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Satisfaction Across the Consumption Experience: The Impact of Judgment Timing, Emotions and Interruptions on Consumer Enjoyment

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Paper #1: The Road Not Taken: The Effect of Forming Pre-Choice Product Expectations and Making a Choice on Subsequent Consumption Enjoyment
Naomi Mandel, Arizona State University, USA
Stephen M. Nowlis, Washington University, USA

Paper #2: Angry Avengers or Disappointed Deferrers: Consumers’ Emotional Reactions to Stockouts
Nicole Verrochi Coleman, University of Pittsburgh, USA
Patti Williams, University of Pennsylvania, USA
Gavan J. Fitzsimons, Duke University, USA

Paper #3: The Effect of Curiosity on Consumption Enjoyment
Elif Isakman, University of Southern California, USA
Lisa Cavanaugh, University of Southern California, USA
Deborah J. MacInnis, University of Southern California, USA
Gülden Ülkümen, University of Southern California, USA

Paper #4: Waiter, There’s a Fly in My Soup (and I Have an iPhone)! How Evaluation Timing can Impact Customer Reviews
Christine Ringler, Rutgers University, USA
Andrea C. Morales, Arizona State University, USA
Nancy J. Sirianni, Texas Christian University, USA

SESSION OVERVIEW

These papers focus upon the process of consumption in a variety of ways: by jointly investigating the discrete stages of the choice process, considering the emotions consumers feel when confronted with a stockout during a choice situation, assessing the impact of interruptions on consumption and exploring how the timing of evaluations impact the overall positivity of those evaluations. Broadly, each of the papers examines consumer satisfaction across the consumption process, predicting high levels of dissatisfaction depending upon the timing of judgment, the emotions felt or interruptions experienced during the consumption experience. The first paper (Mandel and Nowlis) emphasizes the distinction between satisfaction after choice but before consumption, compared with satisfaction after consumption. The second paper (Coleman, Williams and Fitzsimons) focuses upon emotional reactions during the consumption process and their implications for decision satisfaction and downstream behaviors. The third paper (Isakman, Cavanaugh, MacInnis and Ülkümen) focuses upon how curiosity-evoking interruptions to consumption can influence satisfaction levels. The fourth paper (Ringler, Morales and Sirianni) examines how the timing of when consumers provide evaluations influences consumer satisfaction. Together these papers suggest that the way in which the consumption process unfolds, rather than simply the moment of consuming the chosen item, influences consumer satisfaction in substantial ways.

The first paper in this session (Mandel and Nowlis) examines the separate and joint effects of forming expectations, making a choice and actually consuming the chosen item on consumption enjoyment. Results show that consistent with the cognitive dissonance literature, participants who formed expectations and chose, but did not consume, bolstered their choices by showing a divergence of alternatives after forming expectations. However, participants who formed expectations, made a choice, and then consumed their choice experienced lower consumption enjoyment than those in other conditions, due to the convergence of option attractiveness after consumption. This research offers implications for the many studies published on the topic of dissonance, examining the degree to which the frequently obtained effect of spreading of alternatives persists after consumers have consumed their selections.

The second paper in this session (Coleman, Williams and Fitzsimons) examines the emotions consumers feel in response to experiencing a stockout. Previous research has shown that stockouts reduce decision satisfaction and lead to store or brand-switching behaviors and negative word of mouth. In this paper, the authors suggest that the effect of stockouts on satisfaction is mediated by their immediate emotional reactions to the stockout situation. Results show that consumers often feel angry and disappointment in response to a stockout and that these emotions differentially predict the actions consumers take in response to a stockout. Results suggest that consumers nearly always feel disappointed in response to a stockout but that they are likely to feel angry when the stockout affects an item they are highly committed to or when the stockout feels personal. Three studies demonstrate that consumers naturally experience anger and disappointment in response to stockouts, and that anger leads to greater levels of damaging retaliatory behaviors (e.g., store switching) while disappointment predicts choice deferral.

