Reliability and Validity of Alternative Measures of Channel Member Satisfaction
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The authors describe the development of multiple-item measures to capture the construct of channel member satisfaction. Two measures are developed that are found to have high levels of reliability and validity. In addition, the construct of channel member satisfaction is found to be multidimensional, involving satisfaction with products, financial considerations, social interaction, cooperative advertising programs, and other promotional assistance.

Reliability and Validity of Alternative Measures of Channel Member Satisfaction

Recent research in channels of distribution has emphasized the importance of the behavioral dimensions of channel interaction. One construct which has been explored both conceptually and empirically is channel member satisfaction. Robicheaux and El-Ansary (1975) state that the construct of satisfaction is of fundamental importance in understanding channel relationships. They propose that a channel member’s satisfaction with its relationship with another firm is influenced by the level of control of the other firm, and further maintain that greater satisfaction among channel members results in higher productivity within the channel and vice versa. Stern and Reve (1980) adopt a similar perspective in their political economy framework of distribution channels. They posit that channel member sentiments (of which satisfaction is an example) comprise one dimension of the internal politics of the channel and are linked directly to the internal efficiency with which the channel operates. They consequently make the plea for more rigorous study of channel member sentiments.

Channel member satisfaction also is viewed as being related to other important behaviors within the channel. Hunt and Nevin (1974), for example, propose that channel member satisfaction will lead to (1) higher morale, (2) greater cooperation, (3) fewer terminations of relationships, (4) fewer individual and class action lawsuits, and (5) reduced efforts to seek protective legislation. Lusch (1976) suggests that satisfaction in the channel can reduce friction between parties, lower dysfunctional conflict, and increase channel efficiency. Satisfaction seems to be related to the exercise of power in that the use of noncoercive sources tends to increase satisfaction whereas the use of coercive sources serves to reduce satisfaction (Hunt and Nevin 1974; Lusch 1976; Mitchie and Roering 1978; Stern and Reve 1980). In sum, channel member satisfaction has a key role in most of the important recent conceptual and empirical literature that examines the operations of channel systems.

In spite of the apparent importance of the concept and its central place in a number of theoretical structures, channel member satisfaction remains a rather primitive construct. It is almost never conceptually defined, nor explicitly operationalized, when it is used. Further, studies which attempt to operationalize it are often poorly executed. In most studies, for example, single-item scales are used in spite of their known limitations (Nunnally 1978). Hunt and Nevin (1974, p. 189), in their study of power in distribution channels, simply asked franchisees if they “would still choose to be a franchisee with this franchise system.” Respondents answering positively were defined as being satisfied and negative respondents were labeled dissatisfied. Rosenberg and Stern (1971) and Wilkinson (1979) also measured channel member satisfaction on single-item scales using descriptors that ranged from “very satisfied” to “very dissatisfied.”

In only a few instances in the channels literature has satisfaction been assessed with anything other than psychometrically poor, single-item measures. Lusch (1976) argued that franchisee satisfaction is based on a domain of items over which the franchisee could be satisfied or dissatisfied with the franchisor. He proposed a 16-item

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measure of the construct. Though the measure he proposed had satisfactory internal consistency (α = .87) little can be said about its other properties because he did not undertake a comprehensive assessment of them. Mitchie and Roering (1978) also proposed a multi-item “internally consistent measure of satisfaction” but provided few details about its development or reliability and validity statistics. The only other attempt to measure channel member satisfaction via a multiple-item measure of which we are aware was in a bargaining experiment by Dwyer (1980) in which he attempted to assess each participant’s reaction to the other’s negotiating posture.

Clearly, the construct of channel member satisfaction is of sufficient importance both theoretically and managerially to warrant more rigorous measurement. The purpose of our article is to provide (1) a beginning attempt to define channel member satisfaction, (2) a set of measures which can be used to assess the construct, and (3) an analysis of the reliability and validity of those measures.

METHOD

The first steps in developing better measures are to define the construct conceptually and then to specify its domain (Churchill 1979). The first question to be addressed is, “What is satisfaction?” Though the consumer satisfaction literature offers several perspectives (Churchill and Surprenant 1982), the conceptual approach to satisfaction used by organizational theorists and industrial psychologists in assessing job-related phenomena comes closest to capturing the essence of channel satisfaction. The job satisfaction literature recognizes the mutual dependence of the parties, the ongoing nature of the interactions, and the many intangible as well as tangible features that enable employees to form evaluations of their employers (Smith, Kendall, and Hulin 1969). Further, most conceptions of job satisfaction recognize the essential long-term nature of these arrangements and how the arrangements serve to facilitate or impede the attainment of specific goals by both parties to the relationship.

