the importance of the other causal loops in the system.

The difficulty of identifying some loops as more important than others is that the judgment of a loop’s importance may often be purely arbitrary (Weick, 1979, p. 75). Weick (1979) describes ways to solve the arbitrariness of identifying more and less important loops. A strategist might define importance in terms of the number of inputs to and outputs from an element – the greater the number of inputs to and/or outputs from an element, the more important the element is. The strategist then identifies the loop that contains the greatest number of the most important elements.

Figure 4 shows this loop in bold. This loops goes from 1 to 8 to 9 to 4 to 5 to 10 to 1. Since the loop has an odd number of negative signs (three), it is deviation dampening, and therefore the primary prediction is that the entire system is deviation dampening and will stabilize around some midlevel quantity of golf courses versus some maximum number.

Both Figures 3 and 4 serve to make the point that assumptions make a difference. It is conceivable that both conclusions about this golf course and tourism system are correct for different time periods. The system will continue to grow golf courses for some period of time, but such things as the differential speed with which the loops
Figure 3: A view of unequal importance among causal loops resulting in an unsustainable complex golf tourism system.
Figure 4: The possibility of a dominating loop resulting in a sustainable complex golf tourism system.
are completed, the magnitude of the changes at each variable, the tightness of the couplings among variables, the number of times each loop is activated, and the effects of exogenous variables introduce increasing amounts of instability and bubbling of the system (cf. Weick, 1979, pp. 76–77).

The third general strategy to analyze outcomes of the complexity is to use cause maps as a step toward system dynamics modeling. Such modeling recognizes and responds to real-life greater complexities in systems that cause maps alone do not capture. System dynamics modeling with available software programs (e.g., see STELLA at High Performance Systems, 1995) permits the running of multiple simulations of alternative system assumptions to test the efficacy of these assumptions under which the system may operate. System dynamic modeling permits the construction and testing of multiple loops with nonlinear feedback relationships and delays in activating noticeable increases or deceases (i.e., tipping points; see Gladwell, 2002) among the elements or nodes in a system.

System dynamic modeling permits the recognition of time as an important factor in the operation of all complex systems – the different loops in complex systems are operating at different rates of speed. Consequently, bad news outcomes may follow good news outcomes and achieving sustainability in a system may never occur – an oscillation from relatively short best periods to longer worst periods or the combination of best and worst of times may continue.

The primary objective of system dynamics modeling is to deepen understanding, not point prediction, of how a given system operates under alternative sets of assumptions. “To avoid misinterpretation, you should resist drawing any conclusions from a single simulation. A single simulation teaches us much about a system. Its purpose is usually to provide a starting point for comparison with additional simulations” (Ford, 1999, p. 10). Running multiple simulations deepens knowledge of likely outcomes of a given system under different sets of assumptions; such knowledge enables executives to create useful rules of thumb (i.e., heuristics; see Gigerenzer, Todd, & The ABC Research Group, 1999) to help manage complex systems.

Running simulations of system dynamic models increases knowledge about the momentum and direction of environmental outcomes. Outcomes of some simulations often suggest that the strategist may need to “hit the brakes” (Ford, 1999, p. 11) to prevent disaster and to allow slow and sluggish loops the time to operate to dampen seemingly uncontrollable expansion. System dynamic modeling often leads to recognition among all stakeholders of the value of nurturing the opposable mind (Martin, 2007), and most important, such modeling is a how-to method for applying such mindfulness for achieving sustainable systems.

Simulations of Golf Course Development, Tourism, and Residents’ Quality of Life

The analysis includes constructing mathematical models (see appendix) reflecting the propositions in Figures 3 and 4. The model for Figure 3 assumes that no controlling
governance of golf course development – golf course development occurs unabated during a 33-year time span (going from 0 to 1 to 2 additional golf courses annually beginning in year 4). The resulting systems output indicates that golf course development has both positive influences on quality of life (via employment) and negative influences on quality of life (via degrading the availability and quality of potable water and decreasing land use for other purposes). The results of running this simulation include both substantial growth in residents’ quality of life (using lifetime income estimates as a metric as a surrogate for quality of life) and a dramatic decline in quality of life in the final four years of running the simulation.

The model for Figure 4 includes a control governing mechanism on golf course development that affects the number of golf courses operating annually. The metric for control mechanism includes estimated monetary costs of buying, installing, and maintaining government-mandated equipment for monitoring and supporting objectives relating to vegetation, water potability, and residents’ physical health. The resulting systems output illustrates that one or more variables do not continue to increase or decline only – the principal that growth and dampening mechanisms operate on variables in real-life complex systems applied to golf course development. Explicating or planning for the influence of government regulations on golf course development serves to identify a sustainable number of golf courses that does not result in a massive breakdown in the residents’ quality of life.

Figure 5 shows the results for both simulations for the two variables in this discussion. Such visualization in Figure 5 is to help increase understanding of likely patterns in the relationships. As Ford (1999, p. 10) recommends, “Our purpose is improved understanding, not point prediction.” Describing the equations for several simulations is best to avoid misinterpretation and to decrease the tendency to advocate one view only in how a system might operate.

Limitations and Future Research

Chapter 16 serves to introduce cause mapping and system dynamic modeling as useful tools for deepening understanding of how to achieve sustainable golf tourism in particular, and to show how such tools are useful for understanding complex, lagged, relationships having feedback loops that occur among interacting individuals and organizations. Such tools recognize the value of nurturing an opposable mind view that golf tourism is likely to substantially both benefit and harm a geographical region in different time periods – if stakeholders do not deepen their understanding about the important elements that occur in growing and controlling golf tourism.

Possibly using Figure 2 as a workbench draft for system dynamics modeling of golf tourism is a step for consideration for future research. Such modeling should increase the likelihood of amplifying the benefits and dampening the harm of golf tourism by moving the industry toward a sustainable system.
Figure 5: Simulation of system responses to number of golf courses in annual operation without and with government control mechanism.
Advancing Multiple Hypotheses and Multiple Methods Approach

The findings in this chapter using theoretical non-optimizing cause mapping and system dynamics approaches receive support in a review of prior literature from a variety of perspectives. Applying a theoretically dynamic optimizing modeling approach, Johnston and Tyrrell (2005) describe a dynamic model illustrating the interrelated behavior of tourism-related economic and environmental conditions throughout time. They characterize fundamental notions of sustainable tourism from the perspectives of both a profit-maximizing tourist industry and permanent residents of a tourist community. Their model illustrates findings relevant to the search for sustainable outcomes and characterizes potential conflicts implicit in different sustainable and unsustainable paths. “The model demonstrates that (1) in all but the rarest of circumstances, no single, universal sustainable optimum is possible; and (2) a policy that maintains overly pristine environmental quality may be just as unsustainable – from the perspective of either the tourism industry or residents – as a policy that causes excessive environmental decay” (Johnston & Tyrrell, 2005, p. 124).

Johnston and Tyrrell’s (2005) view about the value of using an optimality approach suggests greater limitations occur than applying a system dynamic modeling approach. Because the literature includes a number of industry environment applications (for a review, see Ford, 1999), because cause mapping and system dynamics modeling include a nonoptimality approach, and because of problems with acquiring empirical data to test the assumptions of optimality models, cause mapping and system dynamics modeling offer greater promise in empirical field research on sustainable golf tourism. However, the value of theoretically testing optimality modeling may be substantial, and such a theoretical approach receives support in the relevant literature on organizational survival (see March, Sproull, & Tamuz, 1991).

Insightful reviews of the sustainability tourism literature (e.g., Briassoulis, 2002; McKercher, 2003) suggest both the possibility and the necessity of multiple stakeholders working together and recognizing the usefulness of applying systemic methods to prevent the “tragedy of the commons” (Hardin, 1968), that is, system failure because of stakeholders acting individually to maximize only their own returns rather than acting collectively to maintain the functionality of resources common to multiple parties.

Applying here the terminology of systems thinking (Gharajedaghi, 2006) relevant to the present chapter, Hardin (1968) emphasizes the necessity of creating some functional form of regulation to apply policy design principles (Briassoulis, 2002) to achieve a sustainable commons. This view supports the proposition that government has a legitimate role as a direct participant in sustainable tourism – including golf tourism. In his seminal essay, Hardin stresses that no technical (i.e., technology) solution to the tragedy of the commons is possible in the long run because of the limitations of natural resources.

Ultimately, multiple stakeholders need to come together – work together – to recognize the necessity of adopting systems thinking and to apply systems research methods to deepen their knowledge about their individual and collective influence within tourism industries, social, and natural environments. Chamberlin’s (1890)
wisdom into the value of applying the multiple hypotheses method is extendable by recognizing the value of using multiple methods rather than relying on a single dominant data collection and one method of analysis. Incorporating multiple hypotheses and multiple methods paradigm (cf. Campbell & Fiske, 1959) in sustainable versus unsustainable golf tourism research is likely to provide both confirmatory and disconfirmatory findings for one or more of the hypotheses – such multiple evidential outcomes are likely to enhance the building of opposable minds (Martin, 2007) and to deepen understanding of short- and long-term influences of golf tourism and all other interdependent elements in the golf–tourism–economic–social–environmental system. The analysis in Table 2 indicates that economic value analysis, environmental impact analysis, and possibly other research methods are unlikely to examine all relevant hypotheses relating to golf tourism.

Economic value analyses often do consider time or multiple decade environmental impacts as important factors in estimating the influence of golf tourism. Environmental impact analysis may include only modest consideration of the short-term economic benefits to local residents of golf course and tourism development.

A limitation of Table 2 is that an extensive literature review does not support its presentation. Table 2 makes the point that the method applied frequently affects the efficacy (e.g., complexity of the findings) and the likelihood that a given set of findings supports the hypotheses. Table 2 advocates explicit recognition that multiple methods provide fresh eyes for examining findings when testing multiple hypotheses.

Conclusions

This chapter illustrates the value of causal mapping and suggests applying system dynamic modeling for examining inputs and outcomes of golf tourism development. The use of the multiple hypotheses and multiple methods paradigm is likely to nurture the development of the opposable mind. Such integrative thinking processes are more likely to recognize both the economic value of golf tourism and the need to regulate the industry’s social and environmental impacts – and subsequently create and maintain sustainable, systematic, and long-term relationships in golf tourism.

Rather than assume that a systems breakdown will not occur in the foreseeable future and assume that golf tourism critics will continue to have little or no influence, golf tourism executives and green advocates need to embrace a highly mindful, systems view of the multiple positive and negative influences of golf tourism development. The adoption of systems thinking and the adoption of system dynamics modeling are the operational steps necessary for achieving integrative versus advocacy thinking. Nurturing integrative thinking is more likely to achieve sustainable golf tourism and high quality-of-life objectives than is taking an intractable stance.
Table 2: Issues examined by specific methods within a multiple hypotheses and multiple methods paradigm for sustainable tourism research.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example hypotheses</th>
<th>Economic value analysis</th>
<th>Environmental impact analysis</th>
<th>Optimization modeling</th>
<th>System dynamics modeling</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Golf courses ↑ → tourism ↑</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Golf courses ↑ → property development ↑</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Tourism ↑ → Employment ↑</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Golf courses ↑ → Herbicides ↑</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Golf courses ↑ → Arable land ↓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Golf courses ↑ → Herbicides ↑ → residents’ health/quality-of-life ↓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Residents’ health/quality-of-life ↓ → government regulations ↑</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Government regulations ↑ → golf courses ↓</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>No</td>
<td>Yes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Each “yes” and “no” in Table 2 indicates whether or not the hypothesis is likely to be tested by the method and not that the findings support the hypothesis. For example, the yes in the first cell is to indicate that economic value analysis includes estimating the impact of increasing golf courses on increasing the level of tourism.
## Variable Definition

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$A_t$</td>
<td>Number of golf courses in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$B_t$</td>
<td>Number of tourists in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$C_t$</td>
<td>Total property (development) value in $\text{Smillions}$ in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$D_t$</td>
<td>Employment in number of persons in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$E_t$</td>
<td>Residents’ quality of life in estimated annual lifetime income for year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$F_t$</td>
<td>Herbicides and insecticide usage in $\text{sthousands}$ per golf course in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$G_t$</td>
<td>Arable land usage in millions of hectares in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$H_t$</td>
<td>Potable water usage in billions of liters in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$I_t$</td>
<td>Agriculture sales in $\text{Smillions}$ in year $t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$J_t$</td>
<td>Government regulations/control in $\text{sthousands}$ per month for total number of golf courses for purchases, installation, and maintenance for environment and water treatment and monitoring in year $t$</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Variable Model without $J_t$

- **$A_t$**: Zero for first three years; continuous annual growth of 1 to 2 units to year 33
- **$B_t$**: $10000 + (A2*2000) + (A2*10)^2$
- **$C_t$**: $300 + (A2*10)^{1.2} + (A2*2)^{1.6}$
- **$D_t$**: $A2 + (0.001*C2*A2)$
- **$E_t$**: $(E2*0.02) - ((G2*0.005)^3.5) + ((H2*0.004)^{1.5}) + ((J2*0.02)^{1.3})$
- **$F_t$**: $50 + (A2*2)^{1.6}$
- **$G_t$**: $50 - (A2*0.2)^{1.9}$
- **$H_t$**: $5 - (A2*0.1) - (A2*0.05)^2$
- **$I_t$**: $(H2*1.1)^{1.6} + (J2*18)$