The third paper (Isakman, Cavanaugh, MacInnis and Ülkümen) examines the impact of increasingly common curiosity-arousing contexts on consumption experiences. Daily occurrences of ringing cell phones, incoming email notifications, or unopened mail can evoke curiosity about who is calling or writing, what they have to say, and whether there is good or bad news to be learned. Defining curiosity as a feeling of deprivation that arises when there is a gap between what one knows currently (i.e., someone is trying to get in touch with me) and what wants to know (who is it and what do they want to tell me), the paper suggests that individuals in a state of curiosity feel deprived because the resolution of the curiosity-evoking event is self-relevant but unknown to them, and may interrupt consumption in order to attend to these events. Results show that that curiosity-evoking events evoke a feeling of deprivation and a state of discomfort that motivates an impulsive search for resolution. Such information seeking behavior disrupts the consumption experience and undermines its enjoyment.

The fourth paper in this session (Ringler, Morales and Sirianni), in contrast, suggests that taking time to provide evaluations during consumption can lead to more favorable reviews and higher levels of satisfaction than evaluations provided after a delay. Results demonstrate that these effects are driven by higher levels of negative emotions at the time of delayed evaluation, suggesting that merely asking customers for feedback one week after their experiences creates negative feelings that then color consumer evaluations. Consumers find delayed evaluations to require a greater expenditure of effort as they work to recall their real-time feelings and experiences. This extra effort leads to more negative affect and thus decreased evaluations and satisfaction.

This session is likely to be of interest broadly to ACR members, including those interested in consumer satisfaction, those who study emotions, and those interested in how new technologies might influence consumer behavior. The session furthers the conference’s mission of appreciating diversity in a variety of ways. While all the papers in this session focus broadly upon consumer satisfaction or...
dissatisfaction as the consumption process unfolds, they approach that topic from different directions.

The Road Not Taken: The Effect of Forming Pre-Choice Product Expectations and Making a Choice on Subsequent Consumption Enjoyment

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Consumers often form expectations about products before choosing and consuming an option. For example, a consumer attending a wine-tasting might form detailed expectations about the attributes of each wine, such as whether it will be fruity, earthy, pungent, or resinous. Will this person enjoy consuming the chosen wine more or less than someone who does not form such detailed expectations? While prior research has examined how the acts of forming expectations, choosing, and consuming can independently influence satisfaction or consumption enjoyment, this paper is the first to demonstrate that the combination of all three is both necessary and sufficient to systematically lower consumption enjoyment.

One line of prior research, based on the theory of cognitive dissonance (Festinger 1957) suggests that forming expectations prior to choice may increase consumption enjoyment, because consumers may want to defend their choice by increasing their stated preference for the chosen option. This phenomenon is known as “spreading of alternatives,” because individuals indicate a higher attractiveness differential between the options after choice, compared to before choice (Brehm 1956). Although thousands of studies have been published on the topic of cognitive dissonance since the 1950s, to our knowledge not a single study has investigated whether such spreading of alternatives persists after consumers have consumed their selections. We examine this question in our studies.

A second line of prior research suggests that thinking too hard about the available options (which may occur while forming such expectations) may lower product satisfaction (Wilson and Schooler 1991). In attempt to reconcile these disparate prior findings, we propose that when consumers form expectations, consistent with the cognitive dissonance literature, the attractiveness of the two product options diverge after choice (but only when the product is not in fact consumed, as is typical in this literature). However, consistent with more recent literature (Litt and Tormala 2010), we also predict that after forming expectations, choice, and consumption, the attractiveness of those same two options converge; that is, the chosen option becomes less attractive and the unchosen option becomes more attractive (Carmon et al. 2003). This convergence of alternatives leads to regret and ultimately reduces consumption enjoyment.