Our proposed conceptual definition of channel member satisfaction borrows heavily from organizational theory and specifically parallels the definition advanced by Churchill, Ford, and Walker (1974) for salesperson satisfaction. More specifically, channel member satisfaction comprises the domain of all characteristics of the relationship between a channel member (the focal organization) and another institution in the channel (the target organization) which the focal organization finds rewarding, profitable, instrumental, and satisfying or frustrating, problematic, inhibiting, or unsatisfying. We offer two operationalizations of the construct which parallel the main types of operationalizations used in the satisfaction literature in general and the job satisfaction literature in particular. In one we use beliefs or cognitions about the relationship as the basis for the satisfaction scale and in the other we attempt to assess directly the focal organization’s evaluation of its relationship with the target organization.

Research Setting

The research setting for testing the conceptualization was a field study of the perceptions of retailers and wholesalers toward the manufacturer of consumer batteries and ancillary products. The advantage of using a single target organization to develop a measure of channel member satisfaction is that it allows a more thorough investigation of the programs and policies of the target organization that might affect channel partners’ satisfaction with it. The use of a number of organizations would force an emphasis on those procedures that might be common across organizations. The drawback with such an approach is that by focusing on the commonalities, one would miss measuring the things that really matter in producing satisfied channel partners. Another reason for using a single target organization is that such an orientation should be of more value to organizations in a channel network which might be interested in assessing the satisfaction of the various channel partners. Even with a focus on a single target organization, several perspectives could be assumed. One could, for example, attempt to assess a number of wholesalers’ reactions to a specific retailer or how individual retailers evaluate a specific wholesaler. Manufacturers are experiencing decreasing channel power (Bobrow 1981), and a vehicle for assessing manufacturers’ channel relationships would be worthwhile because satisfaction of the intermediary is becoming more important to a continuing relationship.

Components of the Construct

A review of the relevant channels literature provided little direction as to the possible dimensionality of the satisfaction construct. Discussions with retail and wholesale personnel, sales managers and representatives, and marketing managers, however, indicated several broad components were relevant. Specifically, channel members’ satisfaction seemed to have at least four dimensions: a product dimension which reflects the demand for, awareness of, and quality of the manufacturer’s products; a financial dimension that captures the attractiveness of the arrangement with respect to such matters as intermediary margins and return on investment; an assistance dimension which assesses how well the manufacturer supports the intermediary with such aids as cooperative advertising programs and point-of-purchase displays; and a social interaction dimension that reflects how satisfactorily the interactions between intermediary and manufacturer are handled, primarily through the sales representative servicing the account. The exploratory interviews and a second review of the literature, focusing specifically on those elements suggested by the exploratory interviews to make for a satisfactory channel relationship, led to the development of items to tap each of the dimensions of the construct for each of the operationalizations investigated.
For the first operationalization we used a 5-point Likert scale with possible responses ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree" and the following numbers of items per dimension: product 10, financial 10, assistance 7, and social interaction 9. To avoid response set, we reversed the wording for approximately one half of the 36 items and randomized the order of item presentation. Because this measure indirectly asks for the evaluation of the relationship via the intermediary's beliefs, it is labeled SATIND hereafter.

Each of the 16 items in the second operationalization described a specific aspect of the relationship. A 5-point scale ranging from "very satisfied" to "very dissatisfied" was positioned beside each item. There were a priori one product and one social interaction item, four financial items, and 10 assistance items. This measure is very similar to the measure used by Lusch (1976). It reflects a more direct approach to obtaining the intermediary's evaluation (i.e., satisfaction is asked for directly) and therefore is labeled SATDIR hereafter.

One other measure of channel satisfaction, a single-item, 7-point scale calling for a global assessment of the relationship, also was collected. This scale is similar to the other single-item scales used in previous research.