### Variable Model with $J_t$

- **$A_t$**: $(1 + A_{t-1}) - (A_t*0.0001*(1.1^J_t))$
- **$B_t$**: $10000 + (A2*2000) + (A2*10)^2$
- **$C_t$**: $300 + (A2*10)^{1.2} + (A2*2)^{1.6}$
- **$D_t$**: $A2 + (0.001*C2*A2)$
- **$E_t$**: $(E2*0.02) - ((G2*0.005)^3.5) + ((H2*0.004)^{1.5}) + ((J2*0.02)^{1.3})$
- **$F_t$**: $50 + (A2*2)^{1.6}$
- **$G_t$**: $50 - (A2*0.2)^{1.9}$
- **$H_t$**: $5 - (A2*0.1) - (A2*0.05)^2$
- **$I_t$**: $(H2*1.1)^{1.6} + (J2*18)$
- **$J_t$**: $(((E2*0.04)^2+A_{t-1}) + (3*A_{t-1}))$
Chapter 17

Fuzzy Set Social Science and Qualitative Comparative Analysis

Synopsis

Prior reports on theory and research focusing on describing and explaining national cultural influences on purchase and consumption behavior use a net effects approach (i.e., theory and analysis relying on main and interaction effects via statistical analysis). Theory and research in this chapter advances qualitative comparative analysis (QCA) of a configuration perspective of culture’s consequences on consumption behavior. This research informs the view that national cultures represent causal recipes (conjunctions) of cultural values; the study of main and interaction effects offer meager representations of national culture’s consequences in comparison to adopting a cultural configuration stance. The configuration research here includes transforming Hofstede’s country cultural scores into fuzzy set values and applying Boolean algebra to estimate the relevancy of alternative cultural configurations for each of 14 nations to consuming experiences during visits to Australia. The findings support primary and additional hypotheses that specific cultural configurations are sufficient (but not necessary) for describing substantial culture’s consequences on consuming tourism experiences. For example, the animus (i.e., Carl Jung’s unconscious masculine personality-force) configuration — the combination of high power (P), high individualism (I), high masculine (M), and low uncertainty avoidance (∼U) (i.e., P · I · M · ∼U) — is sufficient in indicating not-shopping-for-gifts while visiting Australia. Western national cultures (e.g., United States) have higher fuzzy set scores than Eastern national cultures (e.g., Japan) for the animus configuration.

Introduction

National cultures always represent complex conjunctions of values rather than a collection of distinct individual value dimensions. This chapter show how to use qualitative comparative analysis (QCA, Ragin, 2008) to consider how cultural recipes — conjunctive configurations of national cultures affect international
experiential behavior. QCA is applicable for analyzing both small and large sets of data — that is, data that include ten cases to a 1000 + cases and data that includes a reasonable number of antecedents (e.g., three to eight) in predicting an outcome condition (a term analogous to a dependent variable in statistical analysis).

The QCA advocates modeling asymmetric relationships and reporting conditions that are sufficient (but not necessary) to cause an outcome condition (e.g., high dollar expenditures and short versus long destination visits). Using measures of consistency (a measure that is analogous to a correlation) and coverage (a measure of effect size), QCA provides estimates of how well alternative conjunctive models explain behavior rather than relying on symmetric-based methods of data analysis (i.e., correlations, multiple regression, and structural equation modeling).

This chapter describes the influences of gestalt national cultures on outcome conditions for international experiential consumption. This study supports the proposition that conjunctively complex causal statements using Hofstede’s country value indexes do provide high nomological validity in explaining international tourism behavior. The analysis applies QCA software (fsQCA.com) and the presentation includes XY plots of country-level value configurations and group-level consumption for total visit expenditures, length of visit, shopping behavior, and group touring behavior.

Tylor (1871, in McCort & Malhotra, 1993, p. 97) provides an early definition of culture, “the complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, morals, custom and any other capabilities and habit acquired by man as a member of society.” Subsequent contributions emphasize the all-inclusive nature of culture as affecting aspects of human life in a society (Soares, Faranghmehr, & Shoham, 2007). However, the relevant literature on culture’s consequences on consumption behavior (see Soares et al., 2006, for a review) rarely includes examinations of how the “complex whole” affects purchasing and consuming behavior; rather, this body of work focuses on reporting the influences of single dimensions of culture on consumer behavior. For example, using case (national averages) data on tipping practices for each of 38 different service professions in 34 different countries for Star (1988) and culture value scores from Hofstede (1983) for 50 different countries of a large, multinational industrial corporation and its subsidiaries, Lynn, Zinkan, & Harris (1993, p. 483) report that tipping to be more prevalent in countries with a high tolerance of status and power differences between people than in countries whose tolerance of such differences is lower, “in this analysis, the power distance index correlated at .46 (p < .02) with the prevalence of tipping.”

The present chapter offers examples of taking steps toward proposing and empirically testing gestalt perspectives of cultures’ consequences on consumption behavior. The approach is unique in applying QCA (Ragin, 2008) of cultural multiple-dimensional statements (i.e., conjunctive recipes) for testing cultures’ consequences on purchasing and consuming — working from the complex whole rather than single-dimension perspective of culture. This study adopts Ragin’s (2008) view that the analysis of asymmetric set relations is critically important to social research rather than calculating the net effects of independent variables in linear models from a symmetric (correlation and multiple regression) perspective.
“In set-theoretic work, the idea of a causal recipe is straightforward, for the notion of combined causes is directly captured by the principle of set intersection” (Ragin, 2008, p. 9).

Figure 1 includes visualizations of symmetric (Panel A) and asymmetric relationships (Panel B). Statistical analyses that apply matrix algebra (e.g., correlation and multiple regression analysis) are tests how well data analyses support theoretical statements of symmetric relationships (i.e., low values of an “independent variable statement” relate to low values of a dependent variable and high values of the independent variable relate to high values of a dependent variable. An “independent variable statement” can by a single dependent variable or a complex statement (model) of several independent variables. Statistical analysis examines whether or not the data analysis of an independent statement of one or more independent terms supports a necessary statement of a relationship (see Panel A).

QCA applies Boolean algebra to test how well data analyses support theoretical statements of asymmetric relationships (i.e., whether or not high values of an antecedent condition relate to high values of an outcome condition). QCA does not make a prediction about the relationship of low values of an independent condition and an outcome condition because QCA recognizes that multiple routes can result in high (membership) value of an outcome condition. Thus, QCA examines whether or not the data analysis supports a statement of sufficiency but not necessity. Reality in social behavior of individuals and organizations of individuals frequently support statements of sufficiency but not necessity — a fancy way of stating that multiple routes occur in getting to a high outcome condition such as new product success, heavy casino gambling behavior, or very frequent road rage. See Panel B in Table 1.

This chapter is unique and valuable both in theory and method in proposing and testing complex-whole proposals of national cultural influences on purchasing and consuming behavior. For example, using case (national level) data from visitors to Australia from 14 Asian, European, and North American countries, the study in this report includes examining the impact on consumer behavior of the American (USA) icon, the cowboy, symbolizing the cultural recipe of high independence, low uncertainty avoidance, high masculinity, and low power distance (i.e., all persons (men) are equal) as well as additional cultural recipes. The findings support the theoretical and practical importance of examining the complex whole of cultures’ consequences on purchasing and consuming behavior.

The chapter has the following structure. Following this introduction, section two provides a brief review of research on cultures’ influence on consumption behavior in which the dominant view in developing and testing theory is the net effects perspective; section two includes a general theory of cultures’ consequences on purchasing and consuming products and services relating to international tourism. Section three proposes adopting a set-theoretic perspective for advancing theory and empirical research on cultures’ consequences on consumer behavior; section three includes a set of specific complex-whole cultural propositions for examination. Section four describes the method for examining the propositions. Section five
Figure 1: Symmetric and asymmetric statements of theoretical relationships.
present the findings of the study. Section six presents limitations of the study. Section seven covers implications for theory and international management/marketing practice. Section eight provides conclusions and suggestions for future research.

Research on Cultures’ Influence on Consumption Behavior

Several reviews of the literature of cultures’ influence on consumption behavior are available. Sojka and Tansuhaj (1995, p. 4) conclude that researchers follow three approaches in operationalizing culture: through language, through material goods/artifacts, and through beliefs/value systems. Soares (2005) provides a thorough discussion on both direct and indirect measures of cultural values in research on the influence of cultural values on consumer behavior.

Culture reflects “general tendencies of persistent preference for particular states of affairs over others, persistent preferences for specific social processes over others, and general rules for selective attention, interpretation of environmental cues, and responses” (Tse, Lee, Vertinsky, & Wehrung, 1988). Culture is the collective programming of the mind that distinguishes members of one society from another — the accumulation of shared meaning, rituals, norms, and traditions among members of a society (Solomon, 1996). Culture is both a product of actions and includes conditioning elements of future action (Kroeber & Kluckhohn, 1952). This definition is somewhat broader than Clark’s (1990, p. 70) statement, “the working definition of national character speaks of enduring personality characteristics among the populations of particular states.” Consequently, while the two terms may be used interchangeably with clarity, national culture is a broader conceptualization than embraces national character. National culture is inclusive of the dominant value

Table 1: Comparison of iconic and fuzzy set membership scores for simple and complex antecedent conditions.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>American iconic cowboy</th>
<th>Hofstede world averages</th>
<th>Hofstede USA value</th>
<th>Fuzzy set membership USA</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Individualism (I)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.43</td>
<td>.91</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Masculinity (M)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td>.50</td>
<td>.62</td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Power distance (P)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.55</td>
<td>.40</td>
<td>0.25</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Uncertainty (U)</td>
<td>0.00</td>
<td>.64</td>
<td>.46</td>
<td>0.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not PD (~P)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not Uncertainty (~U)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.80</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(I * M * ~P * ~U)</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: Fuzzy set scores are transformations of osted values for the USA. Hofstede’s national value scores are available at http://www.geert-hofstede.com/. The range possible for fuzzy set scores is from 0.00 to 1.00. The .75 is equal to the lowest value among I * M * ~P * ~U and represents the causal space that the four statements share together.
Common sense requires rejection of the notion that traits are monolithically persuasive in all individuals in any nation. Rather, theory suggests a *model* distribution of traits or a pattern of tendencies in each nation. (Italics original in Clark, 1990, p. 70)

A substantial body of empirical work supports a core tenant of research on national cultures: systematic variation across countries exists on the national-cultural level. For example, Hofstede (1980) reports that, even for countries that are less well culturally integrated, the different ethnic and/or linguistic groups have important commonality in culture in comparison to the populations of other countries. Smith and Schwartz (1997, p. 112) report that cultural differences among samples from three regions in China, three in Japan, and five in the USA were dwarfed by the much larger differences between nations. Schwartz and Ros (1995) find across a sample of 13 countries that nation accounts for about three times more variance in the ratings of the items used to measure national culture than any within-national variable examined, such as gender, education, age, and marital status. However, after reviewing the above studies, Steenkamp (2001, p. 38) still emphasizes, “The mutual influences of micro cultures and national culture … needs more attention.” This chapter illustrates useful methods of attending to this need.

National are useful as a proxy for culture since members of a nation tend to share a similar language, history, religion, understanding of institutional systems, and a sense of identity (Dawar & Parker, 1994), making its use a common approach to operationalize culture (e.g., Dawar & Parker, 1994; Steenkamp et al., 1999; Yeniyurt & Townsend, 2003).

Triandis (1989) proposes that a country’s culture is a powerful force shaping its people’s perceptions, dispositions, and behaviors due to strong forces towards integration in nations, including a single dominant language, history, educational system, political and legal system, and shared mass media, market, services, and national symbols (e.g., flags and sports teams). Hofstede (1980, 2001) identifies four (later, five) core dimensions of national culture that may influence consumer predispositions (i.e., unconscious thinking, see Bargh, 1989, or “mental programming,” see Hofstede, 2001), strategic thinking/deciding processes, and behaviors: individualism/collectivism, uncertainty avoidance, masculinity/femininity, power distance (and a fifth, the Confucian dynamic of long-term versus short-term orientation). Schwartz (1994, 1997) proposes three dimensions of universal human values (conservatism versus autonomy, hierarchy versus egalitarianism, and mastery versus harmony).

Despite a conceptual and empirical development in national culture literature, the delimitation of culture to the nation-state, and the deconstruction of culture as three or four universal value dimensions may raise some potential issues as follows. First,
researchers are fully aware of the existence of multiple levels of cultures. This view clearly shows that culture and country are not meant to imply the same concepts:

Culture can be conceptualized at different levels, including the national level (Dawar & Parker, 1994). Thus, studying the effects of national culture requires that there exist some meaningful degree of within-country commonality and between-country differences in national cultures (Dawar & Parker, 1994). Conceptual (Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Schwartz, 1994) and empirical (Hofstede, 1980; Smith & Schwartz, 1997) evidence indicates that this is indeed the case. (Steenkamp et al., 1999, p. 56)

Second, most people belong to different levels of culture at the same time, and such multiple memberships complicate the identification and understanding of national-cultural influence on consumer behaviors. While stereotyping is commonly seen as a means to categorizing information to bring order to our environments (e.g., Barna, 1994; Fiske, 1993), a study of national cultures must recognize this overall limitation on the capacity to generalize the results and findings, as well as possibly criticism for ethnocentrism or discrimination (Barna, 1994; Clark, 1990; Peabody, 1985). The current study contributes knowledge enhancement in national culture through exploring micro-cultural impact on national culture, and moderating role of micro culture on national culture and international consumer behaviors.