The purpose of study 1 was to examine the joint effects of forming expectations, making a choice, and consuming that choice on option attractiveness and consumption enjoyment. We conducted a 2 (Formed expectations: Yes vs. No) x 2 (Made a Choice: Yes vs. No) x 2 (Product Consumed: Yes vs. No) between-subjects design with 436 participants who chose between two equally attractive flavors of jelly beans: Very Cherry and Green Apple. Participants in the formed expectations condition provided ratings for how much they expected each option to be sweet, tart, refreshing, flavorful, sour, chewy, and good tasting. Participants in the no expectations condition did not give any such ratings. Participants in the choice condition chose between the two jelly beans, and participants in the no choice condition received an assigned jelly bean. Participants in the consumption condition consumed the chosen or assigned jelly bean, while participants in the no consumption condition did not consume a jelly bean.

We calculated the attractiveness differential as the difference in attractiveness between the chosen/assigned and unchosen/ unassigned option. Consistent with prior research on the spreading of alternatives, the attractiveness differential was significantly larger when participants made a choice than when they did not make a choice. Furthermore, in support of our predictions, participants who formed expectations, made a choice, and consumed that choice enjoyed the product significantly less than participants who did not form expectations, but did make a choice and consume that choice. Consistent with the cognitive dissonance literature, participants who did not consume bolstered their choices by showing a divergence of alternatives after forming expectations. However, as predicted, participants who formed expectations, made a choice, and then consumed their choice experienced lower consumption enjoyment than those in other conditions, due to the convergence of option attractiveness after consumption.

One limitation of study 1 is that, unlike in classic cognitive dissonance studies, we did not look at the change in attractiveness ratings over time within a single participant. Our preliminary findings suggest a timing component; that is, consumers’ ratings of two options diverge after choice, but then they converge after consumption due to regret or disappointment. In order to establish these changes over time, we implemented an experiment (otherwise similar to study 1) in which each participant rated the two product options (jelly beans) at three different time periods: after forming expectations (when applicable), after choosing, and after consuming their choice.

Our analysis revealed a replication of study 1, in which the combination of forming expectations, making a choice, and consuming that choice reduced consumption enjoyment. More specifically, participants enjoyed consuming their choices significantly less when they had first formed expectations than when they had not. Second, participants who formed expectations indeed demonstrated a significant spreading of alternatives when rating the attractiveness of the chosen option after choice (M = 4.55 after expectations vs. M = 5.33 after choice) and a significant convergence of attractiveness after consumption (M = 4.74 after consumption). This finding provides further support for the idea that the product options shift in attractiveness at various stages in the decision process.

We are currently running additional studies to uncover the cognitive process underlying these results. It is possible that consumers who bolster their choices feel disappointed after consumption due to expectation disconfirmation. Alternatively, because demonstrating spreading alternatives in preferences reduces cognitive dissonance and thus psychological discomfort (Elliot & Devine 1994; Galinsky et al. 2000), it is possible that the act of consumption reduces such discomfort, rendering this bias no longer necessary. To tease apart these alternative explanations, study 3 (ongoing) measures how well consumption of the products matched participants’ expectations and their disappointment and psychological discomfort levels, as well as individual differences in regret tendencies. Study 3 also extends the findings of the first two studies to an additional product category (music).

Angry Avengers or Disappointed Deferrers: Consumers’ Emotional Reactions to Stockouts

EXTENDED ABSTRACT

Stockouts are a common retail experience, with estimates in the range of an average of 10-20 percent of items being unavailable on a typical afternoon (IHL Group 2008). Given the practical importance and general prevalence of stockouts, understanding consumer responses to out-of-stocks and the costs of product unavailability has
been an area of considerable interest both in marketing and supply chain management.

The behaviors consumers engage in following a stockout can vary considerably, thus impacting key players in the chain differently: from buying another brand in the same store (hurting the manufacturer, but not the retailer) or switching to another store altogether (hurting the retailer, but not the manufacturer), to long-term effects such as negative word of mouth and reduced attitudes toward the store and the brand. Few papers have examined the underlying causes of consumer response to stockouts, or what drives consumers to choose one behavioral response over another. In this research, we seek to better understand when and why consumers retaliate with specific behaviors when encountering a stockout.