Other Measures

Several other measures were used in the investigation. Both the number of persons employed and the number of outlets owned by the focal organization were measured, as were two constructs that were used specifically to assess nomological validity. First, intermediary role ambiguity (the extent of uncertainty about the role expectations of the manufacturer) was measured because both the channels literature (Gill and Stern 1969) and the general organization literature (Kahn et al. 1964; Rizzo, House, and Lirtzman 1970) suggest that role ambiguity would be related negatively to satisfaction. In general, uncertainty about what is expected by a role partner leads to dissatisfaction with the partner. Each item in the resulting 8-item scale asked respondents to indicate their uncertainty on a 4-point scale describing various expectations the manufacturer held of them, such as the amount of inventory they should carry. Because all eight items did not apply to all respondents, an index was created consisting of the average score on those items that did apply. A single-item global estimate of role ambiguity also was included.

Similarly, domain disensus, which reflects disagreement about which channel member has the responsibility for various marketing functions, also should be related negatively to channel member satisfaction (Stern and El-Ansary 1978). This construct was measured through the use of several statements to which respondents indicated their level of agreement on a 5-point scale. Once again, as all eight items were not applicable to all respondents, an index was created from the average score of those items that did apply. As with role ambiguity, a single-item global measure also was used.

Data Collection

Though the target organization was held constant for all evaluating organizations, the organizations represented in the research were diverse. Both retailers and wholesalers were included and four distinct lines of trade (food, drug, hardware, and mass marketer) were examined. A stratified sample was used to select focal organizations from the total population of accounts of the manufacturer. Accounts were arranged first by the four types of trade and then by the level of sales volume of the manufacturer's products. Every other account in each group then was selected after a random start, producing a total sample of 548 retail and wholesale organizations.

The collection of data from the organizations was based on a key informant approach. The appropriate respondent in each organization was identified through a survey of the manufacturer's salesforce conducted two months prior to mailing the surveys. Though the shortcomings of the key informant approach are many (Phillips 1981), its use in this setting is reasonable for two reasons: (1) the decision-making unit for the product type is small, often consisting of only one individual, and (2) the identification of the key informant prior to actual data collection helps guarantee that the proper individual is contacted and serves to reduce errors associated with contacting individuals through title in the organization. Three contacts were made with each respondent. First a prior notification letter was sent informing them that they were selected to be included in the study and asking for their cooperation. Second, two waves of the questionnaire were sent to each respondent approximately two weeks apart.

A total of 173 organizations, representing 32% of the organizations in the sample, provided usable questionnaires. This response rate reflects a middle range of response in comparison with previous studies in the channels literature (Brown and Day 1981). A subsequent comparison of respondents and nonrespondents indicated no significant differences between the groups in either volume of purchases or types of trade.

EVALUATING THE MEASURES

Each of the three measures of channel member satisfaction was evaluated according to the paradigm suggested by Churchill (1979). The two multi-item measures were purified and examined in terms of dimensionality and internal consistency. Next, the convergent and discriminant validity of all three satisfaction measures was assessed. Finally, the relationships between the three satisfaction measures and the measures of the other constructs were analyzed to assess nomological validity.

Dimensionality of the Multi-Item Measures

The dimensionality of the measures was assessed via the following steps. First, the correlation of each item with the total score for each dimension was computed
where the total scores were based on the *a priori* specification of items. These item-to-total correlations were examined to determine (1) whether each item correlated primarily with one dimension and (2) in those cases where an item correlated with one dimension, whether that correlation made conceptual sense. For both multi-item measures, the correlation of each item with the total score for the dimension to which it was hypothesized to belong was higher than its correlation with the total score for any other dimension, but the differences in the size of the item-to-total correlations were sometimes not very large. Consequently, any item that did not have a statistically significant higher correlation with the dimension to which it was hypothesized to belong was eliminated from the analysis. For SATIND, four of the original 10 items were eliminated from the product dimension, three of 10 from the financial dimension, two of seven from the assistance dimension, and four of nine from the social interaction dimension, leaving 23 of the original 36 items.