Lastly, overemphasis on the universal or dominant national-cultural dimensions (e.g., Hofstede, 1980, 1991; Schwartz, 1994, 1997) may result in not only oversimplification of complex or multifaceted nature of culture but also support ignorance of variant values across nations. However, while recognizing the limitation of dominant-value-based national-cultural study, universally valid dimensions of national culture plays a significant role in advancement of theoretical rigor in national culture and cross-national research.

Values represent central goals that relate to all aspects of attitudes and behaviors (Schwartz & Bilsky, 1987); Values not only transcend specific actions and situation, but also serve as standards to guide the selection or evaluation of behavior, people, and events (Smith & Schwartz, 1999). The two major virtues of the concept of value-its relative abstraction and generality- well reflect the key feature of national culture/character- mental programming (Hofstede, 1980, 1991) and enduring personality (Clark, 1990).

Valid frameworks delineating dimensions of national cultural variations are also crucial in creating a nomological framework that is capable of integrating diverse attitudinal and behavioral phenomena and provides a basis for developing hypotheses explaining systematic variation between cultures in attitudes and behaviors (Smith, Dugan, & Trompenaars, 1996). Such frameworks are necessary for international marketing researchers to the formulation of cross-cultural generalization beyond exploratory, qualitative comparisons, which are difficult to validate or replicate (Steenkamp, 2001). Additionally, national cultural dimensions show a significant relevance on cross-national consumer behaviors (e.g., Dawar & Parker,
Reviewing National Culture Theoretical Frameworks

Relevant literature pays substantial attention to developing universally occurring national cultural frameworks (see Hall, 1976; Hofstede, 1991, 2001; Schwartz, 1994, 1997). More significantly, although unified dimensions have not been reached, converging domains of national culture are examined by both conceptual (e.g., Inkeles & Levinson, 1969; Kluckhohn & Strodbeck, 1961; Schwartz, 1994, 1997), and empirical approaches (Hofstede, 1980, 1991; 2001; Peabody, 1985; Schwartz, 1994, 1997).

Hofstede (1980, 1991, 2001) and Schwartz (1994, 1997) provide two rigorous comprehensive frameworks that are used for cross-national theorizing and for designing studies. In particular, the Hofstede’s framework has been noted as a “watershed conceptual foundation for many subsequent cross-national research endeavors” (Fernandez, Carlson, Stepina, & Nicholson, 1997, pp. 43–44). In addition, Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) report 1,101 citations to Hofstede’s work in during 1987–1997.

Hofstede’s framework has been criticized due to lack of correspondence between the measurement items and conceptual definitions in the cultural dimensions. In comparison, Schwartz framework’s provides a close match between the national-cultural domains and their strong theoretical foundations (Kagitçibasi, 1997; Steenkamp, 2001). Hofstede derives and defines four dimensions of national culture in particular, based on the combination of empirical and eclectic analyses. However, Clark (1990) highlights that the core four dimensions of the Hofstede (1990, 1991)’s national culture framework show considerable similarities with other studies, especially Inkeles and Levinson’s (1967) theory driven dimensions. Hofstede’s dimensions are identified based on the country-level approach. Schwartz’s dimensions are, on the other hand, the derivation of the cultural domains/dimensions, and subsequent possibilities of limited conceptual contrast at the country-level (Kagitçibasi, 1997; Steenkamp, 2001).

With respect to sampling issues, Hofstede provides indexes and rankings for the four dimensions of national culture, based on the matched samples of 117,000 IBM employees in 50 different nations (Hofstede, 1980, 1991). Country scores and rankings based on matched samples question possibility of samples’ influence on findings. While the IBM sample is not representative of the various countries’ populations and the employees studied were from the countries’ middle class rather than from their upper or lower classes, the focus here is on differences between countries and not absolute scores:

Hofstede’s sample is good for this purpose because the respondents from different countries were well matched on variables such as corporate culture, occupation, education, sex, and age; their only systematic differences were in nationality. Moreover, the validity of these data is attested by the fact that they are significantly related to a
variety of other theoretically relevant, country-level data (see Hofstede, 1980) for a review. (Lynn et al., 1993, p. 482)

Schwartz (1994) also highlights the necessity of a sample matching strategy in the absence of representative random samples across various nations. National scores on the Schwartz’s dimensions are largely based on teacher and student samples across 32 nations.

Another area of concerns from Hofstede’s framework is questioning of stability of country score and index, as data collection took place in 1967–1973. Hoppe (1990) conducted an update for 19 countries in 1984 and found a reasonable stability (correlation varying between .56 and .69). This finding suggests that Hofstede’s ordering of nations was not determined by the IBM sample, and that this ordering remained fairly stable over several decades. Hoppe’s findings also support the stability of value systems. Furthermore, Hofstede’s four cultural dimensions are accepted widely and have been used by many marketing researchers to locate and compare countries (e.g., see Dawar & Parker, 1994; Iverson, 1997; Lynn et al., 1993; Money & Crott’s, 2003; Nakata & Sivakumar, 1996; Pizam & Sussmann, 1995; Roth, 1995; Steenkamp et al., 1999).

The conceptual framework of this study that this chapter reports is based on four dimensions of Hofstede’s framework due to its conceptual merit and empirical support. Kagitcibasi (1997, p. 11) notes, “Hofstede’s framework is still the most comprehensive comparative study in terms of both the range of countries and the number of respondents involved. More importantly, the four dimensions of Hofstede’s framework are well suited for the development of integrative theory for international consumer behavior research as they parallel areas of traditional concerns in the explanation of consumer behavior (see Clark, 1980, p. 73, for details). Additionally, the usefulness of the Hofstede’s framework in international marketing is well established, whereas Schwartz’s framework has yet to be applied widely.

However, the use of Hofstede’s framework and cultural value indexes for nations does have limitations. While prior research reports examine the independent effects of national cultural values in management and consumer behavior using Hofstede’s country value indexes and do so with some success (e.g., Lynn, Zinkan, & Harris, 1993), other research criticizes the accuracy and usefulness of Hofstede’s scoring and country index scores (Bearden, Money, & Nevins, 2006; McSweeney, 2002).

**General Theory of Cultures’ Consequences on International Tourism Behavior**

Figure 2 summarizes a general theory of cultures’ consequences on purchasing and consuming products and services relating to international tourism behavior. While the theory includes propositions of substantial direct and indirect influences of each of four dimensions of national culture on international consumer behavior, the theory focuses on proposing the influence of configurations (i.e., causal recipes) of cultural dimensions on international tourism behavior. Figure 2 serves as a
Figure 2: General theory of cultures' consequences on international tourism.
conceptual framework for the study and includes a macro summary of the direct (shown by arrows labeled 1 and 2) and indirect influences (arrow 9) of four dimensions of national culture. Causal recipes of national culture are hypothesized to be substantial only for first-time consumers visiting an international destination (e.g., visiting Australia on a holiday only trip — not visiting friends and/or relatives (VFR). (“Holiday” refers to leisure travel that includes traveling during national holiday periods and all other vacation periods. The survey instrument used includes both “holiday/vacation” to avoid possible confusion between the British and American use of “holiday.”) Repeat and VFR consumption behaviors are likely to reduce the impact of national culture on consumption plans and behaviors — arrows 3 and 4 in Figure 2 serve to indicate these propositions; repeat visitors and visitors seeing friends and relatives are likely to be more acclimated to local contexts than first-time visitors.

**Individualism/collectivism** Individualism/collectivism (IC) pertains to the degree to which people in a country prefer to act as individuals rather than as members of a group. In collectivist countries, close-knit social structures form, whereby people expect their group to care for them in exchange for unwavering loyalty. In individualistic societies, the social fabric and group norms are much looser: people tend not to follow social norms, but rather make decisions and initiate behaviors independently of others (Roth, 1995). Triandis declares that IC as “perhaps the most important dimension of cultural difference in social behavior across diverse cultures of the world.” While IC may be worthy of independent examination, the dimension has been found to relate with other dimensions of national culture (e.g., $r = -.67, p < .05$, with power distance, for a review see Kagitçibasi, 1997). Thus, given the limited number of nation states in the world, locating countries in all theoretically possible, high–low, combinations is unfeasible. However, considering all possible combinations is useful for both theory and empirical work because each combination of high–low levels of attributes is a specific location in theoretical “property space” (Lazarsfeld, 1937); each of these locations, in turn, may constitute a different type.

If a relatively small number of combinations exist empirically, then the researcher will be able to reduce a multidimensional property space in a handful of categories. Lazarsfeld (1937, pp. 127–128) calls this simplification a *functional reduction*. Stinichombe’s (1968, p. 47) remarks on typologies echo the idea of functional reduction; he states that a “typology is a statement that a large number of variables have only a small number of combinations of values which actually occur, with all other combinations being rare or nonexistent. This results in a radical improvement in social scientific theory” (Ragin, 2000, p. 79).

Applying the main tenants of IC leads to the following propositions. Deciding on visiting via an organized group tour occurs less frequently among people from nations high in individualism; contracting travel/visit arrangements using a group tour is more popular among people from nations high in collectivism. Rationale: group touring to and in a destination is one means to maintain social approval within one’s own primary group (i.e., the group decided and made the trip); such group
touring may trigger reactance (Bem, 1970) as a violation of personal freedom among people from individualistic nations.

Pre-trip information search using impersonal, commercial, sources is higher among consumers from nations high in individualism; pre-trip information search using personal, noncommercial, sources is higher among consumers from nations high in collectivism; the number of different external information sources used is greater in nations high versus low in collectivism. Rationale: in individualistic societies people tend to make decisions and initiate behaviors independently of others; seeking help and approval in making decisions is part of the social fabric of collectivist, but less so of individualistic nations.

The composition of the immediate travel party more frequently includes two or more persons among people from nations high in collectivism and more frequently one person among people from nations high in individualism. Rationale: gaining social approval for the trip may be realized by bringing additional family members and friends on the trip and such approval is likely valued more in nations high in collectivism versus individualism.

The time away from a consumer’s home nation is less among visitors from countries characterized by high collectivism versus countries characterized by high individualism. Rationale: loyalty to close-knit groups requires frequent presence in the relevant groups, as such, lengthy overseas travel experiences are valued less in nations high in collectivism. Greater shares of visitors from nations high in collectivism shop for products to take home and their total expenditures for goods to take home are greater compared to visitors from nations high in individualism. Rationale: gift-giving to primary group members remaining at home is one way to maintain/gain social approval, a need more likely activated among people from nations high in collectivism but not high in individualism.

**Uncertainty avoidance** Uncertainty avoidance (UA) refers to the degree that a society feels threatened by uncertain, risky, ambiguous, or undefined situations and the extent to which they try to avoid such situations by adopting strict codes of behavior. In countries where uncertainty avoidance is high, a feeling of “what is different is dangerous prevails” (Hofstede, 1991, p. 119). Conversely, in low uncertainty avoidance societies, the dominant feeling is more likely to be, “what is different is curious” and worth exploring (Hofstede, 1991, p. 119). Consequently, the general theory includes the following propositions.

Deciding on visiting via an organized group tour occurs less frequently among people from nations low in UA; contracting travel/visit using a group tour is more popular among people from nations high in UA. Rationale: group touring to and in a destination is one means to reduce unforeseen risks (i.e., physical and psychological) mainly due to the pre-planned trip itinerary to and in a destination by profession organizations (i.e., tour operators and travel agents).

The amount of pre-trip planning is higher among visitors from high UA nations. Rationale: through trip planning behavior serves reducing discomfort or risks with upcoming leisure travel. The average number of different information sources
searched is higher among visitors from nations high in UA compared to nations low in UA. Search and use of tourism information during visit is more frequent among visitors from high UA versus low UA. Visitors from nations low in UA visit more places, including more often visiting places infrequently visited, such as the Australian Outback, compared to visitors from nations high in UA. Rationale: experiencing places where comparatively few people have been is often highly valued by people from nations low in UA while avoiding experientially unknown, and possibly dangerous, places is highly desired by people from nations high in UA. The frequency of hotel accommodations versus campgrounds, motels, and other types of accommodations is higher among visitors from high versus low UA nations. Rationale: experiencing professional services during a leisure trip increases security and comfort at holiday destination.

**Power distance**  
Power distance (PD) is the extent to which a society accepts the fact that power in institutions and organizations is distributed unequally. Among other things, high PD reflects acceptance of hierarchical power structures, a perception of differences between superior and subordinate, and a belief that power holders are entitled to privileges; low PD reflects the opposite mental programming toward power (see Hofstede, 2001).

Upon reflection about how certain leisure touring behaviors may associate with PD lead to the following propositions. Shorter visits are more prevalent in countries high versus low in PD. Rationale: successfully occupying a status rank in a hierarchical power structure requires frequent physical presence to continually affirm such distance while societal ties are weaker in countries low in PD and consequently, trips longer in length are more acceptable. Participating in shopping behavior and total expenditures on shopping are higher among visitors from countries high versus low in PD. Rationale: Gift buying, a behavior included in shopping, is more highly valued in countries high versus low in PD because gift giving-receiving helps to acknowledge/reinforce hierarchical status/power positions — a consequence valued highly in nations high versus low in PD.  