In four experiments we examine when and why stockouts impact consumers’ retaliatory behaviors, focusing upon the mediational role of emotions and satisfaction jointly. We predict that two emotions will be important for stockouts: anger and disappointment. Anger tends to arise when an individual’s goal progress is impeded: feels caused by another person, perceived as controllable by that other person, and seems personally directed (Frijda, Kuipers, & ter Schure 1989). Anger typically leads to active retaliation and an antagonistic response. This is in contrast to disappointment, which is caused by the situation, is perceived as uncontrollable, and is impersonal. Disappointment leads to more passive retaliation, where the individual attempts to change the situation (Zeelenberg et al. 1998).

We examine when consumers are likely to experience anger versus disappointment in response to a stockout and how those discrete emotions lead to different patterns of retaliatory behaviors toward a retailer or brand. With this focus, we look more deeply at the psychological processes that mediate stockout experiences on consumer evaluations and reactionary behaviors. Results demonstrate that consumers naturally experience anger and disappointment in response to stockouts, and that anger leads to greater levels of damaging retaliatory behaviors (e.g., store switching) while disappointment predicts choice deferral.

In a first exploratory study, we examine whether consumers naturally discuss stockout experiences in emotional terms, and specifically if anger and disappointment are innate reactions to an out-of-stock situation. Participants were asked to recall and describe their most recent stockout experience. Participants described a variety of stockout situations, across different retailers, for items at different price levels. Across their open-ended responses, 60% of respondents mentioned experiencing an emotion in response to a stockout: specifically, 40% of respondents experienced disappointment, while 16% mentioned feeling angry or furious, and two respondents (4%) mentioned another emotion—panic. Thus, more than half of the respondents mentioned emotions in their discussion of stockouts.

The second study sought to manipulate aspects of the stockout situation in order to determine the underlying causes of the different emotional reactions—and whether each emotion predicts a specific punitive response. Participants completed an engaging online shopping task in which they were purchasing a cake to take to a dinner party. Two factors were manipulated: the availability of their preferred cake (in-stock, out-of-stock), and their commitment to the preferred cake (high, low). Following the cake purchase situation, participants completed a variety of measures, including: emotion ratings, their satisfaction with the decision process, likelihood of returning to the bakery in the future (store switching), and what they would tell their friends about the bakery (word-of-mouth). Participants’ feelings of anger were affected by availability, such that participants who experienced a stockout were significantly angrier than those whose cake was available; this result is qualified by a significant interaction of availability and commitment, such that when their cake was out-of-stock, highly committed participants were angrier than those with low commitment to the out of stock item. On the other hand, disappointment was only affected by availability—commitment did not amplify consumers’ feelings of disappointment. Similarly, decision satisfaction was also only impacted by availability; unsurprisingly, participants whose preferred cake was out-of-stock experienced lower satisfaction with their decision.

In the third study, the personalization of the stockout announcement was manipulated such that participants entered their name at the beginning of the study, and then—upon reaching the checkout counter—the baker told them that he would never sell their preferred cake to a person with the subject’s name (personal), or simply that he had already sold the last one of their preferred cake (impersonal). Participants were more angry when the stockout was personal (M = 5.56) than impersonal (M = 4.50; F(1, 254) = 14.659, p < .001), yet disappointment was equal across the two conditions (Mpersonal = 4.43, Minpersonal = 4.06, p = .75). Similarly, individuals who felt personally targeted for the stockout were less likely to return to the bakery (M = 30.01) than those who received an impersonal stockout (M = 51.91; F(1, 254) = 27.196, p < .001), and this result was mediated by feelings of anger (z = -2.48, p < .05). This study demonstrates that with higher commitment comes greater anger, which then leads to retaliatory behaviors; while disappointment remains constant.