The internal homogeneity of the items belonging to each dimension was then examined via (1) coefficient alpha, (2) plots of the item-to-total correlations, and (3) principal factor analysis with oblique rotation. The oblimin oblique rotation was used because we believed *a priori* that the dimensions were somewhat distinct but not independent; satisfaction with respect to one dimension could be expected to be correlated with satisfaction with others. The evidence from these analyses suggested that two more items of the financial dimension should be eliminated from the SATIND measure and, perhaps more important, that the assistance items were not unidimensional as anticipated. Rather, the respondents seemed to perceive the cooperative advertising support that the manufacturer as somewhat distinct from other assistance and a five-factor rather than a four-factor solution seemed to be needed. The resulting factor pattern coefficients for the SATIND items are shown in Table 1. The full set of factor coefficients is not shown, but the factors are indeed "clean" in that each item was captured by one factor and one factor alone — that is, only the factor coefficients shown in Table 1 are above .30. Further, factor 1 seems to be a social interaction or salesperson dimension as it primarily reflects how satisfied respondents are with the salesperson's servicing of the account. Factor 2 could reasonably be called the product dimension and factor 3 the financial dimension because these dimensions reflect in turn respondents' satisfaction with the manufacturer's products and the financial attractiveness of the relationship. Factor 4 consists of only two items, both of which reflect respondents' satisfaction with the manufacturer's cooperative advertising program. Factor 5, in contrast, reflects their satisfaction with the other promotional support items the manufacturer provides, such as consumer promotion and point-of-purchase displays. The five-factor solution accounts for slightly more than 58% of the total variation in the data.

### Table 1

**FACTOR COEFFICIENTS FOR SATIND ITEMS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Item / factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.69</td>
<td>12. My manufacturer's sales representative isn't well organized.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.78</td>
<td>17. My manufacturer's sales representative doesn't know his products very well.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.81</td>
<td>21. Manufacturer's salespeople are helpful.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.68</td>
<td>28. Manufacturer's sales representatives have my best interests in mind when they make a suggestion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.78</td>
<td>31. My manufacturer's sales representative is always willing to help me if I get into a tight spot.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.74</td>
<td>1. Manufacturer's products are asked for by our customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.58</td>
<td>5. Manufacturer's products are a good growth opportunity for my firm.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.41</td>
<td>8. Manufacturer's products are not well known by my customers.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.44</td>
<td>20. My customers are willing to pay more for manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.58</td>
<td>24. I would have a difficult time replacing manufacturer's products with similar products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.51</td>
<td>33. Manufacturer's products perform much better than their competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.33</td>
<td>7. Manufacturer's everyday margins are lower than the industry margins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.78</td>
<td>23. Manufacturer provides very competitive margins on their products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.39</td>
<td>25. There is poor return for the amount of space I devote to manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.35</td>
<td>30. Some of the manufacturer's products aren't worth carrying because their margins are too small.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67</td>
<td>32. I am very happy with the margins I receive on manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 4</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.42</td>
<td>2. Manufacturer should have a better cooperative advertising program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.90</td>
<td>34. Manufacturer should provide better cooperative advertising allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Factor 5</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.64</td>
<td>19. Manufacturer conducts excellent consumer promotions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.45</td>
<td>35. Manufacturer provides adequate promotional support for their products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>36. Manufacturer provides excellent point-of-purchase displays.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All coefficients greater than .30 are shown.

The internal homogeneity of the items belonging to each dimension is reasonably high. Though one should not put much faith in an alpha computed on only two or three items, the alphas by dimension follow.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Number of items</th>
<th>Coefficient alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Social interaction</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.87</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Product</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>.76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cooperative</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other assistances</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>.73</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The reliability of the 21-item linear combination is .89, which clearly exceeds the .70 cutoff recommended by Nunnally (1978, p. 245) for basic research.

The 21 items also were input to confirmatory factor analysis for a final assessment of dimensionality by LISREL IV (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1978). The results of the confirmatory factor analysis must be interpreted with some caution, as the responses to the individual items were not normally distributed. Rather, many of them were skewed left or right or otherwise displayed a more peaked distribution than would be found for a normal curve. Maximum likelihood estimation, which is the basis of LISREL and other confirmatory factor analysis programs, relies on the assumption that the distribution of the variables is multivariate normal. When it is not, as when items with a few scale steps are used, the general tendency is for the results to indicate a substantial lack of fit of the model (Olsson 1979) and in particular to suggest that more factors are needed than is actually the case. The problem is particularly acute if the variables are skewed in opposite directions.

Keeping the caveat in mind, we find the LISREL results encouraging. Though the overall chi square value of 312.1 with 179 degrees of freedom suggests the model should be rejected (p = .000), this value may reflect no more than the general tendency of the method to exaggerate the number of factors needed because the items do have skewed response distributions. All other evidence about the fit of the model is positive. All items load as hypothesized and the smallest t-value examining their statistical significance is 3.59. Further, the average residual is only -.001. On balance, the evidence seems to indicate that the SATIND measure has five dimensions.