Visiting well-known local attractions, engaging in organized tourist activities (e.g., guided tours and wine-country tours), and golfing during the visit occur more frequently among visitors from high versus low PD nations. Rationale: such behaviors enable visitors to share with others that they actually engaged in well-known, unique and valued, destination-linked activities that most people back home may never get to experience — such reporting ability and practice serves to reinforce a high status ranking, a consequence particularly valued in high versus low PD nations. For example, golf outings to uniquely experienced, overseas, golf courses may serve to enhance a golfer’s status in discussions with fellow golfers back home.

The frequency of hotel accommodations versus campgrounds, motels, and other types of accommodations is higher among visitors from high versus low PD nations. Rationale: experiencing professional services during a leisure trip, such as hotel services, serves to demonstrate status ranking — a consequence valued higher among visitors from high versus low PD.
Masculinity  Masculinity (M) is the extent that the dominant values in society are “masculine” (i.e., assertiveness, the acquisition of money and things, and not caring for others, the quality of life or people). High scores on Hofstede’s M index associate with male dominance, and an emphasis on achievement, independence, and money. Low scores associate with fluid sex roles, equality between the sexes, and an emphasis on service, interdependence, and people. With the exclusion of Japan as a statistical outlier in their analysis, Lynn et al. (1993) report a positive association between service tipping behavior and M ($r = .47$, $p < .02$).

Several leisure travel activities are likely to have traits that characterize M. The use of external information sources (versus unaided judgments) in planning the trip is less among visitors from high versus low M nations. Rationale: independence is exhibited to oneself and others by not relying on information from external sources — personal independence is highly valued in high versus low M nations. Travel party size is smaller among visitors from nations high versus low in M. Rationale: less caring for others may be expected to translate into less need to travel with others (e.g., with friends and family members).

Total number of leisure activities and destinations/states visited are likely to be less among visitors from nations high versus low in M. Rationale: acquisition of money and things (e.g., materialism) may be relate negatively with engaging leisure activities and destinations and states visited during a leisure travel due to experiential and intangible nature of overseas leisure travel.

Engaging in active outdoors and sports activities occurs more frequently among visitors from high versus low M nations. Rationale: such activities demonstrate personal achievements (e.g., white water rafting and scuba diving) that are consequences particularly highly valued by visitors from high versus low M nations.

Two Behavioral Moderating Variables: VFR Travel and Repeat Visitation

Figure 2 illustrates (arrows 3 and 4) two trip-related variables moderating the influence of national culture on overseas, leisure-travel, consumption behaviors: VFR travel and repeat visitation. Visitors traveling primary to visit friends and relatives are likely to receive suggestions on what to do and not do, and places and events to avoid, often along with free accommodations during their visits that serve to reduce the impact of national culture on length of stays. Consequently, ($H_{5a}$) the effect sizes of hypothesized associations among national cultural dimensions and leisure trip behaviors are reduced for VFR compared to holiday only trips among first-time visitors.

Because prior visits serve to acculturate visitors as to socially acceptable and unacceptable, as well as financially rewarding and punishing, behaviors, the influence of national cultural dimensions on consumption behaviors may be expected to be less detectable among repeat versus first-time visitors. Consequently, the effect sizes relationships among national cultural dimensions and leisure trip behaviors are likely to be low for repeat versus first-time holiday-only travelers.
Thus, the theory predicts substantial effect sizes of national cultural dimensions on travel behaviors among first-time leisure visitors who are not visiting friends and relatives. The theory predicts non-substantial effect sizes for the national cultural dimensions for the other three groups: first-time leisure travelers primarily VFR, and repeat VFR, and repeat holiday-only visitors.

The Direct and Moderating Influences of the Youth and Senior Micro Cultures

Marketing strategists sometime view older consumers (e.g., over-50s) as consumers set in their ways and a market segment best to ignore. However, the share of older consumers in developed nations is growing from 12% in 1950 to over 20% in 2002. In developed nations the over-50s own three-quarters of all financial assets and account for half of all discretionary spending power. “Free time and [good] health, combined with relative financial comfort and a greater readiness for self-indulgence, are creating a mature market eager to consume and explore” (“Marketing to the Old,” 2002). Which view is more accurate among older consumers who do some exploring (i.e., overseas traveling): do consumption behaviors among older consumers reflect national culture theory-based predictions more or less closely than younger and middle-aged consumers?

The proposition that “as consumers move through their life cycle, they undergo predictable changes in values, lifestyles, and consumption patterns” (Mowen & Minor, 1998) complements the view that youth is a time of exploration and to rebel against the views and behaviors of parents (scenes from the movie, Rebel Without a Cause may come-to-mind here). Is it true that in later stage in life that we become our parents in the ways we see things and in our behaviors? Are members of older versus younger generations more likely to match behavior patterns theoretically predicted from their respective national cultures? If age is an important moderating variable on the influence of national culture on overseas, leisure travel behavior, then the differences among young travelers from nations varying in their national cultures may be expected to be less compared to older travelers.

As Figure 2 depicts (arrows 5 and 6) a substantial age effect likely exists in international leisure travel, for example, young travelers (1) prefer FIT (freely independent travel) versus group tour, (2) stay more nights in the destination country, (3) do more activities, (4) visit more destinations and states, and (4) spend less per day compared to middle-aged and senior travelers. Rationale: younger versus older travelers are likely to perceive more freedom to be away from home and they often have less family and occupational obligations compared to older travelers. Energy levels and desire to do more varied activities are likely to be higher among younger versus older travelers while their incomes and available spending power are lower.

A substantial age by national culture interaction effect may exist in international leisure travel; specifically, differences in behaviors due to national cultures are less among young versus older travelers. The findings for the visitors to Australia data do
not support this proposition. In Figure 2 arrows 7 and 8 summarize the macro proposal that age moderates the national culture impact on travel behavior.

Figure 3 depicts the more specific proposal that age moderates the impact of national culture on number of nights spent in Australia among leisure, pure holiday (not visiting friends and relatives) travelers. The prediction reflects Levitt’s (1983) widely debated view that markets are becoming more similar globally in customers’ purchasing behavior toward specific brands. If so, the purchase behavior regarding Australia as a travel destination brand should be more similar among young versus older visitors across many national cultures.

**Set-Theoretic Perspective for Advancing Theory and Empirical Research on Cultures’ Consequences**

Combinations of national culture dimensions, micro cultural, and prior behavior contribute a sense of the whole in understanding national culture influences on consumer behavior; such knowledge improves understanding of behavior that relates to national cultures above the understanding of single cultural-dimension studies. Nations consists of combinations of dimensions of national culture —”type concepts” (Lazarsfeld, 1937) involve sets of attributes that make sense together as a unitary concept. Social scientists often use type concepts without analyzing
them and instead focus on analyzing individual dimensions across types (e.g., Lynn et al., 1993).

Considering three level (high, medium, and low) for each of four value dimensions, Figure 4 presents an example of a full typology of cultural types that builds from Hofstede’s first four dimensions. In Figure 3 each of the 81 combinations of attributes constitutes a “property space” (Lazarsfeld, 1937).

Figure 4 summarizes 81 theoretically possible nations that reflect unique combinations of levels of national cultural dimensions. In the behavioral sciences, because systematic versus random differences in dependent measures due to psychological and social independent variables often become clear only for respondents scoring very high versus very low on the independent variables (related to this point, see Bass, Tigert, & Lonsdale, 1968; Gladwell, 1996; McClelland, 1998; Ragin, 1987), Figure 3 reflects the suggestion of performing qualitative comparative analyses of nations using the following levels for each of the four national cultures: the 20% “very high” versus the 60% high-moderate-low versus the 20% “very low.

Lazarsfeld (1937, pp. 127–128) notes that if a relatively small number of combinations exists empirically, then the researcher is able to reduce a multidimensional property space to a handful of categories — he names this simplification a functional reduction. Stinchcombe (1968, p. 47) stresses that functional reductionism results in a radical improvement in understanding social phenomenon and in developing social scientific theory.

Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) note the difficulty in controlling for possible confounding influences in a cross-cultural study that examines only one dimension of national culture. The most extreme analysis would be comparing measures for dependent variables for nations scoring very high in individualism (cell 1 in Figure 4) versus nations scoring very high in collectivism (cell 81 in Figure 4). Assuming that substantial differences do occur in the dependent measures, the finding observed cannot be attributed to anyone focal dimension of national culture since nations in cell 1 are very high and nations in cell 81 are very low in all four dimensions. Estimating differences using dependent responses for nations in cell 1 versus cell 55 is one theoretical example of a comparison of nations scoring very high versus very low on individualism that controls for the other three major dimensions of national culture. Because national culture index scores are available only for a limited number of the total nations (50 of approximately 175 recognized nations) and because significant associations across nations occur for individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance, in practice less than half of the cells in Figure 4 categorize one or more nations; the rest may be empty empirically but are useful for reflection and for theory development.

Sivakumar and Nakata (2001) identify sets of nations for single culture and two cultural dimension comparisons that provide some control for non-focal cultural dimensions. However, the attempt to achieve both high difference scores for a focal dimension as well as low difference score for non-focal dimensions moves the researcher away from nations ranked first or last for any one cultural dimension. For example, the country ranked first in masculinity (i.e., Japan) is not found in
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<th>Uncertainty Avoidance</th>
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<td>High/Medium/Low (2)</td>
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<td>Individualism</td>
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Key. CAN = Canada, G = Germany, HK = Hong Kong, IND = Indonesia, KOR = Korea, JP = Japan, MAL = Malaysia, NET = Netherlands, NZ = New Zealand, SG = Singapore, SW = Switzerland, TW = Taiwan, UK = United Kingdom, US = United States

Figure 4: Classifying 14 nations by four dimensions of national culture.
Sivakumar and Nakata’s country pair comparisons for masculinity controlling for non-focal dimensions.

**Possible Confounding Effects and a Quasi-Experimental Design**

Pondering the need to compare nations very high versus very low in dimensions of national culture and the high likelihood of confounding possibilities leads to applying Cook and Campbell’s (1979) suggestion to examine multiple comparisons in theory testing for ruling out alternative explanations, as well as to compare any sets of nations whereby a maximum difference occurs for one dimension only. Figure 3 depicts the classification of nations using the described 20-60-20 segmenting rule for Hofstede’s (1980) index scores for 14 nations having substantial numbers of respondents visiting Australia in the study described below. Note that one set of nations does differ for one dimension only: Canada being very high and Korea and Taiwan being very low on individualism with all three nations scoring in the large mid-range for the other three cultural dimensions.

From a dichotomous perspective (rather than identifying three levels for each dimension), a total of \(3^k - 1\) logically possible groupings occur for causal conditions. Thus, for four national culture dimensions, a total of 80 groups are possible; these grouping include 8 single aspect groupings (e.g., high versus low in individualism), 24 two aspect groupings, 32 three aspects groupings, and 16 four aspect combinations. Ragin (2000, p. 125) notes that by evaluating the comparability of the cases conforming to each configuration, a researcher can make a preliminary assessment of the adequacy of the aspects selected for investigation. For example, the configuration \(I \cap U \cap P \cap \sim M\) indicates the combination of high individualism (I), high uncertainty avoidance (U), high power distance (P), and low masculinity (M). Note that midlevel dots indicate combinations of characteristics and the “\(\sim\)” preceding the attribute’s name indicates negation.

A fuzzy set perspective recognizes that an individual case (e.g., country) is not fully in or fully out of any of the sets that make up a property space — the case has partial membership in all crisply defined property-space locations. Given Hofstede’s scores (transformed to fall between 0 and 1) for four dimensions of national cultures by country, a very close correspondence can be established between fuzzy membership scores (ranging from 0 to 1) rather than using dichotomous scales. Using Boolean algebra the maximum score across the dimensions defines a country’s membership score for a specific property space in two or more dimensions. For example, a country with fuzzy sets scores of .5, .7, .2, and .9 for I, U, P, and M, respectively, has a score of .1 for \(I \cap U \cap P \cap \sim M\), since \(\sim M = 1.0 - 0.9 = .1\) and .1 is the maximum score for this country for any one dimension in combination with the scores on the other three dimensions.

Note that Figure 4 identifies two property spaces as animus (cell 7) and anima (cell 75) locations. Our conceptualization of Jung’s concept of animus here refers to the largely unconscious cultural position of high masculinity, high individualism,
high power distance, and low uncertainty avoidance ("I am a man who does need anyone, I am powerful physically, and I am afraid of nothing"). Anima here refers to the largely unconscious cultural position of low masculinity, low individualism, low power distance, and high uncertainty avoid ("I am woman with children who need me, I am weak physically, and I wish to avoid being in harm’s way"). The following conjunctive statements represent the causal recipes for these two cells:

Property space 7, animus: \( M \cdot I \cdot P \cdot \sim U \)
Property space 75, anima: \( \sim M \cdot I \cdot \sim P \cdot U \).

The American cowboy icon comes close to the animus recipe though the argument may have merit that this cowboy represents low power distance as a reflection of the American ideal, “all men are equal.” In support of the view that the characteristics of the American cowboy reflect the animus recipe, the property space of the United States is very close to cell 7 in Figure 3. Figure 5 visualizes the ideal American cowboy, animus, and anima property spaces.