In Study 4 participants complete the same cake shopping scenario but we manipulate their commitment level by having them first specify what cake they would buy (chocolate, carrot, or fruit) and, in the high commitment condition, write about why that cake would make a good gift. Also, in this study, after experiencing a stock-out of their preferred cake participants were given the option of either choosing another in-stock cake or indicating they would choose to go to another bakery altogether. As in the previous studies, highly committed participants were more angry (M = 4.39) than low commitment (M = 3.44, F(1, 145) = 7.622, p < .01). Interestingly, disappointment was also higher in the high commitment condition (M = 3.88) than the low (M = 3.28, F(1, 145) = 5.154, p < .05). Commitment also affected the likelihood that an individual would choose to go to a different store, such that high commitment led to a higher likelihood of store switching (p = 1.519, p < .001). Anger ratings partially mediated the effect of commitment on store switching (z = -1.817, p = .062), while disappointment ratings did not (z = 1.54, p > .15).

These studies tell a consistent story of emotions in reactions to stockouts: anger and disappointment are integral to the experience of stockouts. In particular, as an individual becomes more committed to a particular option, the likelihood of experiencing anger increases. Importantly, experiencing anger predicts whether the individual will switch stores—seen in the repeated mediation of commitment on store switching by anger. Interestingly, disappointment seems to be a relatively invariant component of stockout experiences: few aspects of the stockout situation changed the experience of disappointment, suggesting that any stockout will lead to disappointment. Understanding what emotions a consumer will experience upon encountering a stockout has implications for predicting the downstream retaliatory behaviors, as well as suggesting courses of action that stores can take to reconcile with consumers.

**The Effects of Curiosity on Consumption Enjoyment**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Consumers increasingly face curiosity-arousing contexts. For example, daily occurrences of ringing cell phones, incoming email
notifications, or unopened mail can evoke curiosity about who is calling or writing, what they have to say, and whether there is good or bad news to be learned. Consistent with Loewenstein (1994), we define curiosity as a feeling of deprivation that arises when there is a gap between what one knows currently (i.e., someone is trying to get in touch with me) and what wants to know (who is it and what do they want to tell me). Individuals in a state of curiosity feel deprived because the resolution of the curiosity-evoking event is self-relevant but unknown to them.

Despite the prevalence of curiosity evoking events in consumers’ lives, limited consumer behavior research has focused on the effects of curiosity. We ask the novel question of whether and to what extent the interruption of a consumption episode (i.e., a dinner, a nice drive, a movie, a massage, a concert, a book) by a curiosity-evoking event (i.e., a ringing cell phone) impacts enjoyment of the consumption experience.

On the one hand, prior research shows that interruption can increase consumption enjoyment. Specifically, (Nelson and Meyvis 2008) showed that breaks increase enjoyment with positive experiences and decrease enjoyment with negative experiences. Their theorizing is based on the notion that breaks disrupt hedonic adaptation and intensify the consumption experience. Based on this research, one might expect that a curiosity-evoking event that interrupts a consumption experience might enhance consumption enjoyment.

However, we predict the opposite. Our theoretical framework suggests that curiosity-evoking events do more than interrupt. By evoking a feeling of deprivation they create a state of discomfort about the gap between what one knows and what wants to know. They motivate an impulsive search for resolution. Indeed, prior research confirms that when in a state of curiosity, consumers seek information and are more responsive to that which is received (Memon and Soman 2002; Steenkamp and Baumgartner 1992). Such information seeking behavior disrupts the consumption experience and may undermine its enjoyment. Moreover, social forces (norms against answering phones or emails while dining with others), legal forces (laws against texting while driving) or physical limitations (phones that are out of reach during a massage) may prohibit information resolution. Under such circumstances we anticipate that individuals ruminate about the curiosity-evoking event and that such rumination further undermines consumption enjoyment.