A similar set of procedures was applied to the 16 items making up SATDIR. The initial item-to-total correlation analysis suggested only one item should be eliminated. The subsequent factor analysis results, reported in Table 2, indicate that the SATDIR items also reflect five, not four, dimensions of satisfaction. Once again the coefficients are clean. All items but item 11 are accounted for by a single factor. When one considers the nature of item 11, its relationship with both factors 1 and 5 is perhaps not unusual. Factor 1 clearly seems to reflect respondents' level of satisfaction with how their business with the manufacturer is handled. Because most of the handling is via the salesperson, factor 1 might be called a salesperson or social interaction dimension. Factor 5 seems to reflect more directly how the manufacturer itself handles the business and could be called an other assistances dimension. Item 11 measures how the customer's orders are handled. Order handling typically involves both the salesperson and manufacturer, and one might reasonably expect that customers could be satisfied by the order handling of one of these two parties but not the other. Factors 2 and 3 are very much like they are for the SATIND items; factor 2 seems to capture the product dimension and factor 3 the financial dimension. Finally, factor 4 seems to reflect customers' satisfaction with the promotional support provided by the manufacturer. The five factors together account for slightly more than 67% of the total variation in the items.

Coefficient alpha and a subsequent confirmatory factor analysis were used to corroborate the five-factor solution. The alphas and item-to-total correlations indicate that item 13 does not belong with item 2. Rather, it more clearly belongs with items 3, 4, 5, and 6 making up the promotional support dimension. Switching it from one dimension to the other makes factor 2 a one-item product dimension and factor 4 a five-item promotional support dimension. The alphas by dimension follow.

### Table 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coefficient</th>
<th>Item</th>
<th>Factor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.52</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>Personal dealings with manufacturer's sales representatives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.69</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Assistances in managing your inventory of manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.50</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Order handling by manufacturer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.37</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>Manufacturer's handling of damaged merchandise.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.31</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>The quality of manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.67</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>How promotional payments are made.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.47</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Income received from the sale of manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.61</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Everyday margins on manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.59</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Manufacturer credit policies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.78</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Manufacturer's national advertising support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.63</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Manufacturer's cooperative advertising support.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.79</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Consumer promotion support by manufacturer (coupons, rebates, displays).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.53</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Off-invoice promotional allowances.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.51</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>Order handling by manufacturer.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.68</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Level of backorders of manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.94</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Speed of delivery of manufacturer's products.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All coefficients greater than .30 are shown.*
other goodness-of-fit criteria, the five-factor model fits the data very well. All parameters load as hypothesized and the smallest t-value examining their statistical significance is 6.29. Further, the average residual is only .007. In sum, the evidence seems to indicate that the SATDIR measure also has five dimensions, and the labels one would attach to the dimensions are very similar to the labels one would attach to those of the SATIND measure.

Convergent and Discriminant Validity

One useful way to assess the convergent and discriminant validity of a measure is to examine respectively the pairwise correlations between the measure and other supposedly similar and dissimilar measures. The theory specifies conceptual linkages between other constructs and total satisfaction, not the components of satisfaction. Consequently, the component scores were combined to produce total satisfaction scores for each measure, and the pairwise correlations between these and the other measures used in the study are summarized in Table 3. When forming the total scores for the two multi-item satisfaction scales, we summed the average scores per item per each of the five dimensions. This was done to avoid unequal weighting of the dimensions which would have occurred if the item scores had been summed directly. In that case, each dimension would have been weighted implicitly in proportion to the number of items making up the dimension. The measures in Table 3 are divided into three groups: satisfaction measures, theoretically related constructs, and unrelated constructs. Notice that in cell A the correlations between the three measures of satisfaction are all positive and significant with the highest correlation occurring between the two multi-item measures. The single-item scale correlates with the other two satisfaction measures at a slightly lower level. These findings suggest that the three measures demonstrate convergent validity.

Discriminant validity requires that the correlations between measures designed to capture the same construct be greater than correlations involving those measures and other constructs (Campbell and Fiske 1959). Notice that the correlations in cell A involving the three satisfaction measures are greater than all of the correlations involving those measures in cells B and C. They are particularly large in comparison with those in cell C as might be expected because the constructs in cell B (1) are theoretically related and (2) share method variance with the satisfaction measures as they too were measured by paper and pencil tests.