The causal recipe statement \( I \cdot M \cdot \sim U \cdot \sim P \) represents the iconic American value system — the configuration of total membership in individuality and masculinity and total non-membership in uncertainty avoidance and power distance. This complex antecedent condition equals 1.00. Table 2 includes the estimates for this iconic view of the American value system based on a fuzzy set transformation of Hofstede’s index values for the United States. The fuzzy set value for the USA equals .75 for the causal recipe, somewhat lower than value of 1.00 but closer to the iconic estimate in
comparison to other countries. Hofstede’s national value scores are available at 

The United States has the highest individualism index value (.91) among the 
550 countries in Hofstede’s set of cultural values. Given that .91 is the highest value, 
the fuzzy set for individualism includes a transformation of this value to 1.00. The 
reader might wish to convert Hofstede’s index scores into fuzzy set scores; in doing 
so, fuzzy set value for a country should be greater than .50 when a country’s score is 
greater than the average score for a given cultural value. The fuzzy set value for a 
country should be less than .50 when a country’s Hofstede score is below the average 
score for a given cultural value. The fuzzy set value assignments in Table 2 are 
applications of these heuristics.

Using fuzzy set scores that range from 0.00 to 1.00 enables the testing of the 
relevancy of animus, anima, and the full theoretical range of causal recipes/
combinations of influence on international tourism behavior.

**Method**

**Data and Procedure**

The data for examining the general theory propositions was purchased from the 
Australian Bureau of Tourism Research as part of an on-going annual study of 
international visitors to Australia (i.e., the “International Visitor Survey” and 
“Supplementary Survey”). The Australian Commonwealth and State/Territory 
governments sponsor this survey annually. Data acquisition was supported for 
the study by a grant awarded by the Cooperative Research Centre for Sustainable 
Tourism in Australia.

Data were collected using exit interviews of visitors to Australia leaving on 
commercial flights. A quota-sampling plan was followed to achieve a representative 
sample of all flights from all Australian international airports. Thus, the greatest 
share of interviews was completed at the Sydney Airport; however, representative 
samples of interviews proportionate to traffic volume were completed at all seven 
Australian international airports. The findings in this chapter are based on data 
\((n = 3,651)\) from the first quarter of 2000.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Number of nights in Australia</th>
<th>Membership (M)</th>
<th>Verbal label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>45 → 365</td>
<td>(M = 1.0)</td>
<td>Clearly a long visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35 → 44</td>
<td>(.5 &lt; M &lt; 1.0)</td>
<td>More or less a long visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26 → 34</td>
<td>(M = .5)</td>
<td>In between</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11 → 25</td>
<td>(.1 &lt; M &lt; .4)</td>
<td>More or less not a long visit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>0 → 10</td>
<td>(M = 0)</td>
<td>Clearly not a long visit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All interviews were completed face-to-face with an interviewer and an adult member of each travel party in the departure lounges for specific flights. A professional marketing research firm (A C Nielsen) was hired to collect the data for the study. The interviewers were native speakers in the language used during the interviews; the interviewers work full-time for A C Nielsen.

The cooperation and completion rates were above 90 percent for respondents requested to participate in the survey. Several additional factors were considered to insure data collection representative of visiting travelers; for example, the substantial majority of travelers arrived in the lounge area more than one hour before the departure of their flight and care was taken to interview early, middle, and late arrivals; interview quotas were used for travelers by travel party size that were representative of flight population data.

Country Selection

A two-step procedure was used to classify respondents by national culture. First, early in the interview each respondent was asked to name his or her country of residence. Second, the following question was asked near the end of the interview, “What is your first language, the language that you speak most at home?” To be included within a specific national culture, for example, Korean, the respondent had to be residing currently in the same nation of the language the respondent spoke most at home, for example, a “Korean” was defined to be someone living in Korea who spoke the Korean language most often at home. Using this screening requirement resulted in more than 90 percent useable completed surveys for each of the 14 nations examined.

Survey responses from the 14 nations with the largest shares of visitors to Australia were selected for analysis. The 14 include seven Asian nations: Korea, Hong Kong (a unique economic/political city-state within the PRC), Indonesia, Japan, Malaysia, Singapore, and Taiwan. Survey responses from four European countries were analyzed: Germany, the Netherlands, Switzerland, and the United Kingdom. Surveys were analyzed from two North American nations: Canada and the USA. Finally, responses from New Zealand were included in the study. Visitors from these 14 nations constitute more than 75 percent of the total overseas visits and close to two-thirds of the total visitors to Australia.

Questionnaire

The survey instrument included 88 questions. Trip-related planning activities were included in the questionnaire. The questions included asking, “Before you left [country of residence] did you get any information about Australia for this visit?” Respondents who did get information were asked to identify information sources from a list of 11 specific information sources, plus “somewhere else.”
Detailed questions on cities and places visited as well as participating in 29 specific tourism-related activities were asked.

Detailed questions were asked about expenditures in 16 expense categories, including pre-paid expenditures, airfares within Australia during the visit, car rentals, petrol and oil costs, food, drink, and accommodations, shopping, gambling, and entertainment (e.g., theaters, movies, zoos, museums, nightclubs, recreation, and entry fees). The respondents were not asked to report a total amount of expenditures for their current visit in Australia; this amount was calculated based on their answers to the individual expenditure items. “Total visit expenditures” includes prepaid expenses related to activities done in Australia during the visit and expenditures while in Australia for the travel party, but not the overseas air fare expenses for travel to and from Australia.

All questions were examined for clarity and ease of response in each of six major languages (English, German, Indonesian/Malay, Japanese, Korean, and Mandarin) used to gather data. Thus six versions of the questionnaire were prepared and the professional full-time interviewers completed the face-to-face interviews in the native tongues of the respondents; this procedure was used to encourage top-of-mind responses to open-ended questions among visitors from countries of origins with the largest shares of visitors to Australia. Thus, for example, native Germans participating as respondents, who were capable of being interviewed in English, were requested to respond during the survey in their native language.

In pre-testing the six versions of the survey, ten-to-twelve respondents completed each round of draft survey instruments. Two to three rounds of revisions were completed before the research team conducting the study was satisfied that the questions were understood clearly. The process of clarifying the questionnaires included two-rounds of back-translations, for example, from Japanese to Australian-English and back again to Japanese and Australian-English.

**Analyses**

For testing the propositions cross-country (i.e., group) level statistical analyses was used for testing net effects (e.g., Bass et al., 1968; Lynn et al., 1993) as well as qualitative comparative analyses (see McClelland, 1998; Ragin, 1987) using fuzzy set QCA software (available at fsQCA.com) for testing configuration effects. The analysis and findings in the chapter focus on the association of cultural causal recipes on international tourism behavior; the analysis and findings using net effects analysis (e.g., correlation analysis) is available elsewhere (Woodside & Ahn, 2007).

To compare apples to apples for similar segments of visitors across countries, four sets of data groups were created for both the statistical and comparative analyses:

- **A-consumers**: first-time visitors to Australia on a purely holiday trip (i.e., no part of the visit was motivated by business reasons and the visit did not include VFR in Australia),
• B-consumers: first-time visitors to Australia on a holiday only visit who also are VFR in Australia,
• C-consumers: repeat visitors to Australia on a purely holiday trip,
• D-consumers: repeat visitors to Australia on a holiday only visit that also are VFR in Australia.

Theory suggests that the hypothesized impacts of the four described dimensions of national culture should vary systematically: highest for A’s, moderate for B’s, low for C’s; and lowest for D consumers. A’s have the least direct and indirect experience with using the brand, Australia, and thus, their reliance unconscious reliance on their relevant national cultures should be highest. D’s are likely to adjust their behaviors during their current visits to Australia based on: (1) their prior visit (dis)satisfactory experiences and consumption learning that came to their working memories during their current visits and (2) particularly frank suggestions of things to do and how to act offered by friends and family members living in Australia. The data analyses do not confirm these views.

Both the estimated average and median responses for each of the dependent measures were used to estimate the country-level association with the four dimensions of national culture. Because the pattern and size of the associations are very similar for associations based on mean versus median values, the findings reported below are based on averages.

Further, fine-grained, comparative analyses, were performed by examining data for the three age segments within each of the A’s, B’s, C’s, and C’s. If the hypothesized impacts of specific dimensions of national culture are found consistently across all three age segments, such a comparative analysis serves as meta-analyses (sometimes at nearly a case-by-case micro level since the sample sizes become small for some countries). The observed findings support consistent impacts of national culture across the three age segments.

Data analysis includes transforming Hofstede’s index scores for country value dimensions into fuzzy set scores. The fuzzy set scores range from 0.00 to 1.00 and the calibration (see Ragin, 2008) of index to fuzzy set scores results in very similar values for the two sets of data (e.g., USA country value index for individualism equals 91, the highest individualism score among the countries in Hofstede’s data set and the fuzzy set score for the USA is set at 1.00).

The QCA data analyses included transforming mean scores for the outcome conditions (analogous to dependent measures in statistical analysis into fuzzy set scores). Table 1 provides an example of calibrating values representing a long visit to Australia. One point to fuzzy set analysis is a range of values do not represent any theoretically useful differences and the calibration transforms the values within such a range into the same value. For example, the range of nights in Australia of 45 to 365 days constitutes full membership (1.00) into the long visit fuzzy set value. All visits less than 11 days are transformed into full nonmembership in the long visit outcome condition. The data analyses include full use of fuzzy set scores ranging from 0.00 to 1.00.
Figure 6 indicates the specific fuzzy set values for number of nights of visiting Australia. The share of visitors visiting Australia in a tour group was also transformed into fuzzy set scores as well as dollars spent shopping gifts, and number of activities and regions in Australia visited.

QCA provides measures for consistency and coverage. Consistency values are analogous to correlation estimates in statistical hypothesis testing. Coverage values are analogous to effect size estimates in statistical hypothesis testing. Consistency gauges the degree to which the cases sharing a given combination of conditions (M · I · P · ~U) agree in displaying the outcome in question (e.g., not a long visit (~V)). That is, consistency indicates how closely the pairing of antecedent and outcome scores approximates a perfect subset relation.

Coverage assesses the degree to which a cause or causal recipe accounts for instances of the outcome. When several paths to the same outcome exist, the coverage of a given causal combination may be small. Thus, coverage gauges empirical relevance or importance.

The calculation of the fuzzy set-theoretical consistency value is as follows:

\[
\text{Consistency}(X_i \leq Y_i) = \frac{\sum \min(X_i, Y_i)}{\sum X_i},
\]

where \(X_i\) equals a fuzzy set score for the antecedent condition (e.g., a specific causal recipe) and \(Y_i\) equals a fuzzy set score a specific outcome condition (e.g., long visit).

The measure of fuzzy-set coverage is simply the overlap expression for the proportion of the sum of the membership scores in the outcome:

\[
\text{Coverage} (X_i \leq Y_i) = \frac{\sum \min(X_i, Y_i)}{\sum Y_i}.
\]
The formula for coverage of $Y$ by $X$ substitutes $\sum (Y_i)$ for $\sum (X_i)$ in the denominator of the formula for consistency (Ragin, 2008, p. 57).

In the $XY$ plot output of fsqca.com software program, the value in the upper left box shows the degree to which the data are consistent with $X \leq Y$ ($X$ is a subset of $Y$). The number in the lower right box indicates coverage. For an indication of usefulness, Ragin recommends consistency scores should be higher than 0.75 with the observed consistency value being greater than the corresponding coverage value.

Findings

Applying QCA, the presentation of findings here are only to probe some of the causal recipe antecedent associations with outcome conditions and to present a full examination of the general theory of cultures’ consequences on tourism behavior.

Figure 7 presents the entire set of data for the 14 countries. To eliminate the impact of one travel party with an extreme outcome condition having a disproportionate impact on the findings, the data analysis in this chapter focuses only on sets of visitors having more than 4 travel parties per category of visitors, for example, the sample size is 41 first-time visitor parties from the USA visiting Australia for holiday only and younger than 30 years old. See Figure 7 for this and other sample sizes for specific contingency statements.

Anima ($\sim M \cdot \sim I \cdot \sim P \cdot U$) as a Causal Recipe Influencing Tourism Behavior

Figure 8 shows the findings for anima as a causal recipe. These findings indicate modest support for the proposition that anima is a causal recipe that relates to not-long-visits to Australia. The consistency scores for the $X$ (anima) and $Y$ (not-long visits) are .85, 1.00, and 1.00 for young, middle-aged, and old visitor segments. Korea and Taiwan are countries with high anima scores.

Note that European countries have low fuzzy set scores for not-long-visits in Figure 7 as well as low scores for anima. The farther distance of the European countries from Australia versus the Asian countries is an equally plausible explanation to the high consistency values in Figure 8. However, distance alone is not a plausible explanation for other patterns in the findings.

While this report does not show plots of anima and not-long-visit for repeat holiday visitors, the findings are very similar for repeat visitors as first-time holiday visitors. The consistency values are above .88 for the four $XY$ plots for repeat holiday visitors and coverage values are less than .35 (for the 3 age groups and the total sample of cases).