One field study and two experiments provide preliminary evidence consistent with these predictions. In study 1, Three hundred individuals completed a short survey immediately following movie screenings. Respondents were asked to evaluate their enjoyment of the movie and whether or not they received calls, emails or texts during the movie itself. The results indicated that participants enjoyed the movie significantly less, if they checked their phones or received a phone call during the movie. Although correlational, this study provides some preliminary evidence that a curiosity-evoking event reduces consumption enjoyment.

Study 2 provided a more rigorous test of the link between curiosity and consumption enjoyment. Specifically, study 2 was designed to determine whether the observed effects were attributable to curiosity and not merely distraction. Seventy-seven individuals were randomly assigned to one of three experimental conditions (curiosity, distraction, or control). All respondents were seated in a comfortable chair and asked to evaluate a foot massager by having a 3-minute foot massage. Respondents’ belongings, including their cell phones, were placed nearby but beyond reach. In the curiosity condition, we called participants’ cell phones during the massage experience. In the distraction condition, we remotely operated a fan located near the participant. Respondents in the control condition heard no interruption. At the conclusion of the massage, participants rated their enjoyment. As hypothesized, enjoyment of the foot massage was significantly lower in the curiosity condition than in the distraction and control conditions, which were equivalent. The results of study 2 suggest that curiosity-evoking events can decrease consumption enjoyment, and this effect is not driven by pure distraction.

Study 3 was designed to provide a conceptual replication and extension our findings by examining the process underlying the relationship between curiosity and consumption enjoyment. Study 3 offers an initial test of whether curiosity’s effect on enjoyment is explained by attention to and rumination about the curiosity evoking event. Eighty-six participants were randomly assigned to curiosity, distraction or control condition. Participants were asked to play a Mario Kart Nintendo Wii driving game for four minutes. In the curiosity condition, respondents placed their cell phones on a table next to the chair at which they were seated. To evoke curiosity, we called respondents on their cell phone once while they played. In the distraction condition, we placed an iPod on the same table by respondents’ chairs and created a distraction by remotely starting the iPod. Immediately following the game, respondents were asked to rate their enjoyment of the game. Consistent with study 2, we found that enjoyment with the videogame experience was significantly lower in the curiosity than in the distraction and control conditions, which did not differ. To measure attention, we coded participant behavior, i.e., whether and how frequently they looked at their cell phones or iPod. Meditation analyses showed that attention mediated the effect of curiosity on enjoyment.

Although work in progress aims to further explore the mechanism driving our results, the current findings add to our understanding of the effects of curiosity. Importantly our work suggests that curiosity negatively impacts consumption enjoyment, has different effects on consumption experiences compared to simple distractions or interruptions, and that its effects are driven by a rumination mechanism that takes attention away from the consumption experience. To the best of our knowledge, this work is the first to examine curiosity in a context independent of the focal consumption experience. Hence, our findings also contribute to the incidental emotion literature by showing how curiosity that is unrelated to the focal task impacts overall enjoyment.

**Waiter, There’s a Fly in My Soup (and I Have an iPhone)! How Evaluation Timing can Impact Customer Reviews**

**EXTENDED ABSTRACT**

Mobile technology and reviewer-driven applications like Yelp!, Citysearch and Amazon.com enable customers to evaluate products and services in real-time. According to the head of mobile applications at Citysearch, the practice of real-time reviewing is beneficial for customers because it empowers them to express what they are currently feeling as they use products and receive services. Further, Citysearch views immediate evaluations as more honest and informative than those written after a delay, thereby increasing their value to consumers who use posted reviews in their own decision-making (Miller 2009). While immediate evaluations can prove beneficial to consumers, what does this mean for the companies being reviewed and whose reputations are at stake? Generally speaking, how does timing affect the valence of consumers’ product, service and brand evaluations? Are ratings more positive (negative) when they are written in the heat of the consumption experience, or after a delay, when the experience has ended and customers have had some time to cool off?
Across four studies, we provide strong evidence supporting our theory about the role of delayed feedback timing and its negative effect on consumer attitudes. When consumers give feedback about a product or service consumed after a time delay has occurred (vs. in real-time), they should report more negative evaluations of the experience, lower levels of satisfaction, and more negative affect. In contrast, when products or services are evaluated in real-time, overall evaluations and satisfaction are higher, regardless of product or service quality.