Nomological Validity

Nomological validity refers to the relationship between measures representing theoretically related constructs. If a relationship between two constructs is established in theory and the measures of those constructs behave as expected with respect to each other, the nomological validity of the measures is supported. One should keep in mind, however, that the distinction between construct validation and theory testing is somewhat arbitrary (Peter 1981).

The three measures of channel member satisfaction were examined in relation to measures of role ambiguity and domain dissensus. Theory suggests that satisfaction would be related negatively to ambiguity and dissensus. Cell B displays the correlations between the various measures of these constructs. As expected, all three satisfaction measures are related significantly in the proper direction.

### Table 3

**Correlation Matrix of Satisfaction Measures and Other Measures**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>SATIND</th>
<th>SATDIR</th>
<th>Single-item satisfaction</th>
<th>Role ambiguity (multi-item)</th>
<th>Role ambiguity (single-item)</th>
<th>Domain dissensus (multi-item)</th>
<th>Domain dissensus (single-item)</th>
<th>Number of employees</th>
<th>Number of outlets</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell A</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATIND</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SATDIR</td>
<td>.63</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Single-item</td>
<td>.58</td>
<td>.68</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell B</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role ambiguity (multi-item)</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>-.58</td>
<td>-.44</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role ambiguity (single-item)</td>
<td>-.52</td>
<td>-.57</td>
<td>-.56</td>
<td>.66</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain dissensus (multi-item)</td>
<td>-.43</td>
<td>-.39</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>.32</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Domain dissensus (single-item)</td>
<td>-.46</td>
<td>-.48</td>
<td>-.55</td>
<td>.36</td>
<td>.54</td>
<td>.49</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cell C</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of employees</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.13</td>
<td>-.06</td>
<td>1.00</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Number of outlets</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.04</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>1.00</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*All correlation coefficients greater than 0.125 are significant at $\alpha = .05$, given $n = 173$ and one-tailed tests of the relationship.
to both measures of role ambiguity and domain dissen-
sus.

Further evidence that the satisfaction measures behave
as expected can be found by comparing cells A and C.
None of the three measures of satisfaction is related sig-
ificantly to either the number of employees or the num-
ber of outlets, which is desirable because there is no the-
etrical basis for a relationship between satisfaction and
these other constructs.

**DISCUSSION**

We have attempted to develop and empirically ex-
amine the psychometric properties of two multi-item
measures of channel member satisfaction. The measures
were offered as alternatives to the commonly used sin-
gle-item measures of the construct. The findings suggest
that the multi-item measure SATDIR (which asks di-
rectly how satisfied the channel member is with specific
aspects of the relationship) and the multi-item measure
SATIND (which asks for respondents’ cognitions or be-
liefs about the workings of the relationship) have strong
internal consistency, are highly correlated, and behave as
expected with other behavioral constructs. Further,
the multi-item measures perform similarly to the single-
item global assessment measure that was also gathered.

Though similar in performance, the multiple-item
measures are preferred to the single-item measure on
psychometric grounds. Single-item measures have at least
three weaknesses: (1) individual items have considerable
specificity or uniqueness, (2) they permit only gross dis-
tsinctions among objects, and (3) they are notoriously un-
reliable. Multiple-item measures overcome all of these
weaknesses of single-item measures and also provide more
diagnostic information than do single-item scales. The
choice between the direct and indirect multi-item mea-
sures is not obvious. The direct scale (SATDIR) and the
indirect measure (SATIND) provided basically the same
results in terms of convergent, discriminant, and nomo-
lological validity. In future research the two approaches
appear to be used with equal confidence.

Some additional conceptual and empirical develop-
ment is needed in at least one area, namely further de-
velopment of the underlying dimensionality of the chan-
nel member satisfaction construct. Are the five dimen-
sions we identify universally appropriate, or does dimen-
sionality depend on type of product line or on the nature
of the dyad investigated? It is feasible, for example, that
the primary dimensions underlying the satisfaction of a
wholesaler with a manufacturer differ considerably from
those underlying the satisfaction of a retailer with a bro-
k or the satisfaction of a franchisee with a franchisor.
It is also conceivable that different types of channel sup-
port might be expected for producers of different types
of products and that the satisfaction of an intermediary
handling industrial equipment, say, would have different
dimensions and would involve different attributes than
would the satisfaction of an intermediary handling con-
sumer convenience items. The channel member satis-
faction construct must be sufficiently broad to embrace
such diversity.

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