The analysis for the older segment is not useful since the analysis is absent of most of the Asian countries — Asian countries do not provide many over 50 aged visitors to Australia. The analyses do indicate similar patterns for young and middle age visitors for animal and the outcome condition.
Figure 7: Comparative analysis for national cultures with key findings underlined.
### National Culture

#### Canada (n=101)
- First-time Visitor (n=52)
  - Holiday (n=38)
  - VFR (n=21)
  - VFR (n=5)
  - VFR (n=13)
  - VFR (n=11)
  - VFR (n=18)
- Repeat Visitor (n=39)
  - Holiday (n=22)
  - Holiday (n=38)
  - Holiday (n=27)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)

#### Korea (n=105)
- First-time Visitor (n=70)
  - Holiday (n=38)
  - VFR (n=22)
  - VFR (n=60)
  - VFR (n=22)
  - VFR (n=60)
  - VFR (n=60)
  - VFR (n=60)
  - VFR (n=60)
- Repeat Visitor (n=35)
  - Holiday (n=22)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)

#### Taiwan (n=106)
- First-time Visitor (n=71)
  - Holiday (n=38)
  - VFR (n=21)
  - VFR (n=5)
  - VFR (n=13)
  - VFR (n=11)
  - VFR (n=18)
- Repeat Visitor (n=45)
  - Holiday (n=22)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)
  - Holiday (n=60)

---

### Dependent Variable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Case Study Research: Theory / Methods Practice</th>
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</thead>
</table>

#### N of PNC
- 37.6760
- 33.0060
- 60.3300
- 25.0100
- 15.3500
- 33.0010
- 01.3700
- 00.5000
- 31.1500
- 38.3300
- 23.0800
- 09.5000

#### N of P/C
- 42.3340
- 33.3360
- 20.1714
- 25.0100
- 50.7150
- 00.0000
- 30.3300
- 00.0000
- 78.9250
- 00.6700
- 46.50100
- 09.1700

#### N of I/NC
- 32.9060
- 67.0040
- 80.3371
- 00.0000
- 02.0600
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 19.3200
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 09.1700

#### N of I/C
- 79.3960
- 67.0040
- 80.3371
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 18.1700

#### % Group Tour
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000
- 00.0000

#### Ave. Nights
- 48.4027
- 77.1714
- 92.2135
- 11.1537
- 25.0603
- 11.4551
- 06.1400
- 31.9171
- 07.0605
- 09.3605
- 35.0607
- 11.1211

#### Ave. Total & Daily Activities
- 9.17.425
- 50.172.8
- 78.355.1
- 25.1230
- 28.212.0
- 1.36050
- 0.11700
- 0.13410
- 0.12420
- 0.230.5
- 0.284.0
- 0.775.8

#### N of Oz Regions & States visited
- 113.307.153
- 50.134.160
- 216.303.50
- 01.451.00
- 177.154.08
- 123.327.272
- 164.961.00
- 150.369.213
- 135.177.94

#### $ per day
- 360.727354
- 270.300.175
- 194.990.379
- 225.235.25
- 658.109.188
- 1036.107.0
- 750.808.20
- 542.705.1029
- 316.745.00
- 558.110.830
- 589.842.600

#### $ Shopping
- 19.0910
- 06.0305
- 05.0607
- 04.1007
- 04.1007
- 00.0101
- 00.0101
- 00.0101
- 00.0101
- 00.0101
- 00.0101

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Figure 7: (Continued)
Figure 7: (Continued)
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<tr>
<th>National Culture</th>
<th>First-time Visitor (n=50)</th>
<th>Repeat Visitor (n=40)</th>
<th>First-time Visitor (n=117)</th>
<th>Repeat Visitor (n=77)</th>
<th>First-time Visitor (n=79)</th>
<th>Repeat Visitor (n=36)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Holland</td>
<td>Vacation</td>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>Holiday</td>
<td>VFR</td>
<td>VFR</td>
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<td>Malaysia</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td>Singapore</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of PNC</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of P/C</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of I/NC</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of I/C</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% Group Tour</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. Nights</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ave. Total &amp; Daily Activities</td>
<td>12.1 (8.8) 8.0 (4.1) 5.3 (0.3)</td>
<td>14.2 (4.7) 7.3 (0.3)</td>
<td>14.3 (4.0) 12.0 6.0 (0.4)</td>
<td>12.3 (2.5) 2.0 3.3</td>
<td>12.2 (1.8) 12.2 (1.3)</td>
<td>12.1 (1.8) 12.2 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N of Oz regions &amp; States visited</td>
<td>11.2 (0.10) 6.0 5.2 3.3</td>
<td>14.2 (0.20) 12.0 6.0 (0.4)</td>
<td>14.3 (0.20) 12.0 6.0 (0.4)</td>
<td>12.3 (2.5) 2.0 3.3</td>
<td>12.2 (1.8) 12.2 (1.3)</td>
<td>12.1 (1.8) 12.2 (1.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ per day</td>
<td>105</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>388</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$ Shopping</td>
<td>310</td>
<td>302</td>
<td>160</td>
<td>130</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

Figure 7: (Continued)
Figure 7: (Continued)
Figure 8: Anima ($\sim M \cdot \sim I \cdot \sim P \cdot U$) as a causal recipe affecting not long visits to Australia. Note: Findings indicate high consistency and moderate coverage for anima as an explanation for not long visits to Australia.
Animus and Not Shopping for Gifts among Young, Middle-Aged, and Older Visitors

Figure 9 includes the findings for animus as a causal recipe and not shopping for gifts as the outcome condition. High fuzzy set scores for not shopping for gifts to take home indicate low dollar expenditures for such purchases. The USA youth has high values for both animus and not shopping for gifts. The Japanese youth has low values for both animus and not shopping for gifts.

The XY plot for young samples of country visitors provides the highest consistency value (1.00) and modest coverage (.36). For the middle-age pairings, the findings indicate that most middle-aged Koreans, Japanese, and Taiwanese visitors to Australia do shop for gifts to take home while most middle-age Dutch, Malaysians, Germans, and British are not shopping for gifts to take home.

Animus and Not Shopping for Gifts for First-Time and Repeat Holiday Visitors

Figure 9 includes a replication of findings for two distinct samples: first-time and repeat holiday visitors. The findings include high consistency and modest coverage for both first-time and repeat holiday XY plots for animus as a causal recipe.

Note in Figure 9 that a number of sample cases of countries from Western cultures are high in both animus and not shopping for gifts while the opposite pattern occurs for a number of sample cases of countries from Eastern cultures.

Limitations

This chapter offers a limited introduction to QCA for analyzing conjunctive causal recipes of cultures’ consequences on outcome conditions relating to international tourism. Attempting to meet the objective of keeping this report to reasonable length, the analyses and findings do not offer a comprehensive examination of the propositions in the general theory of cultures’ consequences on international tourism. The focus of the findings is on examining conjunctural influences rather than net effects on two outcome conditions (length of visit and expenditures for gifts).

A full report using QCA that includes analyzing simple causal conditions (e.g., collectivism only) on outcome conditions would be beneficial. (Such analysis do support and extend findings using net effects statistical test results that Woodside, 2007) reports.

The findings in this chapter are representative of visitors to one country in one year using only Hofstede’s value indexes and replications to other countries in other continents using alternative value scores for countries are necessary before concluding that conjunctive causal recipes of country values are useful for explaining outcome conditions relating to international tourism behavior.
Figure 9: Animus (M · I · P · ∼ U) and not shopping for gifts to take home. Note: Findings indicate high consistency and moderate coverage for animus as a causal recipe for not shopping for gifts.
Implications for Theory and International Management and Marketing Practice

Cultures represent a complex whole (a conjunction) of value systems. Such value systems potentially are causal recipes that affect international tourism behavior. The present chapter demonstrates that such complex causal recipes are helpful in explaining not visiting an overseas destination for a lengthy stay and for not shopping for gifts to take home.

The findings in this report do not support the view that young versus middle-age or older visitors exhibit counter-cultural outcome behaviors. The findings do not support the view that complex culture recipes are less influential among repeat visitors versus first-time visitors.

The view that the pairing of animus as a causal recipe and not shopping for gifts relates to international visitors from some Western countries receives support. Such a pairing of relatively high animus and not shopping for gifts excludes most visitors from Eastern countries.

Anima as a complex causal recipe does relate to not-long-visit. This finding supports the view that being home is necessary for practicing forms of nurturing behavior that anima reflects.

Firms in tourism related industries may benefit by designing experiences that match with the visitors’ cultural orientations. For example most visitors from several Eastern cultures will not engage in long visits and will engage in shopping for gifts during their brief visits to Australia. The opposite pattern is more likely to occur for visitors from Western cultures. Broadly summarizing, product marketing for gifts for loved ones and friends at home relates more closely to Eastern cultures while experience marketing during longer visits relates more closely to Western cultures. Exceptions do occur from this strategy proposition and the proposition may not appear to be a new proposal; however, the use of QCA permits the identification of what countries and visitors reflect this proposition and where the exceptions occur.

The continuing tourism marketing designs that attempt to convert short visits into long visits or long visits into longer visits may be effective for only a limited number of origin markets. For Australia, given the dominance of short visits and complex cultural recipes that call residents to be home, most Asian visitors are highly unlikely to shift to long visits in comparison to visitors from Western nations. Complex causal recipes (such as animus) permit visitors from Western cultures to consider lengthening their visit to participate in additional “once-in-a-lifetime” experience. The identification of Australian-own unique experiences may be essential for implementing such strategies effectively. Similar insights likely are applicable for other country destinations as well.

Conclusion and Implications for Future Research

Examinations and refinements of the general theory of cultures’ consequences on international tourism are worth of additional research attention. Culture’s influence
on purchasing and consumption tourism products and services is likely to be contingent on age, first-time versus repeat visits, and holiday versus visiting friends and relatives. However, the findings in this chapter do not offer much support for this view.

The main conclusion is that QCA is useful for identifying important asymmetrical relationships between complex causal recipes of values statements and international tourism behavioral outcomes. The testing of such causal recipes using QCA is worth pursuing in research on explaining and modeling international tourism behavior.

**Problems and Questions for Discussion**

1. A. Summarize the major findings in Figure 10 in 300 words or less. B. What tourism-marketing strategy implications follow from these findings?

2. A. Summarize the major findings in Figure 11 in 300 words or less. B. What tourism-marketing strategy implications follow from these findings?

3. A. Construct a table listing Hofstede index scores for each culture value appearing in Figures 10 and 11 for each of the 14 nations. (Retrieve these values on the internet at http://www.geert-hofstede.com/). B. Transform Hofstede’s index

![Figure 10: Sufficiency test long-visit fuzzy-set membership among young adults by the intersection of individualism, uncertainty avoidance, and power distance.](image-url)
scores for each nation for each value after creating a fuzzy set scale for each of the four cultural values.

4. A. After completing problem 3 above, use your fuzzy set scales to compute the causal-recipe fuzzy-set value for $I \cdot M \cdot \sim P \sim U$ (the American iconic recipe) for each nation. B. Create a figure that plots the country scores for $I \cdot M \cdot \sim P \sim U$ and the long visit membership scores that appear in Figures 10 and 11 for the 14 nations.

5. A. Summarize the major findings that appear in your diagram in answering problem 4. B. What tourism-marketing strategy implications follow from these findings?
Chapter 18

Conclusions: Principles for Doing Case Study Research

Synopsis

Chapter 18 closes the book with twelve principles relevant for doing case study research. The chapter includes brief discussions of specific must-read literature for each principle. The discussion also emphasizes that accuracy (validity) comes first, not generality. The chapter emphasizes that the dominant logic in seeking generality by using surveys whereby informants write-out answers, tick boxes, and never have the opportunity to answer questions that they themselves frame fails to deliver accuracy except possibly when informants are describing evaluating their own recent experiences (see Chapter 2 for further details). The following key thoughts signify the twelve principles:

- *Configural* not net effects
- *Unconscious* not conscious thinking
- *Dynamic* not cross sectional designs
- *Multiple routes* not one model only
- *Predictive validity* not only a best fitting model
- *Context* not context free
- *Conjunctive-disjunctive* not compensatory decision-making
- *Systems thinking* not independent versus dependent conditions
- *Multi-person* not one-person
- *Satisfy* not optimize decisions
- *Unobtrusive evidence* not just obtrusive interviews or observations
- *Visual* not just verbal data collection and interpretation.

If we are concerned about the imprecision of case studies as research data, we can console ourselves by noting that a man named Darwin was able to write about a study of the Galapagos Islands and a few other cases. To the best of my recollection, there are not statistics in Darwin’s book (Simon, 1991, p. 128).
Chapter 18 closes the book with principles to live-by in doing case study research. These principles serve as rationales supporting the usefulness for theory creation, doing valid research, and implementing successful practice (i.e., workable implemented strategies).

Good news in response to Simon’s (1991) expression of concern about the imprecision of case studies! The discussion and research examples in several chapters in this book describe how precision is possible in case study research. Methods providing for precision include qualitative (configural) comparative analysis (QCA, see Chapter 2), building-in degrees of freedom, ethnographic decision-tree modeling, and confirmatory personal introspections.

Chapter 18 presents 12 principles relevant for doing case study research. The principles serve both as rationales for doing case study research versus using empirical positivistic methods and as guides on how to do case study research. Nothing is sacrosanct about the number 12; including 20 principles for case study research is the goal for the second edition.

The quality in doing and writing-up case study research improves with practice. Big mistakes usually occur by novices in doing case study research. All case study researchers make mistakes but usually do improve with practice; studying case-study research methods before going into the field to collect data can be helpful. Mistakes include asking blunt questions at a first meeting with informants and asking “why” questions. The second edition will elaborate on this thirteenth principle — practice to improve quality; ask informants what you should ask; ask indirect questions and ask questions indirectly before asking blunt questions; consider not asking questions at all until the third or fourth meeting with informants. The next 12 sections describe 12 principles relevant for case study research theory development, designing methods, and interpreting data.