The goal of study 1 is to investigate how evaluation timing impacts consumer evaluations regardless of the quality of the consumer's actual service experience. As such, in study 1, a quasi-field study (using a pizza delivery company), we ran a 2x3 between-subjects experimental design with feedback timing (immediate vs. delayed) and quality of the service delivered (substandard vs. standard vs. above standard) as the experimental factors. We randomly assigned participants to one of the six conditions for a total of 164 undergraduate students who received course credit for their participation. We uncover evidence to support a delayed feedback effect whereby participants report lower satisfaction with their service experiences and more negative attitudes toward the company that delivered those experiences when feedback was submitted one week after the service encounter as compared to instances when feedback was submitted immediately following the service encounter.

The main objective of the second study is to extend our findings beyond service contexts to the lower involvement consumption context of everyday consumer packaged goods (paper towels). In Study 2, we ran a 2x2 between-subjects experimental design with feedback timing (immediate vs. delayed) and quality of the paper towel (low vs. high) as the experimental factors. Specifically, in study 2 we seek to determine whether the same findings are observed with the evaluation of something as basic as a paper towel, while broadening our investigation to look at whether affect is also affected in the delayed feedback conditions. The findings of study 2 provide additional support for the existence of a delayed feedback effect. Consistent with study 1, we found that when feedback was elicited after a delay, evaluations of the product and likelihood to purchase that product were lower than when feedback was elicited immediately following the product sampling experience. We are able to demonstrate that it is not the baseline mood at the time of product interaction that is coloring the evaluation. Rather, Study 2 demonstrates that the negative emotions reported by study participants were significantly more prevalent at the time of the delayed evaluation (time 2) over what was reported at the baseline (time 1). This lends support to the idea that merely asking customers for feedback one week after their experiences creates negative feelings and these color consumer evaluations.

The primary goal of Study 3 is to gain a better understanding for why, when soliciting customer feedback after a delay, a decrease in product and service evaluations occurs. Namely, we are interested in the amount of perceived effort by the consumer when completing the evaluation at time 2. Study 3 also extends our contribution by examining the effectiveness of incentives offered to customers for taking part in follow-up surveys, such as nominal gift cards. We randomly assigned seventy-three undergraduate participants to a one-factor (incentive: no incentive vs. gift card) between-subjects experimental design. Evaluation timing was held constant in this study in that all participants were asked to evaluate products after a delay. Consistent with studies 1 and 2, results indicated that evaluation and satisfaction at time 1 were significantly higher than at time 2. Additionally, results indicated that the perceived effort at time 1 was significantly lower than the perceived effort at time 2. Thus, as hypothesized, participants perceived there to be more effort expended when they were asked to complete a survey one-week after the consumption experience as compared to when they were asked to complete a survey during the experience. This resulted in decreased satisfaction and decreased evaluations of the product. Additionally, it appears that participants expect some type of incentive when completing a follow-up survey, but by offering a small two-dollar gift card, participants' need for an additional incentive decreases significantly.

The main objective of study 4 was to gain a better understanding of the underlying process. We test evaluation of the paper towels via a quality manipulation in either real-time or after a delay. Additionally, we measure perceived effort as a potential mediator for those in the delayed feedback condition. Consistent with the previous studies, we find evaluations of the product to be lower in the delayed feedback condition, regardless of paper towel quality. Additionally we find perceived effort to be higher when feedback is delayed versus immediate. In the open-ended portion of the survey, participants indicated that they perceived effort to be higher in the delayed feedback condition because it was difficult to recall the exact feeling and experience of the product when it wasn’t directly in front of them. Together this set of results confirms our proposed theory that by asking for feedback after a delay, perceived effort increases, resulting in lower evaluations and decreased levels of satisfaction for products, services, and firms.