Configural Effects Not Net Effects

Outcomes are viewable better as results of causal recipes and not combinations of independent variables and interaction terms. “In conventional quantitative research, independent variables are seen as analytically separable causes of the outcomes under investigation. Typically, each causal variable is thought to have an autonomous or independent capacity to influence the level, intensity, or probability of the dependent variable” (Ragin, 2008, p. 112).

Achieving accuracy requires applying methods that account for contingency and complex antecedent conditions. For example, at least a few substantial changes in contexts relevant to an outcome always change the outcome — antecedents are viewable best as recipes and not linear combinations of independent influences.

The addition of complex interaction terms (e.g., four-way interactions of independent variables) presents severe problems of interpretations. Expecting techniques designed
specifically to estimate net effects (e.g., correlation and structural equation modeling) in linear-additive models to do a good job of assessing causal recipes, especially in situations that include multiple recipes, is unreasonable (Ragin, 2008, p. 113).

Homework reading to assign yourself: Ragin (2008). Ragin is the leading authority on qualitative comparative analysis. Start with his 2008 book because the Boolean algebra tools in this book are more advanced and useful than his earlier books.

**Unconscious Not Conscious**

Humans (all of us) have biases favoring the belief that we plan what we do and know why we have done whatever we have done. A double-whammy over-confidence bias occurs. An over-confidence bias occurs when someone’s subjective confidence in her judgments is reliably greater than her objective accuracy, especially when confidence is relatively high. Failure to recognize and agree that such a bias is relevant in our descriptions of causes of our own behavior is the second whammy.

When outcomes are good, we usually conclude, “I did it!” Humans tend to report that their decisions and behaviors were the principal (or only) causes of good outcomes. When outcomes are bad, we conclude, “They changed the rules on me!” Humans tend to report that conditions and actions of others were the principal (often the only) cause of bad outcomes. Humans fail to (consciously) notice how context and manipulations by behavioral scientists and marketers influence their behavior (see Bargh & Chartrand, 1999).

Consequently, collecting conscious-based data via self-reports (e.g., subjective personal introspections and survey responses) is insufficient for achieving high accuracy. Humans need to reflect on their own behavior and collect unconscious-thinking data (e.g., latency-response tests at implicit.harvard.edu) to achieve high accuracy in describing and understanding their own thinking and behavior.


**Dynamic Not Cross-Sectional**

The dominant logic for most organizational studies, research in marketing, and strategic management research is to collect all the data in the main study in one survey and then to test a conceptual model using structural equation modeling. The conceptual models include no lagged relationships (and the write-ups of these studies include only best-validity estimates and almost never include tests for predictive validity). While the conceptual models almost always imply lagged relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variables, the empirical models fail to test for such relationships.
Not following the dominant logic is best. Collecting data from the same sources for several days, weeks, years, or decades is best. Doing cross-lagged analysis (e.g., Woodside, 1999), field experiments where manipulations precede outcomes (List, 2006), system dynamics modeling in case study research (e.g., Hall, 1984), and qualitative comparative analysis (e.g., Ragin, 2008) are useful alternatives to avoid the failure to recognize empirically for lagged relationships.

Go back into the field twice, thrice, and several times more if possible to see if informants’ predictions become reality. Participant observations (e.g., van Maanen, 1978) that include long periods in the field (i.e., weeks, months, and years) alleviate the lack of information on lagged relationships that cross-sectional data analysis ignores.


Multiple Routes Not One Model Fits All

Useful rules-of-thumb include the expectations that if a study has five antecedent conditions with each having low, medium, and high values, about five-to-ten percent of the resulting 243 possible causal recipes ($3^5 = 243$) results in a high value for the outcome condition in the investigation; 30–50 percent of the causal recipes lead to low-to-medium values in the outcome condition, and the rest of the complex antecedent conditions (i.e., causal recipes) are “remainders”, that is, they include no cases.

Several models in a multiple regression analysis will achieve close to the same maximum level that is reachable for the coefficient of determination (adjusted $R^2$) in an empirical positivistic study; yet most of these studies only report one or two empirical models. Similar reports are made for structural equation models. Case study researchers using qualitative comparative analysis (see the software program at fsqca.com) know better — they report all relevant routes to high outcome levels for the outcome condition.

Homework to assign yourself: Perfetto and Woodside (2009). Perfetto and Woodside (2009) describe several routes leading to extremely frequent casino gambling using relatively complex recipes of demographic antecedent conditions. This study reports unique recipes for whales (wealthy), big fish (modest income) and jumbo shrimp (very low income) extremely frequent casino gamblers.
Predictive Validity Not Just Best Fit Validity

Gigerenzer (2008) shows that multiple regression models do extremely well at creating a best fitting model for a given dataset but perform less well in comparison to more simple heuristics at predictive validity — testing the model’s accuracy for a separate set of data. Presenting only best-fit model findings is the dominant logic in the management, organizational studies, and marketing literatures but doing so is bad practice.

Testing for predictive validity with hold out samples is always possible and doing so substantially increases the added value for both empirical positivistic and interpretative case studies. Yes, case studies can apply empirical positivistic analysis methods (e.g., latency measurement and building-in degrees-of-freedom analysis).

Homework to assign yourself: [223]Gigerenzer (2008). A brilliant scholar who is the direct link to the present from Herbert Simon’s work in case study research (e.g., Cyert et al., 1956) for creating formal models of bounded rationally. Gigerenzer (2008) is essential reading.

Context Not Context-Free

Simon (1990, p. 7) most famously reports, “Human rational behavior … is shaped by a scissors whose two blades are the structure of the task environment and the computational capabilities of the actor.”

Simon’s earlier development of the concept of “bounded rationality” illustrates well the scissors of the mind-environment interface. In a boundedly rational world, environments are much more complex than any single actor can ever fully comprehend due to the computational limitations of the human mind. Hence, actors must construct local cognitive models that enable them to manage their environments effectively. The cogency of this insight, that action takes place in cognitively tractable local spaces, was a needed antidote to conceptions of the panoramic managerial mind promoted by neoclassical economics. (Porac & Sharpira, 2007, p. 2007)

Because multiple-actors directly or indirectly participate in the immediate or prior contexts relevant to the main focus of research on most human behaviors, collecting data from multiple informants and for multiple context both are useful for confirming/refuting the accuracy of the findings and expand on understanding of the contingencies affecting outcomes uniquely for each context. The big mistake in the dominant logic in management research is not planning a research study to examine for context effects.

**Conjunctive-Disjunctive Not Compensatory Decision Making**

For deciding on actions in new contexts, an individual or group usually asks two questions. First, does a given action meet the minimum levels necessary on three to nine prerequisites? Second, is the given action likely to provide high performance for a critical outcome?

The first question expresses the conjunctive decision rule: set minimum levels necessary for each prerequisite and discard candidate actions failing to meet all minimums requirements.

The second question expresses the disjunctive decision rule: select the action that is superior for the most critical prerequisite — among the remaining options following learning the answer to the first questions.

For new contexts, the rules actually in use include several definable (this discussion includes six) phases that occur several times before a choice is made. For example:

- Define the problem/opportunity
- Search a little to find a few (three to nine) potential options
- Apply the conjunctive rule
- Redefine the problem/opportunity
- Apply the conjunctive rule
- Search a little to find a few (three to nine) potential options
- Redefine the problem/opportunity
- Apply the disjunctive rule
- Search a little to find a few (three to nine) potential options
- Apply the disjunctive rule
- Implement the decision
- Search a little to find a few (three to nine) potential options
- Evaluate the performance realized after implementing the decision.

Witte (1972) emphasizes that phases are identifiable in complex (new or major problem/opportunity) management decision making but several of these phases repeat during the processes. Research by Mintzberg et al. (1976) confirms empirically and elaborates theoretically on how phases repeat in complex decision making. Earlier empirical findings by Cyert et al. (1956) and recent findings by Woodside and Wilson (2000) provide additional support.

What decision makers do not do is a Ben Franklin when making decisions. Sometimes decision makers tell you that they perform Ben Franklins but if the
researcher conducts “long interviews” (McCracken, 1988) of two-plus hours with two to five participants in the decision process, she learns that the actual decision process was an application of the conjunctive-disjunctive rules.

What is doing a Ben Franklin? Ben Franklin was one of the Founding Fathers of the United States. His writings include recommendations to apply a compensatory decision rule for major decisions with two or more options (e.g., go versus no go; option A, B, or C). A compensatory decision rule includes assigning pluses and minuses to all features relevant in the decision for each alternative; adding up the pluses and subtracting the minuses; the final values are compared; the option with the highest score is selected.

A variant on this fully rational model for decision making is to apply varying weights of importance to the features. The decision maker may assign different weights of importance to the features and multiple the weights after assigning positive or negative values to an option for each feature (e.g., −3 to +3) and then sum the weighted scores for each option. Afterward, the decision maker selects the option with the highest summed score.

While a few decision makers do take the time to apply such compensatory decision rules, they will then refer to non-compensatory rules when actually deciding (Woodside & Wilson, 2000). Decision makers apply non-compensatory decision rules (such as the conjunctive-disjunctive rule) for two reasons. First, such rules are easier to apply than compensatory rules. Second, the non-compensatory rules actually provide higher predictive validity (though lower best fit validity) in accuracy versus compensatory rules (Gigerenzer, 2008) — this second reason was recently proposed theoretically and confirmed empirically by Gigerenzer (2008).

Consequently, while the theory of reasoned action (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980; Fishbein & Ajzen, 1975) — a compensatory model on decision making — is theoretically elegant and pleasing but it is not relevant sufficiently for describing or understanding actual decision making. Also, asking informants to respond to measures of importance using 1–5 or 1–7 scales and then multiplying informants’ responses to feature evaluations by importance responses is unsound if the objectives include describing and understanding real-life decision making.

Homework to assign yourself: Gladwell (2005), Gigerenzer (2007), and Gigerenzer (2008). Gladwell (2005) and Gigerenzer (2007) are useful, popular, airport-reading translations of scientific research on how thinking and deciding are actually done. Gigerenzer (2008) is a heavy-duty scientific read. (Someone needs to nominate Gigerenzer for the Nobel Prize in Economics before 2020. He deserves both the nomination and the award.)

**Systems Thinking Not Linear Thinking**

*The Fifth Discipline: The Art & Practice of the Learning Organization* (1990) describes systems thinking. Systems’ thinking includes the assumption that relationships
include feedback loops. The view that decisions are never final but lead to actions that lead to further decisions that lead to further actions is systems thinking.

Systems' thinking is necessary for system dynamics modeling. Jay W. Forrester is the founder of system dynamics as a field of study. Hall (1984) applies many of the principles of system dynamic modeling in his study that he reports in his award winning case study research article.

Systems' thinking recognizes that layers of relationships occur among antecedent conditions (using QCA language) and variables (using empirical positivistic language). For example consider antecedent conditions A, B, C, and D: where $A(t)$ affects $B(t+1)$ and $B(t+2)$ affects $C(t+3)$ and $C(t+3)$ affects $D(t+4)$ and $D(t+4)$ affects $A(t+5)$, where $t =$ days, weeks, or years. Note that among these relationships that all conditions are both antecedent and outcome conditions — systems' thinking includes the proposition that all conditions or variables are both independent and dependent.

“Hidden demons” are found in systems. Hidden demons are seemingly unimportant relationships that can drive the system to failure. Executives frequently fail to recognize the impact of these relationships before the system breakdowns and dies. Hall (1976, 1999) provides details on how hidden demons cause systems' failures.

*System Dynamics Review* is the leading journal in the field. Consider becoming a member of the System Dynamics Society (go to http://www.systemdynamics.org/), if you wish to become a hands-on researcher in this subfield of case study research.

Homework to give yourself: Hall (1976) and Sterman (2000). Read Hall for a highly readable empirical example of system dynamics research. Sterman (2000) is a first-rate full treatise on how to do system dynamics research.

**Multiple Party Not Single Person**

Von Hippel (1988) reports the discovery in his ethnographic study of new manufacturing processes that manufacturers initially fail to report that “lead customers” came up with details on what to invent, what the invention should look like, and how the invention should work. When good things happen, most humans tend to try to take all the credit for themselves. But with long interviews individually among several persons on site (i.e., in contexts), a more accurate picture emerges: several persons have involvement in the innovation process. *The Sources of Innovation*, the book resulting from his Ph.D. dissertation is downloadable for free at http://web.mit.edu/evhippel/www/sources.htm.

Look for multiple-party participation and build theory to include the participation by multiple parties in case-study research projects. For example, friends, family members, and co-workers have direct and indirect influences in initial purchases of most products, services, and brands. Suppliers and customer firms influence manufacturers in new product development. Woodside and Biemans (2005) provide a set of propositions of the roles of multiple parties in IMDAR processes (i.e., innovation, manufacturing, diffusion, acceptance and rejection of innovations).

Homework to give yourself: von Hippel (2008). Also, in a paper awarded best article in the volume of its publication, Woodside (1996b) provides an insightful
Satisfy Not Optimize

Because humans face many tasks everyday and seek to make tradeoffs between accuracy and effort when making decisions (Payne, Bettman, & Johnson, 1993), decision makers rarely seek to find an optimal option to a problem or opportunity even if such an option might be available. Simon (1990) points out that humans lack the cognitive resources to maximize: they usually do not know the relevant probabilities of outcomes, they can rarely evaluate all outcomes with sufficient precision, and their memories are weak and unreliable. Also, an optimal decision may not exist for a given decision-making context. Simon proposes the bounded rationality theory of decision making.

A question that might arise here is how might decision makers improve their decisions when in the heat of a context requiring that a decision be made? That is, how can decision makers decide on taking an action somewhat better than one that results in disaster and that many persons implement in the heat of a given context? Weick (2007) provides several articles on this issue. He uses the following account to stress the importance of improving decision making in high stress contexts:

At least 23 wildland firefighters have died in four separate incidents since 1990 with their tools beside them. In every case, they died within sight of safety zones that could have been reached if they had been lighter and moved faster. For example, at the South Canyon disaster outside Glenwood Springs, Colorado, 14 firefighters were killed on July 6, 1994, when they failed to outrun a fire that exploded through a stand of oak trees just below them. One firefighter, whose body was found a mere 250 ft from safety at the top of the ridge, was still wearing a backpack and still had a chain saw in his hand. (Weick, 2007, p. 6)

Weick (2007) proposes six solutions to improving the quality (i.e., effectiveness not efficiency) of decisions (please refer to his article for a full discussion of these possible solutions). The point here is that designing decision making that incorporates his training proposals may be possible. Also case study researcher may wish to undertake historical analysis (Golder, 2000) of cases to find additional instances of very wise decision making that incorporates Weick’s proposals and others versus typical decision making. Using QCA, what are the complex antecedent conditions resulting in wise versus typical solutions? These issues may represent a worthwhile Ph.D. dissertation topic and method.

Homework to assign yourself: Weick (2007). Note-to-self: be sure to include a chapter on case study research on normative decision-making issues in the second edition.
Unobtrusive Not Just Obtrusive Observations and Interviews

Humans and other animals are likely to report beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors about themselves that do not match with their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors when acting unobserved in natural contexts.

Several reasons support this phenomenon. Humans have limited conscious access to their own unconscious thinking (Wegner, 2002; Wilson, 2002). Humans edit their thoughts that surface from their memories to protect their egos. Humans edit their responses to be socially correct. Humans frequently change their answers depending on the framing context and wording of the question (Levin, Schneider, & Gaeth, 1998). Placing the same human in different contexts frequently changes their beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors dramatically. Field studies confirm that humans act differently in real-life versus laboratory settings (e.g., List, 2006).

Collecting data unobtrusively in natural field settings is a powerful method for learning how humans think and act in real-life. Avoid asking leading questions. Avoid asking any questions at all!

This view might seem obvious but implementing research methods from such a base requires more creativity and different tools than the use of fixed-point surveys. Fixed-point surveys represent the main data collection method in most masters’ theses and Ph.D. dissertations in marketing, strategic management, and organizational studies — possibly from 1960 to 2010.

A key suggestion here is to use methods other than fixed-point surveys. One context that is appropriate for fixed-point surveys is for assessing customer evaluations of recent product–service experiences — especially when such surveys reduce bias by not identifying the sponsor of the study and achieve response rates above 50 percent for consumers selected for the study (e.g., Woodside, Frey, & Daly, 1999).

Homework to assign yourself: Webb et al. (2000). Webb et al. (2000) cover 20+ methods for unobtrusive data collection and provide sources in the literature with details on the implementation of each one. This recommendation goes hand-in-hand with Mintzberg’s (1979) recommendation to do “direct research” by going into real-life contexts that you are studying (see also Mintzberg, 1979) in strategic management — an insightful view that applies to all fields of management, social psychology, and sociology.

Visual Not Just Verbal Data Collection and Interpretation

Humans first communicate visually. Kaufman and Kaufman (1980) demonstrates that babies of all ages (four days to six months) have preferences among visual alternatives. Verbal languages developed thousands of years after Homo sapiens and their ancestors were using visual communications. Humans’ report visual scenes, actions, and locations in their dreams (e.g. Jung, 2009).
Figure 1: The case study research flowering learning tree: communicating visually 12 case study research principles.
Because most thinking occurs unconsciously and individuals have great difficulty in retrieving unconscious thoughts, Zaltman (2003) and Zaltman and Zaltman (2008) create and apply visual data collection methods that aid individuals to retrieve and interpret information from memories. Also refer to Chapters 4 and 7 in the book in your hands or on the screen.

Homework to assign yourself: Reed (2010). Reed (2010) provides excellent training in how to think visually as well as a review of much literature of research on visual thinking and communicating.

Conclusion

Figure 1 concludes this final chapter with a happy-face flowering learning tree as a metaphor for the principles for case study research theory, methods, and practice. Figure 1 illustrates a key feature in a unique visual format for each of the 12 principles. Let us nurture this tree's future growth.
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References


References


Subject Index

AAE, 132
adaptive unconscious, 132, 144,
146–147, 155–156, 399
advanced attribution error, 130, 132
advanced overconfidence bias, 131–132
advertising, 45, 58, 61–62, 70–71, 87,
104, 148, 194, 255, 257, 274, 276,
280, 309, 323
alcohol, 236–239
anecdote, 21, 23, 177
anima, 376–379, 384, 390, 393
animus, 359, 376–379, 391–393
antagonist, 44–45, 92
anthropomorphistic, 41–42, 47
AOB, 132
archetype, 42–44, 47–48, 53–54, 56–58,
63, 85, 88–92, 96, 100–103
asymmetric, 26, 360–362
auto-driving, 5, 226, 240, 265, 267,
270–271, 275, 278, 281
automatic thought-retrieval, 139
autonoetic, 46
awakening, 88, 91–92, 96–98
backstage, 158, 163, 173–174, 176,
187–188
balance theory, 63, 70, 102, 225,
227–228
Barq’s, 144
96, 100–101
Boone, 268, 272–277, 280–289
Buddhist, 91, 130
building-in degrees-of-freedom, 12, 268,
401
buying center, 246–247, 250, 252, 322
case study research, 1–42, 44–46, 48, 50,
52, 54, 56, 58, 60, 62, 64, 66, 68,
70, 72, 74, 76, 78, 80, 82, 86–88,
90, 92, 94, 96, 98, 100, 102, 104,
107–108, 110, 112, 114–116, 118,
120, 122, 124, 126, 130, 132, 134,
136, 138, 140, 144, 146, 148, 150,
152, 154, 156, 158, 160, 162, 164,
166, 168, 170, 172, 174, 176, 178,
180, 182, 184, 186, 188–192, 194,
196, 198, 200, 202, 204, 208, 210,
212, 214, 216, 218, 220, 222,
224–261, 263–289, 291–319, 322,
324, 326, 328, 330, 332, 334, 336,
338, 340, 342–344, 346, 348, 350,
352, 354, 356, 360, 362, 364, 366,
368, 370, 372, 374, 376, 378, 380,
382, 384, 386, 388, 390, 392, 394,
397–408
catharsis, 43, 88, 91–92, 99–100
causal recipe, 19, 25–26, 28, 30, 33, 359,
361, 367–369, 378–379, 381,
383–384, 390–394, 398–400
cause mapping, 343–344, 347–348, 352,
354
Clark Kent, 101–102
climax, 93
cohort auditor, 118
collectivism, 364, 368–370, 374–375, 391
commodity purchase planning, 333
commons, 354
configural, 397–398, 407
correlation, 30, 33, 105, 114, 126,
130–131, 133, 164, 195, 199, 203,
211, 261, 265, 277
confirmatory personal introspection, 24, 87, 107, 109, 111, 113–115, 117, 119, 121, 123, 125, 127, 129, 164, 398
conjunctive-disjunctive, 397, 402–403, 407
consistency, 29–30, 158, 186, 360, 383–384, 390–392
contingency, 15, 207–211, 213, 220, 222, 291, 304, 308, 384, 398, 402
deliberate, 23–24, 33, 36, 157–158, 183–184
deviation amplifying, 348
dOF, 38–39, 67
dual processing theory, 86, 104
dynamic causal modeling, 12–13
deviation amplifying, 348
dOF, 38–39, 67
dual processing theory, 86, 104
dynamic causal modeling, 12–13
developmental systems theory, 293, 297
emic, 1, 8, 16, 39, 44, 49, 51, 54, 56, 58, 63, 67, 69, 105, 117, 125–126, 140, 158–161, 164, 166–167, 169, 172, 179, 182–185, 188, 301
empirical positivism, 18, 20
enactment, 53–54, 56, 67, 103, 162, 167, 169–170, 183, 186
Subject Index 437

Epsilon Corporation, 322, 325–328, 339
eثنوغرافيك، 9, 12–13, 31, 113, 209, 293, 301, 321, 325, 342, 398, 404
etic, 8, 16, 39, 54, 56, 58, 63, 105, 125–126, 140, 143, 155, 184–185
exchange behavior, 194, 205
explicit, 5, 8–9, 16, 18, 20, 32, 35, 37, 51, 104, 107, 114, 125, 131–133, 138–141, 143–145, 147, 156, 184, 208, 223, 243, 291, 294, 297, 348, 355
feedback, 8, 10, 23, 33, 116, 122, 136, 244, 322, 336, 343–345, 351–352, 404
FIT- freely independent traveler, 300, 368, 373
fit-like-a-glove, 291
FLAG, 134, 291, 293, 295–297, 304
flow, 31, 45, 51, 63, 67, 156, 169, 300, 321, 326, 329, 342
FMET, 23–24, 105, 118–120, 125, 138–140, 143–145, 147–149, 151, 153–155, 166, 251
folk, 24, 129–130, 134, 226
forced metaphor elicitation technique, 23–24, 105, 123, 139
FSSS, 25, 30, 32, 38, 40
fundamental attribution error, 129–130, 132, 136, 141
golf, 314, 343–357, 371
Hawaii, 44, 295, 297–314
hero, 43–44, 48, 55, 57, 88–89, 145
hidden demon, 33, 343–344, 404
hierarchy, 46, 225, 364
historical method, 25, 30, 115–116
Holocaust, 49, 86, 227
humanistic, 115, 117–118, 126
icon, 50, 361, 378
IKEA, 169
illusion, 129–133, 135, 137, 139, 141
imbalance, 49, 52, 63, 69, 102, 225, 228
IMDAR, 34, 404
independent variable, 10, 19, 31, 295, 310, 345, 360–362, 375, 398–399
inertia, 33, 80
inside auditor, 117–118, 125
inter-judge reliability, 250
“Joe the Plumber”, 23
journey, 57, 66, 77, 80, 82, 89, 91–92, 97–101
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject Index</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>law of the instrument, 21, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lead user, 34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 1, 3, 238, 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 2, 3–4, 238, 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 3, 4, 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 4, 4, 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>level 5, 4–5, 238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>little trickster, 43, 55, 57, 90</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>logical positivistic, 241–242</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>long interview method, 24, 264, 268–269, 292, 297, 310</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>loops, 8, 10, 13, 23, 33, 79, 122, 345, 347–349, 351–352, 404</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>lying, 3, 11, 97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>market prices, 26, 211, 216, 220</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>means-end laddering, 225, 227, 229, 231, 233, 235, 237, 239</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEC, 225–228, 230–232, 238, 240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>member check, 20, 32, 58, 70, 114, 127, 130–131, 141</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mental model, 1, 8–9, 16, 114, 223</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meta-analysis, 252</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>meta-sensemaking, 6, 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>micro-tipping point, 291, 293</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mixed-methods, 23, 33, 35–36, 130, 132–133</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monet, 64, 76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>monoscenic, 93, 97, 102–103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moonstruck, 55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mother-of-goodness, 43, 56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>motivation, 100, 115, 120, 156, 253</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mountain Dew, 41, 44, 48, 88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MTP, 291, 293–295, 304, 309–311</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multi-person, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple methods, 1, 33, 38, 107, 115, 121, 125, 129, 354–356</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>multiple routes not one model only, 397</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>myth, 41, 44, 47, 50, 54, 59, 67–69, 71, 88, 97, 145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>naïve observation, 12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>“new wave theory”, 272, 282</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>nonconscious, 132, 144–145, 147, 155</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>operational data, 6, 8, 16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>opposable mind, 345, 351–352, 355</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>optimality, 354</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>over-confidence bias, 399</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Paris, 51, 56, 62, 64, 67, 70–71, 73–76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>phase theory, 121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>polyscenic, 91, 93</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postulate of commensurate complexity, 17–18, 22–23, 39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>postulate of disproportionate achievement, 17–18, 23, 25, 40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>predictive validity, 397, 399, 401, 403, 407</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>presentational data, 6, 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>“proper pleasure”</td>
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<td>“stay-the-course” theory</td>
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<td>Street Corner Society</td>
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<td>structural equation modeling</td>
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<td>system 2</td>
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<td>Thematic Apperception Test</td>
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<td>Tommy Hilfiger</td>
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<td>Trade-off dimension</td>
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<td>tragedy of the commons</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>transference theory</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>triangulation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
uncertainty avoidance, 359, 361, 364, 368, 370, 375–378, 394–395
unintentional, 134–136, 145
unobtrusive evidence, 397
unstructured, 32, 178
unsustainable, 344, 348–349, 354–355

VFR, 368–369, 372–373, 381–382, 385–389
Visual narrative art, 85–87, 89, 91, 93, 95, 97, 99, 101, 103, 105
Volkswagen, 41, 56, 88, 102

“Weick’s clock”, 22–23

“Woodside’s box”, 23, 32

ZMET, 5, 118–119, 139–140, 148, 166
zoomorphistic, 24, 143–144, 148–149, 154–155, 167